

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

---

Faculty Scholarship

Research and Scholarship

---

3-4-1975

## The Mirror and the Porthole

William C. Spencer  
*Lindenwood College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/faculty-research-papers>



Part of the [International and Area Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Spencer, William C., "The Mirror and the Porthole" (1975). *Faculty Scholarship*. 464.  
<https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/faculty-research-papers/464>

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Research and Scholarship at Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Lindenwood University. For more information, please contact [phuffman@lindenwood.edu](mailto:phuffman@lindenwood.edu).

*the  
Mirr<sup>r</sup>  
and <sup>r</sup>the  
p<sup>r</sup>Orthole*

## THE MIRROR AND THE PORTHOLE

William C. Spencer

President, The Lindenwood Colleges

March 4, 1975

The day before yesterday the lead article in the Editorial Section of the *New York Times* by Sydney H. Schanberg, an East Asian correspondent, began under a Phnom Penh dateline: " 'Our side is more civilized.' the American Embassy official was saying, as he sought to explain to a newsman why it was necessary for the United States to continue supporting the government of Marshal Lon Nol in Phnom Penh against the communist-led Cambodian insurgents. 'If the other side took over, they would kill all the educated people, the teachers, the artists, the intellectuals and that would be a step backward toward barbarism.'

"Who are the insurgents? Is there credence to the American argument that they are immoral barbarians, or is this merely an escalation of rhetoric at a time of loss for American foreign policy?"

Mr. Schanberg continues: "Not a great deal is known about the rebels, even five years after they began building their military and political structure here . . .

"The average peasant is achingly wearied by the war, having been forced to flee the fighting sometimes three and four times and almost certainly having lost some member of his family to a shell or a bullet. He only desires its end. He looks forward to possible communist rule neither with anticipation nor fear, for he is usually a nonpolitical person . . .

"The poor and middle class, that is, most of the people, long ago prepared themselves mentally for a new government. 'When they come,' one businessman said of the insurgents, 'the war will be over.'

The Mirror and the Porthole, the 1975 Alice Parker Memorial Lecture, was presented by the American Association of University Professors on the campus of The Lindenwood Colleges. The late Dr. Alice Parker served as Professor of English Literature at Lindenwood from 1928 to 1961.

"The feeling is understandable after what has happened to this once civilized and happy place after five years of Napalm, B-52 carpet bombing, a casualty toll of nearly a million persons, and deepening hunger that is now producing starvation deaths among children. Starvation in a country that used to export rice, a lush and gentle country where even the poorest did not lack for food.

"To see an emaciated infant gasp and die on a cold metal table in a clinic here, or to see a peasant soldier have his mangled leg amputated in a military hospital is to see Cambodian reality today. In these places, you hardly ever hear anyone talk about geopolitical epicenters or superpower détente or American foreign policy credibility."

The most dramatic detail in these quotations from Mr. Schanberg may not be the horror of children starving or the references to wounded soldiers or even the embassy official's dire predictions, but one sentence buried in the middle of the article: "Not a great deal is known about the rebels, even five years after they began building their military and political structure here." That, I would contend, is amazing.

In his remarkable book, *Darkness at Noon*, Arthur Koestler wrote: "We have learnt history more thoroughly than the others. We differ from all others in our logical consistency. We know that virtue does not matter to history, and that crimes remain unpunished; but that every error has its consequences and venges itself unto the seventh generation. Therefore we concentrated all our efforts on preventing error and destroying the very seeds of it. Never in history has so much power over the future of humanity been concentrated in so few hands as in our case. Each wrong idea we follow is a crime committed against future generations." It is useful to recall that this book was written against the background of the Stalinist Purge Trials in the 1930's, and Koestler's imprisonment during the Spanish Civil War. The book was published in 1941.

Many years ago, around the turn of the century, H. G. Wells wrote a fanciful story entitled, "The Country of the Blind," a title later used by Counts and Lodge in a definitive study of Soviet documents and press releases. The Wellsian fantasy described a remote mountain valley in Ecuador where some Peruvian Indians escaping from Spanish oppressors settled in a village. Decades later an earthquake dislodged the top of the neighboring mountain, sending rock crashing down, and forever sealing off the only outside access to the village. Sometime later a strange epidemic left all the newborn congenitally blind. Fifteen generations later a stranger from the outer world stumbled into the village by one of those mysterious but unexplained accidents so characteristic of Wells. Nuñez, the stranger, told the villagers of the great and beautiful world beyond the valley. Surprisingly his descriptions did not interest the villagers, for over the generations they had lost those elements of their original heritage which depended on vision. Instead they believed that their village constituted the entire universe, and that their people were the only race of mankind. Their sky, they believed, was of smooth rock reflecting sound from the wings of angels. Nuñez at first ridiculed these notions and in so doing outraged the villagers who considered him ignorant, immature, and possibly evil. Driven by hunger, need for companionship, and desire for a young maiden, his beliefs were finally shaken. When asked if he could still "see," he replied that he could not, that seeing had no meaning. As evidence of his sincerity he agreed to an operation to remove the offensive organs of sight. However, dawn came and with it a beautiful sunrise. Torn by inner conflict Nuñez concluded that sight was his most valuable possession. Wells leaves him struggling up the unclimbable mountain toward a world where people can see.

The thoughts intertwined in these three citations — ignorance, errors, and blindness — are fundamental to the themes of this paper. Relationships among nations have always been fragile and ephemeral, often beyond the immediate control of even the most dedicated, altruistic, and well-informed statesmen. But for our generation, more favored with information and the sophisticated means to obtain information than any other generation throughout history, to plead ignorance, to commit and compound errors and, worst of all, to be blind in our national relationships is unacceptable. Six weeks from now, on April 18 (“On the 18th of April in '75; hardly a man is now alive, who remembers that famous day and year.” How many of you can recall from your schooldays “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere”?) we will celebrate the anniversary of “The Shot Heard 'Round the World,” that symbol of self-determination, the skirmish that forecast our nationhood. Have we perchance, two hundred years later, lost the ability to know what to do, to avoid being trapped in errors, to see rather than to accept blindness?

*Nations are like individuals, subject to caprices, buffeted by conflicting conditions, needs, aspirations, fortunes, seeking recognition and approval in the eyes of God and men, but most of all preoccupied with the basic struggles of survival and day-to-day living. The key to understanding nations is to understand the antecedents of behavior, the motivators of actions that explain a nation's policies, its decisions, its character: in other words, one must know the cultural and social context, past and present, within which a nation lives and acts. And, finally, one must probably empathize, that is project one's consciousness, to achieve full understanding of another individual or another nation — not a “bleeding heart” act but a hard-headed effort to see through the other's eyes.* Against this background we can examine some aspects of present-day relations with other

nations. For purposes of this paper I will illustrate with only two areas, Southeast Asia and Latin America, although I believe other world areas and nations could be used.

Before we look through our portholes toward the distant shores of Asia and Latin America, we might profitably spend a few moments before the mirror. For that face, those eyes, that mind, those expressions and attitudes will affect what we see through the porthole. So will they be affected by the ship of which the porthole is a part, as well as the beauties and the agonies of the distant shores.

Americans tend to ignore history. For them everything is new under the sun, or if it isn't it ought to be. They have consummate faith in the future — it's almost a religion — in the renewal, rebirth, and correctibility of mankind and nations. Toffler in *Future Shock* jams American society in the caboose of a fast train to the future, has them musing over where they've already been, while no one is in the engine controlling the throttle. Toffler's is an insightful observation, but he fails to note what would happen if the train slowed down or stopped. No doubt everyone would then rush forward, fix or replace (preferably replace) the engine, and return to the caboose to congratulate each other on the resourcefulness of the passengers. In the process they would probably neither look ahead nor behind, assuming and hoping all was now well. Americans deeply believe — with Horatio Alger — “rags to riches, onward and upward, work hard and you'll make it.” They're down-to-earth people, practical, and with no nonsense. They're sentimental, generous, staunch defenders of what they believe is right. But they're individualistic, outspoken, proud, nationalistic, competitive and honest. They're also provincial (New Yorkers and Washingtonians included). They're culturally myopic in spite of their diverse backgrounds; they tend to be braggards

("bullish on America"); they love heroes and parades; they are suspicious of foreigners and beliefs different from their own; they covet material possessions, worship youth, resent criticism, respond to slogans and advertising, regard science and discovery with awe, and believe that solutions to every problem can be found if you only look long enough and work hard enough.

That's enough mirror-gazing. Each of you can fill in the gaps or elaborate on the suggestions. Americans as individuals are widely admired, frequently envied, regarded occasionally with amusement or amazement, and often seen for what they are. It must be remembered, however, that many of those features we see in the mirror, normally positive and complimentary, have an ugly side too. It's humbling to read or to hear the critical words of Fidel Castro, to think about what he is saying, to ponder on the validity of his observations, rather than to reject them out-of-hand and out-of-mind as propaganda. Listen, for example, to what Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia said this last week: "My government and I are sincerely desirous of rapidly achieving a reconciliation and a normalization of our relationships with the United States. In order to achieve this, we are prepared to forget what has happened between us since 1970, the death, the suffering, the misery, the destruction. We pose only one condition to the United States. We demand only that it no longer involve itself with the regime in Phnom Penh, and let the Cambodians take care of their own affairs. That is in conformity with the spirit of the American Constitution." Truth, propaganda - we need to know, to avoid mistakes, to see.

The portholes of our ship are open: the mirror has been put aside. Our vision admittedly is slightly blurred by the banners and flags proclaiming that we will never surrender to communist tyranny, that we are fighting for the

great cause of freedom, that we are dedicated to the abolition of poverty, ignorance, and disease, and that we must contain the expansion of communism to prevent future wars. There is truth here, but it is only part of the picture. When the banners and flags stream out of our line of vision we can clearly see the distant shores.

Edwin Reischauer, former Ambassador to Japan and a most perceptive analyst, recently commented on East Asian culture and beliefs. "It is rather the secular ethics of Confucianism," he said, "that in recent centuries has played the unifying role in East Asia that Christianity has played in the West." Eastern ethical and value systems tend to emphasize family solidarity, stress filial piety, subordinate the individual, elevate the group, respect group harmony rather than strive for the compromise of conflicting rights. They honor social organization, prize political integration, and believe in hard work, frugality, and education. "Seen in such basic terms," Reischauer summarizes, "East Asia has been in the past and still is in many ways every bit as much of a cultural unit as is the West." Of particular interest in a political sense, Reischauer adds: "China is a Rome that never broke up into a multiplicity of people and nations. She traditionally viewed other units in the world as 'Barbarian,' participating in civilization only insofar as they accepted tributary vassalage to the 'Central Land' of China. Vietnam and Korea first entered the era of recorded history as colonial conquests of China, comparable to Rome's settlement of Britain. After they achieved their independence, Korea in the fourth century and Vietnam in the tenth, they remained subject to occasional Chinese conquests and usually accepted tributary status." Probably most significant to

our understanding of East Asians, Reischauer concludes: "Intercourse among the very disparate units of East Asia was far different from that among the various people of Europe. The distances were greater and contacts therefore fewer . . . some intermarriage occurred among the lower classes in seaports but, unlike Europe, was not practiced among ruling families or among those of social status. Even today East Asians regard intermarriage with other East Asian nationalities as hardly less distasteful than with people of radically different races."

As is evident from these statements, the Asian nations are not likely to form a unified bloc, a community of nations committed to common purposes. Nationalism, fear and even hatred of neighbors, the tradition of Chinese conquests and superiority – all these argue against the notion of combined forces and particularly against the probability of foreign nations intervening successfully in an Asian nation's internal affairs.

Frances Fitzgerald, a young free-lance writer of immense ability and extraordinary insights, went in 1966 to Vietnam as a journalist, and quickly delved into the nation's culture, sociology, and politics. In a series of articles for the *New Yorker Magazine* published in book form as *Fire in the Lake*, Miss Fitzgerald revealed to us the antecedents of behavior, those motivators of actions that we have needed for so long to understand the Vietnamese. She did so with clarity and precision, in straightforward and readable prose. "Many American officials," she noted, "understood that the land and the graves of the ancestors were important to the Vietnamese. Had they understood exactly why, they might not have looked upon the wholesale creation of refugees as a 'rational' method for defeating communism. For the traditional Vietnamese villager, who spent his life immobile, bound to the rice land of his ancestors, the world

was a very small place. It was in fact the village or *Xa*, a word that in its original Chinese roots signified 'the place where people come together to worship the spirits.' In this definition of society the character 'earth' took precedence, for, as the source of life, the earth was the basis for the social contract between the members of the family and the members of the village. Americans live in a society of replaceable parts – in theory anyone can become president or sanitary inspector – but the Vietnamese lived in a society of particular people, all of whom knew each other by their place in the landscape. 'Citizenship' in a Vietnamese village was personal and untransferable. In the past, few Vietnamese ever left their villages in times of peace, for to do so was to leave society itself – all human attachments, all absolute rights and duties." That's quite different from our mobile society, preoccupied as it is with the prospect of gas rationing, and how to avoid commuter jams.

Of even greater significance for our understanding of the East Asian is a rudimentary perspective on Confucianism. Grounded as we are in a dynamic Judeo-Christian culture it is difficult to comprehend or appreciate the static nature of Confucian wisdom. Confucius was not a revolutionary: rather he epitomizes a reactionary. His precepts concerned the proper conduct of life, drawn through a labored process of induction, a detailed study of endless epochs of past Chinese civilizations. East Asian students study the Confucian texts, memorize their teachings, absorb the commentaries. The good life consists of patterning oneself on a model, perfectly fitting oneself into the established order, abiding by the will of heaven, knowing one's place in the family, the village, and the state. The goal is to maintain the status quo. Invention, progress, a crisis of identity? These Western concepts have no

parallel meanings to the East Asian. The child does not learn "principles" from his parents, he learns how to imitate his father in his every action. Confucius said, "When your father is alive, discover his project and when he is dead, remember his actions. If in three years you have not left the road followed by your father, you are truly a son full of filial piety." In his formal education the child encounters not a series of "disciplines" but a vast unsystematized collection of stories and precepts. In reading the Confucian precepts the child arrives not at a theory of behavior but at a series of clues to the one way of life.

Fitzgerald cites the case of an American professor teaching comparative government at Saigon University who learned at the second meeting of the course that several students had memorized large sections of their first reading assignments. Pleased but bewildered he then asked them to finish Macchiavelli and begin Montesquieu. The following day the students rebelled: What did the professor mean by teaching them one thing one day and another the next? They could not conceive that government could be a matter of opinion. If it worked, it was a proper subject for study. If it didn't, it was not proper to study it. On the other hand it is interesting to note that Ho Chi Minh reflected: "One must study in order to remold one's thinking . . . to foster one's revolutionary virtues . . . Study is aimed at action. The two must go hand in hand. The former without the latter is useless. The latter without the former is hard to carry through."

East Asians subordinate justice to harmony, stress man's proper relationship to man. This of course produces an individual with a very different ego concept from Western man. There is, for example, no exact word in Vietnamese for the personal pronoun "I". The word in current use originally meant "subject of the King." Speaking of the individual, Fitzgerald

tells us: "The traditional Vietnamese did not see himself as a totally independent being, for he did not distinguish himself as acutely as does a Westerner from his society (and, of course, by extension, the heavens). He did not see himself as a 'character' formed of immutable traits, eternally loyal to certain principles, but rather as a system of relationships, a function of the society around him. In a sense, the design of the Confucian world resembled that of a Japanese garden where every rock, opaque and indifferent in itself, takes on significance from its relationship to the surrounding objects."

Within this frame of culture, tradition, beliefs, and values America has been conducting a war. That war, founded in Western concepts of parliamentary democracy, the worth of the individual, rights of self-determination, conflict and compromise, with the objective of containing communism, protecting helpless people, and preserving the peace of the world, is doomed to inevitable failure because of ignorance, errors, and blindness. In 1963 a peasant soldier in Saigon was asked which side he supported. "I do not know," he said, "for I follow the will of heaven. If I do what you say, then the Diem side will arrest me: if I say things against you, then you will arrest me, so I would rather carry both burdens on my shoulders and stand in the middle."

Time and again, Fitzgerald reminds us, political change in Vietnam comes suddenly, seemingly without motivation. But it's there, hidden beneath the surface, until the will of heaven manifests itself. Then "the wind shifts, and if all goes for the best, the whole society changes from unanimity to unanimity." We can wonder if this same phenomenon is now occurring in Cambodia. For Confucius said in the *Analecets*: "The essence of the gentleman is that of wind: the essence of small people is that of grass. And when a wind passes over the grass, it cannot choose but bend."



Let us move now to the other porthole and focus our attention on Latin America. Here is indeed a different world from Asia, this one with many familiar landscapes. Even our stereotypes are firmer than those we hold of Asians. The geography, of course, helps (North versus South), the languages are more familiar at least in the cities, foods are less strange. But appearances can deceive: seeming similarity can lead to errors, and is itself a kind of blindness.

To characterize the Latin American is especially difficult, for one must think both of the indigenous people and of the descendants of the European Spanish and Portuguese, mixed of course with each other and with national and racial groups from throughout the world. Superficially there is a Latin culture, a Latin mentality, Latin attitudes and beliefs, but they are more elusive than even the corresponding characteristics of East Asians.

Probably the single most dominant feature of the Latin American is his sense of personalism. In the United States we tend to type people, to search for the social, economic, or intellectual group to which they belong, even before we somewhat self-consciously search out their individual and personal attitudes and beliefs. The Latin American, especially the one of middle status, espouses verbally the rights of man and champions equality of opportunity, but basically he values the inherent uniqueness of individuals, their differences, the inner worth, the spirit, the mentality, one's personal feelings. Unlike North Americans the Latin American enjoys a personal, intimate contact even with strangers. This value, "La Dignidad de la Persona," is featured in songs, poetry, and fiestas as well as in daily living. It sometimes poses a problem for the more aloof, more private, more inhibited American from north of the border.

Growing from this value of personalism are characterizations described by the

adjective *macho*. While this literally means "male" and is often associated with sexual prowess, Gillin reminds us that it also connotes zest for action, including verbal "action," daring, and above all, absolute self-confidence. The Latin may express his inner convictions by resorting to physical force, as in the case of bandits and revolutionary military leaders, or he may do so verbally as a leading intellectual, lawyer, or politician. Not all machos are caudillos (leaders), but all caudillos must be machos.

As might be expected, Latins value highly their kinship ties which can be rather easily extended to the larger friendship ties. This value generates some interesting byproducts. Believing that his "family" best understands his personal uniqueness he turns to them in ways rather strange to the more impersonal North American. Rather than to seek money from the bank (impersonal) he seeks it from family (personal). He tends not to invest in stocks and bonds, (impersonal) but to provide financial help (that is to invest) to family members (personal). His politics also tends to be highly personalized and emotionalized. His business dealings proceed along smoothly only after he has determined the nature of the personal relationships involved in those dealings. The Latins have a wonderful word that is used with great frequency, *simpático*. Literally this word means sympathetic, kind, agreeable: but more truly it signifies that you can trust or work with the person who is *simpático*.

Overarching this personalism are two other values: dignity and hierarchy. While *dignidad* applies to the person, it also describes a social attitude, love of country, pride in one's heritage, even boisterous and flamboyant nationalism. These manifestations of inherent dignity are observed frequently and sometimes misinterpreted by North Americans who disdain pretense, showy displays, and glossing over realities. Notions of

hierarchy and obligations to hierarchy are deeply imbedded in the Latin character and personality. One can readily hypothesize that the ease with which the Spanish Conquerors subdued the indigenous people of South and Central America was because of their compatibility of values regarding hierarchies. The social structure of Latin America is therefore clear-cut, rather inflexible, and distinctly patriarchal. This is not particularly difficult to understand if you see the Latin American as one who does not believe that you can be "equal" to anyone else simply because of your inner essence, your uniqueness. Moreover it is perfectly obvious in Latin America that everyone is not equal to everyone else.

This patriarchal (or *patron*) system of social order pervades all aspects of Latin American culture, and even permeates modern business and political affairs. Presidents of the republics, for example, are expected to play a father role. They must be available to ordinary persons. As a consequence it is typical for the president of a republic to establish specific hours each week when he may be personally approached, greeted, sometimes presented with a petition, always treated with deferential respect. On many occasions I have seen lines of ordinary citizens sitting on benches outside the president's office waiting to spend a few seconds or minutes with him.

Modern-day Latin America, reflecting the cultural antecedents cited above, even though unable in literal form to perpetuate personalism and the patriarchal system, provides its citizens with elaborate social security, free health and hospital services, public housing programs, and highly-subsidized transportation systems. There are quite understandably also strong tendencies to nationalize (that is to bring into the family) all activities that are possible, and especially those that tend to exploit the natural resources of the nations. In countries that are economically

poor, and this of course includes most of Latin America, these social benefits are often criticized by uninformed outsiders as being overly-socialistic, providing evidence of creeping communism, or simply regarded as childishly impractical. Such sweeping generalizations and judgments are not based on an understanding of Latin American culture, society, or economics, and they result only in resentment by Latin Americans of the foreigners (*gringos*) who make them; they offend their personal and national sense of dignity, and lead the Latin American to conclude that the individual responsible for the judgment is not *simpático*.

The problem that the United States faces in its international relations may be illustrated by the case of a distinguished ambassador, experienced in another world area, who made a quick, initial trip to Latin America some years ago. In his biography he told at length of his early family life and its effect on him. Reflect on this passage: "Its members were neither rich nor poor." (Obviously the ambassador is talking about his own family.) "There was not one who did not work long and hard with his hands. It never occurred to them to view it [poverty] as a mark of inferiority, as an occasion for envy in the personal sense, or as a source of reproach to public authority. They accepted the logic of their passion for independence. They asked of government only that it leave them alone to struggle in their own way. When times were hard, as they often were, groans and lamentations went up to God, but never to Washington. . . . No family could have been more remote from that classical social predicament . . . of the bloodsucking, corrupted capitalist versus the downtrodden, exploited, but socially pure worker. It was something to which I could not relate myself personally either by my own experience or by that of my family. I could identify myself neither with the exploiter nor with the exploited."

This ambassador's diary most interestingly reveals the following commentary on his Latin American trip: "Caracas, jammed in among its bilious-yellow mountains, appalled me with its screaming, honking traffic jams, its incredibly high prices, its feverish economy debauched by oil money, its 'mushroom growth of gleaming, private villas creeping up the sides of the surrounding mountains.' I commiserated, in the privacy of my diary, with those unfortunate American representatives who were obliged 'to continue to carry on their work in this grotesque crevice of urbanization, fighting the claustrophobia imposed upon them by the isolation among the towering mountains and the life of the local millionaires, doing their part in this unhappy relationship in which each country was beholden to the other in a manner slightly disgraceful...'"

"The inordinate splendor and pretense of the Latin American cities can be no other than an attempt to compensate for the wretchedness and squalor of the hinterlands from which they spring. And in the realm of individual personality this subconscious recognition of the failure of group effort finds its expression in an exaggerated self-centeredness and egotism — in a pathetic urge to create the illusion of desperate courage, supreme cleverness, and a limitless virility where the more constructive virtues are so conspicuously lacking."

Speculate, if you will, on these questions: How did this ambassador's values and beliefs, his cultural conditioning, affect his vision? Why had he not prepared himself for this cross-cultural experience, or was he simply a modern-day villager from "The Country of the Blind?" One suspects that at least he was gazing more in the mirror than he was in the porthole.

The single most succinct summary of our hemispheric relations has, in my opinion, been provided by John Gillin. "In view of the still persistent personalistic value in Latin American culture," he says, "it is essential for U.S.

representatives to develop sympathetic personal contacts with the leadership elements of the middle groups and learn to appreciate their sometimes hazy aspirations. In the past, North American diplomatic and business people have all too frequently confined their personal relations to the very rich, the cosmopolitan, or Americanized segments of the national society, and consequently have had no firsthand comprehension of the subsurface trends of change. Latin Americans love to argue and to deal with general concepts, if this is done in a friendly atmosphere. They are quick to grasp new ideas and to appreciate sound logic. And the emotional aura of human relations in a common confrontation of 'fate' possesses great value. On the other hand, American attempts to settle arguments or solve problems by resort to superior force, economic power, or snobbish prestige will often result in a fanatic and 'heroic' opposition, regardless of its practical consequences.

"It is entirely within the realm of possibility — provided the United States shows no comprehension of the values and urgencies of the social revolution now going forward in Latin America — that some or all of the nations to the south will choose the path of stubborn opposition to the 'colossus of the north' or even decide that they can best fulfill their aspirations by seeking the protection of the communist bloc. This need not happen if both North Americans and Latin Americans learn to understand each other's cultures and needs.

"Ultimately, it is the task of U.S. policy to lay a general groundwork for a better understanding of the common interests and shared aspirations of the two Americas, so that detailed policies of the nations may be spontaneously brought into harmony as new or unforeseen problems demand solutions. Once this is accomplished, such 'explosions' as may occur will not be painfully surprising or unmanageable, and Latin America will be encouraged to move

forward into full participation in the affairs of the modern world by developing its great human and material potential, without illusions concerning the mirages offered by Moscow, and without fears of its big neighbor to the north."

It is sad, especially in view of the contemporary scene that we failed to listen to or to learn from the lesson Gillin taught us in 1956, nearly twenty years ago. Ignorance, errors, blindness have been our fate.

Walking away from our porthole vantage points, we can contemplate on what we've seen. Some conclusions are apparent:

1. The United States must recognize and accept the limits of its power and influence. We cannot serve as policeman, confessor, father, banker, spiritual leader, businessman, teacher, and governor of *all* the nations, regions, cultures, and races of mankind. Such an aspiration or notion is primary evidence of serious national delusions.
2. Hans Morganthau offers another hopeful concluding thought: "The ideological contest between hostile philosophies, social and political systems, and ways of life," he says, "will ultimately not be decided by the political, military, propagandist, and economic interventions of the contestants in the affairs of other nations, but by the visible virtues and vices of their respective political, economic, and social systems. Throughout its history, this has been the source of America's ideological strength and attractiveness.
3. The proper role for the United States in its relations with other nations is to share the *essence of our* culture and traditions – to help others achieve *their* objectives, to provide knowledge where only ignorance exists, to offer resources when only poverty prevents progress, to extend an open hand of friendship, to welcome and support the weary and oppressed.

To avoid ignorance, error, and blindness the United States must use its knowledge and its technology and techniques to educate its citizens about other people in other lands whose customs and heritage are fully as rich and as highly valued as any that we possess. Until that is done and done well, with both ambassadors and laborers, we as a people stand in danger of being recognized on those distant shores only as mirror-gazers or villagers in a country of the blind.



The Lindenwood Colleges are a cluster of colleges sharing a common faculty and campus in the historic city of St. Charles, adjacent to St. Louis, Missouri.

Lindenwood College for Women was founded in 1827, Lindenwood College for Men was added in 1969, and the Lindenwood Evening College was established in 1972. The colleges offer programs leading to bachelor's degrees in fields ranging from accounting and art to theater and urban planning. Internship and work experience opportunities relate studies in the liberal arts and sciences to an increasing range of career options. Two new colleges are in the planning process on the Lindenwood campus increasing the diversity of learning opportunities for men and women students of all ages.

the  
LINDENWOOD  
COLLEGES

