That history is a cosmopolitan discipline seems to be accepted today at least as a vision by a large number of historians. Recent presidents of the American Historical Association have alluded to and confirmed this vision. Bernard Bailyn has called historical scholarship "an international enterprise" and noted the increasing "transnational communication of parallel information"; John Hope Franklin has written that "scholarship knows no national boundaries"; and William H. McNeill has spoken of "the moral duty of the historical profession" to cultivate "a sense of individual identification with the triumphs and tribulations of humanity as a whole."1 History, it seems, has come a long way in the last one hundred years. When this organization was established, "history" mostly referred to European and especially American history, and the mission of the association was said to consist in the preservation of historical manuscripts and in the promotion of "American history, and of history in America." George Bancroft, president of the association in 1885, declared that the AHA devoted itself "to the affairs of the United States of America."2

In the intervening years, as Arthur S. Link noted in his centennial presidential address given four years ago, there has been "growing diversity in the membership and leadership of the AHA," and there has developed a "catholicity of interest" in all aspects of the past and in all parts of the world.3 Today, the association's 13,000 members represent diverse methodologies and specializations, many ethnic groups, nearly all ages, and scores of countries.4 This last seems to me to be of special significance, for, although our organization is called the American Historical Association, it has been an international community of historians. From its inception, it has been open to historians of all countries, and today scholars from over forty countries belong to it. More than five hundred members have overseas mailing addresses; while some are undoubtedly American historians residing abroad, their number must be more than matched by foreign scholars living in the United States. Some of the most distinguished

2 George Bancroft, quoted in AHA Perspectives, April 1984.
4 I am indebted to the AHA executive director, Samuel Gammon, for membership and other information.
foreign historians have been elected honorary members of the AHA. Starting with Leopold von Ranke in 1885, the honorary membership has been offered to scholars in all parts of the globe. Visiting historians regularly participate in our annual conventions. Moreover, the AHA has sponsored, and sent delegations to, many international conferences.

These are impressive beginnings and attest to the openness and vitality of the American historical profession, which seems unsurpassed anywhere in the world. I am sure I speak for all scholars of foreign origin in the United States when I express my deep gratitude for this openness. But I strongly believe that the AHA should dedicate itself not only to reaffirming but also to expanding the tradition of openness and cosmopolitanism. Today, further efforts are required to internationalize the discipline. At one level, this will necessitate the establishment of closer ties between the American and overseas historical communities. At another level, the effort will entail the search for historical themes and conceptions that are meaningful across national boundaries. At still another level, each historian will have to become more conscious of how his or her scholarship may translate in other parts of the world. I would like to comment briefly on these three aspects of internationalization.

The establishment of closer ties with foreign historical communities requires dedicated and enterprising initiatives, such as those demonstrated by one of our past presidents, Lewis Hanke, who a few years ago undertook a survey of American history as taught and practiced in other countries. In the process, he communicated with over five hundred foreign scholars specializing in the history of North America, and his initiatives have left a valuable legacy to build on for further internationalizing the profession. As one step in this direction, the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the American Studies Association have created a joint committee on international scholarly exchange. It will seek to strengthen ties to overseas historians, especially in American history, by suggesting specific ways in which they may better communicate with Americanists in the United States. It makes sense to pay particular attention to American history because the United States is the center of this subfield, and yet specialists in the United States do not always possess information on what Americanists do in other countries. And Americanists overseas do not enjoy as much opportunity as they would like to interact with historians here. There are even indications that the number of Americanists in Britain and some other European countries, as well as Japan, may be declining. If so, the question of what the American historical profession can do to reverse this trend should be on its agenda for the immediate future. On the other hand, in socialist countries such as the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, East Germany, and the People's Republic of China, American studies may have entered a period of growth. Clearly, it is imperative to encourage such a

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development. To take perhaps the most notable example, the ties between the American and Chinese historical communities have become very close in the last several years. Senior Americanists from the United States, many of them members of our association, have visited China under the auspices of the Council on International Exchange of Scholars, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China, or other organizations. They have lectured to large Chinese audiences, organized workshops in American studies to which Chinese scholars from all over the country were invited, and donated books to university libraries throughout China. Historians in China, for their part, have established American studies associations, and Chinese scholars now here have organized themselves into an association of Chinese historians in the United States. It is to be hoped that similar attempts will be made in other countries as well and that the AHA will become more directly involved in furthering such scholarly ties.

It is not enough, however, merely to promote the study of the United States in other countries by duplicating what American historians do at home. Such an exchange is a one-way transaction. More fruitful exchanges would be, and have been, those in which American historians from the United States come into contact not only with Americanists overseas but with other historians as well, thereby broadening their perspectives and accustoming themselves to thinking of American history not just as national history, or even as part of transatlantic history, but also as an aspect of human history.

This notion of the interconnectedness of human history is the second topic I would like to consider. International exchanges will mean little if historians from various countries meet, exchange specialized information, and part without having jointly explored wider issues of history. It seems to me that, even when they exchange localized knowledge, they should keep in mind the question of what such information may mean to the rest of humanity. This is another way of suggesting that historians from different parts of the world should make an effort to discuss problems whose significance transcends local boundaries. The best examples of international scholarly collaboration have come when scholars have translated their respective specialized and fragmented knowledge into more universal language and explored the meaning of, for instance, feudalism, slavery, or modernization in different countries. The list of "internationalizable" topics is endless. Such fundamental questions as human beings' relationship to nature, the definitions of beauty and truth, social justice, freedom against power, and the struggle to preserve memory should provide thematic points of contact between scholars of various countries. Historians can collaborate in comparing these themes in different parts of the world, thereby affirming that history belongs to the whole of humanity, not just to its segments.

As these remarks indicate, the internationalization of history may be the same as the promotion of comparative history, in the sense that we are comparing ideas and institutions in different parts of the world. There is a tendency,
however, at least in some works of comparative history, to emphasize differences between nations and cultures or the particularity of indigenous social developments. Often, a comparison of social, political, or intellectual trends in countries ends up reiterating their unique natures. The more one compares ideas and institutions in one part of the world with those in another, the stronger their differences tend to appear. This is perhaps unavoidable, but it seems to me that to confirm local, national, or cultural distinctions is counter to the ideal of internationalization. To the extent that we seek to internationalize history, it would be unfortunate if our work merely nationalized it in the sense of stressing the uniqueness of each country's historical development. Sometimes, it may be necessary to try to denationalize history in order to internationalize it, that is, to find themes and responses common to a plurality of nations rather than those limited to specific subcategories of humanity.

It may be said that the study of history, at least modern history, has experienced a tension between nationalization and internationalization. I believe both are important perspectives, and to illustrate I would like to cite my own field of specialization, international history. At one level, international history is but a sum total of national histories: it deals with the behavior of nations toward one another. Most major works in the field are studies of this kind, written in terms of national security, national interest, national power, national prestige, national styles of foreign policy, and the like. Because the interests and relative power of nations provide key conceptual frameworks, it is not surprising that most monographs in international history are studies of crises, tensions, struggles, and wars among nations. This may also explain why there are far more studies of war than of peace. A focus on conflict seems inevitable so long as the nation remains the basic unit of inquiry. This is what I mean by nationalization.

At the same time, international history has sought to go beyond the national level of analysis and to treat the entire world as a framework of study. In addition to examining the behavior of each nation, historians have proposed various conceptions of the world system, or the international system, a structure that establishes conditions for the existence of individual nations and to which their policies are responses. Thus scholars have written of "the concert of Europe," "Bismarck's European order," "the Versailles treaty system," "the Washington Conference order," and the like. These were all definitions of international order accepted by the major powers with varying degrees of enthusiasm, and whose stability or instability spelled the difference between world peace and war. Whereas these systems are conceptual constructs defined basically in terms of power, some scholars have stressed international economic systems, or regimes, referring to such examples as the British-sustained and gold-based system of international economic exchange in the nineteenth century and the Bretton Woods system after World War II. International order, there-

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fore, may be characterized both as a power system and as an economic regime. The study of how such a system or regime affected various countries, how it was supported or destroyed by them, has provided a key set of issues for international historians, and these issues have been subjects of joint research for scholars from different nations.

Perhaps one of the most important areas that awaits extensive investigation is the relationship between a given international power system and a global economic regime. The two are often, but not always, interchangeable. In the nineteenth century, it could be argued that Pax Britannica was both a power and an economic definition, upheld by Britain's navy and commerce. It may also be that imperialism was a system both of power and economic relations in which hegemonic nations controlled the affairs of dependent populations. But sometimes there can be a gap between an international system defined in power terms and a global economic order. During the 1920s, for instance, power balances in Europe and Asia were sustained by Britain, France, and Japan, whereas the United States was the undisputed leader in the world economy. Thus there was a gap between international power relations and the global economic system. Today, the power aspect of the international order may be characterized by the nuclear balance between the two superpowers, but that does not correspond to the structure of global economic transactions. What such gaps may imply for the stability or instability of the world as a whole is a problem that can be profitably and cooperatively explored by historians in all countries.

Ultimately, I think international historians must also concern themselves with cultural issues. One might well ask whether it is even possible to speak of a cultural dimension to the international system. In addition to discussing the rise and fall of the great powers, or the creation and collapse of an economic regime, can we also talk about the emergence and erosion of global cultural trends? On the surface, it might seem impossible to do so, if for no other reason than that culture denotes something private, local, parochial—in Bailyn's phrase, "interior world views—shared attitudes and responses and 'mind-sets.' "9 Thus defined, culture is specific as to time and place, so that to talk of culture in the context of something as broad and vague as international order may be an absurdity. Still, it is worth exploring whether or not connections exist between inner worlds and the external world, for, after all, the relationship between private and public affairs has long defined a key historical issue.

International historians have in fact been examining cultural issues even when they do not explicitly write about them. To take a recent, well-known example, Paul Kennedy's *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, despite its conventional-sounding title, is filled with pertinent insights in this regard.10 While the book does compare the relative military and economic positions of various nations, it

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suggests that the search for power is a pervasive human condition. While the great powers rise and fall, one thing seems to remain constant: the power orientation of men and women everywhere, at least when they organize themselves into national entities. In this sense, the book is about a fundamental transnational drive, defining the culture of people living in international society. At the same time, Kennedy implied that power is not all that they have chosen to invoke in defining their relations with one another. Toward the end of the book, he cited Friedrich List and Adam Smith as exponents of two contrasting conceptions of international affairs, List postulating a power definition in which a state’s raison d’être is to amass power to prepare for possible war, and Smith stressing economic transactions that do not necessarily imply hostile relations. The contrast between a List and a Smith, between an image of sovereignty and one of interdependence, between an assumed state of conflict and one of harmony in the world, is not limited to Western thinkers. The same dichotomy informed the classical Chinese conception of wu (power) versus wen (civilization), and undoubtedly other societies have developed similar polarities. The reality, of course, may not fit so neatly into a simple opposition, but the point is that both List’s and Smith’s formulations are ideological productions, assuming certain images of international order, and suggest that neither power relations nor economic transactions are mindless, automatic responses but that the choice to pursue power or stress economic interests is conditioned by suppositions about culture and its relation to the world community.

Of these suppositions, none has been more prevalent than the ideas of nationalism and internationalism. Gustave Hervé, an influential French author, noted in 1910 that, as capital moved across national boundaries and as people crossed frontiers, the distinction between domestic and foreign goods and populations was diminishing. In time, international regulations would come to be promulgated to govern their behavior. Capitalists and workers, thus internationalized, would try to avoid disastrous competitions that led to war. The nineteenth century, Hervé asserted, “was a century of nationalism. The twentieth century will be a century of internationalism . . . There will eventually be a United States of Europe and of America, perhaps a United States of the world.” This kind of internationalism, an echo of Adam Smith, gained currency particularly in the United States in the first decades of the century. And American historians, perhaps because they are uncomfortable with purely power-oriented formulations of foreign affairs and believe in economic interdependence, have produced many valuable studies of internationalism. The late Warren Kuehl, one of the pioneers in this endeavor, asserted on many occasions that no study of international history would be complete without due attention to forces that make for internationalism. And it is gratifying that recently U.S.

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and Soviet historians have been holding a number of symposia to explore the
meaning of internationalism. Internationalism is clearly a conceptualization, but so is nationalism. Max Weber, writing at about the same time as Hervé, vehemently denied that, because economic development had created an international community, nationalism had become an anachronism; on the contrary, "the economic community is . . . only another form of the conflict of nations with each other." Weber postulated the primacy of nationalism and interstate conflict even when the world was becoming more and more internationalized economically. But he defined nationalism as "the assertion of one's own 'Kultur,'" thus indicating that he did not subscribe to a crude power determinism, any more than he accepted what he viewed as a naive economic internationalism. We may grant that Weber's conception of international affairs was more realistic than Hervé's, but it was still a conceptualization, an idea that assumed localized orientations and priorities of human behavior. Nationalism, in a sense, was accepted as the prevalent ideology of the time in whose terms states were pictured to be organizing themselves.

The ideology of nationalism has spread to other parts of the world, but again it has been moderated by currents of internationalist thinking. To cite just one example, Fukuzawa Yukichi, the Meiji intellectual leader, while stressing, in a widely read book published in 1875, national sovereignty as the cardinal goal of Japan, argued that, ultimately, national power hinged on the level of acceptance of modern civilization. Drawing a distinction between the Japanese people's behavior toward one another and toward foreigners, he wrote that individual Japanese were quite honest and courteous at home but that this tendency was not sufficient to establish just and equal relations with other countries. Dealing with foreigners (gaikoku kōsai) was a serious weakness with the Japanese, one that they must somehow overcome if they chose to live in the international community. The answer lay in civilizing themselves, by which Fukuzawa meant industrialization, modern learning, and the spirit of independence. How individual personalities and energies could be channeled into promoting these objectives was his main concern and, one suspects, the concern of many others in Japan and elsewhere at an early stage of nation-building. It is illuminating that the Japanese word for diplomacy, gaikō, is an abbreviation of what Fukuzawa termed gaikoku kōsai, indicating that diplomatic affairs must be comprehended in terms of their grounding in people's dealings with foreigners. In such a conception, the international system is inseparable from the individual attitudes and orientations that constitute a culture. One may also note that, over a hundred years after Fukuzawa penned these thoughts, one still hears a great deal about Japan's cultural isolation in the international community, in sharp contrast to its superior economic position in the world. But to speak of cultural

isolation assumes that there is an international cultural order in terms of which one is judged to be isolated.

Is there in fact such an order? I would suggest that here is another important area of inquiry in which historians of various countries can cooperate to develop wider perspectives. It is obvious that they must draw on the insights and methodologies of anthropologists, sociologists, and practitioners of other disciplines who have long been interested in the phenomenon of cultural diffusion and transformation. Those perspectives will be invaluable as historians attempt to trace the forces that make for, or militate against, the creation of an international cultural order. International historians in particular may have much to learn from art historians who, after all, have explored the transfer of artistic styles and tastes from one part of the world to another. Perhaps they could help us understand how these phenomena might be linked to political and economic trends. Recent writings in art history have, moreover, emphasized the need to go beyond national frameworks and to look for transnational artistic themes. Some art historians have, in the meantime, developed the theme of hegemonic order, the production of predominant modes of artistic expression acceptable to the elites in society.\(^\text{16}\) Perhaps we could borrow from such a vocabulary and examine if, over the centuries and through the decades, there have developed hegemonic cultural orders in the world. It is an exciting prospect to explore the relationship between an international power system, a global economic regime, and a world cultural outlook.

**Speaking of hegemonic order brings me to the third and last item that I wish to discuss very briefly, namely, the problem of cultural consciousness on the part of the historian.** John King Fairbank, another former president of our association, has emphasized how “culture bound” we all are.\(^\text{17}\) Although, as a recent study on Fairbank shows, he started out believing in the universal applicability of certain principles and values, he became increasingly more skeptical, for instance, of judging developments in China with an American yardstick.\(^\text{18}\) He thus cautioned against asserting American ideological hegemony. Such self-criticism provides an obligatory methodological underpinning for what we do; we should of course be aware of the cultural presuppositions that may affect the ways in which we represent past phenomena. But such caution need not mean that all we can do with confidence is to examine ourselves. As Philip Curtin has noted, “self-knowledge by itself is . . . a form of selfishness that can be dangerous to social health.”\(^\text{19}\) While it may be true, as Paul Ricoeur wrote more than twenty years ago, that cultures, defined in terms of their respective values and symbols, are fundamentally “incommunicable,” we must not assume that we cannot

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\(^{18}\) Paul M. Evans, *John Fairbank and the American Understanding of Modern China* (New York, 1988).

encounter other cultures and in the process transform our “privileged” knowledge into something less privileged and therefore more universal.²⁰

It seems to me that our methodological self-consciousness should not prevent us from translating historical works into many languages. I believe that whatever we do as historians will be of little value unless it has some meaning to readers in other parts of the world, unless it is read in different cultural languages, as it were. And, in this regard, Fairbank himself has contributed enormously not only to the Western understanding of Asia but also to Asia’s understanding of itself, and not just in conceptual frameworks indigenous to the West. His pessimism seems to be more in the realm of trying to influence official relations among countries than in searching for intellectual common ground where Americans and Asians, and others as well, may seek to promote better mutual understanding. In similar fashion, a generation of Japan specialists in the United States has engaged in intellectual dialogue with their counterparts in Japan with the result that it is no longer clear which contributions are made by U.S. historians and which come from Japanese.

The distinction between Japanese and American history lost meaning for me in August 1945 when, upon Japan’s defeat, school children of my generation were told by the American Occupation authorities that whatever we had learned of history up to that point was all wrong and that we must now restudy the past without taking anything for granted. This was a most liberating experience and persuaded us that national history could best be understood when it was examined from without as well as from within, that, in this quest for a less distorted view of the past, it made no difference who you were so long as you were willing to learn from various perspectives. In very much the same way, when I came to the United States shortly after the end of the Occupation, I was treated like any other student of history. I was grateful that my professors in college and graduate school never considered my being an outsider a handicap for the study of history. By the same token, the blackening out of passages in school textbooks that were objectionable to the Occupation authorities had impressed on us how easily the past could be manipulated by temporal power. The recent rewriting of history textbooks in Japan is but the latest manifestation of this. Those in China, Korea, and other countries who remember the wartime atrocities have justifiably protested against such revisions, and this outside intervention may be one of the healthiest developments of the internationalization of history, for it indicates that forming a less parochial view of the past may depend on international cooperation.

Herbert Norman, the Canadian historian of Japan whose tragic death in 1957—when he chose suicide to put an end to interminable investigations of his past political beliefs and behavior—in many ways symbolized the limits imposed by temporal authority on the freedom of historical inquiry, once wrote, “History is the discipline that makes the whole world kin and is for humanity what

²⁰ Paul Ricoeur, History and Truth, Charles A. Kelbley, trans. (Evanston, Ill., 1965), 282. I am grateful to Frank Ninkovich for calling my attention to this book and otherwise providing me with valuable comments on this essay.
memory is for the individual.”21 To which I would like to add a quote from Milan Kundera: “The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting.”22 It seems to me that memory is a precious gift in all countries and cultures, and that the historical profession here and throughout the world has the task of ensuring that this gift will be constantly reaffirmed so that the past can be transmitted to and confronted by the present. Of course, there will not be one past but as many pasts to remember as there are individuals, but the totality of remembered pasts forms the legacy of civilization to which we are all heirs. No profession would seem to be as well equipped as the historical community to recognize and reconfirm this faith in common humanity.