

Regionalism

Donald Davidson and Theresa Sherrer Davidson

Editorial Note: *In the summer of 1982, I wrote William T. Couch, a name familiar to the readers of Modern Age, asking him about the publishing history of Donald Davidson's The Attack on Leviathan (1938). Couch published the book while Director of the University of North Carolina Press. He went from there to direct the University of Chicago Press, just as World War II was winding down. From Chicago he became editor-in-chief of Collier's Encyclopedia, in the early 1950s. My inquiry prompted a number of detailed letters from Couch, retired to Chapel Hill, the letters centering especially on the very active censorship exercised by the political left, especially through its control of the American Library Association. He had opposed that bias, at cost to him. It is a sordid episode, this attempt by the left to determine what is and is not suitable for citizens to read. The media, of course, are much more interested in the attempt by some Fundamentalist mother in Tennessee or Georgia or West Virginia who is trying to have a scrofulous novel or evolutionist textbook removed from a rural high school than in the behind-the-scenes attempt to prevent F. A. Hayek's Road to Serfdom (1944) from reaching a wider audience.*

Couch spoke out on such censorship from his increasingly embattled position. The Hayek episode, among others, is recorded in his "Sainted Book Burners" (The

Freeman, April 1955), and the role of the American Library Association as pre-publication censor is revealed there. He had already published, with Henry Regnery in 1948, a booklet on the subject, It Costs Us Nothing. These pieces, and his letters to me, show a complicated and important topic yet to be sufficiently detailed. The theme might well be the left's "protective censorship" that has influenced the climate of our political and social thought since World War II. Such a book might well begin with Couch's struggles with President Robert Maynard Hutchins and his administration at the University of Chicago when Couch was director of that press. The attempt was made by the administration there to prevent the publication of a book containing words embarrassing to the political left, words about Justice Warren's role in the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The book was at last published, but Couch's firm stand in the matter cost him his job, though as usual in such matters the public grounds of dismissal were quite different from the buried reasons. There is a book waiting here, then, one which will show heroic attempts by Couch, Henry Regnery, Russell Kirk, and others who were fighting important battles now largely forgotten in a war that continues.

When the book is written, among the good soldiers of the 1940s and 1950s to be

remembered will be Donald Davidson, whose essay "Regionalism" is here printed for the first time. Couch commissioned the essay when he became editor-in-chief for Collier's Encyclopedia, only to have its publication prevented (along with, he says, "pieces" by Richard Weaver that are now apparently lost). Couch wrote me (July 11, 1982) that when he became editor-in-chief, the firm brought in as his immediate boss a man from the American Library Association. The boss's role was "to keep the editor-in-chief...in line with what was required to get the approval of the reviewers in ALA's publication," that approval necessary to the sales of the Encyclopedia, since libraries and individuals were so largely governed by such reviews as the prestigious ALA publications. A conspicuous victim of this intent that a liberal bias prevail was Donald Davidson's and Richard Weaver's contributions. (Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences* [1948] was published by Chicago during Couch's tenure, no doubt a mark against both Weaver

and Couch at the time.) Couch sent me a carbon typescript of "Regionalism," with emendations he remembers as most probably made by Davidson. Attached to it is a note of his own, dated "10/3/55." The note says, in part, "This subject is of basic importance today, just as important as statism and propaganda [topics covered by the Encyclopedia]. This article is a model of its kind—in my opinion. It is one of the two that F. held up." I have not attempted to identify "F.," presumably the "boss" Couch spoke of in his letter. The second piece held up I deduce was one by Weaver.

Donald Davidson's "Regionalism," a 32-page typescript manuscript, has initials appended "D. D. and T. S. D." Theresa Sherrer Davidson, Davidson's wife, should be remembered, then, as co-author. This essay is here published with the kind permission of their daughter, Mrs. Eric Bell, and with the encouragement of the late William T. Couch.

— Marion Montgomery

THE WORD *REGION*, as a loose designation for a natural or administrative area, derives through the Middle English and Anglo-French from the Latin *regio*, which in historic Roman usage had various meanings, some of them perhaps closely paralleling modern meanings. In the *Digest of Justinian*, among other references, we find (13, 4, 3): *Varia sunt pretia rerum per singulas civitates regionesque* ("Prices of things vary in different cities and regions"); and *consuetudo regionis* ("the custom of the region") is to be observed in a contract of sale (18, 1, 71).

Regionalism, on the other hand, is a new term, the currency of which, in the United States, dates from the 1930s. In the practice of social scientists it refers to a theory of regions in their relationship to one another and to the nation of which they are component parts. Since regionalism as a theory advances inter-

pretations of history, politics, economics, culture, and art, the term is highly ambiguous in modern usage and has little sharpness of definition except with reference to natural regions that can be delimited by the method of geographic science, as in John Powell's *Physiographic Regions of the United States* (1895) and similar works. In France of the later nineteenth century, Maurice Barrès advocated regionalism as a check against "benumbing centralization." To such writers as Charles Maurras it signified a return to tradition and political autonomy for the Provençal, Breton, Corsican, and Basque regions. Paul Vidal de la Blache, in 1910, was content to propose merely a redivision of France into regions determined according to their economic specialties. American historians, reviewing similar phenomena in the United States, have generally preferred to follow the

example of Frederick Jackson Turner in using the terms *section* and *sectionalism*, which carry definite historical implications, rather than the shifting and indefinite terminology of the "New Regionalism" of social science. But the warm public advocacy by the social scientists of regionalism as a tool of research and a technique of government has insured a wide diffusion and rather indiscriminate application of the terms *region*, *regional*, and *regionalism* in a variety of fields.

Viewed philosophically, regionalism may seem only a modern manifestation of the timeless interplay between unity and diversity—in Plato's terms, the One and the Many. Historically considered, regionalism does not emerge as a theory of culture and government until the modern nation-state, using economics as a tool of power, achieves the capability to enforce upon all citizens, regardless of their inclinations, whatever degree of cultural uniformity is deemed necessary to the national welfare. Under totalitarian regimes, the pressure toward uniformity is compulsive and thorough. But the term "Leviathan State" can be applied, not too unjustly, even to the governments of the so-called "free" and "democratic" nations, and the Leviathan State everywhere applies a similar, if less compulsive pressure. Yet old diversities of culture may remain, though obscured by the pattern of consolidated government, and resistance to uniformity may appear in a form recognizable as "regional" or "sectional." From the national point of view regionalism may then offer a plausible technique for dealing with such resistance. From the point of view of the areas concerned, regionalism may become a doctrine of resistance.

Unity and Diversity in the Ancient World

Since regionalism in essence is a conflict between government and culture—and it may be argued that "[highly central-

ized] power and culture... are... inconcilable opposites" (Rudolf Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, 1937)—it is important to see the relationship between government and culture in an ancient as well as a modern perspective. Greece and Rome have primary importance because from these two sources stems the Western civilization which, as Toynbee says, "has cast the net of its economic system around the world," without completely changing the "cultural map," yet which seems able, under industrial auspices, to make that map over into one uniform gray.

The Greek City-State. The Greek city-state was not a "nation," nor did the Greeks of all the Hellenic world ever constitute a nation in the modern sense. The idea of a consolidated, central Hellenic government was unthinkable to them. In the city-state of the fifth century B.C., the Greeks solved the problem of the relationship between government and culture, to the great benefit of both, by eliminating any serious conflict between them. The city-state may well be called a culture-government. It was a small government of limited territorial scope (the Athenian city-state included only 1,060 sq. mi.)—a working democracy that retained vestiges of its patriarchal and aristocratic past. Yet the numerous city-states of the Hellenic world had a unified civilization, the basis of which was cultural, and which encouraged local diversities of a sort that today might be called "regional." Except in Sparta, where a form of military communism made culture both sterile and static, one could say that the culture fostered the state, and that the state's fostering of culture (as in great festivals and art works) was but a reciprocal interplay between different aspects of a unified city life. In their decline, when both government and culture were imperiled by such consolidators as Philip, Alexander, and the Roman empire, the Greek city-states took the first steps to-

wards the principles of federation, dual citizenship, and representative government which appeared centuries later in the Constitution of the United States. Toynbee notes that the Achaean Confederation of the third century (the last of various leagues and federations) was "a new system of federating city-states—a form of federation which did not attempt to deprive the individual state-member of its traditional city-state autonomy, yet...took care to confer effective powers upon the common government of the federated union." When the Romans defeated the Achaean Confederation in 168 B.C., they carried off among the hostages Polybius of Megalopolis, to whose famous history the "divided sovereignty" and "check-and-balance" features of the American Constitution are said to owe a remote debt.

Regional Government and Culture Under the Roman Empire

Like the short-lived empire of Alexander, the Roman empire achieved unification through conquest, but Roman capacity for government based on a single system of law, backed by skillful exercise of military power, made the conquest secure. During the periods of greatness the Roman world-state brought political stability and material prosperity to the varied peoples under its dominion. The system of law it promulgated still forms the basic framework of law in massive portions of the civilized world. Even English and Anglo-American law have been affected by the Roman influence. The Roman example is therefore one of the greatest examples of the ascendancy of government over culture and, in some of its aspects, seems to demonstrate the possibility of a co-existence of government and culture in separate spheres. Roman administration allowed the provinces to retain or develop what would today be called regional differentiations. Under Augustus and for some time later "the

custom of the country" was respected in the levying of taxes and in other matters. In Spain, provincial charters specified the extent to which native laws remained in force. Tolerance of religions was observed both in the provinces and in Italy itself. Thus Christianity, which was provincial in its origin, could take hold in the metropolis of Western civilization and eventually make Rome the seat of the Papacy. When Rome fell, it was the provincial diffusion of churches and monasteries that preserved the continuum of civilization in Western Europe.

But meanwhile the cultural sterility of Rome itself was an element in its decline. Rome was the carrier of cultures, especially of the Greek culture, but Rome the cosmopolis, while it was the patron and merchandising distributor of arts and sciences, like the world-cities of today, was the original generator of very little. Despite its administrative flexibility, the Roman imperial system was not farsighted enough to develop self-government in the province and had no place for the federal system projected by the Greeks. The great Justinian code (*Corpus Juris Civilis*), promulgated from 529 to 534 A.D., was a product of the period of decline, when the once stable Roman world-state was divided into an Eastern and a Western empire—a Western empire which had long since fallen into barbarian hands and was only partly recovered by Justinian. Both East and West had been debilitated by invasions, civil disorders, economic confusion, and general corruption. Justinian's uniform legal system could not re-establish a world-state in its own time. In its ultimate revival, it was received with favor by no world-state, but by the kingdoms and principalities of medieval Europe, diverse in language and local culture, that had grown up out of the ruins of the ancient empire. In short, cultural impotence at the center insured the wreck of the Roman governmental system. The Chris-

tian Church of the West was left as the spiritual heir of the roman *imperium*. In Russia and other parts of Eastern Europe, the Greek Orthodox Church represented what remained of the authority of the Eastern Empire.

Government and Culture in the Pre-Industrial Period

Between the fall of Rome and the beginning of the industrial revolution the peoples of Europe and the world went through approximately fourteen centuries of cultural development and of very complex and widespread cultural differentiation. Not until the rise of nationalism in its modern form, in combination with industrial economics, did Europe have to encounter any political-economic force that could everywhere exert uniform pressure. The modern regionalist who holds, with Rupert Vance, "that the regional approach to social analysis has an integrative rather than a divisive function" faces a difficult historical problem. A retrospective view of fourteen pre-industrial centuries reveals that Western civilization owes a greater debt to "divisiveness" than it does to "integration" of a national or international character. Reduced to essentials, this long period presents the following prominent features:

Decentralized and Unstable Government. It is a period of political "retrogression" and confusion, with strong national governments beginning to appear only toward the end of the period, in the England of Elizabeth and the France of Louis XIV. None of the empires achieved more than a wavering pattern of political unification, and none of the monarchies achieved the modern type of political-economic nationalism. Germanic influence, already strong in the later Roman empire, fused with certain proprietary features of the Roman system and gave medieval Europe its characteristic institution—feudalism. Feudalism, which in

its governmental aspects was more cultural than political, was a great decentralizing and divisive force. Roman law, when finally revived during the Middle Ages, was variously "received" in the various kingdoms of Europe and had to be accommodated to already existing codes or to customary law. In England especially, it met resistance. "We do not wish to change the laws of England" (*Nolumus leges Angliae mutare*), declared the Barons of England to the Bishops at Marton in 1236. The study and use of Roman law became general, but it did not unite Europe into one governmental system. Fierce defense of local privilege, whether by nobles contending for feudal rights or cities arguing for charter rights, was the rule, and the dispensations thus won often remained as relics even after feudalism had disappeared. As late as the seventeenth century, the Huguenots of France had their own courts and fortified cities against which—as at the siege of La Rochelle—Richelieu sent the armies of Louis XIV. The Holy Roman Empire was but the shadow of a temporal empire in which extreme separatism prevailed. The medieval "Germanies" which were its actual seat included over three-hundred states of various kinds.

Capacity for Survival. This divided Europe of contentious and relatively weak governments was nevertheless able either to repel or to absorb invasions by the Vikings, Moors, various Asian hordes, and finally the Ottoman Turks. In the fifteenth century the Spain of Ferdinand and Isabella completed the expulsion of the Moors. With the failure of the Turkish siege of Vienna, the period of invasions ended. Europe remained European, but as a result of invasion kept an enduring residue of population stocks and languages that further diversified its cultural pattern. This was especially true of Spain, and of Russia and East Europe in general.

*An Organic, Stable, yet
Locally Diversified Culture*

In sharp contrast to the instability and extreme heterogeneity of governments, European culture was remarkably stable and relatively homogeneous. The greatest single unifying and stabilizing force was Christianity. Through its spiritual empire (and often its temporal power) centralized in the Papacy, the Church not only preserved and transmitted the Christian faith; it also preserved and transmitted the cultural heritage of Rome and, with it, the pre-Renaissance relics of Hellenism. Through its influence medieval Latin remained the universal language of the learned in a Europe that was a disconcerting mixture of languages. The culture of the traditional societies of Western and Central Europe achieved an organic growth throughout the entire period that was very different from the fitful and spotty career of political and economic institutions. This long period of organic growth must be conceived as a continuity that includes both the medieval and the "Renaissance" culture. To it we owe not only the greatest monuments of Western art and literature, but also the foundation of universities, the beginnings of modern commerce, science, and invention, and nearly all of what we treasure and use as a familiar part of our basic cultural tradition. The Protestant Reformation may be viewed as a break in the continuity of the general tradition, especially since Protestantism finally became more indulgent than Catholicism toward the secular excesses of mercantilism and industrialism. Yet Europe, whether Catholic, Greek Orthodox, or Protestant, remained firmly Christian in thought until near the end of the pre-industrial period.

Radiation of Culture from Regional Sources. The typical cultural event of the pre-industrial period was a flowering of ideas and art in a free city like Florence or

in a limited region like Provence, and a subsequent spontaneous radiation from such sources. Along with the high arts went the folk arts and crafts, which were developed to great perfection at local levels and ramified in similar fashion. The *Chanson de Roland* developed and survived, if we accept Bédier's view, through the devotion of certain abbeys situated on the route followed by Crusaders and pilgrims. The lyric poetry and probably the folk song of all European nations owe a tremendous debt to the *trouvères* of Provence. Out of this diffusion and interchange the "national literatures" of Europe developed. Their beginning may be dated from the time when the vernacular languages came into polite use, but the rise of such literatures was accelerated when, in the sixteenth century, printing facilitated publication. This nationalistic development at the cultural level preceded by long periods—differing unevenly from nation to nation—the emergence of the modern political-economic nation. "Italy," writes Carlton Hayes, "almost the last European land to be politically unified, was the first to develop a great national literature."

Capacity to Expand; World Exploration and Colonization. During the last five hundred years of the pre-industrial period, exploration and colonization of the world took place under European auspices. This broad diffusion was in great part a product of the competitive divisions in Europe itself. Proselytizing zeal for the Christian faith was also an important factor. The development of the great colonial empires of Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, France, and Holland exactly paralleled the rise in Europe of the pre-industrial system known as mercantilism, which built up a commercial middle class, undermined feudal and aristocratic privileges, and guaranteed the emergence of the modern Powers of Europe. The general result was to plant through-

out the world the late European form of the Greco-Roman culture, modified by Germanic, Arabian, and other influences. It was a unified culture, but, prior to the industrial revolution, it did not exert uniform political-economic pressure, either within Europe or abroad. It did not at first destroy the enormous variety of the world's indigenous cultures except in those areas—as in North America—where the aboriginal populations were overwhelmed by permanent settlement of European stocks.

*The Dominance of
Government over Culture:
Nationalism in the Industrial Age*

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the rise of the modern nationalistic state initiates a period, not yet ended, of the dominance of government over culture. Exploiting the national feeling long since fostered by the monarchies, the libertarian revolutionists of Europe established governments that substituted “popular sovereignty” for the “divine right of kings.” But they also took over, as a convenient instrument of the popular will, the pattern of a strongly centralized government already developed by some monarchies—for example, the France of Louis XIV. Rousseau had formulated the odd paradox that rationalized this new Leviathan State: “Anyone who refuses obedience to the general will is to be forced to it by the whole body. This merely means that he is compelled to be free” (*The Social Contract*, Bk. I, Chap. VII). Except in countries like Great Britain and the United States, where tradition and reform shaped a different course, the idea of a centralized government with unlimited powers gained favor. Napoleon, “the child of the Revolution,” established a national bank, a national system of uniform education, a national program of public works; he drafted the male population for compulsory military service; and, emulating Justinian, he provided in

the influential *Code Napoléon* a codified, uniform legal system. Whatever fine protestations might appear in their constitutions about the rights of men, the governments of nineteenth-century Europe moved steadily toward this Napoleonic model.

Meanwhile the industrial revolution transformed the new democracy. Libertarian political ideals were translated into economic terms as the masses gained suffrage and as Europe changed from a *laissez-faire* mercantile to a state-regulated industrial economy. Marxist and Fabian socialism made their appearance. With their help “popular sovereignty” was converted into a useful fiction of the Leviathan State. Capitalists and their stockholders, labor unions, politicians, and the uprooted urban masses all alike seemed eager for regimentation—eager to concede the state unlimited supremacy, if only to ensure the continuous stream of material benefits supplied by the very unstable industrial regime. Demand for economic security replaced demand for political and cultural freedom. By the middle of the twentieth century the nation-states tended ever more consistently to force a uniform, synthetic, urban culture upon humanity—internally, by rigid controls, upon their own citizens; externally, through trade and empire, upon the world at large. “Man was sacrificed without compunction to technique,” writes Rudolf Rocker (*Nationalism and Culture*), “...in order that the productive process might function with the least possible friction and without internal obstruction.”

Except in Communist Russia and other totalitarian countries, an extreme degree of repression was not attainable. The ancient divisiveness of Western Europe guaranteed that friction and internal obstruction would continue. Each nation-state (and empire) jealously maintained its own economic interests against all comers. In wars, labor-unions remained

“nationalistic” despite Marxist predictions to the contrary. Each nation, also, included a mixture of racial stocks and contained border regions or enclaves peopled by restless cultural minorities. More than forty different languages were still in use in twentieth-century Europe.

In this Europe, the resistance of internal cultural groups to the dominance of national government might take the form of “regionalism,” but was more likely to appear as the aspiration of “submerged nationalities” toward independent status. Rebellion of colonies against imperial rule might also take the form of nationalism. In the United States, however, this type of internal resistance to national dominance took the form of sectionalism.

Nationalism and Sectionalism in the United States

In its original foundation, the United States of America was a government as favorable to local diversities of culture as could be wished. The terse Constitution of 1789 avoided all mention of democracy, indulged in no flamboyant rhetoric concerning the rights of man, and was content to establish the mechanism of a Federal republic, of which the thirteen sovereign states were members, and, in its enumeration of powers, to fix the relationship between the Federal government and the states and to lay down broad principles that would form the basis of specific legislation. At the same time, the principle of “popular sovereignty” was inherent both in the Federal Constitution and in the several state constitutions; and the rights of citizens and of member states were definitely safeguarded in the twelve amendments that were speedily affixed to the original Constitution. Furthermore, while it successfully established a stable central government, this Federal government was in its original form a government of limited powers devised upon an inge-

nious “check-and-balance” principle that operated both within the Federal mechanism itself and in the relationship between the Federal government and the member states.

Of particular importance was the fact that, as a general rule, the Courts of the Federal government were the final authority in the interpretation of the Federal Constitution and laws, while the Courts of the member states exercised authority in connection with the administration of their own state constitutions and laws. Federal law was entirely statutory, and began with the first session of the First Congress. There was no Federal “common law.” But Anglo-American “common law” was already deeply invested in the legal practice of the states. Since there might be great variation in application of this “common law” from state to state, there was, accordingly, a possibility of wide differentiation at the local cultural level.

In fact, the form of the American government seemed to allow little possibility for uniform cultural pressure to be exerted by the central national authority. At the national level, the government embodied in a new form the classic principles of federation and dual citizenship. At the state level, government linked, not with abstract political theory, but, through the common law, with the English legal tradition that was an organic growth out of “customary law” from English or North European origins so remote as to be hardly traceable. Under this relaxed and tolerant nationalism of the early republic, there was apparently no means by which central authority could force American ways of life into a uniform national pattern. For a long period the patriotism of an American was warm and definite only with regard to his native state; toward the Federal government, in comparison, national feeling was ill-defined or even cool. Expanded to continental dimensions finally, the United

States was unlike a large European state in having no organized and sub-national racial or political group occupying a definite region and inheriting a different language, culture, and past experience of independence. The aboriginal Indian tribes, though formidable, were not exactly comparable to the Catalans or the Albanians or the Hungarians or the Irish. Only in the South, with its heavy Negro population, was there a region with a concentration of a different racial stock; but the Negroes at first were slaves, uprooted from their African past and entirely lacking in regional or national aspirations.

However, the pressure toward national uniformity began early in American history and increased as the nation expanded to continental bounds and as the American variant of European industrialism made its influence felt. The sectionalism peculiar to the United States developed in response to this pressure. In one of its familiar aspects it represents the resistance to some "national" tendency by a group of contiguous states which have common cultural or economic interests; such a group constitutes a "section." In another important but often neglected aspect of sectionalism, the national tendency may represent sectional aggrandizement which wears the "national" mask as a convenient disguise.

American historians, preoccupied with "national" or "state" history, long failed to trace clearly the pattern of sectionalism. In a series of papers, beginning in 1904, Frederick Jackson Turner took up this neglected task of interpretation. Gradually Turner set forth his view that the American nation is "a complex of physiographic sections" which should be studied as an organic cross-pattern interwoven with the conventional pattern of Federal and state governments. "The American physical map," Turner said, "may be regarded as a map of potential nations and empires, each to be

conquered and colonized, each to rise through stages of development, each to achieve a certain social and industrial unity, each to possess certain fundamental assumptions, certain psychological traits, and each to interact with the others, and in combination to form that United States, the explanation of the development of which is the task of the historian." ("Problems in American History," 1904; reprinted in *Sections in American History*, 1932.)

From Turner's emphasis on cultural factors and from the attention he gives to the work of the physiographers in delineating "provinces" or "regions," it is clear that regionalism is a latent element in his theory of sectionalism. Nevertheless Turner's major concern was with sectionalism. Despite the lack of provision for sections in the American constitution—except perhaps in the Interstate Compact clause—Turner considered sectionalism a political as well as a cultural reality. "We are...an empire," he kept saying, "a federation of sections, a union of potential nations." State sovereignty, Turner noted, was not "a vital issue except when a whole section stood behind the challenging state." Thus South Carolina failed when standing alone on Nullification (1832), but temporarily succeeded when the Southern states followed it into secession and the establishment of the Confederacy of 1861-1865. During the period of westward-moving settlement the pattern of sectionalism was "migratory" and changed as new states were erected in frontier areas. Migratory sectionalism would pass away, leaving a cultural residue behind it, when the nation matured; but the sectionalism due to physiographic conditions, economic interests, and "constituent stocks of settled societies" would probably endure.

With similar clarity Turner delineated the sectionalism that assumes the mask of nationalism. Any section may think of

"its own culture, its economic policies, and well-being as best for all the nation" (*Sections in American History*). When such a section controls the majority party in Congress, it is in a position to assert its will. Then a clash may occur in which the dominant section claims to represent the national interest and strives to fix sectionalism as a stigma upon its minority opponent.

Turner does not fully develop this point, but Walter Prescott Webb, among others, in his *Divided We Stand* (1937) draws a harsh and angry picture of a colonized South and West held in chains of financial bondage to an imperializing North.

Webb's adoption of a sectional interpretation of American history is the more striking since in an earlier book, *Great Plains* (1931), he had used geographical and sociological determinants to describe a "region" bounded approximately by the Canadian boundary line, the Rocky Mountains, the Rio Grande, and the irregular line west of the Mississippi where the dry and relatively treeless plains begin—the province of the original Cattle Kingdom. In this earlier book Webb is a model regionalist of the social science school.

Regionalism and Social Science

The social scientist, while admitting the reality of sectionalism in the United States of the past, tends to view sectionalism as only a stage of social-political development, to be followed by another stage, assumed to be higher, in which the relationship between government and culture—or unity and diversity—should be defined and studied as a relationship between nation and region. Thus Rupert Vance says: "The transition from an unsettled country marks the gradual change from the frontier process to social control. The intermediate stage in the transition is sectionalism, the ultimate stage may well be regionalism and regional-

national planning" ("The Regional Concept as a Tool for Social Research," in Merrill Jensen, *Regionalism in America*, 1952, 137). Underlying this view are several assumptions, prominent among which is the assumption that the modern form of political-economic nationalism attained in the United States—as also in Europe—represents a commendable progression towards maturity rather than a possible retrogression or social disease. The social scientist, accepting national interest, however ill-defined, as paramount, decries sectionalism for its "divisive," "separatist," or "immature" tendencies. Howard W. Odum, for example, says: "Regionalism envisages the nation first, making the national culture and welfare the final arbiter.... On the other hand, sectionalism sees the region first and the national afterwards.... Where sectionalism features separateness, regionalism connotes component and constituent parts of the larger national culture." Odum frankly admits that his version of regionalism carries "the implication of more of the designed and planned society... than sectionalism, which is the group correspondent to individualism." Regionalism is also preferable because it is objective, exact, and scientific. "It offers," says Louis Wirth, "a naturalistic and empirically verifiable theory for the interpretation of history" (Jensen, *Regionalism in America*, 381).

The strength of the regional studies undertaken by the social scientists is in their comprehensive, often minutely detailed descriptive character. Working in many related fields, they have brought together a vast amount of useful information. As regionalist theory was developed by their investigations, it flowed into many spheres of activity and enabled many advocates of diversity to find a new form of statement for their claims. So artists and professors of the humanities, as well as social scientists, could counter the steam-roller of the

Leviathan State with "scientific" protestations and devices.

The weakness of the social scientists is in the assumptions to which they had long been committed. Inheriting the theories of nineteenth-century Positivism, they looked at the Leviathan State through the spectacles of sociological Darwinism. As the latest, most complex development in the "evolution of society," the Leviathan State in their eyes must necessarily be the highest form of state reached by man. At the next stage of evolution there could be only the international or world state, toward which "nations" would have a "regional" relationship corresponding to that of the "regions" toward the Leviathan State.

Thus committed to a principle of mechanical social evolution which could not be proved and was indeed outmoded, they found themselves in the position of being determinists who could not, in the case of regionalism, quite fix the determining factors relevant to their studies, much less isolate and use these factors for purposes of laboratory experiment. But their predilections nevertheless made them theoretical bedfellows with Marxists or other determinists who were resolved to use region, nation, and world as an experimental ground. In this dilemma it is not surprising that the theory of regionalism as developed by social science has no very clear hypothesis to support and no consistent principle of definition, analysis, and classification. For this reason the field studies of the social scientists are more useful and convincing than their general syntheses.

Beginning in the definite sphere of geography and physiography, the social scientists note that physiographic regions by no means coincide with the political boundary lines of states or sections, although physiographic factors may and do have a partial determining influence upon the culture, "human use," or economics of some regional area, large

or small. But next, to establish the outline of a region by the methodology of social science, it is necessary to use all the important "differential factors" as "indices" or "co-ordinates" for plotting out an area sufficiently homogeneous within itself and sufficiently different from surrounding areas to be defined as a region. Since the economic map may not coincide exactly with the political map or the physiographic map, and since other "indices"—racial stock, religious preference, historic experience, degree of literacy, per capita wealth—may reveal other variations, the task of delimiting a region becomes very complex. Inevitably any major region becomes a composite of many factors. Inevitably, too, it has to be divided into sub-regions, which in turn may have to be divided into districts; or it may be crossed by large "single factor" regions (like trade areas) that have their own independent outline.

In Howard W. Odum's monumental *Southern Regions of the United States* (1936), this method of depicting a major region and its numerous sub-regions and inter-regional functions is applied on a larger scale. The result is a huge composite in which statistical detail, often valuable in itself, obscures the regional distinctness of the historic South. No other major American region, up to the 1950s, had been the focus of such study as Odum and others gave the South. In *American Regionalism* (1938), Odum and Harry E. Moore applied the multiple factor method to the entire United States and gave a total regional picture that, up to a certain point, only confirmed already familiar historical or cultural divisions. In this work, however—as in other works of the period—much emphasis was also put upon entirely functional regions (river valley, metropolitan, administrative) which had no precedents in American experience.

The definitions of regionalism that grow out of such studies are likely to be

bafflingly complex. In one of his last published articles Odum wrote: "Regionalism is...an areal-cultural concept on a higher level of generalization than a mere uncritical miscellany of disconnected ideologies. It is essentially a synthesis of differentiation and integration, within the framework of homogeneities and diversities, following the historic process of periodic alternating between the particularist trend of multiplying culture areas and the universalist trend of consolidating areas and culture." This is only an elaborate admission of relativism.

But the relativity of such definitions did not prevent the work of the social scientists from having its effect. Their pragmatic attention to functional regions appealed to an age that made "planning" its watchword. The following selected list of functional regions suggests the extent to which this trend took hold.

River Valley Regions. In the early enthusiasm for regional-national planning that marked the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the river valley region was considered a type of "natural region" that would form an excellent basis for multiple purpose hydro-electric projects, to be undertaken by the Federal Government. Crossing state lines, yet "co-coordinating" with local government, such a project could combine navigation, flood control, power production, and conservation under one authority, which would decentralize Federal administration and somewhat vaguely constitute a regional third estate between state and Federal levels. The Tennessee Valley Authority, the sole completed realization of this idea, was long cited as a perfect example of regionalism and was recommended to the world as an example to be followed. Establishment of similar "authorities" was repeatedly advocated for other river valley regions. In the end no exactly similar parallel project was set up. The projected Missouri Valley Authority, despite a heavy propa-

ganda in its favor, was defeated by regional (or sectional) opposition in the Missouri Valley itself. The Tennessee Valley Authority, tangled in the conflicting logic of its own multiple purposes, found itself out of favor in some quarters as a model for the New Regionalism. It was attacked by President Dwight D. Eisenhower and others as an example of "creeping socialism" and was sharply criticized by a number of ecologists as a very bad example of true conservatism.

Metropolitan or Trade Area Regions. The metropolitan region, dominated by a large urban center, is characterized, according to Louis Wirth, "by the network of economic interconnections that holds it together and...can be described in terms of the radii of influence which extend from the center outward." The metropolitan region cannot be defined in terms of the homogeneity of its component parts, which may display different geographic or cultural features; nor in terms of its boundary line, which may fluctuate. The component parts may be interdependent with relation to the metropolis, but independent and heterogeneous in other respects. Although classified as a "culture region" by Odum, the metropolitan region typifies the concern of the social scientist with the abstract, urban, and uniform patterns developed by the political-economic Leviathan State at the expense of traditional culture and local diversity.

Administrative Regions. These are areas defined as regions for the convenience of some *ad hoc* function or problem. The U.S. Census Bureau and the Federal Reserve System represent early applications of this type of regional organization. With the rapid enlargement of Federal authority, administrative regionalism has come into use by a wide variety of Federal bureaus and agencies. The purpose of administrative regionalism is simply, through "decentralized" organization, to render governmental opera-

tions efficient or, in some cases, palatable within a localized area. The "service regions" of industry and commerce fulfill a similar function. Administrative regionalism contributes nothing to the diversity of national life, but rather has an opposite influence.

Regionalism in Retrospect and Prospect

The concern of social scientists with planning and their uncritical acceptance of "big government" were the most consistent features of their devotion to regionalism. An integrated national culture, they argued, need not cancel out healthy regional differentiation. For a time their optimism seemed justified. Under the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt the word "regional" began to acquire some beneficent statutory force—as in *Regional Factors in National Planning* and similar studies authorized by Congress and conducted by the National Resources Committee. One implication of such studies was that the Federal government would cooperate with states and regions in correcting "regional imbalance." John Gaus, defending this policy, held that it would protect the "major sections of the country...from invasions, exploitations, and suppression by ill-considered and hasty national policies."

The massive studies of the National Resources Committee, however, were not instrumented by any major legislation. Instead, through the Wagner Labor Act, minimum wage laws, control of farm prices and crops, social security legislation, and various decisions of the Supreme Court, especially its decision in the school segregation cases, the Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower administrations committed the government to reshaping American culture into harmony with the uniform economic pattern characteristic of the Leviathan State. By the 1950s, the New Regionalism had ceased to influence Federal policy and survived only as one of the administra-

tive conveniences of big government. Similar tendencies were dominant in the non-political sphere. Every home, every farm, every school, every institution or enterprise was under pressure to slough off regional differentiations and become an undifferentiated, functional part of one big collectivist system.

Nevertheless, from the 1930s on, there was much "particularist" resistance to this dominant "universalist" trend. It might come from an unregenerate South, an "isolationist" Middle West, or a dissenting New England, or Southwest, or West. In the shock of the encounter, "regionalism" became an accepted euphemism for such features of the old sectionalism as the universalists could appropriate for their own cause; and "sectionalism" was, accordingly, damned as anti-national and perverse. By another shift of meaning "regionalism" and "regional" could also be employed as terms of condescension and abuse, if applied in a context that would give them derogatory force. In this scale of values *national* was always "good"; *regional*, "good" or "bad" according to the context; *sectional*, always "bad." A filibuster by Southern Congressmen was "sectional" and "bad." The Tennessee Valley Authority was "regional" and "good." The tendentious frescoes painted by the Mexican artist Orozco in the Dartmouth College library were also "regional" and "good" according to Lewis Mumford. In metropolitan criticism, Du Bose Heyward's *Porgy* (1925) and Erskine Caldwell's *Tobacco Road* (1932) got a "national" rating; William Faulkner's novels were at first passed off as "regional" oddities. The confusion revealed in such judgments resembles the egocentric blindness attributed by Toynbee to the imperializing Britisher, to whom the inhabitants of any country but his own are merely "natives." When American artists who drew their strength from regional roots found themselves catalogued as "regional," with the impli-

cation of inferiority, their resentment led them into counter-attacks in which they sometimes flourished the term "regional" as a badge of honor. In H. L. Mencken's excoriations of the "hinterland" they detected a form of sectionalism masquerading as cosmopolitan nationalism. Against this hidden sectionalism the "regionalists" of the 20s and 30s revolted vigorously and successfully.

Meanwhile, beginning with Vernon L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, in 1927, American literature, old and new, was subjected to an intensive critical reconsideration that brought regions and sections into a new historical perspective and gave them solid prestige. By the middle of the twentieth century, regionalism was no longer an organized, self-conscious movement. It had been bred, as Benjamin T. Spencer noted, "by the cultural pluralism of a vast nation and by the cultural deficiencies of an industrial-urban society," and had served its purpose. *New York and Hollywood* remained the nation's great marketing centers for the arts, but the "regions," especially the South and West, had become the chief source of the arts, and, in the expressions of dissent that various art media afforded, were the last strong barrier against the dominance of government over culture.

Whether particularist regionalism could win against the mass-conditioning devices of the old nation-state or of the new world-state prefigured in the United Nations Organization was a matter for the future. The United Nations charter recognized regionalism by providing for "regional" agreements among groups of member nations, but since nations associated in such agreement (like the NATO group) need not form a geographically related group, the term "regional" in this connection meant only "international but not worldwide." Attacks on "national sovereignty" and the "pathology of nationalism" that attended the rise of the one-world concept implied a future process of international integration during which nations would sink into the kind of subordination proposed by social scientists for the regions of a nation. The pressure of government upon culture could then become fairly uniform throughout the world. The only hope for continuance of the traditional diversity of cultures, regional or otherwise, would be in the assurance offered by history that cultures have been far more durable than governments. Augustus Caesar, in his time, achieved the political unification of Italy, but the "Romanization" of Italy took much longer and in fact was never fully realized.