

tion had changed, at least superficially. A number of women were present, the officers were public although still self-perpetuating, we were asked for suggestions for new members, a wider range of departments was represented, and the scientific sessions seemed much better, although still informal. The Hunt Lectures continued, but male genitalia were added.

The organization has very extensive archives, and perhaps their study might be valuable. The analysis of the membership's subsequent role in grant-awarding committees, editorial boards, and open organizations could be instructive. PRT may be of interest not only to the historian of American psychology but perhaps to the sociologist of science or even of American society.

I almost forgot: The gavel was a brass penis.

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#### *Fin de Siècle*

Most of us will witness the turning of the year 2000. It promises the unusual excitement of the end of a century and of a millennium. Psychologists might well begin to plan now for fascinating events likely to precede this event. The material that follows is a brief introduction to possible trends in behavior and to the literature on ends of centuries and millennia.

*Fin de siècle* (end of the century) madness was widely reported and discussed in the 1880s and 1890s. Its emphasis was on despair and degeneracy. Nordau (1893) analyzed *fin*

*de siècle* madness as an intellectual state of grim humor, a feeling of impending doom, and an odd confusion of hectic restlessness. Its impetus, he claimed, was with the young and impressionable. Similarly, Millward (1955) saw artists and youths as passive participants in a general weariness and corruption. This was an era influenced by Wagner's music and Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy.

But as the turn of the last century drew near, optimism began to hold sway. It was time to inventory the accomplishments of the 19th century and to glory in the promise of the 20th. Consider Alfred Russell Wallace's (1898) *The Wonderful Century*: He believed his century had produced more inventions (e.g., railways, steam navigation, telephone, photography, electric lighting, antiseptics) than all the previous centuries combined (e.g., telescopes, printing press, alphabetic writing). The assumption was, of course, that progress would continue its rapid growth.

It appears now that as the tide turned away from pessimism, writers could at least find solace in the advances of humankind from a more primitive state (Shelton, 1892). Faint optimism grew into fanciful thinking. In a magazine article entitled "The Time-Spirit of the Twentieth Century" (Bisland, 1901), readers were led to hope that progress might even bring "some thought undreamed of, some new and happier guess at the great central truth which forever allures and forever eludes our grasp" (p. 22).

The millennium may be of even greater portent. The advent of the first chiliad, or 1,000 years, of our western system is often described as an era of numb terror, of waiting for the final cataclysm of the Apocalypse and the millennial reign of Satan. Hope for a second coming has persisted in various millenarian sects (Cohn, 1970). If there is a revival of chiliastic prophecies in the next decades, it may be expected to flourish against a background of dis-

asters. We may see an age of new messiahs or of gloomy anticipation of the Antichrist, the demon who will supposedly bring an age of lawless chaos, robbery, torture, massacre, and finally, the second coming.

Measurement of the combined effects of *fin de siècle* and millennial phenomena may be facilitated by early planning. Our problems will lie in objectivity and in detachment (Kanfer, 1976). It will be critical to provide more than subjective descriptions of, say, degeneracy in intellectualism (Strupp, 1976). And as the futurist Arthur C. Clarke often notes, we will probably overlook some of the most important events of our day because of our lack of detachment from them. Nonethe-

less, *fin de siècle* should be an interesting spectacle. Although it is still a bit early for excitement, it may be that we can imagine its prospect if we realize the importance of numerological events to many people: "Even now, the idea of that *Annus Mirabilis*, the year of Grace 2000, begins to affect us. We feel that if we could live to witness its advent, we should witness an immense event" (*The Spectator*, January 9, 1892, p. 52).

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