

vote for losing candidates, out of some misguided notion of privacy, secrecy, or mystery.

If Harvard is to have a democratically elected governing body—which it should—that body ought to act in accord with democratic principles. Some issues properly are considered *in camera*. But the guiding spirit and practice should stress openness in reporting to their constituents and allowing their constituents to have input beyond the annual vote for candidates (who are structurally insulated from those who elected them by virtue of their six-year, nonrenewable terms).

I very much hope this year's Overseers' election will see democratic procedures raised by the candidates as a central issue. CHESTER W. HARTMAN '57, Ph.D. '67 Washington, D.C.

The Good Parent

Derek Bok is to be congratulated for setting a tone at Harvard that combines deep humility with intellectual ferocity, emphasizing ethics and first principles. Flying tourist class, he shows that he is not merely Harvard's man but his own, and his example teaches students and faculty alike not to lean too heavily on fair Harvard, financially or otherwise. As a former junior faculty member who, like most, was politely informed from the beginning that I sat in a collapsing chair, I still cherish those years and the many colorful figures I encountered. The senior faculty treated me better than I deserved and provided many a role model for lifelong scholarship; the astute departmental librarian matched Patton with her zest for command; and even many of the groundskeepers seemed to realize that these are not ordinary walkways but the paths trodden by Emerson, Holmes, the Roosevelts. Like a good parent, Harvard is appreciated later for how well it prepares one to leave it.

WILLIAM E. COOPER
Professor of psychology
University of Iowa

Iowa City, Iowa

Who's in Charge?

As a current 25th-year alumnus, I am becoming increasingly disenchanted with the way that Harvard is conducting itself. To begin with, I found the chain of social events that make up the 25th Reunion to be at best irrelevant and at worst downright condescending.

As disconcerting as my reunion was—followed closely by a largely irrelevant 350th celebration—it was nowhere near as distressing as a recent booklet sent by the Harvard College Fund listing all donors to Harvard in broad categories of amounts given. Although this publicizing by dollar

amount has been common practice for some fundraising organizations, it has always been frowned upon by most serious institutions for the crassness it so obviously displays. I would hope that this latest strategy would have the opposite effect of less money being donated by irate alumni and that the practice will be immediately stopped.

Somehow this year, I have gotten the feeling that Harvard is being run by the wrong people. Whether it's the Harvard chocolates being hawked around the Square, the flimsy attempt at pageantry for the 350th that was both inappropriate and easily outdone by any respectable half-time display at a football bowl game, all the speeches in the Yard for the 350th that added up to absolutely nothing, or this latest attempt at raising money by embarrassment, it's obvious that Harvard has lost the touch that it displayed for a greater part of this century—what the late George Frazier '32 would refer to as its *duende*.

Where are the Carl Icahns or Ronald Perelmans when you need them? A nice clean hostile takeover of Harvard with the pursuant replacement of all its leaders seems more than due.

K.C. SULKIN '61

Westborough, Mass.

Skewed Vision

In the last issue of *Harvard Magazine* there was a letter commenting on my research as described in "Work in Progress" (November-December, page 4). The author of the letter noted that the similarities in styles of art and architecture that I found in the Americas and Africa may not be due to widespread copying of representational forms (as I indicated in my research), but may be due instead to independent invention on the part of individuals in far-separated societies around the world. I appreciate the reader's interest in my research; however, her argument does not directly address the problem with which I am concerned.

The description of my research that appeared is only a very brief summary of a more detailed essay published in the *Harvard Review*, Fall 1986. In this article I argue that the pictorial representation of non-Western peoples in European accounts of exploration is characterized largely by myths and stereotypes that have less to do with reality than they do with the attitude of Europeans toward so-called primitives from the Age of Discovery to the present. I suggest that European illustrators of travel accounts—having little or no firsthand knowledge of the peoples and places they were to depict—borrowed images from a number of different sources

in order to create their own personal, skewed vision of the world around them. I am not, therefore, comparing the arts of non-Western peoples to one another, but rather I am demonstrating similarities in European conceptions of non-Western peoples as reflected in the iconography of travel accounts.

CHRISTOPHER B. STEINER
Department of anthropology
Harvard University

Cambridge

Memorial Hall's Tower

It's encouraging to see how much fine renovation of Harvard buildings has already resulted from the success of the \$350-million Harvard Campaign. Still unimproved, however, are the two most embarrassing loose ends in Harvard's entire architectural collection: the clock tower of Memorial Hall and the memorial fence around Harvard Yard.

The tower of Memorial Hall was lost in a fire in 1956, since which time this unique building has been a hatless, crew-cut caricature of itself. And the section of the memorial fence in front of what is now Canaday Hall has been ordinary chain-link mesh, like that of a tennis court, since the building was completed in 1975. (Previously, the steps of Hunt Hall came down to the sidewalk here, making a fence unnecessary.)

Surely the integrity of the Yard calls for the chain-link fencing to be replaced at once with brick-and-limestone piers and iron sections like those of the rest of the memorial fence. The clock tower is a bigger and costlier problem, but also one that has been even longer ignored. As soon as possible it, too, should be restored to its former magnificence.

ROBERT CAMPBELL '58, M.Arch. '67
Cambridge

Muted Debate

I noted in the *Washington Post* of last May 14, 1986, that Elliott Abrams '69, J.D. '73, assistant secretary for the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, told Harvard officials that he would not share a platform with Robert White, former ambassador to El Salvador and a critic of President Reagan's policy on Central America. Harvard thereupon canned White as a rebuttal speaker at the Kennedy School of Government. Abrams, shorn of intelligent challenge, then went on to speak about democracy in Central America. The same article quotes White as regretting that "Harvard permits itself to be dictated to."

In an article titled "Hired Revolutionaries," written by Richard Cohen in the January 9, 1987, issue of the *Post*, Cohen