

## The Political Science Fiction of *Challenge to America* (PBS, 1993)

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What happened to IBM, the symbol of American supremacy?<sup>1</sup>  
—*Challenge to America*, 1993

*Roger and Me*, Michael Moore's 1989 documentary, articulates the outrage felt by many Americans when companies began replacing workers with robotic technology and cheaper labor overseas.<sup>2</sup> This comic opera-commentary is Moore's quest to interview Roger Smith, Chief Executive Officer of the world's largest transnational corporation, General Motors (GM). Seeking accountability from the elusive hierarch for his assault on the American Dream, Moore demanded to know why Smith allowed GM to nearly destroy Flint, Michigan (Moore's hometown), where GM closed its plant and left 30,000 autoworkers unemployed. *Roger and Me* closes with Pat Boone crooning "I am Proud to Be an American," and the 1960s beauty queen, country singer and Florida orange juice spokesperson, Anita Bryant, squeaking, "And if you decide to go for it, you'll make it." Through Moore's lens, these two pious icons of old-fashioned American values, along with other celebrities who visited Flint, are no different from Roger Smith and other wielders of cultural, economic and political power who shirked their responsibility for the common worker and the livelihood of the American community.

Shortly following the release of *Roger and Me*, another documentarian also addressed the shattered lives of disillusioned American workers, but in the context of the decline of corporate America vis-à-vis foreign

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competitors. Hedrick Smith's lesser-known four-and-one-half hour homily, *Challenge to America*, broadcast on PBS in 1993 (after over two years of research and planning), soberly asks, "What happened to IBM, the symbol of American supremacy?"<sup>3</sup> America is losing to foreign competition, it warns, but "the problem will not be entirely solved by blaming foreigners or CEOs; the problem lies with *us*." *Challenge to America* becomes *Roger's* methodological antithesis, diverting the viewer's gaze from the summit to the "root"—as far down as the second grade, where future workers of the nation get started. Whereas Moore left Americans deliberating over their betrayal by leaders, *Challenge to America* picks up where Anita Bryant and Pat Boone left off. It restores coherence to the American Dream by rallying for the retraining of ordinary Americans, toward the aim of better competitiveness with foreign countries and by contextual implication, Japan, above all.

Much has changed, as public paranoia over Japan segued to a love-hate fest with globalization and again to the War on Terrorism. In revisiting *Challenge to America*, however, the intent is not to disprove the Japanese economic takeover that was perceived so realistically. Instead, it is to recognize the mutability of the idea of reality conveyed in everyday media as the documentary film. Cultural critics increasingly recognize documentary film as a blurred realm of representations. Ostensibly "facts only," the documentary film presents "situated knowledge," representations linked to larger, ever-changing socio-historical forces. The capacity of the documentary gaze to be "constitutively multiform" should not be underestimated, argues film scholar Michael Renov. The documentary is not bound to the "rigorously enforced reality principle" assuming that all documentaries are real, nonfiction; it engages "conscious motives such as intellectual curiosity as well as less conscious ones aligned with fantasy, memory, or longing."<sup>4</sup>

The less conscious motives in *Challenge to America* derived from the perceived decline of American economic supremacy against the rise of Japan, other Asian countries and Germany in the 1980s. This paper is concerned with how the film's *alien probe*—its investigation into the inner workings of Japan and Germany as futuristically superior rivals—appropriates such emotions as economic nationalism as a buffer against a new kind of danger.<sup>5</sup> Probing Japanese and German children, workers and beneficent managers as *Übermenschen*, *Challenge to America* romances the border between Us and Them. It asks, what is happening to America, as it is being overtaken by superior (alien) nations?

At first glance, then, *Challenge to America* offers a pragmatic solution to Moore's slap at leaders who really don't care about ordinary Americans. With deeper observation, however, it becomes clear that Hedrick Smith's "the problem lies with *us*" is actually an attempt to identify strategic Otherness and re-frame national unity. The science-fiction-like ambience in the documentary series creates the moral space of insecurity, and offers economic nationalism and its emphasis on human capital as the heroic solution. Unlike the ironic humor in *Roger and Me* that acts as an opening to dialogue and reflection, however, *Challenge to America*'s economic nationalism seals the connections between corporations and nations; it argues only for the further discipline of patriotic workers rather than the dialogue of informed and inquisitive citizens.

#### TAKE ME TO . . .

"Take me to your leader" is a guiding cliché of science fiction. Aliens want to find out who or what makes the unknown entity tick. But in the immediate post Cold War moment, when militarism seemed passé and economism was newly legitimated, where was the territorial or institutional center of the material nation, and what was its precise unit of strength? *Challenge to America*, like other then-au courant "Pacific Century" theses, imagined the elusive center of capitalist power in metaphor, the industrious worker. Workers of the post cold war, not just deployed soldiers and weapons, make the nation strong. Thus obedient and dynamic foreign Superkids and their more attentive parents became the mirrored lenses for remolding the American national body toward a new ideal of happy, familial relations within and among corporations, schools, and families. *Challenge* did not just mourn the decline of American economic prestige and seek answers in high places. It aimed to fully re-invent a new material nation from the crib to the corporation.

Appropriating the familiar, *Challenge to America* uses *panoptical* power by bringing social formations from "from below"—from the ordinary home, classroom and assembly line—into sharp focus, while power "from above"—from corporate managers and heads of state—is obfuscated. Michel Foucault (adapting Bentham) describes panoptical power as a disciplinary technique in which a guard observes all inhabitants of a village from a central, elevated point, recording each of their moves to establish a meticulous catalogue of standards. The person observed locates his or her own identity against such standards, without considering

the elevated and privileged power controlling the standards and movement. The subject under surveillance, as an object, is “in a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.”<sup>6</sup> Subjects “perform” the objectives of biopower, the nexus of life and politics, as everyday activity; power is internalized in the very functioning of their bodies.

On the surface, the film sings praises to foreign competition as an exercise of national self-flagellation. Germany and Japan are typecast as role models of the future, while America is the proverbial hare that stopped to rest on the laurels of war victory and 1950s-style happy days.<sup>7</sup> Yet its dichotomizing of Japan as futuristic desire and America as obsolete delusion is consistent with the stereotyping taking place outside the film studio in late 1980s America: Japan, Inc., as enemy, America as victim.

As Homi Bhaba expresses it, the idea of the “nation” is imagined in a split narrative—in one set of ideas that conjoins citizens as co-participants to a timeless national *pedagogy*, and in another set that stratifies citizens so that they can carry out each of their special duties to the nation-state in time-specific acts of *performance*.<sup>8</sup> *Challenge to America* “writes” the nation in terms of both pedagogy and performance; it teaches people to feel they share a common economic destiny while it motivates them to perform for that destiny.

As pedagogy, *Challenge*'s myth evokes nostalgia for the 1950s, when the statement, “What is good for General Motors is good for the country, and vice versa,” made perfect sense.<sup>9</sup> Assigning sentiment to economic objects and achievements, the film affirms a mythology of America as a timelessly strong economic nation, a “corporate culture.” The image-continuum of logos such as IBM, RCA, GM and Boeing, along with currency, workers and productive parents and children, reacts to imminent loss: the moral of the story in *Challenge to America* is that downtrodden America needs to give up its individualistic capitalism, and adopt methods of communal, “teamwork” capitalism practiced by its rivals. The film's own logo is a circulating global sphere onto which are affixed the Deutsche mark, the dollar, and the yen, along with their respective national flags. Hedrick Smith also narrates against the backdrop of the three currencies hoisted alongside their partnered national flags. The star section of the American Stars and Stripes is tilted to create a triangle at the center of the ten-dollar bill, a Stars and Dollars pinnacle from which the camera dramatically zooms back and forth. American students and workers also appear and disappear from the flag-currency motif.

## ECONOMICS AS NATIONALISM

This mediated coding of national economic symbols against external threat can be called “economic nationalism,” yet the emotional intensity of the “nation” as a collective people is typically neglected in utterances of that term.<sup>10</sup> American and European scholars, policymakers and journalists have used “economic nationalism,” “mercantilism” and “neo-mercantilism” interchangeably to depict the political modus operandi of Japan,<sup>11</sup> focusing almost exclusively on the state and its relationship with economic institutions. Such trade war chroniclers take seriously the role of Japan’s “ruling triumvirate”—its bureaucracy, business leaders and leading Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). They insinuate the corruption inherent in economic nationalism, since industrial leaders “collude” with political leaders. They imply that economic nationalism serves Japan more than any industrialized economy in the world, and that economic nationalism is intrinsic to the state, not politically contingent.

Fusing state-centered economic nationalism with the actual “nation” proves much more complicated. “Economics” does not form a partnership with “nationalism” as smoothly as ethnicity, nationality, language, religion and other attributes or mass-produced sentimentalities frequently corralled into the borders of nation-states. Economics engages motion, an “exchange impulse” that *ignores* boundaries; nationalism constructs sentiments of restraint and containment, a “sovereignty impulse” to *protect* the boundaries of nation-states.<sup>12</sup> Contradictions of affect can occur when cultural artifacts cross national borders and become exchanged via capital. Some artifacts lose their ability to specify uniqueness, causing dissonance to the guardians of authenticity, the culture-protectionists who feel displaced when border-crossing Japanese businessmen wear cowboy hats, or conversely, when itinerant blondes speak Japanese. Other artifacts spread their cultural uniqueness across borders, encroaching on territories of “others” as manifestations of cultural imperialism: America and Japan, perhaps as no two other nations, share in common the impressions that their products, culture, factories and corporations are creating “Americanization” or “Japanization” when transferred across borders.

Economic nationalism’s opposing impulses of containment and exchange often require creative subterfuge.<sup>13</sup> Leaders learn to manage this contradiction not only institutionally, but also rhetorically. States acquire great power because of their exports and expansionism; their

diplomatic relations with one another necessitate utterances of “free trade” as *tatema*, the Japanese concept for the publicly expressible principle which literally means “façade.” Efforts to tame capitalist intrusions by others and protect one’s own (to the extent they can be “owned”) markets, whether to the benefit of corporations or communities—via state actions to curb imports, assign quotas, assist certain key industries etc.—are generally actions that constitute protectionism, mercantilism, neo-mercantilism and sometimes, economic nationalism. But these are rarely labels one affixes to one’s own regime: they are ascribed to others. Protectionist measures appeal to local constituencies, such as labor unions and agricultural workers, but acquire a hue of “cheating” in the international corporate community. Both the United States and Japan were actively practicing neo-mercantilism during the trade war era (and into today), ostensibly in reaction to one another, but they kept their own practices at the level of *honne*, the Japanese concept for the “real intentions” that cannot be publicly expressed.

For a brief period in the 1980s and into the first years of the first Clinton administration (1992–1996), coinciding with the perceived threat from Japan and other Asian economies, it became gradually okay to mention the unmentionable: the need to link business and government via a legitimate “industrial policy,” not an illegitimate “ism” (neomercantilism, economic nationalism). The general mood of the country was shifting from “Bash Japan” to “Learn from Japan”—or at least toward a method to ease anxiety about the Japanese threat in a publicly acceptable manner. Part of this drift to join ‘em if you can’t beat ‘em was to develop more structural congruence with Japan. The leading academic promoting industrial policy was Chalmers Johnson, who outlined its main components as investment in infrastructure and public (“federal”) measures to increase personal savings, and promote education and entry into high-tech and other jobs valuable to national growth.<sup>14</sup> Education, work and household economics—the subjects of *Challenge to America*—thus figure prominently, and are the least likely categories of industrial policy to be castigated as “trade barriers.”

Early in his first presidential campaign, former U.S. President Bill Clinton gained bipartisan popularity for his ability to straddle both the “free market and democracy” rhetoric of his Republican rival, incumbent George H. W. Bush, and the inklings of protectionist rhetoric among his own Democratic contenders. Clinton’s support for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (during the campaign) was

sprinkled with hesitations, e.g., “While we don’t know what will happen to these other regional trading blocs we know enough to know that we need stronger ties to our neighbors, both for the positive opportunity and to protect us in the event that other countries become more protectionist.”<sup>15</sup> He appeased the left wing of the party (who opposed NAFTA) by “peace dividend” appeals to transfer gains from military downsizing to domestic issues such as education and worker training programs. While his fellow Democrats were more forthright in advocating Japanese-style industrial policy, Clinton spoke only of a “comprehensive national strategy” to support economic growth.<sup>16</sup> State intervention—i.e., Big Government—was implied, a notion repellent to many Americans, but the “federal” aspect was groomed into a more patriotically appealing “national.” Indeed, plans for Clinton’s first cabinet in 1992 included the creation of an Economic Security Council to respond to the neomercantilist Ministry of Trade and Industry in Japan; what he ended up creating to merge domestic economics with foreign policy was the National Economic Council (NEC), whose staff reported to heads of both the NEC and the National Security Council.<sup>17</sup>

There is thus the economic nationalism of Japan enunciated through American and European texts, more accurately an economic *statism*, and the contrasting economic nationalism qua *nationalism* attributed to Americans (though called “patriotism” if mentioned at all). The sheer pedagogically sentimental content of economic nationalism—from the “nation”—rendered through the typical signposts of flags, slogans and military language, was pervasive, nonpartisan and legitimate in America throughout the period of the Japan threat.

Yet the intimations of support for industrial policy and counter-Japan protectionism that gradually became audible in America during the immediate post-Cold War period faded in the early years of the Clinton administration. In general, American leaders began to promote the United States as “not Japan”: Japan practices economic nationalism; America practices free trade. (The supreme irony here is that the “free” in “free trade” is the same etymological symbol rendered as “liberal”—as in Adam Smith’s “liberal”—in Japan’s Liberal Democratic Party, considered by American leaders as the bastion of economic nationalism.) Because Americans associate institutional restraints on capitalism, i.e., “trade barriers,” with authoritarianism, and likewise, free trade with democracy, there is considerable inhibition to recognize, and hence, make official, actions that could be called economic nationalism.

“Democracy and freedom” are constitutionally enshrined and legitimate; economic nationalism is tucked away so as not to expose its contradictions.

In the American case, therefore, while the “nation” of economic nationalism really mattered, “nation” also became a subterfuge to ignore the contradictions and collusions of capitalism and nationalism at the level of the state. In the Japanese case (again, rendered through the outside gaze), the nation was conceptually bypassed so that nation, state and corporation—Japan, Inc.—were indeed one. At one level, Japanese people were rendered as docile, single-minded *homo economicus*—or, the “economic animal,” the exact personifications of Japan, Inc. With a slight permutation however, the *homo economicus* became the role model of the future world of transnational capital and technology. Whether reviled or romanced, however, the human aftershocks experienced in high-speed economics were seldom considered by trade war enthusiasts.

This is why closing the tension between the fluidity of the economic “exchange impulse” and of any constraining “sovereignty impulse”—whether of localities, nation-states, or regions—is depoliticizing. As long as capitalism affects everyone globally, it is inevitable that any public sphere will need to debate and negotiate the difficult problems of maintaining social stability and equity when practices of capitalism define new markets, displace workers and alter communities.<sup>18</sup> In *Roger and Me*, Michael Moore suspends himself in the ironic space between community and corporatism by calling on leaders to take notice of the hardships experienced by residents of Flint, Michigan when they are abandoned by General Motors. Moore’s tragicomic method politicizes (in the sense of opening to democratic dialogue) the effects on the community.

The documentary techniques of *Challenge to America*, in contrast, depoliticize (in the sense of hiding) the tension between economism and the sovereignty impulse. First, in Bhaba’s sense of “pedagogy,” the so-called “corporate culture” of America as another manifestation of the timeless idea of the imagined “nation” is reified; second, in Bhaba’s sense of “performance,” the inherent tension between economism and nationalism is shifted onto schools, homes and workplaces. The transfer of power from “above” to “below” is also one from “politics” to “police,” to borrow concepts from Jacques Rancière. Politics, which is essentially democracy itself, emerges from paradox, spaces where dilemmas must

be negotiated because they have no uniformly agreed-upon proper place. “Police” in his usage, depicts the gravitation toward social ordering that is so uniform and consensual that the need for politics is obviated.<sup>19</sup> Panoptical power brings about the closed “police”-like ordering of society depicted by Rancière, since, as power from above becomes less visible, and as individuals become preoccupied in household economic pursuits (“my-home-ism” in Japanese), the more the very symbolic representation of the “nation” diminishes liminally. Consumers, students and workers do not need to see how their purchases, test scores and labor compare with other nation-state rivals in order to be good economic subjects. They have internalized the disciplinary norms of society—as biopower.<sup>20</sup>

Third, the very ambience of *Challenge to America* pacifies anxiety by engaging viewers in simplistic narrative expectations, as one would find in *Us vs. Them* science fiction stories that fail to inspire deeper reflection. In the following section I discuss the film’s narrative closure of the space between economism and nationalism.

#### TAKE ME TO OUR LEADERS

“Why were our best companies in trouble?” queries Smith, explaining the impetus for the series that will take viewers into the “classrooms, factories and homes” of the three great nations to seek out the “roots” of America’s problems. Part I, “Old Ways, New Game,” reviews the misfortunes of American corporations, evoking nostalgia for the iconic reminders of the American Dream. It begins with the story of IBM, the very metaphor of America itself that seemed “impregnable” for half a century. Former employees decry IBM’s “bureaucratic claw,” the arrogance and lack of foresight in the top leadership of IBM as well as other American corporations. Such corporations that refuse to cast off old ways will be forced to “change or die,” reports Smith. They must recognize that “jobs spring from ideas,” yet “ideas alone are not enough if they are not commercialized.” “We” Americans invented such things as the video camera and liquid crystal, yet because of American managerial myopia, the Japanese were able to fully develop these ideas into entrepreneurial successes while Americans sat idle.

Smith then directs our attention to an American computer trade show where Asian engineers are earnestly studying and sketching diagrams of an intriguing new IBM telephone. To embellish this potent scene,

insights from an expert witness are summoned. Economist Lester Thurow laments, “The problem is, the rest of the world sees you invent a new product, they copy it very fast, and microseconds later they’re building it. And if you’re not the cheapest builder of that product then it doesn’t do you any good. And of course the best example is the video camera and video recorder, which were invented in America but produced in Japan. That’s where all the income is. That’s where all the jobs are. That’s where all the management is.” Cut back to Smith, who interviews the Asians at the trade fair, who happen to be Koreans: “How long will it take you to copy this?” “Not *copy*,” retorts one of them. Through “independent development” they will “maybe” develop it within two years, viewers learn.

“Our industrial leaders were cocky and careless,” Smith reflects, as excerpts of 1950s commercials evoke nostalgia for the triumphant times of big cars and easy living, when Japan and Germany were still recovering from the war. Suddenly the time warp fades; that was “then” and this is “now,” the narrator continues, awakening viewers to the gloomy scene of a Kansas GM plant that closed its doors in 1988. A lachrymose female autoworker, laid off after 12 years of dedicated service, shares her loss of pride with Smith and viewers. *Challenge* very briefly retraces *Roger and Me*’s trek, chastising GM for its insensitive and anti-humanistic era of “re-industrializing,” when it replaced workers with robotics in a high-tech “buying spree.” Again, the alien threat: the management believed they were following the leading techniques from Toyota and Honda, remarks Harry J. Pearce, GM’s Vice President and Executive Counsel, but they also failed to take into consideration the leaner management style and workers’ teamwork that were also coordinated with robotics in Japan.

Thus, *Challenge to America* re-dreams America into a “new game.” As Part I closes, Smith turns Them into Us, extracting a new *performance* of workers, a new wealth of the nation, a new embrace of productivity-grinding “family values” in home, school and work. GM’s Pearce reiterates that “the challenge is absolutely immense. And I can assure you we’re running a little faster than Honda and Toyota. Because we’re behind ’em and we gotta catch ’em. I just hope they don’t look over their shoulder.” Hedrick Smith then goes to UAW local president L.D. Edwards for a similar perspective, that the competition is against Them [the foreign competition], not within Us [Americans]: “We can certainly strike General Motors and take them under. And they can strike

us and take us under. But no one wins but the foreign competition.” Edwards continues, establishing the link into Part Two, “If we don’t build the best quality, give the American customer the best product, then we can’t survive.”

“Edwards’ point is telling,” Smith moralizes. “The stakes are high for all of us and we won’t make it until we start working together. The corporate giants are battling furiously to get back into the game, and venture capitalists are hoping to leapfrog the Japanese with new technologies.” After his two years of traveling and research, Smith advises that America’s arrogance and rigidity will not help restore competitiveness. Viewers must learn that if the American Dream is to be reshaped, motivation must come from the bottom up. The new economic reawakening will be inspired by viewing the futuristic intelligence and skills of Others, and will result in the absorption of national economic motives in American schools, homes and workplaces. Accordingly, Americans must learn that “People are the key to success.”

#### TAKE ME TO OUR FAMILIES

“Over the past twenty years, we’ve watched millions of good American jobs move abroad,” Smith reminds us, effectively removing the agency of *who* did the moving. “Japanese, Germans, and others have overtaken our industry by working smarter and more efficiently than we do, and by effective teamwork. Often we’ve blamed foreigners for our problems, but the answers lie at our own doorstep. To get ahead of the changing game of global competition, we need a high performance workforce—higher skills and more teamwork than ever before. School is where the race begins, the heart of the nation, where we teach our children the skills they will need and pass along our bedrock values.”

The gaze on the powerful, well-manicured men in penthouse offices then begins its rapid descent into primary schools. Part Two, titled, “The Heart of the Nation,” takes viewers into classrooms of Germany and Japan, where the nation-state’s familial metaphor now surfaces. Entering the selected classrooms and homes of the powerful economic nation-troika, we are soon overwhelmed by the cute songs and recitations of uniformly-frosted, exuberantly co-operative Japanese second-graders. We accompany them through their rituals of decorating the classrooms with flowers, removing their shoes at the door, and serving lunch and cleaning the floors all by themselves. The school, we learn from Japanese

education expert Thomas Rohlen, is their home away from home; it is family. Children learn to manage themselves in groups with the teacher at the side. American schools, in contrast, emphasize the *individual*. American teachers hover over their classrooms, taking great care to call on each *individual* student, and to display students' *individual* artwork, birthdays and high-performance homework. While the film rhetorically argues against the continued importance of the "individual" in America as free agent, it simultaneously objectifies individuals in terms of their productive worth to national corporate cultures; the second-grader and the state are one.

The film's technique of observing the all-important benchmark standards of Japanese and German schoolchildren and workers thus exemplifies panoptical power. The elevated point at which Hedrick Smith narrates, the vantage point of American national power judged by corporate performance, gradually dims while the happy, unassuming children dominate the screen as unwitting avatars of national power. "People are the key to success," repeats Smith, implying that Japanese and German versions of communal capitalism have allowed for better *care* of their respective school and work families than America's individualist capitalism. To exchange the old pedagogy of individualism for new performance standards of future workers, Smith may be strained not to say in precise terms that the United States should *mimic* the alien Superpowers, but for all his repetitions of familial and group metaphors, he may as well. What he does articulate is the need for America to create more *trustful* (no longer considered collusive) relations between business and government, which should no longer be considered the archetypal enemies in the new corporate culture. Such industrial policy would in turn enable better coordination among schools, homes and industry as well, all to fulfill the end purpose of a healthier, more prosperous, more productive nation.

The family unit itself is also scrutinized to see how Japanese and Americans compare, especially in reference to educational values. When escorted to a Japanese Heartland home in Toyota City, Smith introduces us to an ordinary working class father dressed in a business suit. This dedicated head of family speaks intelligently about the importance of education while his similarly well-dressed wife tutors their children in the background. The Japanese father says he want his kids to acquire good study habits as well as a "sociable nature."

In the Heartland kitchen of America's middle-America middle class

family, two pudgy parents confess they don't go to PTA because Wednesday is their bowling night. The mother giggles and prepares lunch while the hirsute, flannel-shirted father twangs out his eloquent view on American individualism, "It's the American way, it's here to stay and there ain't no way they're ever gonna git rid of that. That's what made this country great in the first place and it will always be that way."

Another featured Midwesterner, a twelfth grader named Jason, will never amount to much since he spends all his time working at a fast food restaurant to support his car. Unlike Japan and Germany's efficient vocational guidance, no structure exists in American schools to guide Jason. He tells each overworked guidance counselor a different story about what he wants to do with his life, and they think his string of part-time jobs will help him develop a work ethic. "But do you think Jason can compete with German and Japanese 18-year olds?" Smith asks one teacher. "That may be the toughest question you've asked me yet," the teacher responds. (Here, Smith's rhetoric contrasts with that of Moore, whose well-known populist signature is to impart credibility and respectability onto the Joe Six-pack assembly-line workers from Flint who have no idea what a latte is.)

*Challenge to America's* cherubic economic nationalism echoes other tripolar political education-economical theses. Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker, in *Thinking for a Living: Education and the Wealth of Nations* (1992),<sup>21</sup> for example, call the Japan-German system "social partner capitalism" toward which Americans must invent a comparable "human resource capitalism" where citizens "think for a living." Officially they argue for "less bureaucracy, more accountability," while at the same time advocating an elaborate new code of educational standards, including national exams for both students and teachers.<sup>22</sup> These points are also advocated in Part IV of the film. The power from above authorizing the continuous benchmarking becomes naturalized, unremarkable. The reconfirmation of the worker-student-economic nation is designed to ease the anxiety that would be brought about by the loss of individualism, assuming that America would adopt some sort of Japan or Germany-styled industrial policy.

Another tripolar thesis is Lester Thurow's *Head to Head: The Coming Battle Among Japan, Europe, and America* (1992)<sup>23</sup> (Although "Europe" figures in Thurow's title, his focus is clearly on Germany. As he states, explaining the shift from bipolar military rivalry to tripolar economic rivalry, "In broad terms there are now three relatively equal contenders—

Japan, the European Community, centered around its most powerful country, Germany; and the United States.”<sup>24</sup>) Thurow figures prominently in *Challenge to America*, and Hedrick Smith’s story likewise follows the letter and spirit of *Head to Head* quite closely. Both works start off with the transition of global power from military to economic following the collapse of Communism, and they both decry the decline of corporations as symbols of American power. They then turn to specific ideas for reconstructing the American Dream based on the competitive “new rules” of Japan’s “Japan, Inc.” and Germany’s “Das Volk” teamwork—extolling communitarian industrial policies. The “new rules” of the game may seem antithetical to free market Americans, they agree, but the new rules reflect the new international playing field. Thurow argues further that teamwork is indeed part of the American landscape; the problem is that individuals no longer recognize it as such:

Teams were important in America’s history—wagon trains conquered the West, men working together on the assembly line in American industry conquered the world, a successful national strategy and a lot of teamwork put an American on the moon first (and thus far, last). But the American mythology extols only the individual—the Lone Ranger or Rambo. In America, halls of fame exist for almost every conceivable activity, but nowhere do Americans raise monuments in praise of teamwork. Only national mythology stands between Americans and the construction of successful economic teams.<sup>25</sup>

Both Smith and Thurow thus tout the “new rules,” but their analyses might instead be dubbed, “New Ways, Old Game.” Curiously, they both seem to shy away from the temptation to remind Americans that military success also needed the paternalism of government and sacrifice of individuals through teamwork. (No monuments in praise of teamwork? Has Thurow never seen the Iwo Jima monument?) But rather than anticipate the breakdown of borders that would result from the new power shift to global capitalism, both nostalgically recapture the cold war conceit of a world mapped into disparate nation-states. The atavistic tripolarization of Japan, Germany and the United States jointly resembles both World War II and the bipolar cold war scenario. Not surprisingly, Thurow’s *Head to Head* revels in competitive, mostly war metaphors exemplified in the subtitle, *The Coming War*—and ad nauseum references to winning and losing. Yet bookstores overflowed with clones of *Head to Head* during this era, and many were far more “militarized” in their attempts to remind Americans of the treachery of Japan in the Pacific War.

Smith's military imagery is more subtle than Thurow's, but nonetheless provocative. In Part I, when we learn how the Japanese companies became fascinated with America's RCA-led invention of liquid crystal, the recording of Japan's public announcement of the invention is muffled, with a minor-key military tune in the background: economic competition thus feels like a World War II newsreel. One commentator ends Part III (which concerns government-business relations) with the declaration, "We did it in once in war [raise our national confidence], we can do it again."

Inspiring citizens to productivity also diverted attention from the story's notable absences. Perhaps the most remarkable absence in the film is its failure to mention the negotiation of NATFA which took place concurrently with the making of the film, from 1991 to 1993. Because both of America's leading political parties (Republicans and the Clinton faction of Democrats) endorsed the agreement, mainstream public opinion gradually gave into the persuasion that "NAFTA will create jobs"/ "We hafta NAFTA"—ergo, it then became okay to send factories to Mexico; "free-trade" became the patriotic euphemism for neoliberal global expansionism. Meanwhile, the strong nationalist sentimentality expressed in *Challenge to America* became less and less popular until it fizzled into the Patrick Buchanan fringe (and was only barely alive in the 2004 anti-outsourcing arguments of the Kerry-Edwards campaign, filled with qualifications on the inevitability of globalization). In the 1990s, some tried to let China fill the void of economic enemy, but anti-Chinese economic nationalism, in the context of accepted globalization, never gripped the American nation in the same way as anti-Japanese economic nationalism, which resurrected World War II imagery and neatly filled the gap of enemy replacement in the meltdown of the Cold War.<sup>26</sup> Populist watchdogs of corporate responsibility such as Michael Moore, meanwhile, took their arguments to the global level.

Another absent story is the popular-level economic nationalism, the impetus to "Buy American." Before "Learn from Japan," individuals practiced patriotism with their pocketbooks, boycotting Japanese and other foreign-made goods. This quintessential populist economic nationalism was considerably more conspicuous, unsavory and more apparently contradictory than Learn from Japan's objective of transforming education and worker training. Dana Frank, who has chronicled the waves of "Buy American" movements since the founding of the nation, reveals that the drama of economic competition in the 1970s and 1980s produced the "longest, and deepest wave of Buy American sentiment in

U.S. history.”<sup>27</sup> Americans felt righteous in demonstrating and legitimating the worth of American products. Yet the nation-wide consciousness to buy only American products turned ugly because it so often resurrected and coincided with racist sentiment against Japanese, and by association, all Asians. One of the labor unions promulgating Buy American sentiment, the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union (ILGWU), put a poster of the American flag in the New York subway system in 1972. Under the flag was the caption: “MADE IN JAPAN: Has your job been exported to Japan? . . . If not, it soon will be unless you buy the products of American workers who buy from you.” Numerous editorials, community groups and organizations supporting Asian Americans around the nation condemned the poster as a possible fusion of apparel and the Yellow Peril.<sup>28</sup>

Once opened, the box of World War II symbols was difficult to close, since it resonated across several layers of public sentiment. In the 1980s, two incidents in particular marked the extent to which the public was willing to blame its economic nationalist frustrations on Japan. At a picnic for the United Auto Workers (UAW) Union, members took turns smashing a Toyota with a sledgehammer, fully reveling in the mass publicity. And in 1982, the ugliest incident to mark the era of blaming America’s economic woes on Japan occurred when two laid-off GM workers in Detroit battered an Asian American to death, blaming him for the loss of their jobs. The victim turned out to be an American of Chinese ancestry named Vincent Chin.

Despite the public outcry against these incidents, much of the catharsis went unchecked. The UAW bumper sticker politics included several themes and variations on the especially enduring slogan, “BUY AMERICAN: THE JOB YOU SAVE MAY BE YOUR OWN.” The UAW’s parking lot in Detroit featured the sign, “UAW PARKING RESERVED FOR U.S. AND CANADIAN VEHICLES ONLY. PLEASE PARK IMPORTS ELSEWHERE.” A GM worker set fire to a Japanese flag in a New Jersey plant while blaring Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the USA.”<sup>29</sup>

Pearl Harbor figured prominently in the imagery of Buy American. A Florida entrepreneur churning out anti-Japanese products to sell at union conventions produced a best-selling T-shirt featuring a Japanese fighter plane dropping electronic parts and automobiles on the U.S., with the caption, “Pearl Harbor II.” In 1991, a GM plant in Michigan produced a pamphlet with the following message, directing its anger at GM’s deci-

sion to close 21 plants toward Japan, on the 50<sup>th</sup> commemoration of Pearl Harbor:

A call to arms for all Americans to declare war on Japanese products and all non American made products! When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor—we went to war!. . . And when Japan threatens the security of American jobs we must go to war again—with a complete boycott of all products not made in America!<sup>30</sup>

“Buy American” as pocketbook patriotism specifically targeted Japanese products and revealed the easy slide between economic nationalism and racist xenophobia. Much of the wave of populist political economy that also became popular during this era tried to create “affirmative action”—as does *Challenge to America*—on the global economic power trinity: the United States, Japan and Germany. But neither the inclusion of Germany as a racially similar rival, nor the transition from “hate Japan” to “love Japan” fully eradicated the racist hue behind America’s anti-Japan/love-Japan economic nationalism. (Moore’s inclusion of the xenophobia effect is minimal in *Roger and Me*, confined to brief shots of anti-Japan neon signs and graffiti.)

#### CHALLENGE TO AMERICA AS POLITICAL SCIENCE FICTION

*Challenge to America*’s borrowed motifs from actual science fiction appear then, as a kinder, gentler xenophobia. In Part III, “The Culture of Commerce,” the gaze returns to the corporate level, both to commend America for ousting some of its CEOs (including Roger Smith and his hand-picked successor), and to signal that a new mode of co-operative relations between business and government, exemplified by *keiretsu* in Japan and codetermination in Germany, represents the future. In the opening scene, viewers witness a welcome ceremony for new employees at the Toyota Motor Corporation that (in Smith’s interpretation) takes place against the dramatic theme song to *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Richard Strauss’s *Also sprach Zarathustra*). Lights shine brightly across the many rows of gender-segregated, soon-to-be productive and happy workers who represent the future of global capitalism. They are about to enter into a “marriage ceremony” with their company for mutual commitment to lifetime service. Several shots pensively gaze up to the towering corporate sky-scape, pondering the elusive powers of corporations in a manner reminiscent of cyberpunk or *animé*. Throughout

the film, then-futuristic images of computers and robotic technology are also generously showcased.

The most conspicuous feature of *Challenge to America* is its arresting of Germany and Japan into unambiguous categories: everything THEY do is futuristic and efficient, what WE do is old and outdated. Otherness is radically delineated and antiseptically probed rather than inter-culturally and critically engaged. The competitor is alien-ated, dissected and biopsied only for the purposes of appropriating findings into an emboldened, future-oriented national identity for Americans. But is this apparent paradigm shift advocated by the panels of experts really new or old?

Over fifty years before the making of *Challenge to America*, America's genre of World War II propaganda films depicted the *subhuman* nature of the enemy.<sup>31</sup> As Renov pithily summarizes Japan's and America's mutually mediated otherness: "The Japanese were diminutive, childlike in temperament, simian in appearance (scientific proof of their debased evolutionary station) and never to be trusted; the Americans were overgrown and devilish, ill-smelling and licentious."<sup>32</sup> *Challenge to America's* superhumanizing of the enemy is not entirely analogous to war propaganda's subhumanizing; we can imagine that Hedrick Smith gained access to many of the Japanese he interviewed by wining and dining or at least gift-exchanging with them—acts that would not be possible in war. Nevertheless, depicting the Japanese as superhuman/futuristic/robotic conveys to viewers a sign system similar to that of subhuman/primitive/bestial in that either stereotype effectively dehumanizes the enemy. The radical distinction of otherness serves both political ends and deep psychological needs; it is a universal device for coping with anxiety caused by "our [human] inability to control the world," as Sander L. Gilman elucidates.<sup>33</sup>

Indeed, after the Second World War, understanding the rising importance of global economic power in general, and the enigmatic Japanese superpower in particular, was beyond the realm of mathematical body-count, win-or-lose comprehension to average Americans. Individuals needed reassurance of what they could personally do to contribute to America's economic competitiveness. *Challenge to America* gave them facile, if self-flagellating, interpretations of the perceived American economic decline, and at the same time it imparted Anita Bryant's "can do" feeling that changes could be made. Moreover, it detracted from the even simpler Blame Japan and Buy America courses of thought and action.

And while the film appears to contend that Americans must change

while the Japanese and Germans hold on to their own established patterns of communal capitalism, this notion, too, was actually a stereotyped pattern of suggestion that only “we” can change and evolve while “they” are fixed, immutable, invulnerable. This arresting of the other does not just *reflect* America’s anxiety; it *relieves* it, since by holding the image stable, the film enables the American-defined gaze to gain the upper hand, to control.<sup>34</sup> Viewers of *Challenge to America* learn only that the Japanese are happy in their Collective: their idyllic school, home, or company. In Part III, Smith visits a Japanese company worker whose dormitory pillow reads, “I am happy,” and who tells us how happy he is to join the corporation where he will work for life and meet his wife as well. Exceptions on their part do not fit the imaginary. We do not learn that the wife will have to quit her job once married, or that she never had a chance for lifetime employment to begin with, or that the happy worker might also get laid off or burnt out by long hours and excessive stress. A host of things become unimaginable in *Challenge to America*, which only aims to fortify the American Corporation-as-Nation Dream, and not really probe the complexities and dangers of Japan’s and Germany’s rapidly mobilized national materialism to humans.

Finally, the morphing from “hate Japan” as evil enemy to “Learn from Japan” as the futuristically techno-savvy superpower rival should not be confused with any sort of saccharine cross-cultural understanding; nor does it necessarily represent an American humbled posturing. As Renov reminds us, “[P]aradigm shifts in our mental representations of the world can and do occur. We can move from fearing to glorifying the Other. We can move from loving to hating. The most negative stereotype always has an overtly positive counterweight. As any image is shifted, all stereotypes shift. Thus stereotypes are inherently protean rather than rigid.”<sup>35</sup> Projecting Japan into the imagining of the future hardly began with *Challenge to America*; so-called Techno-Orientalism has pervaded popular culture, most famously in novels such as Michael Crichton’s *Rising Sun*, and in films such as *Blade Runner* and its many clones attracted to Japan’s high-tech-over-killed and sign-drenched cityscape. Japan is the technological dream/nightmare of the future in terms of both desire and dread; but at the same time it is an “Orientalist” image, following Edward Said’s thesis, in that just as the “West” created the Orient to fasten its own identity and enable its ideological control, guardians of nation-state imaginaries also invented the radically defined future represented in images of Japan.<sup>36</sup>

Yet the imagined timelessness of the linking of economism to nationalism proved to be the most timed. *Challenge to America* was a late-hour (thus, time-specific) attempt to rekindle emotions around corporate symbolism within the security of stable nation-states. Remarkably, a great deal of the film's temperament became obsolete even as it was being produced. When it was finally shown on public television in 1993, the Japanese economy had already fallen into recession; America had become the world's only superpower; software design rather than assembly line automobile production had become the human resource gold standard, and joint-venture capitalism and the launching of NAFTA had rapidly given legitimacy to the multinational corporation to transcend borders and lose much of its patriotic moorings in the American collective sentiment. Though lauded throughout the film, lifetime employment and cozy long-term relations between management and labor became increasingly difficult goals to achieve, even in Japan.

Then, in *Challenge's* coda, Hedrick Smith interviews President Bill Clinton, who instructs on the need to continuously re-educate Americans who "will likely change jobs seven times in a lifetime." Not only were nations, corporations and populations no longer aligned so neatly together as some imagined. Developed states and their leaders began to place responsibility directly on the worker for changing jobs and retraining. Likewise leaders emphasized the freedom of the consumer to purchase cheap goods, the goods produced in other countries with cheap labor. By the mid-1990s and into the present, though economic nationalism is still alive in various guises, global critics more frequently point to such so-called neo-liberalism—whereby states advocate for the most profitable, rather than patriotic, practices of corporations.

For the world's view of Japan, 1995 may have been the annus horribilis that punctuated the end of the miracle—and the threat. Though Japan's economy was declining for some time, the failure of the government to respond adequately to the Great Kobe Earthquake in January 1995, and to anticipate the subway gassings by the bizarre Aum Shinrikyo cult in March of that year, signaled the international community, especially the United States, that Japan was no longer the perfect model of bureaucratic efficiency; nor was it the evil predator. Meanwhile greater awareness of the "global," through NAFTA and the rise of regional trading blocs, the development of joint venture capitalism, the spread of the Internet, the sporadic reappearance of new areas of conflict attracting attention from America's military leaders—and a host of other

factors well-known by now—gave new complexities to ways many Americans imagined themselves in relation to others.

A telling point is that by the mid-1990s, with greater awareness of international political economy, a new generation of American consumers began to practice “Buy American” for reasons quite different than during the anti-Japanese period. Now the motivation was not to protect American workers and the American economy, but to boycott American corporations failing to monitor the exploitation of their laborers overseas.

### CONCLUSION

Against the many threats to cultural coherence that converged in the early 1990s—competition with Japan, the rise of information capitalism, the loss of the strategically stable enemy of the USSR, and globalization’s “race to the bottom”—*Challenge to America* advocated a “new social compact” to join corporations, families and schools toward the “performative” imperative of unified, orderly competitiveness. Simultaneously, it mediated a “pedagogical” symbolism to redefine danger from Japan, Germany and others as imminent economic conquest. The narrative, however, actually tells little about those countries—yet much about America.

The attempt to elevate corporate symbols to the level of the flag fizzled into ambivalent postures toward globalization, and then the topic of economic globalization—for citizens whose main form of information is American mainstream media, anyway—began to attract less and less media attention as the War on Terrorism consumed the interest of the world. Yet individuals, whether as citizens, workers, students or consumers, are entrenched not just in the entities Hedrick Smith called “corporate cultures” but in the increasingly borderless networks of capital. As if to legitimate this transfer, Robert Reich (Secretary of Labor in the first Clinton administration), advocated a re-naming of “economic nationalism” to no longer indicate a nation’s attachment to corporate brands, but instead a nation’s attention to work and training:<sup>37</sup>

Well-trained workers and modern infrastructure attract global webs of enterprise, which invest and give workers relatively good jobs; these jobs in turn, generate additional on-the-job training and experience, thus creating a powerful lure to other global webs. As skills increase and experience accumulates, a nation’s citizens add greater and greater value to the world

economy—commanding ever-higher compensation and improving their standard of living.

In the above passage, Reich imagined power as emanating from the original agency of “well-trained workers,” then through “global webs” in such a way to benefit the nation, and then finally to the world economy: the ordering and individuation of human bodies are stabilized. Yet the view of the larger center of global economic power is destabilized: is the Nation-State, Inc. really giving authority to the development of human resources or are workers increasingly on their own? Are the leaders directing the movement, activities and loyalties of individuals in corporations, states, nations or other containers? Even where a coherent, territorialized entity managing power cannot be centralized, located or articulated, however, it continues to be re-imagined and remobilized. Power often becomes perceptible through the very fictionalizing of Self and Others in documentaries and other media.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See note 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Roger and Me*, produced and directed by Michael Moore, 91 min., Warner Home Video, 1994 (original 1989), videocassette.

<sup>3</sup> *Challenge to America*, produced and directed by Hedrick Smith, Public Broadcasting Corporation (U.S.), 270 min., 1993. See also note 26 regarding the fate of IBM. *Challenge to America*, also produced in a book and audiotape format, was marketed by Hedrick Smith Productions not only as a PBS documentary film but also as a worker training film in corporations.

<sup>4</sup> See Michael Renov, “Documentary Horizons: An Afterword,” in Jane M. Gaines and Michael Renov, eds., *Collecting Visible Evidence* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp. 321–323.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the relationship between danger, identity and the construction of national insecurity, see David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), and Jutta Weldes et. al. eds., *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities and the Production of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999),

<sup>6</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 201.

<sup>7</sup> It is rumored that policy analysts began to include Germany and the European Community in their frequent discussions of economic competitiveness to avoid charges of racism, i.e., to avoid making comparisons only of Japan, and only of Asia, as foreign Other. This paper concentrates on the Japanese comparison since it was more often emphasized in American discussions of political economy.

<sup>8</sup> Homi Bhaba, “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation,” in Homi Bhaba, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 297.

<sup>9</sup> The famous statement, often evoking skepticism about the relations between business and government in the United States, is attributed to by Charles E. Wilson, a for-

mer president of the General Motors Corporation, who later became Secretary of Defense. See E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Joseph F. Kett, and James Trefil, eds., *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> See also George T. Crane, "Economic Nationalism: Bringing the Nation Back In," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 27, no. 1 (1998), pp. 55–75.

<sup>11</sup> See; Chalmers Johnson, *Japan: Who Governs? The Rise of the Developmental State* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995); Kenneth Pyle, *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era*, 2nd ed. (Washington: AEI Press, 1996); Malcolm Trevor, *Japan-Restless Competitor: The Pursuit of Economic Nationalism* (RoutledgeCurzon, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> This conceptualization borrows from various sources of Michael J. Shapiro, including *Cinematic Political Thought: Narrating Race, Nation and Gender* (New York University Press, 1999), p. 46; here he also adapts from Roxanne Doty's reading of Homi Bhaba (see next endnote) in Roxanne Doty, "The Double Writing of Statecraft: Exploring State Responses to Illegal Immigration," *Alternatives* 21 (1996), p. 14. See also Michael J. Shapiro, "Sovereignty and Exchange in the Orders of Modernity," in George T. Crane, and Abba Amawi, eds., *The Theoretical Evolution of International Political Economy: A Reader*, Second Edition (Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>13</sup> My first experience with the need to creatively resolve the tension between economics and nationalism occurred as a teenage worker in one of the dozens of souvenir shops at the base of America's unique monument, the granite carving of four 60-ft heads of presidents, Mt. Rushmore. My job was to affix price tags on Mt. Rushmore trinkets in such a way as to cover the insignia, "Made in Japan." The towering all-American granite icon, when peddled into mass-produced bric-a-brac, still needed a subterfuge to conceal patriotism's opposing impulse: the "race to the bottom" to find the lowest-payable workers to make the little metaphors of patriotism.

<sup>14</sup> Chalmers Johnson, "Flying Blind Across the Pacific," *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1993, p. B7.

<sup>15</sup> Speech at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, October 4, 1992, as cited in Leon V. Sigal, "The Last Cold War Election," *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1992/93), p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Sigal, "The Last Cold War Election," p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> On the NEC, see The Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland, the National Security Council Project Oral History Roundtables, September 27, 2000, retrieved December 8, 2004 at <http://www.brookings.edu/dybdocroot/fp/research/projects/nsc/transcripts/20000927.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> The United States Department of Labor defines "displaced workers" as "persons 20 years of age and older who lost or left jobs because their plant or company closed or moved, there was insufficient work for them to do, or their position or shift was abolished." See Department of Labor, "Displaced Workers Summary" (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Labor Statistics), July 30, 2004, online: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/> [Access date: December 12, 2004].

<sup>19</sup> Jacques Rancière, "Ten Theses on Politics," trans. Rachel Bowlby & Davide Panagia, *Theory & Event* 5:3 <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/tae/toc/index.html>.

<sup>20</sup> On this note, Japan's popular level perception of the concept, "economic nationalism," has been profoundly different than that of America. Japanese people, weary of the negative attributes of nationalism after the war, rigorously pursued economic activities precisely because they recognized economics as something *other than* nationalism. To many people (except, of course, for the frequently publicized war-nostalgic), the terms "nationalism" or "patriotism" retained their prewar connotations as military-expansionist, heavily culturalist, negative ideologies. Rigorous rebuilding of homes and communities through economism was a way to *recover from* the ravages of nationalism.

<sup>21</sup> Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker, *Thinking for a Living: Education and the Wealth of Nations* (Basic Books, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker, *Thinking for a Living*, pp. 74, 146–163.

<sup>23</sup> Lester Thurow, *Head to Head: The Coming Battle Among Japan, Europe, and America* (New York: William Morrow, 1992).

<sup>24</sup> Lester Thurow, *Head to Head*, p. 29. Thurow attributes the origin of the 3-nation approach to the insights of George C. Lodge, *Perestroika for America* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1991), pp. 15–16, cited in Thurow, *Head to Head*, p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> Thurow, *Head to Head*, p. 298.

<sup>26</sup> In December 2004, barely over a decade after the airing of *Challenge to America*, when the formal announcement came that the Chinese company Lenovo purchased IBM's personal computer business, pundits did not mourn the loss of a cultural symbol to foreign predators. By now, IBM, like other transnational corporations, has become so internally diversified as well as internationalized that the *New York Times* could safely report, "The complex transaction is meant to serve as a bridge between very different companies from different cultures." IBM will continue to produce software and other goods and services, so it will be beneficial to ensure its stake in the Chinese company's, and country's, success. See Steve Lohr, "Sale of IBM PC Unit is a Bridge between Companies and Cultures," *New York Times* [electronic edition], December 8, 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Dana Frank, *Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), p. 131.

<sup>28</sup> Dana Frank, *Buy American*, pp. 139–143.

<sup>29</sup> Dana Frank, *Buy American*, pp. 160–163.

<sup>30</sup> Cited in Dana Frank, *Buy American*, p. 163

<sup>31</sup> See Michael Renov, "Warring Images: Stereotype and American Representations of the Japanese," in Abé Mark Nornes and Fukushima Yukio, eds., *The Japan-American Film Wars: WWII Propaganda and Its Cultural Contexts* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994), pp. 95–118; John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986); John W. Dower, "Japanese Cinema Goes to War," Chapter 2 of John W. Dower, *Japan in War and Peace: Selected Essays* (New York: New Press, 1993), pp. 33–54.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Renov, 1994, p. 100.

<sup>33</sup> Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 12; cited in Michael Renov, "Warring Images," p. 99.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Renov, "Warring Images," p. 99, adapted from Homi K. Bhaba, "The Other Question—The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse," *Screen* 24, no. 6 (November–December 1983), p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> Michael Renov, "Warring Images," p. 99, adapted from Gilman, *Difference and Pathology*, p. 18.

<sup>36</sup> I have adapted this idea from Ueno Toshiya, "Techno-Orientalism and Media Tribalism: On Japanese Animation and Rave Culture," *Third Text* 47 (Summer 1999), pp. 95–98; Ueno adapted it from David Morley and Kevin Robins, *The Space of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries* (Routledge, 1995).

<sup>37</sup> Robert B. Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Capitalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), pp. 264–265.