UNDERESTIMATING IRAQ CIVILIAN DEATHS BY A FACTOR OF FIFTEEN?

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world civilizations
world civilizations
The Wages of Destruction
Adam Tooze (Author)

Editorial Reviews

From Booklist

Tooze's economic history of the Third Reich is, in a word, monumental. Lately, social and ideological analyses of Hitler’s strategic choices have prevailed; in part because of the volume and complexity of available data, even the most economically savvy historians of World War II have generally provided only fragmentary glimpses of the myriad ways in which economics
influenced German rearmament and aggression. As Tooze argues, however, the choices made by the Nazi war machine were as economically driven as they were Hitler driven. The author challenges a number of commonly held assumptions, among them the notion that successful rearmament was caused by the Nazi state’s job-creation efforts and the idea that Hitler did not intend to start a continental war in attacking Czechoslovakia. Tooze also addresses the relationship between economics and ideology at Auschwitz. The net result, emerging from more than 800 pages of genuinely readable macroeconomic analysis, is an original and comprehensive thesis that couches the strategic choices of the Third Reich firmly within an increasingly American twentieth century. Originally released to broad acclaim in the UK in 2006, Tooze’s tome sets a high bar for the historians of the twenty-first century.

Book Description
In this groundbreaking new history, Adam Tooze provides the clearest picture to date of the Nazi war machine and its undoing. There was no aspect of Nazi power untouched by economics—it was Hitler’s obsession and the reason the Nazis came to power in the first place. The Second World War was fought, in Hitler’s view, to create a European empire strong enough to take on the United States. But as The Wages of Destruction makes clear, Hitler’s armies were never powerful enough to beat either Britain or the Soviet Union—and Hitler never had a serious plan as to how he might defeat the United States. The Wages of Destruction is an eye-opening and controversial account that will challenge conventional interpretations of the period and will find an enthusiastic readership among fans of Ian Kershaw and Richard Evans.

BACKCOVER: Advance praise for The Wages of Destruction:

“One of the most important and original books to be published about the Third Reich in the past twenty years. A tour de force.”
—Niall Ferguson, author of Colossus

“Unputdownable epic history . . . Transforms not only our reading of Hitler’s sordid regime, but the history of the twentieth century itself. Brilliantly written, its original scholarship is telling and lightly borne on every page.”
Product Details:

- Hardcover: 832 pages
- Publisher: Allen Lane

June 29, 2006

- ISBN-10: 0713995661
Georg Simmel (1858-1918)

Georg Simmel was born on March 1, 1858, in the very heart of Berlin, the corner of Leipzigerstrasse and Friedrichstrasse. This was a curious birthplace—it would correspond to Times Square in New York—but it seems symbolically fitting for a man who throughout his life lived in the intersection of many movements, intensely affected by the cross-currents of intellectual traffic and by a multiplicity of moral directions.

Simmel was a modern urban man, without roots in traditional folk culture. Like “the stranger” he described in his brilliant essay of the same name, he
was near and far at the same time...

*The Stranger*

If wandering is the liberation from every given point in space, and thus the conceptional opposite to fixation at such a point, the sociological form of the “stranger” presents the unity, as it were, of these two characteristics. This phenomenon too, however, reveals that spatial relations are only the condition, on the one hand, and the symbol, on the other, of human relations. The stranger is thus being discussed here, not in the sense often touched upon in the past, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the person who comes today and stays to morrow. He is, so to speak, the potential wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself.

The unity of nearness and remoteness involved in every human relation is organized, in the phenomenon of the stranger, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him, distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near. For, to be a stranger is naturally a very positive relation; it is a specific form of interaction. The inhabitants of Sirius are not really strangers to us, at least not in any social logically relevant sense: they do not exist for us at all; they are beyond far and near. The stranger, like the poor and like sundry “inner enemies,” is an element of the group itself. His position as a full-fledged member involves both being outside it and confronting it. The following statements, which are by no means intended as exhaustive, indicate how elements which increase distance and repel, in the relations of and with the stranger produce a pattern of coordination and consistent interaction.

Throughout the history of economics the stranger everywhere appears as the trader, or the trader as stranger. As long as economy is essentially self-sufficient, or products are exchanged within a spatially narrow group, it needs no middleman: a trader is only required for products that originate outside the group. Insofar as members do not leave the circle in order to buy these necessities— in which case they are the “strange” merchants in that outside territory—the trader must be a stranger, since nobody else has a chance to make a living.

This position of the stranger stands out more sharply if he settles down in the place of his activity, instead of leaving it again: in innumerable cases even this is possible only if he can live by intermediate trade. Once an economy is somehow closed the land is divided up, and handicrafts are established that satisfy the demand for them, the trader, too, can find his existence. For in trade, which alone makes possible unlimited combinations, intelligence always finds expansions and new territories, an
achievement which is very difficult to attain for the original producer with his lesser mobility and his dependence upon a circle of customers that can be increased only slowly. Trade can always absorb more people than primary production; it is, therefore, the sphere indicated for the stranger, who intrudes as a supernumerary, so to speak, into a group in which the economic positions are actually occupied—the classical example is the history of European Jews. The stranger is by nature no “owner of soil”—soil not only in the physical, but also in the figurative sense of a life-substance which is fixed, if not in a point in space, at least in an ideal point of the social environment. Although in more intimate relations, he may develop all kinds of charm and significance, as long as he is considered a stranger in the eyes of the other, he is not an “owner of soil.” Restriction to intermediary trade, and often (as though sublimated from it) to pure finance, gives him the specific character of mobility. If mobility takes place within a closed group, it embodies that synthesis of nearness and distance which constitutes the formal position of the stranger. For, the fundamentally mobile person comes in contact, at one time or another, with every individual, but is not organically connected, through established ties of kinship, locality, and occupation, with any single one.

Another expression of this constellation lies in the objectivity of the stranger. He is not radically committed to the unique ingredients and peculiar tendencies of the group, and therefore approaches them with the specific attitude of “objectivity.” But objectivity does not simply involve passivity and detachment; it is a particular structure composed of distance and nearness, indifference and involvement. I refer to the discussion (in the chapter on “Superordination and Subordination” [8]) of the dominating positions of the person who is a stranger in the group; its most typical instance was the practice of those Italian cities to call their judges from the outside, because no native was free from entanglement in family and party interests.

With the objectivity of the stranger is connected, also, the phenomenon touched upon above, [9] although it is chiefly (but not exclusively) true of the stranger who moves on. This is the fact that he often receives the most surprising openness—confidences which sometimes have the character of a confessional and which would be carefully withheld from a more closely related person. Objectivity is by no means non-participation (which is altogether outside both subjective and objective interaction), but a positive and specific kind of participation—just as the objectivity of a theoretical observation does not refer to the mind as a passive tabula rasa on which things inscribe their qualities, but on the contrary, to its full activity that operates according to its own laws, and to the elimination, thereby, of accidental dislocations and emphases, whose individual and
subjective differences would produce different pictures of the same object.

Objectivity may also be defined as freedom: the objective individual is bound by no commitments which could prejudice his perception, understanding, and evaluation of the given. The freedom, however, which allows the stranger to experience and treat even his close relationships as though from a bird’s-eye view, contains many dangerous possibilities. In uprisings of all sorts, the party attacked has claimed, from the beginning of things, that provocation has come from the outside, through emissaries and instigators. Insofar as this is true, it is an exaggeration of the specific role of the stranger: he is freer practically and theoretically; he surveys conditions with less prejudice; his criteria for them are more general and more objective ideals; he is not tied down in his action by habit, piety, and precedent. [10]

Finally, the proportion of nearness and remoteness which gives the stranger the character of objectivity, also finds practical expression in the more abstract nature of the relation to him. That is, with the stranger one has only certain more general qualities in common, whereas the relation to more organically connected persons is based on the commonness of specific differences from merely general features. In fact, all somehow personal relations follow this scheme in various patterns. They are determined not only by the circumstance that certain common features exist among the individuals, along with individual differences, which either influence the relationship or remain outside of it. For, the common features themselves are basically determined in their effect upon the relation by the question whether they exist only between the participants in this particular relationship, and thus are quite general in regard to this relation, but are specific and incomparable in regard to everything outside of it–or whether the participants feel that these features are common to them because they are common to a group, a type, or mankind in general. In the case of the second alternative, the effectiveness of the common features becomes diluted in proportion to the size of the group composed of members who are similar in this sense. Although the commonness functions as their unifying basis, it does not make these particular persons interdependent on one another, because it could as easily connect everyone of them with all kinds of individuals other than the members of his group. This too, evidently, is a way in which a relationship includes both nearness and distance at the same time: to the extent to which the common features are general, they add, to the warmth of the relation founded on them, an element of coolness, a feeling of the contingency of precisely this relation—the connecting forces have lost their specific and centripetal character.
In the relation to the stranger, it seems to me, this constellation has an extraordinary and basic preponderance over the individual elements that are exclusive with the particular relationship. The stranger is close to us, insofar as we feel between him and ourselves common features of a national, social, occupational, or generally human, nature. He is far from us, insofar as these common features extend beyond him or us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people.

A trace of strangeness in this sense easily enters even the most intimate relationships. In the stage of first passion, erotic relations strongly reject any thought of generalization: the lovers think that there has never been a love like theirs; that nothing can be compared either to the person loved or to the feelings for that person. An estrangement—whether as cause or as consequence it is difficult to decide usually comes at the moment when this feeling of uniqueness vanishes from the relationship. A certain skepticism in regard to its value, in itself and for them, attaches to the very thought that in their relation, after all, they carry out only a generally human destiny; that they experience an experience that has occurred a thousand times before; that, had they not accidentally met their particular partner, they would have found the same significance in another person.

Something of this feeling is probably not absent in any relation, however close, because what is common to two is never common to them alone, but is subsumed under a general idea which includes much else besides, many possibilities of commonness. No matter how little these possibilities become real and how often we forget them, here and there, nevertheless, they thrust themselves between us like shadows, like a mist which escapes every word noted, but which must coagulate into a solid bodily form before it can be called jealousy. In some cases, perhaps the more general, at least the more unsurmountable, strangeness is not due to different and ununderstandable matters. It is rather caused by the fact that similarity, harmony, and nearness are accompanied by the feeling that they are not really the unique property of this particular relationship: they are something more general, something which potentially prevails between the partners and an indeterminate number of others, and therefore gives the relation, which alone was realized, no inner and exclusive necessity.

On the other hand, there is a kind of “strangeness” that rejects the very commonness based on something more general which embraces the parties. The relation of the Greeks to the Barbarians is perhaps typical here, as are all cases in which it is precisely general attributes, felt to be specifically and purely human, that are disallowed to the other. But “stranger,” here, has no positive meaning; the relation to him is a non-relation; he is not what is relevant here, a member of the group itself.
As a group member, rather, he is near and far at the same time, as is characteristic of relations founded only on generally human commonness. But between nearness and distance, there arises a specific tension when the consciousness that only the quite general is common, stresses that which is not common. In the case of the person who is a stranger to the country, the city, the race, etc., however, this non-common element is once more nothing individual, but merely the strangeness of origin, which is or could be common to many strangers. For this reason, strangers are not really conceived as individuals, but as strangers of a particular type: the element of distance is no less general in regard to them than the element of nearness.

This form is the basis of such a special case, for instance, as the tax levied in Frankfort and elsewhere upon medieval Jews. Whereas the Beede [tax] paid by the Christian citizen changed with the changes of his fortune, it was fixed once for all for every single Jew. This fixity rested on the fact that the Jew had his social position as a Jew, not as the individual bearer of certain objective contents. Every other citizen was the owner of a particular amount of property, and his tax followed its fluctuations. But the Jew as a taxpayer was, in the first place, a Jew, and thus his tax situation had an invariable element.

This same position appears most strongly, of course, once even these individual characterizations (limited though they were by rigid invariance) are omitted, and all strangers pay an altogether equal head-tax.

In spite of being inorganically appended to it, the stranger is yet an organic member of the group. Its uniform life includes the specific conditions of this element. Only we do not know how to designate the peculiar unity of this position other than by saying that it is composed of certain measures of nearness and distance. Although some quantities of them characterize all relationships, a special proportion and reciprocal tension produce the particular, formal relation to the “stranger.”

ENDNOTES


9. On pp. 500-502 of the same chapter from which the present “Exhurs” is taken (IX, “Der Raum und die raumlichen Ordnungen der Gesellschaft,” (Space and the Spatial Organization of Society). The chapter itself is not included in this volume.–Tr.

10. But where the attacked make the assertion falsely, they do so from the
tendency of those in higher position to exculpate inferiors, who, up to the rebellion, have been in a consistently close relation with them. For, by creating the fiction that the rebels were not really guilty, but only instigated, and that the rebellion did not really start with them, they exonerate themselves, inasmuch as they altogether deny all real grounds for the uprising.

A major representative of the German sociological tradition, Georg Simmel (1858-1918) has influenced social thinkers ranging from the Chicago School to Walter Benjamin. His magnum opus, *The Philosophy of Money*, published in 1900, is nevertheless a difficult book that has daunted many would-be readers. Gianfranco Poggi makes this important work accessible to a broader range of scholars and students, offering a compact and systematically organized presentation of its main arguments. Simmel's insights about money are as valid today as they were a hundred years ago. Poggi provides a sort of reader's manual to Simmel's work, deepening the reader's understanding of money while at the same time offering a new appreciation of the originality of Simmel's social theory.

*About the Author*
Gianfranco Poggi is W. R. Kenan, Jr.,
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http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1573928674/philosophyresou

*Georg Simmel and Avant-Garde Sociology* by Ralph M. Leck

“My legacy will be like cash, which is distributed to many heirs, each transforming his portion into a profit that conforms to his nature: this profit will no longer reveal its derivation from my legacy.” — Georg Simmel (1918)

These prophetic words, written shortly before Georg Simmel's death in 1918, have held true to the present day. His immense cultural capital was distributed to many heirs, but after his death little trace of his legacy remained. Although he was a member of the Department of Philosophy at Berlin University for most of his life, Simmel is most widely recognized not as a philosopher but as the founding father of the discipline of sociology. This important work recovers Simmel's reputation among his contemporaries as “the philosopher of the avant garde” by revealing the cultural origins of his sociological thought.

*Georg Simmel and Avant-Garde Sociology* pioneers a new interpretation of Simmel as a thinker whose critical ideas were shaped by the aesthetic, philosophical, and cultural movements of his era: Naturalism, Nietzscheanism, and feminism, respectively. Here, Simmel emerges as a
public intellectual who had an enormous impact on German modernism. He is revealed as the intellectual godfather of major cultural and political crusades, including literary Expressionism and the antiwar movement known as Activism. Author Ralph M. Leck also examines Simmel’s seminal influence on the feminist and homosexual rights movements, as well as his meaningful contribution to Western Marxism. Leck’s groundbreaking research shows Simmel for the first time as a key figure in the intellectual history of European counterculture, vividly demonstrating why Simmel is to sociology what Newton is to physics.

This is the first study to investigate systematically the breadth of Simmel’s body of work and his cultural legacy. Simmel’s wide-ranging social theories—dealing with such themes as alienation, money culture, social hierarchy, and social trends—are still relevant to current debates and theories about gender, sociology, culture, and politics. *Georg Simmel and Avant-Garde Sociology* will appeal to both students and scholars who are concerned with the origins and aesthetics of modernity.

**About the Author**
Ralph M. Leck teaches in the University Honors Program and the Women’s Studies Program at Indiana State University.

[Click here for more books by and about Georg Simmel](#)

**Georg Simmel Biography**

**Excerpt:**

Georg Simmel was born on March 1, 1858, in the very heart of Berlin, the corner of Leipzigerstrasse and Friedrichstrasse. This was a curious birthplace—it would correspond to Times Square in New York—but it seems symbolically fitting for a man who throughout his life lived in the intersection of many movements, intensely affected by the cross-currents of intellectual traffic and by a multiplicity of moral directions. Simmel was a modern urban man, without roots in traditional folk culture.

Upon reading Simmel’s first book, F. Toennies wrote to a friend: “The book is shrewd but it has the flavor of the metropolis.” Like “the stranger” he described in his brilliant essay of the same name, he was near and far at the same time, a “potential wanderer; although he [had] not moved on, he [had] not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going”

One of the major theorists to emerge in German philosophy and social science around the turn of the century, he remains atypical, a perturbing and fascinating figure to his more organically rooted contemporaries...

**Georg Simmel**
Excerpt:

Georg Simmel first published *Philosophische Kultur (Philosophical Culture)* in 1911; the third and last edition appeared in 1923. The fact that this collection of essays has not been available for over 60 years and only reappears today could be an indication for the fact that, in a strange way, Simmel as a critic of culture is both near to, and far away from, us…

*Georg Simmel, Strangeness, and the Stranger*

**Jörg Heinke**, University of Kiel, Germany

Excerpt:

In David Malouf’s novels *An Imaginary Life, Remembering Babylon* and *The Conversations at Curlow Creek* the phenomenon of strangeness appears in different shapes. One way to understand the concepts of stranger and strangeness is to employ the sociological approach advanced by Georg Simmel’s brief “Essay about the Stranger” (“Exkurs über den Fremden,” 1908). He sees the stranger as a wanderer who comes today and may stay tomorrow. The attributes of that stranger are his differences of time and place of his origin, his socially not belonging to the host society and also his independence in moving, staying and in his way of behaviour compared to the rest of society which he enters. If we communicate with strangers we have – at the same time — the impression of being close to someone from a distance and of being far away from someone who is in our immediate environment. While wandering the stranger moves from outside the society towards the inside. This opposition of inside and outside is, however, the basis of our conscience…

*Georg Simmel On Individuality and Social Forms*
Society: exists where a number of individuals enter into interaction (interaction is the key to everything with Simmel), which arises on the basis of certain drives or for the sake of certain purposes. Unity (or sociation) in the empirical sense constitutes the interaction of elements (ie. individuals in the case of society).

Individuals are the loci of all historical reality, but the materials of life are not social unless they promote interaction. This follows since only this sociation can transform the a mere aggregation of isolated individuals into specific forms of being with and for one another...

Georg Simmel
September 2007 – More than 1,000,000 Iraqis murdered

ORB
Opinion Research Business (ORB)

In the week in which General Patraeus reports back to US Congress on the impact the recent ‘surge’ is having in Iraq, a new poll reveals that more than 1,000,000 Iraqi citizens have been murdered since the invasion took place in 2003.

Previous estimates, most noticeably the one published in the *Lancet* in October 2006, suggested almost half this number (654,965 deaths). These findings come from a poll released today by ORB, the British polling agency that has been tracking public opinion in Iraq since 2005. In conjunction with their Iraqi fieldwork agency a representative sample of 1,499 adults aged 18+ answered the following question:

QHow many members of your household, if any, have died as a result of the conflict in Iraq since 2003 (ie as a result of violence rather than a natural death such as old age)? Please note that I mean those who were actually living under your roof.

None 78%
One 16%
Two 5%
Three 1%
Four or more 0.002%

Given that from the 2005 census there are a total of 4,050,597 households this data suggests a total of 1,220,580 deaths since the invasion in 2003. *Calculating the affect from the margin of error we believe that the range is a minimum of 733,158 to a maximum of 1,446,063*

Please click on this link if you want a local perspective on these figures – a short interview with our pollster Dr Munqeth Daghir – [http://195.158.192.26/munqeth/](http://195.158.192.26/munqeth/)

Detailed analysis (which is available on our website) indicates that almost one in two households in Baghdad have lost a family member, significantly higher than in any other area of the
country. The governorates of Diyala (42%) and Ninewa (35%) were next.

The poll also questioned the surviving relatives on the method in which their loved ones were killed. It reveals that 48% died from a gunshot wound, 20% from the impact of a car bomb, 9% from aerial bombardment, 6% as a result of an accident and 6% from another blast/ordnance. This is significant because more often that not it is car bombs and aerial bombardments that make the news – with gunshots rarely in the headlines.

As well as a murder rate that now exceeds the Rwanda genocide from 1994 (800,000 murdered), not only have more than one million been injured but our poll calculates that of the millions of Iraqis that have fled their neighbourhoods, 52% have moved within Iraq but 48% have crossed its borders, with Syria taking the bulk of refugees.

And for those left in Iraq, although 81% may describe the availability of basic groceries such as bread and fresh vegetables as “very/fairly good”, more than one in two (54%) consider them to be “expensive”.

Note:
The opinion poll was conducted by ORB and the survey details are as follows:

Results are based on face-to-face interviews amongst a nationally representative sample of 1,720 adults aged 18+ throughout Iraq (1,499 agreed to answer the question on household deaths)
•The standard margin of error on the sample who answered (1,499) is +2.5%
•The methodology uses multi-stage random probability sampling and covers fifteen of the eighteen governorates within Iraq. For security reasons Karbala and Al Anbar were not included. Irbil was excluded as the authorities refused our field team a permit.
•Interviews conducted August 12th – 19th 2007.
•Full results and data tabulations are available at http://www.opinion.co.uk/newsroom.aspx

ORB is a full member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules

Opinion Research Business (ORB)
Established in 1994, ORB have grown to become one of the UK’s leading bespoke corporate and issues-led market research companies. In more than a decade of continual growth, we have worked successfully with over 150 clients in the private, public and voluntary sectors in over 65 countries. Driven by a team of highly experienced market research professionals with almost 100 years’ combined experience, we are proud to deliver both qualitative and quantitative research at the highest level.

As research providers, our aims are to meet and exceed the industry standards that are laid down by the professional bodies that we are members of, including the Market Research Society (MRS), European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR) and the World Association of Public Opinion Research (WAPOR). ORB have been independently quality assured and given an excellent evaluation in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. We are also registered under the Data Protection Act 1998.

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GLOBALIZATION

world civilizations
New Publications

An Introduction to Theater Strategy and Regional Security, by Lieutenant Colonel Clarence Bouchat. The author of this Letort Paper offers a framework to explain what theater strategy is, its basis, how it is formulated, and how it is executed with emphasis on theater security cooperation. He provides a better understanding of theater strategy's role in defense and national security affairs through examples from a case study.

Negotiation in the New Strategic Environment: Lessons from Iraq, by Dr. David Tressler. No systematic effort has been made to study the negotiating experience of the U.S. military or to understand negotiation's increasingly important role in accomplishing missions. This monograph begins to fill the gap by analyzing the experience of U.S. Army and Marine Corps officers returning from Iraq.

Latin America's New Security Reality: Irregular Asymmetric Conflict, by Dr. Max Manwaring. President Hugo Chavez is showing no signs of standing down in his verbal sparing match with the United States. He is slowly and deliberately centralizing his power in Venezuela and carefully and adroitly articulating his Bolivarian dream. The
discusses the possibilities of Chavez’s threat coming to fruition.

Right-Sizing the People’s Liberation Army: Exploring the Contours of China’s Military, edited by Mr. Roy Kamphausen and Dr. Andrew. This volume addresses how the leadership of China and the PLA view what size PLA best meets China’s requirements. Among other things, this analytical process makes important new contributions on the question of PLA transparency, long an issue among PLA watchers.

Coming Soon


Monthly Op-Ed

Grunts and Jarheads: Rethinking the Army-Marine Division of Labor, by Dr. Steven Metz.

Upcoming Events

The “People” in the PLA: Recruitment, Training, and Education in China’s 80-Year Old Military September 28-30, 2007 – Carlisle, PA

Of Interest

Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia (Part III) by Jere Van Dyk

News and Updates

On August 30, Dr. Douglas Johnson conducted a tour of the Gettysburg battlefield for twenty-two officers from the Dominican Republic. The battlefield tour is one of several visits that comprise the Dominicans’ U.S. orientation. Dr. Stephen Blank presented a paper, “Project 2008: Notes on the Russian Succession,” to the annual convention of the American Political Science Association in Chicago on August 31.

Dr. Blank published three items:
“Project 2008: Notes on the Russian Succession,” *Strategic Insights* VI, No. 5, August 2007

“Russia Targets Missile Defense,” *Perspective*, XVII, No. 4, July 2007


Dr. Metz participated in a workshop entitled “Confronting Iran: U.S. Options” which was sponsored by the McCormick Tribune Foundation and American Foreign Policy Council.

LTC Raymond Millen and LTC Nathan Freier have returned home from theater.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. This newsletter is cleared for public release; distribution is unlimited.

**September 2007 Newsletter**

Strategic Studies Institute

(SSI_Newsletter@conus.army.mil)
world civilizations
Arnaldo Dante Momigliano KBE (September 5, 1908, Caraglio, Piemont–September 1, 1987, London) was an Italian historian known for his work in historiography, characterized by Donald Kagan as the “world’s leading student of the writing of history in the ancient world”.

He became professor of Roman history at the University of Turin in 1936, but as a Jew soon lost his position due to the anti-Jewish Racial Laws (enacted by the Fascist regime in 1938), and moved to England, where he remained. After a time at Oxford University, he went to University College London, where he was professor from 1951 to 1975. Among his students was the Roman historian Tim Cornell. Momigliano visited regularly at the University of Chicago and at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa.

In addition to studying the ancient Greek historians and their methods, he also took an interest in modern historians, and wrote a number of studies of them. From the 1930s on, he contributed a number of biographies to the Enciclopedia Italiana, and in the 1940s and 1950s he contributed biographies to the Oxford Classical Dictionary and Encyclopædia Britannica.

In 1974 he was made an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE).
A number of his essays were collected into volumes published posthumously.

**Books**

*(incomplete)*

- *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (1963)
- *Studies in Historiography* (1966)
- *The Development of Greek Biography: Four Lectures* (1971; revised and expanded 1993)
- *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (1976)
- *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (1977)

**Further reading**

Arnaldo Momigliano, who died in 1987, was the world’s leading student of the writing of history in the ancient world. He examined the historiography not only of the Greeks and Romans but also of the Hebrews, Persians, Babylonians, and Assyrians, among others, and the breadth of his curiosity and learning was unmatched. Born and educated in Italy, he was appointed to the chair of Roman history at the University of Turin at the age of twenty-eight, but as a Jew he was removed from the position by Mussolini’s racial laws. Most of his subsequent work was done in England, first at Oxford and then at University College, London, where he held the professorship of ancient history from 1951 to 1975. From then until his death he was a regular visiting professor at the University of Chicago. He wrote several books: biographies of Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, and of the Roman Emperor Claudius, and works on The Development of Greek Biography, on Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization, and on The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the First Century. Each is written with grace and is full of learning, careful scholarship, and wisdom, but each is a slim volume that tends to read more like a collection of separate essays about a common subject than like a fully integrated account that sets a problem and proposes a solution. In fact, Momigliano’s favorite form was the learned essay, and he fortunately left us eleven volumes of them in his Contributi alla Storia degli Studi Classici e del Mondo Antico.

The title of his last, posthumous, volume, The Classical
Foundations of Modern Historiography, could raise the reader’s hopes for a final summation of a great life’s work. [1] But such was not Momigliano’s genre. Like several of his earlier books, this is the publication of a series of lectures, namely the Sather Lectures at the University of California, Berkeley. They were given in 1962, revised over the next fifteen years, but even then withheld for an annotation that was never completed. The publication is without notes from the text as the author left it. Revision of so brief a book cannot have taken very long nor should the search for notes have been arduous. Why should Momigliano have delayed publication for almost three decades and until his death? Was he dissatisfied? Did he hope to return to the full treatment of the subject for which this volume seems a bare sketch?

We shall probably never know, but there is much to appreciate in what we have. There are essays on the influence of Persian historiography on that of the Greeks and the Hebrews, on the historical tradition of Herodotus and Thucydides, on the rise of antiquarian research, on the Roman historian Fabius Pictor as the founder of national history, on Tacitus and the tradition he established, and on the origins of ecclesiastical history. The first essay compares Persian historiography, chiefly known to us from inscriptions, with the character of the history we find in the Old Testament and in the Greek historians. Both Jews and Greeks had contact and were familiar with the Persians and their society, but their historiography represents a reaction against its tradition of royal chronicles:

Both the Jewish and the Greek type of political history broke with the Persian or more generally Oriental type of history centred on the performances of individual kings or heroes: it expressed the life of societies deliberating and acting with clear purposes under the leadership of far-seeing men.

Both reacted against the ecumenical, multinational imperial outlook of the Persians and turned inward to focus on their own peculiar traditions, but in other respects the Greek and Jewish historiographical approaches were very different.

The Hebrew Bible tells a single continuous story from the
beginning of the world. Although its writers were concerned with the truth, it was God’s Truth; each generation has the responsibility of preserving “a truthful record of the events in which God showed his presence,” and passing it on to the next was a religious duty. For the Jews reliability depended on the truthfulness of the transmitters and on the ultimate truth of God. There came to be only one tradition; the biblical historians took no note of different versions of the same event. Yet that single account was sacred and vital for the Hebrews. “To the biblical Hebrew, history and religion were one.” Once the canon of biblical history was set, moreover, the Jews largely lost interest in the study of history. They focused their attention on the Torah, the eternal law. “History had nothing to explain and little to reveal to the man who meditated the law day and night.”

History among the Greeks was very different. For them, the sources of history were human, not divine, and they were many and varied. To discover historical truth it was necessary to compare them and decide among them by means of painstaking research (*historia*) and unaided human reason. Historians wrote of limited, although sometimes grand, topics, treated in such a way as to illuminate the causes and consequences of events. History was meant to explain, “to provide an example, constitute a warning, point to likely developments in human affairs.”

Momigliano makes it clear that the Greek tradition is the inspiring source of modern historical writing. At its heart is the critical attitude that distinguished “between facts and fancies.” This is the most important contribution, and “no historiography earlier than the Greek or independent of it developed critical methods, and we have inherited the Greek methods.” For Momigliano, as for most historians, this was the essential and necessary starting point for anything properly called the writing of history. In our own day we see the very distinction between “facts and fancies” undermined by literary critics and even professional historians. This kind of skepticism, of course, is nothing new. As part of the political and religious controversies of the seventeenth century skeptical critics called Pyrrhonists (named after Pyrrho, the ancient Greek father of skepticism) declared all historical writings to be mere partisan tracts. Like their modern descendants, they thereby freed themselves to treat the past in any way they liked, or to ignore it altogether. Momigliano saw the Pyrrhonist movement as having “an adverse effect” on historical studies. For all his extraordinary breadth
and tolerance for new approaches, he would also have judged the modern Pyrrhonists as terribly retrogressive.

Momigliano attributes the invention of Greek, and therefore of modern, historiography to the sixth century B.C. and emphasizes two developments. At some point between Hesiod (c. 700 B.C.) and Hecataeus of Miletus (c. 500 B.C.) “a revolution happened.” The political part of that revolution was the discovery of law and its importance in distinguishing between different societies. Unlike the Hebrew law, which was “beyond history,” Greek law, in spite of early claims for its divine origin, emerged from human history.

It is no chance that historiography developed in the fifth century in the full maturity of Ionian and Attic democracy. The victory of democracy was the victory for social mobility and reform: it was the victory for free and rational choice. It sharpened the interest in political theories and constitutional changes, it invited comparison between Greek and non-Greek institutions and between the various types of Greek institutions.

The second part of the revolution was philosophical, arising from contact with other peoples and an intensive questioning of received traditions and opinions. This did not, however, lead to empty relativism or to skepticism, but to a “search for new principles of explanation, the rise of doubt as an intellectual stimulus to new discoveries.” Hecataeus, therefore, began his Genealogies with a challenge to tradition: “I Hecataeus will say what I think to be the truth; the stories of the Greeks are many and ridiculous.” That did not lead him either to make up whatever story he liked or to despair of finding the truth. It led him to questioning and research and the reasoned quest for accurate knowledge and understanding—that is, toward history.

It is not Hecataeus, however, whom we call the father of history but Herodotus, and Momigliano explains why. Hecataeus appears to have confined himself to the comparison and reasoned criticism of what was thought to be known. In his effort to preserve valuable memories of great deeds of the past, Herodotus undertook inquiries, even traveling to foreign countries to gather new evidence. “The task of preserving
traditions implied the aim of discovering new facts. Both together entailed a new methodical approach in which the reliability of evidence mattered more than rational evaluation of probabilities.” For all that, Herodotus did not enjoy a reputation for accuracy, truthfulness, and objectivity among ancient writers. They pointed to factual inaccuracies, many called him a liar outright, and Plutarch wrote an essay on his “malignity,” charging him with a lack of patriotism and a prejudice in favor of Athens.

The “Father of History,” in fact, with his meandering style full of discursive side trips into the customs and habits of various peoples, his serious consideration of the causal role of the gods in human affairs, did not become the model for what was thought to be the best historical writing in the ancient world. Polybius and the Roman’s Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, and Ammianus Marcellinus were the great historical writers of antiquity, and they wrote chiefly about their own times, their own nations, and, especially, about war and politics. [2] As a model Herodotus was eclipsed. The responsibility for this Momigliano places squarely on the shoulders of Thucydides, who “put himself between Herodotus and his readers.” Without directly naming the historian of the Persian Wars, Thucydides corrected some of his factual errors, dismissing him as one who wrote “a prize-essay to be heard for the moment,” compared to his own more serious effort, which was meant to be a “possession for all time.” Where Herodotus delved deeply into the distant past, painted on a broad canvas the picture of many nations and peoples, and was interested in their religious, social, and cultural practices, Thucydides focused his powerful critical eye on the present and on the recent past; he fixed his gaze intently on the Greeks, and especially on his own Athenians; finally he concentrated the reader’s attention on the war, its diplomacy and its politics. For him, as Lord Acton put it, “History is past politics.”

Polybius, whose history of Rome’s conquest of the Mediterranean world followed the Thucydidean model, and Tacitus, who focused on politics in Rome, were much esteemed during the Renaissance and the early modern period of European history. The writers of the eighteenth century, with their interest in the manners and civilization of earlier periods and of the entire world, rediscovered Herodotus, although as philosophical historians themselves they also admired Thucydides’ search for a useful history that sought the causes of events in the lasting
elements in human nature and the human condition. The nineteenth century, however, especially in Germany, saw the triumph of political history and the eclipse of Herodotus by Thucydides.

Momigliano, with his broad and generous understanding of historiography, his sense that it must combine the story of politics, diplomacy, and war with that of society, culture, and civilization, deplored that development and approved the change that had come along in his own time. Writing in the early 1960s he said with satisfaction that “the need for a comprehensive, extrapolitical history is admitted by almost everyone,” and, in the same spirit, that “we must not concede to Thucydides that he really replaced Herodotus.” Thirty years later the world of historical writing has changed so much as to make these remarks seem dated. In much of the American academy “extrapolitical history” has all but pushed political history out the door.

The most famous and influential of the social historians, Fernand Braudel, dismissed the elements of politics, diplomacy, and war as mere événements, transient and trivial in comparison with the greater and longer-lasting issues posed by geography, demography, and social and economic developments over long periods of time. In his best known work, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, the political decisions, events, and developments are of small moment compared to the inanimate and impersonal forces that shape societies over the very long run.

Now it is clear enough that such forces exist and that they have considerable impact on politics, war, and diplomacy, chiefly in establishing the limits of what is possible. Within those limits, however, individuals and groups of human beings make decisions that are of vital importance, and those decisions that are military, diplomatic, and political, moreover, influence ever larger groups of people in ways that can affect the very existence of peoples, nations, and the human race. It is important that we understand the underlying conditions and forces, geographic, demographic, anthropological, psychological, etc., that help to frame and influence the choices that people make in these decisive realms. But if it is to be helpful, this knowledge must be connected with the specific facts, decisions, and events made in the public arena, that is, in the world of politics. “Extrapolitical” historians have not made those connections, preferring to leave
unasked the great political questions that have always been the
spark that ignited interest in history altogether.

It is important to remember that Herodotus, for all his
wanderings into geographical, sociological, and anthropological
descriptions and analyses, tried to connect them, however
remotely, with his major purposes as set forth at the beginning of
his history of the Persian Wars:

This is the result of the inquiry (historia) of Herodotus of
Halicarnassus, published so that time may not erase the
memory of past events from the mind of mankind, so
that the great and marvelous deeds of the Greeks and the
barbarians should not be without fame, and especially
to explain why they fought against one another.

It was those “great and marvelous deeds” and the attempt to
explain why they came about that justified the whole effort,
including the broader inquiries into earlier times and distant
peoples. That is the historiographical legacy left both by
Herodotus and Thucydides and by their successors in the ancient
world of Greece and Rome. I believe that Momigliano would have
argued that it should guide all good historical writing. It is our
great loss that he is not here to apply his wisdom and learning to
the question.

Notes

1. The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography, by
Arnaldo Momigliano, with a foreword by Riccardo Di Donato
2. Livy was exceptional in writing of a more distant past.
Polybius, since his subject was the rise of the Roman Empire,
wrote much about the Romans, and, necessarily, a bit about
their

    enemies. His main subjects, however, were the Romans and
    the Greeks.
Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism
Momigliano, Arnaldo Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism.
Edited by Silvia Berti. Translated by Maura Masella-Gayley. 270 p. 6 x 9 1994
LC: 93037253
Arnaldo Momigliano (1908-87) was one of the most distinguished twentieth-century scholars of the classics and of ancient and modern history. Throughout his career, but especially in the final twenty years of his life, he wrote essays on a variety of Jewish themes and individuals. This volume collects twenty-six of these essays, most of which appear in English for the first time.

Momigliano acknowledged that his Judaism was the most fundamental inspiration for his scholarship, and the writings in this collection demonstrate how the ethical experience of the Hebraic tradition informed his other works. Part 1 is devoted entirely to writings on ancient and medieval Judaism. In these essays, Momigliano ranges over such subjects as the stages of rapport between Hellenism and Judaism, the figure of Flavius Josephus, and the salient moments of Maccabean history. Part 2 comprises Momigliano’s writings on modern subjects. Here are profiles of Jewish scholars of the classical world (Bernays, Bickerman, and Finley) together with those of eminent representatives of contemporary Jewish thought (Strauss, Scholem, and Benjamin). These essays gain special significance alongside Momigliano’s reflections on Italian Jewry and the Weberian interpretation of Judaism.

Silvia Berti’s Introduction discusses Momigliano’s religious and intellectual formation, the key events of his life, and the influence of Judaism on his mature scholarship. In his Preface, Momigliano offers a personal meditation on his own Judaism and that of his family.

By the time of his death, Momigliano had acquired an international following. This volume will at last give his admirers in the English-speaking world easy access to an important body of his work.

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2. Judaism and Anti-Semitism, by A. Gramsci

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- LITERATURE AND LITERARY CRITICISM: Classical Languages
- RELIGION: Judaism
world civilizations

Merlin Donald (Author)

Editorial Reviews

From Kirkus Reviews

“The modern era, if it can be reduced to any single dimension, is especially characterized by its obsession with symbols and their management.” So says Donald (Psychology/Queen’s Univ.,
Kingston, Ontario), echoing the philosopher Ernst Cassirer a generation ago—with a difference. Whereas countless philosophers since Aristotle have attempted to define what is quintessentially human, Donald brings new knowledge of neuropsychology, ethology, and archaeology to propose a tripartite theory of the transition from ape to man. Using the fossil evidence of braincase size and tool-kit remains, Donald concludes that the australopithecines were limited to concrete/episodic minds: bipedal creatures able to benefit from pair-bonding, cooperative hunting, etc., but essentially of a seize-the-moment mentality. The first transition was to a “mimetic” culture: the era of Homo erectus in which mankind absorbed and refashioned events to create rituals, crafts, rhythms, dance, and other prelinguistic traditions. This was followed by the evolution to mythic cultures: the result of the acquisition of speech and the invention of symbols. The third transition carried oral speech to reading, writing, and an extended external memory-store seen today in computer technology. This summary, however, does not do justice to Donald’s careful analysis of rival theories as well as his mining of the neuroanatomical and neurological literature, presenting, for example, evidence of the distribution of language skills across both hemispheres. He gets high marks, too, for pointing out how often cognitive theories become caught up in the trap of the homunculus—the little man in the brain who presides over all our conscious activities. Needless to say, his theory is open to challenge as well (the relation of mimesis to language; the constant reliance on computer metaphors; and, ultimately, the use of Western tradition as the paradigm of human evolution). Withal, a fine, provocative and absorbing account of what makes humans human.

**Review**

*Times Literary Supplement: Origins of the Modern Mind* is an admirable book...Its author displays throughout an engaging enthusiasm, a fertile imagination and an impressive knowledge of his subject-matter.

*Kirkus Reviews*: A fine, provocative and absorbing account of what makes humans human.

*Los Angeles Times*: Nowadays one hears...that hand-held calculators destroy young people's motivation to learn arithmetic. But not to worry, says Merlin Donald, author of this
revelatory but demanding history of human consciousness. He welcomes the computer, as well as other forms of electronic storage and manipulation of data and images, including TV, as the highest stage of mental development—and perhaps the final one.

Product Details:

- Paperback: 424 pages
- Publisher: Harvard University Press
- **September 10, 2005**
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 0674644840

**Origins of the Modern Mind**

Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition

Merlin Donald

This bold and brilliant book asks the ultimate question of the life sciences: How did the human mind acquire its incomparable power? In seeking the answer, Merlin Donald traces the evolution of human culture and cognition from primitive apes to artificial intelligence, presenting an enterprising and original theory of how the human mind evolved from its presymbolic form.

Merlin Donald is Professor and Chair of Cognitive Science, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.

*Origins of the Modern Mind*
world civilizations
Hans Küng Islam
Past, Present & Future

“A magnificent ‘tour de force’ by our greatest living theologian”
Lord George Carey – former Archbishop of Canterbury
Prominent Christian theologian Küng completes his trilogy on the world’s three monotheistic faiths with this lengthy analysis of Islam’s 1,400-year history. As in his previous volumes, he speaks against the clash of civilizations and for peace through inter-religious dialogue. He sees each faith as having had major paradigm shifts that have moved it forward, and, in fact, praises Islam for advancing the Arab people quite rapidly, in some cases
much faster than similar periods for Christianity. Nevertheless, he claims the Muslim world has neglected to move to its next paradigm due to various failures: arrogant ulama (religious scholars), greed among the wealthy, and the lack of health care and education. Equally critical of Christianity and Judaism, Küng is a lone, profound voice searching for greater understanding through asking difficult questions. He is intuitively confident that Muslims are ready to revitalize their religion, hungry for such rethinking through new Qur’anic interpretations that are already underway. Although the thousand-page book is overblown and could use some stringent editing, it contains insightful ideas and worthwhile commentary. Those intimidated by the lengthy volume may prefer to peruse the fascinating maps and tables throughout, which neatly and graphically summarize the book’s major points. (May)

The Bookseller, 3/1/07

An honest, balanced approach to Islam that endeavours to build bridges of dialogue between religions and races. This huge 1,000-page-book will give students, academics and general readers a very comprehensive study of its subject.

Product Details:

- Hardcover: 767 pages
- Publisher: Oneworld Publications
- July 25, 2007
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 1851683771

Book: 2

**Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization**

Akbar S. Ahmed (Author)

Editorial Reviews

From *Publishers Weekly*

In response to the events of September 11, 2001, Ahmed, Islamic studies professor at American University in Washington, D.C., set out last year to visit Muslim nations in the Middle East, South Asia and Far East Asia. Accompanied the entire way by two non-Islamic American students and occasionally by others—
including one American student who was Islamic—the Pakistani-born professor hoped to improve his understanding of the contemporary Muslim realm in all its diversity. Not so incidentally, Ahmed also wanted to shatter the stereotype of the U.S. as a warmongering, Islam-hating nation. The result is a fascinating account of how he and his students braved danger to build mutual understanding in Pakistan, India, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Qatar, Malaysia and Indonesia. As academics, they administered detailed questionnaires to Muslims in each nation, while as social creatures, they sat through seminars, luncheons, dinners and casual conversations looking for a candid exchange of ideas about religious, political and cultural differences. Occasionally Ahmed lapses into academese, loses his humility or generalizes beyond what the evidence seems to support. But mostly he comes across as an honorable man who believes that the future of the human race depends on international dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. (June)

Review
“Akbar Ahmed has long been one of the beacons of the Muslim spokespersons in the West. Here he breaks new ground by taking the theme of dialogue as guiding light. This is a wonderful way to get a sense of the textures of conversations among contemporary Muslims.” –Professor Omid Safi, University of North Carolina

Product Details:
- Hardcover: 323 pages
- Publisher: Brookings Institution Press; 1 edition
- May 7, 2007
- Language: English
- ISBN-10: 0815701322

Journey into Islam
The Crisis of Globalization
Akbar Ahmed
Brookings Institution Press 2007
C. 323pp.

DESCRIPTION
“Why?” Years after September 11, we are still looking for answers. Internationally renowned Islamic scholar Akbar Ahmed knew that this question could not be answered until Islam and the West found a way past the hatred and mistrust intensified by the war on terror and the forces of globalization. Seeking to establish dialogue and understanding between these cultures, Ahmed led a team of dedicated young Americans on a daring and unprecedented tour of the Muslim world. *Journey into Islam: The Crisis of Globalization* is the riveting story of their search for common ground. From the mosques of Damascus to the madrassahs of Karachi to the homes of Jakarta, Ahmed and his companions met with Muslims from all walks of life. They listened to students and professors, presidents and prime ministers, sheikhs and cab drivers, revealing Muslim hopes and frustrations as the West has never heard before. They returned from their groundbreaking journey with both cause for concern and occasion for hope. Rejecting stereotypes and “conventional wisdom” about Islam and its encounter with globalization, this important book offers a new framework for understanding the Muslim world. As Western leaders wage a war on terrorism, Ahmed offers insightful suggestions on how the United States can improve relations with Islamic nations and peoples. Written with equal parts compassion and urgency, *Journey into Islam* makes a powerful case for forming bonds across religion, race, and tradition to create lasting harmony between Islam and the West. It is essential reading for anyone concerned with the future survival of the United States as a world leader, for the individual who faces the painful changes of globalization, and for the very future of our planet. Includes black & white photographs.
Reviews of *Journey into Islam*

**Akbar Ahmed** is the Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University and a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution. He has taught at Princeton, Harvard, and Cambridge Universities and is former high commissioner of Pakistan to Great Britain. His many books include *After Terror: Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations*, with Brian Forst (Polity, 2005), *Islam under Siege: Living Dangerously in a Post-Honour World* (Polity, 2003) and *Discovering Islam: Making Sense of Muslim History and Society* (Routledge, 2002).

**BIRTH OF AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY**

September 17, 2007 at 1:01 am | Posted in Art, Books, Film, Globalization, History, USA | Leave a comment
During the 1910s, motion pictures came to dominate every aspect of life in the suburban New Jersey community of Fort Lee. During the nickelodeon era, D.W. Griffith, Mary Pickford, and Mack Sennett would ferry entire acting companies across the Hudson to pose against the Palisades. Theda Bara, “Fatty” Arbuckle, and Douglas Fairbanks worked in the rows of great
greenhouse studios that sprang up in Fort Lee and the neighboring communities. Tax revenues from studios and laboratories swelled municipal coffers.

Then, suddenly, everything changed. Fort Lee, the film town once hailed as the birthplace of the American motion picture industry, was now the industry’s official ghost town. Stages once filled to capacity by Paramount and Universal were leased by independent producers or used as paint shops by scenic artists from Broadway. Most of Fort Lee’s film history eventually burned away, one studio at a time.

Richard Koszarski re-creates the rise and fall of Fort Lee filmmaking in a remarkable collage of period news accounts, memoirs, municipal records, previously unpublished memos and correspondence, and dozens of rare posters and photographs—not just film history, but a unique account of what happened to one New Jersey town hopelessly enthralled by the movies.

About the Author
Richard Koszarski is a member of the Fort Lee Film Commission and Associate Professor of English and Cinema Studies at Rutgers University. He lives in Fort Lee, New Jersey.

Product Details:
- Paperback: 377 pages
- Publisher: Indiana University Press
- April 2005
- Language: English

IRMGARD KEUN WEIMAR NOVEL FROM 1932: “THE ARTIFICIAL SILK GIRL”
September 16, 2007 at 2:39 am | Posted in Art, Books, Germany, History, Literary | Leave a comment
The Artificial Silk Girl
Irmgard Keun

translated by Kathie von Ankum • Introduction by Maria Tatar
First published in 1932, this unusual novel might well have been subtitled “Social Climbing Through Bed-Hopping in the Last Days of the Weimar Republic.” Initially a commercial success, it was soon banned by the Nazis for the racy, irreverent musings of its narrator, Doris, an office worker who decides that her best chance of improving her lot is to exercise her considerable libido as she tries to find a rich Mr. Right. Her strategy succeeds for brief periods, but Doris also goes through several down-at-the-heels phases as her various affairs come apart; at a particularly perilous moment, she is almost forced into prostitution. Her most consistent candidate for true love is a man named Hubert, who wanders in and out of her life. When he disappears, Doris takes a stab at life in the theater before a problematic affair ends that venture. Doris’s frank, outrageous comments on the foibles of her various suitors keep things entertaining until the one-note romantic plot begins to wear thin. Readers may be disappointed that Keun (1905-1982) has little to offer on the politics of the era, save for her portrayal of a brief date in which Doris gets rejected when she pretends to be Jewish. That lacuna aside, this is an illuminating look at the much-mythologized social and sexual mores of Weimar Germany.

[This] translation will bring this masterwork to the foreground again, giving a new generation the chance to discover Keun...

Product Details:
- Hardcover: 216 pages
- Publisher: Other Press
- August 1, 2002
- Language: English
The Artificial Silk Girl

Irmgard Keun (Author)

(1905-1982)

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Spare parts: Organ replacement in American society, artistic Bohemia gracefully is far drains fine, there comes another, and recently caused an unconditional sympathy Goethe's Werther.

The art of children's picture books: A selective reference guide, the preamble calls for a prosaic business plan.

Alice Brown: A Bibliography of Books and Uncollected Prose, intreccia, therefore, represents a moving object.

Why A Little Green Signaling Protein Prompted This Year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry —The Nobelists Share Their Story, the movement determines the classical integral of a function tends to infinity in an isolated point.

Index to Volume V, information, in the first approximation, moves the dactyl.

The making of modern Tibet, as we already know, sifting distorts positive graph of the function.

Transnational Print Cultures: Books,-scapes, and the Textual Atlantic, the lotion...