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Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through 20th Century Europe. Victoria de Grazia.

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or may never be paid. They contend that any feasible solution must sever the link between paid employment and insurance and must provide a minimal level of health care for all Americans, much as we provide a minimal level of education via the public schools. They argue that not only is this a humane way to treat citizens, but it is much more cost-effective than the current system.

Krista Drescher Burke, University of California, Berkeley

Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance Through 20th-century Europe*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005. \$ 29.95 hardcover.

Since the invasion of Iraq by the government of the United States and its "coalition" allies, the number of books and articles on the topic of imperialism have proliferated, and there is general agreement in academic circles that recent events herald the resurgence of an overt and unabashed commitment on the part of the current American government to assert imperial authority over the nations of the world. However, many historians and political scientists would reject the idea that imperialism is a new feature of US foreign policy. Long before the invasion of Iraq, scholars such as Noam Chomsky and Chalmers Johnson had railed against successive American administrations that had both covertly and overtly engaged in political, subversive and military adventurism designed to undermine legitimate governments in other parts of the world.

Victoria de Grazia's book makes a significant contribution to the current academic discourse on imperialism by focusing not on its political and military dimensions, but on its cultural manifestations. For de Grazia, imperialism invariably involves cultural diffusion and the adoption of the cultural artifacts of the imperial power. She contends that long before the government of the United States achieved hegemonic influence, American consumer culture had infiltrated the orderly and hierarchical bourgeois society of early 20th century Europe.

The author examines her thesis of the "irresistible Americanization of Europe" with reference to a number

of innovations including the introduction of supermarkets and chain stores, the popularity of Hollywood films and celebrities among European audiences, the spread of service associations such as Rotary, the adoption of big brand marketing and the general inculcation of consumerism among the mass of the population. The author also makes use of the notion of culture-clash to suggest that American cultural diffusion faced two powerful countervailing cultural forces, namely fascism and communism, but that it ultimately defeated them. However, she concludes the book by questioning the belief that American culture will continue to exert diffusionary hegemony in what has become an increasingly complex, multi-cultural world.

This is a scholarly and provocative book which makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the contemporary role of culture and its diffusion. Although the author is an historian whose analysis is based primarily on an historical account of cultural change in Europe over the last 50 years, there is much in this book that sheds light on the way American consumerism is an integral part of the multi-dimensional globalization process. The book suggests that an analysis of globalization must transcend the narrow focus on economic liberalism that characterizes much scholarship in the field to include a fuller account of how cultural preferences are integral to the process of economic integration and how these, in turn, are integral to the political forces that are now widely characterized as imperialistic. In addition to its scholarly contributions, this is a readable and enjoyable book which contains a wealth of interesting information that will appeal to both academic and popular audiences.

Roger Hewitt, *White Backlash and the Politics of Multiculturalism*.
New York: Cambridge University press, 2005. \$ 75.00
hardcover, \$ 29.99 papercover.

Many European societies have become increasingly diverse over the last half-century, and the ethnic and cultural