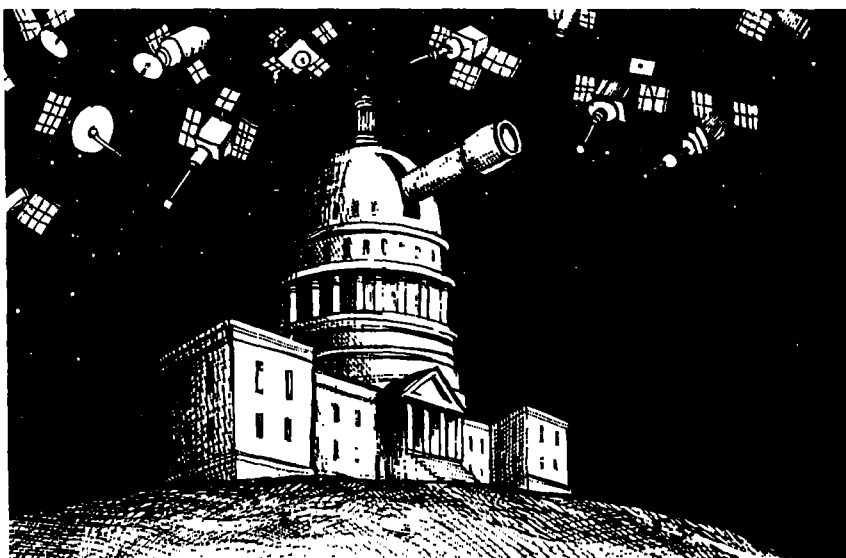


ment that new early warning radars be located on the periphery of each country and oriented outward. However, the treaty is ambiguous in that it exempts such radars from the requirement if their *purpose* is the tracking of space objects. The Soviets have said that Krasnoyarsk radar is for space tracking purposes and that this will be apparent when it is completed. The Reagan administration insists that because of the siting, orientation, and capability of this radar, it "almost certainly constitutes a violation" of the ABM Treaty.)

Deadly Gambits, Strobe Talbott's excellent new book on arms control policy-making in the Reagan administration, quotes START negotiator Edward Rowny as saying privately on a number of occasions that the ABM Treaty was "an historical mistake" that "tied our hands forever." Other analysts have noted the influence on the star wars speech of members of the president's "kitchen cabinet"—right-wing beer baron Joseph Coors and physicist Edward Teller, both SDI enthusiasts.

The evidence that ideology and politics played a major role in stimulating the star wars speech is strong, almost overwhelming, but the evidence that technology played *no* role is lacking. Here Stein strains a bit to force the evidence to fit his hypothesis and, as a result, weakens his own credibility. Stein is wrong in insisting that at the time of the star wars speech there was no real ballistic missile defense (BMD) program. When Congress ratified the ABM Treaty in 1972, it made clear (in the so-called Jackson Amendment) that it expected a vigorous program of research and development as well as the modernization of U.S. strategic forces. The Army in particular, responsible for BMD in the Pentagon, was required to maintain the capability to deploy an ABM system in five years in the event of treaty abrogation and break-out by the other side. To meet this requirement the Army's Ballistic Missile Defense Office has maintained a modest but active BMD research program, conducting numerous simulated interceptions from its test facility on Kwajalein Island in the Pacific. It was this program that was responsible for the June, 1984, test in which one unarmed ICBM warhead was successfully intercepted and destroyed by a kinetic energy interceptor. Moreover, the director of the new Strategic Defense Initiative Office in the Pentagon has directed that his organization build on the Army's efforts and, at least in the near term, concentrate on developing precisely the kind of BMD system on which the Army was working. Technological momentum may not have caused the president to make



Stephen Swamy

the star wars speech, but it is shaping the form the SDI will take in the years to come.

Having been set in motion, the SDI program has already acquired a momentum that will make cancellation or even change of direction difficult indeed. The Soviets have no choice—given the ten-to-fifteen-year lead time associated with most new weapons technology programs—but to assume SDI will continue and be successful. They have no choice but to push development of their own counterpart system and of countermeasures as well, some of which they have been working on for some years. That may be the most troubling part of SDI.

The Pentagon's Richard DeLauer, undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, has noted that without some limits on offensive forces, obtained via arms control agreements, there is no way SDI could be successful. However, rather than incentives for limiting offensive forces, SDI and its Soviet counterparts are incentives for each side to *expand* its offensive forces to overcome defenses on the other side. In short, SDI needs arms control but destroys any incentive each side might have for agreeing to limits on offensive weapons. The Reagan administration has yet to come to grips with that basic contradiction.

Stein's book is interesting and provocative. Its strength—its detailed, in-depth analysis of the two cases—is also its main weakness. Having seen that politics was the critical (if not the only) factor in these two decisions, we simply cannot be sure how widely we can apply this conclusion. If politics and ideology are clearly important, so is technological change and momentum, and we will have to await other case studies to give a definitive answer to the questions at hand. **WV**

**THE CLOTHING OF CLIO:
A STUDY OF THE REPRESENTATION
OF HISTORY IN NINETEENTH-
CENTURY BRITAIN AND FRANCE**

by Stephen Bann

(Cambridge University Press; 216 pp.; \$37.50)

Richard Rand

Consider, as you must, the title and subtitle of this book. Does its title refer to the clothing worn by Clio, Muse of History, or to the act of dressing Clio in her clothes? Does its subtitle refer to some accomplished image of "history" or to some ongoing effort, in the last century and in this one, to accomplish such an image? Ambiguous titles are an academic convention these days, followed promptly by an analysis of the ambiguity. In *The Clothing of Clio* Stephen Bann gives us more than one ambiguity but leaves the analysis to us. Or consider next, as you certainly would if you had a copy of the book in hand, the reproduction of Vermeer's "The Artist in His Studio" on the dustjacket. It is also a convention of our day to put some famous painting at the front of one's book and start up the text with a commentary. Foucault did so with Velasquez in *The Order of Things*, but Bann never mentions Vermeer.

The Clothing of Clio is punctuated with surprises of this kind, surprises which, when joined to a bland and diffident prose style, a documentational overload, a tendentious reading of intricate works, and a disjointed redundancy of argument, make it a remarkably difficult book to read. Poe might have called it a book that does not allow itself to be read at all. It has, however, allowed itself to be published, and by the

Cambridge University Press. Given the role of that press in the history of the field of history, this event is well worthy of comment. It sheds some valuable light on the ties between a volatile field of study and a venerable institution—one that has “printed and published continuously since 1584.”

Among other things, *The Clothing of Clio* is a tentative essay in the theory of writing history. This theory has, as we know, a complex history of its own. Over the past three centuries there have emerged (and submerged or merged) four contending traditions of historiography, each drawing its disciplinary rationale from the premises of a field outside the field of history. There is the tradition that draws on the model of the physical sciences (von Ranke, Comte), the one that draws on speculative logic (Hegel, Croce), the one that draws on classical rhetoric (Vico, Michelet, the Structuralists), and the one that draws on theological philology (Schleiermacher, Dilthey). Each has its dream of the Truth, and each has its fiefdoms and citadels, its linguistic, geographical, and national boundaries. The history of historiography consists of the interplay between the four. Notably, the first tradition—history as a version of physical science—has pitched its castle on the banks of the Cam. It did so in 1895 with the appointment of the Right Honorable John Edward Emerich, the First Baron Acton, to the Regius Professorship of Modern History. A true believer in the scientism of Leopold von Ranke, Lord Acton engendered that massive and “continuing” enterprise known as the Cambridge Modern History, with its correlative offspring, the Cambridge Ancient History and the Cambridge Medieval History. Among the treasures of the University Press, these are the richest, its crown jewels.

What, in this context, is the role of *The Clothing of Clio*? Were the good Lord Acton to read it, he might find cause for alarm: he might feel slightly wounded by the brief and dismissive remarks directed at his own work, and by the fact that his project receives no mention at all. He might be put off by the author’s eclectic attentions to taxidermy (Chapter 1), to early photography (Chapter 3), to museum design (Chap-

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ter 4), to country houses (Chapter 5), and to the novels of Scott (throughout), were it not that his own *Modern History* pays a like, and likewise eclectic, heed to the fine arts, to crafts, and to sciences. But what would surely bother the baron is Bann’s commitment, erratic but always sincere, to the formal methods of structuralism, to the rhetorical analysis of pictures, houses, museums, and history books in terms of syntagms and paradigms, metaphors and metonymies. He might suppose that Bann has forsaken science for rhetoric as his theoretical model. Optimistically, the blurb calls *The Clothing of Clio* a “provocative study.” The baron might well be provoked.

But Bann has not abandoned the baron. Rather—and this is the burden of his book—he argues an actual harmony of the two rather different traditions, and he has furnished the banns for the two. As he states in his closing remarks: “History as science is interfused and interwoven with history as myth. There is a real interest in exploring the texture of this interrelation, which is so much more intricate when its threads are not torn sharply apart.” Vico joins hands with von Ranke, and the baron joins hands with Barthes. And it ought to be said that Bann, in this matter, is undeniably correct. Indeed, though he does not argue the point, he could say it as well of the traditions deriving from logic and philology. All four modes of historiography share a common ground, a common root system; their most basic premises are the same. More urgently still, they share a common, if unmentioned, theoretical adversary: A theory of history is on the rise that threatens to date them all. Now is the time for alliance, and the conciliatory ways of Bann reflect this political fact.

Briefly, all too briefly, we may put the problem thus: History has traditionally seen itself as a “representation” of something basically “other” than the things it “represents”: the original and the copy are thought to differ in essence. Bann calls this “other thing” the “real,” and history may be considered either a direct representation of this “real” (von Ranke, Acton) or a representation of the actions and artifacts of a culture, where culture, it is assumed, is not the “real,” and the “real,” for its part, is never examined—precisely because, not being culture, it is not susceptible to examination (the Structuralist view). History, in either instance, is posited as a fundamental opposite of the real, and the paired concepts of the real, and the representation constitute an article of faith, a sacred cow, a theological touchstone. It is signaled in *The Clothing of Clio* by such paired terms

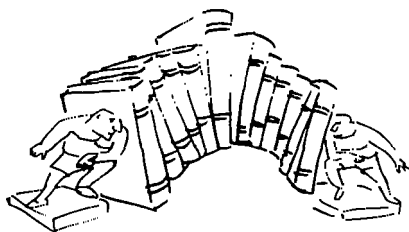
as “reality” and “fiction,” “the real world” and “the mythic,” the “historically authentic” and the “merely rhetorical.” The point of this conceptual system, which has elsewhere been called a “precritical empiricism,” is that it presupposes as its starting point an essential difference between events and reports and directs our attention to the minding of that difference above all.

The counterthrust to this traditional habit of mind might be called, with a tip of the hat to Democritus, the argument of “critical materialism.” It holds that conceptual oppositions remain, at bottom, merely conceptual, and that concepts alone do not determine history, either in the doing or the telling. It is not some difference or other within the field of concepts that matters but another, a *different* difference—the one between the field of concepts on the one hand, and various non-concepts on the other.

The term “non-concept” does not, in this instance, refer to the nonverbal or even the nonhuman, but to things that, though acceptable to the mind and infinitely repeatable, are not essentially meaningful. Non-concepts are precisely insignificant; they are such things as dates, proper names, the whole world of testamentary markings, such as “1066,” or “Hastings,” or “Bayeux.” Why should these particular traces have forced themselves on our thinking at the expense of other, equally insignificant, candidates such as “1065” or “Woking,” or “Cotentin”? This is the inconceivable event that historians try to conceptualize; their effort is the game they play. The game is played, however, not only in the world of books but in the world at large. We all engage in the same effort to comprehend the incomprehensible, to calculate the incalculable, the random happening.

The Clothing of Clio exhibits precisely this fascination. In the welter of its concepts we trip over happy *trouvailles*, for Bann has a gifted sense of the unsung, the telling detail—be it an unnoticed carving by Clodion or an unassuming photography by Fox Talbot or a floor plan for the Musée de Cluny. (That these details are invariably works of art in no way displaces the central concern, the interplay between concept and non-concept.) The mere name of “Rembrandt” was never glorious until Rembrandt did his thing. What Bann does not comprehend, however, is that his fated effort to comprehend his *trouvailles* is fated to fail: for there was never either a science or a rhetoric of chance. Chance is what happens to science, including the science or art of history. The joke, of course, is that a growing awareness of this fact, here and

now, is itself in the very process of disrupting the good old ways of the baron. Lord Acton's castle does well to welcome the opponents of an earlier day, for a day of reckoning is at hand. **WV**



Briefly Noted

ENDLESS ENEMIES

by Jonathan Kwitny

(Congdon & Weed; 448 pp.; \$19.95)

Two brief quotations capture the essence of *Endless Enemies*:

"The Zaire experience is in no way a test of our own domestic economic or political systems. In our handling of Zaire, great effort was made to suppress both democracy and free enterprise—in fact, to suppress almost everything we say we believe in. But the Zaire experience certainly is a fair test of our *foreign* policy. The measure of that policy is not alone, or even primarily, in the conditions of the Zairian people, poignant and compelling as their plight is. The test is in America's *own* plight. Nations do not operate as charities, and a nation unsuccessful in providing for its own people cannot be charitable at all....

"It is hard to make a fair argument that they [the Zairians] don't *need* a revolution. Even in the Zairian power structure, all but the most generously rewarded insiders tend to be discontented with the system. If Samuel Adams had been born 35 years ago in the Congo, he would today be in northern Angola with 5,000 loyal followers, trying to buy arms from anyone who would sell them to him."

Kwitny did not come to his task after long years of pleading for reason in little-read left-wing journals or goring the foreign policy oxen of various administrations. He gained much of the experience and keen insight displayed here during a distinguished career at the *Wall Street Journal*, a stout defender of capitalism and the American free enterprise system, not given to advocating revolt.

Kwitny stoutly defends these things too. But while otherwise reasonable, people applaud the invasion of tiny Caribbean islands

or a "get tough" attitude with Nicaragua (where were they when the Somozas were in power?) and call the unnecessary use of force or out-and-out illegal acts against foreign governments "hardball" or "pragmatism." Kwitny exposes the shabbiness of such postwar American tactics and, in so doing, offers a different view of what is *really* American. As he is frank in putting the case, America would be a much more popular nation if it practiced what it preached.

Kwitny points out that the countries with the most odious systems and those now most immune to American influence are precisely those nations in which we have fought for power, e.g., Vietnam and Iran. The Soviet Union has often been kicked out of client states because of the failure of its system; the United States, on the other hand, wins friends by letting countries *choose* to adopt American values. "Forceful intervention by a big power in a Third World country, no matter how well-intentioned, is almost always dramatically harmful to the people in the country being intervened in. Intervention by either major power, regardless of what the other power is doing, usually tends to be counterproductive for the intervener."

I present these quotations to capture the spirit in which the book is written. But *Endless Enemies* is anything but a book of generalizations. In presenting the long (and, alas, lengthening) list of American interventions, covert and overt, since the Second World War, Kwitny uses all the tools of the novelist to make his book, well, enjoyable as well as both dismaying and informative. Using well-researched and scrupulously documented anecdotes, he presents us with the eccentrics, shady characters, murderers, liars, and naifs who have been the front men for the U.S. in the four corners of the earth, and as often as not have helped make enemies for America that it will take a long time to *unmake*.

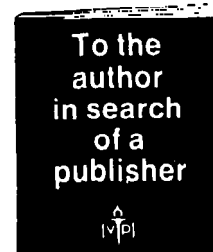
In sum, *Endless Enemies* permits any American who professes to care what his government does overseas to understand why CIA-sponsored coups, the infiltration of foreign labor unions, and political assistance to U.S. multinationals to help them turn overseas markets into dumping grounds for unsafe products are not only wrong but tend to hurt us in the end. Kwitny's is a passionate call for adherence to stated American principles—if not simply because that is right and good and fair, he concludes, then because the alternatives almost always backfire. We've now got Chile, Zaire, Vietnam, Iran, Cuba, Nicaragua, South Africa, the Philippines, and Pakistan to prove it.

—Rafael Suarez, Jr.

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