



*Opera: The Basics*, by Denise Gallo.  
Routledge, 224 pages, \$75 (cloth), \$16.95 (paper)

This short little book outweighs much of the competition. Written by a senior music specialist at the Library of Congress, Denise Gallo's *Opera: The Basics* is a cross between an opera dictionary and an encyclopedia. It defines basic terms but adds fascinating history and rich context.

This is not opera for "dummies." For instance, a page in the libretto section is devoted to "A Brief Word About German Versification." While the beginner will not be intimidated, even opera veterans will learn from it. One can dip into this volume almost anywhere and find something entertaining and instructive. I had no idea that Mozart's famous librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte, filched most of the text for *Don Giovanni* from other sources. Or that one reason the pit was created for the opera orchestra was that patrons in the front row complained that the double basses obstructed their view.

Gallo's evident depth of learning is combined with an affection that gives the book the sense of having been written from inside the world of opera rather than by an outside observer of it. *Dulce et utile.*

—Robert R. Reilly  
Vienna, VA



*Right Turn: John T. Flynn and the Transformation of American Liberalism*, by John E. Moser.  
New York University Press, 277 pages, \$45

In this much-needed and well-researched biography, Ashland University history professor John Moser traces the long, strange career of an American journalist prominent from the 1930s to the 1950s. John T. Flynn's ability to convey complex economic issues in winning prose made him an influential voice at the onset of the Great Depression, which he blamed on corrupt, unregulated Wall Street financiers.

Initially a supporter of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, Flynn later wrote two books attacking the president. He thought Roosevelt incapable of grappling with the Depression and prone, as Moser recounts, to "save his presidency by promoting war hysteria." Flynn became a founding member of America First, though he did everything he could to distance the organization from Nazi defenders and Communists. By the 1950s, he embraced Senator Joseph McCarthy, whom he thought deserved "the whole-

hearted support of every loyal American." Flynn eventually became a pariah on both the Left and the Right, and today he is remembered only by groups like the John Birch Society.

Moser argues that throughout it all, the irascible journalist remained—as he himself always claimed—a political liberal. Yet Flynn was not a classical liberal; he rejected free-market capitalism and favored business regulation. Nor was he a modern liberal; he opposed both the New Deal and the Fair Deal. If anything, Flynn was closer to the old progressives like Gerald Nye, Burton Wheeler, Gifford Pinchot, and Hiram Johnson, self-proclaimed advocates of the people against the interests. If these men had been active public figures following World War II, they may have made a "right turn" similar to Flynn's.

—Gregory L. Schneider  
Emporia State University



*Perfection and Disharmony in the Thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, by Jonathan Marks.  
Cambridge University Press, 200 pages, \$65

Rousseau is notorious for elaborating two apparently contradictory accounts of human well-being: primitive, natural man (misnamed the noble savage) and the citizen (who is totally socialized or "denatured"). Most readers find both extremes impossible and undesirable. In his carefully argued book, Jonathan Marks suggests that Rousseau agrees.

Marks, a Carthage College professor of political science and philosophy, argues that what is best by nature for man according to Rousseau is a kind of balance of contradictory elements that is more productive of happiness than the bourgeois' conflicted existence—a "natural perfection of a naturally disharmonious being." He elaborates several such possibilities. In his *Discourses*, Rousseau calls the state of savage society, which has already developed far from the original state of nature, "the best state for mankind." In the *Émile*, an imaginary account of the best possible education for an ordinary man, he combines in a different way elements of individuality and independence with preparation for compassionate, dutiful participation in social life. And in *The Social Contract*, the citizens of a legitimate modern republic would likewise exemplify a balance of opposites, enjoying individual rights and spheres of activity alongside their dedication to the general will. In short, the perfection of man involves

not impossible unity but happy balance.

This assessment is thorough and exceptionally fair-minded in its discussion of other interpreters of Rousseau. Marks recovers an analysis of liberalism's problems that is more radical and yet more balanced than modern communitarian approaches. He shows that Rousseau's rhetorical extremism, being in the service of moderation, is no political vice.

—James H. Nichols, Jr.  
Claremont McKenna College



*Bertrand de Jouvenel: The Conservative Liberal and the Illusions of Modernity*, by Daniel J. Mahoney.  
ISI Books, 232 pages, \$25 (cloth), \$15 (paper)

For Daniel Mahoney, author of two celebrated works on Raymond Aron and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Bertrand de Jouvenel is one of the greatest though most underappreciated political philosophers of the 20th century—a thinker in the mold, if not quite at the rank, of Alexis de Tocqueville.

Jouvenel was concerned with the danger of state power (and hence often miscast as a libertarian), but also with the need to develop conscious public and private strategies to form better citizens and to protect the natural environment. His political thought aimed in no small part at dispelling "the illusions of modernity," though without ever abandoning belief in founding a moderate and rational political science that could improve liberal democracy. The core of Jouvenel's work, according to Mahoney, is found in three "masterworks of political philosophy" written between 1945 and 1963: *On Power* (the best known of Jouvenel's books), *Sovereignty* (the most profound), and *The Pure Theory of Politics* (the most provocative).

Mahoney candidly explores Jouvenel's life—including his dalliances before World War II with both the far Left and the far Right, and his awkward efforts after 1968 to ingratiate himself again with the Left. Mahoney concludes that Jouvenel's thought deserves to be distinguished from his weaknesses, though not fatal flaws, of character: "The sympathetic student of Jouvenel is torn between profound admiration for the wise and humane political philosopher and unavoidable discomfort with the poor practical judgment he regularly displayed in the opening and closing periods of his intellectual career."

—James W. Ceaser  
University of Virginia



Essay by Victor Davis Hanson

## FRANCE'S IMMIGRANT PROBLEM—AND OURS

**T**HE THREE WEEKS OF MUSLIM RAGE across France during autumn 2005 brought *Schadenfreude* to many Americans. They saw a thin scab of French hypocrisy scraped off—revealing a deep wound of invidious religious and racial separatism festering in Muslim ghettos. As during the August 2003 heat wave that killed nearly 15,000 French elderly in stifling apartments while their progeny enjoyed their state-subsidized vacation at the beach or mountains, French talk of solidarity and moral superiority proved spectacularly at odds with the facts.

So for much of last October and November, Americans congratulated themselves that French-style rioting could, of course, never happen in the United States. After all, their economy is moribund. Ours is growing at well over 3% per year. French unemployment hovers near 10%; America's is half that. Fifty-seven million jobs were created in the U.S. during the past 30 years; only 4 million in all of Europe. Our minority youth, as a result, are much more likely to be working than idling in the streets. And sure enough, in France, about 25% of youths between 15 and 24, regardless of race or religion, are out of work.

After the unrest in our cities during the 1960s and 1970s, Americans increasingly sought through assimilation, intermarriage, and integration to fulfill the ideal of an interracial society. As emblems of our success, Americans can point to cabinet members like Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, or Alberto Gonzalez. By contrast, it is almost unimaginable that anyone of Arab-French ancestry would head a major French ministry. We long ago jettisoned the notion that proper citizens should necessarily look like Europeans. The French apparently still have not. Second- or third-generation spokespersons of the American Hispanic community, for instance, are often successful, affluent, and integrated. By contrast, imams who barely speak French after decades of living there, and who from their 1,500 mosques decry the decadence of French culture, were often the only intermediaries between the French government and youthful rioters.

The accepted view is not just that the American melting pot differs from European separatism, but that the largest bloc of our immigrant residents is itself quite different—Christian Mexicans who trek across a

common 2,000-mile unfenced border, eagerly looking for work. France's Muslim immigrants bring with them age-old, clash-of-civilizations baggage dating from Poitiers in the 8th century to the 20th-century French colonial war in Algeria. In contrast, Mexico was colonized by European Christians—and we have had more or less stable relations with the Mexican government for over a century. Moreover, even illegal-alien drug smugglers and gangbangers are not terrorists; we do not fret about their potential sympathy for radical Islam. And the rioters outside of Paris were almost all males, apparently embracing strict gender separation—antithetical to French culture, and utterly foreign to Mexican immigrant men and women, who cross our border indistinguishably.

### All's Not Well

**Y**ET SUCH CONTRASTS ARE NOT THE entire story. For despite the many differences, America is not immune from all the destructive social and cultural forces now tearing at the seams of French society. Hundreds of thousands of first-generation illegal aliens currently live in Los Angeles and rural California in what are, in effect, segregated communities. In many cases, they are no more integrated—and no less alienated—than those in the French suburbs. Instead, these immigrants comprise an entire underclass without sufficient language skills, education, or familiarity with their host country to integrate successfully into society, much less to pass on capital and expertise to ensure that their children are not condemned to perpetual menial labor.

Spanish has become the de facto language for many communities in the southwest U.S. in the same way that Arabic dominates the French suburbs. Mexico City newspapers air the same sort of historical gripes and peddle the same kind of myths as Arab fundamentalists, who drug their poor, uneducated expatriates with stories of al-Andalus and a restored caliphate that will spread once again from southern Europe to the Euphrates.

In some respects, our situation is worse than France's. The United States has some 8-12 million illegal aliens—a population of unlawful residents larger than that of any other country in the Western world—not France's 4-7 million mostly Arab-French citizens. Ten

thousand Muslim youths rioted outside Paris; but there are nearly 15,000 illegal-alien felons from Mexico in the California penal system alone, incarcerated at a cost of almost a half billion dollars a year. Portions of the Arizona and California borders have devolved into a Wild West—a no-man's-land of drug smuggling, shoot-outs, environmental desecration, and random death. Mexico responds by publishing comic books with safety tips about crossing the border, so that its departing citizens can more safely violate U.S. immigration laws. Meanwhile, Hispanic groups in America complain that increased border surveillance near San Diego has cruelly diverted human traffic into the desert.

Granted, Americans have proved far more adept at assimilating the Other than have the French; we have not suffered widespread racial or ethnic violence since the 1992 Los Angeles riots. And we do not have a religious or terrorist overtone to our internal tensions. But there are still enough similarities with the French experience to give us pause.

### Immigration and Its Discontents

**I**N THE FIRST PLACE, POOR MEXICANS COME to the U.S. for largely the same reasons that Arabs settle in France (and both were initially welcomed by their hosts). Mexicans and Arabs alike flee corrupt Third World societies and grinding poverty. At least in the beginning, they trust that unskilled and often menial employment in the West—under the aegis of a far more liberal welfare state and the rule of law—are better than anything back home. Perhaps at first such jobs are considered an improvement. But by the second generation, the paradox becomes apparent: employers hire migrants and their children expressly on the premise that they will work for lower wages than the natives would accept. If employers were to pay competitive compensation and provide full benefits, there would be little need for immigrants, since in many counties where illegal aliens reside there are enough unemployed non-immigrants to fill such jobs. In America as in France, the society eventually must pay the difference through greater state entitlements to subsidize an (often persistent) underclass.

So the reasons that Mexicans' and Arabs' rates of poverty, alcoholism, incarceration, reli-