

ADVANCED READING

PASSAGE 1

Bernard Bailyn has recently reinterpreted the early history of the United States by applying new social research findings on the experiences of European migrants. In his reinterpretation, migration becomes the organizing principle for rewriting the history of preindustrial North America. His approach rests on four separate propositions.

The first of these asserts that residents of early modern England moved regularly about their countryside; migrating to the New World was simply a "natural spillover." Although at first the colonies held little positive attraction for the English—they would rather have stayed home—by the eighteenth century people increasingly migrated to America because they regarded it as the land of opportunity. Secondly, Bailyn holds that, contrary to the notion that used to flourish in America history textbooks, there was never a typical New World community. For example, the economic and demographic character of early New England towns varied considerably.

Bailyn's third proposition suggests two general patterns prevailing among the many thousands of migrants: one group came as indentured servants, another came to acquire land. Surprisingly, Bailyn suggests that those who recruited indentured servants were the driving forces of transatlantic migration. These colonial entrepreneurs helped determine the social character of people who came to preindustrial North America. At first, thousands of unskilled laborers were recruited; by the 1730's, however, American employers demanded skilled artisans.

Finally, Bailyn argues that the colonies were a half-civilized hinterland of the European culture system. He is undoubtedly correct to insist that the colonies were part of an Anglo-American empire. But to divide the empire into English core and colonial periphery, as Bailyn does, devalues the achievements of colonial culture. It is true, as Bailyn claims, that high culture in the colonies never matched that in England. But what of seventeenth-century New England, where the settlers created effective laws, built a distinguished university, and published books? Bailyn might respond that New England was exceptional. However, the ideas and institutions developed by New England Puritans had powerful effects on North American culture.

Although Bailyn goes on to apply his approach to some thousands of indentured servants who migrated just prior to the revolution, he fails to link their experience with the political development of the United States. Evidence presented in his work suggests how we might make such a connection. These indentured servants were treated as slaves for the period during which they had sold their time to American employers. It is not surprising that as soon as they served their time they passed up good wages in the cities and headed west to ensure their personal independence by acquiring land. Thus, it is in the west that a peculiarly American political culture began, among colonists who were suspicious of authority and intensely anti-aristocratic..

PASSAGE 2

Many United States companies have, unfortunately, made the search for legal protection from import competition into a major line of work. Since 1980 the United States International Trade Commission (ITC) has received about 280 complaints alleging damage from imports that benefit from subsidies by foreign governments. Another 340 charge that foreign companies "dumped" their products in the United States at "less than fair value." Even when no unfair practices are alleged, the simple claim that an industry has been injured by imports is sufficient grounds to seek relief.

Contrary to the general impression, this quest for import relief has hurt more companies than it has helped. As corporations begin to function globally, they develop an intricate web of marketing, production, and research relationships. The complexity of these relationships makes it unlikely that a system of import relief laws will meet the strategic needs of all the units under the same parent company.

Internationalization increases the danger that foreign companies will use import relief laws against the very companies the laws were designed to protect. Suppose a United States-owned company establishes an overseas plant to manufacture a product while its competitor makes the same product in the United States. If the competitor can prove injury from the imports—and that the United States company received a subsidy from a foreign government to build its plant abroad—the United States company's products will be uncompetitive in the United States, since they would be subject to duties.

Perhaps the most brazen case occurred when the ITC investigated allegations that Canadian companies were injuring the United States salt industry by dumping rock salt, used to de-ice roads. The bizarre aspect of the complaint was that a foreign conglomerate with United States operations was crying for help against a United States company with foreign operations. The "United States" company claiming injury was a subsidiary of a Dutch conglomerate, while the "Canadian" companies included a subsidiary of a Chicago firm that was the second-largest domestic producer of rock salt.

PASSAGE 3

At the end of the nineteenth century, a rising interest in Native American customs and an increasing desire to understand Native American culture prompted ethnologists to begin recording the life stories of Native American. Ethnologists had a distinct reason for wanting to hear the stories: they were after linguistic or anthropological data that would supplement their own field observations, and they believed that the personal stories, even of a single individual, could increase their understanding of the cultures that they had been observing from without. In addition many ethnologists at the turn of the century believed that Native American manners and customs were rapidly disappearing, and that it was important to preserve for posterity as much information as could be adequately recorded before the cultures disappeared forever.

There were, however, arguments against this method as a way of acquiring accurate and complete information. Franz Boas, for example, described autobiographies as being "of limited value, and useful chiefly for the study of the perversion of truth by memory," while Paul Radin contended that investigators rarely spent enough time with the tribes they were observing, and inevitably derived results too tinged by the investigator's own emotional tone to be reliable.

Even more importantly, as these life stories moved from the traditional oral mode to recorded written form, much was inevitably lost. Editors often decided what elements were significant to the field research on a given tribe. Native Americans recognized that the essence of their lives could not be communicated in English and that events that they thought significant were often deemed unimportant by their interviewers. Indeed, the very act of telling their stories could force Native American narrators to distort their cultures, as taboos had to be broken to speak the names of dead relatives crucial to their family stories.

Despite all of this, autobiography remains a useful tool for ethnological research: such personal reminiscences and impressions, incomplete as they may be, are likely to throw more light on the working of the mind and emotions than any amount of speculation from an ethnologist or ethnological theorist from another culture.