

Bald Eagle and Gallic Rooster : The Paradox of Americaization & Anti-Americanism
in France

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To vindicate my title, let me first say that, aside from *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Edmond Rostand published *Chanteclerc*, another play in verse, in 1908. The eponymous hero is the Gallic rooster, an emblem of French jingoism. While strutting on a dunghill, he is deeply convinced that his cock-a-doodle-do makes the sun rise every day.

Two of La Fontaine's fables may also contribute to exemplify some of the most significant aspects of the French character in relation to my subject :

The Fox and the Grapes

A fox, from Gascogne or from Normandy,
we don't know

Almost dying with hunger, going around,
Saw a vine-branch with grapes on it
So beautiful and ripe to all appearances
that he thought of reaching and eating them.

But after uselessly jumping and jumping
As the vine was too high for him to reach
He had a second thought :

«They are sour, I can see it,
These grapes are good just for the loirs and squirrels.
I'll leave for you what I can't have. »

The Ox and the Frog (or, better updated as the Buffalo and the Frog)

As small as a hen egg,
An envious little frog,
Seeing a bulky ox,
Starts swelling and swelling,
Trying to be as big as he is.

« Look at me now ! » she exclaims, puffed up.
 « Am I now as big as you are?» « Not enough,
 my old friend » –And she keeps on swelling
 And stretching and straining, enlarging
 Till she bursts like a bladder.
 Folks : all show and no substance,
 Ambitious and brainless men,
 Or people despising their own right place--
 How many people are like this frog is!

La Fayette, Nous Voilà

Scholars should always be wary of convenient stereotypes and generalizations. I am also generally allergic to evaluations in terms of ratio and proportion. Only circumstantial evidence can offer a fair insight into a changing phenomenon. Observations should likewise link the past to the present to avoid naive, instantaneous contentions. The sense of relativity is thus a safeguard against the vagaries of nationalistic prejudice.

In the 90s, Larry King interviewed columnist Art Buchwald on CNN. The humorist had long lived in Paris as a press correspondent. When asked about French anti-Americanism, Buchwald answered, « Why would the French like Americans ? They already hate each other!» Conversely, the hatred of America may have been instrumental in reconciling the right with the left, the conservatives with the radicals, to reach a consensus, precarious though it may be in France.

To go against the grain, I might say that the French « silent majority » is either pro-American or unconcerned, anti-Americanism being mostly expressed by vocal minorities among the intelligentsia, the media, and Parisian political circles.

In the 50s, humorist George Mikes surmised that Queen Victoria was still alive and well in British minds, especially when he read Punch magazine. Mark Twain once remarked that if a duke's dog ever caught a head-cold, the press of the French Republic would make it a front-page story. France has never quite recovered from the loss of Louis XIV, the Sun King. It also misses the aura of Napoleon's empire. Yet France was bled white after the wars waged by the absolute monarch and the « Corsican ogre. » Succeeding regimes often brought disillusion and skepticism, as if the country were doomed to waver between anarchy and despotism.

The impact of Americanization was first felt in 1917 when the « Dough-boys » saved France from chaos. They were acclaimed by millions of lowbrow men and women, some of whom had marveled at Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in Paris even before the war. In the « Roaring Twenties,» new icons such as the flapper-girl, Mae West, Douglas Fairbanks, and Rudolph Valentino emancipated youngsters from strict bourgeois morality. In compensation for its loss at home, the «Lost Generation» writers like Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald enjoyed booze in Montparnasse during the Prohibition era.

In 1944, while enraptured French crowds were welcoming their liberators once more, after four years of German occupation, dispassionate observers could also notice that the GIs brought in their wake the paraphernalia of the American way of life. It marked the beginning of a steady Americanization of a long-frustrated country. With singers Maurice Chevalier, Edith Piaf, Charles Trenet, and Yves Montand, jazz had been popular in occupied France among German troops always eager to enjoy the so-called «Gay Paris». By the late 40s, bebop became the musical support of existentialist folklore at Saint Germain des Prés, while graffiti in suburban backstreets relentlessly denounced Yankee imperialism. Gradually, pulp fiction, Hollywood westerns, film noirs, musical comedies, Louis Armstrong, Jerry Lewis, and Marilyn Monroe established the United States as *the* popular culture model for the new generations. This challenge did not fail to arouse mixed feelings, but few French observers, whether high brow or low, realized how paradoxical their attitudes might be toward the alteration of national tastes and habits. The amount of American productions flooding the French market also made it a formidable task to evaluate the response of the general public. School textbooks still taught in their first pages that our ancestor was Vercingetorix, the chief of the Gauls, a native Celtic people who had defeated Julius Caesar. But a disgruntled commentator happened one day to lament over the French youth's habit to recognize John Wayne as their *true* ancestor.

Mixed Feelings

French intellectuals who visited the United States privately succumbed to the lure of New York City, although they openly resented materialistic capitalism. They were both fascinated and repulsed by skyscrapers and suburban housing. Over the years, Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre, Maoist Philippe Sollers and cosmopolitan Julia Kristeva, analyzed the American landscape in terms of «vertiginous verticality» and depressing

horizontality. Hip-philosopher Bernard Henry Levy titled his recent book *Vertigo* when he painstakingly tried to emulate Alexis de Tocqueville.

After Hollywood movies had monopolized French screens for decades, the dumping of U.S. TV series on the French market made new American stars and «People» familiar to viewers who discovered in *Dallas*, for instance, that wine could be drunk by the glass in restaurants. They likewise wondered why a rickety old Peugeot 403 looked so bizarre in *Columbo's* Los Angeles. In the nineteenth century, Mark Twain had made fun of the Southern planters who picked medieval-sounding names like Roxana for their children, after Walter Scott's historical novels. A decade ago, French kids were named John Ross or Sue Ellen. Back in the 80s while in Tahiti, I saw fishermen rush back in their dug-out canoes from the coral reef to watch *Dallas* at home in the evenings. By the early 90s, Sylvester Stallone was awarded the title of «Chevalier des Arts et Lettres» for his outstanding contribution to arts and humanities. The Minister of Culture was Jack Lang, a dashing Socialist whose onslaught, while he was in Cancun, against cultural imperialism had been broadcast worldwide. Yet he had previously attracted *The Living Theatre* and the *Bread and Puppet Theatre* to promote the counterculture at his provincial festival, which was funded by a right-wing government. Meanwhile, the sophisticated Crazy Horse Saloon was making the Folie Bergeres look obsolete.

Today, trash is recycled into avant-garde culture by the happy few who make the headlines in magazines and dominate the talk-show circuit. French «Haute couture» has had a fashion show on the premises of the Communist Party headquarters in Paris, but also maintains luxurious stores on Fifth Avenue. Master-minded by the entourage of left-wing director Bertrand Tavernier, the Cannes Film Festival has celebrated Michael Moore as a kind of poet-laureate of protest. Movie stars appear every day in TV commercials to advise French women on cosmetics. Andy McDowell solves mid-life crises, and Jane Fonda provides comfort to the elderly. George Clooney's fans can brush-up on their English with his famous quip: «What else?» Last week, Pamela Anderson received a red-carpet treatment. She has become an icon for French plastic-surgery practitioners. A few days ago, within a few minutes of each other on prime-time TV, Pope Benedict was seen in Lourdes to exhort the faithful to be virtuous, and Madonna was advertising her movie *Filth and Wisdom* from Rome.

The overwhelming presence of transplanted U.S. popular culture has often served as an argument by the French against cultural imperialism, as if «high-brow» American culture were non-existent. Sartre stated he preferred the comfort of the Saint Germain des Pres

bistros to the cliff-hanging nightmares of Fifth Avenue. Simone de Beauvoir, at least, sought refuge in the arms of subversive writer Nelson Algren to recover from her culture-shock. In the past, Poe and Faulkner had been honored by such prominent authors as Baudelaire and Malraux. In a memorable issue of *Tel Quel* in 1977, Philippe Sollers brushed aside such opinions by stating, «There is no great American literature today.» However, he did acknowledge that visiting the United States did not necessarily compare to *A Journey to the End of the Night (Voyage au bout de la nuit)*, thus alluding to Louis Ferdinand Celine's gruesome narrative about the underworld. For Sollers and Kristeva, Americans, who never really «grew up,» only gave utterance to their sensations rather than to their ill-conceived ideas.

It thus belonged to the French intellectual to help such Americans become articulate. In a way, Sollers's critique was prophetic. For several decades after the 60s, a single generation of French scholars was committed to the «conquest» of the West. Their earlier background had been restricted to the neighborhood of the Pantheon, but they were soon to reign over literary theory on American campuses. Will deconstructionism outlive Foucault, Bourdieu, Deleuze, Derrida, and Althusser? Did they «Frenchify» American academic criticism? Were they not «Americanized» themselves? It is a burning issue beyond my scope. Anyway, keep in mind that Foucault annointed the Ayatolla Khomeini as a «mystic saint.» However, and in contrast, Michel Serres and Rene Girard never seemed to bite the hand that fed them .

«Les Americains sont de grands enfants » is a stock phrase not only among « Franchouillards » (dumb, chauvinistic Frenchmen), but also among a self-proclaimed intellectual elite. In the late 80s, French culture seemed to be in jeopardy. When Euro-Disney opened, stage director Ariane Mouchkine, a close friend of Helen Cixous, called it a «cultural Chernobyl.» Meanwhile, the Communists once more deplored the «Coca-colonization» of the French territory. On the front page of *L'Humanité*, the Party's daily, a full page picture of Uncle Scrooge was intended to reflect ruthless capitalist exploitation. On the other hand, French bookstores have always been richly supplied with the works of Philip Roth, Jim Harrison, James Ellroy, Toni Morrison, and Thomas Pynchon, among many others. Many a French reader admits that those books give the public a breath of fresh air, compared to the stuffy atmosphere of some contemporary French, self-centered narratives derived from mental masturbation.

Past and Present : From the Noble Savage to the Hippie

It is true that the French public has long been attracted to Native Americans and African-Americans. It goes along with the enthusiasm for any form of counter-culture, ambiguous though it may be. In the 60s, sociologist Edgar Morin, a staunch Marxist, exulted at finding the freedom enjoyed by students on the campus of the University of California at La Jolla. Almost simultaneously, philosopher Jean François Revel lionized the hippies in his book *Ni Marx ni Jesus*. Clearly, it has long been a habit with the French to idealize the underprivileged, the underdog, and the «loser» at home and abroad. («Loser» is almost invariably misspelled «looser» in the French press). In the Ancien Regime before the Revolution, compassion and condescension were often combined to serve personal prestige in the name of humanism. The elite despised the French peasant, but idolized the so-called «noble savage.» Aristocrats at the court of Louis XVI loved to host a «hermit» and show him around. Ben Franklin loved to impersonate the enlightened backwoodsman who was in love with the coquettes.

The myth of the «natural man» was conveyed by trendy philosophers like Jean Jacques Rousseau, and French aristocrats loved to exhibit Native Americans in their households. The «sauvages» were thus brought from New France to the Versailles Court as tokens of upper-class open-mindedness and exotic leanings. Narratives about the wilderness were indeed thrilling in sophisticated salons litteraires. Yet ever since the mid-eighteenth century, and with the publication of Buffon's *Natural History*, the French intelligentsia had been voicing rumors about precocious Americans who literally collapsed physically and mentally by middle-age. Once, Franklin delighted in refuting such arguments on premature senility in his home country by resorting to a practical joke. He invited Abbé Raynal to dinner with an equal number of Frenchmen and Americans. The priest eloquently developed his theory of the «degeneracy» of men and animals in America. Meanwhile, Franklin noticed that the Americans were sitting on one side of the table, and the French on the other. He playfully asked his guests to stand up to see on which «side» nature had really «degenerated.» It so happened that the Americans were particularly tall, and the French were very short. Raynal himself, who was “a mere shrimp,” in Jefferson's own words, readily admitted exceptions to the rule, which allowed him to remain seated by Franklin, another American six-footer. Incidentally, Bonaparte was about a foot shorter than Jefferson.

By the late nineteenth-century, progress in America appeared disturbing to the French because the economic, social, racial, and cultural factors at work in U.S. society appeared to be dangerously dynamic. The French «racial theorists» distinguished the Anglo-Saxon peoples from the Germanic peoples, who were said to be fierce but community-minded. In contrast, Anglo-Saxons combined the Germanic vitality with an anti-social devotion to individualism. Such traits, they claimed, resulted in harsh competition and a «survival of the fittest» mentality at the cost of solidarity. In fact, the French elite has always resented the rise of the common man and preserved a strict caste system. Nepotism is still the rule among the ruling classes, and it now affects the media and mass culture. Meanwhile, the Communists and Socialists have tried to stubbornly debunk the myth of the «self-made man,» which they consider as a disaster for the working class.

In the early twentieth-century, bourgeois French kids learned German at school instead of English. Being complex languages, German and Latin appealed to smart youngsters whose parents were able to give them help with reciting elaborate declensions. Such was the case with the education of several past presidents of the Republic.

The left-wing majority that had emerged after voting at the time of the Popular Front in 1936 gave full power to Marshall Petain in June 1940 to surrender to the German troops and for him to become Chief of State under Nazi rule. The Non-Aggression Pact signed by Germany and the Soviet Union had been strongly supported by the French Communists. In 1942, the Paris police actively participated in the round up of Jewish families, who were sent to concentration camps. Once they hastily joined in the liberation of Paris, however, previous collaborators with the enemy did not fail to overemphasize their role in the «Resistance,» but only to save their own skins. To form a government in the aftermath of World War II, General de Gaulle was faced with a Communist Party that gathered 25% of the votes in general elections. To ward-off the threat of a popular democracy, he enlisted the Communists in a coalition that also included tycoons who had prospered during the war. De Gaulle granted long-term privileges to radical unions in education, research, transport, and energy, so any nation-wide strike could endanger the economy, and any demonstration could degenerate into riots and discredit the government. De Gaulle also relied on the Communists' lip-service agreement to support his foreign policy. After his resignation in 1946, France cast its lot with America through NATO, but Communist opposition to the U.S. remained vocal in the media.

Ironically, Cold War culture allowed for left-wing interpretations of Hollywood movies. George Sadoul, a Marxist film critic, saw the harsh struggle of the classes in John Ford's

westerns. Notably, the spy movie *Pick-Up on South Street* was artfully dubbed so that the microfilms smuggled to the Soviet Union in the original were transformed into capsules of narcotics in the French version, thus suggesting American criminality. In the French press, McCarthy's witch-hunt was portrayed as indicative of a sham democracy and a totalitarian regime, which made the Moscow trials appear benign in comparison. Self-styled «humanist» French travelers to the States longed to «get their kicks» along Route 66 by stopping at sordid-looking filling stations and being served by an overweight, preferably racist, unshaven redneck. From the French perspective, America was governed by a dictatorship of millionaires and by a rabble of uncouth thugs. Called back to power in 1958 by a coup d'état of generals to avoid the loss of Algeria to rebels, De Gaulle could not openly antagonize nationalistic urges and prejudices. America was judged by turns bellicose and weak, powerful and unreliable. Yet John and Jackie Kennedy were idolized in Paris during their state visit there.

Anti-Americanism as a Negative Passion

Over the years, anti-Americanism has become a negative passion. It may be partly ascribed to what is known as «la pensee unique» (one-way thinking), which has generated a giddy feeling of national righteousness among the French. It is the exact opposite of Cartesian dialectics. It has varied in scope and degree in relation to the intellectual level of the censors and in keeping with the political context of the times. French parties and factions may by turns line up with Russia, China, and Cuba, and consider the United States as the principal danger to world peace. «Americanophobia» still targets unbridled capitalism, the cult of material success, the obsession with hegemony, and the ignorance of foreign interest, as exemplified in the U.S. rejection of the Kyoto Protocol. It likewise denounces intolerance, social injustice, racial discrimination, corruption, and anti-intellectualism. Capitalism is seen as the monstrous offspring of brutal Darwinism and smug Puritan rhetoric.

The Gallic libertine anti-clerical tradition is at odds with American religious attitudes, which are often confused in the French mindset with Victorian self-righteousness. France has always been puzzled by the millennial temper of American religion. Our school books hold that Joan of Arc claimed she had heard voices calling her from Heaven to oust the English occupants. But deep-rooted rationalism is certainly at odds with mysticism.

Oppressive Puritanism is another argument to set-off French permissiveness against the alleged inhibitions, frustrations, and perversions derived from the fascination with the forbidden fruit. In relation to the Monica Lewinsky case, or rather, affair, French headlines read, « Hell is American,» «The Return of the Inquisition,» and «The Heretics Hunted down.» President Mitterrand's mistress and his daughter born of adultery were at his funeral, side by side with his widow. Mark Twain said that «A Frenchman's house is where another man's wife lives.» Today, our first lady, a former topless-model, is now a pop singer. Her latest hit is titled «You Are My Dope,» most likely addressed to her husband. The pictures of her as a cover girl in the nude are freely circulated on the Internet.

Age-old antagonism may still be harmful, even when the gap between America and France should be closed out of sheer necessity. As a high school student, I was sometimes nurtured on Marxist precepts by history teachers who opposed the «fascist war-mongers of the Pentagon» to the «glorious marshalls of the Red Army.» Later, I had to almost justify my status in «American Studies» in order to question and counter assumptions such as «The United States has no History» and «It is not a civilization.» So, I could have ended up as a professor of nothing.

In the 70s, quite unexpectedly, I was recommended by my university to spend a year at the CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research) to complete a research project. From Romanian Studies to Balkan Studies, the whole spectrum of countries/regions was covered within the institution, but the CNRS had no department in English and American Studies. So, they eventually found a niche for me in «General Linguistics.»

In 2004, Maurice Druon, one of the most prestigious pundits of the Academie Française, wrote an article about America's «blind strategies in foreign affairs» in *Le Figaro*, a Conservative daily. For him, the treasures of world culture were buried in the sands of oblivion by the American ignoramus who knew nothing about Pericles, Julius Caesar, and Shakespeare.

Shortly after 9/11, Emmanuel Todd published *After the Empire: The Breakdown of the American Order*. As typical Marxist propaganda, this evaluation of life in «benighted» America predicted a tide of violent uprisings—ironically, what happens time and again around Paris, Lyon, and Strasbourg. And, when riots do erupt in French suburbs, the press headlines read, «La Seine Saint Denis becomes Chicago.» If there is a manhunt in a remote region of the Alps, it is said to look like a «posse» in an American western. When a mall is looted in the business district of the Defense, the area is likened to the Bronx. Every time I return from the United States, someone asks me how many «losers» I have seen

dying in the gutters. My next door neighbor thinks that in any American city, if you walk across a street to buy a paper, you have to be covered to keep from being shot.

How seriously do people in France cling to the beliefs that the United States is a «rogue state»? Well, our own bankers and traders are no guardian angels, either. In fact, the public often ascribes to American hegemony what really pertains to globalisation and corporate power in general. Between the media and the average French citizen, the credibility gap has dangerously-widened in recent decades. The heralds of the «pensee unique» claimed that a third of the French public expressed to pollsters a preference for Saddam's victory after the U.S. invasion of Iraq. But who could truly believe that America is heading for a fascist regime? Any U.S. citizen holding that the government is hell also knows that every four years, a new elected majority will emerge from the ballot-boxes, unlike in France. It is of course presumptuous to give lessons in democracy to the United States when you know that 25% of the French voters may go to extremes in their political allegiances at any time. The extremist Le Pen was in a run-off against Chirac in the presidential election six years ago. Chirac won, but his majority stretched across the political horizon, from the right through the Socialists. The heritage of the left was preserved with an expanding, though selective, welfare state, the thirty-five hours' work week, political lethargy, and erratic attitudes toward United States' diplomacy. Divisions inside both the left and the right also amounted to an ultimate rejection of the European Union. The Federation has little in common with the United States. 23 languages are spoken in the Brussels' «Tower of Babel.» It is assumed that technocrats have taken over from politicians. Some observers even suspect the former of planning to ban fishing in rivers because maggots are prone to stress when serving as bait !

In recent days, columnists have predicted that American capitalism would not survive its own contradictions, a statement that would have pleased Stalin.

9/11

A few days after the shock of 9/11, the French media began to comment on the lessons of history given to a nation that had never suffered and thought itself invulnerable. No mention was ever made, of course, of the English troops that set fire to the U.S. Capitol in the War of 1812, of the 600,000 dead in the Civil War, of Pearl Harbor, and the military cemeteries in France after two world wars. As a token of her gratitude, Oscar-winning Marion Cotillard resorted to the «conspiracy theory» to support Hollywood's trendy pacifist

poses. She recently stated that no plane had ever crashed into the Twin Towers. She may have been tempted to emulate Edith Piaf, who played with fire during the German occupation with her tours across the Rhine. *L'effroyante imposture* by Thierry Meyssan, translated as *The Big Lie*, postulates that 9/11 was a plot by the FBI and other sinister agents. No airplane ever crashed into the Pentagon, and the Jews, he claims, were advised in advance to avoid the World Trade Center on that day. Besides, the upsurge of paranoid, anti-Semitic campaigns gratified an enormous public. The book remained number one on the best-seller lists for many weeks. In his comments on 9/11, sociologist Jean Baudrillard was overjoyed in seeing a global superpower destroyed. Talking of the terrorists, he said, «ultimately, they were the ones who did it, but we were the ones who wanted it.» But the late Baudrillard enjoyed far more prestige overseas than he ever did on French territory. His cynical, provocative, anarchistic stand was part and parcel of a sophisticated rhetorical training, which teaches how to be brilliantly convincing upon request, even though you do not believe at all in what you assert forcefully.

The Issue of Globalization

To return to America's impending doom, how can such a society as the United States, allegedly plagued with so many evils, be so attractive to the poor and the oppressed after two centuries? Oblivious to Bartoldi's homage with the Statue of Liberty, French anti-Americanism can seem to thrive on any opportunity. Americans are castigated for their isolationism if they ignore the rest of the world. If they commit themselves to a foreign cause, their interventionism is denounced. Should they promote free trade, they are enslaved to mercantile interests. If they raise taxes on imports, their archaic protectionism is stigmatized. Should they lavish dollars on bankrupt countries, it is to save the oligarchy of corporations at home. If they stop funding international institutions, their arrogant selfishness is incriminated. It is thus taken for granted that their motivations are impure, their policies unethical, and their flaunted good-faith dubious. As a symptom of a neurosis, such anti-Americanism reveals that having lost part of its influence, France has had to conceal its frustration by resorting to the language of appeasement, thus entertaining the illusion that the world will soon reach everlasting peace, whereas the United States, it holds, is entangled in a Manichean predicament and unable to transcend history. Multilateralism screens domestic ideological inconsistencies. Diverse factions have capitalized on a growing opposition to globalization. The fear of uprisings has made the body politic wary of

incalculable consequences if police repression causes heavy casualties among the crowds during demonstrations and riots. The Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire and hard-line ecologists form a tumultuous anti-capitalist coalition. They hope to enlist radical ethnic minorities to be substituted for aging working-class militants, who are now mostly preoccupied with their retirement pensions. To court Islamist groups, they naturally set-aside the idea that religion is the «opiate of the masses.» The spearhead of the movement is Jose Bove, an expert in communication who ran for president last year and obtained hardly two per cent of the vote. In his youth, his family had moved to Berkeley, where his father worked as a scientist. In the 70s, Bove left the Latin Quarter in Paris and settled on the Larzac Plateau in the south of France to fight government plans to turn the area into an army base. He has now the look of Asteryx, a popular comic-strip character in France. He became a Gallic folk hero when the U.S. imposed a heavy import duty on Roquefort cheese. Bove and his comrades demolished a McDonald's restaurant in Millau, and later vandalized genetically-modified crops. He also took the offensive against hormone-treated American beef, the symbol of junk-food, or «malbouffe.» With a small farmer's confederation, he led a crusade against the evils of U.S.-sponsored globalization trade, and he was acclaimed at the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle.

Always receiving generous media coverage, Bove was jailed for three weeks before receiving bail. He is protected by right-wing governments because he can help split votes on the left in any major election. Our current Minister of the Environment, the glamorous daughter of a former ambassador to the United States, gives him kisses in public to show her goodwill.

Across the political spectrum, former Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, whose romantic hair-style evokes Chateaubriand, worships at the altar of French grandeur as embodied in history's charismatic great men. In 2003, he posed in the United Nations as the great defender of reason, prudence, and international law against an arrogant, fool-hardy America. In a flamboyant biography, Villepin treats Napoleon as a «superman» whose «ultimate defeat gleams with the aura of victory.» Our latter-day Carlyle longs for an era of imperial action, energy, tragedy, and crisis, as if world tyrants still stood in awe of France. His objection to the United States stemmed not from a pragmatic strategy, but from the determination to occupy the international limelight and steal the show.

After the collapse of Soviet Communism, Marxist ideas were appropriated and recycled by Europeans. A consensus arose out of the recognition that a spirit of ruefulness or repentance was needed to establish a new order. But after 9/11, it appeared to the United

States that such global perfection was hardly at hand. Therefore, to French Marxists, American ideology was held to be averse to the peaceful world that would otherwise prevail. I do not agree with Berman, however, who says that anti-Americanism, from a psychoanalytical perspective, owes something to the scale of France's debt to America and that such unpayable debts can only arouse unappeasable resentment.

Prospects

American culture radiates outward and pulls inward. France eats, listens, dresses, and dances American. Not only is there the lure of pop culture, but also the magnet of American universities. Some of my staunchest Marxist colleagues dream of sending their kids to Harvard or Berkeley. Philippe Roger has published an admirably documented book, *The American Enemy*, in which he recaptures the major phases of the anti-American periods in French history. It remains to devote a study to the evaluation of Americanization in France after half a century, which has led to universal values under the aegis of pop culture.

«Conspicuous consumption,» the «aspirin age,» the shopping center, the counter-culture, and the «me-generation» have probably concurred to make our French icons seem sometimes archaic. Perhaps Madame Bovary would have never committed suicide had she been given the opportunity to practice aerobics or be on Prozac. La Dame aux Camelias (the Traviata) would have found cough syrups in TV commercials, and Sarah Bernard would have removed the whalebone from her corset. It would have been a small step for France, but a giant leap for Playtex.

With the Fast-train, Nouvelle cuisine, the French paradox, and Foie gras, we may still have something to offer. In the future, joint efforts may ultimately combine «Joie de vivre» with «the Pursuit of happiness.» In such critical times, the United States and France might also be inspired by Franklin's warning during the American Revolution, when he made it clear that if his compatriots did not hang together, they would certainly hang separately.