Contents
Issues Published in 2007

ABSTRACT: This paper addresses the influence of the American School at the Düsseldorf Academy of Arts on American history painting in the 1840s and 1850s, most prominently represented by the German-American painter Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze (1816-1868). By focusing on Leutze's artistic production in the decade prior to his famous *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851), particularly the Columbus series, I will discuss the emergence of an American style of history painting in a transatlantic context, which did not intend to merely represent but to *interpret history*. After all, many well-known American painters worked in Düsseldorf, most of them directly with Leutze. While Leutze's techniques were largely influenced by the Düsseldorf Academy, his themes, socio-cultural agendas, and political ideologies were clearly American. Thus, on the level of method, Leutze employed the theatricality and performativity of the "living images" practiced by the Düsseldorf theater. On the level of content, however, Leutze projected his idea of American greatness into the future, even though many of his images dealt with Euro-American themes. This blend turned the German-American painter into one of the most important transatlantic artistic figures of the mid-nineteenth century.

ABSTRACT: Asher B. Durand's painting *Kindred Spirits* (1849) is probably his most well-known work. As the embodiment of the artistic principles of the nineteenth-century American landscapists, much has been made of this painterly tribute to

Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School. Yet, if we insert it into the peripatetic tradition, it yields fruitful results in that it more fully illuminates the simultaneously depicted peripatetic stations of "Knowledge" and "Arrival," as well as the nineteenth-century dialogue between the sister arts of writing and painting. It is also most remarkable for the size of the portrayed protagonists in the painting. In fact, it is one of the few canvases of the Hudson River School that can vie in its figures' size with C. David Friedrich's famous *Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* (ca. 1817), its European counterpart, as to the walk in painting. A brief summary about the peripatetic tradition, its poetic stations, and the iconography of the act of walking in painting will precede the comparison of the two canvases. Underlying the exploration of the parallels and differences of the walk in the New and the Old World are the questions as to the relationship between man and nature as well as the inherent landscape aesthetics.

BETTINA FRIEDL

"The Hybrid Art of Fashion Photography: American Photographers in Post-World War II Europe"

ABSTRACT: The distinction between art photography and fashion photography was long regarded as significant and necessary to protect 'serious' photography from fashion's odium. Like authors writing for Hollywood, 'serious' photographers risked their respectability if they worked for one of the major fashion journals and thus carefully avoided being labeled 'fashion photographers.' Yet early on, major American photographers—Edward Steichen, Man Ray, Clifford Coffin, Irving Penn, Richard Avedon, and William Klein among them—spent years abroad working for international fashion journals, producing images that emphasized the fashionable and transitory quality of dress and glamour while creating photographs of timeless beauty and aesthetic value. This paper will adopt a phenomenological, descriptive approach in order to focus on the visual inventiveness of American photographers in transforming European fashion into images of perfection while at the same time transgressing accepted generic boundaries.

CHRISTOF DECKER

"'Irony is a Cheap Shot': Robert Altman, Luis Buñuel, and the Maneuvers of Comic Deconstruction"

ABSTRACT: In 2006, the year of his death, Robert Altman received an Honorary Academy Award for his lifetime achievement. Despite this belated recognition by the Hollywood establishment, his films since the late 1960s have been regarded as highly critical and aesthetically complex forms of interrogating American culture and society. Indeed, Altman was one of the last active auteurs from the era of the New Hollywood Cinema who had begun their careers by deconstructing Hollywood formulas and American myths. Focusing on his early work and, in particular, on aspects of the comic, this essay examines how

Altman's films shaped, and complicated, what has been called his democratic aesthetic. By juxtaposing Altman with the late work of Luis Buñuel, I will argue that a crucial, if ambiguous, achievement of the American art cinema lies in its interrelation of comic deconstruction and performative self-creation.

JOHANNES VÖLZ

"The Index and Its Vicissitudes: Hyperrealism from Richard Estes to Andreas Gursky"

ABSTRACT: Comparing the high-precision paintings of the photorealist Richard Estes with the large-scale photographs of Andreas Gursky opens up a view on the transatlantic dynamic of hyperrealism that has hitherto gone almost completely unnoticed. While both artists share a strong interest in hyperrealist aesthetics, contrasting Estes with Gursky also allows us to see how this aesthetic underwent a transformation as it traveled from American photorealist painting to German Becher-circle photography. Most obviously, the two œuvres differ regarding imagery: The majority of Estes's paintings show cityscapes derived from a specifically American iconography, whereas Gursky's works emphasize the topos of worldwide circulation. On a deeper level, both artists differ in their assessment of indexicality. Through his painterly approximation of the photographic look, Estes suggests that photography, despite or even because of its indexicality, fails to provide representations that both look and *feel* realistic—a shortcoming arguably alleviated by photorealist painting. While Estes thereby questions the relevance of indexicality for realistic representation, Gursky casts the index itself into doubt by digitally manipulating his conventional photographs. Surprisingly, however, this does not simply transport Gursky's semi-digital photography into the realm of the fictional usually ascribed to painting. Rather, the undecidable status of his photographs' indexicality, in combination with his move towards abstraction, creates a new sense of representational truth. Estes and Gursky thus challenge the critical discourse on the index of the last thirty years.

PETER SCHNECK

"'To See Things Before Other People See Them': Don DeLillo's Visual Poetics"

ABSTRACT: Don DeLillo's fascination with images in general and visual art in particular has been noted by many readers and critics. Especially in regard to the dominant role of modern media in DeLillo's fiction—from photography, film and television to the computer—this obvious obsession with contemporary American visual culture has often been interpreted as a fundamental critique of the global culture of media images. However, a more thoughtful investigation at DeLillo's specific use of images reveals that his attitude towards visual culture is much more complex, both highly ambivalent and highly self-reflexive. For while the

author is indeed wary of the powerful cultural effects of the image, DeLillo also tries to tap into this power by carefully integrating the presentation of imagery from various sources into his own highly visual poetics. What characterizes the visual strategies in DeLillo's writing most is the attempt to expand the effect and function of literary descriptions of visual representations—i.e. what is commonly called ekphrasis— through the convergence of contrasting visual formats. The article discusses specific instances of DeLillo's visual poetics which are built on the description of paintings, while giving particular attention to the contrast between their original European iconographic tradition and DeLillo's revisualization in the context of American culture.

LAURA BIEGER

"Transatlantic Landscapes and Living Images: 'Marlboro Country' Revisited"

ABSTRACT: "A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing surroundings. This is not to say," as Denis Cosgove and Stephen Daniels point out, "that landscapes are immaterial. They may be represented in a variety of materials and on many surfaces—in paint on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone, water and vegetation of the ground". Thus a landscape is always both 'image' and 'picture,' and as such also bound to a specific site and an artistic genre. The iconography of 'Marlboro Country,' which will serve as my starting point as well as the lens to look at the American western landscape is not only a typical representative of this conceptual ambiguity of landscape, but it is also one that stands out because of what W.J.T. Mitchell would call its lasting 'vitality.' Conceived in the early nineteenth century the American western landscape, which has by now been so efficiently condensed into the familiar Marlboro advertising images, initially seemed 'unspeakable' to its European explorers. Applying Mitchell's approach of 'found objects' and 'living images' this paper revisits instances of the evolution of its imagery in textual and visual accounts of the nineteenth century and traces a shift from the 'object found' gaining recognition by its picturesque visualization to the baroque 'object lost' of wilderness nostalgia which we find still at work in the visual rhetoric of the Marlboro campaigns today.

Amst 52.2 (2007)

NORBERT CAMPAGNA

"Virtue in Tocqueville's America"

ABSTRACT: Some liberals think that free institutions will

dispense those benefiting from them to display political or civic virtue. Tocqueville does not share this view. In this contribution I want to discuss the way Tocqueville deals with the problems one meets when maintaining, on the one hand, that free institutions need politically virtuous people and, on the other, that democratic individuals are not politically virtuous. As will be shown, Tocqueville tries to solve the problem by relying on two mental mechanisms—believing and forgetting—and on participatory mechanisms. Democratic man must, while participating politically, believe that one can participate for other than self-centered reasons and sometimes forget that his reasons are unselfish. Though this kind of believing and forgetting may help us preserve liberty in peaceful times, it may be doubted that they will also be sufficient when troubled times will demand that the individual sacrifice his life for the free republic.

Thomas Clark

"'The American Democrat' Reads *Democracy in America*: Cooper and Tocqueville in the Transatlantic Hall of Mirrors"

ABSTRACT: Tocqueville and Cooper have traditionally been seen as ideological brothers in arms, but the relationship between their political theories is far more complex. Both proceed from the problem of preserving liberty by containing the excesses of mass democracy, but their positions within Atlantic and national discourses on liberty and equality engender diverging definitions, perceptions, and solutions concerning American government and democracy. From a postcolonial perspective, Cooper rejects Tocqueville and his authority as a representation of the European imperial gaze as well as the colonized American mind. As a classical republican Cooper defines democracy as a society based on the natural principles of equal rights and social inequality, in which order is contingent upon the deference of the many to a natural aristocracy of virtue and talent. This model collides with Tocqueville's understanding of democracy as homogenous equality, which requires completely new means of checking the threat of majority tyranny. While Cooper's assessment of American inequality was empirically more accurate, Tocqueville had a better understanding of the implications of democratic modernity, though his popularity with Americans, as Cooper partly understood, resulted from the possibility of reading his study as a long-awaited European endorsement of American democracy.

Galia Benziman

"'Try Not to Love such a Country': The Americanization of Sholom Aleichem's Yiddish Text"

ABSTRACT: *Mottel the Cantor's Son* (1907, 1916), one of the most popular Yiddish novels of the twentieth century, is a story of emigration. As such, it is preoccupied with cross-cultural,

cross-national, inter-religious, and inter-lingual relations. Aspiring to move from one geographical and cultural setting to another—from the poverty-stricken Eastern-European Jewish town to the promisingly rich and excitingly modern "New World" of North America—the characters, and to some extent also their author, Sholom Aleichem, are busy disparaging their former world and idealizing the new. The translation of the novel into English by Tamara Kahana (published 1953) augments this dynamics in its attempt to assimilate the work to the American canon and reduce its Jewishness. Kahana, being both a Jewish immigrant herself and the author's grandchild, is an involved translator. Rather than an act of mediation and communication, her strategy of translation appears to be an act of appropriation, a rewriting whereby the otherness of the source text is erased. At issue here—for all three agencies that deliver Mottel's story to us (the narrator Mottel, the authorial voice, and the translator)—is an ideal of identity that involves a break with the past. For Mottel and for Sholom Aleichem this ideal is America and the formation of an assimilated American identity; for Kahana it is a perfectly accessible Americanized story. However, in both the original text and in its translation, this ideal is continually, subtly subverted even as it is strenuously articulated and sought.

JULIA FOULKES

"The Other West Side Story: Urbanization and the Arts Meet at Lincoln Center"

ABSTRACT: When discussions began about a new performing arts center in Manhattan in the mid-1950s, philanthropists, impresarios, artistic directors, and educators welcomed the opportunity to broaden the audience for the arts. The idea was to go from "class" to "mass," as Edgar B. Young, the overseer of the project, put it. But most agree that Lincoln Center fell far short of that goal and, instead, re-inscribed the elitism of the high arts in its monumental architecture, conventional programming, and international rather than local gaze. This paper seeks to explore fissures in the monumentality of Lincoln Center by aligning indoor spaces alongside outdoor ones, particularly by adding an attention to spatial patterns and the performances inside the theaters to the more often viewed architecture and demographic changes of the neighborhood. It is an attempt to tie these stages—the setting of some of the grandest performances in the world—to the surrounding streets to reveal the defining features of the intertwining of the arts and urbanization in the post-World War II era that re-made American cities into "culture cities."

KATHARINA ERHARD and
KARSTEN FITZ

"Publications in American Studies from German-Speaking Countries, 2006"

Amst 52.3 (2007)	Teaching American Studies in the Twenty-First Century
	GERHARD BACH and JÜRGEN DONNERSTAG - Guest Editors

GERHARD BACH and JÜRGEN DONNERSTAG	"Introduction: Teaching American Studies in the Twenty-First Century"

MATTHIAS OPPERMANN	""Writing in 'that other space'": Digital Storytelling and the Scholarship of Teaching in American Studies"

ABSTRACT: This paper introduces the emerging 'scholarship of teaching and learning' as a movement that challenges the status of teaching in academic American Studies in the United States and offers tools for an assessment of pedagogies in the field. The disciplinary design of American Studies has changed noticeably since the 1960s, when critical pedagogy became highly influential with progressive educators. In the teaching of American Studies, this has led to new and revised curricula and the integration of new technologies. But the status of teaching remains unchanged. Scholarly teaching is not considered as problem-driven, serious intellectual work, and the notion of teaching and scholarship as two completely separate fields still prevails. Critical pedagogy has provided important theoretical guidelines for teaching, but it does not offer the tools we need to better understand where and how learning in American Studies courses takes place. Likewise, it fails to suggest how certain traditional or multimedia pedagogies are expressive of specific methods and agendas of knowledge production in American Studies. To reinvent critical pedagogy from within the field of academic American Studies, I suggest that we engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and Lee Shulman's notion of 'signature pedagogies' as a way to make teaching truly consonant with programmatic and methodological markers of the field. My formulation of the attributes of potential American Studies pedagogies offers a basis for the re-evaluation of traditional classroom practices. With a case study from the Visible Knowledge Project, I introduce digital storytelling as a potential pedagogical marker of American Studies which makes tacit knowledge about the conceptual and political agenda of our field visible to novice and expert learners. By moving from scholarly teaching towards a scholarship of teaching, we can come to an understanding of which emerging pedagogies best serve certain disciplinary dimensions, and how they need to be combined with other, different approaches.

GABRIELE LINKE   "Memory, Media, and Cultural Mediation"

ABSTRACT: Especially in times of political tensions, teachers need to intensify their efforts to explore new methods and themes for teaching American culture. The theme of memorialization offers a focus of study that is political, but not in a superficial, polarizing way. In 2004, the University of Wyoming at Laramie and the University of Rostock conducted a joint project on the politics of memory. Students in Rostock and Laramie investigated local history and its memorialization and presented their findings with the help of PowerPoint presentations in the virtual joint classroom. The project was intended to explore several issues. Firstly, with regard to contents it was assumed that, besides teaching its participants historical knowledge, a critical debate of selected issues in American history and American cultures of memory can also influence cultural awareness and tolerance positively, question stereotypes, and develop communicative skills. Secondly, transatlantic video conferences via Internet were tried out as a tool for cooperative and reciprocal intercultural learning. Thirdly, the integration of student-made PowerPoint presentations into video conferences was tested for feasibility. The analysis of excerpts from the video conferences illustrates what can be accomplished and what needs to be done to make transatlantic video conferences a success.

LAURENZ VOLKMANN   "Our 'Favorite American'—Teaching Michael Moore"

ABSTRACT: In recent years Michael Moore has become the ubiquitous favorite American of many Germans increasingly critical of the American way of life in general and the Bush administration in particular. This article delineates how Moore caters to common and well-established anti-American prejudices and sentiments, analyzing how he is perceived as an 'objective' and authentic transatlantic source of information by many (high school) students of English. It is shown why and how Germans appreciate his brand of 'America bashing,' but also how his documentaries can be used in the EFL classroom to further media competencies and intercultural learning. Researching and discussing the 'Moore phenomenon,' students can attain a critical stance towards ideologically biased and seemingly 'objective' images of the United States.

WOLFGANG HALLET   "Close Reading and Wide Reading: Teaching Literature and Cultural History in a Unit on Philip K. Dick's 'Minority Report'"

ABSTRACT: This article argues that the common practice of reading literary texts in the foreign language (FL) classroom almost always implies the exclusion of the cultural dimension of the text. The latter is more or less treated as an extra-textual

phenomenon and reduced to factual information provided in annotations. Against this practice and with reference to new historicist, interdiscursive and intertextual approaches it is suggested that a literary text in the FL classroom be embedded in a network of texts. While co-reading them ('wide reading'), students are able to understand and interpret the literary text ('close reading') by discovering parallels and correspondences, allusions and recurring themes, notions and motifs as well as references to the cultural situation or issues. The article presents an empirical example from the FL classroom that uses Philip K. Dick's story "Minority Report" to illustrate how FL students can explore the interrelatedness of the literary and the cultural text.

ANDREAS MÜLLER-HARTMANN

"Is Disney Safe for Kids?—Subtexts in Walt Disney's Animated Films"

ABSTRACT: This paper presents a teaching approach that allows for a critical reflection of the ideological subtexts of the Walt Disney Company's animated films in secondary school (grades 9-10). In a learner-centered approach popular culture texts form an important part of the EFL curriculum. It will be shown that the Walt Disney Company, one of the leading producers worldwide of popular culture texts, transports messages of American dominance as well as ethnic and gender stereotyping in their texts. The animated films of the Walt Disney Company especially warrant close scrutiny since they are central to the company's marketing concept of cross-merchandizing. Based on the concepts of multiliteracies (Cope and Kalantzis) and intertextuality (Hallet) a task-based teaching approach for the English foreign language classroom will be outlined and supported with examples for the two cartoon feature films *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988) and *The Rescuers Down Under* (1990).

KARSTEN FITZ and KLAUS-DIETER GROSS

"Native American Literature as a Transcultural and Multimedia Experience: Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*"

ABSTRACT: This article outlines a project on teaching Sherman Alexie's novel *Reservation Blues* (1992) in the EFL classroom as part of a transcultural and multimedia experience. It sets out from the stereotypical and backward-looking, popular (here: cinematic) constructions of Native Americans and contrasts these with Alexie's view of Native American realities past and present and his vision of how to survive against the claims of a predominant white environment. A discussion of a short story sketches out the complexities of present-day Indianness. The main part discusses in some detail how Alexie's novel sets cultural sensitivity (with a focus on music, storytelling, and religion) against the depressing real-life conditions to create a slightly optimistic blending of Indian, white, and black cultural

modes, enabling the main character to survive against the odds. This tendency is found again in the pop-style cross-over music of a CD that Alexie has produced on the poetic chapter openings of his novel, and in his 1998 movie, *Smoke Signals*, in which both topical elements and characters reappear, although in reshaped form. To Alexie, culture is a dynamic balancing act between cultural change and preservation. With regard to the perception of cultural 'others' in general and Native Americans in particular, this broadly contextualized and historicized transcultural and multimedia approach sensitizes students to the need for negotiating between their own internal and external cultural perspectives—a self-reflection crucial to the process of intercultural learning.

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JOE LOCKARD

"Justice Story's *Prigg* Decision and the Defeat of Freedom"

ABSTRACT: The essay compares the early anti-trafficking and antislavery rhetoric of United States Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story with his authorship of the 1842 *Prigg* decision returning a black woman, Margaret Morgan, and her children from Pennsylvania into slavery in Maryland. It argues that the contradiction between these two positions was muted due to judicial nationalism that bracketed personal and official opinions. There is an ideological line between Story's 1820 "Charge to the Maine Grand Jury" and the 1842 *Prigg* decision, one traced by the absence of active, cognizant black subjects. For Story, blacks represented a passive class without their own will, one requiring rescue from their enslaved situation by action of law. His concept of the rule of law provided a means to display white racial nobility while forging a constitutional vehicle for civilizational advance. In Story's nationalist jurisprudence, forceful assertion of federal authority, whether through suppression of piracy or slave-trading, was necessary to assure justice for the nation more than justice to individuals. Thus the refusal of witness and narratorial blindness at the heart of *Prigg* resulted from a fusing of sacrificial nationalism with a racial denial of citizenship and self-determining subjectivity for blacks.

MATTHIAS MAASS

"When Communication Fails: Spanish-American Crisis Diplomacy 1898"

ABSTRACT: The essay analyzes the relevance of the legal differences between two kinds of truces during the crisis diplomacy conducted between Washington and Madrid just prior to the Spanish-American War in 1898. Although the different

legal terms carried important nuances in meaning and with regard to their political implications, they were frequently used improperly. Such a lack of clarity and precision in the communication between the Spanish and U.S.-American sides aggregated and built up into a mutual misperception as to each other's *actual* (vis-à-vis the diplomatically *communicated*) objectives with regard to the Cuban insurgency. These legal differences affected U.S.-Spanish crisis diplomacy negatively, even if they by themselves neither caused the breakdown of crisis diplomacy nor the war itself. Rather, miscommunication and misperceptions contributed to the failure of the diplomatic efforts at averting the war; the essay will focus on this particular aspect of Spanish-American crisis diplomacy. Other factors were certainly also responsible for the failure to resolve the conflict between the United States and Spain peacefully—from the Yellow Press and public sentiment, humanitarian concerns and missionary ambitions to economic and business interests to Jingoism, military-strategic desires and the rising tide of American Imperialism—and these factors are not discounted. However, given the breadth of the subject, the essay will limit itself to one aspect, the struggle over the particular type of truce for Cuba and how this impacted Spanish-American crisis diplomacy.

Michael Wutz

"The Politics of (Post)modern Form: Tradition, Language, and Narrative Coherence in *Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*"

ABSTRACT: Robert Olen Butler has been charged with cultural ventriloquism and been given the restrictive label 'Vietnam War writer.' Rather than reading Butler's work from the perspective of any particular theoretical camp, I argue that *Good Scent from a Strange Mountain* (1992)—his Pulitzer-prize winning short story collection of Vietnamese immigrants living in the American diaspora—participates more broadly in the discourse of modern and contemporary literature. As a narrative practitioner Butler is not intent upon defining his writing through the trends of the academy, but instead allows theoretical and narrative concerns to emerge because they are a 'natural' and, aesthetically, fully integrated fit for his vision as a novelist. In part 1 of this essay, I argue that *Good Scent* demonstrates Butler's keen awareness of the postcolonial situation as it relates to the immigrant experience. In part 2, I advance that Butler's formal interest in representation suggests his affinity for the both modernist and postmodern concern with language, mediation, and signifying slippage. In the concluding part 3, I suggest that Butler's location within a more broadly twentieth-century tradition of short fiction is particularly visible in *Good Scent's* narrative cohesiveness, which blends modes of conventional realism with magical realism into a dissonant formal hybrid. The resulting narrative parallax encapsulates not only the cultural schizophrenia of the collection's inhabitants, but also the (finally, unresolvable) tension between their jarring modes of narrative experience that oscillate between political reality and dreamlike ideality. My

overall hope is to make a wide-ranging opening statement about Butler's superb though neglected collection that will lead to further scholarly dialogue.

Birgit Däwes

"On Contested Ground (Zero): Literature and the Transnational Challenge of Remembering 9/11"

ABSTRACT: The cultural memory of September 11, 2001 emerges in an overlap of national and transnational discourses. In light of the simulacral media spectacle of disaster, televised live and hypnotically repeated around the globe, desires for authenticity and re-enactment were as strong as they were difficult to meet. Literature, as a less immediate "technology of memory" (Marita Sturken), has only recently begun to enter the fields of tension between documentary and fictional, objective and sympathetic, and visual and textual modes of representation. In a comparative analysis of a French and an American approach, Frédéric Beigbeder's *Windows on the World* (2004) and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), this essay exemplarily examines two literary alternatives to hege(mne)monic narratives of the terrorist attacks. Despite their international trajectories, however, a closer look reveals that these novels offer fundamentally divergent solutions to questions of transnationalism. Outlining their specific political, aesthetic, and ethical agendas against the backdrop of commemoration, I will investigate the purposes to which both texts employ their innovative metamnemonic techniques—including storytelling, iconic layouts, photographs, and editorial intervention—and thus explore how literature may contribute to, or undermine, transnational modes of remembering September 11.

Karlfriedrich Herb and Oliver Hidalgo

"Once Upon a Time in America—Tocqueville on the Beginning of the End of History"

ABSTRACT: Many authors have already spoken about a presumed end of history. Optimists like Kant, Hegel, or Francis Fukuyama linked their detection of a historical *telos* with several unrealizable expectations. Pessimists like Rousseau tried to delay the termination of history as long as possible. Alexis de Tocqueville does not belong to either of these sides. His diagnosis refers to a kind of providence, which offers both optimistic and pessimistic visions of democracy. Tocqueville's insightful analysis of modern democracy marks him as one of our contemporaries. Two hundred years after his birth we still face the two alternatives the French aristocrat had conceived as options for the future: freedom or servitude. With this in mind, Tocqueville's vision of the USA's becoming the first political, economic, and cultural power of the world is of special note. The leading role of American democracy therefore also includes both chances and risks.

OLIVER HIDALGO

"America as a Delusive Model—Tocqueville on Religion"

ABSTRACT: The role of religion in modern democracy is Tocqueville's hidden major topic. Without faith, he considers moral stability for the polity to be lost. The inevitable consequence would be disintegration and despotism. At first glance, America is a shining counter-example. Tocqueville benevolently registers that, unlike Europe, the New World is unreservedly convinced of the necessity of religion. However, the religious foundation of the United States is regarded by him as being more fragile than the flaunted piety. This is due to the Protestant mainstream, which placed greater value on rational self-interest than on religious claims of truth. Therefore, Tocqueville does not consider Protestant doctrines to be a real counterweight to democratic passions but rather their reinforcement. Thus, he puts his hopes on Catholicism. Despite the reactionary attitude of the Roman church in the nineteenth century, he regards its hierarchical constitution as the best guaranty against the hubris of the modern age. Accordingly, a positive end to the democratic story would observe rules different from those obeyed at the successful beginning of the USA.