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Introduction by Sophie Meunier

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Introduction by Sophie Meunier, Princeton University

The Asterix image is rather fitting to describe France's simultaneous embrace and rejection of Americanization in the last two decades of the twentieth century: like the village of indomitable Gauls resisting the ineluctable Roman occupation, French political and cultural elites (and to a lesser extent the French population) tried to defy the tide of American products, culture, and values in a manner that could sometimes be seen as being as dead serious as it was comical. Americanization occurred everywhere else in Western Europe as it did in France, initially through the spread of trade and investment in the postwar period and later through globalization in the post-Cold War period. But nowhere else in the region did the country on the receiving end of Americanization churn out such resentment and desire for competition. Why this peculiar French obsession about turning back the tide? And why this particular fixation on the United States, against which France is the only major Western power never to have fought a war?

In *The French Way: How France Embraced and Rejected American Values and Power*, the renowned historian of contemporary France Richard Kuisel does a masterful job of highlighting and trying to make sense of numerous paradoxes surrounding the unique and complex French fears about Americanization at the turn of the millennium. Why was French anti-Americanism at its lowest point since WWII, and lower than other countries in Western Europe, during the years of the ideological odd couple formed by Ronald Reagan and François Mitterrand? Why was the French negative obsession with the United States at one of its highest points in the twentieth century during the presidency of leftist, Europhile Bill Clinton? Why was France, in the late 1990s, one of the epicenters of the anti-globalization movement, when it was also one of the main actors in globalization?

Kuisel's earlier work, particularly *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*¹ already addressed the unique animosity and concerns of the French regarding America, contributing to an extensive literature on this French 'exception' which includes notably Philippe Roger's *The American Enemy: The History of French Anti-Americanism*, Jean-Philippe Mathy's *French Resistance: The French-American Culture Wars*, Richard Pells's *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated and Transformed American Culture Since World War II*, and Philip Gordon and Sophie Meunier's *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization*.² In *The French Way*, Kuisel takes the investigation one step further, covering the very recent history of the end of the twentieth century and achieving a "tour de force" by analyzing "international affairs, economics, and culture by weaving them together

¹ Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997).

² Philippe Roger, *The American Enemy: The History of French Anti-Americanism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005); Jean-Philippe Mathy, *French Resistance: The French American Culture Wars* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997); Philip H. Gordon and Sophie Meunier, *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001).

rather than hierarchically ordering them”, as Alessandro Brogi puts it. The reviewers in this roundtable applaud the book and praise the craft of what is a “careful, balanced and judicious inquiry”, according to Kim Munholland. *The French Way* is, in the words of Jolyon Howorth, “a ‘big’ book.”

We already know that what distinguishes France from its European neighbors, and what contributes to a large extent to explaining the French idiosyncratic perceptions of the United States, are its universal aspirations. As Howorth states, “since the foundational Declarations of 1776 and 1789, the U.S. and France have each sought to project their respective models of universal values across the globe. No other nation-state has posited such a claim to universalism.” The present book reminds us that France’s “propensity, similar to that of the United States, to cast itself as a proselytizing nation”, in the words of Brogi, is the source of what is often perceived as its stubborn and long-standing anti-Americanism.

What *The French Way* really contributes in a novel way is an argument about how the United States has served, specifically at the end of the twentieth century, as a “foil” for reshaping French identity. The peculiar French fixation on the ravages of Americanization has been less about the U.S. than it has been about France itself. This explains in large part the contrast between French attitudes towards the U.S. in the 1980s versus the 1990s. In the Reagan-Mitterrand years, the general perception was that France still had a distinctive political economy and a unique role to play in world affairs. With the simultaneous end of the Cold War and take-off of economic globalization, however, national identity reemerged as a central concern in French political and intellectual rhetoric –as it had at various points in French history. Overwhelmed with changes to their political sovereignty thanks to European integration, to their economic sovereignty as a result of globalization, and to their ethnic and religious make-up brought about by immigration, the French reverted to a familiar foil against which to define their national identity. This American foil was also at play in a variety of issue-areas not investigated by Kuisel, such as the debate (or lack thereof) on affirmative action and the quick dismissal of “*multiculturalisme*” as antithetical to the French Republican notion of equality.

The reviewers have a hard time finding any fault to this book. The only criticism concerns Kuisel’s treatment of France’s adaptation to this new Americanized world –the titular “French way”. Howorth notices that “Kuisel’s chapter conclusions seem somewhat out of phase with his narrative. In assessing American success in penetrating the French market and in evaluating the impact of these products on the ‘French way,’ he parts company with scholars who claim that local adaptation preserved French essentials, and argues that such adaptations were merely “cosmetic.” Yet the introduction, even invasion, of American material and cultural goods did not radically turn the French into Americans. French identity proved resilient to Americanization, even if it is in a constant state of flux and redefinition. Moreover, globalization also enabled the French, in turn, to spread their own material and cultural goods across the globe, including the United States. L’Occitane and Sephora cosmetics stores are now more ubiquitous in the U.S. than are GAP stores in France.

French anti-Americanism has waxed and waned since the early days of France's involvement in the American continent. However, whether the U.S. continues to serve as the foil against which France redefines its national identity is uncertain. In the period covered by *The French Way*, what irked the French about the U.S. were its competing universal aspirations, to be sure, but also its power, which was especially triumphant and unrestrained after the end of the Cold War. But today the relative power of the U.S. is itself on the decline. Emerging economies, first and foremost China, are becoming trade and investment powerhouses. Does this mean that the French will stop defining their national identity against the U.S. and start using China as a foil instead? After all, there was no resurgence of anti-Americanism in France after the made-in-the-USA 2008 financial crisis. Let's hope that Richard Kuisel will soon turn his enquiry to the period subsequent to 2000 in his next project.

Participants:

Richard Kuisel holds a joint appointment at the BMW Center for German and European Studies and the History Department at Georgetown University. His doctorate is from the University of California Berkeley. His major publications are *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (1993) and *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the 20th Century* (1981). For readers of H-Diplo he has also written: "The Gallic Rooster Crows Again: The Paradox of French Anti-Americanism," *French Politics, Culture and Society*, Vol. 19 (Fall 2001): 1-16; and "Americanization for Historians," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 24 (Summer, 2000): 509-515. He is currently writing on the conceptual issues raised by American-led globalization and the related phenomenon of anti-Americanism as well as a historiographical essay on the paradigm of modernization in twentieth-century French history.

Sophie Meunier is Research Scholar in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and Co-Director of the EU Program at Princeton. She is the author of *Trading Voices: The European Union in International Commercial Negotiations* (Princeton University Press, 2005) and co-author of *The French Challenge: Adapting to Globalization* (with Philip Gordon, Brookings Institution Press, 2001), winner of the 2002 France-Americas book award. She is also the editor of several books on Europe and globalization. Her current work deals with the politics of hosting Chinese investment in Europe.

Alessandro Brogi is Professor of History of U.S. Foreign Relations at the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville). He also held positions as Olin Fellow and Lecturer at Yale University, Visiting Professor at Johns Hopkins University – Bologna Center, and Fellow at the Nobel Peace Institute in Oslo. His focus is on U.S. relations with France and Italy, and his books are *L'Italia e l'egemonia Americana nel Mediterraneo* (1996), which was finalist for the Acqui Storia Prize, and for the OAH foreign language book prize; *A Question of Self-Esteem: The United States and the Cold War Choices in France and Italy, 1944-1958* (2002); and *Confronting America: The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2011), which won the 2012 Charles

Smith Award of the Southern Historical Association, and featured in this H-Diplo Forum of January 23, 2012.

Jolyon Howorth has been Visiting Professor of Political Science at Yale University since 2002. He is also Jean Monnet Professor *ad personam* of European Politics and Emeritus Professor of European Studies at the University of Bath. Recent books include *Security and Defence Policy in the European Union*, Palgrave, 2007 (2nd edition 2013); *Defending Europe: the EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy*, Palgrave, 2003 (ed. with John Keeler); *European Integration and Defence: the Ultimate Challenge?* Paris, 2000.

Kim Munholland is retired from the history department at the University of Minnesota. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton University. Among his works on French history and French-American relations is *Rock of Contention: Free French and Americans at War in New Caledonia, 1940-1945* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Press, 2005). He is currently working on the imprisonment of French political and military leaders during World War II, tentatively titled, "The Gravediggers of France at the Château d'Itter, 1943-1945."

Review by Alessandro Brogi, University of Arkansas (Fayetteville)

The Western alliance has been studied more for its recurrent crises than for its harmony, and France has traditionally been the main protagonist of transatlantic squabbles. That France, more than other Europeans, articulated the continent's reasons for disagreements with America, or even anti-Americanism, can be explained mainly by its propensity, similar to that of the United States, to cast itself as a proselytizing nation. In this sense the confrontation with the United States turned an issue of national identity into a claim to represent a continental one: the descendants of Victor Hugo followed his dictum that "France is Europe" and "for the French, Europe would be France's child."¹ France, Richard Kuisel adds, more than any other European state, had aspirations, and often the means, to international leadership. Its identity, more than that of its neighbors, appeared targeted by American practices and values, whether this was free-market liberalism vs. French *dirigisme* or the social, religious, and cultural differences between the transatlantic partners.

But the story of Franco-American relations, like that of various broader transatlantic crises, does not show irreparable rifts. This is also a story of adaptation, illustrating how France strove, with mixed results, to absorb lessons from America by "selective imitation" (381), and to "match the Americans without copying them," thus attaining "power and modernity the French way" (384). Kuisel's new, and, as always with his work, balanced exploration of this "French way" is a welcome departure from the number of sensational accounts highlighting the inherently insubordinate, hostile, even devious nature of America's most problematic western ally.² As in his previous study,³ which analyzed the Cold War years, Kuisel, examines France's dilemmas of Americanization, qualifying the term but never denying that there was such a phenomenon. Moving now his focus to the last two decades of the twentieth century, Kuisel illustrates the many ways in which the American presence in Europe, at every level - military, diplomatic, economic, cultural - became "palpable, inescapable" (377), particularly in the *fin-de-siècle*, globalizing, hyperpower years. And French anxiety about losing international clout and cultural identity became more tangible, because, more than ever, France was forced to acknowledge American power and influence, and to adapt to forms of modernity that carried a global as well as American label. Yet, the ubiquitous, and now, mostly absorbed consumer society and American popular culture meant that the universal, prejudicial, dystopian anti-Americanism - which Kuisel describes, borrowing from the French expression, as "primaire," - of the previous

¹ Quoted in Philippe Roger, *The American Enemy: The History of French Anti-Americanism*, Trans by S. Bowman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 283, and quoted Roger, *ivi*.

² See for ex. John J. Miller and Mark Molesky, *Our Oldest Enemy: A History of America's Disastrous Relationship with France* (New York: Broadway Books, 2004), and Kenneth R. Timmerman, *The French Betrayal of America* (New York: Crown Forum, 2004).

³ Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); see also Richard F. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France. Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

decades was replaced by more volatile forms of anti-Americanism, which “focused less on modernity itself and more on American policies” (372), or rather, the “latent images” of America, those that always “mixed promise with peril” (379) became less forms of irrational scapegoating and more connected to the real challenges to French society, culture, and international presence.

And yet, the transatlantic drift that might have seemed to have grown since the end of the Cold War did not signify the unraveling of the U.S.-French friendship. France has rather been an example of how “to defy [not reject] growing interdependence and uniformity by asserting difference” (xvi). President Jacques Chirac aptly summarized the point about U.S.-French relations as always being “conflictive and excellent”; he mused that “the U.S. finds France unbearably pretentious” and the French “always find the U.S. unbearably hegemonic”; but he concluded that “there will always be sparks, but no fire” (209). This does not mean that most controversies have been skin-deep, or merely matters of rank. They rather go to the core of French - and European - identity; they tackle the dilemmas of and controversies over globalization, and the extent to which it has also become a form of Americanization; they portend two contrasting visions of European and, often, world affairs: one relying on a persistent U.S. hegemony, the other one aimed at promoting a more multipolar power system.

What is most praiseworthy about Kuisel’s approach to all these issues is that, as in his previous work, he analyzes international affairs, economics, and culture by weaving them together rather than hierarchically ordering them. For only by treating them concurrently rather than separately can we fully understand the complexity of the “simultaneous advance of Americanization and persistent anti-Americanism” (xiv). Kuisel’s method belongs to neither diplomatic nor cultural history; it is rather an example of international history at its best. The advantage of correlating cultural, economic, and political aspects is most evident in some revealing passages: France’s opposition to American free market liberalism and defense of its own “social solidarity” model can be fully understood through the prism of French cultural perceptions of U.S. society as “violent and fractured by inequalities of race and wealth” (279); its continued subsidization of its farmland and consequent trade wars with the U.S. followed an economic interest, but is here further explained in terms of France’s attachment to a “rural way of life closely associated with national identity” (244); and the defense of the French language, most strongly championed in the mid-1990s by Prime Minister Édouard Balladur and his Minister of Culture Jacques Toubon, does not appear so quirky and unrealistic, if seen not only as the “most important marker of French culture,” but also as a vehicle of its “global status” (307), and as an expression of “freedom and diversity” (Toubon quoted. on 311) both within French society and worldwide.

Kuisel demonstrates the continuity of French anti-American sentiments in the last decades of the twentieth century. They were not as virulent as in previous Cold War moments, not among political leaders, and not even among intellectuals generally associated with the French Left. Continuity characterized also the French pattern of selective adaptations of American socio-cultural mores and “liberal” (in the classic meaning) economics.

While Kuisel confirms that “America was in vogue in France during the 1980s” (1), he also constantly reminds us that this American revival was a “reverie,” concealing a persistent “rivalry.” The decade should not be idealized as some “halcyon past,” but rather a “bubble” when both nations, “anxious about a renewed Soviet threat,” found common strategic ground - courtesy also of France’s preserved autonomy from NATO, which allowed it to face the Euromissiles controversy with equanimity -, and when “America’s economic prosperity made the United States seem admirable” (44). But this reverie “like all daydreams [...] masked reality” and “had to come to an end.” Even the apparent harmony of that decade featured ill-concealed “sharp disagreements, mutual mistrust, even some nasty spats” (100). All the elements of French admiration show how contextualized this pro-Americanism had become, while the exceptions to that attitude reveal how most aspects of anti-Americanism remained rooted, dormant in the French psyche. Those aspects, too, became more contextualized, responsive to circumstances rather than ideological and prejudicial, and thus they eclipsed the few remnants of *anti-américanisme primaire*.⁴

Kuisel’s reevaluation of the Reagan years adds perspective to analyses still immersed in the decade: this was the case with the celebrated Franco-American 1984 academic conference on anti-Americanism at Sciences Po in Paris, which prompted its participants to wonder “*Does Anti-Americanism Exist?*” Like those earlier historians and social scientists, Kuisel suggests that, while French leaders and intellectuals extolled the U.S. president’s virtues of leadership, enthusiasm, candor, even his economic vision and pioneering spirit as the quintessential traits of the “man of the West,” this Reaganomania was ironic also in suggesting that the stereotypical, simple-hearted, corny new president was more reassuring than an indecisive Carter or a shady Nixon. It was thus still possible for the French to be condescending while being approving. Former *gauchistes*, paralleling the neo-conservative evolution in the United States, became the most Americanophile intellectuals; they repudiated the *engagé* intelligentsia, and marginalized the anti-American opinion-makers.⁵ President François Mitterrand, wary of Soviet repression in the East, and disillusioned with the effects of regulation on the French economy, quickly became an assertive Atlanticist and came to accept at least a hybrid of market economics and the French system of social solidarity. The Socialist Party never became utterly pro-Reagan, but it did admire America’s revived entrepreneurship, optimism, and the adaptability of its high-tech industry in the Reagan years (witness Mitterrand’s “pilgrimage” to Silicon Valley). But even in the boom years of Reganomics, the conservative Jacques Chirac, as Prime Minister from 1986, chastised the ruthlessness of those recipes. The two nations continued to disagree on economic policies, on trade with the Eastern Bloc, and even on how to best stem the HIV contagion. American cultural imperialism was still resented, and

⁴ In those same years the celebrated French historian Pierre Nora offered his most perceptive analyses of the “historical and cultural gap” between the two societies that was “at the root of anti and pro-American feelings,” because “without readily understanding [one another] people take refuge in passions” (Nora qtd. on p. 91).

⁵ Marie-France Toinet, “Does Anti-American Exist?” and other essays in the proceedings of that conference: Denis Lacorne, Jacques Rupnik, and Marie-France Toinet, eds. *The Rise and Fall of Anti-Americanism: A Century of French Perception*, Trans. by G. Turner (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990).

Jack Lang, twice Minister of Culture, championed both the revival of French culture and cultural diversity as essential instruments of the country's economic performance -- but, "given the appeal of American popular culture, Lang lost to a formidable opponent" (64).

So Reagan's ingenuity, which elicited a "fleeting" French admiration, also contained disingenuous traits that confirmed French phobias and disparaging views of a standardized, hypocritically moralistic, profoundly unequal and exploitative American society. Mitterrand and Reagan, particularly, while "usually congenial," were also a "study in contrasts" (99). For all their convergence on Cold War matters, Mitterrand remained a subtle "Florentine," who always preferred détente to brinkmanship, and, detecting America's renewed unilateralism on strategic and trade policies, countered them with attempts at genuine partnership and empowerment for the European Community (EC). That was true also in the way he handled German reunification, which, Kuisel argues in agreement with the most recent historiography,⁶ he did not try to slow down, but rather to secure within an EC framework, possibly ushering a pan-European confederation extended to the East, rather than within an expanded NATO. But in the end, "unwilling to act either as a true Atlanticist or a Gaullist, Mitterrand often had to settle for being ineffectual and resentful" (150).

In the 1990s France "wanted an ally but faced a hegemon" (210). Even the mutual respect between Mitterrand and George H.W. Bush should not be misleading. In the post-Cold War world, the United States was increasingly tempted to act unilaterally. For the French, "taming the hyperpower became an index of a successful foreign policy" (p. 210), and they ultimately designed an "alternative to the unipolar international system around the notions of multipolarity and multilateralism" (211).

The New World Order stirred suspicion in France, which truly wanted the UN to reassert itself, not become a power tool of U.S. dominance during the First Gulf War or during the conflict in Bosnia. France also tried to balance NATO expansion with repeated attempts to expand the Western European Union (WEU), reinforcing its autonomous foreign and security policies. But "most Europeans clearly preferred NATO" (228) to the uncertainties of the European "pillar," and Washington got its way: the WEU remained strictly coordinated with and subordinated to NATO. U.S. leadership in the conflicts over Bosnia and Kosovo stood in contrast to Europe's ineffectiveness. President Chirac's proposal to reenter the North Atlantic Organization, under certain conditions that validated France's power status, was also foiled, and France was forced to resume its full participation in NATO in 2009 without special prerogatives. France in particular "resisted efforts at politicizing the alliance and expanding its geographic scope," fearing the risk of "an international order controlled by the United States" (242). At the same time, Kuisel

⁶ See for ex. Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); Mary Elise Sarotte, *1989: The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Maurice Vaïsse, Christian Wenkel, *La diplomatie française face à l'unification allemande: D'après des archives inédites présentés par Maurice Vaïsse et Christian Wenkel* (Paris: Éditions Tallandier, 2011).

acknowledges, France did “push forward” the other Europeans to at least begin developing an “autonomous defense capacity outside the alliance” (242). We are also reminded here (though only in passing) that in the new millennium, the administration of George W. Bush did not rekindle Franco-American animosity, for the clash had already been there for a while. It was during the years of Clinton’s “indispensable nation,” of the extended reach of the American “hyperpower,” that French anti-Americanism reached its “strongest expression [...] since the 1960s” (329). I will have further comments on Kuisel’s depiction of France’s attempts to “tame the hyperpower” below.

Having published his previous book in 1993, Kuisel adjusts here his older argument on the decade he saw barely emerging at that time. As with that previous work, he argues here that the “American menace became diluted by the emergence of alleged dangers mounted by new “others” – the domestic Muslim population, EU commissioners, East European workers, and cheap labor from developing countries” (373). But, with knowledge of how French qualms about a “domineering ally” (354) grew by the decade’s last years, Kuisel notices that France’s fears of the new outsiders did not just replace its phobias about America, or even allow Americanization to occur without much disturbance. While the new “others” in part displaced the Americans as targets, they also rather shared with the Americans their role as culprits for whatever could go wrong with globalization. In some respects, American multiculturalism still represented an unappealing option for France, which preferred assimilation. So, even the new threats to French economy or identity “were frequently connected to [America] in an indirect way” (363).

Of course, much of the French resentment against the hyperpower, as well as the fading of French *anti-américanisme primaire*, had to do with the disappearance of America’s Cold-War adversary. While perhaps not mentioned enough, the emergence of U.S. unipolarity left less space for maneuver to America’s allies. It also disarmed primary anti-Americanism because its partisans could no longer invoke a “coherent alternative,” whether it was “Soviet dream” or “Gaullist grandeur” (374). There are only a few, non-crucial exceptions I would like to take to Kuisel’s otherwise impeccable analyses.

France’s coping with Americanization cannot clearly come to the foreground without first understanding the impact of Gaullism. Kuisel amply analyzed the “Gaullist exorcism” in his previous book, *Seducing the French*, and here offers a simple reminder that having de Gaulle in power successfully made France more independent from the United States, and that therefore “there seemed to be less need to taunt Uncle Sam” (4). De Gaulle’s nationalism of pride was far healthier than his predecessors’ nationalism of resentment. And only by brandishing grandeur with confidence could the French accept their diminished role in world affairs. The other correlated thread of *Seducing the French* was that, besides affecting power, this confidence allowed the French to accept American cultural influence as well with growing ease. Next to this double paradox, whereby a good dose of anti-Americanism helped assuage transatlantic dichotomies, was France’s realization that de Gaulle’s economic dirigisme had “reached its limits” (4), and that the main venue to economic growth through the 1970s and 1980s had become advanced market deregulation (though it was pursued in the “French way,” preserving a great deal of safety nets and state intervention). We are left to wonder about the long-term impact of

Gaullism, or even about its permanence: was its job done by 1970? Or has it remained, in mitigated form, a staple of French foreign and domestic policies, from Mitterrand's Left to Chirac's Center-Right alike? In introducing the rivalries of the post-Cold War era, Kuisel notes that "the United States mattered more than any other nation in accomplishing France's agenda and determining its status." We may then wonder - to put it with Kuisel's own expression, - why has France continued to "measure itself against the United States" (209)? The French nation, while perhaps accepting its regional power status with less recrimination than in the 1960s, still aspires to a "global rank" (210). Since this is now accomplished more through the pursuit of multipolarity and multilateralism, within the UN or the EU, than by challenging Washington directly, Gaullism does appear in modified form. But its core element - the pursuit of global rank, which, in Europe, only Britain and Vladimir Putin's Russia may have matched - has remained, and it begs the question of how effective the "exorcism" has been.⁷ Kuisel's avoidance of the diplomatic and economic disputes during George W. Bush's administration leaves that question only partially answered.

Kuisel gives us a masterful chapter on Americanization via McDonalds, Coca-Cola, and Disney. But he does not sufficiently clarify America's "creolizing" trends. He convincingly argues that for these companies, adapting to the French ways is not the issue: "of course they did, to an extent. The real question is, Were these modifications significant?" And the answer is a resounding "no"; they were "largely cosmetic" (200). Even more, the modifications they made "to suit the locals" constituted part of their quintessentially American marketing techniques, and they preserved the essence of "their operations, products, [and] appeal" (207), which came from their association with America, not France or Europe. The Americans changed the "competitive environment, gained market shares at the expense of the natives, and modified patterns of consumption and leisure" (206).

The French, despite virulent attacks especially from farmers and anti-globalizers, adapted, for they understood the mutual benefits of businesses improving their practices and for politicians providing jobs. Consumers, too, changed their habits and leisure, and thus "gained in diversity" while losing "uniqueness [and, one may wonder, quality, too?] by becoming more like Americans" (208). So, creolization or domestication of American products and cultural habits had their limits, and perhaps did not even exist, according to Kuisel. European fairy tales became sanitized under the Disney version, and hardly evoked or reinforced local folk traditions. Given Coca-Cola's vicissitudes in France, its endurance has shown its resilient appeal. Twenty years ago, in Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, John Travolta told us that a quarter-pounder with cheese is still the same Mac-burger, even if you call it "Royale with Cheese." He also cheered at the fact that, in Europe, you could have beer or wine along with that burger. So, yes, this was a matter of successful 'seduction' of the French, showing perhaps, as other authors, most notably Rob Kroes, have argued, that creolization is rather an American trait; it constitutes one of the main elements of its

⁷ On the continuity of Gaullism through the 1980s see for example, Frédéric Bozo, "France, "Gaullism," and the Cold War," in Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*. Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 158-178.

national identity and helped develop the strength of America's global appeal.⁸ American mass culture - including movies (briefly outlined in Chapter six against France's successful fight to protect the home industry) - owes much to its capacity to absorb and rearrange the cultural inputs it has received especially from Europe. Recently, Richard Pells has contended that the U.S. mastery of the modernist trends in art and mass culture - even better, the essence of modernism in bridging high and mass culture and in making the modern world seem more intelligible - should not distract us from the reality that the transatlantic cultural dialogue is still indeed an exchange, one that is reciprocal, with mutual influences.⁹ It is made of hybrids, and, one should add, Americanization must not only be qualified, but must also be seen as rooted first in the high degree of Europeanization of the American experience. To draw one example close to Kuisel's selection of the big three American 'intruders' in France, mass marketing and consumerism may have been perfected in the United States, but it was France that first introduced the large department stores (Le Bon Marché in the 1830s) to better lure consumers. Academic disputes over Americanization will continue (Kuisel himself once engaged Pells over the latter's claims in *Not Like Us*)¹⁰ but Kuisel's illustration of America's 'seduction' of France will remain a powerful and intriguing, if not consistently compelling argument. Perhaps the explanation of both France's dramatic opposition to the three 'intruders' and its rapid adaptation would have gained power if this chapter had not been the most compartmentalized of the book, and had instead included the correlations of France's cultural attitudes with the evolution of its politics and, more in general, its sense of declining global status in the post-Cold War era.

France's success at countering U.S. predominance with multilateralism was qualified at best, especially because of France's own hegemonic desires - a contradiction not sufficiently explored by Kuisel. His analysis of Hubert Védrine's 1997 "hyperpower" statement rightly places French misgivings about post-Cold War Europe in perspective. Védrine acknowledged the limits of French power, but also asserted that France, being among the top five or six elite world nations could help rebalance the United States' preponderance of power. The antidote, we are reminded again and again, was multilateralism and multipolarity, "Tying down Gulliver with international institutions and rules was the aim" (267). But France failed at rebalancing the alliance. It found other European allies favoring the status quo rather than accepting a prominent role for France (especially in NATO's Southern Command). France was moderately successful on trade negotiations, and in blocking U.S. attempts to control Europe on the issue of sanctions against Cuba, Iran, and Libya.

⁸ See especially Rob Kroes, *If You've Seen One You've Seen the Mall: Europeans and American Mass Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

⁹ Richard Pells, *Modernist America: Art, Music, Movies, and the Globalization of American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Richard F. Kuisel, "Not Like Us or More Like Us: America and Europe," Review of Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), *Diplomatic History* 22:4 (Fall 1998).

But that is the point that Kuisel keeps circling around without fully identifying it: France was successful when it was truly multilateral, defending other EU nations' interests as well. While championing multilateralism, France has apparently been, among the big nations of Europe, the least fit to do so. Its claim to world power status may have assisted multipolarity but not consistently multilateralism. Its policy has been rhapsodic between the two. Is it only because the others have not dared challenge U.S. leadership that France, - as Kuisel notes, using Jacques Adréani's words - was accused of being "often alone in its critiques and its objections"? And, if the French have remained convinced that "it is possible to be right all alone, which does not mean that one is right because one is alone" (268), how could that not smack of hypocrisy, particularly to the other Europeans whose drive for multilateralism France was supposed to assist? France's proposals were rejected within Europe because they ill-concealed, behind the veneer of continental solidarity, hegemonic designs over the European Community or over the European defense pillar. In this sense multilateralism might be more defensible by EU members which have not remained so anchored to notions of being one of the elite powers, Germany perhaps (although one might note that Chancellor Angela Merkel's assertiveness comes close to some "French ways") or Italy, which as a nation has not as actively as France challenged American influence, but has determinedly done so when its representatives have run European institutions. That is the case, for example, of Mario Monti during his tenure as European commissioner and director-general for competition: Monti successfully foiled merger attempts between General Electric and Honeywell; he was also the key force in the establishment of the International Competition Network, which allowed enforcement against the Microsoft monopoly.

Kuisel's numerous observations about how other Europeans often opted for NATO over France's choices calls our attention to another aspect that has traditionally favored U.S. hegemony. European nations have coalesced and integrated, they have at times also bound together in solidarity against American impositions or unilateralism. But, despite their union, they have maintained mutual rivalries that match or surpass those they have with their transatlantic ally; and, frequently, they have competed for America's special favor or regard. The United States may have played some divide and rule options, but for that it found a malleable situation in Europe.

Kuisel admits upfront that this work could not be comprehensive. Focusing primarily on international relations, economic policies, and popular culture, he skews "other issues where America may also have acted as foil" (xv), including high culture. In *Seducing the French*, intellectuals, especially those who expressed *anti-américanisme primaire* received more attention. And perhaps Kuisel doesn't do enough justice to this new finely interlaced narrative of French anti-Americanism, which does include, in Chapter two, a rather detailed analysis of the intellectual debate over America, adding some remarks on those intellectuals' theories or philosophies. All the most prominent names of the polemicists, from Alain de Benoist to Jean Baudrillard, are accounted for; the reappraisal by former *gauchistes* receives its due attention; and the growing ranks of anti-anti-Americans are shown here to further illustrate the obsolescence of France's constructions of America as dystopia. The retreat of anti-Americanism did not mean that France surrendered its claims

to represent high, global cultural standards; in fact, it shows the opposite. Jean-Marie Domenach's reaction to Jack Lang's protectionist proposals is instructive: "French culture – he wrote – is grand because of its universal vocation: it becomes impoverished when one treats it as an expression of national particularity and it would accelerate its decline if one were to make it an instrument of anti-American nationalism" (94).

But Chapter two (on the 1980s) remains an exception, if anything showing a bit of inconsistency in Kuisel's treatment of the intellectual debate, giving us the impression that by the late 1990s, it did not count as much, not at least to explain France's resentment against the United States, or even its own alleged Americanization. But if the anti-American Régis Debray figured so prominently when he visited Kosovo in 1999, and if his exposés were so hard-fought by the likes of Bernard-Henri Lévy and André Glucksman (this is briefly summarized on 260-261), we are then reminded of the persistent role public intellectuals assume in France, even when their contentions are not about cultural identity but about American policies. Indeed, if the main culprit by the late 1990s had become America's domineering practices, then intellectual intervention in the international politics arena should have been a more conspicuous part of Kuisel's multilayered narrative - giving perhaps a little more space to high culture and a little less to some repetitions on mass culture.

Since Kuisel prefaces his book with his own clear definitions of anti-Americanism, we cannot fault him for not being specific enough about its various manifestations; but we may still wonder about some of its crucial causes. Kuisel acknowledges the elusiveness of the term anti-Americanism, and draws the due distinctions between "primary" anti-Americanism, which "treats America as an ideology," and a more expansive notion that describes critical "attitudes among the general populace" that "oscillate and are more responsive to circumstances" (xx). I agree that primary anti-Americanism tends to essentialize America as an ideology. But when Kuisel alludes to the largely fictional nature of that anti-Americanism, which addressed a "fantasized America" (379), he comes close to Philippe Roger's treatment of French (or even global) anti-Americanism as "discourse," an "unbridled discourse, not only because it is rife with irrationality and bubbling with humors, but also because it takes an essayistic form" (an argument a priori), rather than providing a "demonstration."¹¹ Kuisel's scrutiny of Baudrillard is especially remindful of Roger's thesis.

This kind of argument says a lot about the perceiver but not much about what role the perceived has in projecting those assumptions. So America often appears unfairly, irrationally demonized, stereotyped, and 'ideologized' from that side of the Atlantic only. It has been established that the discourse about America has often not been about a nation, but rather a faith, an encryption of everyone's fears and hopes, a frame of reference that acts on the conscious and subconscious levels of every people (America was a 'foil' for the French to measure their own identity, as Kuisel often reiterates). But if the United States has enjoyed that particular status, it is also because its own national identity has been

¹¹ Roger, *The American Enemy*, xvi.

formed around a creed, if not an ideology. American exceptionalism, with its core assumptions on U.S. perfectibility and universalism, had a significant role in shaping French (and European) opinion. American exceptionalism, and the standards it set for itself, certainly constitutes one main reason for *anti-américanisme primaire*; it was also inherent in the U.S. hegemonizing trends of the 1990s, which caused the popular and volatile anti-Americanism to which Kuisel draws our attention. To be sure, this is a book on the “French Way,” not the “American Way.” But any argument about the ‘receiving’ end of American influence, especially on social and cultural matters, would gain in balance by including at least some reflections on the “transmitting” end of this dialogue.

As an example of finely crafted international history Kuisel’s book remains nevertheless rather one-sided. The scope of this analysis, already vast in itself for its nuance and complexity, covers French recent history, but it will not fully satisfy those who also want to learn about how the United States confronted the “French Way.” Kuisel tells us - though still indirectly through French lenses - a great deal about how American business strategies and how foreign policies reacted to French fears and expectations, but adds almost nothing about U.S. perceptions of French society, or reactions to France’s forms of pro and anti-Americanism. That side of the story, admittedly not the focus of this book, will hopefully soon be fulfilled with similar subtlety and complexity by others. But even the most traditional practitioners of U.S. diplomatic history, and likewise U.S. foreign-policy makers, will have much to learn from this revealing and masterful account of the French “ways.”

Something strange happened at the end of the eighteenth century. Two nations, one quite ancient and one newly born, each constructed a revolutionary republican discourse which claimed to enjoy universal validity. All men, it was asserted (women would have to wait a little longer), could become either French (through assimilation) or American (through the melting pot) simply by embracing these new republican values. In the U.S. case, they also needed a steamer ticket. Since the foundational Declarations of 1776 and 1789, the U.S. and France have each sought to project their respective models of universal values across the globe. No other nation-state has posited such a claim to universalism. This brace of Declarations helps explain the intense rivalry between the two distinctive models and cultures which informs this splendid and important book.

The literature on Franco-American relations is plethoric. Significantly, it is massively dominated by analyses of France's U.S. complexes rather than the other way around. In 2005, Philippe Roger gave us his magisterial *The American Enemy: The History of French Anti-Americanism* which offers a veritable "genealogy" of Gallic Americano-phobia going back more than two centuries. Now Richard Kuisel has consummated several decades of major scholarship with a sweeping and deeply probing study of French anti-Americanism (and occasionally pro-Americanism) during the last two decades of the twentieth century. In its exhaustive coverage, its impressive command of detail, its measured tone and its subtle and sophisticated analysis, this is a 'big' book. Some might regret that the story stops short of the veritable tsunami of mutual hostility around the 2003 Iraq War, but Kuisel is a historian and historians have to stop somewhere. Moreover, the tale he has to tell is one for which the period between the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush supplies a super-abundance of data. The substance of the book is divided into three main policy areas (foreign and security policy; trade and economics; culture and society), each of which fills two chapters, roughly covering each of the two decades under analysis. The book sparkles on every page with impressive erudition, it is peppered with wonderful and long-buried quotations (read President Jacques Chirac on liberalism p. 30 or on Franco-U.S. relations p.209), it is written with a style and a verve in which every word has been weighed carefully and every word counts.

Kuisel's book is also one with a message. In measuring itself against an American standard, France, he concludes, succeeded in retaining the deeper roots of its own distinctive model, but at the price of opening itself up to U.S. influences and practices which, as globalization proceeds, will only present ever-growing future challenges. The inference is, to paraphrase Charles de Gaulle, that France succeeded (just) in being able to declare victory in the war, but at the cost of losing the majority of the battles. And the war remains on-going.

Kuisel offers a brilliant parsing of the brief mid-1980s flirtation with Ronald Reagan's America on the part of prominent journalists, businessmen and politicians, including – for a fleeting moment – François Mitterrand himself. That the "cowboy president" appeared to be doing a better job than his Florentine counter-part in the Elysée, both at facing down the Soviets and at creating jobs, seemed, to many, almost self-evident. Yet while Mitterrand

supported Reagan with his January 1983 *Bundestag* speech on the Euro-missiles, and gave military assurances to George H.W. Bush on Day-one of the Kuwait crisis in August 1990, he balked at rejoining NATO. Mitterrand, imperceptibly, had appropriated the Gaullist mantle. It was left to the neo-Gaullist Chirac to initiate the process eventually leading to France's 2009 reintegration into NATO's command structure, under yet another neo-Gaullist, Nicolas Sarkozy.

Franco-American relations are no respecter of party cleavages. Philo-Americans can be found on both left and right, as can primary anti-Americans. Like Euro-philias and Euro-phobias, these preferences are more emotional than logical, more psychological than political. Ultimately, as Kuisel demonstrates, they are essentially cultural in the broadest sense. As many in France blew hot and cold over market forces in the 1980s, engaging in a virtual "will-she-won't-she" tango with the Chicago school, the cultural center, led by Mitterrand, Chirac and Edouard Balladur, stuck doggedly to, and thereby preserved, the 'French way.' The state would remain a major player, social welfare benefits would stay sacrosanct and markets would be clearly regulated. A comparison with the UK would underscore this point. The reason Thatcherism succeeded in making market-forces stick in Britain (to such an extent that Tony Blair could only be elected in 1997 by paying lip-service to them) was not politics but political culture. In this sense, the sub-title of the book – "Embraced and Rejected" – could appear to be slightly misleading. The fact is that some bits of France "embraced" the U.S., but only temporarily. Much of France "rejected" American values and market forces – much of the time. But very few first clearly "embraced" Uncle Sam and then equally clearly "rejected" him. The picture, as Kuisel's account demonstrates convincingly, is one of constant fascination accompanied by regular disappointment, leading to bouts of irritation, before starting the process all over again. France does have a kind of obsession with the U.S. (one of the best studies of this phenomenon is entitled *L'Amérique dans Les Têtes*)¹ which is exacerbated by the sheer imbalance of power between the two states.

France's long drawn-out cultural guerilla warfare against Mickey Mouse, Coca-Cola and McDonalds is narrated with a comprehensive concern for both detail and nuance which is exemplary. Unearthing and synthesizing cubic meters of scholarship (including his own), Kuisel leads us sure-footedly through the minefield of cultural sensitivities epitomized by José Bové's torching of a McDonald franchise, Ariane Mnouchkine's dissing of Disneyland (a "cultural Chernobyl" 168), and the Coca-Colonization which brought the Atlanta company a 55% share in the French market for carbonated drinks. These stories will probably never be better told. Yet Kuisel's chapter conclusions seem somewhat out of phase with his narrative. In assessing American success in penetrating the French market and in evaluating the impact of these products on the 'French way,' he parts company with scholars who claim that local adaptation preserved French essentials, and argues that such adaptations were merely "cosmetic": "The essence – and the appeal – [of Euro-Disney, Big Mac and Coke] remained unaltered, remained American" (200). Similarly, when judging the

¹ Denis Lacorne, Jacques Rupnik & Marie-France Toinet, *L'Amérique dans les Têtes: Un Siècle de Fascinations et d'Aversions* (Paris: PUF, 1986).

extent to which French cultural resistance impeded the onslaught of U.S. marketing techniques, he argues that, despite considerable obtuseness in its approach, the U.S. juggernaut “managed in time to thwart, or at least weaken, Gallic cultural opposition” (204). The impact is undeniable. Today’s French adolescents drink far more Coke than they do wine. Coke is cool and helps them define themselves as young people. However, does this mean, as Kuisel suggests in his parting shot to this wonderfully rich chapter, that the French “gained diversity by adding an American menu”, but, in doing so, “lost uniqueness by becoming more like Americans” (208)? As one who divides his time equally between France and the U.S., I do not believe that the latter proposition holds. Coke defines adolescents as adolescents – not as French people. Nicolas Sarkozy in 2012 may have lost 200,000 votes because he drinks Coke rather than wine. He is not an adolescent. I prefer to go with Kuisel in his overall conclusion on the cultural dimension, which seems somewhat at variance with his earlier assessment: “French ways survived. The cinema, television, restaurants, beverages, theme parks and the language itself were not overwhelmed by Yankee imports. And one cannot measure the psychological comfort, the boost in self-esteem, gained by keeping America at bay, at keeping France French” (386)”. Indeed!

The long central chapter entitled “Taming the Hyperpower” takes us step by step through the labyrinthine complexities of France’s (and much of Europe’s) efforts to come to terms with what was – for them – the most significant historical implication of the end of the Cold War: America’s inevitable relative military disengagement from the old Continent. With the 2012 United States ‘tilt’ to Asia, this remains an ongoing narrative. Kuisel again excels in distilling a huge mass of scholarship – about the Gulf War, the Balkans, ESDI/ESDP (European Security Defense Policy), NATO and much more – into a highly readable, well sequenced and comprehensible narrative. There are occasional lapses of accuracy: the Sixth Fleet was explicitly excluded from Chirac’s 1997 bid for AFSOUTH, the Allied Forces Southern Europe NATO Command (235); it was not Washington, but Ankara which delayed deployment of Berlin Plus, the 2002 agreement package between NATO and the EU (240-41), but on the whole, the story Kuisel tells is the real story. And he tells it with a masterly grasp of detail. I do, however, have a quibble. His interpretation is at times overly pitched towards a kind of Herculean struggle between NATO and a ‘rival’ French agenda designed to hobble the Alliance. This is implicit in the chapter title, which effectively sets up a straw man. France did not attempt to “tame the hyperpower”, so it is hardly surprising that it failed. It should not be forgotten that, in the period Kuisel is investigating, France proved to be a totally reliable (and indeed principal) ally in fighting alongside the U.S./NATO in all major military operations (the Gulf, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan). This was not bandwagoning. It was about something that Mitterrand in particular, echoing de Gaulle, called ‘rank’ (le rang).

This chapter understates the legitimacy and desirability – for both sides – of Europe’s emerging as a credible and effective security actor, one which would allow the U.S. to concentrate resources on the strategic areas of highest priority to its own interests (the Middle East, South and East Asia). In neglecting the endogenous dynamic behind the rise of the EU security and defense project, and in stressing the purportedly ‘anti-American’ dimension of French strategic diplomacy, Kuisel skews the complex reality. Occasionally, this even affects the normal impartiality of his register. He sees former Defence Minister

Pierre Joxe's observation that Europe needed autonomy because there were doubts about America's ongoing commitment as an example of French "contrariness" (226). He comments on former Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine's continuing defense of ESDP in this way: "France had been checked, but it had not surrendered" (241). This language is unfortunate. To some extent (but *only* to some extent), it may result from Kuisel's limited time-frame. It is true that Washington, having urged the Europeans for over a decade to become more militarily capable, reacted schizophrenically to the Saint-Malo Declaration in December 1998 in which Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac announced their intention to boost the EU's military capacity. But that schizophrenia did not last. It was, after all (as Kuisel recognizes, 239-40), largely on U.S. urging that Blair crossed the Euro-defense Rubicon. The post-Saint-Malo fear, within the beltway, that the EU was somehow about to become a rival to NATO and even to the U.S., rapidly gave way to the opposite fear: that ESDP would prove a damp squib. By the early 2000s, Washington was cheer-leading as much European military autonomy as the EU member states could muster. Duplication was no longer a problem: the more the better (except for strategic planning). The problem with ESDP (renamed, since the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, CSDP) is the same as the problem with the Euro. In the absence of clear central political authority, the member states are prone to free-ride, buck-pass and prevaricate. But they will not deliver. Meanwhile, in 2011, France drove forward and jointly led a NATO mission in Libya which President Obama characterized (inaccurately) as a model of the U.S. 'leading from behind.' Yet NATO, by any objective standard, has failed in Afghanistan, and its future remains unclear. At the same time, the U.S. has its strategic eyes set on Asia. The story of Europe's efforts to engineer an autonomous security capacity cannot be reduced to a *bras de fer* between Paris and Washington.

That said, Kuisel's analysis amply demonstrates that there is really only one power in Europe which is both willing and able to stand up to Uncle Sam on issues of principled national or regional interest. Hubert Védrine's triptych – *ami, allié, non-aligné* – says it all.

Quibbles apart, this is a marvelous book, a work of imaginative and sustained scholarship, bold and far-reaching in its scope, shrewd and incisive in its interpretation, a book in which the heady accumulation of detail in no way interferes with the elaboration of a clear big picture. One might question some aspects of certain conclusions, but there is no getting away from the fact that Kuisel is the absolute master of his subject. This is a book which will become a reference for scholars of France for generations to come.

For Francophile Americans, Richard Kuisel's careful, balanced and judicious inquiry into what makes Franco-American relations so 'testy' and contentious makes for painful reading at times. For those of us who have had an enduring fascination with France, the shock of French anti-Americanism has been a source of curiosity and regret. France has appealed to many Americans, not only expats, but writers and scholars who have made the study of France a life's work. A few years ago North American historians recorded their fascination and also their realization that in their encounters with France they could also face hostility or mistrust of Americans.¹ The same paradox of fascination and repulsion but with greater intensity can be found on the French side of the Atlantic, and the paradox of the French response to America and Americanization is the subject of Richard Kuisel's new study. It is a subject that he has visited before, but this time there is a difference in that he argues that in the last two decades of the twentieth century America became a 'foil' for French identity. A history of French-American amity and conflict existed almost from the beginning of relations between the two nations, but became particularly evident during and after World War II and the era of Charles de Gaulle, which lasted into the 1960s. After 1980 America became a fixation as the French searched for an independent path toward modernity without adopting the American model, and the fascination/repulsion syndrome acquired a greater intensity than earlier forms of anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism could be found throughout Europe, and where possible Kuisel compares other European responses to the American juggernaut, mainly in Britain, Germany and Italy, but he finds that the French have been unique in their strident, obsessive anti-Americanism and fears of lost identity.

While there are many issues of contention, such as gender, multiculturalism, and immigration, Kuisel has chosen to focus on three areas: international affairs; economics, and culture. He also finds differences in intensity between the two decades, with the 1980s characterized by a decline in anti-Americanism and relatively warm relations between the odd-couple presidents, the Socialist François Mitterrand and the advocate of free market economics, Ronald Reagan. The American economic recovery after the doldrums of the 1970s, when many French saw an America in decline, made an impression, particularly as the Socialist economic agenda faltered within the first two years of Mitterrand's presidency. Mitterrand's visit to the United States and his enthusiasm for the innovation and dynamism of Silicon Valley was a famous example of the French fascination with America. As for international matters, Reagan's evolution from calling the Soviet Union an evil empire to his willingness to negotiate with Mikhail Gorbachev, showed a pragmatic side of United States (U.S.) foreign policy under Reagan and Secretary of State George Schultz that was welcomed in France. Popular opinion, initially skeptical of the cowboy president, warmed to his personality, so that by 1984 Reagan enjoyed considerable popularity with the French public.

¹ Laura Lee Downs and Stéphane Gerson, eds. with afterword by Roger Chartier, *Why France? American Historians Reflect on an Enduring Fascination* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2007).

In cultural matters the standard anti-Americanism of the postwar period went into a decline and brought out a group of anti-anti-American intellectuals to challenge the efforts of the French Minister of Culture Jack Lang to play upon the old fears of a vulgar America overwhelming the French in matters of media, taste, style, fast food, popular music, not only in France but globally. Lang's UNESCO July 1982 speech in Mexico City that championed the rights of different cultures to counteract the spread of American pop culture and the French theorist Jean Baudrillard's denunciation of America as a California-inspired Disneyland that swallowed European culture in his *Amérique* marked a high point in the anti-Americanism of the 80s.² This denunciation of American cultural imperialism failed when most of the intellectual community remained "deaf" (81) and even *Le Monde* joined those who called for a cease fire in the anti-American "war of words." (83-84) The reaction featured the emergence of anti-anti-Americans, who considered the primitive or primary anti-Americanism of the postwar and Gaullist years to be passé, and French writers and historians began serious inquiry into the history and persistence of the anti-American phenomenon in France. Yet Kuisel reminds his readers that beneath this decade of "reverie" in the 1980s (147) a rivalry and friction persisted that would emerge and become viral in the decade of the 1990s.

Three events illustrate the problem of Americanization in France: Disneyland, McDonald's and Coca-Cola, all of which are seen as more than symbols of America and an American way of life. For all three the pattern was the same--a period of initial fumbling in setting up French operations, followed by some adjustment in dealing with a different cultures and then eventual success, with French crowds coming to Disneyland, McDonald's outlets spreading (despite the violent protests of José Bové), changing French eating habits, and the acceptance of Coca-Cola as the beverage of choice at meals, at least for a younger generation, with a corresponding decline in wine consumption. Kuisel concludes that despite French resistance, the American companies prevailed, imposing their aggressive methods in advertising, production, and distribution on the French and that these American methods had an impact upon the ways the French adapted to mass culture and marketing. The Americans had to adapt to local culture, but they remained firmly American and insensitive to broader French anxieties over identity that the American invasion continued to raise. Still, the impact of these icons of American mass culture had a legacy in that French culture itself was sufficiently malleable so that French habits became a bit more Americanized. Other issues of cultural contention included the impact of Hollywood movies, which the French continued to try to restrict, but ticket sales for blockbusters outpaced the local market. Still, the French succeeded in subsidizing their cinema and in so doing succeeded better in preserving a distinctly French style than did other European movie production.

It was in the realm of international politics, however, that the Franco-American rivalry attracted widest attention. The end of the Cold War produced growing contention to the point that by the end of the decade French anti-Americanism reached its height, climbing to

² Jean Baudrillard, *Amérique* (Paris: Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1986).

levels of the Gaullist era anti-Americanism. With the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe and Russia, the United States was left standing as the only superpower or hyperpower, in the terminology of Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, who was determined to use confrontation as a way of constraining American domination by promoting a multi-polar security system and creating a European defense capability independent of NATO. Initially relations between France and the superpower seemed relatively cordial. After attempting to reach a diplomatic solution in the Gulf crisis over Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, President Mitterrand agreed to a French contingent under American command during the First Gulf War. Bosnia was a different matter when the Europeans were compelled to call for NATO intervention, and the United States took the lead in the air strikes and then dominated the Dayton peace process with France on the margins, despite its major contribution to the ground forces in the UN/NATO peacekeeping mission. Bosnia and the lesser role for the Europeans caused the French to seek a European security system outside NATO, which would bring a balance and true partnership with the U.S., but this effort was effectively blocked by the Americans, much to the annoyance of Hubert Védrine, who insisted that France had a distinctive role to play in an era of globalization. The objective was to limit American unilateralism by working through international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN). Yet Védrine's efforts at "taming the hyperpower" Chapter 5) had no more than limited success, mainly in terms of the negotiations over GATT and French opposition to the American insistence on reducing farm subsidies, an attempt that led to French farmers demonstrating in Paris and burning American flags in the countryside. From the First Gulf War to the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the image of America in the eyes of the French, in both elite and popular opinion, plunged into negative territory.

At the heart of French identity was language, which brought a French attack upon the corruption of their language through the introduction of English words and phrases, which in their opinion produced a bastardized *Français*. The defense of pure French began with de Gaulle but reached an extreme with the campaign of Jacques Toubon, Prime Minister Balladur's Minister of Culture, who succeeded in having legislation passed in 1994 that required the use of French terms when available. This led to awkward phrases as when an "airbag" became *le coussin gonflable de protection* (310). Toubon did not relent, fining violators, but he faced opposition from those who argued that banning English would impede business and scientific research, denying them recognition of their impressive achievements in physics and astrophysics. His French critics began to refer to him ironically as 'Mr. Allgood.' They argued that a pure French would be better preserved if the French learned English as their second language.

The growing French critique of American society rested on a comparison between the American preference for ultraliberalism in social and economic affairs compared with the French preference for greater social solidarity and economic security. The French expressed reservations about a society that was marked by violence, the death penalty, racism, and growing inequalities of race. The Left was particularly critical of the 'new economy' and its human costs. The government realized that some liberal reforms were necessary in France, but refused to abandon the idea of solidarity to what were perceived to be the excesses of ultraliberalism. The French also had some success in limiting the

impact of American movies and television shows, although Hollywood blockbusters were able to capture 54-63% of the market during the 1990s (313). The French enlisted the European Community (EU) to restrict television imports and impose quotas on non-European films, all of which were directed at American productions. The argument was based, as it always had been, on cultural exception and, after a struggle, the EU gave France a victory. The French were able to subsidize their film industry and preserve its distinctive quality. Despite efforts to limit them, the invasion of American audiovisual products continued. If adoption of American ways occurred, it had to be disguised as French in order to avoid the impression of overt Americanization.

Kuisel concludes his study with a paradox. At the end of the century Americanization had an impact in France, yet these were the years that witnessed the strongest expression of anti-Americanism since de Gaulle. What annoyed the French most was American triumphalism following the end of the Cold War and what was resented was unilateralism in international affairs, ruthless and aggressive capitalism in the global economy, and pervasive Americanization of culture and values. The French reaction at the end of the 1990s was to become far more critical of the American way of life and to contrast an American lifestyle with the virtues of the French way. At stake was again the issue of French identity amid a time of French malaise and insecurity. What was once an admiration for aspects of America--its innovation, job creation, economic dynamism, and the popularity of "Dallas" on TV--turned into an increasingly negative comparison with the French social model and renewed concerns about cultural imperialism and homogenization. American boasting elicited a defensive French response. By using opinion polls Kuisel traces the growing critique of America as a society and of the Americans as a people at the end of the twentieth century. He notes that most of the terms used to describe America in the first half of the 90s were positive: "*power, dynamism, wealth, and liberty*" although "*power*" was ambivalent (341). By the end of the decade the leading choices were "violence" including the death penalty, "racism, inequality, materialistic, domineering, religiosity," which were in the ascendant while more favorable terms such as "democratic" or "trustworthy" were in decline. The French deplored the lack of social protection in America, and the country's individualism, and absence of solidarity and concern for the sick and elderly compared with the French social safety net. These criticisms were strongest on the political Left, but critics could be found across the political spectrum. Kuisel concludes that common feelings against the United States curiously united French opinion. He asks, though, why the anti-Americanism, which could be found elsewhere in Europe, was more extreme in its French expression. Kuisel notes several sources of resentment but concludes that it was part of a process of globalization that magnified the impact of the 'hyperpower' and raised the level of French anxieties about their future in a rapidly changing world. Resisting the American juggernaut became a way of asserting a French identity that was not American.

The problem of distinguishing what is French from what is American persists. As this review was being written, an article in the *New York Times* summed up the issue. The headline read: "The Champs-Élysées, a Mall of America: Latest Mass-Market Invasion

Leaves the Grand Avenue Far Less French.”³ The reactions of those interviewed captured the paradox. A writer from Brittany said, “It feels more like nowhere, because we find the same things everywhere.” And with nostalgia an editor for *Les Echos* lamented, “It’s no longer a Parisian place....It’s no longer a place for lovers.” Yet the chairman of the *Comité Champs-Élysées*, merchants’ association, Jean-Noël Reinhardt observed, “the avenue has changed, as the world has,” and added, “for the French, it’s the shop window of global commerce, a bit like Fifth Avenue in New York.” The French paradox of embrace and resistance toward America seems likely to continue into the twenty-first century.

³ Steven Erlanger, “The Champs-Élysées, a Mall of America.” *The New York Times*, 15 September 2012, A4, A9.

Author's Response by Richard F. Kuisel, BMW Center for German and European Studies and the History Department at Georgetown University

I want at the outset to thank the three commentators for their insightful, wise, and generous reviews of my new study. I am grateful for their accolades, but I must address the interpretive issues they raise.

Jolyon Howorth speaks of a “quibble” over my contention that France tried “to tame the hyperpower.” He thinks I overdo the French/American struggle over security strategy, slight the desire of both countries to construct a viable European defense capacity, and exaggerate the anti-American dimensions of French policy. He calls France “a totally reliable ally” with respect to fighting alongside the U.S. in conflicts like Bosnia. Professor Howorth is both perceptive and correct in arguing that the narrative changed after Saint-Malo (1998) when Washington became a cheerleader for European defense. Yet within my time frame that ends in 2000, which Howorth allows, the main story was a French-led confrontation with the U.S. over reshaping NATO. François Mitterrand, moreover, was something less than “a totally reliable” ally in both the first Gulf War and Bosnia. Even after the beginning of the new millennium the U.S. sought European aid from a junior partner, but not an autonomous European defense entity. The U.S. remained anxious, as it was earlier, about a European force independent of NATO. Washington may have become a champion of a European defense, but it insisted it be built on its terms, i.e., that the U.S. led when it wanted, received assistance when it needed, and it handed off to Europeans when it elected to stand aside. Thus I agree with Howorth that in the long-term this story is not a simple *bras de fer* between the two allies and that the U.S. warmed to the prospects of ESDP. But the 1990s represented a more contentious chapter. And I am skeptical about U.S. intentions after 2000 of encouraging an autonomous European security entity, and am persuaded that France retains the goal of constructing just such a capacity.

Alessandro Brogi thinks that Gaullism continues to characterize French policy, if in a “mitigated” or “modified” form and that I have been hasty in writing about a “Gaullist exorcism” by the 1970s. In this he is in good company with other experts who stress continuities in French policy.¹ Professor Brogi further finds some inconsistency because I also contend that France continued to measure itself against the U.S. and to seek global rank. Far be it for me to banish Gaullism because, as Brogi correctly reminds H-Diplo readers, certain essentials of the General’s stance survive. For example, France retains its “allied but not aligned” posture, an independent nuclear deterrent, and its wariness of American unilateralism. Yet we must also acknowledge that much of Gaullism has been quietly abandoned. France during the 1980s and 1990s suppressed the reflex that required it to take exception to all of Washington’s initiatives; it discarded De Gaulle’s abrasive and condescending diplomatic style; it curtailed its global pretensions; it relinquished its unwillingness to fight with, and under, U.S. military command; and it saw

¹ See for example: Frédéric Bozo, *La Politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012).

its security embedded in NATO—which it offered to rejoin in 1996 and succeeded in doing so in 2009. And, at the more personal level of presidential behavior, Gaullist loyalists must have been dismayed at Jacques Chirac entertaining American reporters with stories of working as a soda jerk when he was a summer student in Boston or Nicolas Sarkozy vacationing in New England in order to be close to President George W. Bush. All these concessions represent a distancing from the Gaullism of the 1960s and perhaps they constitute what Brogi means when he speaks of a modified form of Gaullism. Gaullism survives but only in the sense of setting a broad policy agenda based on guarding French independence, asserting France globally, and measuring success by its non-aligned partnership with the U.S. In Hubert Védrine’s notorious speech in 1997 invoking the American “hyperpower” we have only the faint echo of a Gaullist sermon: Védrine admonished his countrymen to accept a smaller world role, to stop taunting the U.S., and to be “realistic” in their dealings with Washington. Perhaps we need to admit that Gaullism is not what it once was?

Brogi raises a second question about Franco-American relations, pointing out that I may underestimate France’s “hegemonic desires” and the way this contradicts its proclaimed goals of multilateralism and multipolarity. He speaks of “hypocrisy” here: France, he contends, is the least fit of European nations to adopt this role. French designs for building a European defense pillar concealed France’s own hegemonic agenda. This is a legitimate rejoinder. To be sure there was some hypocrisy here and the U.S. was right to be suspicious of French intentions. However, I think the French commitment to multilateralism, for example its United Nations-first policy, is not mere camouflage for the country’s selfish ambitions. And “hegemony” is too strong a term to characterize French goals. “Leadership” seems more accurate even if sometimes it took a condescending form as was the case when President Chirac in 2003 admonished those East Europeans who sided with the U.S. over Iraq to behave themselves.

The extent of Americanization is another issue raised by these two reviewers. Both Professors Howorth and Brogi think I go too far in stressing that the French have been seduced by American popular culture. Howorth prefers my more general conclusion that despite the best efforts of American purveyors of everything from soft drinks to movies, the French remain French. He wryly points out drinking Coke instead of wine may have cost Sarkozy votes in the 2007 election. Brogi suggests that domestication of American exports was more characteristic of the Americanization process, and that transatlantic exchange was “reciprocal.” I have written extensively on this subject and I dissent from those like Richard Pells who see transatlantic exchange of popular culture as balanced.² In fact such trade can be likened to a bicycle path (Europe to U.S.) versus a superhighway (U.S. to Europe)—and, according to the latest assessments, it remains that way.³ And in the three

² Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

³ David W. Ellwood, *The Shock of America: Europe and the Challenge of the Century* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Frédéric Martel, *Mainstream: Enquête sur la guerre globale de la culture et des médias* (Paris: Champs actuel, 2010).

cases I examine most closely, Coca-Cola, Disney, and McDonald's, little domestication occurred. Nothing essential about these Yankee intruders changed when they captured large shares of the French market: not their products, their operations, their management, their labor relations, or their marketing. And they exploited their associations with America. In fact, instead of being domesticated, their business strategies changed how their French competitors operated. Beyond my case studies there is further evidence of "seduction" by the Americans. Even with respect to the "holy of holies" of French culture, the French language, the French now lace their speech with American phrases and most French students learn English as their first foreign language. I admit that Americanization is difficult to measure and it has been neither uniform nor simple and, as Brogi reminds us, much of the process consists of mutual mixing or hybridization. In my study I illustrate this process. For example, in the case of the cinema, in an effort to keep Hollywood at bay, the French adopted many of its techniques including making lavish, English-language productions. But in many arenas the Americans did not accommodate the locals and had their way. The French were seduced when Disneyland Paris—a replica of Disney's Florida theme park-- drew more visitors (half of whom were natives) than Notre Dame or the Louvre.

With respect to explaining Gallic anti-Americanism, Brogi thinks I neglect America's role. American exceptionalism, he argues, was a veritable ideology that excited Europeans' hopes and fears and set standards that America could not meet. This is a fair point although my study discusses at some length American hubris, especially its triumphalist phase that peaked under Bill Clinton and I show how elites and the public responded to American declarations of exceptionalism. But my basic rejoinder to Brogi is that *The French Way* is long enough as it is and the American side of the story would require another book—a task I may entertain one day.

Howorth notes that some readers (not him) may regret that I stop my narrative before the dramatic clash between the two countries over Iraq in 2003. Why stop in 2000? I did so because I did not want my analyses to read like a prologue to an event that may prove to be a transitory and, in many ways, an atypical episode in Franco-American relations. My story should stand on its own, as an examination of two decades when the French used America as a foil, rather than as a prelude to an unusually nasty transatlantic spat. Moreover, I have already stretched the legitimate domain of the historian by addressing the 1980s and 1990s and wanted to show some respect for historical perspective. Other historians, I am aware, have undertaken the task of examining the diplomacy of the Iraq crisis.

Finally Kim Munholland finds my story at times to be "painful reading." For Francophiles like us it is distressing to confront the recent struggles between the "two oldest allies", as well as the persistent stereotyping, mutual suspicions, latent anxieties, and misunderstandings. Yet Francophiles should also find some solace in *The French Way*. For it argues that much of so-called primal anti-Americanism has faded even among intellectuals, that the French sustain their reservations about Americanization and set limits to its progress, and that the "French way" which includes such admirable goals as social solidarity, a controlled market economy, and respect for high culture survive. My story should, in some respects, please him.

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