



4-1-1991

Forward

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Recommended Citation

Bledsoe, Wayne (1991) "Forward," *Comparative Civilizations Review*: Vol. 24 : No. 24 , Article 2.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol24/iss24/2>

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FOREWORD

The present issue of *Comparative Civilizations Review* contains four articles that address various problems and issues associated with the processes of assimilation and acculturation.

J. Steven Thomas, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Alabama, concentrates on a single coastal community in Alabama in his analysis of the assimilation and adjustment problems encountered by Indochinese fishermen attempting to infiltrate the Anglo fishing industry along the Gulf coast. In addition to his administrative duties, Thomas is a Professor of Anthropology and currently serves as a consultant to the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council.

Gary M. Feinman and **Linda M. Nicholas**, both of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, reject theories traditionally used by Diffusionists and Developmentalists to explain the processes of assimilation and acculturation that took place in late, prehispanic Mesoamerica. In place of the more traditional theories, Feinman and Nicholas proffer a macroregional process, which they find preferable due to its sensitivity to questions of scale. Feinman, an Associate Professor of Anthropology, is the co-author of *Ancient Mesoamerica* and Linda M. Nicholas, an Honorary Fellow in the Department of Anthropology, has co-authored several articles on Mesoamerica.

Another novel approach to the issue of assimilation and acculturation is provided by **Thomas D. Hall**, who investigates the role of nomads in civilizational change. After defining the language of discourse, Hall concludes that the evidence is compelling that nomadic groups have played a highly variable role in social change. Hall is the Lester M. Jones Professor of Sociology at Depauw University and is the author of *Social Change in the Southwest, 1330-1880* and co-editor of *Core/Periphery Relations in Pre-Capitalist Worlds*.

Kenneth Stunkel, Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Monmouth College, is an Intellectual historian, specializing in Asian and European relations. In the present work, Stunkel compares and contrasts the long-lived Chinese civilization with the comparatively youthful West and concludes that the phenomenal Chinese longevity can be attributed, in part, to their very unique attitude toward "continuity" and "change."

Until the nineteenth century, whenever plagued by disturbances, China always tended to return to her original character. A Professor of History, Stunkel has numerous publications on comparative civilization, most of which have a science and technology focus.

New to the *Comparative Civilizations Review* this issue is the "Forum," a section designed to invite and encourage discourse among the readership. Comments pertaining to articles published in the *CCR*, along with communiques of general interest to fellow civilizationalists, reports on "works in progres," and other pertinent topics which you bring to the attention of the editor will be considered for publication in the "Forum" section of the journal.

In the maiden run of the "Forum," **Matthew Melko**, Professor of Anthropology at Wright State University and the immediate past President of the IS CSC, provides an informative and rather charming vignette on the topic of "Breakdowns." Drawn from his intimate knowledge of Arnold Toynbee and private communications with Toynbee's son, Philip, Melko strikes an amusing chord on a heretofore somber theme.

In a more serious timbre **Arthur S. Iberall**, a recently retired UCLA Physicist, and **David Wilkinson**, a Professor of Political Science at UCLA, respond to John Hord's review of one of their publications. The Iberall/Wilkinson response is an amplification of the aforementioned publication rather than an emendation of Hord's review. Iberall's and Wilkinson's common interest in complex systems has resulted in several joint publications designed to bridge the gap between physics and the social sciences.

Finally, **Roger Wescott**, in his comments on an article by Edmund Leites, entreats scholars engaged in comparative research to devote increased energies to making explicit comparisons of civilizations rather than being content with pale allusions. Wescott is a Professor of Anthropology at Drew University and the first holder of the Endowed Chair of Excellence in Humanities at the University of Tennessee.

Those readers interested in submitting material to the Forum, should address their correspondence to Wayne M. Bledsoe, Editor, *CCR*, Department of History, University of Missouri-Rolla, Rolla, MO 65401. Those submitting articles for publication consideration should send three manuscript copies (3) to the same address.

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Editor