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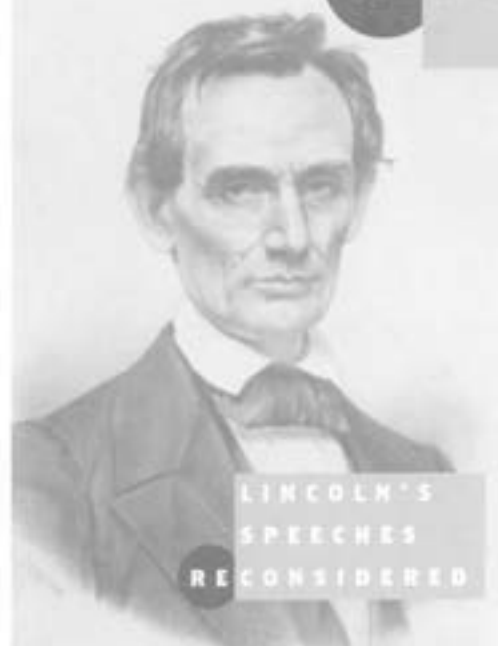
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# Editor's Comment

“**W**hy do they hate us?” Americans asked after 9/11. One answer is that after the Cold War the U.S. government left the job of representing the American idea abroad almost entirely to Hollywood and the makers of music videos. Of course, it's not just images that matter. U.S. policies provoke criticism, as this country's negative ratings in international opinion surveys show. Yet no policy will win assent if the world misunderstands what the United States is and what it stands for. Conveying those truths is an infinitely more complex matter than it was during the Cold War, and our essays in this issue offer insights into the new reality.

I'm surrounded by talented people at the Wilson Center, with accomplishments far more numerous than I could list in a single column. Congratulations to former Wilson Center fellow Mark Reutter, whose classic book on the U.S. steel industry has been published in a new edition as *Making Steel: Sparrows Point and the Rise and Ruin of American Industrial Might* (University of Illinois Press), with an additional chapter detailing the fate of the industry and its workers in recent years. His vivid chronicle of the rise and fall of the once mighty Sparrows Point plant in Baltimore captures in microcosm the story of American basic industry.

My colleagues on the staff of the Wilson Center continue to produce an impressive array of books, including most recently Kent H. Hughes's *Building the Next American Century: The Past and Future of American Economic Competitiveness*. Kent is the director of the Program on Science, Technology, America, and the Global Economy. Readers who have enjoyed the *WQ*'s many essays on urban matters will be rewarded by *Second Metropolis: Pragmatic Pluralism in Gilded Age Chicago, Silver Age Moscow, and Meiji Osaka*, by Blair A. Ruble, director of the Kennan Institute. Both books were published by the Woodrow Wilson Center Press. For more information, and to see a full list of the Press's books, consult the publications section of the Center's website, at [www.wilsoncenter.org](http://www.wilsoncenter.org).

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## *Looking Back on Dresden*

If the 1945 aerial bombing of Dresden shows the difficulty of controlling destruction once unleashed, its contemporary echoes are in plain sight, if only we would listen. Tami Davis Biddle's essay ["Sifting Dresden's Ashes," *WQ*, Spring '05] has more profound implications than she spells out.

She finds the Allied bombing of Dresden uniquely troubling—less for its civilian carnage than for the “erosion of moral sensibilities” it represents. She highlights U.S. acknowledgment that the raids would assist the Soviet advance by dislocating Dresden's refugee-swollen civilian population. Given the technology of the age, a callow casuistry allowed Americans to aim at urban marshaling yards and avoid grappling directly with the certainty of thousands of civilian deaths.

Yet if these facts trouble the modern conscience, they do not automatically condemn the decisions of the day. Rather, they highlight the difficulty of maintaining bright moral lines in the conduct of war—particularly at times when the stakes are high and the outcome uncertain, but even in less trying circumstances.

Muddled and overlapping motivations, coupled with studied ignorance about likely civilian effects, can be found in more recent U.S. military operations. Consider NATO's 1999 air strikes against RTS, a Serbian state radio and television station. The allies variously described their goal as degrading military communications, depriving the Milosević regime of a propaganda outlet, and undermining civilian morale. More than a dozen civilians working in the facility were killed, while RTS was put out of commission for only a few hours.

In scale, the strike bore no similarity to

Dresden's. But its rationale reminds us of Biddle's critique of Americans' willingness in 1945 to wage “air attacks that were designed, at least in part, for their psychological effect on the enemy,” at the cost of civilian life. Of course Americans preferred to hear of the Dresden raid's military necessity, much as they later accepted (as did the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia) that RTS was a military communications target.

In reality, military necessity can coexist uneasily with less noble aims such as vengeance or collective punishment. In October 2004, a Pentagon official suggested that U.S. air strikes in Fallujah, with their attendant civilian casualties, might finally pressure locals to give up the terrorist leaders they were harboring. This echoes American commentary at the time about the bombing of Dresden, that the Germans were “merely making the cost of their defeat heavier . . . by continuing a hopeless resistance.” To recognize that civilian deaths can have strategic impact is perhaps unsavory, but not inherently immoral.

Laws and moral traditions require attention to the purposes of military attacks, the harm they inflict upon the innocent, and the “due care” combatants take in waging war. But upholding these norms is rarely a simple matter. Few believe the Allies bombed Dresden *because* it was swollen with refugees (or that NATO aimed to kill makeup artists in RTS, or that U.S. pilots targeted civilians in Fallujah). Some perhaps hope that if Americans had consciously wrestled with civilian consequences, instead of implicitly denying them, they would not have participated in the bombing. But as Biddle explains, the raids were deemed a military necessity in that historical moment, and subsequent American use of the atomic bomb suggests

## Correspondence

that calculations of civilian harm were not a deterrent.

Biddle concludes that wartime exigencies, incremental decision making, anti-septic language, and the comforting notion of ancillary effects denuded American planners of moral clarity regarding civilian protection in war. Surrender to these forces is neither surprising nor uniquely manifest in the Dresden bombing. Controversial rationales such as morale targeting can be stylishly dressed in the garb of military necessity; proportionality assessments can be rendered moot by inflated expectations of military advantage. Keeping ourselves honest about the goals of military operations and their potential costs remains a challenge. It is more pressing given the West's temptation to believe that global terrorism has made the days as dark as those that justified firebombing Dresden.

*Sarah Sewall*

*Carr Center for Human Rights Policy  
John F. Kennedy School of Government,  
Harvard University  
Cambridge, Mass.*

Particularly striking and praiseworthy in Tami Davis Biddle's perceptive analysis of the Dresden bombing and its aftermath is her incision through to the moral heart of the catastrophe. The sequence of powerful air attacks of which the Dresden raid formed part aimed to create terrible human chaos on the eastern front. The sequence indeed represented very ruthless war making.

But it is worth asking whether crossing Dresden's moral threshold made any difference in the actual number of casualties in the city compared with those inflicted elsewhere by less reprehensibly motivated raids. Biddle describes the huge American assault of February 3 on the center of Berlin, which killed around 3,000 citizens—fewer than one in a thousand. The linked British bombing of Chemnitz (February 14–15), carried out with intent as murderous as that directed at Dresden the night before, caused casualties that were relatively insignificant by the standards of the time.

In other words, for various largely fortuitous reasons—including favorable weather conditions, the closely built nature of the city center, the recent withdrawal of anti-aircraft protection, and the scandalous inadequacy of the air raid shelter system—only the attack on Dresden proved apocalyptically destructive. At least 25,000 civilians died, out of a population of around three-quarters of a million. So a legend was born.

Had the usual combination of foul weather, technical snafus, and human error kept the numbers of Dresden dead below five figures, we should arguably not be having this special discussion of the city's fate at all. Even the East German air historian Olaf Groehler, no friend of the Western Allies, admitted that "if one analyzes the planning documents for the city attacks undertaken in early 1945 . . . in many cases these resembled the style of attack used against Dresden, right down into the details."

During those few weeks in early 1945, the Allies tried to use the fearsomely destructive techniques developed in the three-year strategic war of attrition to influence conditions on the eastern front. Deaths and injuries among the flood of refugees were "factored in," a morally far-from-pretty sight, as Biddle rightly reminds us.

Nonetheless, when "routine" strategic raids resumed, they proved equally if not more costly in terms of human loss. For example, the death toll in the historic city of Würzburg in northwestern Bavaria (March 16–17, 1945) amounted to between four and five percent of the city's more than 100,000 inhabitants. In the small western German city of Pforzheim (February 23–24, 1945), 17,000 died, a dizzying absolute number and a far greater proportion of the population (almost 20 percent) than in Dresden.

*Frederick Taylor*

*Author, Dresden: Tuesday,  
February 13, 1945 (2004)  
Cornwall, England*

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## Media's Malaise

Terry Eastland ["Starting Over," *WQ*, Spring '05] merely mentions in passing

the real problem in journalism today: that many—perhaps most—of those who possess the ability and ethics needed to practice honest journalism are locked out of the field because even the smallest television station or daily paper demands a journalism degree.

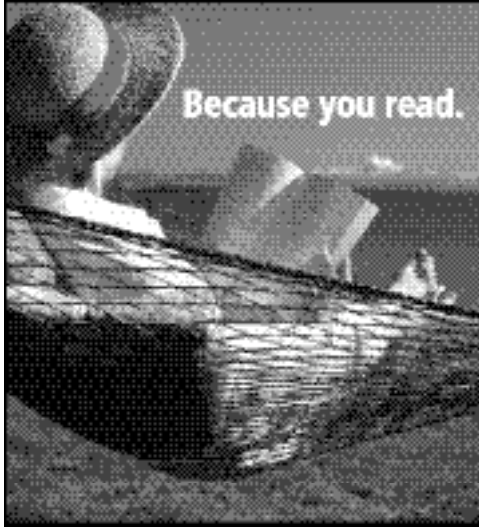
Once, journalism was learned in the field. Someone who wanted to work for *The Daily Blab* started out as a copy boy, or inundated the editor with on-spec articles until something got printed. The newly hatched “professional” news writer kept at it, accrued bylines, and eventually carried a scrapbook into the editor’s office to ask for a job.

I was the news director—actually, the whole news department—at a small, no-budget, low-power television station in Arizona. I got that job because I was the first guy to go into the station manager’s office and ask to do the news. From there I went to work for network affiliates, the last being a CBS station in Michigan run by a “whiz kid” with degrees in both journalism and broadcasting who demanded that everything be done his way because he wanted to move up to a larger market and we were his steppingstone.

Today’s journalists, generally taught by people whose main qualification is a journalism degree, have become high-tech migrant laborers. No longer the neighborhood fact-finders, they are interested primarily in moving to the next station or paper. They stay only long enough to get their tickets punched. Yet the respected reporters in any town are those who started there, first working at foot-in-the-door jobs. The current crop of journalists is for the most part a blur of transient faces, sometimes vaguely recognized when seen on the network feeds from some other state.

The public’s connection to the news is now mediated by people who mispronounce the names of local towns, try to make every story The Big One that gets them noticed, and tell horror stories about the places where they got their tickets punched in the past. When reporters don’t care about their towns, they can’t care about the people whose stories they tell.

I wonder which major newspaper will



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be the first to start recruiting online journalists and bloggers as paid reporters. Some paper will see the potential in having a "farm" of credentialed bloggers working as stringers for the online version of the paper, with the best of them working in the print edition beside traditional reporters. When that day arrives, journalism professors will become an endangered species.

*Keith R. Wood  
Salt Lake City, Utah*

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## *Pride of Place*

Joel Kotkin ["Will Great Cities Survive?," *WQ*, Spring '05] is correct when he says that the New York City economy has roughly the same number of jobs now as it did at its peak in 1969. However, what he misses is that in the intervening years, the average rate of pay for New York jobs grew much faster than did the national average. By the end of the century, the average wage in New York was nearly double that of the country: \$71,744 compared with \$42,202 nationally. As economists at the New York Federal Reserve Bank have noted, New York is capturing a growing share of the nation's high-paying jobs.

This sign of economic vibrancy is particularly remarkable when one considers that 3.2 million largely unskilled immigrants have arrived in New York City since 1970. Though many eventually leave New York, it's in this great city that they first learn what it is to be an American. It's hard to imagine that the more homogenous, isolated suburbs could offer a comparable education.

Indeed, New York City's identity as the gateway to America may give it the spiritual dimension that Kotkin says cities need to survive. New York has its "holy" sites, such as the Statue of Liberty, and its champions, including former mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who has said immigration is the reason that



New York is the capital of the world. People across the city share a belief in the special nature of New York, from Wall Street wheeler-dealers who came from working-class families to the West Africans who are settling on Staten Island.

*Elizabeth MacBride  
Washington, D.C.*

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### *Music Musings*

Miles Hoffman ["Music's Missing Magic," *WQ*, Spring '05] has written a brilliantly cogent explanation of how art music has come to be rejected as insulting and irrelevant by its public. Many of the responses to this essay will likely serve to demonstrate just how insidious is the phenomenon of the emperor's clothes.

It is altogether too easy to heap scorn, ridicule, and contempt upon Mr. Hoffman's observations and conclusions, and rather more difficult to actually refute the inescapable reality that no post-tonal style of composition has yet found an audience of any size.

"When small men begin to cast large shadows, it is a sure sign that the sun is setting."

*Daniel E. Gawthrop  
Composer  
Winchester, Va.*

In response to Miles Hoffman's essay, there will be those who defend modernism and those who praise him for having the courage to tell it like it is. I believe readers should contemplate the following fragments of historical evidence and then draw their own conclusions about his persuasiveness.

First, the tradition of musical composition to which Mr. Hoffman refers with such nostalgia never enjoyed a wide audience. The composers of so-called classical or concert music had, for the most part, three real but elite audiences in mind: fellow musicians and colleagues, educated laypersons, and a refined public with some education but a perhaps limited familiarity and ease with music. Composers may also have a fourth audience—an imaginary one made up mostly of past and future composers.

Second, the manner in which classical music has absorbed, appreciated, and understood has always varied. Some listeners, such as the great early-20th-century music critic Paul Bekker, heard in Beethoven emotions and ideas. But many of Bekker's contemporaries heard only self-referential musical subtleties discernible to a small elite. And then there were the listeners and amateurs who liked the music of Beethoven but could not articulate precisely why. Finally, there were connoisseurs in the past who hated what we now love. The resistance to late Beethoven—including the now world-famous Ninth Symphony—for more than 50 years after the composer's death is just one example.

Third, the traditions of music so praised by Mr. Hoffman have always depended on patronage. Though some patrons were discerning, such as the circle of aristocrats who supported Beethoven, more often than not the patrons themselves were unable to distinguish the great from the average.

Fourth, ever since the mid-19th century, in the decades after the audience for classical music in Europe and America began to expand, expert writers on music have heralded a decline in the standards of composition and the disappearance of consonance and beauty. Beauty, meaning, and craftsmanship—the "magic" of music—apparently have been in decline and at risk for about 150 years.

Fifth, in every era of music history, more forgettable than memorable music has been written. The repertoire that has remained vital has always represented a mere fraction of all that has been written. Memorable, communicative, and sublime music has been written in every historical epoch—even by Arnold Schönberg—for all three audience types. As the general population increased and the size of the audience became, in the aggregate, larger, there appeared more composers writing more music, both good and bad.

It is unnecessary to list all the powerful works written in the 20th century using varying degrees of modernist strategies by

*Continued on page 9*

## FROM THE CENTER

As the inspiring “Arab spring” burst into bloom earlier this year, one man at the Wilson Center watched with particularly keen interest. Saad al-Din Ibrahim, a recent public-policy scholar at the Center, is one of the heroes of the long and often lonely struggle for freedom and democracy in Egypt. The 66-year-old sociologist, the founder and director of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies at the American University of Cairo, paid for his years of activism and dissent with a jail term in an Egyptian prison.

After the successful Iraqi elections in January and the subsequent popular protests in Lebanon that forced Syria to end its 29-year occupation, all eyes are now on Egypt. There, the Kefaya (“Enough”) movement has forced

the autocratic government of long-ruling president Hosni Mubarak to open, if only slightly, the country’s election process to other parties. Ibrahim has hardly been alone at the Wilson Center in hoping that the upcoming September presidential election will mark the beginning of a period of positive political change in Egypt, but he alone can claim to have had a significant role in making that change possible. He has even spoken of challenging Mubarak at the polls.

Over the years, the Center has been privileged to host distinguished people from many walks of life as visiting scholars in residence, including academics, journalists and other writers, and practitioners from the worlds of government, business, and nongovernmental organizations. The list includes former U.S. senators and representatives, cabinet officers, and ambassadors, and, from abroad, former presidents and prime ministers. All have seen their courage tested in many ways, but Ibrahim is one of a small number of our visiting scholars who have been called to put their lives and liberty at risk in pursuit of freedom and democracy. Among the others are Galina Starovoitova, a specialist on ethnicity and a longtime activist on behalf of

Russian democracy and political reform who ran for Russia’s presidency in 1996 and was serving in the State Duma when she was killed by two assassins in 1998; Dai Qing, a Chinese engineer who was jailed during 1989–90 for persisting in her campaign against Beijing’s environmentally destructive Three Gorges Dam; and Bronislaw Geremek, a Polish social historian who was a close adviser to Solidarity leader Lech Walesa during the labor union’s daring challenge to Poland’s Communist regime during the 1980s, and who went on to serve in various positions in the government of free Poland, including minister of foreign affairs during the late 1990s.



### Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Ibrahim, slowed only slightly by small strokes he suffered while in jail, speaks with the enormous authority that only

experience like his can confer, yet he retains a mischievous charm and an irrepressible optimism about the possibilities in Egypt and throughout the Middle East. He believes that change is coming, and he bluntly credits U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq with having “altered the region’s dynamics.” He also firmly believes that the region’s many popular Islamist political parties are prepared to join the democratic process. “These parties understand the social transformations under way in the Middle East that are leading towards democracy, and they want to take part,” he wrote recently. “In my view, we may be witnessing the emergence of Muslim democratic parties, much like the rise of Christian Democratic parties in Europe in the years after World War II.”

Ideas and action are the key elements in the struggle for freedom around the world, and the Wilson Center, in the great tradition of the president it was established to honor, has always been strongly committed to supporting both. To find the two embodied in a single person is a rare and inspiring thing.

*Joseph B. Gildenhorn  
Chair*

*Continued from page 7*

Schönberg, Alban Berg, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, Olivier Messiaen, Henri Dutilleux, Luigi Dallapiccola, Elliott Carter, and even the recently departed George Rochberg. There was and remains an audience for contemporary music that is enthusiastic and awaits the new, unfamiliar, and difficult.


In an era dominated by mass entertainment, brilliantly executed forms of popular culture, and the superb technological reproduction of all music, the traditions of amateur and professional classical music making and listening are economically, socially, and politically endangered. They seem increasingly extravagant to maintain, and therefore appear obsolete. Many people still possess the patience and cultivation required to make and listen to music, but they are proportionally a smaller segment of the educated public.

Can we sustain an active concert life of live performance that will ensure that this tradition continues? This is a matter of social and educational policies and, in the United States, the will of private philanthropy. We must somehow persuade our contemporaries to spend sufficient time as children and adults to gain an appreciation for concert music. If we do not, the only classical music that will sound magical is that which has been successfully appropriated by commercial genres.

In no period of history, even those in which Mr. Hoffman detects magic, were the past and present of art forms radically disconnected. Nearly every museum devoted principally to the past contains or is close to a gallery of contemporary art. Every performer who plays the music of the past has, knowingly or not, a commitment to the music of his or her own day. The survival of the cherished music of bygone days depends on an enthusiastic embrace of new music.

The pessimist always seems plausible. I prefer to run the risk of foolishness by being a cautious but enthusiastic optimist on behalf of the creativity and imagination of my contemporaries who seek to continue the daunting task of writing concert music. I am equally optimistic about

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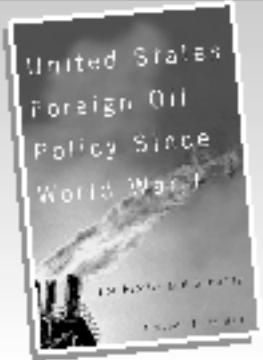


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the audiences I encounter worldwide whose receptivity to the new is actually a pleasure to behold, and who, old and young, are delighted to discover the magic in music they encounter for the first time, much of which they came to the hall expecting to dislike.

*Leon Botstein*  
*President, Bard College*  
*Music Director, American Symphony Orchestra*  
*and Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra*  
*Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.*

Miles Hoffman criticizes modernist music as inaccessible, lacking in emotional resonance, and just plain bad. Surely these charges are overblown and do not apply to the vast majority of so-called atonal music produced by dedicated innova-

tors over the past 80 years. The works of Charles Ives, Lou Harrison, Olivier Messiaen, Arnold Schönberg, and György Ligeti, to name only a few, have had a profound impact on how we think about music. Much of what they composed will most certainly stand the test of time. Their best works have an awesome power to stir the soul of the listener and to transport him or her to places of which Mozart never dreamed.

Nor does this "atonal" music appeal only to a discrete and insular group of aesthetes. Atonal music has had a huge impact outside classical music circles, as is evident once one leaves the confines of the concert hall and ventures to the local multiplex. For every film like *Amadeus* that introduces a new generation to the art



of Mozart, there are a dozen or more unpretentious genre movies that rely extensively on atonal styles to convey a sense of wonder or horror that would be unachievable if only “tonal” music were available for the soundtrack. To give only a few, high-profile examples, where would *2001: A Space Odyssey* be without Ligeti, *Psycho* without Bernard Herrmann, *Mulholland Drive* without Badalamenti? Atonal music has also influenced popular musicians in a way that traditional, tonal classical music has not—Frank Zappa is only the most obvious example.

The real problem with classical music in our time is that the tonal structures employed by Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart have become so familiar that their genius has lost much of its power to inspire awe. In an age where everyone can enjoy low-cost reproductions of the works of history’s most famous composers, and their compositions are often peddled in ersatz form “for relaxation,” the more powerful, direct, and visceral atonal music of the modern classics provides a welcome if occasionally unsettling form of relief from terminal boredom.

*Frank Gibbard  
Eastlake, Colo.*

Miles Hoffman is too quick to dismiss 20th-century atonal music—just as he is too quick to dismiss the notion that a music ahead of its time may need years or decades to find its audience. Like most people, I originally found atonal music unappealing. But I kept listening, thinking my ears and my taste would one day catch up. And they did! Quite abruptly, I found that I had learned to track the events in atonal music and to appreciate the works as wholes, just as I did with tonal music.

The two listening experiences are not identical. As Hoffman observed, traditional tonal music is insistent with meaning. Atonal music can be rich in event, rhythm, and tone color, but the best of it conveys no meaning. Indeed, once one forms an ear for atonal music, its freedom from meaning is one of its great pleasures.

Atonal music was the most authentic possible response to the 20th century, dur-

ing which the deep groundlessness and absurdity of existence became generally recognized in the West. Moderns recognize that any claim to overarching meaning is presumptuous—including such claims as traditional tonality embodies.

There’s something arrogant, pre-democratic, even authoritarian, at the heart of traditional tonal music—I suspect it may be the last, best-hidden vestige of the pre-Enlightenment worldview. Give atonality a chance. It shows us what music can become when emancipated from the last of its medieval baggage.

*Tom Flynn  
Buffalo, N.Y.*

The editors’ translation of Arnold Schönberg’s 1911 postcard to Wassily Kandinsky in the caption to the picture on page 32 in Miles Hoffman’s article suggests a sloppiness that is unworthy of the *WQ*. The original text is: “Lieber Herr Kandinsky, Ich löse mich ewig in Tönen—endlich von einer Verpflichtung, die ich gerne schon lange erfüllt hätte.”

“Dear Mr. Kandinsky,” Schönberg writes. “I dissolve myself eternally in tones [citing and paraphrasing a line from a poem by Stefan George that he set in movement 4 of his second String Quartet] and finally release myself from an obligation that I would have liked to have fulfilled long ago.”

Granted, my translation can be improved, but certainly it is closer to the original than yours: “My tone may be loose but my obligation to you is infinite.”

*Jürgen Thym  
Professor Emeritus of Musicology  
Eastman School of Music,  
University of Rochester  
Rochester, N.Y.*

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### **Correction**

The meaning of a sentence in S. J. Deitchman’s letter to the editor on page 7 of the Spring 2005 *WQ* was changed in the editing process. His original sentence read, “Third, Bacevich implicitly suggests that reliance on the military component of foreign policy is somehow inappropriate.” We regret the error.

# Findings

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## Name Droppers

George W. Bush was America's most admired man of 2004, according to Gallup, but his first name continued its almost century-long decline. George ranked in the top five names for American boys from the dawn of recordkeeping, in 1880, through 1911 (the year of George V's coronation—coincidence?), and then started slipping. The Social Security Administration, which tracks such things, says George was last year's 148th most popular name, one slot below Omar.

For the first name of 2004's most admired woman, the descent proved steeper. Hillary entered the top-thousand for girls in 1963 and mostly climbed, hitting 131st place in 1992. Then it tumbled, dropping off the list altogether in 2002 and 2003. Now Hillary is back, the 805th most popular name for girls. An augury?

Another name with political resonance, Madison, ranked third on the girls' 2004 list (after Emily and Emma). A rededication to constitutionalism, perhaps, or tenderness for America's shortest president? Nope. It's part of "perhaps the single hottest subgenre of names in America," explains name watcher Laura Wattenberg (<http://babynamewizard.com>): "aggressively modern, androgynous surnames that contract to cute girlish nicknames." Cassidy can let her hair down and be Cassie; Emerson, Emmy; Madison, Maddie. Jefferson, understandably, hasn't made the cut.

The name of America's number-two most admired woman of 2004, Oprah, isn't on the rise either, but pop culture does leave its mark. According to Harvard sociologist Stanley Lieberman, the once-common name Donald was tainted long before Donald Trump—blame Donald Duck. Not that new

parents are necessarily hunting for role models: The films *Lolita* (the 1962 version), *The Exorcist* (1973), and *The Omen* (1976) launched disquieting wavelets of, respectively, Lolitas, Regans, and Damiens. Of course, such trends can be as ephemeral as fame itself. The nation's compact cohort of Farrahs is approaching age 30 and, one hopes, some measure of forgiveness. Among 2004's fastest-rising names, Wattenberg reports, are the star-powered Ashton, Charlize, and Paris, mayflies all.

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## Coffeehouse of Games

Gamblers of early-18th-century London often took their business to Edward Lloyd's Coffee House. In *Virtue, Fortune, and Faith* (Univ. of Minnesota

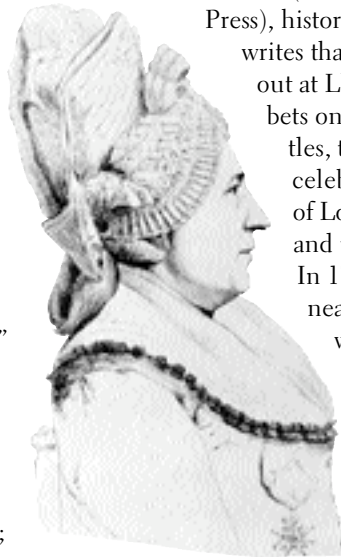
Press), historian Marieke de Goede

writes that oddsmakers hanging out at Lloyd's would accept bets on "the outcome of battles, the longevity of celebrities, the succession of Louis XV's mistresses, and the outcome of trials."

In 1771, Londoners bet nearly 60,000 pounds on whether French diplomat Charles de

Beaumont was male or female; though de Beaumont declined to furnish definitive proof, a judge ruled that the preponderance

of evidence favored female. A Lloyd's patron could also wager that he'd be dead soon, or that his ship would be lost at sea—the types of win-by-losing gambles still available at the coffeehouse's descendant, Lloyd's of London.



*How would you bet?*

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## Not-So-Great Expectations

We often bungle our predictions of future happiness, Daniel Nettle explains in *Happiness: The Science Behind Your Smile* (Oxford Univ. Press). Most people who experience a tragedy, for instance, will be less miserable than they expect a year later. Predictions about petty annoyances, oddly, skew the opposite way. In one study, Nettle reports, “residents were interviewed four months after a new road opened in their neighborhood. They were irritated by the noise, but most felt that they would eventually adapt. One year on, they were just as irritated, and had become more pessimistic about the possibility of ever adapting.” Tragedy fades; nuisance endures.

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## Time Loss

Train passengers crossing the United States in 1870 might have to adjust their watches 20 times, David Pre-*rau* explains in *Seize the Daylight* (Thunder’s Mouth), because different railroads had decreed more than 70 time zones. Transferring from one railroad to another, each running by its own clock, could prove chancy. Charles Dowd, the principal of an all-girls boarding school in Saratoga Springs, New York, came up with a simpler approach: four time zones, one hour apart in time (a 24th of a day) and 15 degrees apart in longitude (a 24th of the earth’s rotation). The railroads agreed—time, at the time, wasn’t a matter for the federal government—and the new zones took effect in 1883. In gratitude, railway executives arranged for Dowd to enjoy free passage on every major line in the country, until, in Saratoga Springs in 1904, he was struck and killed by a train.

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## Grumpy Old Jedi

A long time ago (1975), in a galaxy far, far away (Hollywood), Alec Guinness lunched with, as he later recounted, “a small, neat-faced young man with a black beard, . . . tiny well-shaped hands, poorish teeth, glasses, and not much sense of humor.” George Lucas, director of *American Graffiti*, offered him a part in a film. “Fairy-tale rubbish but *could* be interesting perhaps,” Guinness told a friend, accord-



The late knighted British actor Alec Guinness called the first *Star Wars* movie “fairy-tale rubbish,” but came to fear that his Obi-Wan-Kenobi role would overshadow his other work.

ing to *Alec Guinness* (Simon & Schuster), by Piers Paul Read. The actor agreed to appear in *Star Wars*.

Once filming was under way, though, the 62-year-old Guinness found little to his liking. Obi-Wan-Kenobi was “not an acting job” but a role to “drift through, aimlessly,” he complained; “I cannot yet find a voice which I think suitable.” Lucas kept changing his mind about whether to kill off the character—“a bit late for such decisions,” Guinness sniffed—and the other actors seemed to “treat me as if I was 106.” In a diary, he declared that “apart from the money, which should get me comfortably

## Findings

through the year, I regret having embarked on the film.”

When the money proved far, far better than anyone expected, Guinness started fretting that he'd be remembered for nothing else. He left bags of *Star Wars* fan mail unopened and tried to avoid the “ghastly bores” who were obsessed with the film. In biographer Read's account, “When a mother in America boasted of how often her son had seen *Star Wars*, Alec made him promise that he would never see it again.”

## Cavemen vs. Zombies

Folklorist Daniel Melia has pointed out that *Star Wars* embodies one of humankind's oldest stories, known as “The Dragon Slayer.” But the sequels, with dead Obi Wan-Kenobi popping up as a kindly spectral helper, deviate from an even older story. You could call it “The Spiteful Corpse.”

As long ago as the Stone Age, according to Akop Nazaretyan, a researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences, people feared the dead. To the primeval mind, death brought on a sort of sociopathy; it could drive even loved ones to the Dark Side. So, Nazaretyan explains in the *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* (June 2005), survivors would take prudent precautions: “In Australia, the dead man's neck was sometimes pierced with a spear to fix it to the hollow wooden coffin; the Tasmanians used to tie the dead body's hands and legs before burial; the ancient Spaniards hammered the body with long nails to the wood on which it was buried.”

Nazaretyan ranks necrophobia as our oldest irrational fear, and he speculates that it may have conferred a couple of evolutionary advantages. Fear of the dead discouraged murder within the tribe — the development of tools had made killing much easier — while also encouraging people to take care of the ill, lest they turn into the evil dead. Sometimes, it seems, misapprehending death can make for a better life.

## Fall of the Souse of Usher

When his necrophobic fictions didn't pay the bills, Edgar Allan Poe set his telltale heart on a federal job. He was rejected for a Philadelphia customs position in 1842, which provoked a rant about “the low ruffians and boobies who have received office over my head.” A few weeks later, according to *Poe* (Univ. Press of Mississippi), by James M. Hutchisson, a friend arranged a White House meeting: The job seeker would be able to make his case directly to President John Tyler.

Upon reaching Washington, Poe promptly got inebriated (amontillado?), and stayed that way for days. In a coat worn inside out, he staggered through the city, cadged money from passersby, and started fights, in one case by mocking a Spaniard's moustache. Poe didn't seem to “understand the ways of politicians nor the manner of dealing with them to advantage,” remarked one observer, with admirable understatement. The White House meeting was canceled, and the writer made his way back to Philadelphia, his chance for a federal sinecure destined to return nevermore.



A 1915 drawing by Claude Buck portrays the gloomy author Edgar Allan Poe.





# What Meets the Eye

Americans so idolize the thin and the beautiful that it's become something of a national embarrassment. What's even more embarrassing is how bad most Americans actually look. There are good reasons why they should fret more, rather than less, about appearances.

*by Daniel Akst*

Everyone knows looks shouldn't matter. Beauty, after all, is only skin deep, and no right-thinking person would admit to taking much account of how someone looks outside the realm of courtship, that romantic free-trade zone traditionally exempted from the usual tariffs of rationality. Even in that tender kingdom, where love at first sight is still readily indulged, it would be impolitic,

if not immature, to admit giving too much weight to a factor as shallow as looks. Yet perhaps it's time to say what we all secretly know, which is that looks do matter, maybe even more than most of us think.

We infer a great deal from people's looks—not just when it comes to mating (where looks matter profoundly), but in almost every other aspect of life as well, including careers

## Why Looks Matter

and social status. It may not be true that blondes have more fun, but it's highly likely that attractive people do, and they start early. Mothers pay more attention to good-looking babies, for example, but, by the same token, babies pay more attention to prettier adults who wander into their field of vision. Attractive people are paid more on the job, marry more desirable spouses, and are likelier to get help from others when in evident need. Nor is this all sheer, baseless prejudice. Human beings appear to be hard-wired to respond to how people and objects look, an adaptation without which the species might not have made it this far. The unpleasant truth is that, far from being only skin deep, our looks reflect all kinds of truths about difference and desire—truths we are, in all likelihood, biologically programmed to detect.

Sensitivity to the signals of human appearances would naturally lead to successful reproductive decisions, and several factors suggest that this sensitivity may be bred in the bone. Beauty may even be addictive. Researchers at London's University College have found that human beauty stimulates a section of the brain called the ventral striatum, the same region activated in drug and gambling addicts when they're about to indulge their habit. Photos of faces rated unattractive had no effect on the volunteers to whom they were shown, but the ventral striatum did show activity if the picture was of an attractive person, especially one looking straight at the viewer. And the responses occurred even when the viewer and the subject of the photo were of the same sex. Good-looking people just do something to us, whether we like it or not.

People's looks speak to us, sometimes in a whisper and sometimes in a shout, of health, reproductive fitness, agreeableness, social standing, and intelligence. Although looks in mating still matter much more to men than to women, the importance of appearance appears to be rising on both sides of the gender divide. In a fascinating cross-generational study of mating preferences, every 10 years different groups of men and women were asked to rank 18 characteristics they might want enhanced in a mate. The im-

portance of good looks rose "dramatically" for both men and women from 1939 to 1989, the period of the study, according to David M. Buss, an evolutionary psychologist at the University of Texas. On a scale of 1 to 3, the importance men gave to good looks rose from 1.50 to 2.11. But for women, the importance of good looks in men rose from 0.94 to 1.67. In other words, women in 1989 considered a man's looks even more important than men considered women's looks 50 years earlier. Since the 1930s, Buss writes, "physical appearance has gone up in importance for men and women about equally, corresponding with the rise in television, fashion magazines, advertising, and other media depictions of attractive models."

In all likelihood this trend will continue, driven by social and technological changes that are unlikely to be reversed anytime soon—changes such as the new ubiquity of media images, the growing financial independence of women, and the worldwide weakening of the institution of marriage. For better or worse, we live now in an age of appearances. It looks like looks are here to stay.



The paradox, in such an age, is that the more important appearances become, the worse most of us seem to look—and not just by comparison with the godlike images alternately taunting and bewitching us from every billboard and TV screen. While popular culture is obsessed with fashion and style, and our prevailing psychological infirmity is said to be narcissism, fully two-thirds of American adults have abandoned conventional ideas of attractiveness by becoming overweight. Nearly half of this group is downright obese. Given their obsession with dieting—a \$40 billion-plus industry in the United States—it's not news to these people that they're sending an unhelpful message with their inflated bodies, but it's worth noting here nonetheless.

Social scientists have established what most of us already know in this regard, which is that heavy people are perceived less favorably in a variety of ways. Across cul-

>DANIEL AKST is a writer in New York's Hudson Valley. He writes a monthly business column for The New York Times and is the author of several novels, including *The Webster Chronicle* (2001) and *St. Bur's Obituary* (1996).

tures—even in places such as Fiji, where fat is the norm—people express a preference for others who are neither too slim nor too heavy. In studies by University of Texas psychologist Devendra Singh, people guessed that the heaviest figures in photos were eight to 10 years older than the slimmer ones, even though the faces were identical. (As the nation’s bill for hair dye and facelifts attests, looking older is rarely desirable, unless you happen to be an underage drinker.)

America’s weight problem is one dimension of what seems to be a broader-based national flight from presentability, a flight that manifests itself unmistakably in the relentless casualness of our attire. Contrary to the desperate contentions of some men’s clothiers, for example, the suit really is dying. Walk around midtown Manhattan, and these garments are striking by their absence. Consumer spending reflects this. In 2004, according to NPD Group, a marketing information firm, sales of “active sportswear,” a category that includes such apparel as warm-up suits, were \$39 billion, nearly double what was spent on business suits and other tailored clothing. The irony is that the more athletic gear we wear, from plum-colored velour track suits to high-tech sneakers, the less athletic we become.

The overall change in our attire did not happen overnight. America’s clothes, like America itself, have been getting more casual for decades, in a trend that predates even Nehru jackets and the “full Cleveland” look of a pastel leisure suit with white shoes and belt, but the phenomenon reaches something like an apotheosis in the vogue for low-riding pajama bottoms and flip-flops outside the home. Visit any shopping mall in summer—or many deep-Sunbelt malls year round—and you’ll find people of all sizes, ages, and weights clomping through the climate-controlled spaces in tank tops, T-shirts, and running shorts. Tops—and nowadays often bottoms—emblazoned with the names of companies, schools, and places make many of these shoppers into walking billboards. Bulbous athletic shoes, typically immaculate on adults who go everywhere by car, are the functional equivalent of SUVs for the feet. Anne Hollander, an observant student of clothing whose books include *Sex and Suits* (1994), has complained that we’ve settled on “a sandbox aesthetic” of

sloppy comfort; the new classics—sweats, sneakers, and jeans—persist year after year, transcending fashion altogether.

**W**e’ve come to this pass despite our seeming obsession with how we look. Consider these 2004 numbers from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons: 9.2 million cosmetic surgeries (up 24 percent from 2000) at a cost of \$8.4 billion, and that doesn’t count 7.5 million “minimally invasive” procedures, such as skin peels and Botox injections (collectively up 36 percent). Cosmetic dentistry is also booming, as is weight-loss surgery. Although most of this spending is by women, men are focusing more and more on their appearance as well, which is obvious if you look at the evolution of men’s magazines over the years. Further reflecting our concern with both looks and rapid self-transformation is a somewhat grisly new genre of reality TV: the extreme makeover show, which plays on the audience’s presumed desire to somehow look a whole lot better fast.

But appearances in this case *are* deceiving. The evidence suggests that a great many of us do not care nearly enough about how we look, and that even those who care very much indeed still end up looking terrible. In understanding why, it’s worth remembering that people look the way they do for two basic reasons—on purpose and by accident—and both can be as revealing as a neon tube top.

Let’s start with the purposeful. Extremes in casual clothing have several important functions. A big one nowadays is camouflage. Tent-like T-shirts and sweatsuits cover a lot of sins, and the change in our bodies over time is borne out by the sizes stores find themselves selling. In 1985, for example, the top-selling women’s size was eight. Today, when, as a result of size inflation, an eight (and every other size) is larger than it used to be, NPD Group reports that the top-selling women’s size is 14. Camouflage may also account for the popularity of black, which is widely perceived as slimming as well as cool.

That brings us to another motive for dressing down—way down—which is status. Dressing to manifest disregard for society—think of the loose, baggy hipsters in American high schools—broadcasts self-determination by flaunting the needlessness of having to impress

## Why Looks Matter

anybody else. We all like to pretend we're immune to "what people think," but reaching for status on this basis is itself a particularly perverse—and egregious—form of status seeking. For grownups, it's also a way of pretending to be young, or at least youthful, since people know instinctively that looking young often means looking good. Among the truly young, dressing down is a way to avoid any embarrassing lapses in self-defining rebelliousness. And for the young and fit, sexy casual clothing can honestly signal a desire for short-term rather than long-term relationships. Indeed, researchers have shown that men respond more readily to sexy clothing when seeking a short-term relationship, perhaps because more modest attire is a more effective signal of sexual fidelity, a top priority for men in the marriage market, regardless of nation or tribe.

Purposeful slovenliness can have its reasons, then, but what about carelessness? One possible justification is that, for many people, paying attention to their own looks is just too expensive. Clothes are cheap, thanks to imports, but looking good can be costly for humans, just as it is for other species. A signal such as beauty, after all, is valuable in reproductive terms only if it has credibility, and it's been suggested that such signals are credible indicators of fitness precisely because in evolutionary terms they're so expensive. The peacock's gaudy tail, for example, attracts mates in part because it signals that the strutting bird is robust enough not only to sustain his fancy plumage but to fend off the predators it also attracts. Modern humans who want to strut their evolutionary stuff have to worry about their tails too: They have to work them off. Since most of us are no longer paid to perform physical labor, getting exercise requires valuable time and energy, to say nothing of a costly gym membership. And then there is the opportunity cost—the pleasure lost by forgoing fried chicken and Devil Dogs. Eating junk food, especially fast food, is probably also cheaper, in terms of time, than preparing a low-calorie vegetarian feast at home.

These costs apparently strike many Americans as too high, which may be why we as a culture have engaged in a kind of aesthetic outsourcing, transferring the job of looking good—of providing the desired supply of physical beauty—to the specialists known as "celebrities,"

who can afford to devote much more time and energy to the task. Offloading the chore of looking great onto a small, gifted corps of professionals saves the rest of us a lot of trouble and expense, even if it has opened a yawning aesthetic gulf between the average person (who is fat) and the average model or movie star (who is lean and toned within an inch of his or her life).

Although the popularity of Botox and other such innovations suggests that many people do want to look better, it seems fair to conclude that they are not willing to pay any significant price to do so, since the great majority do not in fact have cosmetic surgery, exercise regularly, or maintain anything like their ideal body weight. Like so much in our society, physical attractiveness is produced by those with the greatest comparative advantage, and consumed vicariously by the rest of us—purchased, in a sense, ready made.

Whether our appearance is purposeful or accidental, the outcome is the same, which is that a great many of us look awful most of the time, and as a consequence of actions or inactions that are at least substantially the result of free will.



**M**en dressed liked boys? Flip-flops at the office? Health care workers who never get near an operating room but nevertheless dress in shapeless green scrubs? These sartorial statements are not just casual. They're also of a piece with the general disrepute into which looking good seems to have fallen. On its face, so to speak, beauty presents some serious ideological problems in the modern world. If beauty were a brand, any focus group that we convened would describe it as shallow and fleeting or perhaps as a kind of eye candy that is at once delicious and bad for you. As a society, we consume an awful lot of it, and we feel darn guilty about it.

Why should this be so? For one thing, beauty strikes most of us as a natural endowment, and as a people we dislike endowments. We tax inheritances, after all, on the premise that they are unearned by their recipients and might produce something like a hereditary aristocracy, not unlike the one produced by the competition to mate with beauty. Money plays a role in





*The pursuit of good looks has become a spectator sport, with celebrities and contestants on extreme makeover television shows among the few active participants. Here Amanda Williams, on Fox Network's The Swan, sees her new look for the first time. Above, her "before" photo.*



that competition; there's no denying that looks and income are traditionally awfully comfortable with each other, and today affluent Americans are the ones least likely to be overweight. By almost any standard, then, looks are a seemingly unfair way of distinguishing oneself, discriminating as they do on the basis of age and generally running afoul of what the late political scientist Aaron Wildavsky called "the rise of radical egalitarianism," which was at the very least suspicious of distinction and advantage, especially a distinction as capricious and as powerful as appearance.

Appearance can be a source of inequality, and achieving some kind of egalitarianism in this arena is a long-standing and probably laudable American concern. The Puritans eschewed fancy garb, after all, and Thoreau warned us to beware of enterprises that require new clothes. Nowadays, at a time of increased income inequality, our clothes paradoxically confer less distinction than ever. Gender distinctions in

clothing, for instance, have been blurred in favor of much greater sartorial androgyny, to the extent that nobody would any longer ask who wears the pants in any particular household (because the correct answer would be, "everybody"). The same goes for age distinctions (short pants long ago lost their role as uniform of the young), class distinctions (the rich wear jeans too), and even distinctions between occasions such as school and play, work and leisure, or public and private. Who among us hasn't noticed sneakers, for example, at a wedding, in a courtroom, or at a concert, where you spot them sometimes even on the stage?

The problem is that, if anything, looks matter even more than we think, not just because we're all hopelessly superficial, but because looks have always told us a great deal of what we want to know. Looks matter for good reason, in other words, and delegating favorable appearances to an affluent elite for reasons of cost or convenience is a mistake, both for the indi-

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viduals who make it and for the rest of us as well. The slovenliness of our attire is one of the things that impoverish the public sphere, and the stunning rise in our weight (in just 25 years) is one of the things that impoverish our health. Besides, it's not as if we're evolving any-time soon into a species that's immune to appearances. Looks seem to matter to all cultures, not just our image-besotted one, suggesting that efforts to stamp out looksism (which have yet to result in hiring quotas on behalf of the homely) are bucking millions of years of evolutionary development.

**T**he degree of cross-cultural consistency in this whole area is surprising. Contrary to the notion that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, or at the very least in the eye of the culture, studies across nations and tribal societies have found that people almost everywhere have similar ideas about what's attractive, especially as regards the face (tastes in bodies seem to vary a bit more, perhaps allowing for differing local evolutionary ecologies). Men everywhere, even those few still beyond the reach of Hollywood and Madison Avenue, are more concerned about women's looks than women are about men's, and their general preference for women who look young and healthy is probably the result of evolutionary adaptation.

The evidence for this comes from the field of evolutionary psychology. Whatever one's view of this burgeoning branch of science, one thing it has produced (besides controversy) is an avalanche of disconcerting research about how we look. Psychologists Michael R. Cunningham, of the University of Louisville, and Stephen R. Shamblen cite evidence that babies as young as two or three months old look longer at more attractive faces. New mothers of less attractive offspring, meanwhile, have been found to pay more attention to other people (say, hospital room visitors) than do new mothers of better-looking babies. This may have some basis in biological necessity, if you bear in mind that the evolutionary environment, free as it was of antibiotics and pediatricians, might have made it worthwhile indeed for mothers to invest themselves most in the offspring likeliest to survive and thrive.

The environment today, of course, is very different, but it may only amplify the seeming

ruthlessness of the feelings and judgments we make. "In one study," reports David M. Buss, the evolutionary psychologist who reported on the multi-generational study of mating preferences, "after groups of men looked at photographs of either highly attractive women or women of average attractiveness, they were asked to evaluate their commitment to their current romantic partner. Disturbingly, the men who had viewed pictures of attractive women thereafter judged their actual partners to be less attractive than did the men who had viewed analogous pictures of women who were average in attractiveness. Perhaps more important, the men who had viewed attractive women thereafter rated themselves as less committed, less satisfied, less serious, and less close to their actual partners." In another study, men who viewed attractive nude centerfolds promptly rated themselves as less attracted to their own partners.

Even if a man doesn't personally care much what a woman looks like, he knows that others do. Research suggests that being with an attractive woman raises a man's status significantly, while dating a physically unattractive woman moderately lowers a man's status. (The effect for women is quite different; dating an attractive man raises a woman's status only somewhat, while dating an unattractive man lowers her status only nominally.) And status matters. In the well-known "Whitehall studies" of British civil servants after World War II, for example, occupational grade was strongly correlated with longevity: The higher the bureaucrat's ranking, the longer the life. And it turns out that Academy Award-winning actors and actresses outlive other movie performers by about four years, at least according to a study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* in 2001. "The results," write authors Donald A. Redelmeier and Sheldon M. Singh, "suggest that success confers a survival advantage." So if an attractive mate raises a man's status, is it really such a wonder that men covet trophy wives?

In fact, people's idea of what's attractive is influenced by the body types that are associated with status in a given time and place (which suggests that culture plays at least some role in ideas of attractiveness). As any museumgoer can tell you, the big variation in male preferences across time and place is

in plumpness, and Buss contends that this is a status issue: In places where food is plentiful, such as the United States, high-status people distinguish themselves by being thin.

There are reasons besides sex and status to worry about how we look. For example, economists Daniel S. Hamermesh, of the University of Texas, and Jeff E. Biddle, of Michigan State University, have produced a study suggesting that better-looking people make more money. "Holding constant demographic and labor-market characteristics," they wrote in a well-known 1993 paper, "plain people earn less than people of average looks, who earn less than the good-looking. The penalty for plainness is five to 10 percent, slightly larger than the premium for beauty." A 1998 study of attorneys (by the same duo) found that some lawyers also benefit by looking better. Yet another study found that better-looking college instructors—especially men—receive higher ratings from their students.

Hamermesh and some Chinese researchers also looked into whether priming pays, based on a survey of Shanghai residents. They found that beauty raises women's earnings (and, to a lesser extent, men's), but that spending on clothing and cosmetics helps only a little. Several studies have even found associations between appearance preferences and economic cycles. Psychologists Terry F. Pettijohn II, of Ohio State University, and Abraham Tesser, of the University of Georgia, for example, obtained a list of the Hollywood actresses with top box-office appeal in each year from 1932 to 1995. The researchers scanned the actresses' photos into a computer, did various measurements, and determined that, lo and behold, the ones who were the most popular during social and economic good times had more "neoteny"—more childlike features, including bigger eyes, smaller chins, and rounder cheeks. During economic downturns, stronger and more rectangular female faces—in other words, faces that were more mature—were preferred.

It's not clear whether this is the case for political candidates as well, but looks matter in this arena too. In a study that appeared recently in *Science*, psychologist Alexander Todorov and colleagues at Princeton University showed photographs of political candidates to more than 800 students, who

were asked to say who had won and why based solely on looks. The students chose correctly an amazing 69 percent of the time, consistently picking candidates they judged to look the most competent, meaning those who looked more mature. The losers were more likely to have babyfaces, meaning some combination of a round face, big eyes, small nose, high forehead and small chin. Those candidates apparently have a hard time winning elections.



To scientists, a convenient marker for physical attractiveness in people is symmetry, as measured by taking calipers to body parts as wrists, elbows, and feet to see how closely the pairs match. The findings of this research can be startling. As summarized by biologist Randy Thornhill and psychologist Steven W. Gangestad, both of the University of New Mexico, "In both sexes, relatively low asymmetry seems to be associated with increased genetic, physical, and mental health, including cognitive skill and IQ. Also, symmetric men appear to be more muscular and vigorous, have a lower basal metabolic rate, and may be larger in body size than asymmetric men. . . . Symmetry is a major component of developmental health and overall condition and appears to be heritable." The researchers add that more symmetrical men have handsomer faces, more sex partners, and their first sexual experience at an earlier age, and they get to sex more quickly with a new romantic partner. "Moreover," they tell us, "men's symmetry predicts a relatively high frequency of their sexual partners' copulatory orgasms."

Those orgasms are sperm retaining, suggesting that symmetric men may have a greater chance of getting a woman pregnant. It doesn't hurt that the handsomest men may have the best sperm, at least according to a study at Spain's University of Valencia, which found that men with the healthiest, fastest sperm were those whose faces were rated most attractive by women. There's evidence that women care more about men's looks for short-term relationships than for marriage, and that as women get closer to the most fertile point of the menstrual cycle, their preference for "symmetrical" men grows stronger, according

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*Despite wildly divergent public images, actresses Audrey Hepburn, in black, and Marilyn Monroe shared one thing: a waist-hip ratio of 0.7.*

to Thornhill and Gangestad. Ovulating women prefer more rugged, masculinized faces, whereas the rest of the time they prefer less masculinized or even slightly feminized male faces. Perhaps predictably, more-symmetrical men are likelier to be unfaithful and tend to invest less in a relationship.

Asymmetric people may have some idea that they're behind the eight ball here. William Brown and his then-colleagues at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, looked at 50 people in heterosexual relationships, measuring such features as hands, ears, and feet, and then asked about jealousy. The researchers found a strong correlation between asymmetry and romantic jealousy, suggesting that asymmetrical lovers may suspect they're somehow less desirable. Brown's explanation: "If jealousy is a strategy to retain your mate, then the individual more likely to be philandered on is more likely to be jealous."

In general, how we look communicates something about how healthy we are, how fertile, and probably how useful in the evolutionary environment. This may be why, across a range of cultures, women prefer tall, broad-shouldered men who seem like good reproductive specimens, in addition to offering the possibility of physical protection. Men, meanwhile, like pretty women who appear young. Women's looks seem to vary depending on where they happen to be in the monthly fertility cycle. The University of Liverpool biologist John Manning measured women's ears and fingers and had the timing of their ovulation confirmed by pelvic exams. He found a 30 percent decline in asymmetries in the 24 hours before ovulation—perhaps more perceptible to our sexual antennae than to the conscious mind. In general, symmetrical women have more sex partners, suggesting that greater symmetry makes women more attractive to men.

To evolutionary biologists, it makes sense that men should care more about the way women look than vice versa, because youth and fitness matter so much more in fe-



male fertility. And while male preferences do vary with time and place there's also some remarkable underlying consistency. Devendra Singh, for instance, found that the waist-to-hip ratio was the most important factor in women's attractiveness to men in 18 cultures he studied. Regardless of whether lean or voluptuous women happen to be in fashion, the favored shape involves a waist/hip ratio of about 0.7. "Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe represented two very different images of beauty to filmgoers in the 1950s," writes Nancy Etcoff, who is a psychologist at Massachusetts General Hospital. "Yet the 36-24-34 Marilyn and the 31.5-22-31 Audrey both had versions of the hourglass shape and waist-to-hip ratios of 0.7." Even Twiggy, in her 92-pound heyday, had a waist/hip ratio of 0.73.



**I**s it cause for despair that looks are so important? The bloom of youth is fleeting, after all, and the bad news that our appearance will inevitably broadcast about us cannot be kept under wraps forever. Besides, who could live up to the impossible standards propagated by our powerful aesthetic-



industrial complex? It's possible that the images of models and actresses and even TV newscasters, most of them preternaturally youthful and all selected for physical fitness, have driven most Americans to quit the game, insisting that they still care about how they look even as they retire from the playing field to console themselves with knife and fork.

If the pressure of all these images has caused us to opt out of caring about how we look, that's a shame, because we're slaves of neither genes nor fashion in this matter. By losing weight and exercising, simply by making ourselves healthier, we can change the underlying data our looks report. The advantages are almost too obvious to mention, including lower medical costs, greater confidence, and a better quality of life in virtually every way.

There's no need to look like Brad Pitt or Jennifer Lopez, and no reason for women to pursue Olive Oyl thinness (a body type men do not especially prefer). Researchers, in fact, have found that people of both sexes tend to prefer averageness in members of the opposite sex: The greater the number of faces poured (by computer) into a composite, the higher it's scored in attractive-

ness by viewers. That's in part because "bad" features tend to be averaged out. But the implication is clear: You don't need to look like a movie star to benefit from a favorable appearance, unless, of course, you're planning a career in movies.

**T**o a bizarre extent, looking good in America has become the province of an appearance aristocracy—an elect we revere for their seemingly unattainable endowment of good looks. Physical attractiveness has become too much associated with affluence and privilege for a country as democratically inclined as ours. We can be proud at least that these lucky lookers no longer have to be white or even young. Etcoff notes that, in tracking cosmetic surgery since the 1950s, the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery reports a change in styles toward wider, fuller-tipped noses and narrower eyelids, while makeup styles have tended toward fuller lips and less pale skin shades. She attributes these changes to the recalibration of beauty norms as the result of the presence of more Asian, African, and Hispanic features in society.

But what's needed is a much more radical democratization of physical beauty, a democratization we can achieve not by changing the definition of beauty but by changing ourselves. Looking nice is something we need to take back from the elites and make once again a broadly shared, everyday attribute, as it once was when people were much less likely to be fat and much more likely to dress decently in public. Good looks are not just an endowment, and the un-American attitude that looks are immune to self-improvement only breeds the kind of fatalism that is blessedly out of character in America.

As a first step, maybe we can stop pretending that our appearance doesn't—or shouldn't—matter. A little more looksism, if it gets people to shape up, would probably save some lives, to say nothing of some marriages. Let's face it. To a greater extent than most of us are comfortable with, looks tell us something, and right now what they say about our health, our discipline, and our mutual regard isn't pretty. □

# The President and the Wheelchair

In the decades since Franklin Roosevelt's presidency, Americans have come to believe that FDR hid from the public the crippling effects of his polio. That myth about the man in the wheelchair says more about our own time than it does about his.

*by Christopher Clausen*

**D**uring his 12 years in the White House, Franklin D. Roosevelt was hardly ever photographed in a wheelchair. Not surprisingly, the longest-serving president in American history disliked drawing attention to his polio symptoms. He had been stricken suddenly by the disease in 1921, at age 39, seven years before he was elected governor of New York and 11 years before his first presidential campaign. Roosevelt took the stage on crutches at the 1924 Democratic National Convention to nominate New York governor Alfred E. Smith for president. Later, he learned to stand with leg braces and to walk for short distances with the assistance of crutches or—after he had recovered as completely as he would—a cane.

Once Roosevelt took the governor's office in Albany, four years later, the press corps was discouraged from photographing him being helped out of cars or otherwise exhibiting signs of physical dependence. When *Life* published a photo of him in a wheelchair in 1937, presidential press secretary Steve Early was displeased. Most stills and newsreels from Roosevelt's White House years show him seated (often in a car), gripping a lectern, or, frequently, clutching the arm of his son James. To compensate for the immobility of his legs, he developed his arms and upper body and used them effectively in his signature speaking style.

Fast-forward half a century. Although FDR had explicitly rejected the idea of a memorial, his admirers eventually succeeded in having one erected between the monuments to Lincoln

and Jefferson in Washington, D.C. It opened in 1997 to mixed reviews. While some commentators were enthusiastic, others felt that it was a bland, politically correct celebration not so much of the late president and his accomplishments as of the liberal pieties of the 1990s. Daniel Schorr, one of the few Washington journalists who could recall the New Deal, complained in *The New Leader* that "FDR is remembered for the cigarette holder he held between his teeth at a jaunty angle. You will not find that in any of the statues in the memorial. The argument is that if he had known what we know today about tobacco, he wouldn't have smoked." After noting that Eleanor Roosevelt's "trademark silver fox fur piece" is also never shown, Schorr asked, "Why does everybody with a cause seem to know that FDR and Eleanor today would be sharing that cause?"

But the biggest controversy was what Schorr dubbed "the great battle of the wheelchair." The committee that designed the memorial had acceded to Roosevelt's wish that he not be shown in one. Disability rights groups, however, demanded that the biases of his own time not be countenanced in ours. (The possibility that a proud man might have minimized his handicap as much to avoid pity as stigma did not seem to occur to them.) After President Bill Clinton announced that he felt both their pain and his late predecessor's, Congress authorized a bronze statue of FDR sitting proudly in the homemade wheelchair he had designed for himself, like a man who,





*In a 1941 family snapshot, FDR holds his Scottish terrier, Fala, and chats with the daughter of his Hyde Park caretaker. Photos of the president in his wheelchair are scarce, but the public knew of his disability.*

with superhuman effort, had rolled himself out of the closet of ancient prejudices and simultaneously kicked the tobacco habit.

At the dedication of the statue in early 2001, the air was thick with self-congratulation. “While Roosevelt hid his disability from the public during his lifetime, believing that the country wasn’t ready then to elect a wheelchair user as president, he nevertheless stayed in his chair when it was uplifting to particular audiences, such as when touring veterans’ hospitals,” proclaimed Michael Deland, chairman of the National Organization on Disability.

“It’s wonderful that the whole world will now know that President Roosevelt led this country to victory in World War II and through the Great Depression from his wheelchair.” Clinton echoed this view of the past, explaining, “He lived in a different time, when people thought being disabled was being unable.” The implication was that if FDR had had the good fortune to run for president today, his disability would have been no handicap at all.

But embracing this view of a tolerant present contrasted with a darker past requires negotiating a major obstacle: Americans of our

## FDR's Handicap

grandparents' generation elected FDR to the presidency four times—twice during the worst depression in history and twice more during a world war. How could such unenlightened people have done a thing like this? The answer is simple: They must not have known what they were doing. His affliction must have been kept secret, hidden through two decades of public life from all but his intimates. As Davis W. Houck and Amos Kiewe put it in *FDR's Body Politics: The Rhetoric of Disability* (2003), "Roosevelt's disability was carefully concealed not only from the media, and thus the public, but also from some members of his own family."

This assertion has been widely circulated in recent years. Since the 1985 publication of Hugh Gallagher's book, *FDR's Splendid Deception*, it has become conventional wisdom—even though Gallagher himself makes the more modest claim that the impact of polio on FDR's personality and motivation has been underestimated. This April, in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Roosevelt's death, both a History Channel documentary and an HBO drama offered accounts of how the complicated cover-up was supposedly carried off.

Press discussion of the films asserted even more positively that Roosevelt's ailment was kept under wraps. "FDR is being reimagined for television audiences in the very way he went to extraordinary lengths to hide," declared *The Los Angeles Times*, "as a polio survivor whose paralysis formed the core of his adult experience." The paper quoted the scriptwriter of the HBO movie, *Warm Springs*, as saying, "I wanted to out him as a disabled man." *The Columbus Dispatch* insisted, "Most Americans never knew of his disability. During his presidential years his polio wasn't even disclosed by the press." *The Washington Post* went further, attributing the New Deal itself to polio: "Because voters were unaware of Roosevelt's paralysis, he set out to project a can-do approach calculated to restore national self-confidence."

**H**ow much truth is there to these claims that most Americans knew little or nothing about their president's paralyzed legs until after his death? Such major historians as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and

Frank Freidel, writing in the 1950s when the Roosevelt administration was a comparatively recent memory, made no mention of such a secret. Their accounts treat his polio and its physical manifestations matter-of-factly, as if every well-informed person knew at least the essentials of his condition and had known at the time. As members of a generation less obsessed with health and youthful appearance than we are, perhaps they did not find it remarkable that a demonstrated ability to perform presidential duties was sufficient physical qualification in voters' eyes. The rite of exhibiting fitness for high office through frenetic athleticism didn't emerge until the administration of John F. Kennedy, whose general health, ironically, was much worse than FDR's.

Freidel discusses at length the ways in which the future president dealt with the disease and indicates that he was fortunate in his friends and supporters. Reacting early in the 1928 gubernatorial campaign to the Republican charge that paralysis made Roosevelt unfit for office, Al Smith, who had drafted the younger man to succeed him in Albany while he himself ran for president, snorted, "But the answer to that is that a governor does not have to be an acrobat. We do not elect him for his ability to do a double back-flip or a hand-spring." Indeed, Republicans soon stopped talking about Roosevelt's physical condition for fear of creating a sympathy vote for him.

**Q**uestions and rumors about Roosevelt's health naturally proliferated as his plans to run for president became evident. In July 1931, *Liberty* magazine, a weekly that claimed a circulation of 2.5 million, published an article headlined "Is Franklin D. Roosevelt Physically Fit to Be President?" The opening paragraph bluntly stated, "It is an amazing possibility that the next President of the United States may be a cripple. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Governor of the State of New York, was crippled by infantile paralysis in the epidemic of 1921 and still walks with the help of a crutch and a walking stick. Yet by all the political signs he will emerge as the Democratic nominee." Though the article made no mention of a wheelchair, it detailed Roosevelt's use of leg braces and fea-

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tured a photograph of him displaying them. Another photo showed him barelegged on the edge of the pool at Warm Springs, Georgia, where, he explained, “swimming in tepid water” gave him buoyancy and somewhat improved the feeling in his legs. As for his limited mobility, he portrayed it as an advantage on the job; it forced him to concentrate. “I don’t move about my office,” he was quoted as saying. “But I can and do move about the state.”

The article’s author was a self-described Republican journalist, Earle Looker, who (probably with the Roosevelt campaign’s encouragement) had challenged the prospective candidate to submit to a lengthy interview and to an examination by an orthopedist, a neurologist, and a general practitioner, to be chosen by the director of the New York Academy of Medicine. “A sound mind in a sound body,” Looker declared, “has more and more come to be a requirement for the Presidency. This is outside the legal requirements, but two recent breakdowns in office, those of Woodrow Wilson and Warren G. Harding . . . very pertinently raise the question whether or not Franklin Roosevelt is fit to be President.” Roosevelt eagerly accepted the challenge. In a moment of unintentional humor, when Looker asked whether he would be willing to sacrifice his “personal desires” to assume the burdens of the presidency, the candidate snapped, “The opportunity for service that the Presidency affords has not honestly been considered a personal sacrifice by anyone I have ever known or heard of who has had that opportunity.” The article also contained a now-famous quip from Eleanor Roosevelt: “If the paralysis couldn’t kill him, the presidency won’t.”

After following the governor through several exhausting workdays, Looker delivered a chirpy but essentially accurate judgment: “Insofar as I have observed him, I have come to the conclusion that he seemed able to take more punishment than many men ten years younger. Merely his legs were not much good to him.” The three doctors concurred: “We believe that his health and powers of endurance are such as to allow him to meet any demands of private and public life.” The Roosevelt campaign sent copies of the published article to every influential Democrat and county chairman in the country, as well as to others who expressed concern about the candidate’s

health. Looker soon expanded his piece into a popular campaign biography, *This Man Roosevelt* (1932), that painted an even more favorable picture of the candidate’s abilities and, like nearly all later biographies, attributed some of his most impressive qualities to his struggle with a crippling disease.

*Liberty* was by no means the only publication to scrutinize FDR’s polio as it related to his fitness for office. After he formally declared his candidacy, *Time* ran a sympathetic cover story on February 1, 1932, that described the onset of the disease in 1921. “Months later,” the magazine reported, “he arose to find his legs quite dead. This calamity he met with supreme courage and cheer.” In 1924, FDR discovered Warm Springs, then a down-at-heel spa resort. “After churning about in the pool, he found that his leg muscles felt a little stronger. Thereafter Warm Springs became his great hobby. He spent a large part of his personal fortune on developing the place into a sanatorium.” As for his present condition, *Time* summarized it judiciously:

Swimming at Warm Springs several months each year and special exercises at Albany have made it possible for the Governor to walk 100 feet or so with braces and canes. When standing at crowded public functions, he still clings precariously to a friend’s arm. Constitutionally he is sound as a nut and always has been. His affliction makes people come to him to transact business, saves him useless motion, enables him to get prodigious amounts of work done at a sitting. Governor Roosevelt is confident of ultimate total recovery. . . . Never have his crippled legs deterred him from going where he would.

Some secret. There you have all the essential information laid out with admirable succinctness and precision—the history of the disease, how it affected him after more than 10 years (with a clear distinction between the effects of polio and general health), complete with a slightly skeptical reference to the ingrained optimism that helped make FDR such an appealing leader—in time for voters to factor it in, if they wanted. It’s hard to imagine fuller disclosure.

References to FDR’s paralyzed legs did not end with his election. Faced with a manifestly



*At a ceremony in 2001, President Bill Clinton, flanked by FDR's grandchildren Anna Eleanor Roosevelt and James Roosevelt, regards the controversial statue of the late president in his wheelchair.*

energetic president in a time of national crisis, however, the press had more important things to cover. After the public rendered its verdict in 1932, his health was never a significant political issue again until the 1944 campaign, when he was visibly deteriorating. Then, the White House was indeed less than informative, but at issue were heart disease and exhaustion rather than polio. (One alarming sign, however, as *Time* noted, was that for a while he “virtually abandoned the uncomfortable braces which make walking possible for him and hold him up while standing.” A week later his chief physician reassured the press that the president was swimming again, adding that “the buoyancy of

the water enables him to walk and he gets exercise that he can't get any other way.”) In the countless attacks on a controversy-riddled administration, FDR's polio was rarely a target—not because it was taboo, but because it had ceased to be relevant. “It's not a story,” Early would answer when asked about the president's handicap, and he was largely right.

**M**aking light of an affliction is not the same as denying it. Roosevelt aggressively identified himself with the cause of curing polio. As president-elect, according to *Time*, “At Worcester, Mass., Governor Roosevelt picked Catherine Murphy, 9, also a crip-

ple from infantile paralysis, to send at his own expense to Warm Springs, Ga., for treatment.” Starting with his 52nd birthday, in 1934, he promoted an annual series of nationwide “birthday balls” to raise money for polio treatment and research.

In 1938, his advocacy efforts culminated in a national radio address and media extravaganza to announce the creation of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, soon to become known as the March of Dimes. Press coverage was profuse and laudatory. *The New York Times* carried a story on page 1 and several more on page 3. *Life* featured pictures of the Hollywood stars who had participated. *Time* began its story with the lead, “Franklin Roosevelt is not only the nation’s No. 1 citizen but its No. 1 victim of infantile paralysis. He is not only President of the U.S. but president of the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation.” *Newsweek* ran a cover that showed polio sufferers in wheelchairs and a benevolent FDR sitting in his car lighting a cigarette, with the headline, “Paralysis war: Roosevelt’s gift becomes a national institution.” Like other publications, *Newsweek* recounted the by-then-familiar story of the president’s crippling infantile paralysis, his early experiences at Warm Springs, and the creation of the Warm Springs Foundation in 1927. Courting this kind of publicity was hardly the act of a man trying to distance himself from a stigma, let alone practice a deception.

Although he never abandoned the unrealistic hope of a complete recovery, as a candidate and as president Roosevelt was more candid about his health than Kennedy was in 1960 or former senator Paul Tsongas (who downplayed the lymphoma that later killed him) was in his 1992 run for the Democratic nomination. But even if he had been less forthright, how *could* such a secret have been kept? It would have required the collusion not only of the president’s associates and a supine press, but of thousands of people who met him in situations in which his paralysis was obvious or who had known about it before he became president. His worst political enemies would have had to conspire to keep quiet. The whole theory is wildly implausible.

**Y**et the myth will not die. Myths are immune to evidence, and the 21st centu-

ry has already enshrined this one in film and bronze. Like other myths, it reveals more about its believers than about its ostensible subject. At the dedication of FDR’s statue in 2001, his granddaughter, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt, made the shrewd comment, “Memorials are for us. They aren’t necessarily for the people they memorialize.”

The new millennium’s nicotine-free FDR sits placidly in his wheelchair next to the Tidal Basin, as if contemplating the changes wrought by time. Americans who elected and re-elected him in the second quarter of the 20th century held some attitudes, particularly on race, that we rightly repudiate. But they were not fools, and they were not on the whole deceived about their president’s abilities or disability. Rather, they shared with him a notion of dignity and reserve that entailed suffering in silence, emphasizing what one *could* do instead of what one couldn’t. “Don’t stare” was the first rule of etiquette. At a time when everybody knew victims of polio and was at least somewhat familiar with its effects, discreet sympathy seemed the most appropriate and humane posture toward those with an affliction that remained all too common until the Salk vaccine (whose development had been largely funded by the March of Dimes) came into use a decade after FDR’s death.

This stoic observance of privacy has gradually come to seem obsolete over the past half-century. Subsequent political history and present-day attitudes make it amply clear that a man handicapped as Roosevelt was would stand no chance of reaching the White House today. In an age when pictures trump words, television would mercilessly fix in every viewer’s mind the very images of physical helplessness that FDR largely managed to avoid. Polio would drown out every other issue. The insistence that the voters who chose the greatest president of the 20th century must not have known the inspiring truth about him is simply one more example of the present misrepresenting the past to serve its own ends—in this case, a powerful need for assurance that, whatever our faults, we immeasurably surpass our forebears in the supreme contemporary virtue of tolerance. □

# How Women Won the Vote

In the pleasant haze of half-remembered history, the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment is surrounded by images of determined suffragist on the march over the protests of buffoonish men. The reality was a lot more interesting than that.

by *Akhil Reed Amar*

In August 1920, with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, some 10 million American women finally became the full political equals of men, eligible to vote in all local, state, and federal elections. In terms of sheer numbers, the Woman Suffrage Amendment represented the single biggest democratizing event in American history. Even the extraordinary feats of the Founding and Reconstruction had brought about the electoral empowerment or enfranchisement of people numbering in the hundreds of thousands, not millions.

Woman suffrage came as a thunderclap. As late as 1909, women voted on equal terms with men only in four western states, home to less than two percent of the nation's population. How did they get from the Wilderness to the Promised Land in so short a span? First, it's necessary to ask how they got from bondage to the Wilderness—that is, how they managed to get equal voting rights in four Rocky Mountain states in the late 19th century.

The process began when the Wyoming Territory broke new ground in 1869 and 1870 by giving women equal rights with men to vote in all elections and to hold office. Twenty years later, Wyoming entered the Union as the first woman-suffrage state. Colorado, Utah, and Idaho soon followed suit.

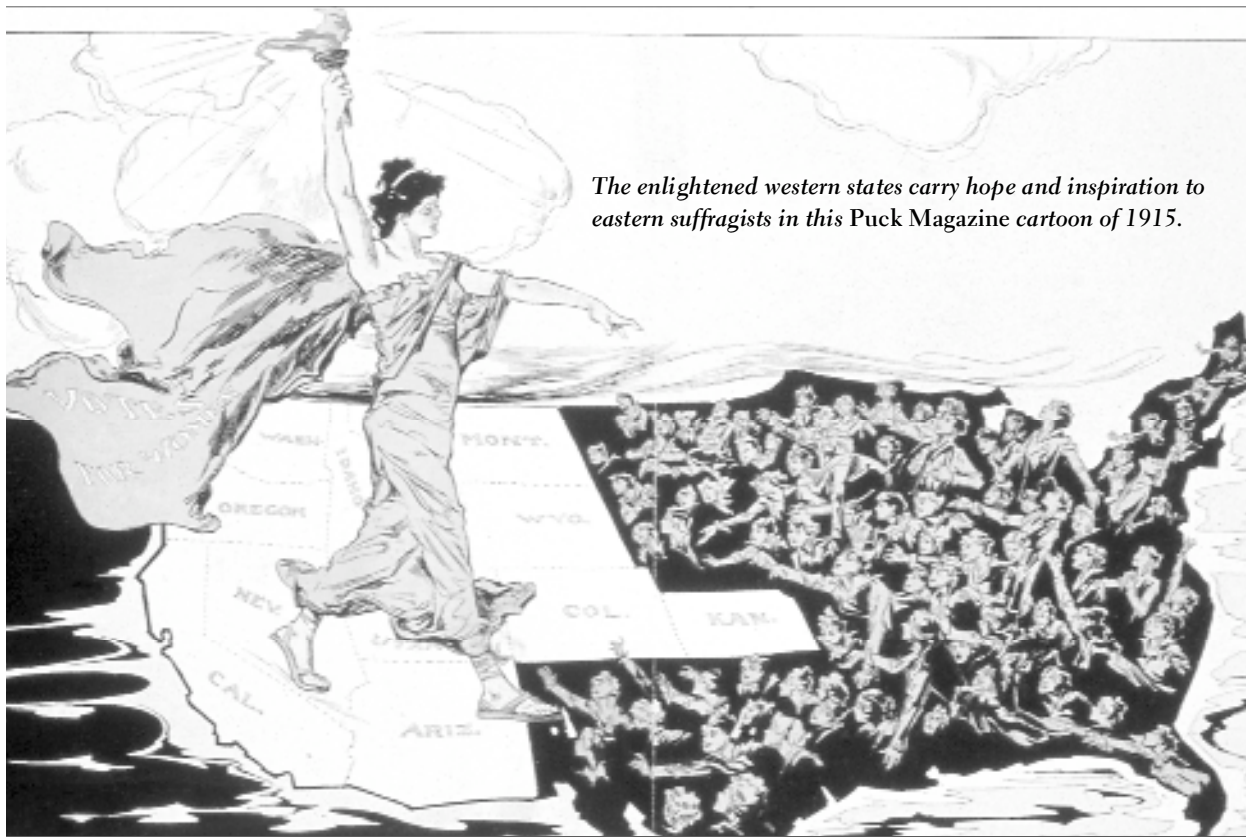
Conditions in the West were especially favorable for woman suffrage. Women were a rare and precious resource in the region; under the laws of supply and demand, men had to work that much harder to attract and keep

them. The city of Cheyenne's leading newspaper was quick to tout the significance of woman suffrage: "We now expect at once quite an immigration of ladies to Wyoming. We say to them all, 'come on.'" Just as the Constitution's original promises of freedom and democracy in the 1780s were meant to entice skilled European immigrants to travel across the ocean, so these immigrants' pioneer grandsons evidently aimed to persuade American women to journey through the plains and over the mountains.

The 1890 census provides some support for this admittedly crude theory. For every 100 native-born Wyoming males, there were only 58 native-born females. No other state had so pronounced a gender imbalance. Colorado and Idaho were the fifth and sixth most imbalanced states overall in 1890. The other early woman-suffrage state, Utah, had a somewhat higher percentage of women (a consequence of its early experience with polygamy), but even it had only 88 native-born females for every 100 native-born males, ranking it 11th among the 45 states in the mid-1890s. Also, the second, third, fourth, and seventh most imbalanced states—Montana, Washington, Nevada, and Oregon—would all embrace woman suffrage in the early 1910s, several years ahead of most other states. In all these places, men voting to extend the suffrage to women had little reason to fear that males might be outvoted en masse by females anytime soon.







*The enlightened western states carry hope and inspiration to eastern suffragists in this Puck Magazine cartoon of 1915.*

The experience of other countries is also suggestive. In 1893, New Zealand became the first nation in the world to give women the vote in all elections—though it withheld from them the right to serve in Parliament until 1919. From one perspective, New Zealand’s niche within the British Empire was not altogether different from Wyoming’s within the United States: a remote outpost eager to attract new settlers, especially women. At the turn of the century, New Zealand males outnumbered females by a ratio of 9 to 8. Among certain communities of European immigrants, the gender imbalance exceeded 2 to 1.

Australia gave women the vote in national elections in 1902, when there were fewer than 90 non-indigenous females for every 100 non-indigenous males. Before and after Australia’s continental enfranchisement, each of the six Australian states that united to form the nation in 1901 followed its own suffrage rules for elections to local parliaments. The least densely populated and most gender-imbalanced region, Western Australia, was the second-fastest to give women the vote. It did so in 1899, nearly a full decade before the most populous and gender-balanced area, Victoria, became the last Australian state to embrace woman suffrage.

In the United States, federal territorial poli-

cy also provided a modest if unintended spur to woman suffrage. In the 19th century, Congress tended to wait for a territory to achieve a certain critical population mass before admitting it to statehood, though no single formula applied in all places and at all times. Inhabitants of each western territory understood that rapid population growth would enhance prospects for early statehood, and each new woman brought not only herself but, in most cases, the possibility of future children.

In its early years, the story of woman suffrage was in some ways the converse of the black suffrage experience. Even as western men were talking about encouraging an influx of eastern women with the lure of suffrage, northern states between 1866 and 1868 were imposing black suffrage on the South while largely declining to embrace it for themselves—precisely because they wanted to discourage southern blacks from flooding north.

Later, the stories of black and woman suffrage converged. Indeed, the language of the Woman Suffrage Amendment repeated the wording of the Fifteenth Amendment verbatim, with “sex” simply substituted for “race” as an impermissible basis for disfranchisement: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States

## Woman Suffrage

or by any State on account of sex.”

Once large numbers of black men could vote in many states, the stage was set for universalization of the equal suffrage principle articulated in the Fifteenth Amendment. In the case of both blacks and women, white male lawmakers for whom the disfranchised had never voted proved more eager to grant them the vote than did the larger mass of voters.

As early as 1878, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other women leaders began appearing before the U.S. Senate in support of a constitutional amendment that would do for women what the Fifteenth Amendment had done for blacks. Introduced by Senator A. A. Sargent of California, the proposed amendment had been drafted by the crusading suffragist Susan B. Anthony, in collaboration with Stanton. In 1920, this amendment would prevail in the exact form in which Anthony had initially drafted it—but only after Anthony’s acolytes had transformed the landscape of state practice.

Between 1896 (when Utah and Idaho became the third and fourth woman-suffrage states) and 1909, no new states gave women the vote in general state or federal elections. Yet even in this period of seeming quiescence, powerful subterranean forces were at work. A few additional states joined an already substantial list of those willing to let women vote in school board elections or on other municipal matters. More important, merely by voting routinely in the Rocky Mountain West, women pioneers were proving by example that equal suffrage was an eminently sensible and thoroughly American practice suitable for adoption in other states.

Eventually, suffragists—inspired by early crusaders such as Anthony, Stanton, and Lucy Stone, and by the quieter examples of thousands of ordinary Rocky Mountain women—succeeded in spreading woman suffrage to neighboring western states. From this broad and expanding base the movement began to successfully colonize the East. In effect, western egalitarians aimed to even up the continental balance of trade: The East had sent bodies out west, but the idea of woman suffrage

would migrate in the other direction, reprising the American Revolution itself, in which colonial children had sought to teach Mother England the true meaning of liberty.

The special challenge confronting suffragists was that in each and every nonsuffrage state, voteless women somehow had to persuade male voters and male lawmakers to do the right thing and share the vote. Their ultimate success showed that men were not utterly indifferent to the voices of women. However, 56 full-blown state referendum campaigns and countless lobbying efforts before state legislatures, Congress, and national party conventions were needed to make the Anthony Amendment a reality.

From 1910 through 1914, the pace of reform quickened dramatically, as seven additional states—six in the West and Kansas in the Midwest—gave women full suffrage rights. Meanwhile, other democratic reforms were percolating to the top of the political agenda and capturing the national imagination. At the state level, provisions empowering voters to participate in initiatives, referendums, recalls, and direct primaries swept the country. At the federal level, the Seventeenth Amendment, providing for the direct election of senators, became law in 1913, less than a year after Congress proposed it. Corruption was out, and good government was in—and women were widely associated with the latter. The progressive politics of the era also placed strong emphasis on education and literacy, and in many places the literacy rates of women outstripped those of men.

Soon, various midwestern and eastern state legislatures began allowing women to vote for president, if not for members of Congress or state legislators. By the end of 1919, a dozen states fell into the presidential-suffrage-only category, and two more allowed women to vote generally in primary elections, including presidential primaries. These legal changes typically did not require amendment of a state constitution or a direct appeal to the voters. Presidential suffrage thus offered a handy hedge for many a state lawmaker who hesitated to get too far ahead of his (currently all-male) voting base but who also saw that one

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*Just 50 years after the Wyoming Territory, where women were in short supply, used the vote as a carrot to draw the “ladies” west, suffragists celebrated the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in August 1920.*

day—soon—women would be voting even in state races.

Meanwhile, more states—including, for the first time, eastern and midwestern heavyweights such as New York (in 1917) and Michigan (in 1918)—were clambering aboard the full-suffrage bandwagon. By the end of 1918, women had won full suffrage rights in a grand total of 15 of the 48 states then in the Union. Because federal lawmakers in all these places would now need to woo female as well as male voters, suffragists could look forward to strong support in Congress from this bloc. Eventually, members of Congress from full-suffrage states would favor the Nineteenth Amendment by a combined vote of 116 to 6, adding extra heft to the House support and providing the decisive margin of victory in the Senate.

True, in some places during the mid-1910s, woman suffrage went down to defeat. For example, in 1912 male voters in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan said no, and in 1915 suffragists lost in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. But by this point, savvy politicians were beginning to appreciate the mathematical logic of what historian

Alexander Keyssar has aptly labeled the suffrage “endgame.” Once women got the vote in a given state, there would be no going back. Unlike southern blacks, women would likely always have enough votes to keep the ballot after they first got it. Conversely, whenever suffragists failed to win the vote in a given state, they would be free to raise the issue again and again and again: Tomorrow would always be another day, and democracy’s ratchet would inexorably do its work. Thus, New York women won in 1917 what they had failed to win in 1915, and suffragists prevailed in Michigan in 1918 after two earlier defeats.

Another aspect of the endgame: If and when women did get the vote, woe unto the diehard antisuffrage politician who had held out until the bitter end! Each state legislator or congressman from a nonsuffrage state had to heed not just the men who had elected him but also the men *and women* who could refuse to reelect him once the franchise was extended. (And with the ratification of the Seventeenth Amendment in 1913, which put an end to the selection of U.S. senators by state legislatures, senators also had to be responsive to this broader constituency.) The experience in Ohio,

## *Woman Suffrage*

where male voters had refused to enfranchise women in 1912 and again in 1914, nicely illustrated the underlying electoral math. Senator Warren Harding voted for the Woman Suffrage Amendment and went on to capture the White House in 1920. Conversely, Senator Atlee Pomerene opposed the amendment and was voted out of office in 1922.

**B**y the end of 1919, with 29 states already having adopted full or partial suffrage, no serious presidential candidate could afford to be strongly antisuffrage. To win the White House without several of these states would be the political equivalent of filling an inside straight. Even a senator from a nonsuffrage state had to think twice about opposing woman suffrage if he harbored any long-term presidential aspirations.

America's decision to enter World War I added still more momentum to the movement. In a military crusade being publicly justified as a war to "make the world safe for democracy," the claims of those Americans excluded from full democratic rights took on special urgency. Because America claimed to be fighting for certain ideals, it became especially important to live up to them. All across Europe, women were winning the vote in countries such as Norway, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, and even Austria and Germany. Surely, suffragists argued, the United States should not lag behind.

Also, women on the home front were making vital contributions to the general war effort, even if they did not bear arms on the battlefield. In a word, America's women were loyal—as America's blacks had been in the 1860s—and wars generally serve to remind nations of the value of loyalty. Given that a disproportionately high percentage of women across the country were American born, the nation's widespread nativist anxiety about German aliens in America, and even about naturalized citizens from Central Europe, also fueled the suffrage crusade.

Wars also generally increase executive power, and World War I was no exception. In September 1918, President Woodrow Wilson dramatized his support for the Woman Suffrage Amendment by appearing in person before the Senate to plead for constitutional reform. Reminding his audience that women were "part-

ners . . . in this war," Wilson proclaimed the amendment a "vitaly necessary war measure" that would capture the imagination of "the women of the world" and enhance America's claim to global moral leadership in the post-war era. Several months after this flamboyant presidential intervention, Congress formally proposed the amendment. The endgame had entered its final stage.

The scene then shifted back to the states. In Congress, opponents of suffrage had unsuccessfully urged that the amendment be sent for ratification not to the 48 regular state legislatures but to ad hoc state conventions, as permitted by Article V of the Constitution. State ratifying conventions probably would have approximated referendums, because one-time convention delegates wouldn't have worried about their political futures. Supporters of the amendment resisted; they faced better odds with state legislatures.

In the final stage of the struggle for woman suffrage, the only major opposition to the Susan B. Anthony Amendment (as it was generally called) came from the South. White southerners, who by the turn of the century had effectively nullified the Black Suffrage Amendment in their region, had little sympathy for a Woman Suffrage Amendment written in parallel language and reaffirming the root principles of national voting rights and national enforcement power. In late August 1920, Tennessee put the Anthony Amendment over the top, becoming the 36th state to vote for ratification, but it was only the third of the 11 ex-Confederate states to say yes.

Read narrowly, the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteed women's equal right to vote in elections. Yet its letter and spirit swept even further, promising that women would bear equal rights and responsibilities in all political domains. In 1787, the amended Constitution consistently referred to the president with the words "he" and "his"—never "she" or "her." Yet today, no one doubts that women have an equal right to run for president. At the Founding, a jury meant, "twelve men, good and true." No longer. And once, every member of the federal legislature was a "congressman," and every Supreme Court member bore the title "Mr. Justice." No more—all thanks to an extraordinary amendment that literally changed the face of American government. □

# AMERICA IN THE FOOTLIGHTS

As the United States steps up efforts to promote freedom and democracy in the Middle East, it must make its case in the court of world opinion. That's a far more complicated task today than it was during the Cold War. A more powerful Goliath than ever, America is bound to be feared and resented.

Can such a colossus ever hope to win the world to its side?



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# Watching al-Jazeera

by Marc Lynch

The Arab satellite television station al-Jazeera is the enemy, or so we are told: “jihad TV,” “killers with cameras,” “the most powerful ally of terror in the world.” Shortly after 9/11, Fouad Ajami, distinguished professor of Near Eastern studies at Johns Hopkins University, luridly described the station in an influential *New York Times Magazine* essay as a cesspool of anti-American hate that “deliberately fans the flames of Muslim outrage.” In June, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told attendees at an Asian defense conference that if they were to watch al-Jazeera day after day, “even if you were an American you would begin to believe that America was bad.” Even *Newsweek International’s* normally temperate Fareed Zakaria loses his composure when faced with al-Jazeera, which “fills its airwaves with crude appeals to Arab nationalism, anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism, and religious fundamentalism.” Denunciation of al-Jazeera is impressively bipartisan and a starting point for many of the post-9/11 debates over public diplomacy and the war of ideas in the Middle East.

This consensus is all the more remarkable given how few of the critics speak Arabic or have ever actually watched al-Jazeera. If they had, they might well arrive at a more nuanced judgment. They would certainly find some support for their disgust. Al-Jazeera may have never broadcast a beheading video, but it has shown many clips of terrified hostages begging for their lives. It airs lengthy statements by Osama bin Laden and invites extremists on its talk shows. Watching the Egyptian radical Tala’at Ramih rhapsodize over the beheading of Western hostages on one popular talk show, or Americans and Iraqi civilians die bloody deaths, as shown on raw video footage, or ex-Nazi David Duke discuss American politics at the station’s invitation, it’s easy to see why al-Jazeera is such a tempting target.

But these incendiary segments tell only half the story. Al-Jazeera is at the forefront of a revolution in Arab political culture, one whose effects have barely begun to be appreciated. Even as the station complicates the postwar reconstruction of Iraq and offers a platform for anti-American voices, it is providing an unprecedented forum for debate in the Arab world that is eviscerating the legitimacy of the Arab status quo and helping to build a radically new pluralist political culture.

The neoconservative *Weekly Standard’s* call for America to “find a way to overcome the al-Jazeera effect” gets things exactly wrong. The United States needs to find ways to work constructively with the “al-Jazeera effect.” The station is as





*With an audience in the tens of millions, al-Jazeera is the largest of the new Arab broadcast media, mixing the familiar, such as Yasser Arafat in 2002, with the radically new.*

witheringly critical of Arab regimes as it is opposed to certain pillars of American foreign policy. In its urgent desire to promote democracy and other reforms in the Arab world, al-Jazeera shares important aspirations with America. Though no friend of U.S. foreign policy, it is perhaps the single most powerful ally America can have in pursuit of the broad goal of democratic change in the Middle East. In the words of Egyptian dissident Saad al-Din Ibrahim, al-Jazeera has “done probably for the Arab world more than any organized critical movement could have done, in opening up the public space, in giving Arab citizens a newly found opportunity to assert themselves.”

**A**l-Jazeera was created in Qatar in late 1996 with financing from the country’s young emir and a staff largely drawn from a failed Saudi-British joint venture in satellite television. It was not the first transnational Arab television station. Within a few years of the 1991 Gulf War, a number of satellite television stations had gone on the air, filled with belly dancing, movies, and other forms of entertainment. These stations reached anybody in the Arab world who had a satellite dish or access to a café or other public place that showed satellite programs. Al-Jazeera’s innovation was to make open, contentious politics central to its transnational mission. Gone were the belly dancers and the sleepy interviews with deputy foreign ministers and B-list heads of state that had dominated Arab airwaves in the past. In their place came shockingly open and passionate political talk shows and highly professional, if sensational-

ist, news coverage focusing on the problems and issues of the Arab world.

The evolution of al-Jazeera and the Arab news media reached a turning point in December 1998 with Operation Desert Fox, the Anglo-American bombing campaign launched against Iraq on the accusation that Saddam Hussein was restricting access by UN weapons inspectors. It was the moment when al-Jazeera, the only television channel with cameras present on the ground at the time of the strikes, broke through to a mass audience. Al-Jazeera's graphic footage riveted Arab viewers and contributed to the massive anti-American protests that erupted across the region. The Palestinian al-Aqsa intifada, which broke out in September 2000, was another occasion to broadcast graphic images of intense combat from the ground level—and talk shows full of appeals for Arab action against Israel. That coverage consolidated al-Jazeera's centrality to Arab political life. During the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the station's exclusive position on the ground once again made its newscasts essential viewing. In these years, its estimated audience grew as large as some 50 million viewers, while its Arabic language website became one of the most popular destinations on the Internet.

But by early 2003, al-Jazeera had lost its monopoly on Arab satellite news. Rivals nipped at its heels: Lebanon's LBC and Future TV, Hizbollah's al-Manar, Abu Dhabi TV, Egypt's Dream TV. Al-Arabiya, launched in February 2003 with Saudi financing as a "moderate" (and pro-American) alternative, quickly emerged as a powerful competitor. The United States entered the fray a year later with its own government-run station: the well-funded but mostly ignored al-Hurra. In market surveys conducted in late 2004, the Arab Advisors Group found that 72 percent of Jordanians with satellite dishes watched al-Jazeera, while 54 percent tuned in to al-Arabiya and only 1.5 percent to al-Hurra. Egypt's market was more skewed, with 88 percent of dish-equipped Cairo residents watching al-Jazeera, 35 percent watching al-Arabiya, and five percent watching al-Hurra.

**T**his intense competition has reduced whatever ability al-Jazeera once had to single-handedly shape opinion in the Arab world. It is still clearly the dominant satellite television station, more than first among equals, but it feels acutely the pressures of competition. The demands of Arab viewers, who tend to channel-surf and compare content, increasingly shape the broadcasting strategies of all Arab television stations. For example, despite his frequent denunciations of al-Jazeera's airing of hostage videos, al-Arabiya's director, Abd al-Rahman al-Rashed, has admitted that his station could abstain from airing hostage videos from Iraq only if al-Jazeera agreed to do likewise. Otherwise, his station would lose market share.

It is al-Jazeera's news broadcasts that have received most of America's attention. Critics have lashed out at the station's coverage of Iraq for exaggerating violence while ignoring positive developments there, for fomenting ethnic strife, for allegedly "collaborating" with insurgents and terrorists. Yet it was also the station's news coverage during the heady "Arab spring" of 2005 that led many to regard al-Jazeera more favorably. Such longtime critics as interim Iraqi prime minister Iyad Allawi and U.S. Secretary of State

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“Exclusive to al-Jazeera,” says the graphic in the upper right corner of this Osama bin Laden broadcast weeks after 9/11. Such images have won the station the enmity of many Americans.

Condoleezza Rice admitted that the station’s coverage of the Iraqi elections in January and the Lebanese protests in February over the murder of Rafik Hariri, the former prime minister who had defied his country’s Syrian occupiers, had aided the cause of reform.\*

To focus only on al-Jazeera’s news programming, however, is to overlook the station’s most revolutionary aspect: its political talk shows. Consider al-Jazeera’s response to the fall of Baghdad in April 2003. During the invasion of Iraq, the station went to an all-news format. When Baghdad fell, it reshaped its prime-time programming, featuring the bare-bones talk show *Minbar al-Jazeera* (al-Jazeera’s Platform). In the very first postwar episode, the beautiful young Lebanese anchor Jumana al-Nimour faced the camera and asked, “Where is the Iraqi resistance? Why are the streets of Baghdad empty of Iraqi dead?” Then she opened the phones, and the voices of the Arab public poured forth. “Sister Jumana, you grieved over the fall of Baghdad, but I celebrated the fall of the tyranny. We hope that this tyrant is slaughtered

\*In the documentary *Control Room* (2004), Lieutenant Colonel Josh Rushing (the American media liaison during Operation Iraqi Freedom) compared al-Jazeera’s selective approach to news coverage to that of Fox News. The comparison is alluring but of limited validity. It’s true that both appeal openly to a particular political identity—whether Arab or “red-state Republican.” Fox has covered the Iraq War, for example, by identifying with the U.S. military and presenting heartwarming stories about American troops, while al-Jazeera has identified with Arabs and emphasized the suffering and fear of the Iraqi people. Even on their respective talk shows there are similarities, in that guests are often drawn from the extremes of politics (which guarantees exciting arguments but obscures the existence of a vital middle ground). But the two inhabit very different media environments. Whereas Fox News began as an underdog and drew on a partisan audience, cultivated by conservative talk radio, to chip away at the dominance of the “mainstream media,” al-Jazeera emerged almost immediately as a near-dominant market leader. And while Fox News has benefited since 2000 from a close relationship with the dominant political party in the United States, al-Jazeera has remained isolated from the powers of the Arab world.

in the streets of Baghdad,” said one caller. Another warned, “I have a message from the Iraqi people. We will not be satisfied with an American occupation.” A Saudi caller worried that “the forces came to Iraq to protect the oil, and will abandon Iraq to civil war.” Another raged that “the issue is not

ARABS FROM ALL  
OVER THE WORLD TALKED  
ABOUT IRAQ WITHOUT  
SCRIPTS OR RULES  
OR FILTERS.

the future of Iraq. It is the slaughter of Muslims and Arabs at the walls of Damascus, at the walls of Beirut, at the walls of Jerusalem, and now the slaughter of Muslims and Arabs at the walls of Baghdad.”

For weeks thereafter, as an audience of upward of 30 million looked on, al-Jazeera

opened the phone lines night after night, allowing Arabs from all over the world to talk about Iraq without scripts or rules or filters. The anguished, excited, angry, delirious discussions, in which Arabs struggled to make sense of events, constituted perhaps the most open and accessible public debate in Arab history. And they made for great television.

**A**l-Jazeera is playing a leading role in creating a new Arab public, and that public is visibly transforming Arab political culture. For decades, Arab public life was dominated by the dead hand of the state. The Arab news media resembled the desert: barren, boring, oppressive, repetitive, and (if not controlled by a national government) owned by the Saudis. In the evocative words of Iraqi dissident Kanan Makiya, a “politics of silence” smothered the public life of the Arab world. Arab writers worked under the constant eye of the intelligence services, with, as one Jordanian journalist put it, “a policeman on my chest, a scissors in my brain.” The television programming of those days offered endless footage of dignitaries sitting on couches or shaking hands at airports; news broadcasts devoid of any substance; an incessant hammering on well-worn themes, such as the Israeli threat; love letters to the accomplishments of each country’s current great leader.

Al-Jazeera ushered in a new kind of open, contentious politics that delighted in shattering taboos. The names of its most popular talk shows suggest their distinctive combination of transgression and pluralism—*More Than One Opinion*, *No Limits*, *The Opposite Direction*, *Open Dialogue*. Al-Jazeera’s public defines itself in opposition to the status quo, against the glorification of kings and presidents and their sycophants. A program in the summer of 2003 asked viewers whether the current Arab regimes were worse than the old colonial regimes. Responding online, 76 percent of the respondents said yes. Nor does radical Islamism go unchallenged: When the station aired an exclusive video by al-Qaeda second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri in June, it turned his monologue into a dialogue by inviting one of his leading Islamist critics and several liberals to respond point by point.

This past March, al-Jazeera broadcast a discussion with four leading

Arab intellectuals on the results of an online survey about the “priorities of the Arab street.” While Palestine predictably placed first in the poll, with 27 percent, “reform” was a very close second with 26 percent, followed by human rights at 11 percent and poverty at 10 percent. (The U.S. occupation of Iraq, terrorism, and Islamic extremism all failed to clear the 10 percent threshold.) Al-Jazeera then assembled panels of ordinary Arab citizens in Doha, Cairo, Rabat, and Beirut to debate the implications of the survey. Two months later, al-Arabiya copied al-Jazeera, airing a very similar program, with very similar results. Such programs are being noticed by more than their Arab viewers: Al-Arabiya’s survey ended up being widely discussed at May’s meeting of the World Economic Forum in Amman.

The new al-Jazeera-style openness has proved disconcerting to many. One guest stormed off the set after being challenged on Quranic interpretation by a Jordanian feminist. Another demanded that an exchange be edited out, only to be reminded—on the air—that the program was being broadcast live. In a June 2000 program, an Iraqi caller calmly told a guest from the Iraqi Foreign Ministry that “this unjust blockade imposed on our people has only one cause and that is Saddam Hussein.” Even the veteran American diplomat and fluent Arabic speaker Christopher Ross once admitted that he was “uncomfortable with the panel discussions and call-in talk shows” on al-Jazeera, preferring situations in which he could “remain in control.”

Arab regimes have complained endlessly of the indignities heaped on them by al-Jazeera’s guests. Jordan closed down al-Jazeera’s offices after an American academic ridiculed the Hashemite monarchy. Morocco did the same after its occupation of the Western Sahara was discussed on a talk show. The Algerian government allegedly cut power to the entire city of Algiers to prevent residents from watching a particularly incendiary discussion.

According to *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, “The U.S. ouster of Saddam Hussein has triggered the first real ‘conversation’ about political reform in the Arab world in a long, long time. It’s still mostly in private, but more is now erupting in public.” Any regular viewer of al-Jazeera would find those remarks laughable. Long before George Bush took up the mantle of democratizing the Middle East, al-Jazeera routinely broadcast debates about political reform in the Arab world. In 1999 alone, the station aired talk show telecasts on “Arab Democracy between Two Generations,” “Democracy in the Arab World,” “Arab Participation in Israeli Elections,” “The Relationship between Rulers and the Ruled in Islam,” “The Misuse of States of Emergency in the Arab World,” “Human Rights in the Arab World,” and “Unleashing Freedom of Thought.” In 2002, only months before the invasion of Iraq, its programs included “Democracy and the Arab Reality,” “Reform and Referenda in the Arab World,” and (in a dig at the democratic trappings of Arab regimes) a mocking look at “99.99% Electoral Victories.”

Even on Iraq, that most contentious of topics, the stereotype of al-Jazeera as relentlessly pro-Saddam or anti-American is misleading. Here is what was said about Iraq on some of these programs during the Saddam years:

- December 1998: After condemning the Anglo-American bombing of

Iraq, the popular Islamist Sunni cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi turned his attention to Saddam Hussein: “We are against Saddam Hussein, but we are not against the Iraqi people. We consider the Iraqi regime a criminal and harmful regime for its people. . . . I call on the Iraqi president to allow freedoms inside of Iraq and to allow the Iraqi people a voice.”

• January 2000: After Iraqi foreign minister Mohammed al-Sahhaf claimed that Iraq had satisfied all the demands of the UN Security Council,

he was visibly brought up short by the curt response of anchor Jumana al-Nimour: “But this is not what the Security Council says.” When Sahhaf rejected a new round of weapons inspections, Nimour coolly responded, “If there are no weapons present, why are you afraid of an inspections team entering Iraq?” To be challenged and

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dismissed, and by a young woman no less, was not business as usual for a senior Iraqi official.

• August 2003: Faisal al-Qassem, host of *The Opposite Direction* and the most controversial media figure in the Arab world, faced the cameras framed by Abd al-Bari Atwan, the radical pan-Arab nationalist editor of the London-based daily newspaper *al-Quds al-Arabi*, and Entifadh Qanbar, spokesman of Ahmed Chalabi’s Iraqi National Congress. After posing a withering series of questions about the American presence in Iraq, Qassem suddenly reversed direction: “But after seeing the mass graves, isn’t it time for the Arabs to apologize to the Iraqi people for their silence over the years?” In the middle of the show, Qanbar dramatically pulled a pile of documents from his jacket that proved, he said, that various Arab politicians and journalists were on Saddam’s payroll.

• May 2004: On the first talk show after the revelation of sexual torture at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, Qassem raised a rather different issue: torture of Arabs by Arab governments in Arab prisons. His message could not have been clearer: Not everything is about America.

Al-Jazeera and its Arab television competitors are building a pluralist political culture in which all public issues are up for debate, and disagreement is not only permissible but expected. Its importance cannot be overstated, particularly since neither Islamist movements nor the existing autocratic Arab regimes—the two most powerful competing forces in the Arab world—offer a route to liberal reforms. And pro-American liberals in the region, however brave and eloquent, are, on their own, weak and marginal. Al-Jazeera offers them what American guns cannot: credibility, legitimacy, influence. When Ghassan bin Jadu, al-Jazeera’s Beirut bureau chief and host of *Open Dialogue*, sat down on-camera in December 2003 with the liberal Saad al-Din Ibrahim and the moderate Islamist Fahmy Huwaydi to discuss Ibrahim’s argument that Arab reformers should accept American support in





*While al-Jazeera remains an important presence in the Arab world, it competes for its viewers' attention with a growing number of newspapers and other information sources.*

their quest for significant political change, their conversation reached millions of Arab viewers.

**E**ven as al-Jazeera cultivates a political culture of fierce public argument, a fundamental question arises: Is such a culture really a viable foundation for democracy? The spectacle of Arab politicians screaming at each other is not always edifying. Nor is the shattering of taboos necessarily constructive. In the fall of 2000, amid heady Arab mobilization in support of the Palestinian al-Aqsa intifada, *The Opposite Direction* host Qassem claimed that al-Jazeera had “succeeded in forming an Arab public opinion, probably for the first time in Arab history.” Less than three years later, he struck a more despondent note: “Why does nothing remain in the Arab arena except for some croaking media personalities? Why does a loud television clamor suffice as an alternative to effective action?”

Al-Jazeera’s politics of pluralism are interwoven with an equally potent politics of Arab identity. Protests in Egypt and Lebanon, elections in Iraq and Palestine, parliamentary disputes in Jordan or Kuwait, arrests of journalists in Tunisia and Algeria: Al-Jazeera covers all of these as part of a single, shared Arab story. This narrative binds Arabs together in an ongoing argument about issues on which all Arabs should have an opinion — though not the same opinion. This politics of identity is a great source of strength for al-Jazeera. But it also poses dangers. A frustrated identity politics can easily give way to demagoguery, to a populism of grievances large and small, to demands for conformity — to what American legal scholar Cass Sunstein calls “enclave deliberation,” which squeezes out the voices in the middle.

Whether populist, identity-driven but pluralist politics can be the foundation for liberal reforms is one of the most urgent problems facing the Arab world today.

What one enthusiast called “the Democratic Republic of al-Jazeera” does not, in fact, exist. Al-Jazeera cannot create democracy on its own, nor compel Arab leaders to change their ways. Television talk shows cannot substitute for the hard work of political organizing and institution building. Talk can become a mere substitute for action, and can even serve the interests of regimes intent on clinging to power.

The Kefaya (“Enough”) movement in Egypt is the quintessential expression of the new Arab public. This diverse coalition of oppositional movements—new Islamists, liberals, Nasserists, and Arabists—has demanded change from below and an end to the rule of President Hosni Mubarak. Its name and its narrative articulate the frustrations of the new Arab public: a

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SHARED STORY.

restless, impatient call for an end to the exhausted, incompetent Arab order, and a fierce resentment of American foreign policy.

Members of Kefaya have worked expertly with al-Jazeera (where many of its leading figures have long been regular

guests). The first identifiable Kefaya protest—in March 2003, against the invasion of Iraq—turned into an unprecedented anti-Mubarak demonstration. Kefaya’s television-friendly protests, at first quite small, soon escalated into larger demonstrations. And the group’s arguments clearly resonated with the wider Arab public. Al-Jazeera’s polls show overwhelming rejection of the Mubarak regime’s self-serving “reforms,” and support for Kefaya’s impatient demands for change.

Kefaya’s fortunes demonstrate both the strength and the limitations of the new Arab public. The combination of a courageous and dedicated domestic social movement and the magnifying power of the new Arab media proved capable of transforming the political environment. But its limits were painfully apparent. The Egyptian regime soon learned the importance of barring al-Jazeera cameras from protest sites. Kefaya demonstrators faced continuing repression and harassment at the hands of security forces and regime thugs, most notably during the horrifying attacks on female protestors during the May 25 constitutional referendum. As the Egyptian state retrenched, the bubble of enthusiasm created by the Arab media’s coverage of Kefaya threatened to burst, leaving Arabs once again frustrated and furious.

How has America responded to this complex, transformative challenge in the Arab world? Poorly indeed.

**A**fter welcoming al-Jazeera in the years before 9/11 as a force challenging the sickly Arab status quo, American officials became so angry over the station’s coverage of al-Qaeda and the Afghanistan war that they stopped appearing on its programs—and thereby lost the opportunity to reach a vast audience. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and other prominent members of the Bush administration have frequently accused al-Jazeera of inciting violence against coalition forces and airing “atrocious” news coverage. Dorrance Smith,

a former senior media adviser to the Coalition Provisional Authority, wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* earlier this year that “the collaboration between the terrorists and al-Jazeera is stronger than ever.”

Criticism is healthy, at least when it’s not simply an exercise in blaming the messenger. But Washington has gone beyond criticism. When the interim Iraqi government shuttered al-Jazeera’s Baghdad offices, for example, U.S. officials said not a word in protest. And the Bush administration has allegedly pressured the government of Qatar to close down, privatize, or censor al-Jazeera. The new Arab public sees such actions as prime examples of American hypocrisy. How can America credibly demand liberalization and democracy in the region when its first response to political criticism is censorship, pressure, and abuse?

The other principal U.S. response to al-Jazeera has been to create the Arabic-language satellite television station al-Hurra to get America’s message out in undiluted form. Though al-Hurra has been a dazzling success in terms of securing large budgets and building state-of-the-art facilities in northern Virginia, it has sunk with barely a trace in the intensely competitive Arab media environment. Few Arabs seem impressed with the quality of its news programs and talk shows, and the station has struggled to overcome the inevitable whiff of propaganda surrounding any government-run station. It has had little impact on either public opinion or the wider Arab political conversation.

A better American response would be to actively engage with al-Jazeera. One of the hidden costs of al-Hurra is that it sucks up the time and energies of American guests, official or not, who might otherwise be reaching far wider audiences on al-Jazeera. The United States should maintain a stable of attractive, fluently Arabic-speaking representatives, stationed in Doha and other Arab capitals, whose chief responsibility would be to appear on any Arab satellite television station that would have them. Even if they didn’t win every debate, their presence would force their Arab sparring partners to take American arguments into account. It would keep Arabs honest, while at the same time demonstrating to Arab audiences that America took them seriously and was willing to debate them on an equal footing.

For the new Arab public, the fundamental challenge today is not to shatter more taboos or ask more questions but to offer solutions. Al-Jazeera’s talk shows have given a forum to voices both moderate and extreme. The shows often err on the side of sensationalism and false oppositions, inviting conflict rather than reasonable compromise. In the short term, the station may well have strengthened anti-American sentiment in the region. But in a longer view, al-Jazeera is building the foundations of a pluralist political culture. By replacing stifling consensus with furious public arguments and secrecy with transparency, al-Jazeera and its Arab competitors are creating perhaps the most essential underpinning of liberal democracy: a free and open critical public space, independent of the state, where citizens can speak their piece and expect to be heard.

The world will continue to argue about whether the invasion of Iraq was necessary for the current democratic ferment in the Middle East. But al-Jazeera was most assuredly necessary. Shutting it down or muffling its voice might give Americans some short-term satisfaction, but to do either would also take away one of the most powerful weapons in the hands of Arab democratic reformers. □

# Goodwill Hunting

by Martha Bayles

To walk through the Zoologischer Garten district of Berlin is to experience a version of America. The fast-food chains, video and music stores, and movie marquees all proclaim the “Coca-colonization” of Europe. But just a block away, on the relatively quiet Hardenbergstrasse, stands a small building that between 1957 and 1998 represented the best of U.S. cultural diplomacy: Amerika Haus. Though this faded modernist edifice has never been formally closed, the casual visitor is met by a locked entrance, a chainlink fence, an armed guard, and a rusted sign directing all inquiries to the U.S. embassy, where, of course, the visitor will be met with cold concrete barriers and electronic surveillance. Gone are the days when Amerika Haus welcomed Berliners to use the library, attend exhibitions and concerts, and interact with all sorts of visitors from the United States.

Cultural diplomacy is a dimension of *public* diplomacy, a term that covers an array of efforts to foster goodwill toward America among foreign populations. The impact of any public diplomacy is notoriously difficult to measure. But there is scant encouragement in polls such as the one recently conducted by the BBC World Service showing that, in more than 20 countries, a plurality of respondents see America’s influence in the world as “mainly negative.” Doubtless such attitudes have as their immediate inspiration the invasion of Iraq and the abuse of prisoners in U.S. military detention facilities. But deeper antipathies are also at work that have been building for years and are only now bubbling to the surface.

The term *public diplomacy* is admittedly a bit confusing because U.S. public diplomacy, though directed at foreign publics, was originally conducted by private organizations. The pioneer in this effort was the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, founded in 1910 on the principle (as described by historian Frank Ninkovich) that “government, although representing the will of the people in a mechanical sense, could not possibly give expression to a nation’s soul. Only the voluntary, spontaneous activity of the people themselves—as expressed in their art, literature, science, education, and religion—could adequately provide a complete cultural portrait.”

Ninkovich notes further that, to the wealthy and prominent individuals who led Carnegie (and the other foundations that soon followed), understanding between nations meant cordial relations among cultural, scholarly, and scientific elites. Thus, Carnegie established “the standard repertory of cultural relations: exchanges of professors and students, exchanges of



*Berlin's forlorn Amerika Haus, once a lively center of American politics and culture, is one of many such official outposts abroad that have suffered from post-Cold War reductions.*

publications, stimulation of translations and the book trade, the teaching of English, exchanges of leaders from every walk of life.”

Yet this private, elite-oriented approach to public diplomacy was soon augmented by a government-sponsored, mass-oriented one. In 1917, when the United States entered World War I, President Woodrow Wilson's Committee on Public Information (CPI) enlisted the aid of America's fledgling film industry to make training films and features supporting the cause. Heavily propagandistic, most of these films were for domestic consumption only. But the CPI also controlled all the battle footage used in newsreels shown overseas, and its chairman, George Creel, believed that the movies had a role in “carrying the gospel of Americanism to every corner of the globe.”

The CPI was terminated after the war, and for a while the prewar approach to public diplomacy reasserted itself. But the stage had been set for a major shift, as Washington rewarded the movie studios by pressuring war-weakened European governments to open their markets to American films. By 1918, U.S. film producers were earning 35 percent of their gross income overseas, and America was on its way to being the dominant supplier of films in Europe. To be sure, this could not have happened if American films had not been hugely appealing in their own right. But without Washington's assistance, it would have been a lot harder to make the world safe for American movies.

And so began a pact, a tacitly approved win-win deal, between the nation's government and its dream factory. This pact grew stronger during World War II, when, as historian Thomas Doherty writes, “the liaison

between Hollywood and Washington was a distinctly American and democratic arrangement, a mesh of public policy and private initiative, state need and business enterprise.” Hollywood’s contribution was to provide eloquent propaganda (such as director Frank Capra’s *Why We Fight*), to produce countless features (good and bad) about every aspect of the struggle, and to send stars (such as Jimmy Stewart) to serve in the armed forces. After the war, Washington reciprocated by using subsidies, special provisions in the Marshall Plan, and general clout to pry open resistant European film markets.

**T**he original elitist ethos of privately administered public diplomacy took another hit during the Cold War, when America’s cultural resources were mobilized as never before. In response to the Soviet threat, the apparatus of wartime propaganda was transformed into the motley but effective set of agencies that, until recently, conducted public diplomacy: the Voice of America (VOA, dating from 1941), the Fulbright Program (1946), the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (1953), and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA, also begun in 1953).

The cultural offensive waged by these agencies had both an elite and a popular dimension. And outside these agencies, a key element in reaching Western

IN THE SOVIET UNION,  
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OVER THE HORIZON.’

elites was the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an international organization that pretended to be privately funded but was in fact funded covertly (more or less) by the Central Intelligence Agency. The Congress for Cultural Freedom’s goal was to enlist

both American and foreign intellectuals to counter Soviet influence through scholarly conferences, arts festivals, and opinion journals such as *Preuves* in France, *Encounter* in England, and *Quadrant* in Australia. Looking back, one is struck by the importance all parties placed on these and other unapologetically elite-oriented efforts.

Yet one is also struck by the importance of American popular culture. It is hard to see how the contest for popular opinion could have been won without such vibrant and alluring cinematic products as *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952), *On the Waterfront* (1954), *Twelve Angry Men* (1957), *Some Like It Hot* (1959), and *The Apartment* (1960). But as the Canadian writer Matthew Fraser notes, the original World War I-era pact between Hollywood and Washington contained an important proviso: “Hollywood studios were obliged to export movies that portrayed American life and values in a positive manner.” Through the early years of the Cold War, especially during the Korean War, Hollywood continued to make patriotic and anticommunist films. But this explicit cooperation ended with Senator Joseph McCarthy’s attacks on communists and fellow travelers in the film industry. And by 1968, during the Vietnam War, only a throwback like John Wayne would even think of holding up Hollywood’s end of the bargain.

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Yet Washington never stopped boosting the export of films. In part this was simply good business. But the government also agreed with the sentiment expressed in a 1948 State Department memo: “American motion pictures, as ambassadors of good will—at no cost to the American taxpayers—interpret the American way of life to all the nations of the world, which may be invaluable from a political, cultural, and commercial point of view.”

That same sentiment led the State Department to value popular music, too. Building on the wartime popularity of the Armed Forces Radio Network, the VOA began in 1955 to beam jazz (“the music of freedom,” program host Willis Conover called it) to a regular audience of 100 million listeners worldwide, 30 million of them in the Soviet bloc. The Russian novelist Vassily Aksyonov recalls thinking of these broadcasts as “America’s secret weapon number one. . . a kind of golden glow over the horizon.” During those same years, the USIA sought to counter Soviet criticism of American race relations by sponsoring wildly successful tours by jazz masters such as Sidney Bechet, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Dizzy Gillespie. The tours revealed a dissident strain in American popular culture, as when Armstrong, during his 1960 African tour, refused to play before segregated audiences. Former USIA officer Wilson P. Dizard recalls how, in Southern Rhodesia, “the great ‘Satchmo’ attracted an audience of 75,000 whites and blacks, seated next to each other in a large football stadium. Striding across the stage to play his first number, he looked out at the crowd and said, ‘It’s nice to see *this*.’”



*It made diplomatic sense to send Singin' in the Rain to Italy in 1952, but the same can't be said of many of today's Hollywood offerings.*

**T**he countercultural tone of much popular culture in the late 1960s and 1970s might have led one to think that the government’s willingness to use it as propaganda would fade. But it did not. In 1978, the State Department was prepared to send Joan Baez, the Beach Boys, and Santana to a Soviet-American rock festival in Leningrad. The agreement to do so foundered, but its larger purpose succeeded: America’s counterculture became the Soviet Union’s. Long before Václav Havel talked about making Frank Zappa minister of culture in the post-communist Czech Republic, the State

## *Diplomacy Is in the Details*

**I**n 1958, a young Soviet Communist Party functionary named Aleksandr Yakovlev arrived in New York City to study. He spent most of his days holed up in the Columbia University library, but not much time soaking up American culture. In fact, he has said, the crude anti-Soviet propaganda he encountered fortified his belief in communism, and a tour of the country left him angry at the capabilities and bounty of America compared with his native land's. In the late 1980s, however, Yakovlev became Mikhail Gorbachev's confidante and the chief architect of perestroika and glasnost. One of 20 students to have come to America in that first year of a U.S.-Soviet agreement (1958), Yakovlev decades later has become a poster child for cultural exchanges.

Formal exchanges of scholars, students, writers, and artists are only the most obvious forms of cross-national contact and communication. And in the post-9/11 era, many of these channels are shrinking. A smaller welcome mat means fewer businesspeople come to America for conferences. Fewer international patients travel to U.S. medical facilities for treatment. Nowhere is the decline more apparent than in international education.

U.S.-Soviet educational exchanges continued throughout the Cold War, even though American officials knew that some Soviet "students" were KGB agents. But today's dangers are not the same: Admitting a spy to America is a different risk from admitting a terrorist. All 19 of the September 11, 2001, hijackers traveled to the United States on valid visas.

In the last four years, the United States has expanded law enforcement powers to monitor, detain, and deport suspected terrorists, and has tightened visa screening and border inspections through the USA Patriot Act and other legislation. The State Department, whose institutional culture favors keeping channels open, now must share authority over visa decisions with the Department of Homeland Security, which has a very different emphasis.

The new restrictions are having a marked effect on the number of visitors to the United States. In fiscal year 2004, the overall number of temporary visas issued was just over five million, a dramatic decline of more than 2.5 million from 2001. Most of this dip reflects a decrease in applications, due in part, many suspect, to a lengthier and more complex visa application process and perceptions that America's shores are less friendly. Visa rejection rates have ticked up as well.

In the 2003–2004 school year, for the first time in more than three decades, the total number of foreign students coming to study in the United States declined. Undergraduate enrollments decreased from each of the top five sending countries: China, India, Japan, South Korea, and Canada. Every year since 9/11, the number of Middle Eastern students—a small portion of the overall number to begin with—has fallen; in 2003–2004, only 31,852 students from that region came to study in America, a 21 percent drop from pre-9/11 levels.

Middle Eastern scholars are also feeling the squeeze, as was highlighted last August by the case of prominent but controversial Switzerland-based Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan. The Department of Homeland Security revoked his work visa two weeks before he was to take up a teaching post at the University of Notre Dame. At a Maryland conference sponsored last year by the International Society for Iranian Studies, only three of more than 30 foreign invitees were able to obtain visas in time to attend.

Middle Eastern scholars—and even those with Middle Eastern ties or names—who do obtain visas are reporting lengthy and sometimes humiliating searches and interrogations when they enter the country, says Amy Newhall, executive director of the Middle East Studies Association. “Honor and humiliation are issues that are very important in the Middle East. People won’t put themselves in the position to encounter that treatment again,” she says.

There are those who argue that America must, first and foremost, protect itself and must err on the side of safety. In 2003, Janice L. Jacobs, deputy assistant secretary of state for visa services, told a congressional committee during testimony on visas for students and scholars, “Our operating environment changed forever on September 11, 2001, and there is no turning back the clock.”

Proponents of educational exchange often attempt to quantify what is lost when America restricts or discourages the flow of people into the country. Numbers make for concrete talking points: The 570,000 international students in the United States pump roughly \$13 billion a year into the U.S. economy. More than a third of Ph.D.’s in America’s science and engineering workforce are foreign born, making them a big piece of that American pie. A third of all American Nobel Prize winners were born elsewhere.

Many who are familiar with U.S. immigration policy say that the risk of admitting the next Mohamed Atta is the sword of Damocles over the head of every consular officer. That fear has fostered a “culture of no.” A visa application is weighed according to certain risk factors: age, gender, country of origin, etc. But the possibility that America might slam the door on the next Aleksandr Yakovlev, or the next King Abdullah, Kofi Annan, or Vicente Fox—all current leaders who received some education in the United States—isn’t among the risk factors considered.

Time spent on American soil doesn’t guarantee goodwill; several of the 9/11 hijackers lived for a while in the United States. But visitors do return home with views of America that can’t be shipped abroad through films, music videos, or news programs. Yakovlev has said that his year at Columbia was more influential than the 10 he spent as the Soviet ambassador to Canada, though it’s hard to identify exactly what seeds of change were sown. Yet few would prefer that he had never visited the United States, never spent several months living in a Columbia dorm, or poring over the policies of Franklin Roosevelt. An American friend of his from those days has wondered if his studies suggested that a reformer is not necessarily a traitor. How to put a value on that?

—Sarah L. Courteau



*Since the 9/11 attacks, fewer foreigners are obtaining visas to visit the United States.*

Department assumed that, in the testimony of one Russian observer, “rock ‘n’ roll was the . . . cultural dynamite that blew up the Iron Curtain.”

Yet all was not well in the 1970s. American popular culture had invaded Western Europe to such an extent that many intellectuals and activists joined the Soviet-led campaign, waged through UNESCO, to oppose “U.S. cultural imperialism.” And there was no Congress for Cultural Freedom to combat this campaign, because a scandal had erupted in 1967 when the CIA’s role was exposed. At the time, George Kennan remarked that “the flap over CIA money was quite unwarranted. . . . This country has no ministry of culture, and CIA was obliged to do what it could to try to fill the gap.” But his was hardly the prevailing view.

It was also true that by the 1970s the unruliness of popular culture had lost its charm. Amid the din of disco, heavy metal, and punk, the artistry—and class—of the great jazz masters was forgotten. Hollywood movies were riding the

crest of sexual liberation and uninhibited drug use. And a storm was gathering on the horizon that would prove not only indifferent but hostile to the rebellious, disruptive, hedonistic tone of America’s countercultural exports. In 1979 that storm

WALTER CRONKITE WAS  
DEEMED TOO UNRELIABLE  
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broke over Tehran, and America’s relation to the world entered a new phase.

With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, U.S. public diplomacy also entered a new phase. Under Charles Z. Wick, the USIA’s annual budget grew steadily, until in 1989 it stood at an all-time high of \$882 million, almost double what it had been in 1981. But with unprecedented support came unprecedented control. Cultural officers in the field were urged to “stay on message,” and at one point Walter Cronkite and David Brinkley were placed on a list of speakers deemed too unreliable to represent the nation abroad.

This close coordination between policy and the agencies of cultural diplomacy may have helped to bring down the Berlin Wall. But it also made those agencies vulnerable after victory had been declared. In the 1990s, Congress began making drastic cuts. At the end of the decade, in 1999, the USIA was folded into the State Department, and by 2000, American libraries and cultural centers from Vienna to Ankara, Belgrade to Islamabad, had closed their doors. Looking back on this period, the U.S. House of Representatives Advisory Group on Public Diplomacy for the Arab and Muslim World reported, in 2003, that “staffing for public diplomacy programs dropped 35 percent, and funding, adjusted for inflation, fell 25 percent.” Many critics have noted that the State Department, with its institutional instinct to avoid controversy and promote U.S. policy, is not the best overseer of cultural diplomacy.

Meanwhile, the export of popular culture burgeoned. This was hardly surprising, given the opening of vast new markets in Eastern Europe, Russia, the Middle East, Asia, and elsewhere. But the numbers are staggering. The Yale Center for the Study of Globalization reports that between 1986 and 2000, the fees (in constant 2000 dollars) from exports of filmed and taped entertainment went from \$1.68 billion to \$8.85 billion—an increase of 426 percent.



*Jazz great Louis Armstrong was such an effective cultural ambassador that the Soviets denounced him as a “capitalist distraction.” This 1956 concert in Ghana drew 100,000 listeners.*

But if the numbers are staggering, the content is sobering. The 1980s and '90s were decades when many Americans expressed concern about the degradation of popular culture. Conservatives led campaigns against offensive song lyrics and Internet porn; liberal Democrats lobbied for a Federal Communications Commission crackdown on violent movies and racist video games; and millions of parents struggled to protect their kids from what they saw as a socially irresponsible entertainment industry. And to judge by a Pew Research Center survey released in April 2005, these worries have not abated: “Roughly six-in-ten [Americans] say they are very concerned over what children see or hear on TV (61%), in music lyrics (61%), video games (60%) and movies (56%).”

**W**e can discern a troubling pattern in the decades before September 11, 2001. On the one hand, efforts to build awareness of the best in American culture, society, and institutions had their funding slashed. On the other, America got the rest of the world to binge on the same pop-cultural diet that was giving us indigestion at home.

It would be nice to think that this pattern changed after 9/11, but it did not. Shortly before the attacks, the Bush administration hired a marketing guru, Charlotte Beers, to refurbish America’s image. After the attacks, Beers was given \$15 million to fashion a series of TV ads showing how Muslims were welcome in America. When the state-owned media in several Arab countries refused to air the ads, the focus (and the funding) shifted to a new broadcast entity, Radio Sawa, aimed at what is considered the key demographic in the Arab world: young men susceptible to being recruited as terrorists.

Unlike the VOA, Radio Sawa does not produce original programming. Instead, it uses the same ratings-driven approach as commercial radio: Through market research, its program directors decide which popular singers, American and Arab, will attract the most listeners, and they shape their playlists accordingly. The same is true of the TV channel al-Hurra, which entered the highly competitive Arab market with a ratings-driven selection of Arab and American entertainment shows.

It would be unfair to say that these offerings (and such recent additions as Radio Farsi) are indistinguishable from the commercial fare already on the Arab and Muslim airwaves. After all, they include State Department-scripted news and public affairs segments, on the theory that the youthful masses who tune in for the entertainment will stay around for the substance.

Yet this approach (which is not likely to change under the new under secretary for public diplomacy and public affairs, Karen P. Hughes) is highly problematic, not least because it elevates broadcast diplomacy over the “people-to-people” kind. It was Edward R. Murrow, the USIA’s most famous director, who defended the latter by saying that in communicating ideas, it’s the last few feet that count. The defenders of the new broadcast entities point to “interactive” features such as listener call-ins. But it’s hard to take this defense seriously when, as William Rugh, a Foreign Service veteran with long experience in the region, reminds us, “face-to-face spoken communication has always been very important in Arab society. . . . Trusted friends are believed; they do not have the credibility problems the mass media suffer from.”

**I**t may be tempting to look back at the Cold War as a time when America knew how to spread its ideals not just militarily but culturally. But does the Cold War offer useful lessons? The answer is yes, but it takes an effort of the imagination to see them.

Let us begin by clearing our minds of any lingering romantic notions of Cold War broadcasting. Are there millions of Arabs and Muslims out there who, like Vassily Aksyonov, need only twirl their radio dials to encounter and fall in love with the golden glow that is America? Not really. It’s true that before 1991 the media in most Arab countries were controlled in a manner more or less reminiscent of the old Soviet system. But after CNN covered Operation Desert Storm, Arab investors flocked to satellite television, and now the airwaves are thick with channels, including many U.S. offerings. Satellite operators such as Arabsat and Nilesat do exert some censorship. But that hardly matters. The Internet, pirated hookups, and bootlegged tapes and discs now connect Arabs and Muslims to the rest of the world with a force unimagined by Eastern Europeans and Russians of a generation ago.

Furthermore, the Arab media bear a much closer resemblance to America’s than did those of the Soviet Union. For example, a hot topic of debate in Arab homes, schools, cafés, and newspapers these days are the “video clips”—essentially, brief music videos—that account for about 20 percent of satellite TV fare. Because most are sexually suggestive (imagine a cross between Britney Spears and a belly dancer), video clips both attract



and offend people. And those who are offended, such as the Egyptian journalist Abdel-Wahab M. Elmessiri, tend to frame the offense in terms of American culture. “To know in which direction we are heading,” he wrote recently, “one should simply watch MTV.”

It is indeed odd, in view of the Bush administration’s conservative social agenda, that \$100 million of the money allocated for cultural diplomacy goes to a broadcast entity, Radio Sawa, that gives the U.S. government seal of approval to material widely considered indecent in the Arab and Muslim world: Britney Spears, Eminem, and the same Arab pop stars who gyrate in the video clips.

POPULAR CULTURE IS NO  
LONGER AMERICA’S  
SECRET WEAPON.

Here the lesson is simple: Popular culture is no longer “America’s secret weapon.” On the contrary, it is a tsunami by which others feel engulfed. Of course, the U.S. government is not about to restrict the export of popular culture or abandon its most recent broadcast efforts. Nor should it impose censorship while preaching to the world about free speech. What the government could do, however, is add some new components to its cultural diplomacy, ones that stand athwart the pop-cultural tide. Here are some suggestions:

- Support a classical radio channel—classical in the sense captured by Duke Ellington’s remark that there are only two kinds of music, good and bad. Instead of mixing American bubblegum with Arab bubblegum, mix American and European classics (including jazz) with Arab classics. Include intelligent but unpretentious commentary by Arabic speakers who understand their own musical idioms as well as those of the West. Do not exclude religious music (that would be impossible), but at all costs avoid proselytizing. Focus on sending out beautiful and unusual sounds.

- Support a spoken poetry program, in both English and (more important) Arabic. It’s hard for Americans to appreciate the central position of poetry in Arabic culture, but as William Rugh notes in a study of Arab media, newspapers and electronic media have long presented it to mass audiences.

- Invest in endangered antiquities abroad. The model here is the Getty Conservation Institute, whose efforts in Asia and Latin America have helped build a positive image for the Getty in a world not inclined to trust institutions founded on American oil wealth. The U.S. government, along with the British Museum and American individuals and private organizations, has been working to repair damages to ancient sites resulting from war and occupation in Iraq, but much more could be done.

- TV is a tougher field in which to make a mark, because it is more competitive. But here again, the best strategy may be to cut against the commercial grain with high-quality shows that present the high culture not just of America but also of the countries of reception. It might take a while for audiences to catch on. But in the meantime, such programs would help to neutralize critics who insist that Americans have no high culture—and that we’re out to destroy the high culture of others.

- Launch a people-to-people exchange between young Americans

involved in Christian media and their Muslim counterparts overseas. The existence of such counterparts is not in doubt. Consider Amr Khalid, a 36-year-old Egyptian television personality who has made himself one of the most sought-after Islamic speakers in the Arab world by emulating American televangelists. Indeed, his Ramadan program has been carried on LBC, the Christian Lebanese network. Or consider Sami Yusuf, the British-born singer whose uplifting video clips provide a popular alternative to the usual sex-kitten fare. His strategy of airing religious-music clips on mainstream Arab satellite music channels rather than on Islamic religious channels parallels precisely that of the younger generation of American musicians who have moved out of the “ghetto,” as they call it, of contemporary Christian music.

One obstacle to the sort of people-to-people exchange proposed here would be the injunction against anything resembling missionary work in many Muslim countries. For that reason, such a program would probably have to start on American turf and involve careful vetting. But the potential is great. Not only would the participants share technical and business skills; they would also find common ground in a shared critique of what is now a global youth culture. In essence, American Christians and foreign Muslims would say to each other, “We feel just as you do about living our faith amid mindless hedonism and materialism. Here’s what we have been doing about it in the realm of music and entertainment.”

If just a few talented visitors were to spend time learning how religious youth in America (not just Christians but also Muslims and Jews) create alternatives to the secular youth culture touted by the mainstream media, they would take home some valuable lessons: that America is not a godless society—quite the opposite, in fact; that religious media need not engage in hatred and extremism; that religious tolerance is fundamental to a multiethnic society such as the United States. If the visitors were ambitious enough to want to start their own enterprises, the program might provide seed money.

**D**uring the Cold War, the battle for hearts and minds was conceived very differently from today. While threatening to blow each other to eternity, the United States and the Soviet Union both claimed to be defending freedom, democracy, and human dignity. Without suggesting for a moment that the two sides had equal claim to those goals, it is nonetheless worth noting that America’s victory was won on somewhat different grounds: security, stability, prosperity, and technological progress.

Our enemies today do not question our economic and technological superiority, but they do question our moral and spiritual superiority. To study the anti-American critique mounted by radical Islam is to see oneself in the equivalent of a fun-house mirror: The reflection is at once both distorted and weirdly accurate. And, ironically, it resembles the critique many American religious conservatives have been making of their society all along. A wise public diplomacy would turn this state of affairs to America’s advantage. □

# Power and Persuasion

by Frederick W. Kagan

“**Y**ou have no idea how much it contributes to the general politeness and pleasantness of diplomacy when you have a little quiet armed force in the background,” the diplomat-historian George F. Kennan declared in 1946. With his customary wit, Kennan enunciated a profound general principle: War and diplomacy are inextricably linked, and it is as great a mistake to conduct diplomacy without considering military means as it is to wage war without diplomacy.

This truth has never enjoyed universal acceptance, but in modern times the conviction—or wish—that diplomacy can prevail without any connection to the use of force has become much more widespread. Many see war simply as the failure of diplomacy rather than its complement, and some argue that statesmen should not even consider using military power until they have exhausted all other means of achieving their aims. It is not only the evil of war that animates these critics, but the belief that force makes any kind of diplomacy all but impossible—that the angry “blowback” of elite and popular opinion in other nations necessarily overwhelms all diplomatic efforts, traditional or public, and outweighs any advantages that force may bring. “Hard” power and “soft” power, in other words, are mutually exclusive.

Reality is more complex. As Kennan suggested nearly 60 years ago, when states act militarily without clearly defined political objectives supported by skillful diplomacy, they risk undermining their military successes by creating significant long-term problems. So, too, states that attempt to conduct complicated and dangerous diplomatic initiatives without the support of credible military options frequently fail to accomplish even their immediate goals—and sometimes create more severe long-term problems. The greatest danger lies neither in using force nor in avoiding it, but rather in failing to understand the intricate relationship between power and persuasion. Some rulers rely excessively upon the naked use of force, some upon unsupported diplomacy. History shows that the most successful of them skillfully integrate the two.

One of the keys to success in this endeavor lies in defining national ends that leaders and publics in other countries find at least minimally palatable. One can be an able diplomat and a talented commander on the battlefield, but even both abilities together will not bring success if they serve objectives that the rest of the world cannot tolerate. For the United States, there is no path that will spare it criticism and even outright opposition, but its broad

goals of spreading freedom and political reform are ones that a great many people in the Muslim world and beyond will be able to accept. The challenge is not only to continue balancing power and persuasion but also simply to continue—to persist in the face of adversity and despite arguments that the very exercise of power ensures that the United States will never persuade and never prevail.

Napoleon Bonaparte offers the classic example of the perils of failing to set goals that other states can accept. Napoleon was a skillful diplomat, and he shrewdly used the seemingly invincible army he commanded to threaten the destruction of any European state that tried to resist him. In 1809, he

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persuaded Tsar Alexander I to send a Russian corps to his aid against Austria, but then, in 1812, the Austrians, along with the Prussians, marched alongside him when he invaded Russian soil. He was also one of the most aggressive propagandists

of all time, so successful that his propaganda continues to influence our perceptions of his era two centuries later. The “bulletins” he published regularly advertising his military successes were so effective that even today the myth that “thousands” of Russian soldiers drowned in waist-high water at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805 lives on, despite numerous cogent refutations of it. His somewhat cynical use of French revolutionary propaganda to support his counterrevolutionary agenda made his propaganda more palatable both to contemporaries and to modern historians.

Yet Napoleon failed spectacularly to establish a stable and long-lived European peace based on French hegemony. He could never define a goal for himself that the rest of Europe found acceptable. When war broke out in 1803, he initially focused on defeating his archenemy, Great Britain. However, he so alarmed the other states of Europe with his aggressive assaults on British interests around the continent that, in 1805, they formed a coalition to fight him—the first of four coalitions that would be formed to stop him over the next decade. His victory over the first coalition at Austerlitz increased his appetite, and, by 1806, he had incited neutral Prussia to attack him. Victory in that conflict brought Napoleon’s armies to the Russian border and established an apparently stable peace.

But the French emperor continued to revise his aims, seeking more control over European affairs with each new military success. By 1809 he had so antagonized the Austrians, whom he had crushed in 1805, that they launched a single-handed war against him. His victory in that conflict led Tsar Alexander to abandon the notion that he could live with Napoleon and to begin military preparations that would lead to war in 1812.

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*Napoleon masterfully portrayed himself as the champion of French revolutionary values for Europe's masses, but this was an illusion that usually vanished in the lands he conquered.*

By the time Napoleon and his troops began their disastrous retreat from Moscow in the winter of 1812, however, all the other powers of Europe had decided that his goal was nothing less than universal conquest and that they faced no challenge more important than defeating him. Emboldened by the destruction of the myth of Napoleon's military invincibility, the major powers of Europe banded together into strong coalitions that finally defeated him on the battlefield and, in 1815, exiled him to St. Helena.

**D**iplomacy is not simply the art of persuading others to accept a set of demands. It is the art of discerning objectives the world will accept—and the restraints on one's own power that one must accept in turn. Peace can endure after conflict only if all the major players find it preferable to another war.

Otto von Bismarck understood this principle better than any other statesman of modern times. He directed Prussia's diplomacy through the Wars of German Unification (1864–71), which created the German Empire and brought all the German-speaking lands except Austria under Berlin's control. None of the other great powers was initially in favor of Prussian expansion, and both Austria-Hungary and France were determined to fight rather than permit it. Like Napoleon, Bismarck did not rely simply on military power. He succeeded through a combination of public and private diplomacy almost unequalled in history.

## *America in the Footlights*

Bismarck used official diplomatic procedures and back-channel communications with enemies and potential enemies, but he also used the news media to shape public opinion. He succeeded, for example, in making the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, a war of outright Prussian expansionism, appear to be the fault of the French. At a time when the two powers were engaged in testy negotiations over the future of Spain, Bismarck released to the press the “Ems Telegram.” He had carefully edited this dispatch from a Prussian official to suggest that the French ambassador had suffered a great insult at the hands of the Prussian king. Bismarck, who famously remarked that the doctored telegram would have the effect of a red rag on the Gallic Bull, got just the results he had hoped for. An indignant French public clamored for war, and in July 1870 the French



*Though called the “Iron Chancellor,” Otto von Bismarck, shown here in 1894, was renowned for deft diplomacy that preserved peace in Europe for decades.*

government granted its wish. Austria-Hungary, which might have joined the French, was deterred by Bismarck’s success in putting the onus of war on the French, along with his deft reminders about the catastrophic defeat Austria had suffered at the hands of the Prussians in 1866. The Prussians quickly destroyed the French armies of Napoleon III, and the new empire of Germany emerged as the most powerful state in continental Europe.

Bismarck’s military and diplomatic derring-do could well have led to the other European powers banding together in coalitions against Germany, years of unremitting warfare, and the collapse of Bismarck’s policy. None of

that ensued after 1871, for three main reasons: the military success of the Prussian army, Bismarck’s ability to define a goal that the rest of Europe could live with, and his willingness to use the power Germany had acquired to reinforce a stability desired by the rest of the continent. However much Prussia’s foes resented the new order, they feared fighting Prussia again even more.

Bismarck was wiser than Napoleon. Instead of allowing his appetite to grow with the eating, he determined to moderate Prussia’s goals and he worked to persuade the other European powers that Germany had no further designs on their territory. He also wielded Germany’s recently won power flexibly to preserve a new European stability, opposing adventurism by Russia and Austria-Hungary and using the threat of intervention by the German army to insist upon peaceful resolution of international disputes.



Bismarck's method of maintaining peace and stability in Europe was so successful that it endured until his removal in 1890, and the peace that it created lasted for another 24 years. War supported diplomacy; diplomacy supported war. Each served clearly defined goals that even the defeated states could live with. That policy was the key to Bismarck's success—and its absence the key to Napoleon's failure.

Some will argue that the United States today is in a more complex situation than that faced by 18th- and 19th-century leaders. The terrorist threat is more akin to an insurgency in the Muslim world than it is to traditional power politics. Insurgency is, indeed, a special case of warfare. Unlike a conventional military struggle, which the great theorist of strategy Karl von Clausewitz aptly characterized as a duel, insurgency is a struggle between two or more groups for the support of the large mass of an undecided population. In such struggles, the counterinsurgent generally suffers more by resorting to force than the insurgent does. The role of any government, after all, is to ensure civil order and peace, and to protect the lives and well-being of its citizens. When the government takes up weapons against rebels, it places all of that in jeopardy, and the population is usually quick to resent it.

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Still, there have been successful counterinsurgencies, even when governments used dramatically more force than the United States is ever likely to contemplate exercising in the Muslim world. One example is the Boer War (1899–1902), in which the British army suppressed an insurgency by Dutch settlers in South Africa only after burning farms and penning the bulk of the population, including many women and children, in barbed wire–encircled concentration camps. The hostility created by this conflict, the last in a series of Anglo-Boer wars over the course of decades, was enormous. As one historian of the period notes, “Far from destroying Afrikaner nationalism, Chamberlain and Milner, Roberts and Kitchener, were the greatest recruiting agents it ever had.”

If modern critics of the use of force are correct, Britain's actions should have fueled endless Anglo-Boer hostility and a permanent insurgency. Instead, they led to the rapid restoration of relations with South Africa, which served as Britain's loyal ally during World War I, sending thousands of soldiers to fight alongside their former enemies. Why did this transformation occur? Britain's military victory was critical. The harsh tactics the British used broke the back of the rebellion and served as an effective deterrent against future Boer attempts to fight them. At the same time, the British government offered moderate terms of surrender—so moderate that some critics in Britain said it “lost the peace.” The Treaty of Vereeniging of 1902, modified substantially in 1907, left the Boers very much in charge in South Africa, although under overall British suzerainty.

A perhaps even more apt example comes from the end of World War II. In Germany and Japan, the American occupiers were far from welcomed, and it is not hard to understand why. Even some official U.S. military histories acknowledge the triumphant GIs' extensive looting and mistreatment of the local populations in Germany. But the sheer scale of the U.S. military victories in Germany and Japan helped prevent the development of significant insurrections or opposition movements. Neither the Germans nor the

Japanese were willing to risk further destruction of their society.

The nature of the peace settlement, however, promoted increasingly close relations between victor and vanquished. As the Marshall Plan was implemented in Germany and U.S. reconstruction efforts bore fruit in Japan, and as the United States and its allies worked to rebuild the German and Japanese polities along stable democratic lines, hostility toward America evaporated much more rapidly than anyone had a right to expect. Of course, the growth of the Soviet threat played a crucial role, since it made the American occupation, even at its worst, seem more attractive than the Soviet alternative. And as the nature of the U.S. military presence shifted to protection against an external threat, and American economic and political aid continued to flow, the occupation came to be seen as a good thing by the majority of the German and Japanese populations.



*Britain's treatment of the Boers cost it dearly in the court of public opinion, as this French lithograph suggests. Yet soon the Boers became Britain's allies.*

Today, those who are most reluctant to consider the use of force under any condition except in response to direct attack pin most of their hopes on the United Nations and other international organizations. In these forums, they believe, states should be able to peacefully resolve even their deepest differences. But history shows rather conclusively that the same principles that govern the affairs of nations also govern those of international organizations.

In 1923, for example, Benito Mussolini seized the Greek island of Corfu and demanded an exorbitant "reparation" from Athens after several Italian officials were assassinated in Greece. No evidence then or since has proven that Greeks were involved in the killings, and it is at least as likely that

Mussolini's own agents were the culprits. The Greeks turned to the newly formed League of Nations.

Britain initially supported the Greeks' request, but it was virtually alone among the major powers. Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin's government had to choose: Forcing the issue into the League's purview would create a serious risk of war with Italy; giving in to Mussolini would destroy the League as an effective force in the post-Great War world order.

Baldwin found the task too daunting. Britain was war weary, and its forces were overextended and weakened by budget cuts (although it is clear in retrospect that the Italian navy could not have resisted the Royal Navy). In the end, the Greeks paid an indemnity they

should not have owed, Mussolini abandoned an island he should never have occupied, and the case was taken away from the League of Nations. The precedent was thereby established for the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, to which the League made no response, and for the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, to which the League also had no meaningful reaction. The emasculation of the League in 1923 destroyed its credibility and virtually ensured its irrelevance in the major crises that lay ahead.

THE SAME PRINCIPLES  
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**B**y contrast, the first Bush administration reacted to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 in a manner designed not merely to resist Saddam Hussein's aggression but to strengthen the United Nations and prepare it for a central role in keeping the peace in the "new world order" after the Cold War. President George H. W. Bush quickly decided that he would use military force to reverse the Iraqi action. This was the critical decision. Although the task looked difficult at the time—Iraq had the fourth-largest military in the world, and early American casualty projections were as high as 50,000—the president believed that he had to act to prevent the immediate unraveling of the international order and to forestall legitimization of the principle that powerful states could use force to prevail in territorial disputes with their weaker neighbors.

Bush began a massive diplomatic effort to gain allies for the United States, win over world public opinion, and, above all, acquire clear and strong sanction from the UN for the operation to liberate Kuwait. The UN was galvanized by Bush's efforts. The discovery after the war that Saddam Hussein had been maintaining a vast weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program that had been virtually unknown to the principal international monitoring agencies led to a complete overhaul of those agencies, particularly the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Under its new director, Hans Blix, the IAEA and UNSCOM, the UN agency set up to oversee the destruction of Iraq's WMD program, pursued an increasingly successful effort in Iraq, supported periodically by the threat and use of U.S. airpower.



*After World War II, the Marshall Plan and other U.S. aid efforts sweetened the tempers of the resentful losers and strengthened the alliance of the victors. This shipment arrived in 1949.*

By the late 1990s, however, a growing American reluctance to use that power allowed the Iraqi dictator to eject UN inspectors. Saddam then began mothballing his WMD programs but was able to persuade the world that he still had them. The inspections effort in Iraq had been effective only when supported by the threat and occasional use of American military force.

The IAEA enjoyed no such support in North Korea. By 1994, Hans Blix had discovered a number of violations of the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the North Koreans had begun to interfere with the work of the inspectors in critical ways. At first, the Clinton administration supported the IAEA in its struggle to force then-leader Kim Il Sung to come clean. As the crisis developed, however, the administration's concern over the danger from the North Korean army overwhelmed its desire to support the IAEA's efforts. The Clinton administration then brokered a deal with Kim Il Sung's son and successor, Kim Jong Il, that allowed North Korea to keep skirting the inspections program. As a result, the IAEA was unable to prevent the North Koreans from developing a nuclear weapon—and all indications are that they now possess one or two nuclear devices. Not surprisingly, recent negotiations, similarly unsupported by military force, have also failed to curb the North Korean nuclear program.

It may be that, in the end, as with Adolf Hitler and a few other die-hard aggressive leaders, there is no finding a peaceful solution with Kim Jong Il. Or it may be that some unforeseen change within North Korea will yield such an outcome. It is certain, however, that diplomatic approaches unsupported by military power will not make much of an impression on Pyongyang,

and that the continued failure to support international agencies charged with enforcing nonproliferation agreements will doom the cause of nonproliferation itself.

International organizations, especially those devoted to nonproliferation and peacekeeping, can succeed in difficult circumstances only when their efforts are supported by credible military means. Because such organizations help to identify current and future threats, and to galvanize international support behind the punishment of transgressors, the use of American power to support them is a good investment in long-term security.

**G**eorge Kennan was right: The existence of a powerful and battle-proven military makes the job of diplomats and political leaders vastly easier. However unhappy a defeated people may be with a given political settlement, or however resentful of military actions carried out against them, very few will take up arms again if convinced that they will again be defeated. Military half-measures designed to “send a message,” such as those the Kennedy and Johnson administrations used in the early days of the Vietnam struggle, deceive no one and leave the door open for insurgent victory. Clear-cut military triumph, such as the British achieved against the Boers, makes even the staunchest rebels more reluctant to try the test of battle again. The use of military force with any aim in mind other than victory is extremely dangerous and likely to be counterproductive.

Though the use of force may stir anger and resentment in an enemy population and damage a state’s position in the world community, history suggests that both the animosity and the damage may be more fleeting than many suppose, and that their scale and duration may depend on many elements other than the mere fact that force was used. By far the most important element is the acceptability of the peace conditions imposed by the victor after the struggle. If the victor can devise terms that most of its foes and the rest of the international community can accept, then the animosity is likely to fade quickly. And if acceptable terms are coupled with continued military power, then the prospects for a lasting and stable peace are excellent.

The actions of the victorious state in the aftermath of the war are of great moment in determining the long-term consequences of military action. If the victor remains engaged with the defeated power in a positive way, helping to reintegrate it into an acceptable international system, and even to make good some of the damage done by the military operations, then memories of the pain inflicted by the war can be surprisingly short. The rise of a new and dangerous common enemy—which is not as unusual as one might suppose—can dramatically hasten this process.

Diplomacy is not the opposite of war, and war is not the failure of diplomacy. Both are tools required in various proportions in almost any serious foreign-policy situation. Yes, it is vitally important for the United States to “work with” and “support” international organizations, but their success in the foreseeable future will depend at least as much on the strength of the American military and on America’s willingness to put its power behind those organizations. On that strength and on that willingness rests nothing less than the peace of the world. □

# The Hunger Experiment

In 1945, several dozen American conscientious objectors volunteered to starve themselves under medical supervision. The goal was to learn how health might be restored after World War II to the wasted populations of Europe. What the volunteers endured—and what broke them—sheds light on the scourge of starvation that today afflicts some 800 million people worldwide.

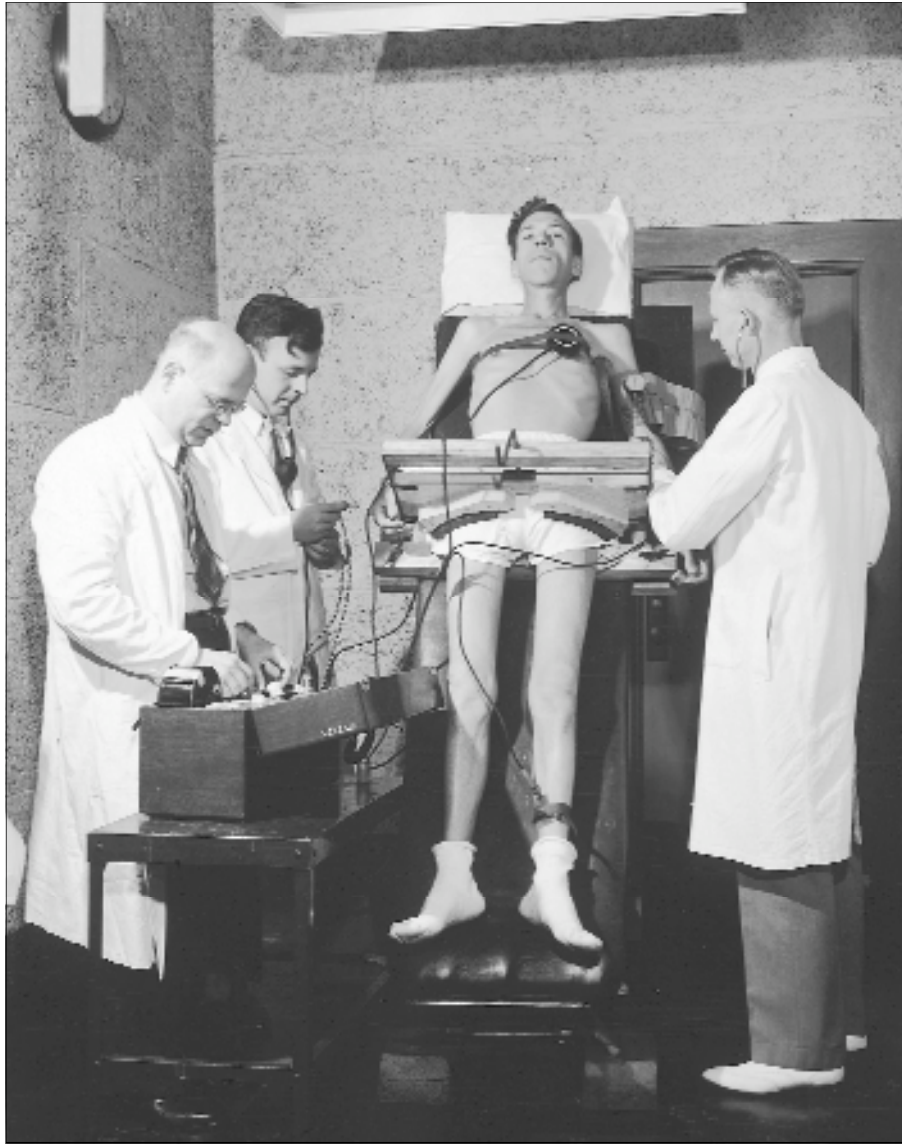
*by Sharman Apt Russell*

**H**uman beings evolved for a bad day of hunting, a bad week of hunting, a bad crop, a bad year of crops. We were hungry even in that first Garden of Eden, what some anthropologists call the “Paleoterrific,” a world full of large animals and relatively few people. Paleolithic bones and teeth occasionally show unnatural pauses in growth, a sign of food shortage. Our diet didn’t get better as our population grew and the big-game species died out. In the Mesolithic, we foraged more intensively for plants and hunted smaller game with new tools like nets and snares. In the Neolithic, we invented agriculture, which sparked the rise of cities. There is no evidence that any of these changes reduced the odds of starvation or malnutrition. A more common trend seems to be that small-game hunters were shorter and less nourished than their Paleolithic ancestors, farmers less healthy than hunters and gatherers, and city dwellers less robust than farmers. We just kept getting hungrier.

Hunger is a country we enter every day, like a commuter across a friendly border. We wake up hungry. We endure that for a matter of minutes before we break our fast. Later we may skip lunch and miss dinner. We may not eat for religious reasons. We may not eat before surgery. We may go on a three-day fast to cleanse ourselves of toxins and boredom. We may go on a longer fast to imitate Christ in the desert or to lose weight. We may go on a hunger strike. If we are lost at sea, if we have lost our job, if we are at war, we may not be hungry by choice.

At the end of World War II, as occupied towns were liberated and prisoners released from concentration camps, the Allies faced the task of refeeding people who had been starving for months and even years. The English officer Jack Drummond remembered a cold day in January 1945 when he met with a group of Dutch, American, and British public health advisers: “It





*Test volunteers at the University of Minnesota were monitored to gauge the effects of starvation. This tilting table allowed doctors to see how the circulatory system adjusts to sudden changes.*

was frightening to realize how little any of us knew about severe starvation. In our lifetime millions of our fellow men had died in terrible famines, in China, in India, in the U.S.S.R., without these tragedies having yielded more than a few grains of knowledge of how best to deal with such situations on a scientific basis.”

For a long time, scientists in America had lobbied for more research on famine relief. The government was interested but was preoccupied with winning the war. In 1944, a group of private citizens at the University of Minnesota’s Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene began what would be called the Minnesota Experiment, the first long-term controlled study on the effects of semi-starvation. The project was headed by Dr. Ancel Keys, director of the lab, who had just developed K rations for the army. Funding sources included pacifist groups like the American Society of Friends and the Brethren Service Committee. The volunteers were conscientious objec-

## *The Hunger Experiment*

tors, Quakers and Mennonites eager to participate in work that meant, according to the scientists, “a long period of discomfort, severe restriction of personal freedom, and some real hazard.”

**T**he study began in November with a three-month control period, followed by six months of semi-starvation, followed by three months of refeeding. The goal for each subject was to lose 24 percent of body weight, mimicking the weight loss seen in famine. (Autopsies done in the Warsaw ghetto showed that death from starvation involved a loss of 30 to 50 percent of body weight.) The diet was one a Warsaw Jew would recognize: brown bread, potatoes, cereals, turnips, and cabbage, with occasional tastes of meat, butter, and sugar. Nothing like this had ever been done before or would ever be done again.

“It undressed us,” concluded one subject. “Those who we thought would be strong were weak; those who we surely thought would take a beating held up best. . . . I am proud of what I did. My protruding ribs were my battle scars. . . . It was something great, something incomprehensible.”

The results of the Minnesota Experiment were published in 1950 in the two-volume epic *The Biology of Human Starvation*, more than 1,300 pages long, heavy as a sack of flour. Up to the last moment before publication, the authors included the newest research appearing in various languages. The hunger disease studies of the Warsaw ghetto, still our most detailed portrait of extreme starvation, had been published in French in 1946. Doctors from a Belgian prison and a French mental hospital had written up their observations on inmates who had had their daily calories reduced to between 1,500 and 1,800 during the war. The 1941–42 siege of Leningrad, in which the Germans successfully prevented food from entering the city for over nine months, resulted in a number of scientific papers. The report of the Dutch government on the 1944–45 famine in the western Netherlands came out in 1948. There were monographs on refeeding from places like Dachau, and field data had been gathered from the Japanese internment camps. World War II turned out to be a cornucopia of starvation research—a wealth of hunger.

It wasn't easy being a conscientious objector during the Good War. Sixteen million Americans answered the call to defend the world against Nazism and Fascism. Forty-two thousand men decided that their religious or moral beliefs prevented them from killing another human being, under any circumstances. Six thousand conscientious objectors ended up in jail for refusing to register for the draft or cooperate with federal laws; 25,000 served as noncombatants in the armed forces; and 12,000 entered the Civilian Public Service, where they worked as laborers, firefighters, and aides in mental hospitals. As the war continued, these conscientious

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objectors grew increasingly restive. In an oral history compiled later, one man complained, “My God, you’re talking about planting trees and the world’s on fire!” Another remembered, “This is what finally got under my skin more than anything else: the sense of not sharing the fate of one’s generation but of sort of coasting alongside all of that; you couldn’t feel you were part of anything terribly significant in what you were doing.”

Partly out of the desire to share the fate of their generation, conscientious objectors became medical guinea pigs. They wore lice-infested underwear in order to test insecticide sprays and powders. They were deliberately infected with typhus and malaria and pneumonia. They ingested feces as part of a hepatitis study. They were put in decompression chambers that simulated altitudes of 20,000 feet. They lived in rooms where the temperatures dropped to below

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freezing—a month at 20 degrees, a month at zero degrees. They were willingly too hot, too cold, anemic, jaundiced, feverish, itchy. When Dr. Keys at the University of Minnesota sent out a recruiting pamphlet titled “Will You Starve That They Be Better Fed?” to various Civilian Public Service camps, where thousands of conscientious objectors served during the war. More than 100 men volunteered. About half were rejected. Thirty-six were chosen as subjects for the experiment, and another 18 as assistants and staff.

All the men had to be in good health, physically and mentally. They had to have considerable social skills and be able to get along with others in a situation that would test everyone’s limits. They had to be interested in relief work and rehabilitation. The men finally selected ranged in age from 20 to 33. All were white, with at least a year of college education. Eighteen already had college degrees. They had a variety of body types, and they came from a variety of economic backgrounds, rich, poor, and middle-class.

Being a guinea pig was a full-time, 48-hour-a-week job. The men lived on the upper floor of the Minnesota laboratory in dormitory-style bedrooms, with a nearby lounge, library, and classrooms. They were free to come and go as they pleased. They worked 15 hours a week doing laundry or clerical work, cleaning in the lab, or helping in the kitchen. They attended 25 hours a week of classes in political science and foreign languages as preparation for going overseas in relief work. They were free to attend other classes at the university, and one subject completed his master’s degree during the experiment. Many of them joined local churches and other organizations. They were also required to walk 22 miles a week, outdoors at their own pace, and another half-hour a week on the treadmill. Each day, they walked two miles to get their meals from a university dining hall. During the control period and for the beginning months of semi-starva-

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tion, most chose to participate in activities such as ice skating and folk dancing. In addition, they spent hours being examined physically and psychologically—testing math skills, memory retention, and hearing range—and giving interminable samples of blood, urine, stool, saliva, skin, sperm, and bone marrow.

For the first three months, the men ate an average of 3,500 calories a day, normal American fare, with 3.9 ounces of protein, 4.3 ounces of fat, and 17 ounces of carbohydrates. Each subject was to achieve his ideal weight by the end of the 12 weeks. Those who were too heavy got fewer calories; those who were too thin got more. As

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a group, the men ended this period slightly below their desired weight.

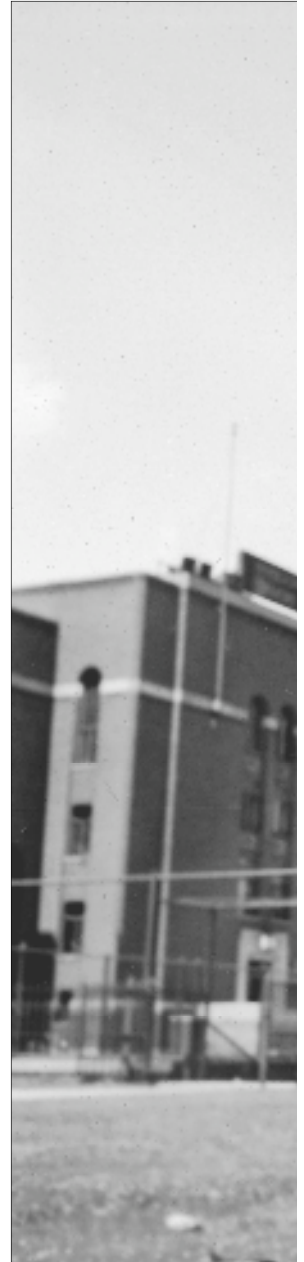
For the next six months, only two daily meals were served, at 8:30 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Three menus were rotated, a monotonous diet of potatoes and whole-wheat bread, cereal and cabbage, and turnips and rutabagas. On rare occasions, there were small portions of meat, sugar, milk, or butter. Daily calories averaged 1,570, with 1.7 ounces of protein and 1.0 ounce of fat. Individual body types had to be considered. Slighter, thinner men were expected to lose only 19 percent of their body weight and heavier men as much as 28 percent, with the goal being a group average of 24 percent. Daily and weekly adjustments in food were based on how well a man was achieving his predicted weight loss. If he was losing too much, he got extra potatoes and bread. If he was not losing enough, he got less.

**J**im Graham was an idealistic 22-year-old who had been planting trees and fighting forest fires before he joined the experiment. At that time, at 6' 2", he weighed 175 pounds. "In the beginning," he remembered for an interview over 30 years later, "this was a rather interesting experience. We were losing weight, of course, but we still had a fair amount of energy."

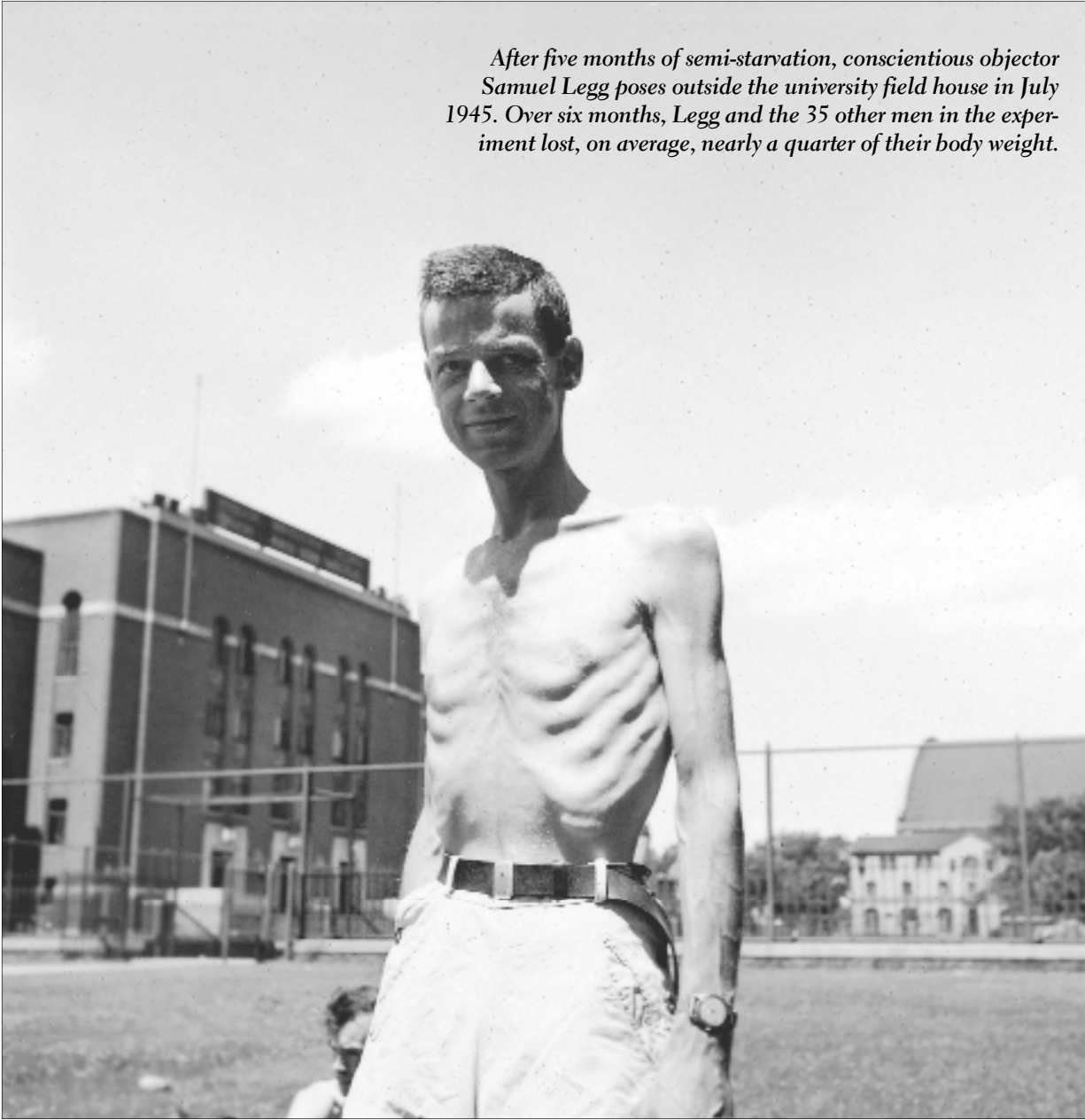
Most of the men felt the same way, at least at first, although they complained of dizziness. Over the next few weeks, however, the experience became more painful.

The sensation of hunger increased; it never lessened. Eating habits began to change. The men became impatient waiting in line if the service was slow. They were possessive about their food. Some hunched over the trays, using their arms to protect their meals. Mostly they were silent, with the concentration that eating deserved. More and more men began to toy with their portions, mixing the items up, adding water, or "souping," to make new concoctions. They were liberal with the salt and asked for more spices. Dislikes of certain foods, such as rutabagas, disappeared. All food was eaten to the last bite. Then the plates were licked.

Obsessions developed around cookbooks and menus from local restaurants. Some men could spend hours comparing the prices of fruits and vegetables



*After five months of semi-starvation, conscientious objector Samuel Legg poses outside the university field house in July 1945. Over six months, Legg and the 35 other men in the experiment lost, on average, nearly a quarter of their body weight.*



from one newspaper to the next. Some planned now to go into agriculture. They dreamed of new careers as restaurant owners.

One man had a harder time than the rest. Twenty-four years old, described as handsome, gregarious, and charming, he had seemed the perfect candidate. But in the first few weeks, he had disturbing dreams of “eating senile and insane people.” As early as the third week, his weight showed discrepancies; he wasn’t losing what he should be losing. One afternoon, in the eighth week of semi-starvation, his discipline broke down completely. Walking alone in town, he went into a shop and had an ice cream sundae, then another bowl of ice cream farther down the street, then a malted milk, then another. When he returned to the laboratory, he confessed. He felt awful.

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He had betrayed his own desire to “do service to a starving Europe and uphold the ideals of the Civilian Public Service program.”

In response, the Minnesota researchers initiated the buddy system. No subject was allowed to go outside the laboratory, about town, or around campus without a friend or staff member. The men themselves understood the need. Those working in the kitchen asked to be reassigned.

The erring subject still felt bad. In truth, he wanted to leave the experiment. But how could he admit that to himself and others? He violated his diet again, this time by stealing a few raw rutabagas. The writing in his daily

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journal was now an emotional swirl of ideas and prayers. He found some strength in God and decided to get a job in a grocery store to test himself. He couldn’t sleep. He shoplifted some trinkets he didn’t want.

He rationalized his behavior to

anyone who would listen, insisting that he was an individualist, that he wasn’t meant for this kind of regimentation, that the experiment was a failure, that he had already done his share. He asked for a buddy to supervise him constantly. He gave up his money and checkbook. Finally, he collapsed weeping, threatening suicide and violence to others. The researchers released him from the experiment and admitted him to the psychiatric ward of the university hospital. What they termed a borderline psychotic episode subsided after a few days.

Meanwhile, another young man, 25 years old, was having problems too. One night at a grocery store he ate two bananas, several cookies, and a sack of popcorn, all of which he vomited back up at the laboratory. He referred to the incident as a “mental blackout.” For the next few weeks, he seemed confident and recommitted; however, his weight failed to go down. Increasingly, he became restless and unhappy but would not admit to any secret eating. At last, he developed a urological problem and was released from the experiment. In retrospect, the researchers decided that the man had “hysterical characteristics and other signs of a neurotic temperament. In interviews he was good-natured and easygoing but showed signs of an immature Pollyanna attitude.” They noted that every other sentence in his journal ended with an exclamation point.

**E**ight weeks. Ten weeks. Twelve weeks. Sixteen weeks. Daily, the physical changes in the Minnesota volunteers became more dramatic. Prolonged hunger carves the body into what researchers call the asthenic build. The face grows thin, with pronounced cheekbones. Atrophied facial muscles may account for the “mask of famine,” a seemingly unemotional, apathetic stare. The scrawny neck is pitiful. The clavicle looks sharp as a blade. Broad shoulders shrink. Ribs are prominent. The scapula bones in the back move like wings. The vertebral column is a line of knobs. The knees are baggy, the legs like sticks. The fatty tissues of the buttocks dis-



appear, and the skin hangs in folds. The men in the Minnesota laboratory now took a pillow with them everywhere they went, as sitting had become uncomfortable.

The skeletal framework, however, seemed unchanged, something the researchers carefully measured. Populations in Russia and Ukraine had reported a decrease in height during famine, but the Minnesota scientists found only an insignificant decline of 0.125 inches on average. They attributed a perceived larger decline to a weakening in muscle tone and posture. In five men, the researchers also measured the thickness of the spinal column's intervertebral discs and saw a loss of an average of 0.04 inches. They speculated that changes in disk cartilage might be irreversible and could parallel the aging process.

"I felt like an old man," Jim Graham said, "and probably looked like one since I made no effort to stand up straight."

**E**dema complicated all kinds of measurements. Wrists and ankles might increase in circumference instead of decrease. Actual weight loss was obscured. The Minnesota scientists estimated that their subjects had as much as 14 pounds of extra fluid after six months of semi-starvation. During refeeding, their height actually decreased as the swelling in their feet went down. Only four subjects showed no clinical signs of edema. Of the rest, many had fluid in their knee joints, which made walking painful. Jim Graham described how the men's flesh bulged over the tops of their shoes at the end of the day, and how his face was puffy in the morning, deeply marked with the indentations of his pillow. The men may have worsened their edema by using extra salt, drinking countless cups of tea or coffee, and watering their food in an effort to make a meal last longer. All this was accompanied by frequent urination during the day and night.

Their kidney functions remained normal.

Their resting metabolism was reduced by 40 percent, which the researchers estimated to be a savings of 600 calories a day.

Their hearts got smaller. After six months, with body weights reduced by 24 percent, their hearts had shrunk by almost 17 percent. These hearts also beat slower—often very slowly—and more regularly. Blood pressure dropped, except in five men, for whom it did not, and in one man, for whom it rose. Their veins sometimes collapsed now when blood was being drawn. The ability of the heart to work in general—the amount of blood pumped, the speed of blood, the arterial blood pressure—declined 50 percent. Electrocardiograms also showed less voltage and electrical energy, along with changes that pointed to possible heart damage. The researchers concluded that although this was abnormal, it was not serious. Semi-starvation did not include signs of heart disease or cardiac failure. (This would not have been true if the diet were deficient in thiamine or had fewer calories for a longer period of time, as with some anorectics.)

The ability of the lungs to bring in air decreased by 30 percent.

The brain and central nervous system seemed remarkably resistant. A battery of tests showed little change in mental ability, although the men

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felt less intellectually active. They just didn't care as much. They lost their will for academic problems and became far more interested in cookbooks.

Two men developed neurological symptoms, such as numbness or burning and tingling. One wrote that his right foot felt unhinged at the ankle. The doctors decided that these feelings were hysterical in origin. They found it pertinent that a subject's numbness coincided with a new "numb" phase in his relationship with his ex-fiancée, who had broken up with him during the experiment. "No feeling aroused at all," the subject noted in his journal. "She might just as well have been any one of a dozen of other girls I know fairly well."

Generally, the men lost strength and endurance. In their jobs around the laboratory, they saw the difference. "Lifting the mattress off the bed to tuck the blankets in is a real chore," one man wrote, and "The carriers for the twelve urine bottles are a hell of a lot heavier than they used to be." Even personal hygiene became difficult. "I notice the weakness in my arms when I wash my hair in the shower; they become completely fatigued in the course of this simple operation." Or, "When the water in the showers becomes hot because of the flushing of the toilets, my reaction time in adjusting controls seems to be longer." It was wearying to walk upstairs, to carry things, to open a bottle of ink. Their handwriting got worse. Dressing took a long time. And they were clumsy, dropping books and tripping over their feet.

Their performance on the treadmill became an embarrassment to them. By the end of six months, the runs often ended in collapse. The researchers noted that the subjects did not stop because of shortness of breath or discomfort in the chest, as a heart patient might. They did not

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stop because of pain or nausea. "They stopped primarily because they could no longer control the actions of their knees and ankles. They literally did not have the strength to pick up their feet fast enough to keep up with the treadmill."

The men had no signs of vitamin deficiency, although the scientists emphasized how closely starvation can look like deficiency. During World War II, hungry populations in Europe did not generally suffer from beriberi, pellagra, scurvy, or rickets, perhaps due to their diet of vitamin-rich foods, such as potatoes. But prisoners in Asia and the Pacific had a very different experience. They ate mostly polished rice, which lacks vitamin A, and they commonly had a tropical disease, such as malaria, which may have had a synergistic effect. These men often had serious neurological damage and eye problems.

A third of the Minnesota volunteers complained that their hair, which seemed dry and stiff, "unruly and staring," was falling out. Their skin

became scaly, a result of reduced blood flow. The area surrounding a hair follicle might turn hard and become elevated, giving them a goose flesh appearance and “nutmeg grater feel.” Nineteen men had a brownish pigmentation around their mouths and under their eyes, deeper than any suntan. For two of the subjects, their long-term acne cleared up. Whenever they worked in the sun or had reason to sweat, all of the men developed tiny pockets of skin filled with perspiration, hundreds of plugged sweat duct openings on their backs and shoulders.

Where not discolored, their skin was pale, with a distinctive grayish-blue pallor. As the blood circulating through their systems became diluted with water, the proportion of red blood cells decreased by about 27 percent. The total amount of hemoglobin in their bodies decreased by 23 percent. In short, they were anemic.

They were also cold, even in that hot and humid July. Young men who had previously been fighting forest fires shivered in their beds under two or three woolen blankets. Their lips and nail beds turned blue. During the day, they wore jackets. Simultaneously, their tolerance for heat increased. They could hold hot plates easily and constantly begged for their food to be served at a higher temperature.

Their bone marrow lost healthy fat and had areas of “gelatinous degeneration.” Their eyesight remained normal. Their hearing improved. They had little tolerance for loud music and noisy conversation. They carried out their own discussions in quiet and subdued whispers.

**P**hysically, the Minnesota volunteers now resembled the hungry populations of Europe. But there were important differences. The men living in the Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene did not suffer from the debilitating diarrhea so common in the Warsaw ghetto, in the concentration camps, and in most situations of famine and malnutrition. Nor did they experience much bloating, flatulence, or stomach pain. The researchers theorized that this was due to sanitation, the ready availability of soap and water, and “the fact that the food served was not adulterated with bark, grass, leaves, sawdust, or even dirt, as is often the case when food is scarce.”

Unlike the people of Warsaw, the Minnesota subjects did not show an increase in cavities or loss in bone density, both of which may require a longer period of starvation. The Minnesota Experiment itself did not reproduce the cold that Europeans experienced in World War II, the lack of fuel for cooking food and heating the house, the lack of warm clothes, the lack of shoes. It did not reproduce the fear, the knowledge that you might die at any time, that you might be humiliated or injured or tortured or killed. It did not reproduce the murder of a neighbor, the corpses in the street, the inexplicable loss of human decency. It did not reproduce the death of your son.

“Above all,” Jim Graham remembered, “we knew it would be over on a certain date.”

And yet, despite the safety and normalcy of the lab, despite the knowledge that their ordeal would end in three months and then two months and then two weeks, the Minnesota volunteers felt it was their minds and souls that

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changed more than anything else. In many ways, they hardly recognized themselves. The lively, friendly group that had bonded together for the first months was now dull and apathetic, unwilling to plan activities or make decisions. They were rude to visitors and spent most of their time alone. It was “too much trouble” and too tiring to be with other people. The scientists mourned the loss of “the even-temperedness, patience, and tolerance” of the control period. Now the men indulged in outbursts of temper and emotion. They sulked and brooded and dramatized their discomforts. Those who deteriorated the most, socially and personally, were the most scorned. One man in particular became the group’s scapegoat.

“We were no longer polite,” Jim Graham said.

On excursions into town, always with a buddy, the men sometimes went on shopping sprees, possessed by the desire to collect knickknacks, second-hand clothes, and miscellaneous junk. Afterward, they were puzzled and dismayed: Who would want these stacks of old books, this damaged coffeepot, this collection of spoons?

They were frequently depressed, although spells of elation could also come upon them suddenly, lasting a few hours to a few days. There was

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a “high” associated with the “quickenings” effect of starvation and with the pride of successfully adapting to the diet. These high periods were followed by low ones, black moods, and feelings of discouragement.

Their behavior at the dinner table became more bizarre. While some men gulped down their meals like dogs at a food bowl, others lingered for hours, dawdling, noodling, stretching out the sensations.

Their sex drive diminished and then disappeared. “I have no more sexual feeling than a sick oyster,” one declared. Some of the men had been dating, and that simply stopped. A few had other relationships in progress, and these became strained. One man was surprised at the new awkwardness, since he had thought his “friendship” was based solely on intellectual interests. When they went out to movies, the love scenes bored them, nothing was funny, and only scenes with food held their interest. Like the monks of earlier centuries, they no longer worried about nocturnal emissions or the desire to masturbate. Physically, their testes were producing fewer male hormones, and their sperm were less mobile and fewer in number.

On tests that measured mental health, the scores that concerned hypochondria, depression, and hysteria rose significantly. There were also increases in scores having to do with delusions and schizophrenia. The researchers regarded these changes as a “diffuse psychoneurosis.” Their subjects had clearly become neurotic, a phenomenon that would reverse during refeeding. The symptoms of starvation neurosis were irritability, asocia-

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bility, depression, nervousness, and emotional instability.

For the men who completed the experiment, there was no change in the area of psychosis—psychopathic behavior, paranoia, and hypomania (elevated moods or grandiosity). This was not true, however, for three of the four men who did not complete the experiment. Moreover, three out of 36 men chosen for their outstanding health and character would suffer some form of mental breakdown under the stress of hunger.

**O**n May 26, 1945, about halfway through semi-starvation, a relief dinner was organized. One meal of 2,300 calories was served. The men helped select the menu: roasted chicken and dressing, potatoes and gravy, strawberry shortcake. That night, the pro-



*After weeks of semi-starvation, subjects' eating habits began to change. The men toyed with their food and added water to make new concoctions, and their dislikes for certain foods disappeared.*

tein in the chicken triggered excessive water loss. Everyone got up even more than usual to urinate. The next day they discovered they had each lost several pounds.

Soon another subject was showing signs of distress. As early as the fifth week of semi-starvation, his weight loss had not followed the expected curve, and he confessed to minor violations, such as stealing and eating crusts

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of bread. He began to chew up to 40 packs of gum a day, until his mouth was sore, and he was caught stealing gum he could no longer afford. Throughout June and July, this 25-year-old, described as a husky athlete, became increasingly nervous. He bought an old suit he didn't

need and later wailed, "Nobody in his right mind would do a thing like that." He talked often of his compulsion to root through garbage cans. Later interviews would reveal he was doing just that, although at the time he didn't confess to breaking the diet. Despite cuts in his daily calories, his weight failed to reach a loss of 24 percent, and he was released from the experiment. His neurotic behavior continued, with cycles of overeating and illness. At one point, he committed himself to the psychiatric ward of the university hospital but did not stay for treatment. In a meeting with the psychologists, he wept and kicked over a table. He couldn't make simple decisions and was painfully disgusted with himself. The researchers believed optimistically that his problems would eventually subside.

This man had a close friend who followed a similar pattern, becoming addicted to gum chewing and failing to lose the prescribed weight. He also denied eating extra food and appeared extremely depressed. His data were not used in the research, although he remained at the laboratory. Another subject in these last few weeks of semi-starvation expressed the fear that he was going crazy. Yet another admitted how close he came to hitting a man over the head with his dinner tray.

**B**y now, the education program at the laboratory had ended for lack of interest. There were no more seminars in foreign languages or relief work. Housekeeping chores were neglected. The working schedule of 15 hours a week had long since slipped into half-hearted efforts. Some regular exercise was still maintained; at least, the men continued to walk back and forth to the dining hall.

Six months had come to seem like an eternity, with each day stretching infinitely long. At last, July 29, 1945, arrived, the day that marked the end of semi-starvation and the beginning of the 12-week rehabilitation period. It was Graham's 23rd birthday. The men felt like cheering. "Morale was high," Jim Graham said. The worst was over.

In fact, it was not. The goal of the Minnesota Experiment had been



to determine how to refeed a starving population with the most economical use of food, assuming that a minimum of resources would be available. In other words, what was the least you could give a starving man and still have him recover? The remaining 32 men were now randomly divided into four groups. One group, for the first six weeks, received an average of 400 more calories a day, the next group 800 more calories, the third group 1,200 more calories, and the last group 1,600 more calories. Those in the first group got about 2,000 daily calories and those in the highest about 3,000. These four groups were each further subdivided into two, with half receiving extra protein in the form of soybean powder added to their bread. The protein subgroups were divided again, with half receiving a vitamin supplement and the other half a placebo.

In all cases, the rehabilitation diet meant the same kind of food, just more of it. Surprisingly, that wasn't a bad thing. "They warned us that the food would get monotonous," Jim Graham remembered. "But it was far from monotonous. It was food, and any food tasted good. To this day, I find the tastiest food a simple boiled potato."

**I**n the first weeks of refeeding, a number of men started losing water and weight. Edema had masked their degree of starva-

tion; now its reduction masked their degree of recovery. These men found the weight loss disturbing. Moreover, a very slow weight gain was seen in all the groups, especially in the men given fewer calories. By the sixth week, the first group had regained an insignificant 0.3 percent of the weight lost during semi-starvation. Essentially they looked much the same: skeletal, hollow cheeked, morose. The second group regained 9.1 percent of weight loss, the third group 11.1 percent, and the fourth group, getting as many as 3,000 calories a day, only 19.2 percent. Their blood sugar levels increased only slightly. Their blood pressure and pulse rates remained low. They still felt tired and depressed. They still had the sex drive of a sick oyster. They still had edema. They still had aches and pains. And they still felt hungry. Some felt even hungrier than before.

One 28-year-old had begun the experiment as a leader, but in the past six months, this "highly intelligent" and "engaging" personality had become one of the weakest and most aggravating members of the group. He spent hours making disgusting messes of his food, and his air of suffering irritated everyone. On the last day, July 28, he collapsed on the treadmill, which caused him to sob uncontrollably. For this subject, assigned to the group receiving the next-to-lowest calories, the letdown of refeeding was unbearable. At the end of the first week, while changing a tire, he allowed his automobile to slip the jack. One finger was almost torn off and required outpatient care at the university hospital. The man confessed he had deliberately attempted to mutilate himself but had lost his nerve

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at the last moment and done an incomplete job.

The next week, the young man visited a friend and went into the yard to chop wood for the fire, something he had done before. This time he also chopped off three of his fingers. During a five-day stay in the hospital, he explained, "When rehabilitation started, I was still hungry. It was really more starvation. . . . I was blue over the whole thing. I was in a weird frame of mind." Seemingly, his only option was to get out of the Civilian Public Service altogether. So "I decided to get rid of some fingers."

The Minnesota researchers convinced the subject to stay in the experiment, and during his time in the hospital his calories remained at the prescribed level, although he received new kinds of food, such as fruit. He returned to the lab refreshed, ready to complete the refeeding stage. The scientists theorized that the extra care had substituted for the "mothering" his immature personality required. The subject now repressed the memory that his mutilation had been deliberate, arguing that his muscle strength and control had been weak or that the ax had hit a branch. He also developed an aversion to the psychology tests and to the psychologists at the experiment. This puzzled him.

**B**y the end of the sixth week of refeeding, almost all the subjects were in active rebellion. Many "grew argumentative and negativistic." Some questioned the value of the project, as well as the motives and competence of the researchers. A few admitted that their desire to help the relief effort had completely disappeared. At the same time, unnoticed by the subjects themselves, their energy was returning. They became more responsive, albeit in a negativistic way. They were annoyed at the restrictions still imposed on them. They rejected the buddy system, which was removed "in the face of imminent wholesale violation." They resisted going back to a regular work schedule. At times, the experimenters felt they were watching "an overheated boiler, the capacity of the safety valves an unknown variable."

Later, the researchers compared this with what they learned about refeeding camps after the war, where aid workers also noted a growing aggressiveness and surprising "lack of gratitude" in men and women who had previously been dull and apathetic with hunger.

Now all four groups got an average increase of another 800 calories and the supplemented group another 0.84 ounces of protein. Slowly, more slowly than expected, their hearts increased in size. The capacity of the lungs improved. The brown pigmentation of the skin began to fade, and the acne that had disappeared came back.

In another four weeks, everyone got an additional 259 calories and the protein group another boost. At the end of the experiment, those in the group with the least calories were eating an average of 3,000 a day and those in the group with the most as many as 4,000. Their weight gains were still only 21 percent of weight lost for the lowest group and 57 percent for the highest group. Most of the weight gain was in body fat, not muscle mass. The more calories a man got, the more fat and the greater per-

centage of fat he gained. The souping of meals, the excessive drinking of fluids and use of salt, and the obsessive interest in food continued. Table manners were shocking.

After three months of refeeding, the groups taking extra vitamins did not seem to have benefited in any way. Nor had the groups taking extra protein. The supplements did not help increase red blood cell count or metabolism. They did not help in the recovery of normal blood pressure and pulse rate or in the return of strength and endurance and general fitness. In fact, the men who did not receive protein supplements recovered their grip strength faster than those who did.

The men receiving extra calories did benefit. They gained weight faster. Their blood pressure, resting metabolism, strength, and endurance rose more quickly.

Their fitness scores improved, and they were better able to do work. The rate of recovery for starvation neurosis, particularly depression and hysteria, was directly linked to how much food was in the new diet. More calories made a man feel better physically and psychologically.

By now, the war was over. Germany had surrendered in May 1945 and Japan in August. Dr. Keys, director of the experiment, offered some preliminary advice in terms of what the scientists had learned about refeeding. The Allies needed to physically rehabilitate the starved people of Europe before talking to them about democracy. Giving these people extra vitamins or protein would not necessarily be helpful. And no real rehabilitation could take place on 2,000 calories a day; the proper diet was more like 4,000.

**B**y the end of the experiment, almost one year after it had begun, the Minnesota volunteers were far from normal, but they were on their way. Their humor and social skills had somewhat returned, and they were looking forward to the future. Twelve subjects agreed to stay on at the laboratory for another eight weeks of testing. Now they were allowed to eat whatever they wanted. A few celebrated by consuming as many as 10,000 calories a day. Many had the sensation of being hungry even after they had just eaten a large meal; some would eat three lunches in a row. Others felt anxious that food would be taken away. Jim Graham carried candy bars and cookies in his pockets, so he would have something to eat whenever he wanted.

The glut of food seemed to overload the system. Most men had some new form of discomfort, from bloating and heartburn to shortness of breath and sleepiness. Five men still had swollen knees and feet, sometimes worse than before. Now the atrophic, weakened heart showed its vulnerability, not in semi-starvation but in rehabilitation. One subject, eating 7,000 to 10,000 calories a day for a week, had signs of cardiac failure—difficult breathing, a puffy face, pitting edema, and an enlarged heart.

EVEN WHEN THE EXPERIMENT ENDED, MOST MEN HAD SOME NEW FORM OF DISCOMFORT.

## *The Hunger Experiment*

After bed rest, a reduced diet, and reduced salt intake, the symptoms disappeared.

Eventually, four months after the end of starvation, almost everyone had returned to a more moderate daily intake of 3,200 to 4,200 calories. They had all surpassed their pre-starvation weight, and the researchers commented that a “soft roundness became the dominant characteristic” of men who had entered the experiment lean and fit. By the end of five months, their sex drive had returned and their sperm were vigorous and motile. Their hearts were normal sized. Their lung capacities were normal. More than eight months later, the researchers were still monitoring 16 of the subjects. Most had no complaints except for shortness of breath. Most were overweight. Jim Graham had ballooned from his control weight of 175 to 225, and he would continue to gain. One man still felt physically lethargic. One still had some edema. Those who had complained of nervousness felt better. Their eating habits were close to acceptable.

**T**he body is a circle of messages: communication, feedback, updates. Hunger and satiety are the most basic of these. Every day, we learn more about how this system works. We know what hormones run through the blood screaming “Eat!” We know which ones follow murmuring “Enough.” We know that it is relatively easy to repress the signal for enough.

The signal for hunger is much, much harder to turn off. We are omnivores with an oversized brain that requires a lot of energy. We are not specialized in how we get our food. Instead, we are always willing, always alert, always ready with a rock or digging stick. We are happy to snack all day long. Our love of fat and sugar has been associated with the same chemical responses that underlie our addictions to alcohol and drugs; this cycle of addiction may have developed to encourage eating behavior. We hunger easily, we find food, we get a chemical reward. Then we’re hungry again. That’s good, because the next time we look for food, we may not find it. Better keep eating while you can.

It’s no wonder we are programmed to pound the table and demand dinner. The exceptions to this usually have extreme causes: infection, disease, terminal illness. For most of us, at regular times, the body shouts, “Feed me, damn it!” Deprived, the body sulks. The body exacts its petty revenge. Finally, with extraordinary cunning, and with something that approaches grace, the body turns to the business of the day, beginning what scientists call “the metabolic gymnastics” by which it can survive without food.

If you are healthy and well nourished, you can live this way for 60 days. You can live much longer if you have more fat to break down. The rhythms of your life will change: your heartbeat, your hormones, your thoughts. Your brain will switch to a new energy source. You will start consuming yourself, but precisely, carefully.

We are built to be hungry and we are built to withstand hunger. We know exactly what to do. □

# THE PERIODICAL OBSERVER

*A review of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad*

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## *Hiroshima at 60*

*A Survey of Recent Articles*

A decade ago, heated controversy marked the 50th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in August 1945. Some historians said the bomb had been necessary to end the war and save hundreds of thousands of American lives, while revisionists insisted that Japan had been on the verge of capitulating and would have offered a surrender if only the Truman administration had facilitated it.

Since that contentious anniversary, a “middle ground” school of thought about the bombing has emerged. Writing in *Diplomatic History* (April 2005), J. Samuel Walker, the historian of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, surveys the recent literature. It seems that Japanese leaders were not, in fact, ready to surrender when the bomb was dropped on August 6, but had it (and the second A-bomb, dropped on Nagasaki three days later) not been used, they might have become reconciled to surrender before the U.S. invasion that was planned for 12 weeks later.

Revisionists such as Gar Alperovitz, whose 1965 book, *Atomic Diplomacy*, initiated the decades-long debate, maintained not only that the planned invasion would not have been as costly as it was later portrayed by President Harry S. Truman and others, but also that there were alternative routes to victory. Japan was already on the verge of surrender, the revisionists contend-

ed, citing a July 12, 1945, message from Japanese foreign minister Shigenori Togo to a Japanese ambassador, in which Togo said that “so long as England and the United States insist upon unconditional surrender the Japanese Empire has no alternative but to fight on with all its strength.”

Truman knew of that cable, as an entry in his diary six days later shows. So the administration should have moderated its demand for unconditional surrender by making it clear that the Japanese emperor could remain as titular head of state. It should also have let the shock of a Soviet invasion of Japanese-controlled Manchuria bring Japan to its senses. (“Fini Japs when that comes about,” Truman wrote in his diary after Stalin told him in July that the Soviets would, in Truman’s paraphrase, “be in the Jap war on August 15th.”)

In response to the revisionists, so-called traditionalist historians such as Robert H. Ferrell, of Indiana University, Robert James Maddox, of Pennsylvania State University, and Robert P. Newman, of the University of Pittsburgh, rejected the claim that Japan was ready to surrender. The Japanese officials who favored peace were not in charge; militants controlled the government. For these historians, dropping the bomb was the only way to defeat diehard Japan without an invasion that would have cost a huge number of American lives—at least 500,000 dead and wounded, Truman

## Periodicals

said in his memoirs a decade later.

But the traditionalists, says Walker, were too ready to accept the high casualty estimates, and they didn't pay enough attention to the uncertainties in the documentary record. For example, just three days after Hiroshima, Truman said in a radio address that he'd used the bomb "to save the lives of thousands and thousands of young Americans." If Truman thought then that the bomb would save *hundreds of thousands* of American lives, why wouldn't he have said so? The revisionists, on the other hand, failed to understand that the projected number of casualties was "far less important to Truman than . . . ending the war at the earliest possible moment in order to prevent as many U.S. casualties as possible."

Walker recounts that, "drawing on American sources and important Japanese material opened after the death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989," historian Richard B. Frank, author of *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire* (1999), "showed beyond reasonable doubt that the Japanese government had not decided to surrender before Hiroshima." Sadao Asada, of Doshisha University in Kyoto, also drawing heavily on Japanese wartime sources, reached the same conclusion. "In the end," he wrote in 1998, "it was the Hiroshima bomb that compelled them to face the reality of defeat."

Revisionist historians generally ignored the serious drawbacks U.S. officials saw in the alternative approaches to bringing about a Japanese surrender, Walker says. American policymakers were "far from certain that the Soviet invasion of Manchuria would be enough in itself to force a Japanese surrender." According to a June 1945 analysis by high-ranking planners, "it would require an invasion or 'imminent' invasion, combined with Soviet participation in the war, to force a Japanese surrender." Whatever Truman may have meant by "Fini Japs when [Soviet entry] comes about," Walker believes that the remark did not reflect the analysis of the president's top military advisers.

Drawing on Soviet as well as Japanese sources, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, a historian at the University of California, Santa Barbara, parts company with many other "middle grounders," says Walker, "by arguing that the

bombing of Hiroshima was less important in convincing the Japanese to surrender than Soviet entry into the war." But in Hasegawa's view, neither of itself was a "knockout punch."

Thomas W. Zeiler, a historian at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and author of *Unconditional Defeat: Japan, America, and the End of World War II* (2003), argues, contrary to the view of Alperovitz and some other revisionists, that the decision to use the bomb was not dictated by a desire to intimidate the Soviets: "The context of the ongoing Pacific War, and the objective of finally crushing an implacable foe, overrode considerations of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy at this time."

Writing in various scholarly journals during the 1990s, Barton J. Bernstein, a historian at Stanford University, "rejected the revisionist contention that the war could have ended as soon [as] or even sooner than it did without dropping the bomb," Walker says. "He argued that none of the alternatives available to U.S. policymakers would have brought the war to a conclusion as rapidly as using the bomb. And he doubted that any of the alternatives, taken alone, would have been sufficient to force a prompt Japanese surrender. Bernstein also suggested, however, that it seemed 'very likely, though certainly not definite,' that a combination of alternatives would have ended the war before the invasion of Kyushu began on 1 November 1945."

Traditionalist historians "too lightly" dismissed that possibility, Walker contends. In the 12 weeks before the invasion, "the combination of Soviet participation in the war, the continued bombing of Japanese cities with massive B-29 raids, the critical shortage of war supplies, the increasing scarcity of food and other staples . . . , and diminishing public morale could well have convinced the emperor to seek peace."

So though the bomb "was probably not necessary to end the war within a fairly short time before the invasion took place," Walker concludes that it "was necessary to end the war at the earliest possible moment and in that way to save American lives, perhaps numbering in the several thousands." And for the American president, saving those thousands of American lives that would be lost if the war continued was "ample reason to use the bomb."

## *Believers and Citizens*

“Church Meets State” by Mark Lilla, in *The New York Times Book Review* (May 15, 2005),  
229 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

The reelection of George W. Bush has provoked a spate of lengthy articles in the press on the role of religious values in American life and set Democrats to devising new strategies to appeal to the religious Center. However, the crucial battle may well involve the debate over religion’s role in the American past, contends Lilla, a professor of social thought at the University of Chicago.

Religion was airbrushed out of many modern accounts of the making of America, and scholars such as Mark Noll of Wheaton College have done useful work in pointing out its prominent role. But the new thinking has its own shortcomings. Historian Gertrude Himmelfarb’s *The Roads to Modernity* (2004) correctly highlights the point that British and American thinkers of the Enlightenment opposed the radical anticlericalism of their French counterparts. Yes, says Lilla, the Founding Fathers and other Anglo-American thinkers saw religion as an important support that would help form new

citizens by teaching self-reliance and good moral conduct. But they “shared the same hope as the French *lumières*: that the centuries-old struggle between church and state could be brought to an end, and along with it the fanaticism, superstition, and obscurantism into which Christian culture had sunk.” The Founding Fathers gambled that the guarantee of liberty would encourage the religious sects’ attachment to liberal democracy and “liberalize them doctrinally,” fostering a “more sober and rational” outlook. The idea, says Lilla, was to “shift the focus of Christianity from a faith-based reality to a reality-based faith.”

For most of the 19th century, the approach worked. By the 1950s, theological liberalism represented the mainline religious consensus. But in the past 30 years, the mainline groups have retreated before resurgent evangelical, Pentecostal, charismatic, and “neo-orthodox” movements that have attracted not just Protestants but



Although many of the Founding Fathers viewed religion as an important source of self-reliance and moral teaching for the country’s citizenry, the separation of church and state became one of America’s inviolable principles, as suggested by this 1871 Thomas Nast cartoon.



Catholics and Jews as well.

A similar collapse of theological liberalism occurred in Weimar Germany after the devastation of World War I. Defeated Germans abandoned the liberal-democratic religious Center for a wild assortment of religious and political groups as they searched for a more authentic spiritual experience and a more judgmental God. So far, says Lilla, the most disturbing manifestations of the Amer-

ican turn—the belief in miracles, the rejection of basic science, the demonization of popular culture—have occurred in culture, not politics. But Americans are right to be vigilant about the intrusion of such impulses into the public square, because “if there is anything. . . John Adams understood, it is that you cannot sustain liberal democracy without cultivating liberal habits of mind among religious believers.”

## *Freedom's the Liberal Ticket*

“Taking Liberty” by William A. Galston, in *The Washington Monthly* (April 2005), 733 15th St., N.W., Ste. 520, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Here's a remedy for liberals despondent at their low standing with the American public: Stop going against the American grain, and put freedom back in liberal thinking and discourse. Not the conservatives' flawed notion of freedom, in which government is usually seen as a threat, but rather the evolving liberal conception, championed by 20th-century progressives from Theodore Roosevelt to John F. Kennedy, in which government can act to advance freedom.

“Government is [not] the only, or always the gravest, threat to freedom; clerical institutions and concentrations of unchecked economic power have often vied for that dubious honor,” argues Galston, interim dean of the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy and a former deputy assistant to President Bill Clinton for domestic policy. The free market, left unrestrained, often works to undermine “the moral conditions of a free society.” And economic, social, and even familial dependence can damage character just as much as long-term dependence on government can.

Liberals became disenchanted with the cause of freedom during the Vietnam War, which led them to reject all efforts to extend freedom abroad. Conservatives picked up the fallen banner and won the public over to their conception of freedom. In response, liberals turned to the courts and redefined the liberal agenda in terms of fairness and equality of results. Most Americans remain unpersuaded—and liberals remain out in the cold.

“In the real world,” contends Galston, “which so many conservatives steadfastly refuse to face, there is no such thing as freedom in the abstract. There are only specific freedoms.” Franklin Roosevelt famously identified four: freedom of speech and of worship, freedom from want and from fear.

In contrast with *freedom of*, which points toward realms where government's chief role is to protect individual choice, *freedom from* points toward a responsibility to help citizens avoid unwanted circumstances. When Social Security was introduced, for example, Roosevelt justified it as promoting freedom from want and protecting citizens and their families against “poverty-ridden old age.”

“Liberals seldom talk about Social Security or other programs in terms of freedom,” notes Galston, but they should. Take universal health care. It would free countless people now trapped in their jobs by the need for health insurance to pursue other opportunities. Or take individual choice. Liberals should embrace it when it serves their principled purposes—by supporting individual retirement savings accounts, for example, not as part of Social Security but as additions to it.

In foreign affairs, says Galston, President George W. Bush's “faith in the transformative power of freedom . . . is not wholly misplaced.” But “contemporary conservatism, with its free-lunch mentality,” has a hard time admitting that freedom requires sacrifices, such as higher taxes in wartime.

Liberals have pined too much for a culture less individualistic than America's reality is, according to Galston. "As FDR did

three-quarters of a century ago, we must mobilize and sustain a popular majority with the freedom agenda our times require."

## *In Your Face*

"The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust" by Diana C. Mutz and Byron Reeves, in *American Political Science Review* (Feb. 2005), American Political Science Assn., 1527 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

It's become fashionable to blame television shoutfests such as *The O'Reilly Factor* for Americans' growing disaffection with politics. But why should a bunch of shouting heads be such a turnoff?

To find out, political scientists Mutz and Reeves, of the University of Pennsylvania and Stanford University, respectively, corralled a group of hapless volunteers and sat them down—some with electrodes attached—to watch two versions of a political talk show created by the researchers.

In one version, the actors carried on a polite discussion, while in the other they interrupted each other, rolled their eyes, and generally misbehaved. All of the viewers found the "uncivil" show more entertaining, but differences emerged when they were given an opinion survey shortly after watching the two programs.

On the whole, those who saw the uncivil show suddenly recorded decreased levels of trust in politicians and the political system generally. (Interestingly, however, trust *increased* slightly among viewers who were identified in psychological tests as prone to conflict in their own lives.) Among those

who watched the civil show, there was no change. So, contrary to a lot of speculation, it's not political conflict that turns off Americans. It's incivility.

And it's not just incivility, but the particular form it takes on television, according to Mutz and Reeves. Television's "sensory realism" makes the shoutfests very much like real-life encounters. But in real life, people who fall into arguments tend before long to back off, physically as well as rhetorically. On talk shows, conflict brings the cameras zooming in for a screen-filling look at the combatants, while the host works to ratchet up the antagonism. It's a "highly unnatural" experience for viewers, and, as the electrodes Mutz and Reeves attached to some viewers showed, one that produces a physiological reaction much like the one created by real conflict. That, the two researchers conclude, is the source of the turnoff: "When political actors . . . violate the norms for everyday, face-to-face discourse, they reaffirm viewers' sense that politicians cannot be counted on to obey the same norms for social behavior by which ordinary citizens abide."

### FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

## *What Does North Korea Want?*

"North Korea's Weapons Quest" by Nicholas Eberstadt, in *The National Interest* (Summer 2005), 1615 L St., N.W., Ste. 1230, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Most discussions of how to deal with North Korea's quest for nuclear weapons begin with the assumption that it's largely a problem of diplomacy. Pyongyang's aim is to obtain as much food, fuel, and other benefits as it can through international blackmail, this logic goes. Indeed, by crying nu-

clear, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il has extracted more than \$1 billion from the United States since 1995. Eberstadt, an American Enterprise Institute scholar, argues that the Communist North Koreans are playing a far more brutal game that many observers recognize.

## Periodicals

From its founding in 1948, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has sought the reunification of the divided Korean peninsula under its own rule. For Pyongyang, the Korean War never ended, and unconditional victory over South Korea remains its aim. With a deeply impoverished population of less than 23 million, North Korea for years has nonetheless fielded an army of more than a million soldiers, the fourth largest in the world. But as long as South Korea is allied with the United States, even this immense force cannot do the job.

"To deter, coerce and punish the United States, the DPRK must possess nuclear weaponry and the ballistic missiles capable of delivering them into the heart of the American enemy," says Eberstadt. "This central strategic fact explains why North Korea has

been assiduously pursuing its nuclear development and missile development programs for over 30 years—at terrible expense to its people's livelihood, and despite all adverse repercussions on its international relations."

The North Koreans already possess short-range Scud-style missiles and biochemical weapons that menace Seoul, and intermediate No Dong-type missiles capable of reaching Japan. They are now working on improved long-range missiles that will be capable of striking the U.S. mainland. Armed with nuclear warheads, such missiles, as former U.S. secretary of defense William J. Perry warned in 1999, might make Washington hesitate at a time of crisis on the Korean peninsula. And uncertainty in Seoul about what Washington would do might lead to a breakup of the U.S.–South Korean

### EXCERPT

## *Memo from London*

*Had policymakers troubled to consider what befell the last Anglophone occupation of Iraq they might have been less surprised by the persistent resistance they encountered in certain parts of the country during 2004. For in May of 1920 there was a major anti-British revolt there. This happened six months after a referendum (in practice, a round of consultations with tribal leaders) on the country's future, and just after the announcement that Iraq would become a League of Nations mandate under British trusteeship rather than continue under colonial rule. Strikingly, neither consultation with Iraqis nor the promise of internationalization sufficed to avert an uprising.*

*In 1920, as in 2004, the insurrection had religious origins and leaders, but it soon transcended the country's ancient ethnic and sectarian divisions. The first anti-British demonstrations were in the mosques of Baghdad, but the violence quickly spread to the Shi'ite holy city of Karbala, where British rule was denounced by Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazi, the historical counterpart of today's Shi'ite firebrand, Moktada al-Sadr. . . .*

*This brings us to the second lesson the United States might have learned from the British experience: Reestablishing order is no easy task. In 1920 the British eventually ended the rebellion through a combination of aerial bombardments and punitive village-burning expeditions. Even Winston Churchill, then the minister responsible for the Royal Air Force, was shocked by the actions of some trigger-happy pilots and vengeful ground troops. And despite their overwhelming technological superiority, British forces still suffered more than two thousand dead and wounded. Moreover, the British had to keep troops in Iraq long after the country was granted full sovereignty. Although Iraq was declared formally independent in 1932, British troops remained there until 1955.*

—Niall Ferguson, professor of history at Harvard University and advocate of American empire, in *Daedalus* (Spring 2005)

military alliance long before any actual strike. Nuclear weapons, in short, may be Pyongyang's best hope for achieving its long-cherished objective of reunification.

No one should have been shocked—though many around the world apparently were—by Pyongyang's claim in February that it possessed nuclear weapons and would not give them up “under any circumstances.” U.S. intelligence has long assumed

that North Korea has one or two nuclear devices. To renounce such weapons would be tantamount to giving up its vision of reunification, Eberstadt argues, and with it the justification the regime has used since its founding for all the terrible sacrifices it has demanded of its people. Keeping the world safe from North Korea will be a more “difficult, expensive, and dangerous undertaking” than many people want to believe.

## *Latin Lessons for Iraq*

“The Follies of Democratic Imperialism” by Omar G. Encarnación, in *World Policy Journal* (Spring 2005), World Policy Institute, New School Univ., 66 Fifth Ave., 9th fl., New York, N.Y. 10011.

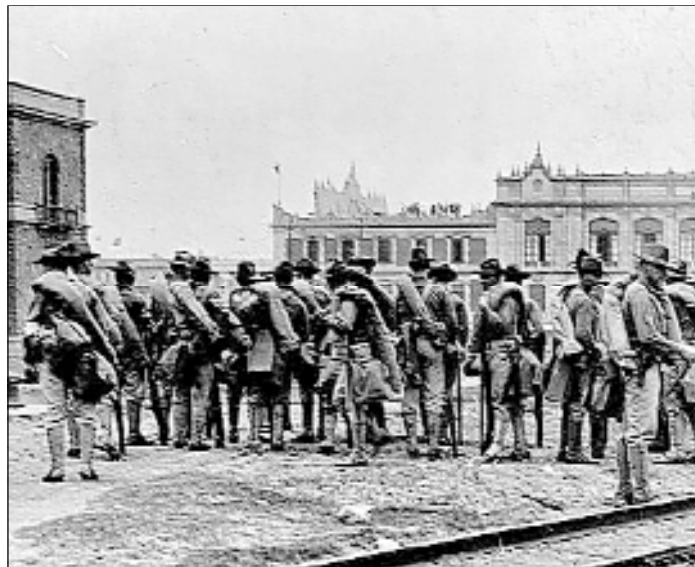
“There is no people not fitted for self government,” declared the idealistic American president, and so saying, he dispatched an expeditionary force abroad to topple a “government of butchers.” To the president's vast surprise, the Americans weren't universally hailed as liberators, and thousands rallied around the dictatorship to fight the invading Americans.

That president was not George W. Bush but Woodrow Wilson, who sent U.S. Marines to Mexico in 1914 to overthrow General Victoriano Huerta, who had seized power in a coup the year before. Anti-American riots, at first confined to Mexico City, spread to Costa Rica, Guatemala, Chile, Ecuador, and Uruguay. A mediation conference ended in failure because Wilson wouldn't budge from his demand that Huerta relinquish power and hold free elections. Huerta fled Mexico later that year, but democracy didn't arrive in Mexico until 2000.

In the Caribbean and Central America, argues Encarnación, a political scientist at Bard College, “Wilson's military occupations and attempts at creating democracy” during his two terms in

office only “paved the way for a new generation of brutal tyrannies,” including those of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba and Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua. The United States ruled the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924, reorganizing much of the government and creating a national constabulary in order to help civilian leaders stay in power. A civil war that broke out after the Americans left ended only in 1930, when Rafael Trujillo, commander of the very National Guard the Americans had created, seized power, inaugurating 31 years of harsh dictatorial rule.

Encarnación sees behind President



*U.S. Marines, sent into Mexico by Woodrow Wilson to overthrow General Victoriano Huerta in 1914, await orders at the port of Veracruz.*

Bush's drive to democratize Iraq and the Middle East the same flawed premises that inspired Wilson's failed crusade: that the spread of democracy, even by force, is an unqualified good; that people everywhere, regardless of their history or circumstances, are ready for democracy; and that America has a special mission to bring it to them and even impose it on them.

Like many other critics, Encarnación dismisses the relevance of apparent U.S. successes in democratizing Japan and Germany after World War II, since both coun-

tries had advantages, including past experience with democracy, not shared by Iraq and other target nations.

The Bush administration should learn from earlier U.S. successes in Latin America and elsewhere by "facilitating the conditions that enable nations to embrace democracy of their own free will: promoting human rights, alleviating poverty, and building effective governing institutions," says Encarnación. As President Herbert Hoover once declared, "True democracy is not and cannot be imperialistic."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

## *A Failing Grade for Business Schools*

"How Business Schools Lost Their Way" by Warren G. Bennis and James O'Toole, in *Harvard Business Review* (May 2005), 60 Harvard Way, Boston, Mass. 02163.

No medical school would employ a professor of surgery who'd never seen a patient, yet today's business schools are packed with professors who have little or no managerial experience. That suits the schools fine, but their students and society are being short-changed, argue Bennis, a professor of business administration at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business, and O'Toole, a research professor at USC's Center for Effective Organizations. Narrowly focused on academic research that purports to be scientific, B-school professors are failing to teach their students to grapple with the complex, unquantifiable issues that business executives face in making decisions. The result, say employers, students, and even some deans of prestigious business schools, is that the future leaders these schools turn out year after year are ill prepared for the real world of business.

Instead of looking on business as a profession, most of the nation's two dozen leading business schools have come to regard it as an academic discipline, like physics or chemistry. That's quite a change from the first half of the 20th century, when B schools were more akin to trade schools. "Then, in 1959 . . . the Ford and Carnegie foundations issued devastating reports on the woeful state of business school research and theory," and put money behind their suggested reforms.

Today, B-school "scientists" employ abstract financial and economic analysis, statistical multiple regressions, and laboratory psychology to get at myriad little facts that they hope will one day add up to a general science of organizational behavior. "Some of the research produced is excellent," but very little of it is relevant to practitioners. The research-oriented professors may be brilliant fact-collectors, but if the business of business schools is to develop leaders, "then the faculty must have expertise in more than just fact collection." As a profession, not a scientific discipline, business must draw upon the work of many academic disciplines, including mathematics, economics, psychology, philosophy, and sociology.

"The best classroom experiences," say Bennis and O'Toole, "are those in which professors with broad perspectives and diverse skills analyze cases that have seemingly straightforward technical challenges and then gradually peel away the layers to reveal hidden strategic, economic, competitive, human, and political complexities—all of which must be plumbed to reach truly effective business decisions." Unfortunately, as narrowly trained specialists fill the B-school faculties—and replicate themselves through hiring and tenure decisions—the trend is away from the "case studies" method.

The authors don't want to remake business schools into the glorified trade schools

they once were, but they do want to restore balance. “By whatever means they choose—running businesses, offering internships, en-

couraging action research, consulting, and so forth—business school faculties simply must rediscover the practice of business.”

## *Overestimating the Trade Deficit*

“A Silver Lining in the U.S. Trade Deficit” by Diana Farrell, Sacha Ghai, and Tim Shavers, in *The McKinsey Quarterly* (March 2005), [www.mckinseyquarterly.com](http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com).

If Washington wants to cut America’s huge and scary trade deficit down to size, using 21st-century measurement techniques would be a good way to start. Farrell, director of the McKinsey Global Institute, and her colleagues at the research arm of the business consulting firm McKinsey and Company, believe that about a third of last year’s \$666 billion U.S. trade deficit was essentially a statistical mirage created by the federal government’s outdated method of calculating the trade balance.

That method is based on the assumption that a dollar sent abroad is a dollar that goes into a foreign pocket. Thanks to the rapid expansion of U.S. multinationals, however, that dollar is much more likely than before to find its way into the coffers of a foreign subsidiary of a U.S. company.

That’s not the end of the story. If that foreign subsidiary sells its products abroad, only its profits (or losses) are recorded in U.S. trade data. But if it ships those products to the United States, the entire sales amount shows up in the trade statistics as red ink.

For example, the Mexican subsidiaries of Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors sold nearly 500,000 cars and trucks in Mexico in 2003, earning a profit of \$360 million. That amount showed up on the plus side of the U.S. trade ledger. But the subsidiaries also shipped 700,000 vehicles to the United States, where they were sold for \$12 billion. After U.S.-made components worth \$5 billion that were used in the vehicles were accounted for, the sales

added \$7 billion to the U.S. trade deficit.

Two trends since the early 1990s have exacerbated this strange effect. First, U.S. multinationals have vastly increased their investments abroad. Second, and more important, a growing share of that money is being sunk into investments designed not to expand markets abroad but to improve corporate efficiency. Classic examples include customer-service call centers in India and assembly plants for computer motherboards in China. These sorts of ventures, especially the service-oriented ones, have a more pronounced effect on the U.S. trade deficit because they incorporate few products exported from the United States.

Farrell and her colleagues argue that U.S. multinationals’ growing foreign investments produce many benefits that are not widely appreciated—including lower prices for consumers, higher stock market valuations (to the tune of \$3 trillion) for the multinationals, and more jobs at home. In 2002, the foreign subsidiaries of U.S. corporations generated about \$2.7 trillion in revenues—about three times the value of all U.S. exports. Yet because of the way Washington keeps its books, the lion’s share of those revenues registered as an economic weakness rather than a strength.

The federal government, say the authors, should adopt “an ownership-based view of trade,” categorizing companies by where they are owned, not by where their goods are produced. That would give a more realistic picture of the health of the U.S. economy.

## *Jobs and Jails*

“What Explains the Continuing Decline in Labor Force Activity among Young Black Men?” by Harry J. Holzer, Paul Offner, and Elaine Sorensen, in *Labor History* (Feb. 2005), Taylor & Francis, Inc., 325 Chestnut St., Ste. 800, Philadelphia, Pa. 19106.

The 1990s were boom years for workers of virtually all kinds, yet the number of young black men who were out of the

labor force—not even looking for work—grew faster than it did during the 1980s. By the end of the 1990s, about 32 percent of

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black men in the 16-to-24 age bracket who were out of school and had no more than a high school diploma were out of the labor force. That compares with 23 percent at the beginning of the decade.

Several familiar forces were responsible: declining real wages, the shrinkage of blue-collar employment, the rise of distant suburbs as centers of employment, and racial discrimination. But two relatively new factors made matters worse, according to Holzer, a professor of public policy at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute, and his coauthors. The first was the steady increase in incarceration rates. Today, about 30 percent of all young black men who are not in the military or in jail have criminal records, and thus reduced job prospects. (Inmates are not included in employment statistics while serving time.) Holzer and his colleagues calculate

that the increase in incarceration may account for about a third of the drop in labor force participation rates during the 1980s and '90s.

The other new factor is government's dramatically increased enforcement of court-ordered child support payments. Those payments may be needed to help the children of absent fathers, but they also impose a steep "tax" on earnings from low-wage jobs. A \$300 monthly payment—a fairly typical sum—is a 36 percent "tax" for a man earning \$10,000 a year. (About half of all black men age 25 and over are non-custodial fathers.) And child support debts pile up even if the father is unable to pay because he is in prison or out of work. Those factors give low-income fathers "meager" incentive to work, and may account for roughly another third of the change in labor force participation.

## SOCIETY

### *Naming a Minority*

"Finding a Proper Name to Call Black Americans" by Randall Kennedy, in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (Winter 2004–2005), 200 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

It's one of the most sensitive questions in America today: What's the proper way to refer to the nation's second-largest minority group?

In colonial times, freed blacks gravitated toward "African." But after the American Colonization Society was launched in 1816 by whites seeking to move freed blacks to Africa, that label lost its appeal. And most freed slaves and other blacks born in the United States considered themselves Americans, notes Kennedy, a Harvard law professor and noted commentator on racial matters. There was a pronounced shift toward use of the term "colored."

Not all black leaders felt it was proper to worry over the question of labels. The black abolitionist William Whipper protested that race-based nomenclature created an "odious distinction" between people of European ancestry and people of African ancestry. "Whipper proposed using a political distinction such as 'oppressed Americans,'" reports Kennedy. But other abolitionists re-

jected Whipper's criticisms. By 1854, the National Emigration Convention of Colored People was drawing up a resolution that "Negro, African, Black, Colored and Mulatto" would carry the same token of respect when applied to blacks as "Caucasian, White, Anglo-Saxon, and European" when applied to whites.

Later in the century, "Negro" began emerging as the preferred term, particularly among black intellectuals such as Booker T. Washington. Derived from "niger," the Latin word for black, the term drew fire because it was uncomfortably close to "nigger," which "had become by the early 19th century a term of extreme disparagement."

For two decades *The New York Times* lowercased "negro," on the argument that the word was a common and not a proper noun. In announcing their new policy in 1930, however, the paper's editors wrote that "every use of the capital 'N' becomes a tribute to millions who have risen from a low estate into the 'brotherhood of the



racers.” Many black luminaries embraced the term, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Thurgood Marshall, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Why, then, was “Negro” largely replaced by “Black” (with the same quandary over capitalization) among 1960s civil rights activists? Kennedy marvels at the Black Power movement’s ability to invert the negative “meaning of ‘black’ (just as some African Americans have recently sought to invert the meaning of ‘nigger’).” Among the dissenters was scholar Rayford Logan, who “rejected the term ‘black’ because he saw it as the term of ‘racial chauvinists who denied that the American Negro also had European roots,’” Kennedy writes. But Logan and his allies did not get far.

Jesse Jackson’s 1988 run for the presidency occasioned a brief renaissance for “African American.” Jackson argued that the term “has cultural integrity. It puts us in our proper historical context,” according to Kennedy. That term has become, among all races, “a conventional designation for American-born descendants of

African slaves.”

Today, says Kennedy, nothing seems so perplexing as the popularization—mainly by blacks—of the term “nigger.” It has been used to shocking effect by comedian Richard Pryor (who won a Grammy Award for his album *That Nigger’s Crazy*), the gangsta rap group NWA (Niggaz Wit Attitude), and rapper Ice-T, who declared, “I’m a nigger not a colored man or black or a Negro or an Afro-American.” Kennedy believes that advocates of the term use it to create “boundaries between insiders and outsiders, authentic members of the club and inauthentic wannabes.” Indeed, “some signal their distinction by calling themselves ‘real niggas.’” A second factor may be the desire to corral usage of the most negative term applied to blacks, making it “off limits to whites.”

Where does Kennedy come out in the name game? “If the labels ‘Negro’ and ‘colored’ and ‘black’ and ‘African American’ were good enough for [history’s black] heroes and heroines, they are certainly good enough for me.”

#### EXCERPT

### *Pointless U*

*If the reasons and rationales for decision making (and making decisions hour after hour, day after day, is what [university] administrators do) do not come from some large vision of education or some grandly conceived national project or some burning desire to correct injustices and save the world—all sources of energy that are now themselves without energy—they must come from somewhere; and the somewhere they come from is the necessity of fusing into a unity—even if the unity is finally spurious—the myriad enterprises that just happened to have collected together in the same space. No longer understood as an ideological system—whether nationalistic, religious, reformist, or revolutionary—the university is understood as a bureaucratic system. No longer organized around a metaphysical value of which all activities are to be the reflection, the university is organized around the imperative that it be organized; it is a contentless imperative that supports and is supported by a set of contentless bureaucratic values—efficiency, maintenance, expansion, resource allocation, development. To the questions Efficiency to what end? or Maintenance of what? or Expansion toward what goal? or Development in what direction? the ethic of bureaucratic management can only give a variation of the answer Marlon Brando gives in *The Wild One* when he is asked, “What are you rebelling against?” and replies, “What’ve you got?”*

—Stanley Fish, dean emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois at Chicago, in *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 2005)

## Murder! Mayhem! Social Order!

“True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism” by Joy Wiltenburg, in *The American Historical Review* (Dec. 2004), American Historical Association, 400 A St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003-3889.

“SLASHER KILLS FIVE” is the sort of gruesome headline that makes us sigh not just in sadness but in vexation with the cheap sensationalism of so much of modern journalism. Yet sensationalism has an honorable history, says Wiltenburg, a historian at Rowen University in New Jersey, and it still serves some of the same functions its inventors intended.

One of the earliest sensationalist works was a German pamphlet describing the horrific hatchet murders of four children by their mother (and her immediate suicide), written by Lutheran minister Burkard Waldis in 1551:

She first went for the eldest son  
Attempting to cut off his head;  
He quickly to the window sped  
To try if he could creep outside:  
By the leg she pulled him back inside  
And threw him down onto the ground  
[and though the boy pleaded for his life]  
She struck him with the self-same dread  
As if it were a cabbage head.

Waldis’s tract established several hallmarks of the genre: language of extreme pathos designed to arouse the reader’s senses (hence sensational), a breakdown of the family unit (providing an opportunity for a lesson on maintaining a strong, church-centered morality), and a relaxed attitude toward factuality.

Sensationalism was born in a time and a place (mid-16th-century Germany) in which the printing press made possible the widespread distribution of pamphlets and broadsheets. According to Wiltenburg, such accounts were “produced and probably purchased mainly by the literate upper levels of early modern society.” Many were written by established clerics and educated burghers. They fancied themselves authors of the “*warhafftige neue Zeitung*” (truthful new report), but they didn’t let a few missing facts stand in the way of dramatizing a “deeper moral truth.” Their different faiths produced alternative takes on events. A 17th-century Cath-



### Anne Vallens Lamentation,

For the Murthering of her husband *John Wallen* a Turner in Cow-lane neere Smithfield; done by his owne wife, on fatterday the 23 of Iune. 1616. who was burnt in Smithfield the first of Iuly following.  
To the tune of Fortune my foe.



The murderess Anne Wallens was the subject of this illustrated 1616 English ballad. The accompanying “dolefull tale” is shot through with regret: Though imagining her husband’s “soule in heaven doth dwell,” she fears that her own “without God’s mercy linkes to hell.”

olic pamphlet, for instance, used a man's murder of his family to discuss the inevitable punishment of sin, while Protestant authors "could use similar content to stress the power of God's word to redeem even the worst sinners through faith." But sensationalism also served important secular purposes. In an era when rudimentary, state-sponsored criminal justice systems were starting to emerge, sensationalist writings stirred crucial "right-thinking people" to support them.

Sensationalism has shifted form and focus over the centuries. In 17th-century England, ballads "fixed their gaze squarely on the criminal," and increasing attention was paid to the motive behind the deed. Murderers were seen as having transgressed more against the state

(by violating laws) than against God (by sinning), a change of perspective that moved the implied causes of criminal violence in a decidedly more secular direction.

Today's blood-soaked sensationalist crime reports may have strayed far from their religiously oriented, morally straitening roots, but they still "exert substantial political and cultural power." Studies suggest that they promote an exaggerated sense of the incidence of crime and of an individual's perception that he or she is likely to be a victim of crime. As Wiltenburg points out, such fears can affect a broad range of choices and attitudes about our society, from where we choose to live to "what punitive governmental actions to support."

## PRESS & MEDIA

### *Queen of Days*

"Imperial Soap Opera" by Les White, in *The Common Review* (Spring 2005),  
35 E. Wacker Dr., Ste. 2300, Chicago, Ill. 60601-2298.

Ever feel that if you've seen one soap opera, you've seen them all? That's because many were the brainchild of one woman, Irna Phillips, mother of *Another World*, *As the World Turns*, *Days of Our Lives*, and the world's longest-running show today, *The Guiding Light*. The shows live on, but Phillips died in obscurity in 1973 after a career as turbulent as any of her creations. Her gender was one handicap; her personality and her independence by turns helped and hobbled her.

Born in Chicago in 1901 into a large, poor, Jewish family, Phillips took the rare step—for a woman—of attending college, where a theater teacher said she had more talent than looks. Then came a series of dramatic plot twists. After graduation, an affair with a married doctor left her pregnant and syphilitic, and a botched abortion made her sterile, says White, a Chicago writer and clinical psychologist.

She volunteered at *Chicago Tribune*-owned radio station WGN, and station manager Henry Selinger hired her to write and act in his "playlet" *Painted Dreams*, a generation-gap-themed drama aimed at housewives. Selinger, the creator of the hot evening show *Amos 'n' Andy*, hoped to du-

plicate his success with daytime audiences, but left for another job shortly after *Painted Dreams* premiered in 1930.

Phillips wrote six 10-minute *Painted Dreams* episodes a week. In the process, she developed the three (seemingly autobiographical) plot lines she would recycle throughout her career: (1) the love triangle, in which a career-minded heroine involved with a married man loses out; (2) single motherhood, in which a heroine risks community scorn to raise a child out of wedlock; and (3) obscure identity, in which a hero or heroine searches for family roots. Phillips never married, but reputedly had a thing for doctors and lawyers, which may explain why they continue to populate daytime screens.

Just when *Painted Dreams* finally began to succeed, WGN and Phillips crossed swords, and she was fired. Meanwhile, *Chicago Tribune* ad man Frank Hummert took notice of *Painted Dreams*' success and began churning out knockoffs, and he, rather than Phillips, became known as the creator of the soap opera.

Phillips finally began making money with *Today's Children*, a *Painted Dreams*-esque serial that first aired on Chicago's NBC af-

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affiliate. Then, in 1937, came *The Guiding Light*, “a smash right from the gate.” Soon Phillips was earning \$250,000 a year. Her career was itself the stuff of melodrama, filled with double-dealing, lawsuits, and rumors of financing from a mysterious mobster lover. In 1941, her cocreator on *The Guiding Light* brought a long and bitter suit against her, which revealed Phillips’s harsh words about her sponsors and competitors, as well as a willingness to lie on the stand. She lost \$250,000.

In 1949, she intrepidly leaped into television, premiering the first major network soap, *These Are My Children*. She pioneered the TV close-up, and in 1964 had hits on all three television networks. She made many enemies in the industry and unwisely insist-

ed on negotiating her own contracts. In her seventies, she refused to join the Writers Guild union, forcing the producers of *As the World Turns*—considered the most successful soap of all time—to fire her. Six months later, she was dead.

Whether Selinger, Hummert, or Phillips deserves the credit for creation of the daytime soap opera, there’s no denying the leading role Phillips played in its wild success. Like one of her own characters, she overcame long odds. The soaps themselves now face the same odds, as cable television and reality shows threaten to kill the entire genre. Phillips’s name no longer appears in the credits of the shows she created, but her marriage of commerce and drama represents a lasting union.

## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

### *They Don’t Know from Adam*

“Bible Illiteracy in America” by David Gelernter, in *The Weekly Standard* (May 23, 2005), 1150 17th St., N.W., Ste. 505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

“Unless we read the Bible, American history is a closed book,” writes Gelernter, a Yale University professor of computer science who is currently a senior fellow in Jewish Thought at

the Shalem Center in Jerusalem. Yet a recent Gallup survey sponsored by the nonprofit Bible Literacy Project indicates that American high school students are ignorant of significant events in the Bible such as the Sermon on the Mount, and of concepts such as Covenant and the Chosen People. Eight percent of them thought Moses was one of the Twelve Apostles, and more than a quarter could not identify David as a king of the Jews.

The rhetoric of the Bible runs as an unbroken thread through American history. “Wee are entered into Covenant with him for this worke,” said John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. “Wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us.” Three and a half centuries later, a sermon of Winthrop’s would be drawn upon, famously, in President Ronald Reagan’s evocation of a “shining city on a hill.” Historian William Wolt, contemplating Abraham Lincoln’s second inaugural address—“With malice toward none; with charity for all: with firmness in the right, as God gives us to



One sign that teenagers could use a Bible refresher: Eight percent think Moses was one of the 12 Apostles.

see the right”—says that it “reads like a supplement to the Bible.”

Such examples suggest something much deeper than mere rhetoric, Gelernter says. These “settlers and colonists, the Founding Fathers, and all the generations that intervened before America emerged as a world power in the 20th century” viewed the Bible, particularly the example of the Israelites as the Chosen People, as *their* story. As John Adams put it, “I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence.”

According to historian Fania Oz-Salzberger, the British political thinkers who influenced early America, such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, saw in the example of Israel “a nearly perfect republic, from the time of the Exodus until at least the coronation of Saul. . . an exemplary state of law and a society dedicated to social justice and republican liberty.”

Understanding these influences on American thought and society are crucial, says Gelernter. Woodrow Wilson “spoke in biblical terms when he took America into the First World War,” and other presidents have used biblical imagery to underscore their ac-

tions. In Gelernter’s view, however, most contemporary culture critics “are barely aware of these things, don’t see the pattern behind them, can’t tell us what the pattern means, and (for the most part) don’t care.”

It may not be easy to correct today’s biblical ignorance. Even well-meaning “Bible-as-literature” electives, crafted to circumvent the minefield separating church and state, may not be the answer. Severing the Bible from its religious roots robs the work of the power that made it such a seminal text for earlier Americans. And the churches and synagogues that might be expected to teach the Bible to new generations are not doing enough, Gelernter says.

His own guess is that America will eventually experience another Great Awakening that will send people back to the Bible. It will begin with the country’s “spiritually bone dry” college students. Mostly, Gelernter says, “no one ever speaks to them about truth and beauty, or nobility or honor or greatness.” But “let the right person speak to them, and they will turn back to the Bible with an excitement and exhilaration that will shake the country.”

## *Locke to the Rescue*

“Natural Rights and Imperial Constitutionalism: The American Revolution and the Development of the American Amalgam” by Michael Zuckert, in *Social Philosophy and Policy* (Winter 2005), Social Philosophy and Policy Center, Bowling Green State Univ., Bowling Green, Ohio 43403.

Once celebrated for his central role in shaping American political culture, John Locke (1632–1704) has been pushed into the scholarly shadows in recent decades, as many historians have stressed the significance of classical republicanism and communitarianism in the American founding. The problem with that, argues Zuckert, a political scientist at the University of Notre Dame, is that it’s impossible to understand the founding without the Lockean philosophy of individual natural rights.

The conflict leading up to the American Revolution was a battle over the true character of the largely unwritten British constitution. The British insisted that Parliament had the right to legislate for the colonists “in all cases whatsoever,” as the Declaratory Act of 1766 stated. The rebellious Americans

maintained that Parliament did not have that right at all—that the colonists were represented, not in Parliament, but in their own legislative assemblies.

The Americans claimed their rights as British subjects. But their case had definite weaknesses, as they knew. Like the North American colonies, Ireland and two English Channel islands were not represented in Parliament, yet they were clearly subject to parliamentary authority. Why not the American colonies? The colonists had let Parliament legislate for them in the past. Why not now?

The British argued that the constitution provided for representation not of individuals but of “estates.” The Americans were part of the “Commons,” and they were represented in the House of Commons, even if they didn’t elect any of its members, insisted Thomas Whately,

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the secretary to the British Treasury, in 1765. Indeed, 90 percent of all Britons—including the wealthy merchants of London—did not enjoy the right to vote. “Although the Americans greeted the theory of virtual representation with scorn,” Zuckert writes, “it is in fact an extremely plausible application of the underlying theory of the constitution, as contained in the [1689] Bill of Rights.”

To trump that theory of virtual representation and the inconvenient precedents in their own colonial history, Americans drew on the Lockean theory of individual natural rights, com-

binning it with as much of the historical constitution as possible. Our laws, said John Adams, derive “not from parliament, not from common law, but from the law of nature, and the compact made with the King in our charters.” In this way, says Zuckert, persuading themselves “that the British were nefariously innovating and that the colonists had every right, as loyal subjects, to resist those innovations,” the Americans proceeded on to the Revolution. And the Revolution then cemented their case, giving “the nascent American political culture a fundamentally Lockean orientation.”

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

### *Mr. Wizard at Bat*

“Predicting a Baseball’s Path” by A. Terry Bahill, David G. Baldwin, and Jayendran Venkateswaran, in *American Scientist* (May–June 2005), P.O. Box 13975, 3106 East N.C. Hwy. 54, Research Triangle Park, N.C. 27709–3975.

When the innings stretch lazily through a warm afternoon and the crowd’s murmurings merge into a locustlike drone, baseball seems the perfect summer game. The field itself, however, is an arena of precise violence. Standing 60.5 feet from the batter, the pitcher hurls a ball just under three inches in diameter at a target only 17 inches wide. The ball arrives in less than half a second, sometimes dropping nearly six feet on its way to the plate.

The batter has perhaps one-seventh of a second to determine the ball’s speed and spin, another seventh of a second to decide whether—and where and when—to swing, and a fraction more to muscle the bat.

Science has more to offer the beleaguered man at the plate than illegal steroids, according to Bahill, a professor of systems engineering and computer science at the University of Arizona, and his colleagues, Baldwin, a former major-league pitcher, and Venkateswaran, a graduate student.

The batter can first pick up a few clues from the pitcher’s delivery. “To go through the strike zone, a 95-mile-per-hour fastball must be launched downward at a two-degree angle, whereas a 60-mile-per-hour change-up must be launched upward at a two-degree angle.” A major-league batter can often tell the difference.

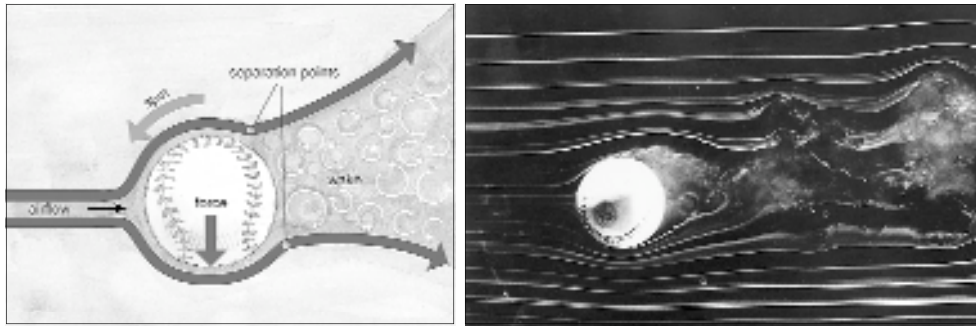
The batter can also observe the pitcher’s

hold on the ball as he releases it. “If a pitcher throws a curve ball and a batter has keen eyesight, he might be able to see the index and middle fingers roll across the face of the ball as the pitcher snaps it off.”

But the batter’s best source of information is the way the ball spins immediately after its release. Each type of pitch has its own spin, and detecting it requires excellent “dynamic visual acuity,” that is, the ability to perceive moving objects. For instance, Ted Williams, the great Boston Red Sox slugger, could read the label on a spinning 78-rpm record.

How the pitch appears to the batter depends on the pitcher’s grip. If the pitcher clutches the ball across the seams, it appears that four seams pass in front as the ball makes a revolution; if he holds the ball along the seams, it appears that only two seams do. To see what actually happens in flight, the authors skewered some baseballs on an electric drill and spun them at a fastball’s typical rate (1,200 rpm). The four-seam fastball was a gray blur with thin vertical red lines a seventh of an inch apart. The two-seam fastball showed two big red stripes, each about three-eighths of an inch wide, which made the spin direction more easily detectable.

The “flicker factor” also plays a role in detection, the authors speculate. The seams on



*Spin determines how a baseball moves. In a curveball (above, lateral view), the ball has topspin, turning in a counterclockwise direction. The turbulence in its wake causes the ball to drop faster than normal. It's the drop more than the curve that gives batters problems.*

the two-seam fastball appear almost as one, so as the ball rotates, it may flicker like a rapidly blinking light. That flickering could reveal if the ball has topspin (a curve ball) or backspin (a fastball). There's no flicker with a four-seam pitch, though, since the "blinking" of the four individual seams is so rapid.

Unfortunately for batters, most pitching coaches recommend a four-seam grip for the fastball. But pitchers generally use the same grip for the fastball and the slider (a pitch

that travels faster than a curve ball but spins less) to avoid tipping off the pitch. On the slider, the four-seam grip works to the batter's advantage because it produces the perception of a red dot on the ball visible from home plate. Eight of 15 former major leaguers Bahill and his colleagues surveyed recalled seeing just such a dot. A smart pitcher could use the two-seam grip to avoid this telltale signal. Now if only future Babe Ruths could keep this scientific knowledge out of the hands of pitchers!

## Bug Cops

"Policing Insect Societies" by Francis L. W. Ratnieks and Tom Wenseleers, in *Science* (Jan. 7, 2005), American Assn. for the Advancement of Science, 1200 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Though it may not provide the basis for yet another *Law and Order* spinoff, police work goes on in insect societies, too. The criminals in these societies are females out to spread their genes around, even though that may not be in the colony's best interest and may upset the division of labor between queen and workers. "In the life of any female bee, wasp, or ant, there are two points at which she may try to reproduce," write Ratnieks, a professor of apiculture at the University of Sheffield, and Wenseleers, a fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study in Berlin.

One is when, as an adult worker—inca-pable of mating, in most species, yet still possessing ovaries—she can activate those ovaries to lay eggs; if reared, the unfertilized eggs will develop into males. That would mean too many males. A typical honeybee colony, for instance, has tens of thousands of workers (female offspring of the queen), but

only a few hundred drones (male offspring of the queen). Enter "worker policing," in which workers (and sometimes even the queen) detect and kill eggs laid by other workers. In the case of the honeybee and the common wasp, this policing eliminates 98 percent of worker-laid eggs. It also appears to have a deterrent effect, discouraging workers from laying eggs.

The other "danger" point in a female insect's life occurs earlier, when she is a larva and can "choose" to develop into a worker or a queen. In most species, queens are specialized structurally for egg laying and frequently are unable to work. "A larva is often better off developing into a queen, yet policing ensures that most are prevented from doing so. Because queens are generally larger than workers and need more food, adult workers can control whether a larva will develop into a queen by controlling her food supply." In a



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honeybee colony, for example, where the queen cannot work and too many queens would reduce efficiency, workers “carefully select” the prospective royals (each likely to head her own colony) from the many wannabes and raise them in the “few special large cells in the brood comb.”

But such benign preventive policing is not an option for a different species: sting-

less bees of the sort that rear their female larvae in sealed cells of the same size. To deal with the excess queens they produce, these bees resort to police brutality: Soon after the unfortunate creatures emerge from their cells in the brood comb, they’re beheaded or torn apart.

Insect reformers, if such there be, have their work cut out for them.

## Psychology Grows Up

“Psychology in Recovery” by Paul C. Vitz, in *First Things* (March 2005), Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Ave., Ste. 400, New York, N.Y. 10010.

When it was born in the 19th century, psychology had high hopes of donning a lab coat and growing up to be a science. That has happened to some of the discipline’s offspring, but therapeutic psychology took another route—and had some wild times in its adolescence. Now, it too seems to be growing into a responsible adult.

Experimental psychology was one of the discipline’s first offspring, and it now has children and grandchildren, according to Vitz, an emeritus professor of psychology at

New York University. They are united by a focus on biology and brain function, and all are recognized as hard sciences. Physiological psychology is now known as neuroscience. Cognitive psychology (which deals with human memory, problem solving, learning, and the like) has begotten “such fields as cognitive neuroscience (focusing on brain activity) and cognitive science (focusing on artificial intelligence and robotics).”

Test-and-measurement psychology, a child of the early 20th century, has won recogni-

### EXCERPT

## *Are We All Plagiarists Now?*

*The 1960s gave us, among other mind-altering ideas, a revolutionary new metaphor for our physical and chemical surroundings: the biosphere. But an even more momentous change is coming. Emerging technologies are causing a shift in our mental ecology, one that will turn our culture into the plagiosphere, a closing frontier of ideas.*

*The Apollo missions’ photographs of Earth as a blue sphere helped win millions of people to the environmentalist view of the planet as a fragile and interdependent whole. The Russian geoscientist Vladimir Vernadsky had coined the word “biosphere” as early as 1926, and the Yale University biologist G. Evelyn Hutchinson had expanded on the theme of Earth as a system maintaining its own equilibrium. But as the German environmental scholar Wolfgang Sachs observed, our imaging systems also helped create a vision of the planet’s surface as an object of rationalized control and management—a corporate and unromantic conclusion to humanity’s voyages of discovery.*

*What NASA did to our conception of the planet, Web-based technologies are beginning to do to our understanding of our written thoughts. We look at our ideas with less wonder, and with a greater sense that others have already noted what we’re seeing for the first time.*

—Ed Tenner, science writer, in *Technology Review* (June 2005)

tion as a useful *social* science rather than a hard science, says Vitz. Researchers in this field develop tests to gauge intelligence, occupational aptitudes, mental pathologies, and other traits.

Therapeutic psychology, the branch that *is* psychology to most people, still has a modest base of scientific observation and experimental research, but it's no longer interested in being a science. The success of biologically based drug therapies in treating many psychological maladies is one reason. Modern therapeutic psychology uses "concepts and broad interpretive frameworks that are intrinsically nonscientific—and, indeed, philosophical in nature. The result is that psychology is becoming an applied philosophy of life," writes Vitz, a part of the humanities.

One sign of the field's new maturity is the emergence of "positive psychology." Traditional psychology focused on traumas and pathologies—and bred the victim mentality and flight from personal responsibility that now afflict American society. Positive psychology, built on the research of Martin

Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania, seeks to balance the discipline's focus by looking at "traits that promote happiness and well-being, as well as character strengths such as optimism, kindness, resilience, persistence, and gratitude," according to Vitz. In making this shift, he writes, therapeutic psychology "has moved not only from science to philosophy, but also from the past and its effects to the future and our purposes, from mechanical determinism to teleology."

At the same time, therapeutic psychology has become far friendlier to religion than it was in its younger days. Indeed, "many clinical psychologists today are themselves religious." Ironically, that friendliness has something to do with the democratization of therapy, which has brought psychologists into greater contact with ordinary Americans.

Vitz sees the possibility of a new "transmodern" psychology that incorporates the wisdom of traditional religious and philosophical thinking in guiding people to better lives. It would be a "smaller and humbler" discipline, but far more useful to its public than the overeager adolescent ever was.

## Genework

"The Unselfish Gene" by Johnjo McFadden, in *The Guardian* (May 6, 2005),  
119 Farringdon Rd., London EC1R 3ER, England.

For decades, scientists have been in hot pursuit of the genes for this and that—for heart disease, autism, schizophrenia, homosexuality, criminality, even genius. For the most part, they've come away empty-handed. As a result, many are turning to "an entirely new way of doing biology: systems biology," says McFadden, a professor of molecular genetics at the University of Surrey, England.

Scientists studying the cell's metabolic pathways picked up some early clues that something was amiss in their search for isolated genes. The metabolic pathways are like a network of roads that transport food to enzymes, which assemble the useful molecules into more cells. Biotechnologists seeking to engineer the cells to produce certain types of new cells found their efforts hindered by genes that appeared to be controlling the whole network's operation. Striking back,

the scientists engineered the genes to prevent them from taking control. But it didn't matter: The metabolic pathways swiftly went back to business as usual.

Geneticists were also frustrated and puzzled by the many genes that had no apparent function at all. Take the "prion gene," which mad cow disease turns into a pathogenic brain-destroying protein. What does this gene normally do? "The standard way to investigate what a gene does is to inactivate it and see what happens," McFadden writes. Yet when geneticists did that to the prion gene in mice, *nothing* happened: The mutant mice were perfectly normal. But a functionless gene isn't really a "gene" at all, as the entity is conventionally understood, for it is invisible to natural selection.

Instead of having a single major function, McFadden writes, most genes "probably play a

small part in lots of tasks within the cell. . . . So the starting point for systems biologists isn't the gene but rather a mathematical model of the entire cell. Instead of focusing on key control points, systems biologists look at the system properties of the entire network. In this new vision of biology, genes aren't discrete nuggets of genetic information but more diffuse entities whose functional reality may be spread across hundreds of interacting DNA segments." Instead of a single gene's being responsible for schizophrenia, for example, the condition

"may represent a network perturbation generated by small, almost imperceptible, changes in lots of genes."

To pursue this new vision, systems biology centers "are popping up in cities from London to Seattle." Unlike traditional biology departments, these centers generally have on staff not only biologists but physicists, mathematicians, and engineers. "Rather like the systems they study, systems biology centers are designed to promote interactivity and networking."

ARTS & LETTERS

## *Paying Tribute to Mr. Bellow*

*A Survey of Recent Articles*

Saul Bellow, whose exuberant novels shouldered their way through the second half of the 20th century, died on April 5, at the age of 89. Recipient of three National Book Awards, a Pulitzer Prize, and the Nobel Prize for literature, Bellow, whose books included *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), *Herzog* (1964), *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970), and *Humboldt's Gift* (1975), continued to write until shortly before his death. The veins of the tributes to Bellow this spring were as varied as his characters. But united as they were in praise, his eulogists could not agree on his essential qualities: Was he a misanthrope or a champion of flawed humanity? Was he the first modern American novelist to successfully embrace a European mode, or the quintessential American writer?

"Bellow's dark philosophical moods are what defined him as the most European of American novelists, though he is often celebrated—especially by British writers—as the epitome of American literary exuberance," critic Lee Siegel wrote in *The Nation* (May 9, 2005). "But Bellow was really a nationally unaffiliated free agent who exuberantly used

European lines and pulleys to get America under control of his imagination, just as he wielded an American idiom to throw off any claim that Europe might have had on his creative will."



Saul Bellow in 1953

In *The Guardian's* pages (April 7, 2005), novelist Ian McEwan proclaimed Bellow uniquely American as he explained why British writers tend to lay claim to him. "What is it we find in him that we cannot find here, among our own? I think what we admire is the generous inclusiveness of the work—not since the 19th century has a writer been able to render a whole society, without condescension or self-conscious social anthropology. Seamlessly, Bellow can move between the poor and their mean streets,

and the power elites of university and government, the privileged dreamer with the 'deep-sea thought.' His work is the embodiment of an American vision of plurality. In Britain we no longer seem able to write across the crass and subtle distortions of class—or rather, we can't do it gracefully, without seeming to strain or without caricature. Bellow appears larger, therefore, than any British writer can hope to be."

Bellow himself was famously impatient with people who tried to read too much into his work, or trace too deliberately the development of his writing over the course of his career. And so, in *The New Republic* (April 25, 2005), critic James Wood, a longtime friend of Bellow's, concluded his tribute by setting aside the encomiums and simply returning to the man himself: "Like anyone, writers, of course, are embarrassed by excessive praise, just as readers are burdened by their excessive gratitude—one cannot keep going on about it. And, eventually, it is easier to turn the beloved literary work into a kind of disembodied third

party: to admit that the work itself exceeds the writer, that it sails . . . away from the writer and toward the delighted reader. In the final year of Saul's life, as he became very frail, I would read some of his own prose to him, something he would doubtless have found, as a younger man, mawkish or cloying or tiresome. It did not feel any of those things, as Bellow sat there in forgetful frailty; rather it felt as if I were gently reminding him of his own talent and that he was grateful for this, and perhaps grateful for my gratitude. But, in truth, I could not thank him enough when he was alive, and I cannot now."

## Whitman Samplers

"Whitman in Selected Anthologies: The Politics of His Afterlife" by Kenneth M. Price, in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Spring 2005), One West Range, P.O. Box 400223, Charlottesville, Va. 22904-4223.

"I am large. . . . I contain multitudes," Walt Whitman boasted in "Song of Myself," and the century and a half since publication of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* in July 1855 has proved him right. We've invented any number of Whitmans, from free spirit to prophet to patriotic sage to civil rights advocate to gay icon. Price, who is a professor of English at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, traces the political uses to which Whitman's "fluid identity" has been put in a number of 20th-century anthologies of the poet's work and in a 21st-century collection meant to comfort Americans after the 9/11 attacks.

The earliest of the anthologies belongs to the "Little Blue Book" series that Emanuel Haldeman-Julius published out of Girard, Kansas, from 1919 to 1951, for working-class audiences. Along with Shakespeare, Hardy, Poe, Thoreau, Balzac, Kipling, Wilde, and the like, Haldeman-Julius introduced readers to the Soviet constitution and to an array of controversial thinkers, including Havelock Ellis and birth control pioneer Margaret Sanger. As many as 500 million of these Little Blue Books may have been sold over the years—for 10, five, and even two and a half cents a copy. (Tempered by his capitalist success, Haldeman-Julius, who began as a committed leftist, ended up a liberal New Deal Democrat.)

The publisher, says Price, saw Whitman as "a sympathetic figure who was compatible with his own views on religion, politics, and sexuality," and it was in a context emphasizing socialism and openness about sexuality that the poet appeared in the series. Blue Book 73 had three different versions: *Walt Whitman's Poems*, *Poems of Walt Whitman*, and *Best Poems of Walt Whitman*. These were not critical editions, to say the least, and they often misrepresented Whitman's meaning by rearranging the poems. Moreover, the cheap-looking volumes would never have met the aesthetic standards of the poet, who was always particular about his books' appearance. But the cheap look made possible a low price, and that assured the series the widest distribution.

However little Haldeman-Julius charged, he "could not match the absolutely free distribution of the World War II Armed Services Editions." In *A Wartime Whitman*, edited by Major William A. Aiken, the poet became, through judicious selection and "editorial intrusiveness," the champion of the American way of life that soldiers were fighting to defend. Aiken "goes to some pains to make Whitman's comradely love safe for the troops." Indeed, writes Price, "the Whitman who emerges from the Armed Services Editions is a virile heterosexual man, a trumpeter of democracy, a

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person equivalent to a medic with direct experience of the war, a fellow a GI wouldn't mind sharing a foxhole with."

The most recent of the anthologies, *I Hear America Singing: Poems of Democracy, Manhattan, and the Future*, published by Anvil Press in 2001, makes no explicit reference to the attacks of 9/11, but the epigraph leaves no doubt: "I am the mash'd fireman with breast bone broken, / Tumbling walls buried me in their debris." And these words appear on the back cover: "This selection of courageous and consoling poems focuses on Whitman's vision of democracy, his love of

Manhattan, his sense of the future—and of the community of peoples of this earth." The publisher (no editor is named) calls Whitman "as much a poet for our time as he was for the time of the American Civil War and its aftermath."

Price believes that "American culture has been in an incessant conversation with Whitman ever since he imbued his art with the political vision of the founders, making freedom and equality the guiding principles that literally shaped the form and content of *Leaves of Grass*." The voluble poet never tires of holding up his end of the conversation.

## Republican Art

"From Royal to Republican: The Classical Image in Early America" by Caroline Winterer, in *The Journal of American History* (March 2005), 1215 E. Atwater Ave., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

In the 1770s, as the 13 colonies drew closer to war with England, neoclassical images began to flood the consciousness of Americans. Prints and engravings were filled with temples, eagles, and triumphal arches. Pictures of the Roman goddesses Liberty and Minerva appeared everywhere—in journals and broadsheets; on coins, currency, seals; in fashion and architecture; on wallpaper and

furniture and even punch bowls. Was the wide distribution of these images a deliberate effort at political spin?

Clearly yes, says Winterer, a Stanford University historian. "Classical imagery in and of itself did not point to revolutionary ideology," she writes, "but that imagery was reinvented to suit the ends of a new political program." By using the symbols of the classical world to

### EXCERPT

## *Arthur Miller's Mission*

*Reservations about [Arthur] Miller, whether expressed by a critic patronizing his lack of avant-garde aspirations or a Broadway producer unwilling to finance anything but yet another revival of Salesman, seem to me to reflect a deeper unease with his notion of what theater is. For more than half a century, everything he wrote and said glowed with the belief that theater is a public art with a mission to bring people together in a public place to speak to them about matters of common concern. That is an old-fashioned idea, and not just because commercial theater is now so ridiculously expensive that its increasingly gray-haired and well-heeled patrons are wary of anything except guaranteed entertainment. It's more fundamental than that. We live in an age when public libraries and public schools, for example, are too often regarded as institutions of last resort for those who can't afford anything better, and when people can't walk down a street or through a park without isolating themselves in a private space via their cell phone conversations. Theater is a beleaguered outpost of collective life, an activity that cannot take place in your living room, online, or over a headset. That is why Miller's old-fashioned idea is eternally relevant and spiritually indispensable.*

—Wendy Smith, author and theater critic, in *The American Scholar* (Spring 2005)

convey the moral authority of Greek and Roman antiquity, artists, craftsmen, and writers were able to foster the impression that a new Rome was at hand. Paul Revere, who created many engravings of revolutionary iconography, was one key promoter of the new republican imagery. Another was Thomas Hollis, a radical English Whig who never left the mother country but who contributed to revolutionary fervor in the colonies by publishing and shipping to America books, prints, and medals that exalted the republican ideal.

Interest in the ancient world was hardly new among the educated American elite. In inventories of colonial libraries, the titles of classical texts appear almost as frequently as those of popular works of Christian devotion. Homer's *Iliad* turns up often, along with two standard reference books on antiquities: John Potter's *Archaeologiae Graecae* (1697) and Basil Kennett's *Romae Antiquae Notitia* (1696). Charles Rollin's *Ancient His-*

*tory* (first published in 1729) was a colonial bestseller.

Such books, and the illustrations that accompanied them, emphasized the Baroque aspect of classicism, especially the glories and plunder of war. But the neoclassical style of late-18th-century America transformed the bellicose images into ones of inevitability and harmony. Minerva and Liberty, for example, were no longer depicted as warlike and authoritarian but as peace-loving symbols of reasoned republicanism, allied with literature, science, and the arts. Ancient virtue was represented not by military action but by serene poise and balance. By adapting classical iconography in this manner, the image makers of the emerging nation were able to address some of the troubling questions raised by revolutionary struggle against the mother country and to present the upstarts with a flattering vision of themselves. A modern political consultant could not have done better.

## *The Inaudible Poet*

"Is That a Poem? The Case for E. E. Cummings" by Billy Collins, in *Slate* (April 20, 2005), [www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com).

Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it also has a more pragmatic use: Its practice by lesser lights keeps a luminary's work refracting through the poetry canon. Pity poor E. E. Cummings, a poet so inimitable that his fame is fading, writes Collins, a former U.S. poet laureate.

Cummings changed the rules by breaking nearly all of them. "In the long revolt against inherited forms that has by now become the narrative of 20th-century poetry in English, no poet was more flamboyant or more recognizable in his iconoclasm than Cummings," writes Collins. "By erasing the sacred left margin, breaking down words into syllables and letters, employing eccentric punctuation, and indulging in all kinds of print-based shenanigans, Cummings brought into question some of our basic assumptions about poetry, grammar, sign, and language itself. . . . Measured by sheer boldness of experiment, no American poet compares to him, for he slipped Houdini-like out of the locked box of the stanza, then leaped

from the platform of the poetic line into an unheard-of way of writing poetry."

Cummings came up hard in the poetry world. Born in 1894, he had, by age 25, placed poems in avant-garde magazines and published two books, *The Enormous Room* and *Tulips and Chimneys*. However, as late as 1935 he was driven to self-publish a poetry collection titled *No Thanks*, dedicated to the 14 publishers who had turned down the manuscript. For much of his life his poetry paid very little, and "well into his fifties, he was still accepting checks from his mother."

But in the decade before his death in 1962, several major collections were published, and he once read to 7,000 people at the Boston Arts Festival. Today, Cummings is variously denigrated for spawning the "desiccated extremes" of so-called language poetry, and lauded as "the granddaddy of all American innovators in poetry." Despite this influence, he is no longer much read.

"Because he is synonymous with sensational typography," writes Collins, "no one

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can imitate him and, therefore, extend his legacy without appearing to be merely copying or, worse, parodying.” It doesn’t help matters that his “most characteristic” poems are nearly impossible to read out loud; Cummings himself described his work as “inaudible.”

“He has become the inhabitant of the ghost houses of anthologies and claustrophobic seminar room discussions,” Collins observes ruefully. “His typographical experimentation might be seen to have come alive again in the kind of postmodern experi-

ments practiced by Dave Eggers and Jonathan Safran Foer, not to mention the coded text-messaging of American teenagers. But the eccentric use of the spatial page that accounted for Cummings’s notoriety must be seen in the end as the same reason for the apparent transience of his reputation. No list of major 20th-century poets can do without him, yet his poems spend nearly all of their time in the darkness of closed books, not in the light of the window or the reading lamp.”

## OTHER NATIONS

### *Japan’s Unfinished War*

“Victims or Victimizers? Museums, Textbooks, and the War Debate in Contemporary Japan”  
by Roger B. Jeans, in *The Journal of Military History* (Jan. 2005), George C. Marshall  
Library, Lexington, Va. 24450–1600.

Are the Japanese determined to whitewash their nation’s militarist past and wartime atrocities? Protesters in China this spring were only the latest foreigners to say so. But the perception, widespread outside Japan, is at odds with the reality of a nation divided over its past, says Jeans, who teaches East Asian history at Washington and Lee University. “By the 1990s, it looked as though the long battle to include the truth of Japanese wartime aggression in Asia in textbooks had been won. In 1995, a survey of the 12 most popular textbooks in Japanese schools showed they agreed [that] Japan pursued a ‘war of aggression.’ . . . They also included the [1937] Nanjing Massacre, as well as Japan’s use of poison gas and slave labor.”

Then, in 1996, University of Tokyo professor Nobukatsu Fujioka and others who condemned this “masochistic” and “anti-Japanese” view of history founded the Society for the Creation

of New History Textbooks. A middle-school textbook produced by the society was one of several approved by Japan’s Ministry of Education in 2001 as suitable for use in schools. But when many Japanese groups, including one headed by novelist and Nobel laureate



*When Japan’s Ministry of Education published history textbooks that appeared to deny responsibility for Japanese atrocities committed during World War II this past spring, Tokyo demonstrators (above) joined the protests that erupted throughout Asia.*



Kenzaburo Oe, joined Chinese and Koreans in attacking the textbook for “watering down” Japan’s wartime past, 98 percent of Japan’s 542 school districts refused to adopt it.

The “culture war” over Japan’s past is also being fought in the country’s museums. On one side are the “war museums,” such as the Yasukuni Shrine War Museum in Tokyo, which glorifies the wartime sacrifice and Japan’s “Greater East Asian War” of “liberation.” Since the early 1990s, however, a more critical Japanese attitude toward World War II has begun to manifest itself in new “aggression” or “peace” museums, such as the Kyoto Museum for World Peace.

Operated privately or by local governments, these museums were built away from the nation’s capital, in Kyoto, Osaka, Kawasaki, Saitama, and Okinawa. “They present Japan as an aggressor in the war and describe its brutal treatment of other Asian peoples. In addition, the atomic bomb museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki added exhibits making it clear the bombings did not take place in a vacuum but were the result of Japan’s wartime aggression.”

Though the debate over the past is bound to continue for years, foreign commentators who claim that “Japan has amnesia” about its wartime past simply aren’t very cognizant about its present.

## *The Dutch Cure*

“A French View of the ‘Dutch Miracle’” by Dominique Schnapper, in *Society* (March–April 2005), Rutgers—The State University, 35 Berrue Cir., Piscataway, N.J. 08854.

Unlike many other countries in Europe, the Netherlands has faced head-on the challenge that slow economic growth and an aging population pose to the welfare state. That the Dutch have achieved significant reform is a “miracle,” says Schnapper, a professor of sociology at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*, in Paris, especially when compared with her own country’s failure to do so.

By the early 1990s, the Netherlands had become almost a caricature of a welfare state, sustaining a rapidly growing population of idlers. The number of officially “disabled” persons (who receive a full slate of welfare benefits) had mushroomed from 164,000 in 1968 to 921,000, and many more people were unemployed. More than a quarter of the work force was jobless or officially unfit to work. Early retirement was also on the upswing.

The “Dutch illness” soon elicited a Dutch cure. Legislation enacted in 1993, for example, tightened qualifications for disabled status, discouraged early retirement, and promoted work. As a result, the size of the disabled cohort shrank to the current level of about 500,000, and before long the early-retirement trend was reversed.

Why were the Dutch so successful? One reason is that there were few draconian cuts.

Disability claims, for example, were reduced in part by requiring employers to bear some of the cost of benefits, thus giving them an incentive to rehabilitate their employees. And the Dutch were helped by their consensual traditions—close cooperation among members of a small national elite, a strong political culture of consensus building, and the trade unions’ role as “comanagers” of the economy and society.

Dutch unions got their members to accept wage caps, freezes on the minimum wage, and part-time work and flextime. These concessions in the private sector allowed the government to trim the salaries of unionized government workers in the name of equality—something that would be unthinkable in Schnapper’s homeland.

The Dutch welfare state combines features from the three basic types of welfare states—the *liberal* (Britain, the United States), *continental* (France, Germany, Belgium), and, in particular, *social democratic* (the Scandinavian countries). The continental welfare states, long in place, rigid, and sacrosanct, have been especially resistant to reform. In France, the ideological approaches growing out of a revolutionary tradition work against political cooperation, not only among the state, unions, and the

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private sector, but in the political world. “All reform, even limited, seems like a fundamental challenge to the social contract.” The Dutch, by contrast, debated reform in the practical language of economic necessity and tradeoffs.

Schnapper adds that the upheavals in the Dutch welfare system have contributed to anti-European Union sentiment in the

country. The EU has required the Dutch to make certain changes in their social welfare system, she writes, but it has acted by administrative fiat rather than through a democratic process. That may help explain why consensus-minded Dutch voters overwhelmingly rejected the new EU constitution a few months after Schnapper’s article appeared.

## *Red Star over Laos*

“Laos: Still Communist after All These Years” by Joshua Kurlantzick, in *Current History* (March 2005), 4225 Main St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19127.

On the short list of states that cling to communism, China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba get almost all the attention. Habitually overlooked is a small country that once loomed large in the news: Laos.

Sandwiched between Vietnam and Thailand, with China to the north, Laos is still ruled by “the same generation of leaders that battled the United States and its allies in the 1970s,” notes Kurlantzick, foreign editor of *The New Republic*. Khamtay Siphandone, the top leader, is 81, and some Politburo members are in their nineties. Though the aging communist leaders have prospered, most of the country’s six million inhabitants have not. Some 85 percent are subsistence farmers, scratching out a life based on sweet potatoes, chickens, and water buffalo. Laos once had a fling with reform, but the country’s leaders have been busy ever since trying to turn back the clock.

In the late 1980s, after China and Vietnam had shown the way, the Laotian leaders tentatively began to open their economy to the outside world. “More than 80 [foreign] aid groups opened offices in Laos, and Vientiane developed a thriving social scene of expatriate assistance workers, who congregated at new cafés serving Western staples like chicken pie and drove around Vientiane in expensive Land Rovers.” Trade with Thailand mushroomed after the opening of a “Friendship Bridge” over the Mekong River in 1994. The regime relaxed its prohibitions against Buddhism and discussion of the former royal family, and loosened restrictions on tourism. The number of

tourists rose from 140,000 in 1994 to more than 700,000 six years later. Young backpackers from Europe and America could be found sipping coffee in the espresso bars that sprang up around the country, and their Laotian peers reveled in the glories of new bars that served up beer and Thai karaoke.

But the changes in Laos were “more cosmetic” than in China and Vietnam. The hard-line leaders refused to liberalize much of the economy, and the close ties with Thailand proved ruinous when the Thai-centered Asian financial crisis occurred in the late 1990s. The level of foreign investment in Laos plummeted. Siphandone and his colleagues were shocked in 1999 when some 30 pro-democracy Laotian students planned a public demonstration in Vientiane, the first such protest since the Pathet Lao came to power. “Police broke up the rally before the protesters could even unfurl their banners,” says Kurlantzick. Many of the activists have not been seen since. Other inconvenient people have also disappeared.

As it retightened its rule, the government turned to China. Beijing provided export subsidies and aid, and it agreed to join Bangkok in jointly financing a new road through Laos that will link China and Thailand. These steps could help Laos’s struggling economy, Kurlantzick says. Eventually, the country may be drawn into expanded trade with other Asian nations and even with the United States. That would be good news for proponents of economic reform, including “younger members of the Lao government.”

# CURRENT BOOKS

Reviews of new and noteworthy nonfiction

## *In the Beginning*

BEFORE DARWIN:  
*Reconciling God and Nature.*

By Keith Thomson. Yale Univ. Press. 314 pp. \$27

Reviewed by David Lindley

Strict creationism may not have gone away altogether, but for now it's mostly in abeyance. These days, school districts in Kansas, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere are treating us to a debate on the "intelligent design" theory of life. Whether for sincere or merely tactical reasons, proponents of this latest anti-Darwinian ruse are willing to allow that *some* evolution occurs. The increasing prevalence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria is an urgent example that's hard to ignore. So, yes, change happens. But that's as much ground as the intelligent design crowd is willing to cede. The complexity of life, they say, is too great to be explicable by the spontaneous and purposeless actions of nature. The marvelously fine-tuned architecture of living organisms indicates a design, and design implies a designer. Ask who or what this designer might be, and you tend to get an innocent smile and a soothing assurance that this is a question—a *scientific* question, mind you—that only continued research can answer.

If nothing else, this latest installment of a long-running saga illustrates the old saw that those who don't know history are condemned

to repeat it. The apparently irresistible proposition that the earth and all it carries must have been put together deliberately has ancient roots, but intelligent design in its modern form is most usually traced to William Paley, archdeacon of Carlisle, who in an 1802 book titled *Natural Theology* came up with a famous argument about a watch. If,

Paley said, you were wandering across a heath, tripped on something, and looked down to discover a watch lying in the grass, you would hardly imagine it got there of its own accord. Nor would you think such a clever little machine had sprung into existence spontaneously. No: Complex mechanisms cannot arise unaided. They must be designed and constructed. And so it is with life itself, Paley asserted.

But as Keith Thomson, a professor emeritus of natural history at the University of Oxford, shows in this engrossing and rewarding book, vapid summaries of this sort do enormous injustice to Paley, and to the profound and tortured arguments over the origin of life that swirled about in the century and a half preceding the publication of *Origin of Species* in 1859. For Paley was not some narrow-minded defender of bib-



William Paley

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lical literalism, but a man of reason, a creature of the Enlightenment. His aim was not to vanquish science by means of religion, but quite the opposite. The nascent ideas and principles of science, he thought, would serve to bolster faith by demonstrating the inescapability of God's hand in our world. The great irony of Paley's failure, Thomson makes clear, was that many of the crucial issues he wrestled with were precisely those that led Charles Darwin to a quite different conclusion.

In earlier times, faith in God rested on biblical authority, augmented by the occasional miracle to show that he was still paying attention. Creation happened all of a piece, on Sunday, October 23, 4004 B.C., as Bishop James Ussher had calculated in 1650. But in a world increasingly devoted to reason, such thinking began to seem ludicrously primitive. Naturalists (a term encompassing what we now call geologists, botanists, and zoologists) began first to classify the world around them, then to make sense of it. They discerned function and mechanism in what they saw; the cliché of the world as a great, interconnected machine took root. The argument for God's existence changed: The very fact that the world worked in such beautiful harmony was proof of his creating and guiding power.

But the naturalists also saw that the world was changing. Rocks built up and eroded away. Fossils betrayed the former existence of creatures that were no longer to be seen. Change posed a problem, especially when coupled with the conviction that the world was designed for human happiness. Was the Creation, then, less than perfect?

This, in a nutshell, was the tension that Paley hoped to resolve. To get to this point, Thomson reaches back into history and delivers a rich narrative of observers and thinkers who, starting in the late 17th century, began to see how evidence of evolution—a word that means, neutrally, that the world is not constant—challenged theological dogma. Unusually for a writer on the side of the scientists, Thomson knows his religious history, and displays a warm sympathy for the efforts of those who sought strenuously and sincerely to adapt their faith to the growing body of scientific argument about the world's origins. The early naturalists were pious men, but modernists too. They left biblical literalism quietly be-

hind. The Flood, for example, became a metaphorical episode, standing in for all the disruption and geological upheaval that scientists now adduced as the explanation for the world's present form.

Some skeptics saw which way the wind was blowing. In the 18th century, David Hume offered an argument against design, observing that organisms lacking some minimal aptitude for life in their environment wouldn't be around for us to notice. This, as Thomson points out, foreshadowed Darwin's essential idea of natural selection—fitness determines survival.

Paley's *Natural Theology*, in Thomson's fascinating and persuasive presentation, emerges as the last desperate effort of a man determined to keep religion, science, and reason together. Unlike many who repeat it today, Paley knew that his watch argument by itself proved nothing. For one thing, watches don't usually shower forth litters of tiny new watches, whereas living creatures generate new versions of themselves. But if animals and plants, unlike watches, create their own offspring, what differentiates the original act of creation from all the subsequent ones that took place on their own?

By the time Paley composed his argument, the notion of a world generated through cumulative small change, both organic and inorganic, was already stirring. Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles), Hume, the Comte de Buffon, and others had all made suggestions along these lines. The sticking point, as Paley shrewdly saw, was tied up with the evident suitability of life to the world in which it lived. It's not simply that you have to produce lungs, for example. Those lungs have to work effectively in the atmosphere in which they have appeared—and it was this harmonization of internal function to external purpose that Paley seized on as proof of the necessity of design. How could blind processes of nature create such coherence?

That, of course, is precisely what Charles Darwin explained. Darwin's theory has two ingredients. Organisms change a little from one generation to the next. Natural selection then weeds out harmful changes and promotes helpful ones. Evolution is not, as some of its critics even now insist on thinking, a process

of pure chance, but an elaborate form of trial and error that creates harmony, yet does so without advance planning.

Most impressive in Thomson's artfully told tale is his evenhanded respect for the losers as well as the winners. All wanted to get at the truth, but in the shift from religious to scientific understanding, the meaning of truth itself became the subject of contesting philosophies. The debate nowadays, with both sides lobbing

slogans back and forth, seems paltry by comparison. Thomson's spirited book brings to mind another adage about the repetition of history—how it comes first as tragedy, then as farce.

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## *High Ground, Low Life*

*TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND MONTMARTRE.*

By Richard Thomson, Phillip Dennis Cate, and Mary Weaver Chapin.

Princeton Univ. Press. 294 pp. \$60

*Reviewed by Jeffrey Meyers*

Perched on a 500-foot butte, the Montmartre quarter of Paris, with its windmills, empty fields, and quaint cobblestone streets through which herds of animals were driven, still seemed like a village in the late 19th century. Yet it also offered a bustling nightlife. The cheap wine and entertainment in the Moulin Rouge, Moulin de la Galette, and other dance halls and bars attracted many artists. They lived among ordinary workers, circus performers, tramps, and petty criminals, in decrepit tenements and rough studios made of wood and corrugated iron, and they often painted their Montmartre. Auguste Renoir's *At the Moulin de la Galette* (1876) portrayed a sunny, congenial evening of drinking, dancing, and joie de vivre. By contrast, Maurice Utrillo, a hopeless alcoholic, depicted a Montmartre of dreary urban landscapes with flyspecked walls and leprous streets confined by endless rows of iron railings.

One of Montmartre's artists was especially conspicuous. Four feet, 11 inches in Cuban heels, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901) lurched along on crutches and sniffled, drooled, and lisped. The singer Yvette Guilbert, whom he befriended and often portrayed, was shocked upon first encountering his “enormous dark head, . . . red face, and very black beard; oily, greasy skin; a nose that could cover two faces; and a mouth . . .

like a gash from ear to ear, looking almost like an open wound!” But his fine draftsmanship, psychological insight, and biting wit made him “court artist to the superstars,” writes Mary Weaver Chapin, a curator at the Art Institute of Chicago.

This handsomely illustrated catalog—for an exhibition this year at the Art Institute, as well as the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.—is factual and clearly written, with sound and convincing analyses and no theoretical or ideological obfuscations. Between them, Chapin and Richard Thomson, a professor of fine art at the University of Edinburgh, describe the settings of Lautrec's work in six quite useful chapters, on the history of Montmartre, cabarets (restaurants with floor shows), dance halls, “cafés-concerts” (offering everything from shadow plays to boxing kangaroos), whorehouses, and the circus.

Three additional essays are more substantial. In “Depicting Decadence in Fin-de-Siècle Paris,” Thomson focuses on 1885–95, Lautrec's greatest decade, and seeks to “explore the aspects of contemporary society with which Lautrec's work interacted, examine the visual culture of Montmartre, and assess Lautrec's images alongside those of others.” He successfully explains “the modernity of Lautrec and how it was formed by social and cultural circumstances.” In “The Social Menagerie of



At the Moulin Rouge (1892–95), by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

Toulouse-Lautrec's Montmartre," Phillip Dennis Cate, director emeritus of the Rutgers University Art Museum, points out that Montmartre was home to both the Nouvelle-Athènes café, where Manet, Degas, and other Impressionist painters gathered, and Le Lapin Agile (*The Lively Rabbit*), where Picasso and Modigliani met before the Great War. And in "Toulouse-Lautrec and the Culture of Celebrity," Chapin describes the fluid society of the 1890s, in which "an actress more beautiful than talented, a fashionable courtesan, an outrageous writer, or a scandalous cancan dancer from the lowest echelon of society could rise to unprecedented heights."

Lautrec himself became instantly famous with his first poster, *Moulin Rouge: La Goulue* (*The Glutton*), 3,000 copies of which were pasted around Paris in December 1891. Besides making the 27-year-old artist a celebrity, the astonishing work transformed lithography into high art. The poster contains four distinctly layered elements, emphasized by the receding vertical lines of the wooden floorboards. The tall, purplish, grotesque,

Pulcinello-like male dancer in the foreground, Valentin le Désossé, has a stovepipe hat, hooked nose, and jutting chin, and seems to push his right hand up the skirt of La Goulue, who dances behind him. She herself, also in profile and facing the opposite direction, wears a blond topknot, choker, polka-dot blouse, and burgundy stockings. Swirling on the axis of one leg and raising the other high enough to kick off a man's top hat, she reveals her bountiful petticoats. (She sometimes "forgot" to wear undies, and revealed a good deal more.) Behind her are the all-black, shadow-play silhouettes of her audience: two women and eight men, one of the latter notably porcine. In the rear, the egg-yolk lights that brighten the spectacle seem to trail off in a spume of yellow smoke. The effect is both seductive and slightly sinister.

One of Lautrec's most important pictures, *At the Moulin Rouge* (1892–95), depicts five well-dressed men and women seated with drinks at a marble table. Thomson perceptively observes that "the seated group forms

a vortex of precarious stability around which flow different currents." Lautrec himself cruises through the background, La Goulue arranges her hair before a mirror, and an orange-haired, green-faced, wide-eyed, large-mouthed woman lurches toward us in the right foreground. "These contrasting but insistent pictorial presences," Thomson adds, "are compositional contrivances that increase the vertiginous impact of the painting. All is artifice in this quintessential image of decadence."

The louche entertainments had a dark side—the cancan dancer Jane Avril, for instance, Lautrec's loyal friend and patron (and a rival of La Goulue), though unusually well educated and refined, had been treated for mental illness by the famous Dr. Charcot—but they served to inspire many artists besides Lautrec. The famous conclusion of W. B. Yeats's "Among School Children" refers to the dancer Loïe Fuller, one of the stars of Montmartre: "O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, / How can we know the dancer from the dance?" In Georges Seurat's *Chahut* (1889–90), the cancan dancers are seen from below, the viewpoint of the orchestra and of the audience. Onlookers smirk in the front seats. Seurat's lines are straight and long, his dancers stiff and fixed. As the art historian

Robert Herbert has observed, "There is something almost frantic in *Chahut*, whose mannequins grimace not so much in fulfilled pleasure as in frenetic attempts to realize it."

Edgar Degas' *Café Singer* (1879) also portrays the performer close up and from below. The singer wears an elaborately trimmed mauve dress and raises her black-gloved right hand in a dramatic gesture. Her head is thrown back, her eyes are in shadow, her skin is chalky pale, and her open, red-rimmed mouth pours out a full-throated song. Unlike Seurat's mechanical dancers, Thérésa seems to enjoy her turn on stage. The inclusion of these and other pictures by Lautrec's contemporaries greatly enhances this exhibition catalog.

The squalid side of Montmartre foreshadowed its inevitable decay. A modern *Blue Guide* for tourists warns that it is "now the focus of the seedy nightlife of an increasingly sordid area, where colorful and motley crowds congregate in the cafés and around the so-called 'cabarets artistiques,'" whose denizens are not favored by a latter-day Lautrec.

>JEFFREY MEYERS is the author of the newly published *Impressionist Quartet: The Intimate Genius of Manet and Morisot, Degas and Cassatt, as well as biographies of George Orwell, W. Somerset Maugham, Ernest Hemingway, and many others.*

## *The People, No*

DEMOCRACY AND POPULISM:  
*Fear and Hatred.*

By John Lukacs. Yale Univ. Press. 248 pp. \$25

*Reviewed by Michael Kazin*

Hostility toward populism has a long history in American intellectual life. Yale students shouted down William Jennings Bryan when he came to New Haven during the 1896 presidential campaign, and renowned professors regarded the agrarian rebels of the same era as anarchists who knew nothing about how the economy worked. Half a century later, Richard Hofstadter and Daniel Bell described populism as an impulse of the ill educated, the paranoid, and the anti-Semitic. In the 1960s, Elizabeth Hardwick, in

*The New York Review of Books*, characterized the backers of George Wallace as self-destructive, "joyless," "sore and miserable."

Common to all these judgments is a suspicion that resentment drives the politics of ordinary people. Clever, unscrupulous leaders, it's charged, gain influence by playing to the irrational anger of the mob. As a result, the erudite, responsible minority is perpetually at risk, and, along with it, the highest achievements of Western civilization.

John Lukacs, the author of *Five Days in*



## Current Books

*London: May 1940* (1999) and some two dozen other works, is the latest to join the chorus of alarm. Indeed, the noted historian's condemnation of populism ranks among the most sweeping and unqualified ever written. He's as upset about politicians who rush to indulge the masses as he is about those who bedazzle them. He even comes close to condemning nationalism as no more than a species of rabble-rousing.

Populism can be defined as a style of political appeal that glorifies the masses and casts the opposition as a hostile, undemocratic elite. In the contemporary United States and Europe, it has spawned, according to Lukacs, the "tyranny of the majority" Tocqueville warned against. A loathsome marriage of mass culture and mass democracy, consummated by demagogues, has corroded public virtue, weakened belief in absolute truth, and sparked "a steady increase in carnality, vulgarity, brutality." If unchecked, populism could destroy the social order itself.

Though often labeled a conservative, Lukacs views the governing Republican Right in the United States as just one more symptom of the disease. "President Bush and his advisers chose to provoke a war in Iraq . . . for the main purpose of being popular," he contends. "This was something new in American history."

One can reject the assertion about the president's motives yet still credit the author for underlining a key transition. What goes by the name of conservatism today, particularly in the United States, bears scant resemblance to conservatism before the Cold War. Beginning with the antics of Joe McCarthy, an aggressive populism that rails against a liberal elite in the name of the patriotic, God-fearing masses has all but replaced the earlier conservatism characterized by the defense of social hierarchy, respect for state authority, and an aversion to heated rhetoric and the rapid social changes it seeks to inspire. Edmund Burke and John Adams might be amused by the likes of Ann Coulter and Rush Limbaugh, but those be-wigged gentlemen would also recognize that such provocateurs have, in effect, rejected the philosophical tradition they cherished.

Unfortunately, Lukacs delivers more a rambling set of convictions than a reasoned analysis. He denounces the imprecise use of terms (Hitler was a National Socialist, *not* a fascist),

dispenses grand truths without taking the trouble to argue for them ("What governs the world . . . is not the accumulation of money, or even of goods, but the accumulation of opinions"), and spits scorn at celebrated figures with whom he disagrees (Hannah Arendt was "a muddled and dishonest writer"). He spins off on tangents and repeats himself, too.

Still, one pays attention. Who can tell when he'll say something wise, or at least original? And a few nuggets do emerge. Drawing on his deep knowledge of Nazism, Lukacs portrays Hitler as an evil genius who created a belligerent style of nationalism, one that survived his death and flowered again in the authoritarian populist regimes of leaders from Juan Perón to Saddam Hussein. Lukacs also points out that "totalitarian" poorly describes the Communist states that ruled Eastern Europe in the 1970s and '80s. The would-be Lenins in East Berlin, Prague, and Warsaw were propping up a sclerotic system that already had one jackboot in the grave.

But ire at the growth of populism leads Lukacs to make some quaint and ahistorical statements. "Like Tocqueville," he writes, "I do not know why God chose to have mankind enter the democratic age." In Lukacs's view, "there may be room for an argument that, for the sake of proper democracy, voting should be made not easier but more difficult." He sniffs at the "questionable results" of the 19th- and 20th-century reforms that magnified the electorate's power as well as its size: Discerning party leaders got replaced by pollsters, with their vulgar efforts to quantify and manipulate the national mood of the nation. But Lukacs ignores the corrupt legislative deals and special favors that, during the Gilded Age, routinely elevated party hacks to the Senate. It's simply a myth that the old order was more honest and intelligent than the new.

**W**hat fueled the triumph of populism on the Right? Lukacs hardly pauses to reflect on the question. The answer is actually rather simple: The populist style wasn't invented by conniving politicians of the Right or the Left; like democracy itself, it arose largely in response to demands from below.

In the 19th century, Americans and Europeans organized with gusto to further their group interests, the definition of which could

change almost overnight. At the same time, the gradual emergence of universal suffrage and the steady rise of incomes in a freewheeling market society emboldened the common folk to question authority of all kinds. Nationalism, which Lukacs is correct to call the most durable force in modern politics, fit the needs of people who no longer trusted the verities peddled by monarchs and bishops but who still longed for a transcendent community. By dramatizing the ideals of his beloved country, a Lincoln (and, later, an FDR and a Churchill) could persuade ordinary people to make sacrifices they wouldn't make for hereditary authorities with transnational connections.

In the United States, reformers and radicals held a near-monopoly on the language of populism from the age of Jefferson through the heyday of the New Deal, but inevitably, plain-speaking conservatives took it up too. Resolving to oppose liberal ideas and policies, they adapt-

ed the rhetorical dualism of their opponents: scorn for a self-appointed elite, and undiluted praise for the virtuous masses and their glorious republic. Activists on the Right substituted middle Americans for heroic strikers and tax-eating bureaucrats for greedy plutocrats, but the technique of mobilizing the grass roots was the same.

*Democracy and Populism* is an entertaining, occasionally instructive polemic by a scholar who has learned a great deal in his long career. But for all his erudition, Lukacs fails to heed the famous sentiment expressed by Churchill, one of his few political heroes: Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.

>MICHAEL KAZIN, a former Wilson Center fellow, teaches history at Georgetown University. His books include *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (1998) and *William Jennings Bryan: A Godly Hero*, which will be published early next year.

## ARTS & LETTERS

### *SONGS FROM THE BLACK CHAIR:*

#### *A Memoir of Mental Illness.*

By Charles Barber. Univ. of Nebraska Press. 202 pp. \$22

Tobias Wolff, author of the autobiographical *This Boy's Life*, selects the memoirs published in the University of Nebraska Press's American Lives series, and what a beautiful choice he's made in this modest, bittersweet story of three boys' lives that didn't turn out as expected.

Three best friends grow up in a New England college town in the 1970s. Together they enact the ritual rebellions of adolescence: drinking, driving too fast, smoking pot, playing nasty music. The brilliant one, Nick, from a working-class Italian background, gets straight A's and goes to the local college on a full scholarship. Henry, the classic WASP underachiever, is a shoo-in to join Nick at the college, where both his parents teach. Fellow faculty brat Charles, the author of this memoir, goes off to his father's alma mater, Harvard.

Fast-forward two decades: Nick lives in his parents' basement and works as an aide with people who are mentally retarded. Charles, who dropped out of Harvard after suffering a full-blown episode of obsessive-compulsive disorder, now does intake interviews at the Bellevue Men's Shelter in New York City. And Henry is dead. He, too, dropped out of college, briefly worked as a busboy, then committed suicide at his parents' summer cottage, after a drunken weekend there with Charles and Nick. A few years later, Henry's mother replicated his suicide almost exactly.

Barber's title isn't phony symbolism. It refers to *Songs from the Big Chair*, the recording that Henry put into the tape player of his truck before letting the exhaust fumes take him out. It also refers to the black chair next to Barber's desk at Bellevue, where the crazies sit and tell their stories, singing the atonal notes of their lives. Barber is supposed to check off all comers by category: SPMI (seriously and persistently mentally ill), MICA (mentally ill chemical abuser), Axis II (per-

sonality disordered), and so on. But the list means nothing, he quickly sees, so he creates his own: “The Travelers and the Wanderers, Guided by Voices, Vietnam Vets, Waylaid Tourists, . . . ‘No English’ and No Papers, . . . Manic in America, . . . The Truly Weird, for Whom We Can Find No Category That Fits.” Barber forms a special attachment to one of his clients, a brilliant Czech émigré, but one day the man jumps into the East River and never comes out.

Barber, who’s now an associate at Yale Medical School’s Program for Recovery and Community Health, is too reflective to offer any pat answers, but he does come to understand that life’s sensitive souls need help in every form, whether pharmaceutical, therapeutic, or familial, to get them through dark nights. Beyond that, who knows why some people make it and some don’t?

“You have to decide whether you are going to breathe or not,” Barber writes. He remembers an atypical conversation with his ordinarily reserved mother, soon after he’d dropped out of Harvard. “My mother and I were talking, in our roundabout way, about the difficulties that people have in the world. . . . ‘Look, living is hard,’ my mother said. ‘Breathing is hard. Just listen to the music.’”

Barber decided to breathe. He listened. He wrote a fine book about it, too.

—A. J. LOFTIN

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**SPECIAL EFFECTS:**

*An Oral History.*

By Pascal Pinteau. Translated from French by Laurel Hirsch. Abrams. 566 pp. \$37.50

The rarest of all special effects in a Hollywood movie these days is a good script. But though oral intelligence is in short supply on the screen, there’s an abundance of technological intelligence, sights to distract you from the dialogue, sounds to drown it out. If you’ve ever left a theater—or theme park or Céline Dion show (see p. 21)—wondering “How’d they do that?” here’s the book for you. Pinteau interviewed more than three dozen special-effects wizards, who shared with him the secrets of the illusions they’ve worked over the years. Be warned, though.

After lots of the explanations, you’re likely to have a follow-up question: “Huh?”

Pinteau honors the antic genius of individuals who’ve been largely anonymous to the public, though they’ve shaped our dreams and nightmares, and that recognition is overdue. How many otherwise awful movies have been redeemed by a good explosion? Or a wayward asteroid? Or an oversized reptile? Or a gaggle of flesh-eating ghouls? As you might expect of a journalist and screenwriter who’s done special-effects work himself, Pinteau takes a spacious view of the subject, exploring not just “film and manipulated reality,” but animation “from paintbrush to pixel,” the art of makeup, TV illusions, and theme parks. (The last no longer feature pop-out skeletons in a down-scale haunted house. Visitors to these stupendous sites are now prey to fire and flood and the false hope of extras in a disaster movie, or they’re pinned by twice the force of gravity while blasting off in a space shuttle—and they expect nothing less.)

But to call this book an “oral history” is misleading on two counts: the oral part and the history part. The featured interviews have no consistent pattern, and, in any case, they’re by no means the whole of the book. They’re dropped at random into Pinteau’s own narrative, which suffers from a kind of journalistic ADD and is much too jumpy to qualify as disciplined history. (From the early special effect of an eight-legged horse in a Paleolithic Spanish cave painting, it’s a two-page gallop to the 19th century.) What’s more—or, rather, less—the book has only a skeletal table of contents, which makes no mention of the interviews, and it has no index at all. The publisher of this oral history must be headquartered in Babel.

Why, then, is *Special Effects* such a guilty pleasure? For the pictures, of course: 1,136 of them—982 in full color—and twice that many would not have been excessive. Without turning a page, you’re hooked by the photo on the laminated front cover: a mechanized head of the current governor of California, looking green and ravaged, with half his steely skull exposed. (A good day terminating, or a bad day in Sacramento?) Recall your favorite screen illusion, and you’re like-

ly to find it, if only by accident, somewhere in Pinteau's lavish compendium.

When movies were new, a century ago, the mere motion of people and objects was special effect enough. Now we want whole new worlds to turn and tumble. And they do, ingeniously, interchangeably. But though all the commotion in those artificial worlds may tickle the mind, does it touch the heart, or supplant the memory of movie moments that needed no technological goosing? It's 66 years since Rhett swept Scarlett off her feet and up that dusky staircase, with no help from a computer. Yet the thrill of that moment persists, wicked and authentic still, even as the recollection of last weekend's digitized apocalypse already fades.

—JAMES M. MORRIS

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**MAGAZINES THAT  
MAKE HISTORY:  
*Their Origins, Development,  
and Influence.***

By Norberto Angeletti and Alberto Oliva. Univ. Press of Florida.  
407 pp. \$45

The Internet is the Shirley Temple of modern media, the hugely talented new prodigy that's conquering the world. It sings! It dances! It lets you watch Icelandic TV! Suddenly, the popular media of the last century seem passé. Magazines in particular have taken on a Norma Desmond air. There they sit on the newsstands, crying out for attention and love, but they're printed on paper, the poor dears, and static as stones. Though traditional magazines are still thriving as businesses—indeed, making a lot more money than their Internet counterparts—they no longer seem fresh or exciting.

Luckily, there are still some who recall the glories of the magazine past and believe in the medium's power. Norberto Angeletti and Alberto Oliva, longtime magazine jour-

nalists based, respectively, in Buenos Aires and New York, spent five years putting together this vibrant chronicle of eight great magazines of the 20th century: *Time*, *Der Spiegel*, *Life*, *Paris Match*, *National Geographic*, *Reader's Digest*, *¡HOLA!*, and *People*.

At first, the lineup looks startlingly disparate—what could *National Geographic* and the Spanish celebrity fanzine *¡HOLA!* possibly have in common?—but as you move through the artfully reconstructed stories of their origins and growth, it becomes clear that the magazines share a great deal. Many of them were born of a very personal vision, a fever dream that seized the imaginations of one or two tenacious individuals. DeWitt Wallace, the founder of *Reader's Digest*, was so taken with the notion of condensing other publications that, while recovering from serious combat injuries suffered in World War I, he pored over old articles and practiced boiling down their contents. Those magazines that didn't begin as obsessive personal quests effectively became just that under driven, visionary editors. Rudolf Augstein, *Der Spiegel's* legendary guiding spirit, occasionally rewrote articles *after* they had been published, just to demonstrate to his staff how they should have read.

Another motif here is the role played by serendipity and pure accident. When Charles Lindbergh made his solo transatlantic flight in May 1927, *Time* didn't see that he'd instantly become a popular hero,

and left him off the cover. Seven months later, as the year ended and the editors faced the usual holiday dearth of news, somebody had a neat idea: Why not fix the oversight by giving Lindbergh the cover and touting him as "The Man of the Year"?

*National Geographic* debuted in 1888 as a scholarly magazine of exploration, mostly made up of dense text. One day in 1904, editor Gilbert Grosvenor was faced with a printer's



*Life published this special edition to celebrate the moon landing in 1969.*

## Current Books

deadline and 11 empty pages. Some Russian explorers had sent him stunning photos they'd taken of the Tibetan city of Lhasa, a place few in the West had ever glimpsed. Desperate, he threw them into the magazine, worried that he'd be fired for this shocking departure from form. The rest is history—literally.

The life stories of these magazines are also the biography of our times, told affectionately by two men who obviously adore magazines and the way they capture our collective life. What's encouraging is that the

story isn't over yet. All eight of these titles are still alive (the only one that actually died, *Life*, keeps getting resurrected), and the book goes into great detail on the art and craft that allow them to be reborn on a weekly or monthly basis. At one point, former *People* editor Richard Stolley explains that a celebrity news story is often a play in three acts: the rise, the fall, and the redemption. Someday, one hopes, the same will be said for the miraculous old medium we foolishly take for granted.

—WILLIAM POWERS

## CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

### *THREE BILLION NEW CAPITALISTS: The Great Shift of Wealth and Power to the East.*

By Clyde Prestowitz. Basic.  
321 pp. \$26.95

Economist Clyde Prestowitz has reasons to be pessimistic about the future of the U.S. economy—three billion reasons, in fact. With the rapid entry of China, India, and the former Soviet bloc nations into the international economy, three billion “new capitalists” have emerged to compete with Americans on the world stage. Prestowitz worries that the United States has no strategy to deal with these new competitors—and that the ultimate losers will be America's workers.

Drawing on an impressive command of economic trends, as well as countless interviews with political and business leaders worldwide, Prestowitz highlights two problems that he sees facing the United States and the global economy. First, America's de facto economic strategy is to ship key industries overseas. It was bad enough when manufacturing industries began leaving, but now the service sector and even high-tech and R&D are going too, enticed by the East's low wages, high levels of education, tax breaks, and huge potential markets. To his credit, Prestowitz doesn't begrudge India and China their growth and progress—he just wonders what jobs and wages his grandchildren will find in an increasingly “hollowed out” America.

The second problem Prestowitz identifies is that China and India are rising at a time of a simple yet fundamental imbalance in the global economy: “Americans consume too much and save too little while Asians save too much and consume too little.” The deep trade and budget deficits reflect and exacerbate these conditions. “The nightmare scenario—the economic 9/11—is a sudden, massive sell-off of dollars,” Prestowitz warns, “a world financial panic whose trigger might be as minor, relatively speaking, as the assassination of a second-rate archduke in a third-rate European city.” Yes, 9/11 meets World War I in a single sentence! At times, Prestowitz can be positively Thomas Friedmansque in his overheated metaphors, but while Friedman has made his mark as globalization's Pangloss, Prestowitz is more like its gloomy Eeyore.

His evidence is sometimes shaky—for instance, he uncritically accepts rosy growth projections for India and China but embraces the direst forecasts for the U.S. economy—and his policy proposals range from daring to goofy. In a time-honored Washington tradition, he calls for blue-ribbon commissions and international conferences to do everything from boosting America's “competitive potential” to eliminating the dollar in favor of a new international currency. He argues that the United States must eliminate the mortgage interest deduction on second homes, drop income taxes in favor of consumption taxes, slash defense

spending, and introduce national health insurance. He encourages Japan and India to join the North American Free Trade Agreement, and he wants Japan to adopt the U.S. dollar as its currency—though it's unclear how his new international currency would fit into that scheme. Running throughout is a call for greater government intervention in the U.S. economy, particularly in the realm of industrial policy, which Prestowitz thinks gets a bad rap in Washington. For American business, his overriding recommendation is "Sell things no one else makes," and he chastises narrow-minded corporate leaders for not considering the national economic interest.

Prestowitz has sounded such alarms before. In his 1988 book *Trading Places*, he argued that Japan had become a juggernaut, a "kind of automatic wealth machine" that could topple the United States from the world's top economic perch. History has not been kind to that prediction. For America's sake, one can only hope that Prestowitz's latest forecast will prove similarly off the mark.

—CARLOS LOZADA

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**PERFECT SOLDIERS:**  
*The Hijackers—Who They Were,  
Why They Did It.*

By Terry McDermott. HarperCollins.  
330 pp. \$25.95

Books about the September 11 terrorist attacks are almost too numerous to count, but *Perfect Soldiers* deserves to stand out. Terry McDermott, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter, may know more than anyone else about the Hamburg-based Islamic extremists who pulled off Al Qaeda's spectacularly successful attack.

The most familiar face among the 19 hijackers, Mohamed el-Amir Atta, is actually the most unknowable of the top organizers. In dramatic contrast to the mean and sour visage in photos from the final years of his life, pictures from his youth show a joyous teenager. He was raised in a solidly middle-class Cairo family, and "forced by his father to leave home and go to Germany" for graduate school in 1992, at age 24.

At Hamburg's Al Quds mosque, Atta and three other principal players grew committed

to a Muslim jihad: Marwan al-Shehhi, who flew one plane into the World Trade Center (Atta flew the other); Ziad Jarrah, who piloted the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania; and Ramzi bin al-Shibh, who couldn't get a visa to enter the United States and ended up serving as the plotters' primary overseas contact. McDermott notes that the public expression of radical ideas was "far more common" in big cities "outside the Islamic world than within it." Even so, few could match this quartet's utter preoccupation with the obligations of religious devotion. "It is hard to appreciate how much time these young men spent thinking, talking, arguing, and reading about Islam," he writes. "It became for some of them nearly the only thing they did."

McDermott says that the hijackers' story reflects "the power of belief to remake ordinary men." In no instance was that power more mystifying than in the case of Ziad Jarrah. The son of a secular, middle-class Beirut family, Jarrah, like Atta, came to Germany to pursue his education. In contrast to the aloof Atta, the partygoing Jarrah married a young Turkish woman who had grown up in Germany, and remained devoted to her until he boarded the United Airlines flight on September 11. Jarrah, whom McDermott calls "an unlikely candidate for Islamic warrior," rendezvoused with his wife six times during his final 14 months, while he, Atta, and al-Shehhi were attending flight schools in Florida.

Jarrah kept his real plans from his wife, and McDermott observes that "their relationship survived on her capacity to believe Jarrah's lies, even those that seemed preposterous." Yet on the morning of September 11, Jarrah wrote her a letter that speaks volumes about the dedication of the attackers. "I did what I was supposed to do. You should be very proud of me," he wrote. Their separation would be only temporary, he assured her: When "we see each other again . . . we will live a very nice and eternal life, where there are no problems, and no sorrow." From Jarrah's certainty of a superior future life sprang the ability to sacrifice his present one.

"Al Qaeda was not a slick, professional outfit that didn't get caught because it didn't

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make mistakes,” McDermott concludes at one point. “It made mistakes all the time. It didn’t get caught because the government with which it was dealing made more of them.” That analysis is certainly correct, but

it’s the life stories McDermott recounts, rather than the conclusions he draws from them, that make *Perfect Soldiers* such a memorable book.

—DAVID J. GARROW

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### *THE XENO CHRONICLES: Two Years on the Frontier of Medicine Inside Harvard’s Transplant Research Lab.*

By G. Wayne Miller. PublicAffairs.  
233 pp. \$26

In olden days, people whose organs failed simply died. Nowadays, they can get replacements from the newly deceased (heart, liver) or the exceptionally generous (kidney). But the organs available are vastly outnumbered by the organs needed. As of late 2004, some 87,000 people were on transplant waiting lists, and thousands of them will die still waiting. One solution seems obvious: organs from animals. It just hasn’t worked yet.

The biggest problem in all transplantation is rejection, the immune system’s attack on the new organ. In the early 1980s, researchers developed a drug, cyclosporine, that suppresses the immune system. Cyclosporine made human transplantation the relative success it is now, and made xenotransplantation—replacing human organs with animal organs—a real possibility.

*The Xeno Chronicles* tells the story behind one of the latest techniques in xenotransplantation. David Sachs, an immunologist at Harvard Medical School, genetically engineered miniature pigs to lack the sugar molecules that trigger organ rejection in humans. The pigs were cloned, bred, and eventually killed. In 2003, Sachs’s team transplanted a kidney from one of the pigs into a baboon, along with the thymus gland, part of the pig’s immune system that could educate the baboon’s immune cells to accept the foreign organ. The process was repeated in a handful of other baboons. If it worked, a case could be made for clinical trials in humans.

But within a couple of months, every baboon with a pig kidney died. The cause wasn’t always organ rejection; when Sachs’s

technique outsmarted the baboon’s immune system, as it sometimes seemed to do, something else went awry. The drug company backing Sachs eventually grew discouraged, and the National Institutes of Health, which ordinarily funds academic research, doesn’t fund much xenotransplantation. So Sachs is more or less out of business and looking for money.

G. Wayne Miller, a *Providence Journal* reporter and the author of six previous books, focuses less on scientific failure than on the research enterprise itself. Besides the Harvard experiments, he writes about the people whose hearts or kidneys have given out, and the ethics of deciding who receives an organ and who doesn’t. He details the history of transplantation: the Jazz Age quacks who transplanted monkey testicles into men worried about their sexual abilities; the experimental liver and heart transplants of the 1960s and 1970s, which never worked for long; the golden age of transplantation in the 1990s, when, thanks to cyclosporine, anything seemed possible; and the slow dimming of the promise thereafter. Miller discusses the difficult balance between animal rights and animal testing, and the scientists who care for and soothe, but can’t bring themselves to name, the animals they’re going to kill in hopes of saving human lives. And he profiles David Sachs, now in his sixties, who’s had a superb career but hasn’t managed to accomplish what he most wants.

Though surely necessary, all this contextual material isn’t presented chronologically or logically; the result is less braid than spotty mosaic. Still, the writing is fluid and fun, and Miller sympathetically portrays a smart scientist who’s never going to quit trying. “I can’t believe we won’t get there,” Sachs says. “I just hope it doesn’t take longer than I’ve got.”

—ANN FINKBEINER



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**LAND OF GHOSTS:**  
*The Braided Lives of People and the Forest in Far Western Amazonia.*

By David G. Campbell. Houghton Mifflin. 260 pp. \$25

A Brazilian woman named Dona Ausira, the last known speaker of Nokini, remembers her native tongue's words for *star*, *moon*, *bird*, and *fish*, but when David Campbell asks if there was a word for *love*, she says, "There may have been, but I have forgotten." Her loss of words mirrors the ecological losses in the Amazon, where bungled attempts at development have wiped out countless species of plants—many, no doubt, before humans even knew they existed. And that's part of the problem, writes Campbell: "It's easy to give away something for which there are no words, something you never knew existed."

A biology professor at Grinnell College, Campbell recounts one of his expeditions into the Amazon to collect and identify plant samples—and perhaps rename those whose indigenous names have been forgotten. For more than 30 years, Campbell has regularly journeyed to Brazil to monitor 18 small plots of rainforest, each of which con-

tains some 20,000 trees representing more than 2,000 different species. He has helped to discover several dozen new species in the process. Measuring and taking samples reminds him of a story about a Tibetan monk who tried to recite the name of every plant, rock, and animal, because each name is one of the names of God. Names can "endow those who know them with understanding," Campbell writes, but ultimately "words of any language are puny tools to describe this forest."

Alongside his careful and clear explanations of rainforest ecology, Campbell offers excursions into the region's anthropology and history. In the 19th century, when the Amazon region had the world's only rubber trees, the owners of rubber estates called *seringais* grew wealthy through the exploitation and forced labor of Native Americans. A few *seringais* survive today, and those who work them still live as indentured servants in an endless cycle of poverty.

Rubber wasn't the only thing that brought people to the forest. As recently as the 1970s, the government of Brazil sometimes transplanted people to the Amazon in an effort to relieve famine and overcrowding elsewhere. Most who came lacked *jeito*, the forest



*A Manaus fish market brings together a cross-section of Amazon River people.*

## Current Books

equivalent of street smarts, and many of the settlements were soon abandoned. Those who did stay often joined the Caboclos, a mixed-race people whose knowledge and enterprise have enabled them to survive in the forest for generations. Now, however, the Caboclos are increasingly embracing modernity—including the Internet—and

losing their *jeito*.

Though Campbell's tone is foreboding and at times overdramatic, his love for the region and his concern about its future are compelling. He doesn't propose a plan for saving the rainforest, but he offers a vivid account of why it's worth saving.

—STEPHANIE JOY SMITH

## HISTORY

***FIVE DAYS IN PHILADELPHIA: The Amazing "We Want Willkie" Convention of 1940 and How It Freed FDR to Save the Western World.***

By Charles Peters. PublicAffairs.  
274 pp. \$26

To most of us, Wendell Willkie is little more than a name and perhaps a famous image—*Life* magazine's panoramic photo of the charismatic presidential candidate standing in an open car as it moves through a welcoming throng on a dusty Midwestern street. If Willkie is remembered at all, it's as the third hapless Republican to be steam-

rolled by Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the process of losing the 1940 election, though, Willkie played a surprising role in winning the looming war. That's the story Charles Peters, the founder and longtime editor of *The Washington Monthly*, recalls in this riveting book.

The political battles of 1940 took place in a country that's in many ways unrecognizable today. The vast majority of Republicans—and many other Americans—were committed isolationists, adamantly opposed to any overseas "adventures," even as Hitler conquered Europe and prepared to invade



*Wendell Willkie celebrates his nomination in the streets of his hometown of Elwood, Indiana.*

Britain. The leading contenders for the GOP nomination were all different flavors of isolationist: Senators Robert Taft and Arthur Vandenberg, of Ohio and Michigan, respectively, and Thomas Dewey, the famed prosecutor from New York State (shades of Eliot Spitzer!). It's astonishing to be reminded that former president Herbert Hoover—perhaps the strictest isolationist of them all—still entertained hopes of securing the nomination and retaking the White House.

Had any of these men captured the nomination, Peters argues, the Republicans would have made a major campaign issue out of any effort by FDR to aid Britain and set up a peacetime draft, perhaps thwarting the president. Willkie, by contrast, was a liberal internationalist, strongly committed to fighting Hitler.

The Indiana-born head of a Wall Street utility holding company, Willkie was a virtual unknown who had never held office and, in fact, had been a registered Democrat only the year before. The Washington wit Alice Roosevelt Longworth was on the mark when she quipped that his candidacy sprang “from the grass roots of a thousand country clubs,” and a small but influential band of media magnates openly promoted his cause, including Henry Luce of Time-Life. It's another unrecognizable characteristic of 1940 America that most of the news media were controlled by Republicans. Yet Willkie was anything but a polished Wall Streeter. A shambling bear of a man in a rumpled suit and “country” haircut, he possessed enough brute magnetism on the podium to convert prominent political figures to his cause in an instant.

In 1940, Peters was a 13-year-old boy from West Virginia whose lawyer father took him along to the Democratic convention in Chicago, and he has the perfect politics-in-his-bones pitch for narrating these events and capturing the texture of the times. Those were the days when the national political conventions, soaked in sweat and booze, really mattered, so much so that fist-fights could break out on the convention floor—and that was at the *Republican* conclave, held in Philadelphia.

After Willkie's triumph, on the sixth bal-

lot, the campaign itself was something of an anticlimax. The candidate came out in favor of the draft, which Congress approved on September 14, and kept quiet about FDR's hugely controversial plan to send Britain 50 aging but desperately needed U.S. destroyers, though he sharply criticized the president for using his executive authority to carry out the deal without congressional authorization. As FDR's lead widened in the polls, Willkie did resort to playing an isolationist card by warning that the president would lead the country into war, but the draft and destroyer deals were already done.

Peters is persuasive in arguing that any other GOP nominee would have made it very hard for FDR to help the British and win approval of conscription, with consequences that are unknowable. This is marvelous history—speculative, vividly written, engrossing—of a kind, sad to say, that few professional historians dare to attempt.

—STEVEN LAGERFELD

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**LANE KIRKLAND:**

***Champion of American Labor.***

By Arch Puddington. Wiley.

342 pp. \$30

In the 2004 election, the Democrats were once again seen as more likely to favor the economic prospects of the average American, while the Republicans were seen as doing a better job of defending national security. But in the past, as Arch Puddington reminds us, one didn't have to choose. Lane Kirkland was both “a New Dealer and a Cold Warrior,” and one of the last of the Cold War liberals.

Although Kirkland (1922–99) is often remembered for presiding over a decline in the ranks of organized labor, he also stood for principles that American liberalism might do well to remember. As the president of the AFL-CIO from George Meany's retirement in 1979 to John Sweeney's challenge in 1995, Kirkland valiantly fought the transformation of liberalism from, as Puddington puts it, a philosophy of “economic growth, equal opportunity, and an informed patriotism” into “a corrosive combination of cultural radicalism, identity politics, and Cold War neutralism.” Kirkland was a lead-

ing proponent of Lech Walesa's Solidarity movement in Poland in the early 1980s, when scarcely anyone thought it would triumph, and when the foreign-policy establishment worried that open support of Walesa would provoke a Soviet invasion.

Kirkland and President Ronald Reagan agreed on Poland, but not on many other issues. Kirkland believed in the importance of organized labor at home, as a counterweight to corporate interests and as a voice for average Americans. He denounced as overkill Reagan's firings of the striking air traffic controllers in 1981, and fought the administration's anti-government strategy of tax cuts for the upper brackets and budget cuts for the lower. In a speech, Kirkland recalled the days when farmhouses lacked electricity, hookworm was widespread, and the elderly were destitute, "before government got on our backs" with the Rural Electrification Administration, the Public Health Service, and Social Security.

Puddington, vice president for research at the nonprofit organization Freedom House, takes us from South Carolina, where Kirkland grew up, to Georgetown University, where he studied foreign affairs, to his presidency of the AFL-CIO, where he sought to help unify the ranks of labor, to his battles with the Clinton administration over the North American Free Trade Agreement. The book closes with what Puddington calls the "coup" against Kirkland by labor dissidents who accused him of devoting too little time to organizing and too much to foreign affairs. Puddington notes dryly that while Sweeney has sharply curtailed the AFL-CIO's once-heroic involvement in foreign policy, he has had no more success than Kirkland in stemming the loss of union members.

This otherwise excellent book could have been improved in a couple of ways. For one thing, a reader will search long and hard to find any criticism of Kirkland. The rap on presidential candidate Walter Mondale 20 years ago—that he couldn't name a single issue on which he disagreed with organized labor—applies equally to Puddington's treatment of Kirkland. In addition, it would be nice to know more about the personal side of Lane Kirkland, including his family life. For

instance, five daughters are mentioned fleetingly in the early chapters, never to reappear.

But overall, at a time when organized labor is written off as a slowly dying special interest, Puddington does an admirable job of reminding us of labor's proud heritage, at home and abroad, as "the only mass constituency" within the Democratic Party "committed to mainstream American values, broad-based reform that transcended racial and gender lines, and a diplomatically engaged and militarily prepared America."

—RICHARD D. KAHLENBERG

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*TO DIE IN CUBA:  
Suicide and Society.*

By Louis A. Pérez Jr. Univ. of North Carolina Press. 463 pp. \$39.95

Cubans kill themselves roughly three times as often as Venezuelans, four times as often as Brazilians, and five times as often as Mexicans, according to the most recent statistics available from the World Health Organization. But that's nothing new. For most of its history, Cuba has had the highest suicide rate in Latin America, and one of the highest in the world. Why?

Ten years in the making, this fascinating illustrated cultural history answers that question by drawing on sources both scholarly and popular: official statistics, academic works, literature, suicide notes, newspaper clippings, even cartoons. Louis Pérez, a historian at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, maintains that most Cuban suicides aren't the product of mental illness. Rather, Cubans view self-destruction as a practical, rational way of exerting control over their lives—even if that control ends their lives.

"The recorded history of Cuba begins with suicide," writes Pérez. The legend of Yumurí—the tale of indigenous people leaping en masse over a precipice instead of surrendering to Spanish subjugation—became a founding narrative. In the 19th century, African slaves and Chinese contract workers on sugar plantations saw suicide as both a means of relief from brutal conditions and a form of resistance against their oppressors.

Resistance can also be more active.

Cubans have so romanticized death in battle, Pérez suggests, that it has become a form of suicide. Later in the 19th century, the nearly 30-year struggle for independence from Spain gave rise to a patriotic duty to sacrifice oneself. In “a vastly unequal struggle of civilians against soldiers, of machetes against Mausers,” Pérez writes, “the only advantage possessed by Cubans was the will to win and the willingness to die.” The prototypical figure is José Martí, whose fatal charge into battle atop a white horse Pérez calls a quest for martyrdom.

Six decades later, Fidel Castro urged Cubans to follow Martí’s example and accept the idea enshrined in the national anthem that “to die for the *Patria* is to live.” Che Guevara’s “suicide platoon” was so popular that soldiers not chosen for it would weep. Many urban revolutionaries carried cyanide pills in case of capture.

With the success of the Cuban Revolution, a new sense of optimism and collective purpose drove down the rate of suicides. But the suicide rate jumped back up in the 1990s, when the Soviet Union’s collapse sent Cuba’s economy into a condition rivaling the Great Depression. Some young people intentionally infected themselves with HIV, hoping to spend their last years in the relative comfort of the sanitariums where AIDS patients were quarantined. Even the Cuban exiles in Miami have a higher-than-average suicide rate, perhaps the product of despair over lives spent in eternal waiting.

Although the particulars vary, the basic story remains the same: Faced with unbearable circumstances, and urged on by a cultural discourse that presents self-destruction as socially acceptable, even desirable, Cubans kill themselves. To do so, they use whatever’s available. “Progress came to Cuba in the form of gas stoves, skyscrapers and bridges, trolley cars and passenger trains, all of which facilitated the act of suicide,” writes Pérez. After the revolution, guns, medicines, and household poisons became scarce, so Cubans turned to hanging and self-immolation. Pérez also sees a suicidal element in the *balseros*, or rafters, who die trying to cross the Florida Straits. To throw oneself in

the sea is “to assert control over one’s life, an act of agency, even if . . . also a deed of self-destruction.”

Despite the occasional lapse into academic jargon, Pérez offers a highly readable, evenhanded look at Cuba’s tumultuous history through an unusual lens. And for a book about suicide, *To Die in Cuba* is surprisingly undreary. “Suicide was not necessarily a deed of hopelessness,” Pérez stresses. “On the contrary, under certain circumstances, it was undertaken as an affirmation of hope.”

—REBECCA A. CLAY

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## ***BECOMING JUSTICE***

***BLACKMUN:***

***Harry Blackmun’s***

***Supreme Court Journey.***

By Linda Greenhouse. Times Books.

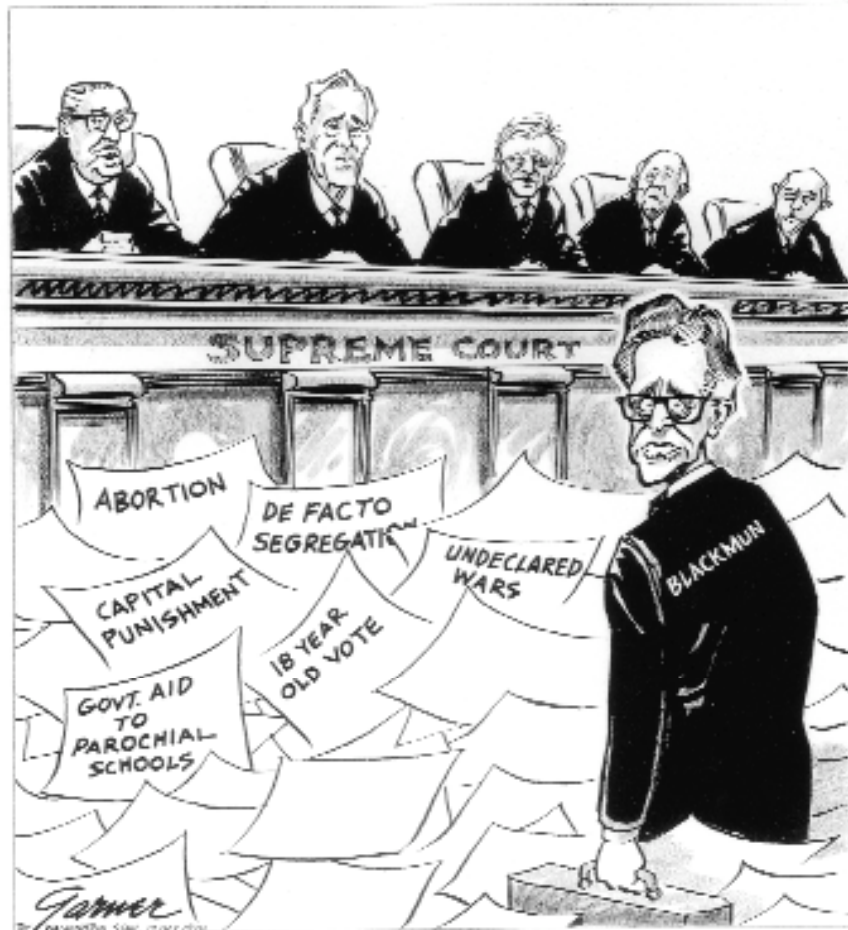
268 pp. \$25

*Washington Post* publisher Philip Graham once called journalism the “first rough draft of history.” In her book on Justice Harry Blackmun (1908–99), Linda Greenhouse of *The New York Times*—who has provided the best journalism out of the Supreme Court for more than 25 years—has given us, for both better and worse, a second draft.

Better: Greenhouse had early access to Blackmun’s voluminous papers, which include childhood diaries as well as Court documents. After a year immersed in the papers and in Blackmun’s 38-hour oral history, she has culled the newsworthy nuggets. There is a good bit of important history here, and Greenhouse thus achieves the goal she sets out in her prologue: “to extract from this immense collection . . . a coherent narrative of a consequential life.”

Worse: Readers expecting the insight and context that are the marks of strong biography will be disappointed. Greenhouse acknowledges that she ventured little outside the Blackmun papers. Justice Blackmun, who served on the Court from 1970 to 1994, remains enigmatic, while his contemporaries are undeveloped as characters. The lack of any notes is a shortcoming. In all, the “draft” is still rough.

Two stories lie at the heart of this book. The first is that of *Roe v. Wade* (1973)—in



*Justice Harry Blackmun wrote many of the controversial Supreme Court decisions of his era, including *Roe v. Wade* (1973).*

which Blackmun wrote the opinion of the Court—and the evolution of the law of abortion and gender discrimination between 1970 and 1995. Greenhouse does a superb job of laying out this evolution, and provides a number of tantalizing anecdotes along the way. Of these, the most memorable may be one that confirms many legal conservatives' worst fantasy: Blackmun literally studied Gallup poll results while formulating his *Roe* opinion.

The second tale, less revealingly told, is of the relationship between Blackmun and Warren Burger, who served as chief justice from 1969 to 1986. At first referred to as the "Minnesota Twins," the two justices came famously to disagree, as Blackmun moved steadily to the left during his years on the high court. Greenhouse charts the two men's close friendship from childhood (they

met in kindergarten) through Blackmun's ascension from a federal appeals court to the Supreme Court—a promotion, it seems, in part engineered by Burger. Then she details the accumulation of slights Blackmun felt thereafter, and the legal disagreements he took personally. But there is no incident chronicled here in which Burger reciprocates Blackmun's resentment, and no hint of Burger's side of the story.

And the Blackmun of this book remains a hard man to understand. We are told that he annually marked the anniversary of the appendectomy he required at age 14, but aren't told what to make of this. Blackmun was a stickler for accuracy—the only justice who double-checked the citations in the work of his clerks. But he also broke with Court protocol to cooperate with Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong for their



behind-the-scenes book *The Brethren* (1979). Blackmun was, as Greenhouse notes, “always thin-skinned,” actually recording on a list of the most significant events of 1985 a February day when “CJ [Burger] picks on me at conference.” But when Justice Anthony Kennedy, a friend, took deep offense at a gratuitous paragraph in a draft Blackmun opinion and pleaded for its removal, Blackmun changed only one word, and then grudgingly.

The Blackmun portrayed here was far more concerned with equitably doing justice in each case than with strictly interpreting the law. In the contentious debate over the role of judges in a democratic society, he clearly chose a side. Perhaps because she still covers the Court, Greenhouse seems reluctant to pass judgment on the key question her book raises: whether Blackmun’s approach is the right one or not.

—RICHARD J. TOFEL

### CONTRIBUTORS

**Rebecca A. Clay**, a writer in Washington, D.C., visited Cuba as part of an information-gathering delegation in 2004. **Ann Finkbeiner**, a science writer who teaches at Johns Hopkins University, is the author of a book about academic physicists who consult on defense problems, to be published next year. **David J. Garrow** is the author of *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, which won the 1987 Pulitzer Prize in biography. **Richard D. Kahlenberg**, a senior fellow at the Century Foundation, is writing a biography of labor leader Albert Shanker. **Steven Lagerfeld** is editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*. **A. J. Loftin** is a writer and editor living in New York. **Carlos Lozada** is a contributing writer of *Foreign Policy* magazine. **James M. Morris** is a senior editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*. **William Powers** is a columnist for *National Journal*. **Stephanie Joy Smith** is a researcher for *The Wilson Quarterly*. **Richard J. Tofel** is president of the International Freedom Center, a new cultural institution that will be located at the World Trade Center site, and the author of the forthcoming book *Sounding the Trumpet: The Making of John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address*.

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## PORTRAIT: Fascination of Flight



The world's romance with aviation was in full bloom after Charles Lindbergh's history-making non-stop solo flight from New York to Paris in 1927. Then came World War II, when the shadow of an airplane passing overhead could be cause for terror. In *The Spectacle of Flight: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1920–1950* (2005), Robert Wohl reflects on a 1936 essay in which French poet and diplomat Paul Claudel describes this transformation: “The sky had suddenly become omnipresent and dangerous. . . . Everyone reached involuntarily for some device to protect him or herself from falling projectiles, a weapon, a shield, an air raid shelter, even an umbrella.” But in the faces of these children, watching from a trench as British fighters and German bombers engage over Kent in September 1940, we can see the fascination as well as the fear these deadly new birds of the air evoked.

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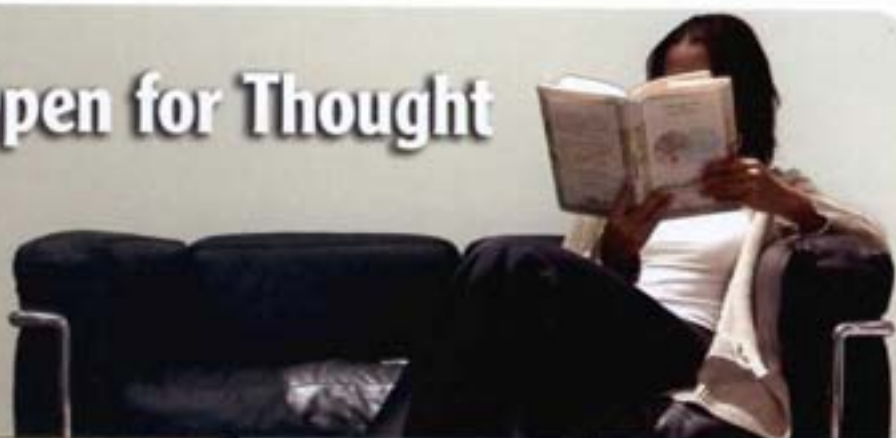
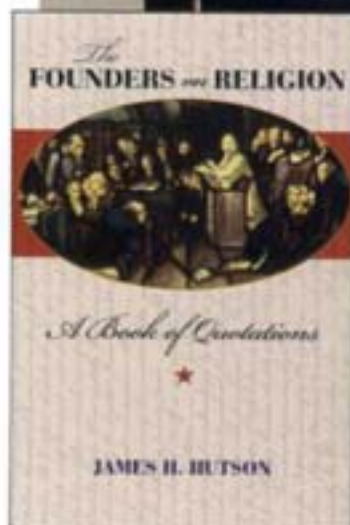


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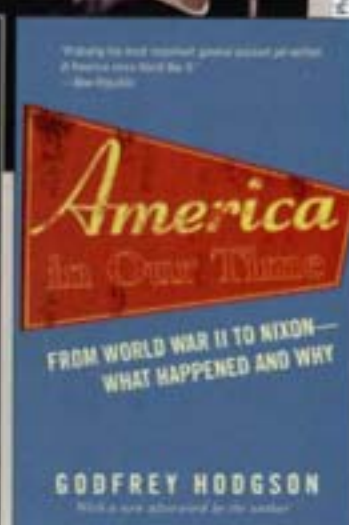


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