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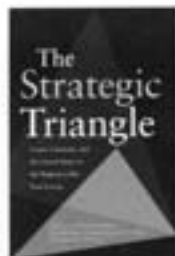
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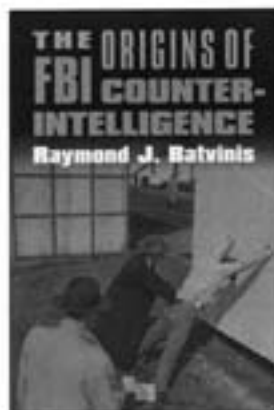
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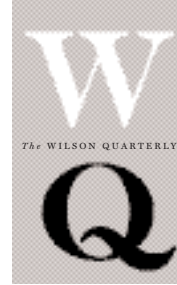
History Lessons

When Iraq is the subject, Americans seem able to open their history books only to the chapter on Vietnam. At the outset of the Iraq war, when the *WQ* published the three-article cluster "Iraq From Sumer to Saddam" (Spring 2003), I noted with dismay in this space the failure of people on both sides of the prewar debate to consult Iraq's past for insights into the eventualities of a post-Saddam future. Now, as America searches for a path out of Iraq, it is in danger of repeating that mistake.

Unfortunately, history rarely yields the simple lessons we would like. It provides cautionary tales and hints at possibilities, but decisions about what risks to take and what sacrifices to bear still have to be made in the context of the current times. Four years ago, in recalling the British experience in Iraq between World War I and the 1950s, our frequent contributor Martin Walker wrote presciently that "the Iraqi national identity that the British tried to foster remains at constant risk from the ethnic and religious tensions among the three dominant elements of Iraqi society." Yet Walker also rightly noted that Iraq's Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds kept the country whole and managed to make substantial social and economic progress during those years.

To ask if it was a mistake for Britain to create a unified Iraq from the shards of the Ottoman Empire after World War I is implicitly to ask if it makes sense to aim for a unified Iraq in the future. F. S. Naiden's tragicomic tale of the cobbling together of modern Iraq in this issue offers little encouragement, while Reidar Visser gives a more hopeful account of the foundations of Iraqi nationhood and of the forces that both unite and divide Iraqis today. If there's a lesson here, it is that history will not repeat itself: A great power may have created Iraq, but it is Iraqis who will determine if it survives.

—STEVEN LAGERFELD



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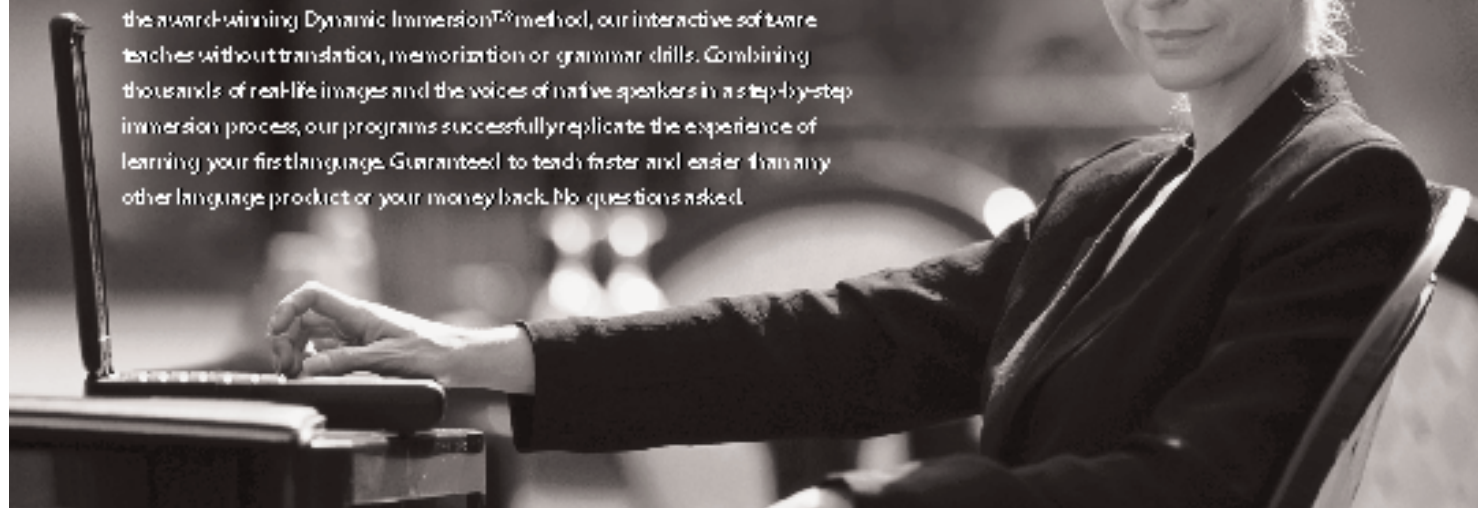
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LETTERS

THE KNOWLEDGE RACE

CHRISTOPHER CLAUSEN SHOULD be commended for his clear-eyed and merciless description of an American higher education system that endlessly contradicts its own highest ideals [“The New Ivory Tower,” *WQ*, Autumn ’06]. And he’s right to suggest that institutions value status above all else. But he’s too quick to dismiss the possibility of creating a real bottom line against which false reputations can be compared.

Most students want and need the same things from higher education: general and specialized knowledge; the ability to analyze, think critically, and communicate; a degree; a good job; and the chance to live life well. In just the last few years, a whole range of new data sources have emerged that could tell us how well individual colleges and universities are accomplishing these goals. The National Survey of Student Engagement is being used by hundreds of institutions to gauge best practices. The Collegiate Learning Assessment measures growth in critical-thinking and writing skills from freshman to senior year. New state data systems can track graduates into the work force to see what kind of jobs they get and how much they earn. Compiled and dis-

closed to the public, these and other measures could fundamentally change the nature of status in higher education, and thus the decisions our colleges and universities make.

Clausen is correct, of course, that the accuracy and propriety of these measures are “endlessly debatable.” But that’s because higher education has a vested interest in never ending the debate, or releasing information about quality to the public. Policymakers at the state and federal levels can break this deadlock by making increased disclosure and transparency the price of tax preferences and government funding. Then colleges will start worrying about students instead of status, for a change.

Kevin Carey

*Research and Policy Manager
Education Sector
Washington, D.C.*

BY USING THE WORD “REVOLUTION,” author Sheila Melvin captures succinctly the profound impact the expansion of higher education has had in China [“China’s College Revolution,” *WQ*, Autumn ’06]. Melvin has attempted a rather comprehensive overview of the changes, and given a broad idea of the problems that have resulted from so great an

expansion. Indeed, changes taking place in China since 1978 have been striking and deep, not only because they affect a huge population but also because of the magnitude of structural reinvention—a reinvention that has shaken up many systems at the same time. For example, the expansion of higher education has a huge impact on the employment system, and will have fundamental implications for China’s transition from an economy that relies on labor-intensive advantage to one based on innovations in science and technology fields.

As the author outlines, China still lags quite far behind developed countries in the percentage of adults who have received post-secondary education, the number of top-ranked universities, etc. But what impresses people is that even a small percentage of change reflects a huge increase in quantity, and what is more amazing still is that the trend upward will continue. It is not inconceivable that in the next 20 years, China will send 40 percent of its young people (about 50 million students) on to institutions of higher education.

Reforms in Chinese education, as in other sectors, are not always conducted in a rational manner, but there is an overall adherence to the national policy of economic development to strengthen the country, in which education and science will play [Continued on Page 6]

LETTERS may be mailed to *The Wilson Quarterly*, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004-3027, or sent via facsimile, to (202) 691-4036, or e-mail, to wq@wilsoncenter.org. The writer’s telephone number and postal address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some letters are received in response to the editors’ requests for comment.

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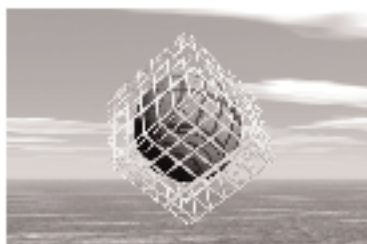
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[Continued from page 4] a strategic role. Chinese policymakers and scholars are eagerly learning from all countries that have accumulated valuable experiences. China now has many “university towns,” where from 80,000 to 300,000 students live and learn. So the infrastructure is in place. Many universities in China are establishing the infrastructure first, then putting in the software (faculty, curriculum, research capabilities, etc.) to get closer and closer to the top-ranked universities in the world. This is truly a “revolution” in higher education, and conceivably will have a major impact on the world’s higher education system.

Jing Lin

Associate Professor
Department of Education Policy
and Leadership
University of Maryland
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MITCHELL G. ASH’S ESSAY [“Germany: The Humboldt Illusion,” *WQ*, Autumn ’06] is a shortened—and somewhat more polemical—version of an article he published in *The European Journal of Education* (June 2006). Many of Ash’s arguments from the longer version are convincing and also well known among German experts. Ash tries to prove that the Humboldtian ideal of the university has always been a myth, was never implemented in practice, and was never adopted in the United States. I’d like to make four points nevertheless.

(1) The Humboldtian ideals largely remained ideals (rather than becoming practices), and they were not the only educational concepts

available for adoption at the time. Nonetheless, they did influence the model for the research university in the United States, though they were necessarily adapted to the American situation, which then evolved differently. But a broader argument would be that the birth of the university took place in the Europe of the Middle Ages and that Europe provided the world with a model (an idea) of the university, while later on America provided the world with the model (an idea) of a university system. I would argue that there are reciprocal influences despite different developments due to “path dependency.”

(2) Ongoing reforms of the German higher education system (e.g., the Bologna Reforms, the Initiative for Excellence, new forms of governance) are not only designed to bring about more institutional diversity and more competition within the system but are elements of an underlying shift in two respects. On the macro level (political decision making), we observe a shift in focus from the institution to the system. On the micro level (institutional decision making), we observe a shift from the logic of the chair holder to the logic of the organization.

(3) The new forms of managerial governance currently being introduced in German universities are not drawn from American models but are based on the so-called (Dutch) Tilburg Model of New Public Management.

(4) Counting the years of schooling and undergraduate study, Ash should keep in mind that in Germany the overwhelming majority of new entrant stu-

dents in universities have had 13 years of school education. Furthermore, in a recent survey of American graduate schools, 89 percent of the institutions said that European bachelor’s graduates of three-year programs were eligible for admission, naturally after positive selection.

Barbara M. Kehm

Managing Director
Center for Research on Higher
Education and Work
University of Kassel
Kassel, Germany

I WAS DELIGHTED TO SEE THE excellent articles on “The Global Race for Knowledge: Is the U.S. Losing?” [*WQ*, Autumn ’06], especially the article by Michael Lind titled “Why the Liberal Arts Still Matter.” I was impressed with and surprised by his perspectives, his accuracy, and his judgment about the importance of the liberal arts for all at the secondary level.

Admiral Hyman Rickover came to a similar conclusion about 40 years ago in his book *Swiss Education and Ours: Why Theirs Is Better*, about the power of a high-stakes external exit examination at the secondary level called the *abitur*, which led to the research university in Germany. This gave Germany a head start in establishing research universities, and during the next half-century or so rigorous secondary exit examinations and research universities spread to most countries in continental Europe, but not to the United Kingdom or other Anglo-Saxon nations.

Although America did create

research universities, starting with Johns Hopkins in 1876, the Committee of Ten proposal for secondary-school reform never was implemented. Thus, we in America missed the opportunity to prepare students for university education, so that today we are annually spending billions on the six R's: remedial reading, remedial writing, and remedial arithmetic at the university level. The dropout rate at the postsecondary level is not only an enormous economic loss, much larger than the cost of the six R's, but more important, it dramatizes the price of the missed opportunity to provide a core curriculum and the foundation for a liberal education by the end of secondary education.

Fortunately, the need for a core curriculum has been pointed out forcefully by E. D. Hirsch and Diane Ravitch in their recent works. Popular demand for a more rigorous and broader curriculum is already growing rapidly, as indicated by the growth of the International Baccalaureate (IB), which is offered by about a thousand schools in North America. Jay Mathews and Ian Hill wrote about the IB recently in their book *Supertest: How the International Baccalaureate Can Strengthen Our Schools* (2005).

The IB curriculum is without a doubt the only world-class curriculum and set of examinations available to Americans at this time. It may not provide a complete liberal education as defined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, but it does compare favorably to the secondary

rigor and exit examinations in the industrial countries, and so is worth investing in and expanding.

So yes, Michael Lind has a great idea to provide a liberal education at the secondary level, but even preparing a significant proportion of our students for the International Baccalaureate diploma within the next decade will, in itself, pose a significant challenge.

M. Blouke Carus

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THE NUCLEAR FALLOUT

TEN YEARS AGO NUCLEAR POWER was dead, killed by problems of waste storage, plant safety, and cost. There seemed little point in debating its

merits, let alone its possible growth.

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[*Continued on Page 9*]



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FROM THE CENTER

STEPPING BACK

WE HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO SEEING statesmen, leading thinkers, and public officials cross our stage at the Wilson Center. Even so, the final week of September was extraordinary. In a two-day period, Iraqi president Jalal Talabani, Afghan president Hamid Karzai, and U.S. director of national intelligence John Negroponte all came to speak at the Center. While each of these figures was impressive, what I felt most powerfully afterward was a renewed appreciation for the important research and debate that proceed without drama every day at desks and conference tables in the Center.

The visit of the two presidents was a spectacle, not least because of what we knew of Iraq's and Afghanistan's past and present. Only a few years ago, these countries were led by two of the world's cruelest and most bizarre autocrats. It was impossible to imagine Saddam Hussein or the Taliban's Mullah Mohammed Omar standing at our podium to explain his views and answer questions from reporters and scholars. Listening to presidents Talabani and Karzai—two eloquent, personable, democratically chosen leaders—in the quiet precincts of the Center's auditorium, it was impossible not to think of the constant violence in their countries, and of the great personal courage and commitment with which they serve.

During his speech, President Karzai acknowledged the continuing violence in Afghanistan. Police training was neglected after the defeat of the Taliban in 2001 in the rush to pursue other goals, such as the creation of new political institutions, he explained, and the resulting "power vacuum" in many areas is being exploited by terrorists from across the border in Pakistan. Yet he listed a number of accomplishments, including education for girls, the construction or rebuilding of more than 3,000 schools, a vast increase in basic health care (which now reaches 80 percent of the population), and the construction of new highways. He pointed out, however, that highways don't reach most villages, where impoverished farmers without the means to get their crops to market often resort to the cultivation of poppies. Smaller farm-to-market roads are among his top priorities for the

future. While much progress has been made, President Karzai concluded, "a lot more needs to be done in Afghanistan over the coming years."

Afterward, he gracefully fielded a number of hard questions, but it was in other sessions organized around the presidential visits that the Wilson Center's value as a hub of advanced research truly shone. At a separate session, Robert Hathaway, director of the Center's Asia Program, noted Afghanistan's significant strides toward democratic governance since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, even as he highlighted a daunting list of obstacles still to be overcome. Afghan poppy farming, for example, now accounts for more than half of the country's gross national income and 92 percent of the world's supply of opium, and the country remains on the World Bank's list of "fragile states." The American public has not paid sufficient attention to the situation in Afghanistan since the Taliban's defeat in 2001, Hathaway concluded, and the victory still could be lost.

Illuminating an entirely different dimension of the situation, Haleh Esfandiari, director of the Wilson Center's Middle East Program, noted that neighboring Iran has a long-standing interest in Afghanistan's political stability. During the years of Taliban rule, some two million refugees flooded into Iran; Iranian diplomats worked hard at the Bonn Conference in 2001 to help create a provisional government for Afghanistan. Today, Afghan drug traffickers regularly violate Iran's borders and clash with Iranian police.

There is no doubt that leading figures such as presidents Talabani and Karzai come to the Center in part because of the reputation of our distinguished director, Lee Hamilton. In his role as cochairman of the Iraq Study Group (and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission before that), he has exemplified not only the spirit of public service but the qualities that make the Center and its staff and scholars so special—dispassionate research, attention to the people "in the trenches," and a willingness to listen to all sides.

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[Continued from page 7] The Massachusetts Institute of Technology study (*The Future of Nuclear Power*), to which I contributed as a team member, argued for the expansion of worldwide nuclear power as one of several components in a global effort to reduce the growth of greenhouse-gas emissions. Simply to keep pace with nuclear power's current contribution would require an almost threefold expansion of the existing U.S. capacity. Where there are 100 nuclear plants in the United States today, in 50 years we will need 400, and that is just to keep nuclear's contribution to U.S. electricity production roughly constant. If we do not expand nuclear power, we must somehow find a way to offset the growth in carbon emissions that an expanded nuclear capacity would have averted. In this respect, the MIT study's proposals offered only a modest step, a way to alleviate a small part of the problem.

Brice Smith and Arjun Makhijani ["Nuclear Is Not the Way," *WQ*, Autumn '06] offer wind as the alternative to nuclear power. This is a red herring. If the objective is to lessen carbon emissions, replacing one low-carbon fuel (nuclear) with another (wind) amounts to no gain. Realistically, wind and solar, which currently account for only a fraction of a percent of our energy, have dim prospects for supplanting nuclear power. It is more prudent, I think, to develop wind and solar power to supplement nuclear's contribution to non-carbon-producing energy sources. This is not to say that nuclear is without problems. Rather, without nuclear, heading off global warming will be that

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much more difficult.

Nuclear power is also not *the* solution. It is only a small part of the solution, and it appears to have its limits. According to the MIT report, worldwide uranium resources could support the sort of expansion envisioned, but not, it appears, a more aggressive expansion. Even the modest MIT proposal—the siting of 300 new nuclear facilities—would require enormous political will.

The real dilemma arises from coal. Coal is abundant and cheap. The United States, China, and India sit on vast reserves of this fuel, enough to sustain thousands of years of growth. Nuclear power has not expanded because it has a hard time competing economically with pulverized coal. Natural gas, as its price rises, will also be replaced with coal.

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Yet coal emits the largest amount of carbon per BTU produced. Wind and solar and nuclear power, if they can be expanded, should supplant coal. The problem is one of economics.

No single fuel offers the alternative to coal or the solution to global warming. Rather, the United States needs to adjust the price of energy to reflect the cost of climate change, or at least the willingness to pay to avoid global warming. Only if the prices of coal, oil, and gas rise will low-carbon alternatives gain in the market and consumer behavior change.

The possible solutions are no mystery. They are to regulate emissions efficiently using a cap-and-trade system, such as the northeastern states are attempting to do. Or, tax carbon. Both involve higher prices for consumers.

How much is the public willing to pay? Here we must wait and see. The immediate answer is, "Not much." In a 2003 survey, my colleagues and I discovered that the median amount that people would willingly pay in taxes on their electricity bills "to solve global warming" amounted to \$10 a month. That is only 10 percent more than they currently pay—far from enough to change behavior or make alternative fuels competitive. But there is a glimmer of hope. In 2006, we repeated the same survey and discovered that another measure, willingness to pay, had risen 50 percent. The growth in willingness to pay reflected rising recognition that global warming is a problem. In 2003, the American public ranked global warming the sixth most important environmental problem, lagging far behind clean

water. By 2006, global warming had become the top environmental concern in the United States. If this trend continues, the political will behind a substantial change in U.S. energy policy will emerge. Then, and only then, will we have the luxury of choosing nuclear or wind.

Stephen Ansolabehere

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CORRECTION

"India's Path to Greatness" [*WQ*, Summer '06] stated that India is the only Asian country with an aircraft carrier that can deploy British-built vertical takeoff jets. Thailand operates such a vessel as well. We regret the error.

FINDINGS

BRIEF NOTES OF INTEREST ON ALL TOPICS

Wiring the Vote

Third-party hope springs eternal

A bare week after the November elections, before memories could fade of a high-stakes campaign season with a gripping photo finish, speakers at a National Press Club forum in Washington, D.C., were earnestly seeking to dispel the notion that the 2006 elections had been a big deal. At the second Independent and Third Party Round-

table (known as I-3PR), participants agreed that the two main parties still offered voters no real choice: Despite the media's "singular focus" on who would control Congress, the election's real message was that voters remain apathetic, disgusted with the powers that be. The American political landscape, declared moderator Webster Brooks, "has never been as favorable as it is now for a breakthrough in 2008 by independents and third-party candidates."

There's some scholarship to fuel Brooks's optimism. But the outlook isn't brightening for third parties because of voter apathy; it's happening because of technology. In *Web Campaigning* (MIT Press, 2006), Kirsten A. Foot and Steven M. Schneider note that although most things campaigns do on the Web only reinforce traditional campaign practices, one important exception is "mobilization." The Web is very effective in drawing new people into political activity. And third-party candidates online can appear just as visible and legitimate as major-party ones—at least in the early stages of a campaign.

A Green Party candidate in Maine stirred public interest in last year's election by conducting a snap survey of viewers, at the close of a televised debate, using cell phones. An independent online political party calling itself Unity '08 even aims to nominate a presidential ticket via an online convention in early 2008.

Can electronic communication overcome the two parties' advantages or other basic features of American politics? Foot and Schneider don't seem to think so. When they interviewed workers from campaigns that operated mostly on the Web, they were told



The Unity '08 website offers visitors a chance to nominate a third-party presidential candidate for 2008.

not to underestimate face-to-face or at least “voice-to-voice” contact. “It is not possible to persuade people via e-mail,” reflected one campaign webmaster. “Next time, we’ll have a storefront office.”

Touch Screen, and Yawn

Missing the old “ka-ching!”

About 40 percent of November’s voters met technology in a more widely publicized way: They voted on electronic touchscreen machines. Though many pundits worried about fraud, William L. Byrd Jr., a curator at the Smithsonian Institution and the creator of an online history of American voting methods (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/vote/intro.html>), diagnoses a different problem.

Touchscreen voting is simply too humdrum, like using an ATM, Byrd said in September, at the Society for the History of Technology’s conference in Las Vegas. By contrast, the mechanical gear-and-lever voting device, invented more than a century ago and still used in New York State, gives “the satisfaction of the hands-on experience of operating a machine,” he said. Like a citizenship oath or a wedding march, the device’s ceremonial “clicking and clacking of levers” connotes something momentous. As Byrd addressed half a dozen fellow voting-machine historians, hundreds of bettors sat in the casino downstairs avidly pressing buttons and pulling levers, voting repeatedly for jackpots that proved almost as elusive as a third-party presidency.

Faces of Khan

Mongolia romances its past

Some leaders with lasting appeal never receive a single vote. One such, named Temujin at his birth around 1162, was feted lavishly this year on the 800th anniversary of his rise to power—feted, indeed, with an outpouring of reverence that startled those Westerners who know him by his title, Chinggis, also spelled Genghis, Khan.

Recalled elsewhere as a brutal conqueror who decimated the civilizations of Central Asia and left behind pyramids of skulls after conquering Bukhara, Samarqand, and other great cities, Chinggis Khan is all but worshiped in his native Mongolia. He amassed the largest contiguous land empire in world history, stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Sea of Japan at his death, and his sons extended Mongol dominion to the shores of the Mediterranean.

The cult of Chinggis, suppressed under the Soviets, came roaring back when Mongolia achieved democracy in 1990. Mongolians celebrate Chinggis for uniting the warring nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppe, melding them in ethnically mixed, meritocratic armies, and thereby forging a national Mongol identity. The great khan was also a lawgiver, instituting a strict universal legal code. At an eighth centennial conference in Beijing, scholars hailed Chinggis as an early avatar of globalization. In perhaps his greatest conquest of all, he’s also credited with designing the world’s first

highly efficient international postal service.

It’s a Bond World

But what does it all mean, 007?

Here in the West, we have our own ways of honoring cultural icons. With the arrival of a new James Bond movie, and a new actor playing Bond, spy scholars have rushed to leverage the perennial appeal of Agent 007. In *Questions Are Forever: James Bond and Philosophy*, edited by James B.

South and Jacob M.

Held (Open Court, 2006), 17 authors subject 007 to a battery of searching philosophical inquiries: Does his “being-towards-death” make him an existentialist? To which of Plato’s archetypes does he conform? Does



Spy. Lover. Existentialist?

he exemplify or subvert the liberal ideal of the rule of law? Are the gadgets on which he relies “functional characteristics of heroism,” and if so, is this Heidegger’s doing? The volume is part of the series “Philosophy and Popular Culture,” which also includes philosophical analyses of *Seinfeld*, Harley-Davidson, and *The Matrix*.

Happy Math

Is it too much fun?

If fun and games can help with the teaching of philosophy, shouldn’t the same be true of math? Successive waves of education reform going back nearly a century have taken it as writ that if children are

self-confident, enjoy their lessons, and find them relevant to daily life, their achievement levels will rise. But is it true? On math achievement, at least, the statistics say no, according to *The Happiness Factor in Student Learning*, part of a report from the Brookings Institution.

Eighth graders in 46 countries who took the TIMSS, an international math and science assessment test, were also asked questions that measured their self-confidence and enjoyment of math. And oddly enough, children in the countries with the highest average achievement said they didn't enjoy or do well at math. In Singapore, which had the highest scores, only 18 percent of students agreed "a lot" with the statement, "I usually do well at mathematics," while 39 percent of American eighth-graders did. Yet the *most* confident American eighth graders scored lower on math tests than the *least* confident Singaporean kids.

This doesn't mean we need to go back to the days of Miss Grinch, the dread-inspiring math teacher. The Brookings authors think that the relentless American emphasis on making students feel good about their math skills actually translates into a sense that the skills themselves aren't that important.

Gaming the Market

How landlords became Monopolists

Talk about making learning fun: Monopoly, a game that has sold 250 million copies since 1935 and

is still going strong, turns out to have originated as a stealth method of teaching an economic theory. In *Monopoly: The World's Most Famous Game and How It Got That Way* (Da Capo, 2006), Philip E. Orbanes describes how Monopoly evolved out of a far more abstruse, purely educational tool called The Landlord's Game, created in 1903 by one Elizabeth J. Magie to teach the gospel of a reformed tax code.

Magie was an adherent of the "single tax," the brainchild of the progressive economist Henry George (1839–97), who believed that the government should levy taxes only on the rising value of land. Magie created her game as a teaching tool to spread George's principles: A player gradually concentrated all the wealth in his hands simply by improving his properties. It circulated on college campuses for several decades, until a simplified and much depoliticized version found commercial success. How many players of today, gleefully piling up rents from their houses and hotels on Park Place and Marvin Gardens, would guess that the game was originally intended to demonstrate the perfidy of such behavior by landlords? Shouldn't there be a card marked "Buy a house and flip it"?

Pit Stops

Antiquity's latrines

In Deuteronomy 23:12–13 (Revised Standard Version), the ancient Israelites are instructed, "You shall have a place outside the

camp and you shall go out to it; and you shall have a stick with your weapons; and when you sit down outside, you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and cover up your excrement." These aren't the kind of verses dwelt upon in most houses of worship, but in academic Bible scholarship, anything goes. At Bible and Archaeology Fest IX, a semiprofessional annual jamboree held in Washington, D.C., by the Biblical Archaeology Society, scholar James Tabor entertained a packed audience with an in-depth elaboration of these down-to-earth verses, enlisting them in a long-running argument over who wrote the famous Dead Sea Scrolls, a collection of biblical and other texts written between 200 BC and AD 68 and found preserved in the Galilee caves of Qumran.

In Tabor's view—much contested by others—Qumran was inhabited by the Essenes, an ascetic sect whose members followed Deuteronomy and related moral codes literally; so literally, in fact, that when Tabor and his colleague Joe Zias retraced the directions for digging latrines, they're pretty sure they found ones dug by the sect. Drawing on other Qumran texts, Tabor says the Essenes were obliged to dip in a ritual bath after using the latrine; the resulting exchange of germs and epidemics of dysentery, he thinks, account for the disproportionate number of young Essenes found in a nearby cemetery. They might have been better off with more cleanliness and less godliness.

Off the Road

When did the travel bug become such a plague?

BY JAMES MORRIS

THE FIRST TRAVELERS LEFT HOME RELUCTANTLY, after playing fast and loose with the terms of their lease:

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The World was all before them . . . :
They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.
(*Paradise Lost* XII, 645–46, 648–49)

Travel began as a precise landlord's retribution, and no matter how plush the circumstances of movement have become, lodged still in travel's DNA are the traces of a sweet deal gone sour: The big plane will shudder, the high-decked ship rock, the Segway reverse course. And physical shocks are the least of it. Our errant first parents had only each other to endure. But we move in the company of . . . others, and it costs us. The assorted penalties of contemporary travel are evidence of how long the Almighty can hold a grudge.

Adam and Eve had no choice but to be on their way. We elect to go, over and over. The figures from the Travel Industry Association of America are staggering. "Travel and tourism" is said to be a \$1.3 trillion industry in the United States. "Total domestic person trips," defined as trips that take you 50 miles

or more from home, or force you to spend at least a night away from home, totaled 1.2 million in 2004 (the number has no doubt gone up since), and more than 80 percent of them were not for business or professional purposes but for leisure travel. We can't wait to lock the front door and unsheathe the handle on that tippy piece of wheeled luggage.

Why do we go? Our motives are pretty much what the motives for elective travel have always been: to see the country, or the world; to know the unknown; to open ourselves to new experience; to relax; to confirm that, by golly, people the world over really are the same. An intrepid few of us may even insist, with Robert Louis Stevenson (*Travels With a Donkey*), "For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake." Easy enough for him to say; the jackass he traveled with wasn't the garrulous stranger in an adjacent seat.

But what's left for the casual traveler to discover? Since that day when the world was all before our unsettled ancestors, a lot has happened. Adam and Eve may have traveled light, but they did carry curiosity from Eden, and it was the best part of their legacy. All the brave individuals, down through the ages, who said to themselves, "I know what's here, but what's elsewhere?" and then set out to answer the question, made us a gift of the world they observed.

The great heroic age of travel and exploration is

JAMES MORRIS is an editor at large of *The Wilson Quarterly*.





And we're off!

ecome a familiar sight to bil—
—not because they've been
anywhere necessarily, but
any others have done the job
nd broadcast the results, in
images. It's not just the world's
architectural sites—the easy
amids, Parthenon, Pantheon,
and such—or natural won-
ce the Nile in flow, that we rec-
Thanks to nature TV, we're
about the world's rarest flora,
ractively on speaking terms
lot of its fauna. Haven't we
the pain of those hapless pen-
whose to-and-froing across
ctica for the species' survival
ardly preferable to their fall-
te as a sea lion's lunch? The
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ird, or find the shyest mollusk
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ons, could break the steeliest
e Hague cry "Foul!"
ot when our impatience has
ed. It used to take supreme

courage to travel. Now it takes a lot of distracting devices (by generations: PlayStation, iPod, laptop, book). We suffer to the measure of our new intolerance, as when we're outraged by a couple hours' delay in crossing an ocean that was once an ordeal lasting weeks. Drive the family to a national park, and you can swap photos and sandwiches with the family in an adjacent SUV while your convoy moves, taillights to grills, through the clogged space at the speed of courage surfacing in Congress.

AT AIRPORTS, WE'RE PUT through a rite of passage that baffles everyone and fools no one. Stolid attendants eye every impatient toddler and unsteady grandma like an agile assassin.

Travel for pleasure? Not when at airports you're put through a rite of passage that baffles everyone and fools no one: the phased frisking of decent folk who are made to shed layers of clothing and their no-less-suspect books, newspapers, currency, and unguents before being herded, unshod, by stolid attendants through nervous portals, every impatient toddler and unsteady grandma eyed like an agile assassin.

Are things better aloft? Not when you can reach into the pocket of the seatback in front of you and pull out garbage that could be carbon dated. Cost cutting by the airlines leaves fewer pennies for cleaning crews, whose appearances are being coordinated with those of Halley's comet. Is the day far off when flight attendants will ask you to do a quick turn with a handvac to earn your microchip pretzels?

And yet we go. And go—on ships like skyscrapers laid sideways, each carrying the population of a small town and the frills of a big city; on planes that in a few years will cocoon many more hundreds than planes do at present, squeezing

us as usual, but stacking us too; on thrifty buses that promise to show us the country up close, and all too successfully do.

We've been sold on the idea that travel is no longer a luxury. It's a staple, like soymilk. Vacations used to be for summer. Now they know no season—or rather, they know every season. The travel industry hawks a product, and to get the attention of a public that, increasingly, has been there (on the Discovery Channel) or done that (on Court TV), the pitches have

become more extravagant. How many people actually take the kinds of trips featured in the glossy getaway magazines, or in the newspaper travel supplements that extend the fantasies the papers invite us to indulge other days of the week about real estate, fashion, and food: Find the house-on-stilts of

your dreams, and ignore the friable mountain it clings to; dress like the guy who always got beat up in school, or the girl who majored in escort service; follow a recipe that lets you substitute badger if your butcher is out of Tasmanian devil.

The travel pages tap into the same extremes of mad play, and with cost rarely an issue, the unreality is pure. Editors dream like drunken Coleridges, and hand subordinates maps. You don't just take a trip to Germany anymore; you book a Third Reich tour of Munich. You make for "the uttermost part of the Earth: Tierra del Fuego." You're the first on your block with a tan from the Saint-Tropez of Turkey, Turkbuku. You're off to an Ayurvedic spa in southern India, one of the "pilgrims with deep pockets" willing to bet that an ancient medical system can't be any worse than our own. A recent issue of *New York* magazine featured an exhausting number of ways to relax: Track a wild rhino in Africa. Spend a morning at a Tokyo gym—with sumos. Nightsled down a torch-lit mountain in Slovenia. Windsurf in a rum-scented Dominican Republic paradise. Reef dive with whale sharks in Honduras. Shop for national treasures at

bargain prices in Oaxaca. (Hmmm. Rhino or a shopping spree? For a New Yorker, not exactly Sophie's choice.)

You can't make this stuff up anymore. Or rather you can, but you'd better be quick, before a Sunday travel supplement staffer beats you to the departure gate, in search of the perfect sausage, or the planet's 10 best gated communities, or the world's most kid-friendly volcanoes. Every patch on Earth, no matter how distant, has its locating coordinates, which include an arrival time. In these fantasies, the world is spread before us as if it were a vast playground for Americans. But as playgrounds go, our world is, in fact, one of the old-fashioned kind, paved with concrete, where you can crack your skull if you lose your balance, and bullies lie in wait. The same newspapers and TV screens that promote the fantasies of travel put this rough world before us, too, and the allurements of the one contend with the dangers of the other. At the far end of the journeys abroad we Americans take these days, the arms that once opened to welcome us may be folded.

Can a case be made for staying put? It's open-and-shut for Pascal in his take-no-prisoners *Pensées*: "All the misfortunes of men come from one thing only: their not knowing how to remain at peace in a room at home." At least Samuel Beckett, in *Waiting for Godot*, manages to put his two tramps outdoors, on a road, where they have the same exchange at the end of each act:

Well? Shall we go?
Yes, let's go.
[They do not move.]

Though it stops just short, their passivity tilts toward despair. Better to incline another way and consider passivity's upside: Unnoticed, forgotten, you'll be safe. As Ulysses reminds Achilles in *Troilus and Cressida*, "Things in motion sooner catch the eye/than what stirs not" (III.iii.182-3). (Was it sly of Shakespeare to put those words in the mouth of the man who went on to become travel's poster boy, launching the tradition of a cruise with extended layovers?) Best of all would be to find passivity an unex-

pected stimulant. No one ever took more delight in being out and about than Cole Porter, but even he had to catch his breath from time to time and weigh the alternative:

Just being still
Might give us a brand new thrill.
So why don't we try staying home?
Wouldn't that be nice?
We've tried everything else twice.
So why don't we try staying home?
("Why Don't We Try Staying Home?" 1929)

I'm not proposing inertia as a permanent option; the economy couldn't take it. But as a temporary measure, a counter to the ceaseless spin of our lives, lasting just long enough for us to get our bearings and sort out a bit more of what's fantasy about the world from what's purposeful, it has its appeal. Stillness, silence, the reflective pause—air and head cleared of noise—are about as welcome today as plague rats were in the Middle Ages. The newest reaper wields no scythe, just puts a bone finger to his lips and pulls your earpiece.

What the Roman poet Horace wrote to a peripatetic friend a couple of millennia ago is sensible still:

Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt.
Strenua nos exercet inertia: navibus atque
quadrigis petimus bene vivere. Quod petis, hic est,
est Ulubris, animus si te non deficit aequus.
(*Epistles* I. 11. 27-30)

Which is to say, stretching the concise verse to a clumsy length (and keeping the Latin's shifts from third person to first to second), "People cross the sea and the sky above them is different, but they don't change. A busy idleness keeps us going. We take to ships and boats in search of the good life. But what you're after is right here in Ulubrae [i.e., at home], if you keep your mind on an even keel."

So strive for a settled soul, a level mind, right where you are, and put the brakes to the body for a while. How frail a vessel the body is anyway to bear the shifting cargo of our expectations. ■

Turkey Faces West

Rebuffed by the European Union, angered by U.S. policies in the Middle East, and governed by an Islamist political party, Turkey seems to have every reason to turn its back on the West. To most Turks, however, that would be inconceivable.

BY SOLI ÖZEL

IN MOST COUNTRIES, THE NEWS THAT ONE OF their own has been awarded a Nobel Prize is an occasion for universal pride and self-congratulation. That was not the case when the renowned Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk received the Nobel Prize for Literature this past October. Many Turks still angrily remembered Pamuk's controversial assertion in a Swiss newspaper in 2005 that "a million Armenians and thirty thousand Kurds have been killed in this land," which provided fodder for allegations that Ottoman Turkey had committed genocide against Armenians during and after World War I. The Turkish government scandalously put Pamuk on trial for defaming "Turkishness," provoking a public outcry in Turkey and abroad before he won acquittal in 2006. When the news of the Nobel broke, some Turks could barely hide their resentment and spite. For them the prize was simply a function of Pamuk's political views, which, in their view, he had expressed only to curry favor in the West and secure the Nobel.

Those with clearer minds rejoiced in Pamuk's accomplishment. By honoring him, the Swedish

Academy had acknowledged the Western part of modern Turkey's identity. It cited his literary achievements as a master novelist who transformed the literary form and in the process helped to make East and West more intelligible to each other. Still, the unhealthy reaction by a sizable portion of the Turkish public spoke volumes about the country's current state of mind toward the West.

The West certainly has given Turks a great deal to think about. Indeed, less than two hours before the Academy notified Pamuk of the great honor he had received, the French National Assembly staged its own crude attack on freedom of expression by passing a resolution making it a crime to deny that Ottoman Turkey was guilty of genocide against the Armenians. In September came Pope Benedict XVI's infamous lecture at the University of Regensburg, in which he infuriated Muslims around the world by quoting a Byzantine emperor: "Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." Then, in mid-December, came the cruelest cut of all. The European Union announced the suspension of negotiations on eight of 35 policy issues

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On a street in central Istanbul, International Women's Day 2005 created a *mélange* of contradictory and paradoxical images typical of modern Turkey.

that must be addressed before Turkey can complete the long EU accession process begun in 2004, bringing accession to a virtual halt. Even worse from the Turkish perspective was the intensity with which some European states suddenly objected to Turkey's membership, a matter that presumably had been settled in 2004. Many Turks saw the decision as yet another example of the EU's double standard in its dealings with its Muslim applicant.

“COOL ISTANBUL,” as the global media sometimes calls it, is a center for investment capital from East and West.

In the past when the Turks were upset with Europe, they turned to the United States. Ankara and Washington have a history of close relations dating to the Cold War, when the Soviet Union loomed menacingly over its southern neighbor. Turkish troops fought alongside the Americans during the Korean War, and Turkey joined NATO in 1952. In the post-Cold War era, the United States was an enthusiastic supporter of the recently completed Baku-Ceyhan pipeline that carries oil from Azerbaijan to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean, making Turkey a significant energy player while reducing Western dependence on Russia. When Turkey faced a severe economic crisis in 2001, the United States used its clout to convince the International Monetary Fund to assist Ankara.

But the Iraq war opened a rift. The Bush administration was embittered by Turkey's refusal to allow the deployment of U.S. troops in the country to open a northern front against Iraq. Ankara was angered by Washington's hard-nosed policies and alarmed by the potential for upheaval among its own traditionally restive Kurdish population created by events in the Kurdish areas of Iraq. And many Turks believe, along with other Muslims, that the United States is leading a crusade against Muslims. Anti-Americanism has begun to consume the Turkish public. The latest German Marshall Fund survey of transatlantic trends

found that only seven percent of Turks approve of President George W. Bush's policies.

Turkey's unique experiment in Westernization was already under intense scrutiny in the post-9/11 world, and these latest blows have led many to question whether that experiment will continue. Will the Turks drift away from the path of Westernizing modernization? The answer to this question, if it implies that Turkey may take a U-turn from its chosen path, is empathically no.

The Turkish experiment, after all, is two centuries old, having begun with the decision of Sultan Mahmud II (1784-1839) to meet the challenge of a rising Europe with a thorough reform of the Ottoman

Empire. Under Mahmud and his successors, the reforms included legal equality for all subjects of the empire, extension of private property rights, reform of the educational system, and the restructuring of the military and the notoriously ponderous Ottoman bureaucracy. With the determined leadership of Kemal Atatürk, the elite that founded the Turkish Republic on the ashes of the empire in 1923 pursued a more radical modernization, with a staunch secularism as its mainstay. Religion would be subjugated to the state and relegated strictly to the private sphere. Turkey under Atatürk replaced its alphabet and civil law virtually overnight; even the way men and women dressed was reformed.

Turkish democracy traces its practical origins to 1950, when an opposition party defeated the incumbent Republican Party and peacefully assumed power. As politicians became more responsive to popular sentiment, religion returned to the public realm and the Turkish military took it upon itself to serve as the primary custodian of the secular republican order. In its name, the army staged four direct or indirect military interventions; the last of these was the so-called postmodern coup of February 28, 1997, in which it mobilized public opinion and the news media to force



Urbanites make the scene on Bagdat Street, an upscale boulevard on the Asian side of Istanbul known for its elegant stores, banks, and restaurants.

the resignation of a coalition government led by the Islamist Welfare Party.

Yet significant political and economic changes were under way by the beginning of the 1990s. In the past decade and a half, the country has progressed in modernizing its economy, liberalizing its political system, and deepening its democratic order. Trade, financial flows, and investment increasingly integrate Turkey into world markets. Office towers are rising over Istanbul, which has recovered the cosmopolitan reputation it enjoyed in Ottoman times. “Cool Istanbul,” as the global media sometimes call it, is a center for investment capital from East and West, a gateway to Central Asia, and a magnet for affluent sophisticates drawn by its prosperity, its spectacular nightlife, and its museums and other cultural riches.

Throughout Turkey, the burgeoning market economy is rapidly breaking down traditional economic habits and drawing in ordinary Turks, breeding more individualistic attitudes and spreading middle-class values, even as many embrace religious piety. The

results can be paradoxical. In a recent survey by the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, 45 percent of Turks identified themselves first as Muslims rather than Turks, up from 36 percent in 1999. Yet support for the adoption of sharia—Islamic law—fell from 21 percent to nine percent, and the percentage of women who said they wore an Islamic headscarf declined by more than a quarter, to 11.4 percent. It is no small part of the Turkish paradox that the rush toward reform and the EU is being led by the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP), which won control of parliament in November 2002 and installed the current prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the following March.

All of these changes have been accompanied by a somewhat painful process of self-inspection. International conferences held in Turkey on the tragic fate of the Ottoman Empire’s Armenian population, the status of the Kurds (the country’s main ethnic minority), and the role of Islam in modern Turkey’s social and political life are emblematic of the new

openness. Turkish society is increasingly pluralistic. After decades of state control, there are now more than 300 television and 1,000 radio stations on the air, broadcasting everything from hard rock to Turkish folklore, from BBC reports to Islamic and Kurdish newscasts. The questioning of established dogmas has generated intense debates. Turkish modernity, long a top-down phenomenon directed by the heirs of Atatürk, is being reshaped and redefined at the societal level. Inevitably, tensions, contradictions, and disagreements over the nation's direction abound.

The Turkish debate over Westernization has never been a winner-take-all contest between supposedly pure Westernizers and retrograde Muslims. The strategic aim of Atatürk and other founding fathers of the Turkish Republic in 1923 was to be part of the European system of states, just as the Ottomans had been. Yet even among committed Westernizers there were lines that could not be transgressed, and suspicions that could not be erased when it came to deal-

ing with the West. After all, the Republic had been founded after a bitter struggle amid the rubble of the empire against occupying Western armies. Its founding myths had an undertone of anti-imperialist cum anti-Western passion.

In his remarkable book of autobiographical essays on his hometown, *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2005), Orhan Pamuk observes that “when the empire fell, the new Republic, while certain of its purpose, was unsure of its identity; the only way forward, its founders thought, was to foster a new concept of Turkishness, and this meant a certain *cordon sanitaire* to shut it off from the rest of the world. It was the end of the grand polyglot multicultural Istanbul of the imperial age. . . . The cosmopolitan Istanbul I knew as a child had disappeared by the time I reached adulthood.”

In all his work, Pamuk reflects on the Turkish ordeal of Westernization. In *Istanbul*, he notes that



Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan and his pro-Western, Islamist Justice and Development Party draw support from traditionalists and the rising middle class.

“with the drive to Westernize and the concurrent rise of Turkish nationalism, the love-hate relationship with the Western gaze became all the more convoluted.” The Republic sought to Westernize, be part of the European universe, but kept its guard up against Western encroachments and did not quite trust its partners-to-be. Today, the nationalist reflexes of Atatürk’s heirs—the secularist republican elites in the military, the judiciary, the universities, and among the old professional and bureaucratic classes—arguably play as large a role in the blossoming anti-Western sentiment as the Islamist political parties and the more religious segment of the population. These old elites are keenly aware of their ebbing power amid the transformative effects of the market economy and democratization.

Yet it is also easy to overstate the degree of anti-Western animus. Ordinarily, the Turkish public sees itself as a mediator between “civilizations,” to use the fashionable term of the day, and believes profoundly in its historical right to such a role. This self-confidence is a function of its long association with the West and the secular-democratic nature of its political order. As if to illustrate this sense of mission, Prime Minister Erdoğan stood on a podium in Istanbul this past November beside his Spanish counterpart, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero—in symbolic terms, the two heirs to leadership of the contending Muslim and Christian superpowers of the past—along with UN secretary general Kofi Annan, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and former Iranian president Muhammad Khatami, to launch the idea of an “Alliance of Civilizations.”

Pope Benedict’s highly publicized visit to Turkey in December offered a more surprising illustration of the limits of Turkish anti-Westernism. Erdoğan, a strong critic of the pope’s Regensburg speech who also has a politician’s exquisite sensitivity to the public mood, initially decided to stay away from the country while Benedict was there. Once the debate in

Turkey intensified, however, those who believed that the prime minister had to meet with this important visitor gained the upper hand. Erdoğan rescheduled his departure for a NATO summit in Latvia and, in a gesture that took everyone by surprise, greeted the pope on the tarmac.

The visit itself went exceedingly well (except for the residents of Ankara and Istanbul, who suffered the torturous inconveniences of maximum security for the pope). Protest rallies organized by funda-

THE TURKISH DEBATE over Westernization has never been a winner-take-all contest between supposedly pure Westernizers and retrograde Muslims.

mentalist political parties failed to draw the predicted multitudes, and widely feared disruptions by radical groups did not materialize. Benedict met with Turkey’s highest official religious leader, Professor Ali Bardakoğlu, and removed his shoes and faced Mecca to pray alongside Istanbul’s most senior religious official at the famed Blue Mosque. Most remarkably, the pope, who spoke in Turkish on several occasions, reportedly told the prime minister that he looked favorably upon Turkey’s accession to the EU—an extraordinary turnabout for a man who had vehemently objected to such an eventuality when he was a cardinal. His earlier vision of the EU, shared by many Europeans, was of a Christian union rather than one in which membership is obtained when objective and secular criteria are fulfilled.

It was a supreme irony that just as the pope was giving such warm messages, the EU was preparing to deliver its blow, virtually slamming the door on what has been Turkey’s great national object—a project that has enjoyed the steady support of some 70 percent of the population.

Ostensibly, the break is a result of Turkey’s refusal to open its seaports and airports to traffic from the Greek part of Cyprus, because of the still-unresolved

conflict between it and the Turkish north. But most EU insiders acknowledge that this is a fig leaf behind which France, the Netherlands, Denmark, and other countries are trying to conceal their desire to keep Muslim Turkey out of the Union.

For many Turks (as others), entry into the EU is not just the final destination of a journey they undertook a long time ago. It is also a test of Europe's own universalist and multiculturalist claims, a symbol of the prospects for harmonious relations between different faiths. A snubbing of Turkey that

provincial entrepreneurs who had prospered in the newly competitive and open economy. They were part of a globalizing economy, and were eager to get a bigger share of the economic pie and to pursue EU membership. Also attracted to the AKP were the recent arrivals from the countryside, who lived and worked on the periphery of the major cities and suddenly found themselves with new and different interests.

The AKP won an overwhelming majority in the 2002 parliamentary elections. The exhaustion of

FOR MANY TURKS, entry into the EU is a test of Europe's own universalist and multiculturalist claims.

the established elites—in particular, their failure to manage the Turkish economy and reform the political system to make it more responsive to the demands of a fast-modernizing society—along with the electorate's desire to punish the

is perceived as religiously based will have repercussions throughout the Muslim world, including Europe's own Muslim immigrant communities. In the words of the *Newsweek* correspondent in Istanbul, "Not so long ago, it seemed that Europe would overcome prejudice and define itself as an ideology rather than a geography, a way of being in the world rather than a mere agglomeration of nation-states. But that chance is now lost."

Yet it is hardly the case that all is lost for Turkey, or that it must now turn its back on the West. The transformations of recent decades have put the country firmly on a modernizing path, as the example of the governing AKP itself illustrates. Founded by current prime minister Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül (his foreign minister), and others, the AKP grew out of a split in the Islamist movement in the 1990s. Erdoğan and his allies in the younger generation broke away from the more conservative and ideological (and anti-EU) group. The AKP retained a great deal of support from the traditional constituencies of the Islamist parties. But there was now a new and dynamic constituency that made a bid for increased power in the economic and political system. Turkey's market reforms had propelled a new generation of

incumbents, played a prominent role in the AKP's success. The promise the party's rise to power held for a better, more inclusive, less corrupt future, rather than the appeal of an ideological call for an Islamic order, won the elections for the AKP. Post-election data showed that half of its support came from voters who had backed secular parties in previous elections. And in its market-oriented economic policies and acceptance of some liberal political principles, the AKP represented a break from the traditional Islamist parties of earlier decades.

Despite its numerous shortcomings (such as its habit of appointing ideological kin rather than qualified personnel to top jobs), the AKP mostly has remained true to its electoral platform, to the surprise of many abroad. Seeking to accelerate Turkey's progress through the EU accession process, it has taken big steps toward political liberalization, civilian control of the military, and consolidation of the rule of law. The example it sets therefore stands as the antithesis of the Islamic order in Al Qaeda's imagination. Still, in the eyes of many the AKP remains suspect because of its origins, its cliquish and ideologically motivated appointments, and the decidedly faith-based cultural preferences of its lead-

ing figures—whose wives, for example, wear the Islamic headscarf. Some critics even detect a dangerous tilt in Ankara's foreign policy. Particularly controversial was the visit by Khalid Meshal, a leader of Hamas, after the Palestinian elections, just when the West was trying to isolate Hamas and force it to renounce terrorism and recognize Israel's right to exist. And Turkey has drawn the ire of some in Washington for remaining on good terms with its Syrian and Iranian neighbors—a choice that may look different now that the Iraq Study Group has recommended dialogue with those two countries.

Some of the AKP's critics charge that one more term under the party will leave Turkey less secular, somewhat less democratic, and decidedly non-Western. This is unfair and untrue. Whatever its failings, the party represents something new in Turkish life. Indeed, if one were to speak of fundamentalism with respect to the AKP and its constituents, "market fundamentalism" would have to hold pride of place. The "creative destruction" of Turkey's vibrant capitalism has transformed sleepy provincial towns such as Kayseri, Denizli, Malatya, and Konya, and integrated them into the global markets. Producing consumer goods, machinery, textiles, furniture, and ceramics for export to Europe, the United States, the Middle East, and Central Asia, they have been enriched and exposed to the wider world. The new social mobility has made the conservative weft of the country's cultural fabric more visible and poignant. Partly because Turkish institutions did little to ease the transition, mobility reinforced communitarian tendencies. An ineffective state and a sluggish banking sector that was slow to reach out to credit-starved businesspeople left many Turks with nowhere to turn but to networks based on kin, faith, and community.

At the same time, the newly acquired wealth created demands for the rewards of consumer society. Women in the conservative Muslim middle classes dressed modestly and wore headscarves but eagerly shopped for the latest look at Islamic fashion shows. Seaside hotels with facilities allowing the separation of the sexes at the beach sprang up to accommodate the newly affluent. The children of the new middle classes, both sons and daughters, registered

in the best of schools and often went abroad, mostly to Western countries (preferably the United States), to get their college degrees or their MBAs.

Despite the EU's crude rebuff, Turkey's multifaceted modernization will continue. The impact of global integration and ongoing economic and political reforms will still ripple through Turkish society, and the transformation will also strain Turkey's social fault lines. A widening sphere of freedom and democratic engagement brings forth demands from long-suppressed groups—from Kurds to environmentalists—and, as in all such cases, triggers a reaction. Yet these are all the birth pangs of a more modern Turkey that will remain European while redefining itself, even if Europe cannot yet grasp this process and its significance. If it manages its transformations wisely, Turkey will indeed become, as Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush have both predicted, one of the key countries shaping the 21st century.

In awarding the Nobel Prize to Pamuk, the Swedish Academy cited his rendering of Istanbul's melancholy in his work. The Turkish word for this is *hüzün*. "The *hüzün* of Istanbul," Pamuk writes, "is not just the mood evoked by its music and its poetry, it is a way of looking at life that implicates us all, not only a spiritual state but a state of mind that is ultimately as life-affirming as it is negating." This *hüzün*, he says later, "suggests nothing of an individual standing against society: on the contrary, it suggests an erosion of the will to stand against the values and mores of the community and encourages us to be content with little, honoring the virtues of harmony, uniformity, humility."

Arguably the *hüzün* of Istanbul is no more. At best, it is on its way out. The cosmopolitan city of different ethnicities and religious affiliations and many languages that Pamuk knew is indeed long gone. A new cosmopolitanism, that of financial services and multinational corporations, advertisers and artists, oil men and real estate agents, is rapidly filling the gap. Individuals of all colors who partake of it exude self-confidence and are unlikely to be "content with little." They will want to take on the world. ■

America's Design for Tolerance

Religious conflicts in multi-faith America are mild compared with those in countries that have only one faith or virtually no faith at all.

BY CHRISTOPHER CLAUSEN

IN 1790, BEFORE THERE WAS A FIRST AMENDMENT, George Washington sent a celebrated message to the Jews of Newport, Rhode Island: "It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support." As if to emphasize that these views were more than cold Enlightenment abstractions, he added near the end of his letter, "May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid."

Though frequently stretched and pummeled in the two centuries since they were enunciated, Washington's principles have generally defined enlightened American opinion on the relation of religious bodies to the state, as well as to one another. Americans have fought over a great many issues, but religion has seldom been a source

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of violence since the colonial era. Even in times and places where anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism were common, the volume of actual blood and tears shed over differences of faith has been piddling compared with the effusions in Europe in the 17th century or the Middle East today. Perhaps the greatest struggle between tolerance and conformity to the majority's mores occurred in the late 19th century when the federal government forced the Mormons to abandon polygamy.

While religiously motivated bloodshed remains mercifully rare in the United States, the ideals proclaimed by Washington seem to be under severe pressure, if not actually breaking down. They also look more naive than they did 40 or 50 years ago. What Washington and many later Americans chose to ignore, for perfectly understandable civic reasons, is the tendency of full-strength religion, with its sublime and dangerous certainty in matters of principle, to cause discord in a pluralistic society. Today, renewed struggles over the place of religion in institutions at every level, the celebration of Christmas in public venues, God in the Pledge of Allegiance, the legality and propriety of same-sex marriage, courthouse displays of the Ten Commandments, and the status of biological evolution in education spill rivers of ink and spawn endless litigation. The Left fears that fundamentalists have subverted the Constitution to



Religious conflict has long been a fact of U.S. political life. When New York City briefly subsidized parochial schools in 1869–70, even supposed defenders of nonsectarianism such as the cartoonist Thomas Nast resorted to crude stereotypes of Catholics and other religious groups.

establish a theocracy, while the Right complains of galloping secularism. Every U.S. Supreme Court confirmation becomes a battle over the quasi-religious issue of abortion. War between the faiths, as well as between faith and government, is raging again throughout most of the world, and America is part of the picture.

It seems scarcely believable that when Jimmy Carter ran for president in 1976, many people outside the South had never heard the phrase “born-again Christian.” In the 1980s and ’90s, eminent sociologists of religion including Alan Wolfe and Robert Bellah, following the lead of Alexis de Tocqueville a century and a half earlier, still thought that a long tradition of “religious individualism,” together with the high value Americans place on being nonjudgmental, could be counted on to preserve civic harmony. Today that judgment seems far too optimistic.

The abstract term “religion,” as employed by Washington two centuries ago and accepted more or less without examination by most Westerners today, implies a basic similarity among the phenomena it names. From the relatively uncon-

troversial insistence that all religions are equal before the state to the stronger claim that all possess equal intrinsic validity seems a short and natural step, one that received further encouragement from the rise of comparative religious studies in the 19th century. This claim of substantive equality may imply that most or all faiths have an essential core of beliefs in common, such as the power and goodness of God, and that the religious conflicts of the past involved doctrines or practices of little importance. On the other hand, the assumption that all religions are equally true may simply be a tactful way of saying that all are equally false. In either case, the idea gained popularity because it seemed to carry the democratic virtue of tolerance a long step further while sidestepping theological questions. “If the primary contribution of religion to society is through the character and conduct of citizens,” wrote Bellah approvingly in *Habits of the Heart* (1985), “any religion, large or small, familiar or strange, can be of equal value to any other.”

Several factors, however, complicate this generous presumption of equality. One is that not everybody shares the same notions of good character and con-

duct. Another is that actual religions—Christianity in its many forms, Judaism, Islam, to name no more—embody conflicting claims about the universe and human life whose truth or falsity is not easy to ignore. Serious religion is more than a diffuse collection of attitudes and sentiments. Adherents who stand by the historical claims of their own faith cannot without contradiction either accept the essential equality of other religions or play by the rules of tolerance that date from the Age of Reason. By the same token, believers find it hard to go along with secular or scientific claims that contradict what they regard as revelation. This familiar state of mind has often been described as a revolt against modernity, whether it

faith, as a practical necessity. But deep down you can hardly avoid regarding them as damnable errors rather than the exercise of a natural right.

In the American context, saying so would violate a host of long-established customs, with the result that those who express negative opinions toward other religions are widely repudiated as extremists even by their fellow believers. Throughout the Muslim world many people are more outspoken, to say the least. So are many Christians in Africa, a numerous and growing body of the faithful who shook the worldwide Anglican Communion to its already cracking foundations by demanding that the American Episcopal Church either repent for having consecrated an openly homosexual bishop in 2003 or be expelled from the Communion. (Of course, in the view of traditional Christians, it was the Americans who did the shaking.)

What is known in the United States as “mainline” Protestantism on the whole evades divisive

questions about the truth or falsity of traditional doctrines. The decline of the mainline churches in numbers and prestige is a major factor in the controversies that beset church and state in America today. “Throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th,” writes Bellah, “the mainline churches were close to the center of American culture. The religious intellectuals who spoke for these churches often articulated issues in ways widely influential in the society as a whole. But for a generation or more, the religious intellectuals deriving from the mainline Protestant churches have become more isolated from the general culture.”

Although the more confrontational branches of Christianity that still believe in sin and hell are often dismissed by the media as a cranky fringe, they have far more members than the formerly dominant mainline churches. There are more than 67 million Roman Catholics in the United States, overwhelmingly the largest membership of any religious body. (Catholics

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occurs in Alabama or Saudi Arabia; but if modernity is equated with secularism, the statement is little more than a tautology.

Thomas Jefferson’s epigram, “But it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg,” is often quoted as a model statement of democratic tolerance. Yet it depends entirely on the questionable assumption that my neighbor’s gods are harmless introverts. Suppose instead that they aggressively command him to confine women in the home, to marry several of them at once, to forbid me from pursuing business and pleasure on the Sabbath, or to convert (if necessary by force) everyone whose convictions differ. What then? These possibilities are hardly fantasies. If you really believe as a matter of divine revelation that salvation comes only through the person of Christ or the teachings of Muhammad, you may reluctantly accept the civic equality of competing faiths, or of unbelief in any

are now informally accepted as mainstream by the press and other cultural institutions, provided they reject the teachings of their church on birth control, abortion, homosexuality, papal infallibility, and women in the priesthood, as many American Catholics do.) Among Protestants, the Southern Baptist Convention, regarded by many critics as a network of provincial fundamentalists, dwarfs all other denominations, with more than 16 million members. There are more than five million Mormons; and the Mormon church, like the Southern Baptist Convention, is still growing. Mainline sects, on the other hand, have been losing members for decades. The largest Methodist denomination has just above eight million adherents. The once-powerful Episcopal Church now numbers fewer than two and a half million.

Among non-Christians, the most numerous groups are five and a quarter million Jews and somewhere between three and six million Muslims (the actual figure is a matter of bitter dispute). Since the Census Bureau does not ask about religion, and defining membership is often tricky, all statistics remain open to question. In the world as a whole there are thought to be well over two billion Christians, a billion and a third Muslims, and close to 900 million Hindus.

On virtually every point at issue between secular liberalism and Christian traditionalism—prayer in the schools, Darwin in the classroom, homosexuality, abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research, the equal value of all religious practices provided they offend no social orthodoxy—mainline American religion chooses the secular side. Frequently, it makes a proud point of doing so. Last year a network of progressive clergy proclaimed February 12, Charles Darwin's birthday, "Evolution Sunday," an occasion for services celebrating the scientific discovery that probably did more than any other event in intellectual history to undermine Christian belief.

The fact that mainline religion views traditional beliefs with such distaste may be one reason for its dramatic decline in numbers and influence as the historically Protestant elite fragmented and lost much of its religiosity in the process. Today, elite American opinion, whether nominally religious or not, over-

whelmingly backs the secular positions in the controversies mentioned above. It could even be argued that the priority of the secular is implicit in George Washington's ideal of free religions that give the government "on all occasions their effectual support." Religious freedom in a pluralistic society, according to this tradition, means subordinating the demands of religious conscience to secular laws or values whenever the religious and the secular collide in the public square. Except on rare occasions, mainline Protestant churches in the United States and western Europe embrace this understanding of priorities almost by instinct, while sometimes (like their adversaries on the Right) claiming a religious basis for what are essentially secular political positions.

Secular values are open to change and interpretation, of course, and at the moment their relation to religious ones may well be in transition. Large majorities of ordinary Americans consistently support prayer in public schools, the teaching of creationism alongside evolution, and related positions that are scorned as backward prejudices by the mainstream press, Hollywood, most people who teach in universities, and many Democrats. To put it mildly, there is a considerable gap between elite and popular attitudes. In a phrase that became notorious, a *Washington Post* reporter in 1993 contemptuously described members of the Christian Coalition as "largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command." The *Post* subsequently apologized, but similar judgments about evangelical Christians are more than commonplace in the news and entertainment media.

It goes without saying that religious institutions also evolve over time. Yet the liberal Protestantism that came to be defined as the American mainstream, with its emphasis on innocuousness and respectability over clarity, has a remarkably long and stable history. In *The Non-Religion of the Future* (1887), a classic in the sociology of religion, Jean-Marie Guyau declared that "Protestantism is the only religion, in the Occident at least, in which it is possible for one to become an atheist unawares and without having done oneself the shadow of a violence in the process." He went on:

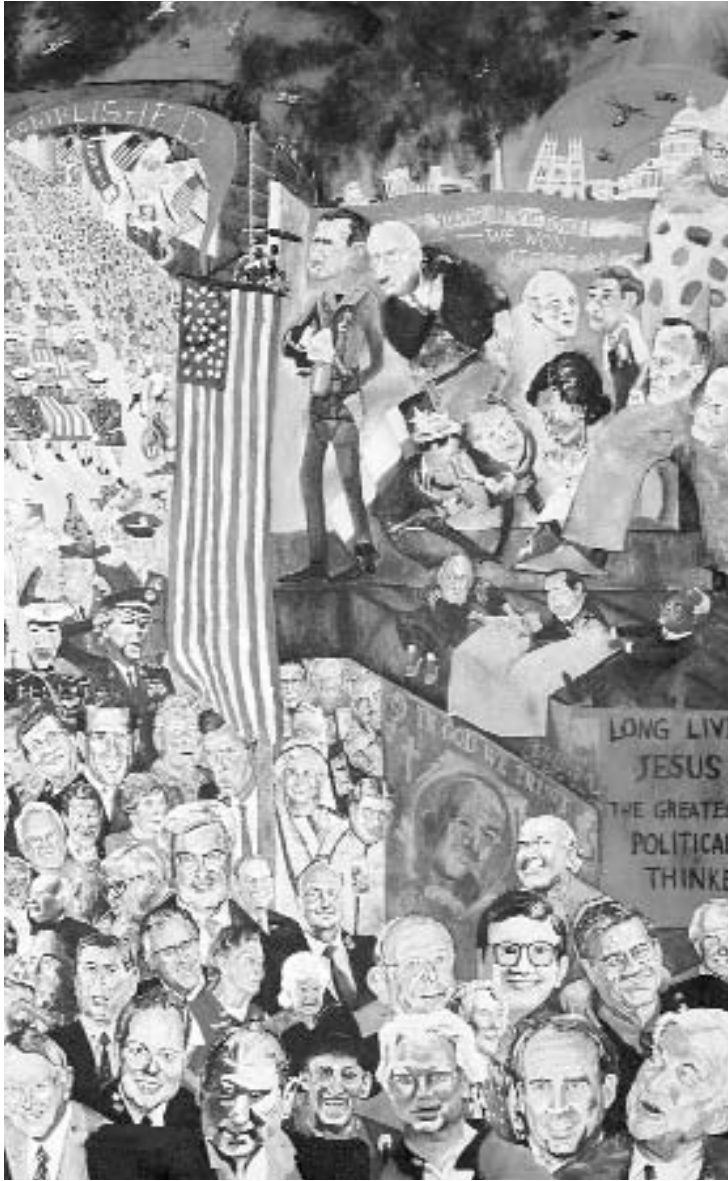


According to the new Protestants there is no longer any reason for taking anything at its face value, not even what has hitherto been considered as the spirit of Christianity. For the most logical of them, the Bible is scarcely more than a book like another; one may find God in it if one seeks Him there, because one may find God anywhere and put Him there, if by chance He be really not there already. . . . God no longer talks to us by a single voice, but by all the voices of the universe, and it is in the midst of the great concert of nature that

we must seize and distinguish the veritable Word. All is symbolic except God, who is the eternal truth.

Well, and why stop at God? . . . Why should not God Himself be a symbol? What is this mysterious Being, after all, but a popular personification of the *divine* or even of ideal humanity; in a word, of morality?

It is hard to imagine that such a watered-down set of beliefs might not be reconcilable with modern sci-



American Fundamentalists: Christ's Entry into Washington in 2008, by Joel Pelletier, reflects the widespread fear of intolerance by the newly powerful Religious Right and its allies. Yet today's political conflicts have stopped short of the apocalyptic struggle some expected.

less, indescribably brutal process of evolution by random mutation and natural selection, one need not be a fundamentalist to feel skeptical. Polls over many years indicate, to the consternation of scientists and many pundits, that only a minority of Americans accept evolution as biologists understand it. Hence the surface plausibility of the majority opinion that intelligent design or some other variant of creationism should be available in schools as an alternative to naturalistic evolution.

Equal time for competing doctrines is such an established principle of American life that those who argue against it in this instance are inevitably at a rhetorical disadvantage. The endlessly repeated liberal mantra that "science" is fully compatible with "religion" never quite persuades most of the 90-plus percent of Americans who tell pollsters they believe in a god because that mantra ignores too many of the convictions central even to non-fundamentalist forms of religion. On this point, ironically, atheists and biblical literalists are in perfect agreement.

Despite their intellectual evasions, or maybe because of them, American forms of religious tolerance have served the nation well most of the time, and still do. Even among the most devout, few of us would wish to see a state religion, let alone the scale of animosities that Washington congratulated the United States for avoiding. Not surprisingly, the level of mutual irritation has increased along with the power of the state over education and once-private relations—the public square has grown much larger than it was in Washington's day—but by any historical standard we still manage these things impressively. What other large country today is doing it as well? Every American is legally free to insult every other American's beliefs, yet the conflicts are less destructive than in most countries where the law protects believers from offensive speech. Of course, it helps that American religion is so fragmented, and that the vast majority of us (unlike, say, Wahhabi Muslims of the present or European Calvinists

ence, with feminism, with practically any dominant secular trend.

Yet the illusion that all conflicts can be finessed by taking the traditional claims of faith in a figurative or metaphorical sense can itself become a source of conflict. (Nobody ever argues that physics or biology should be taken figuratively.) When elite opinion insists patronizingly that there is no real contradiction between the conviction that a benevolent, omnipotent God created humanity in his own image and the scientific picture of a chancy, aim-

of four centuries ago) do not consider faith our strongest allegiance.

The complicated attitudes of believing Americans toward other religions and the state add up to a series of paradoxes that often annoy their secular compatriots and bewilder foreigners. The United States currently has a president who is more overtly religious than most of his recent predecessors, and his faith unmistakably affects his view of some public issues. At the same time, he goes out of his way to express an impeccable tolerance toward other religions—especially the acid test of Islam

THE COMPLICATED attitudes of believing Americans toward other religions and the state often annoy their secular compatriots and bewilder foreigners.

since 9/11—and even toward unbelievers. This mixture of aggressive religiosity with deference toward the opinions of others strikes much of the world as incomprehensible. Perhaps it is merely American. President Dwight D. Eisenhower expressed it in its most endearingly nebulous form: “Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply held religious belief—and I don’t care what it is.”

While this sublime formula helps explain some of the deepest paradoxes of American life, it seems not to export well. Much of the world operates on quite different assumptions. Serious religion has its own agendas, on which inclusiveness and social harmony sometimes rank far down the list. Obeying the Lord’s commands may loom larger. Where those commands involve public controversies, the effects can be spectacularly disruptive even in an open society, whether the crusade is to end segregation or outlaw abortion. A powerful and incomparably destructive form of contemporary religion still mandates religious terrorism, the indiscriminate killing of Jews, Crusaders, apostates, and often the worshiper himself, as a matter of conscience. Like other major faiths, Islam has contradictory teachings about mil-

itancy and tolerance, individual autonomy and the social order, peace and the sword. How far other forces of history—science, political change, the failure of militant Islam to achieve its goals, or (as eventually happened in Europe) sheer exhaustion—may eventually work to sheath the sword of faith is a crucial question for this young century.

So far, the search by outsiders for a critical mass of “moderate” Muslims in the image of mainline Christians, either in the Islamic world itself or in secular Europe, has led only to repeated disappointments. After an obsessively analyzed succession of terrorist events, threats, riots, and murders, European countries find themselves at a complete loss about how to integrate a large, growing, and frequently alienated Muslim population. Affluence and technological advance, it seems, will not automatically bring about a decline in religious commitment. They may actually be stimulating its most fanatical forms. Meanwhile, public opinion in such countries as Denmark and the Netherlands becomes increasingly frustrated. Neg-

ative popular attitudes toward Islam are often dismissed as racism, but confronting militant beliefs is quite different from expressing racial prejudice. Instead of the future of the planet, post-Christian western Europe may represent an exception as extreme in its own way as theocratic Iran or Saudi Arabia. As a British Muslim told a columnist for *The Guardian* in the wake of the July 7, 2005, London terrorist bombings, the fact that you no longer believe in your religion is no reason we shouldn’t believe in ours.

One reason Muslim immigrants may have an easier time integrating into American society is that piety of almost any sort is so much more common and accepted here than in Europe. The complete secularization many intellectuals have been yearning for since the Enlightenment, now nearly achieved in Europe, turns out to bring its own set of unexpected problems. Although George Washington would no doubt be disappointed, an American future of emotional, never-quite-settled conflicts over the place of faith in public life looks like an acceptable price to pay for avoiding the far greater evils that afflict both the devout and godless regions of the earth. ■

The Wealth Explosion

NOT SINCE THE LATE 19TH CENTURY HAS AMERICA EXPERIENCED SUCH

a flowering of new wealth. The surge of dot.com

whiz kids, handsomely paid CEOs, and lav-

ishly rewarded entertainers is transform-

ing everything from the mar-

ket for private jets to

the nature of philan-

thropy. A few rungs lower

on the ladder, the merely

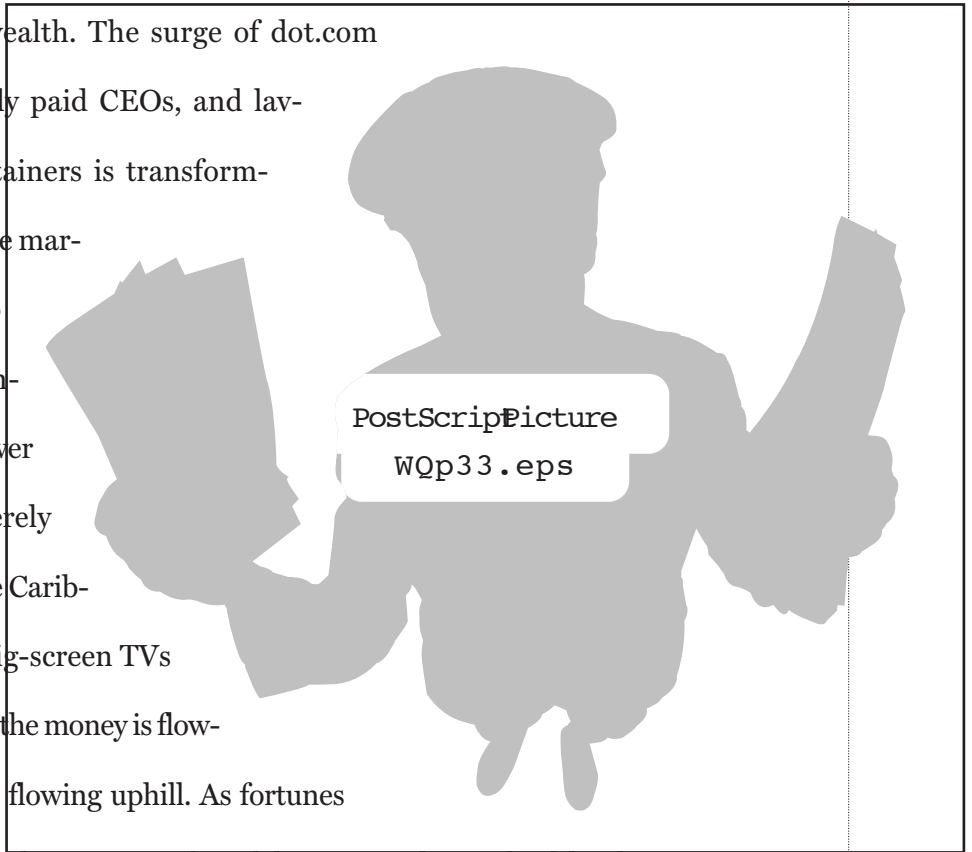
affluent vacation in the Carib-

bean and cart home big-screen TVs

from Costco. But while the money is flow-

ing freely, most of it is flowing uphill. As fortunes

large and small pile up, there is cause for celebration, and some healthy skepticism too.



JAMES TWITCHELL on keeping up
with the Gateses..... p. 34

STEVEN LAGERFELD on the conse-
quences of new fortunes..... p. 38

LESLIE LENKOWSKY on the pitfalls
of Big Philanthropy p. 47

Lux Populi

If rich old King Croesus were living in America today, he'd be hard-pressed to keep up with the Joneses.

BY JAMES B. TWITCHELL

At length I recollected the thoughtless saying of a great prince who, on being informed that the country had no bread, replied, "Let them eat cake."

—Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*

WELL, OKAY, SO MARIE ANTOINETTE NEVER SAID, "Let them eat cake." When Rousseau wrote those words, Marie was just 11 years old and living in Austria. But Americans used to like the story that, when the French queen was told by an official that the people were angry because they

had no bread, she responded, "*Qu'ils mangent de la brioche.*" We liked to imagine her saying it with a snarl and a curled lip. She was a luxury bimbo whose out-of-control spending grated on the poor and unfortunate French people. We fought a revolution to separate ourselves from exactly that kind of uppercrustiness. She got her just "desserts."

But that was 200 years ago. Now cake is one of *our* favorite foods, part of the fifth food group, totally unnecessary luxury



consumption. We're not talking about a few crumbs, but the real stuff. Brioche by the loaf. Not for nothing has Marie become a favorite subject for current infotainment. Novelists, historians, biographers, and even hip young filmmaker Sofia Coppola are telling her story, not because we want her reviled but because we want to be like her.

And we're doing a pretty good job. Luxury spending in the United States has been growing more than four times as fast as overall spending, and the rest of the West is not far behind. You might think that modern wannabe Maries are grayhairs with poodles. Not so. This spending is being done by younger and younger consumers. Take a walk up Fifth Avenue, and then, at 58th, cross over and continue up Madison. You'll see

who is swarming through the stores with names we all recognize: Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Prada, Dior, Coach. . . . Or cruise Worth Avenue or Rodeo Drive, and you'll see the same furious down-marketing and up-crusting. This is the Twinkiefication of deluxe.

You don't have to go to these streets of dreams to see who's on a sugar high. Take a tour of your local Costco or Sam's Club discount warehouse and you'll see the same stuff, only a day old and about to become stale, being consumed by a slightly older crowd. Observe the parking lot, where shiny new imported sedans and SUVs are parked beside aging sub-compacts. Or spend an hour watching the Home Shopping Network, a televised flea market for impulse buyers. Its call centers now have some 23,000 incoming phone lines capable of handling up to 20,000 calls a minute. The network no longer sells cubic zirconia rings. It sells Gucci handbags.

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We've developed a powerful desire to associate with recognized objects of little intrinsic but high positional value, which is why Martha Stewart, our faux Marie, is down at Kmart introducing her Silver Label goods, why a courtier the likes of Michael Graves is designing toasters for Target (pronounced by wits, with an ironic French flair, tar-ZHAY), why the Duke of Polo, Ralph Lauren, is marketing house paint, and why suave Cole Porter-brand furniture is appearing on the floor at Ethan Allen stores.

Look around, and you will see that almost every category of consumables has cake at the top. This is true not just for expensive products such as town cars and McMansions, but for everyday objects. In bottled water, for instance, there is Evian, advertised as if it were a liqueur. In coffee, there's Star-

THE POACHING OF DELUXE by the middle class has made things impossible for the truly rich.

bucks; in ice cream, Häagen-Dazs; in sneakers, Nike; in wine, Chateau Margaux; in cigars, Arturo Fuente Hemingway, and well, you know the rest. Having a few TVs around the house is fine, but what you really need is a home entertainment center worthy of Versailles, with a JBL Ultra Synthesis One audio system, a Vidikron Vision One front projector, a Stewart Ultramatte 150 screen, a Pioneer DV-09 DVD player, and an AMX ViewPoint remote control. Hungry for chow with your entertainment? Celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck has his own line of TV dinner entrées.

Ironically, what this poaching of deluxe by the middle class has done is make things impossible for the truly rich. Ponder this: A generation ago, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor surrounded themselves with the world's finest goods—from jewelry to bed linens to flatware. The duchess, the twice-divorced American Wallis Simpson, would never be queen, but that didn't prevent her from carrying off a passable imitation of Marie. In the Windsor household, the coasters were Cartier and the placemats were Porthault, and the pooches ate from silver-plated Tiffany bowls.

When Sotheby's auctioned more than 40,000 items from the Windsors' Paris home in 1997, the remnants of

their royal life went out for bid. Most of the items listed in the Sotheby's catalog are still being made, either in the same form or in an updated version. In other words, the duchess's precious things are within your grimy reach. From her point of view, she might just as well take 'em to the dump.

- Chanel faux-pearl earrings given to the duchess by the duke can be picked up for about \$360 at Chanel stores.

- The duchess's Cartier love bracelet in 18-karat gold with screw closure, which was presented by the president of Cartier to the Windsors and other "great lovers" in 1970 (among the other recipients: Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, Sophia Loren and Carlo Ponti), is yours for \$3,625 at Cartier boutiques.

- T. Anthony luggage, the Windsors' favorite (they owned 118 such trunks), is still being manufactured and can be bought in Manhattan.

- Hand-embroidered Porthault linens are stocked at your local mall.

- The Windsors' stationery from the Mrs. John L. Strong company, complete with hand-engraved

monogrammed pieces on pure cotton paper, can be yours for \$80 to \$750, depending on the ornamentation.

- The duke's velvet slippers can be purchased for \$188 at Brooks Brothers, which owns the London company that made them. Instead of an E for "Edward" below the embroidered crown, the slippers have a BB.

- Okay, okay, you'll never own as many scarves and gloves as the duchess did, but Hermes and Balenciaga sell exactly the same ones she wore for upward of \$300 a pop.

Here's the takeaway: There is very little cake a rich person once gorged on that a middle-class person can't get on his plate. You name it; I can taste it. So I can't afford a casita on Bermuda, but I can get in on a time-share for a weekend. No, I can't own a stretch limo, but I can rent one by the hour. Maybe Venice is out this year, but I'll go to the Venetian in Vegas instead. I can't afford an Armani suit, but what about these eyeglasses with Giorgio's name plastered on them? Commodore Vanderbilt said that if you have to ask how much a yacht costs, you can't afford one, but check out my stateroom on my chartered Majestic Princess. True, I don't have my own Gulfstream V jet, but I can upgrade to first class on Delta with the miles I "earn" by using my American

Express card. Is that my own Lexus out front? Or is it on lease from a used car dealer? You'll never know.

Lux populi may be the end of deluxe. "Real" luxury used to be for the "happy few," but in the world of the supra-12,000 Dow Jones industrial average, there are only the minted many. "Sudden Wealth Syndrome," as *The Los Angeles Times* has called it, is not just for dot.com innovators or contestants on *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, but for a generation that is inheriting its wealth through the steady attrition of the Generation Who Fought the War. The "wealth effect," as former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan termed it, drives more and more money to chase after goods whose production can hardly be called beneficial and cannot now even be called positional.

There's a story, perhaps apocryphal, that when Tom Ford, chief designer for Gucci in the 1990s, was passing through the Newark airport (what the hell was he doing there?!), he saw one of his swanky T-shirts on the tummy of a portly prole. He immediately canceled the clothing line. Too late. Perhaps the social construction of luxury as a material category has already been deconstructed into banality.

The very unreachableness of old luxe made it safe, like an old name, old blood, old land, an old coat of arms, or old service to the crown. Primogeniture, the cautious passage and consolidation of wealth to the firstborn male, made the anxiety of exclusion from luxe somehow bearable. After all, you knew your place from the moment of birth and had plenty of time to make your peace. If you drew the short straw, not to worry. A comfortable life as a vicar would await you. Or the officer corps.

The application of steam, then electricity, to the engines of production brought a new market to status objects, an industrial market made up of people who essentially bought their way into having a bloodline. These were the people who so disturbed economist Thorstein Veblen, and from them this new generation of consumer has descended. First the industrial rich, then the inherited rich, and now the incidentally rich, the accidentally rich, the golden-parachute rich, the buyout rich, the lottery rich.

Call them yuppies, yippies, bobos, nobrows, or whatever, the consumers of the new luxury have a sense of entitlement that transcends social class, a conviction that the finest

things are their birthright. Never mind that they may have been born into a family whose ancestral estate is a tract house in the suburbs, near the mall, not paid for, and whose family crest was downloaded from the Internet. Ditto the signet ring design. Language reflects this hijacking. Words such as *gourmet*, *premium*, *boutique*, *chic*, *accessory*, and *classic* have loosened from their elite moorings and now describe such top-of-category items as popcorn, hamburgers, discount brokers, shampoo, scarves, ice cream, and trailer parks. "Luxury for all" is an oxymoron, all right, the aspirational goal of modern culture, and the death knell of the real thing.

These new *customers* for luxury are younger than *clients* of the old luxe used to be,

there are far more of them, they make their money much sooner, and they are far more flexible in financing and fickle in choice. They do not stay put. When Richie Rich starts buying tulips by the ton, Nouveau Riche is right there behind him picking them up by the pound.

In a sense, the filthy rich have only two genuine luxury items left: time and philanthropy. As the old paradox goes, the rich share the luxury of too much time on their hands with the very people on whom they often bestow their philanthropy. Who knows, maybe poverty will become the new luxury, as the philosophes predicted. Wonder Bread becomes the new cake. Once you've ripped out all the old patinaed hardware, once you've traded in the Bentley for a rusted-out Chevy, once you've carted all the polo pony shirts to Goodwill, once you've given the Pollock to the Met, once you've taken your last trip up Everest and into the Amazon, there's not much left to do to separate yourself but give the rest of the damned stuff away. Competitive philanthropy has its allure. Why do you think there are more than 20 universities with multibillion-dollar pledge campaigns? Those bobos sure as hell can't do it. Little wonder that Warren Buffett dumped his load rather casually on top of a pile amassed by another modern baron, almost as if to say, "Top that." Now that's a show stopper. Even The Donald can't trump that. ■



The Cartier love bracelet: \$3,625

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The New Yacht Club

The United States has not enjoyed a surge of new wealth to rival today's since the days when people read by gaslight, yet that era holds valuable lessons about the hazards of new fortunes.

BY STEVEN LAGERFELD

JAY GOULD, THE WEALTHIEST MAN IN AMERICA, was only 56 years old when he died in 1892, and the general opinion was that he had already lived too long. “So far as his life and career made him conspicuous he was an incarnation of cupidity and sordidness,” declared *The New York World*. The *Herald* reported that there was “much quiet rejoicing” on Wall Street. *The New York Times* weighed in with a relatively measured judgment: “It is in our time that the ‘operator’ has been born, and JAY GOULD was an operator pure and simple, although, in a general way of speaking, he was as far as possible from pure and as far as possible from simple.”

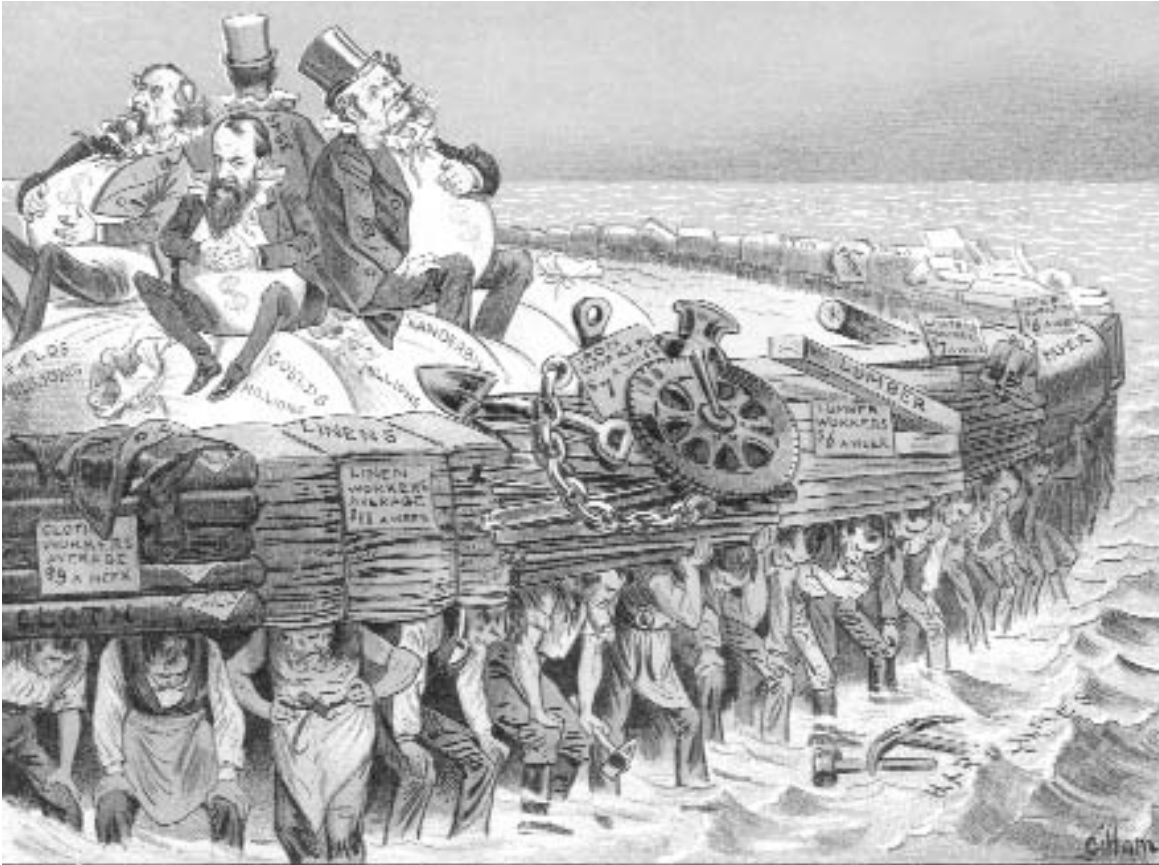
To the long list of things they don’t need to worry about, the two wealthiest men in America, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, can add what the obituary writers will say about them. Buffett, whose \$46 billion leaves him in second place to Gates, with \$53 billion, on the *Forbes* magazine list of the wealthiest Americans, hasn’t even had to die to be dubbed the Sage of Omaha, as if investing were akin to Zen Buddhism. Beneath them, the rich and the merely affluent, with their mortgaged McMansions and leased Range Rovers, are admired (or at least ogled), rather than vilified as they were in Gould’s day. Americans dwell so lovingly on the trappings of wealth

that Tom Wolfe has invented a term to describe the new media genre that serves the taste, *plutography*. A yacht maker recently advertised a \$20 million craft in *The Financial Times* as if it had the same mass appeal as one of Ron Popeil’s Dial-o-Matic vegetable slicers.

According to Emmanuel Saez, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, who, with various colleagues, has done pioneering research on the history of American wealth and income in recent years, the top one percent of households in the United States increased its share of the nation’s pretax wage and salary income from the post-World War II nadir of under eight percent in 1973 to 16 percent in 2004 (see chart, p. 41). During that period, the top 0.1 percent—about 130,000 households—increased their take from less than 2 percent to almost 7 percent. (Average income per household was nearly \$5 million.) Such levels haven’t been seen in many decades.

Americans’ enthusiastic embrace of business and the rich represents an amazing change in public attitudes, and one does not need to look back a century to appreciate its magnitude. In the 1960s and ’70s, business was deeply unpopular and corporations were thought to embody the soul-deadening conformity and materialism of American society. Liberals viewed the corporation as an antagonist and the affluent as milk cows for the wel-

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Unlike today's benign information age capitalism, the late-19th-century version looked to many critics like a zero-sum game: Capitalists win, workers lose. In this 1883 cartoon, Jay Gould (center) sits with fellow "robber barons" Cyrus Field (left) and Cornelius Vanderbilt (right).

fare state. When President Ronald Reagan campaigned in 1981 to reduce tax rates on the rich (and others), howls of egalitarian outrage greeted a bill that ultimately reduced the top rate from 70 percent to 50 percent. Yet returning tax rates to that level now, much less to pre-Reagan levels, even after decades of rising income inequality, seems more unlikely than cutting them did then. Some leaders of the new Democratic majority in Congress have declared that reducing income inequality is a top priority, but their agenda as revealed so far has been mostly modest, stressing traditional measures designed to improve equality of opportunity, including increased aid and lower-interest loans for college students. Many Democrats would like to let some of President George W. Bush's tax cuts expire in 2010, raising top income tax rates, for example, from 35 percent to the 39.6 percent prevailing during the Clinton era. These are

politically contentious proposals, but they are not soak-the-rich measures.

What accounts for this change in attitudes? The economic trials that beset the United States in the 1970s bred a renewed appreciation of the fragility of the nation's extraordinary wealth and the capitalist processes that create it. And Americans' deep-rooted willingness to accept that others are getting ahead as long as they and their children have the opportunity to do the same reasserted itself. But no embrace is unconditional, and there are already signs that the public's ardor for the new era of riches is flagging. The economic progress of many people on the middle and bottom rungs of the economic ladder—even allowing for understatement by some statistical indicators—is slow or nonexistent. Getting ahead is getting harder, as the costs of health care and a college education continue to rise faster than the rate of infla-

tion, and the ordinary insecurities of life on the job are magnified by the stresses of globalization, outsourcing, and technological change. Americans nurture the belief that their sons or daughters could start the next Google or make partner at a major law firm, but the world of the rich looks increasingly distant and alien as news of big-

**AMERICANS NURTURE the belief
that their sons or daughters could start
the next Google.**

money finagling and lawbreaking arrives in the morning paper. And what about the children of the rich? Will they face anything like the challenges that others do in making their way in a competitive world, or will their parents' money buy them not only comfort but instant access to the top?

There has not been a period of sustained economic upheaval like today's information age revolution since the industrial transformation of Jay Gould's day suddenly created massive new manufacturing industries, and massive new personal fortunes to go with them. Gould and many of his contemporaries offer examples of what not to do in such a situation. Four years after he died, with the country in the grip of a severe economic depression, the populist William Jennings Bryan won the Democratic presidential nomination and led a crusade against the nation's moneyed interests and the politicians they owned. Bryan lost badly, but the reform impulse ultimately prevailed. Progressives created new regulatory agencies to rein in the freewheeling trusts and corporations. In 1913, reformers won a constitutional amendment allowing the federal government to impose an income tax. By 1918, when the nation was at war, America's wealthiest were subject to a top rate of 77 percent, more than double today's highest levy, and after dipping in the 1920s, the top rate was sustained at similarly punishing levels for decades. The 19th-century rich were creators and ben-

eficiaries of a massive economic change who, paradoxically, resisted change and had it thrust upon them. So if one were to derive from this history some guidelines for the rich, Rule #1 might be *Don't Reflexively Resist Change*. There are others:

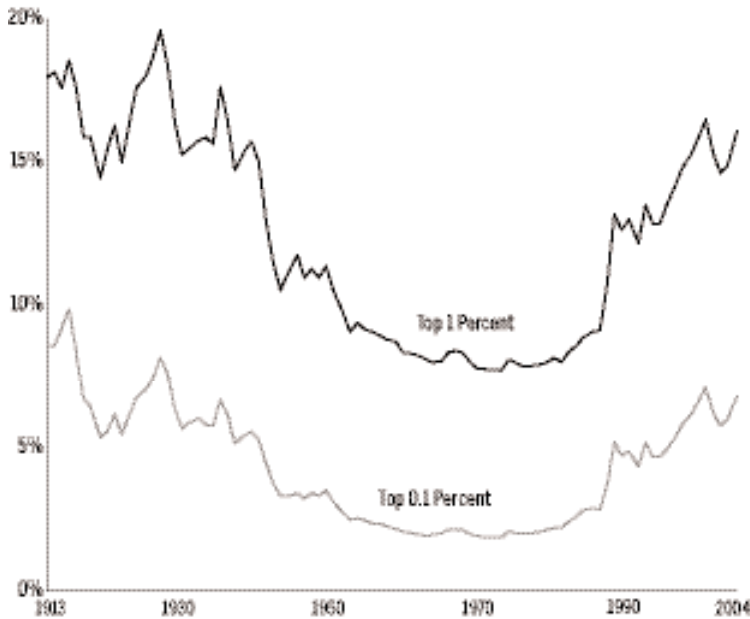
Rule #2: Share the Wealth. Charitable efforts, such as the Gates-Buffett joint venture in megaphilanthropy, announced when Buffett gave \$31 billion to the Gates Foundation last year, are important, but they are not the most significant way that wealth is shared. Jay Gould's few known acts of philanthropy were

roundly criticized as inadequate, and he didn't leave a dime to anybody outside his family. But Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and many other Gould contemporaries were well known for their giving. It mattered much more that in the hands of these men capitalism often appeared to be a zero-sum game: If I gain, you lose.

Gould again offers the dramatic illustration. He made his initial fortune as a Wall Street speculator renowned for ruthlessly manipulating markets, wiping out other investors large and small, and even causing a financial panic in one infamous attempt in 1869 to corner the gold market. While the mass of ordinary workers benefited immensely from the rise of 19th-century industrial capitalism, it was a hard climb, and the great industrialists often played the labor-management game like Gould played the market.

Whatever their sins, today's information economy billionaires are not seen as zero-sum entrepreneurs. In their rise to riches, great innovators such as Gates and Michael Dell minted millionaires out of ordinary office workers as well as top executives, and they created thousands of high-paying jobs as well as products that have transformed daily life. Their stories affirm the American faith in the possibilities of upward mobility. We see them as the proverbial geese laying golden eggs. But avoiding zero-sum situations may sometimes require weighing short-term economic gains from strategies such as outsourcing against more fundamental concerns. Even 19th-century capitalists sometimes made

Income Shares of the Highest Earners

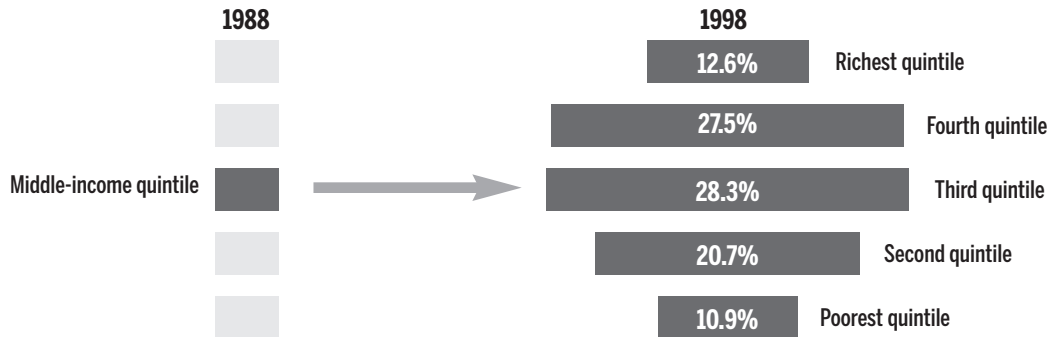


Left: While incomes are higher for all Americans, those at the very top of the scale have claimed a growing share of pretax income since the early 1970s. The top 0.1 percent (gray line) represents some 130,000 households.

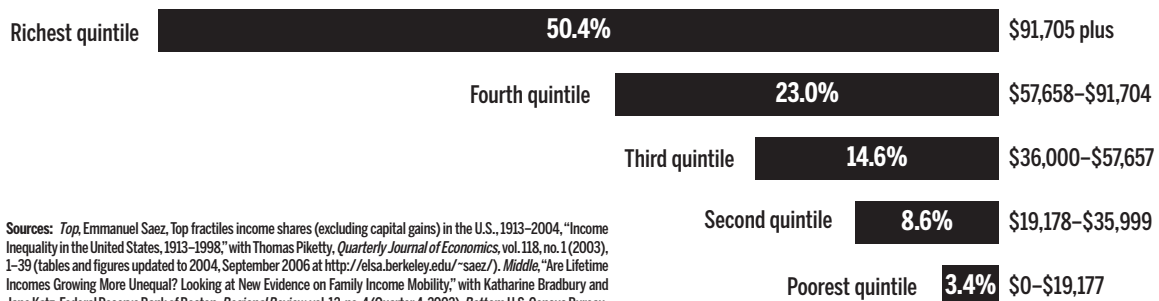
Middle: America provides much opportunity to move up (or down) the income scale. More than 12 percent of the households in the middle-income quintile in 1988 rose to the top quintile 10 years later.

Bottom: One explanation for the income gap between the top and bottom quintiles is demographic: The top quintile includes many households with two working spouses.

Mobility, Up and Down



The Distribution of Income (Income Shares by Quintile, 2005)



Sources: *Top*, Emmanuel Saez, Top fractiles income shares (excluding capital gains) in the U.S., 1913-2004, "Income Inequality in the United States, 1913-1998," with Thomas Piketty, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. 118, no. 1 (2003), 1-39 (tables and figures updated to 2004, September 2006 at <http://elsa.berkeley.edu/~saez/>). *Middle*, "Are Lifetime Incomes Growing More Unequal? Looking at New Evidence on Family Income Mobility," with Katharine Bradbury and Jane Katz, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, *Regional Review*, vol. 12, no. 4 (Quarter 4, 2002). *Bottom*, U.S. Census Bureau.

sacrifices for the communities they inhabited.

Rule #3: Play by the Rules. Jay Gould and his peers lived in a virtually unpoliced financial world. Today's rich live in a much different environment, but scandals such as the Enron and WorldCom debacles and the bloated salaries of some corporate CEOs create the sense that those at the top are not living by the same rules as everybody else.

Yet government has responded to the scandals with tighter regulation by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and other agencies and measures such as the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which establishes stronger corporate accounting and auditing requirements. Some of Jay Gould's buccaneer heirs, such as Enron's Jeffrey Skilling, have been marched off to prison. Stock options, which account for much of the vast increases in pay at the top of corporate America since the 1970s, have come under closer scrutiny, especially the practice of backdating them to artificially increase their value. More than 130 companies are under investigation, and dozens of CEOs and other top corporate executives have already lost their jobs. Compared to the convulsive reforms of the Progressive Era, today's rolling reforms ought to be easier to digest.

Rule #4: Police Your Friends. The case can be made that America's CEOs, with average earnings of \$10.5 million in 2005, are underpaid. Many entrepreneurs, real estate developers, and private investors earn more. Steven Spielberg earned \$332 million that year, and Jerry Seinfeld made \$100 million. Tiger Woods got \$90 million. (Nobody seems to mind that the great golfer floats around on his own \$20 million yacht, 155 feet long and with a crew of nine.) The average CEO's \$10.5 million would be good enough only to earn the 83rd spot in the *Forbes* ranking of celebrity rich, right between *American Idol* host Ryan Seacrest at \$12 million and the trio of actress and singer Jennifer Lopez, tennis pro Serena Williams, and celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse at \$10 million. The managers of the top 25 hedge funds enjoyed an average compensation of \$251 million in 2004.

Yet even within corporate America, the conviction appears to be growing that too many top executives are paid far more than they are worth. Warren Buffett is well known for his criticisms of exorbitant pay. As a member of the board of directors compensation com-

mittee at investment bank Salomon, Inc., he voted against bonuses for top executives in 1990 when the company's profits fell. Buffet sits on many corporate boards, but he hasn't been asked to sit on a single compensation committee since. According to The Corporate Library, one of the leading firms that track executive pay, Barry Diller of InterActiveCorp, an Internet conglomerate, was the highest-paid CEO in America in 2005, with \$295 million, gained mostly through the exercise of stock options granted in earlier years. (The measurement of executive pay is complicated by the complexity of compensation packages and disclosure rules that still leave some factors unknown; an alternative measure puts Diller's pay at \$85 million.) Even at the very top, there are significant gaps between winners and "losers." The number 10 slot on The Corporate Library list is occupied by Valero Energy's William E. Greehey, with \$95 million.

In a separate report, *Pay for Success*, The Corporate Library used a number of metrics to identify companies that got especially good value from their CEOs. The 2005 pay for these executives, who worked at companies of very different sizes, ranged from \$762,000 to \$16 million. Other metrics yield different estimates of justifiable rewards, but all make it apparent that CEO pay at big companies will be measured in millions.

Virtually every effort by activists and government to rein in corporate compensation seems to have failed or backfired. Far from restraining increases, disclosure rules imposed by federal regulators in 1993 apparently juiced executives' competitive instincts by revealing what their rivals were making and giving them leverage to negotiate bigger compensation packages, according to a *Wall Street Journal* review of efforts to contain executive pay. Stock options, once promoted by activists as a way to tie pay more closely to performance, quickly became funny money. And now that Sarbanes-Oxley has tightened reporting requirements for options grants, the manna is flowing through new paths. More disclosure requirements and negative publicity may help, but short of draconian measures, it will be up to corporate shareholders who pay CEO salaries and the boards of directors that set pay levels—boards heavily populated by top executives from other companies who have often taken

chummy approaches to the task—to demand closer links between pay and performance at the top.

Rule #5: Stay Competitive. Escalating pay for CEOs is only the most controversial aspect of the larger phenomenon of swiftly growing income gains for those at the top. What accounts for the change? One cause is the rapid emergence of new industries on a scale not seen since Jay Gould's era, which is suddenly creating a handful of big winners. In the 19th century the industries were steel, railroads, and other manufacturing mainstays; today they are computers, software, and other knowledge-based sectors.

What is different this time is that the competition for talent and markets is global in scale, raising both the stakes and the rewards. As Robert H. Frank and Philip J. Cook argue in *The Winner-Take-All Society* (1995), the new order allows economic winners to increase their gains—the crack heart surgeon whose clientele was once limited to his home city, for example, now draws patients from all over the world who are willing to pay more for the best care. In this hypercompetitive world, many of the old informal constraints on high earners have vanished. Corporations are increasingly reaching outside to hire “star” CEOs rather than promote from within—and paying more to get them. And since for many high fliers the race is as much about getting better toys than their peers as it is big paychecks, the collapse of old constraints has given their competitive zeal free rein. The Old Money ethos that frowned on ostentatious displays of wealth is dead, freeing the new rich to race harder for showy tokens of their success—mansions in Aspen, private jets, and all the rest—and for the money to pay for them.

These are, in many ways, positive developments. Talents given wider scope are a benefit for all. Critics decry the fact that by one estimate today's high-level executives make 170 times more

than the average worker, compared with 68 times more in the 1940s, as if the post-World War II years were the age of the golden mean. Yet the 1950s and '60s were still a time when you could more or less forget about joining the elite if your last name was Blumenthal, Flanagan, or Guglielmo, much less if it was prefaced by a “Miss” or “Mrs.” The U.S. economy was

THE TOP ONE PERCENT of households used to claim 40 percent of the nation's private wealth; now their share is half that.

a mighty engine, but it was largely insulated from outside competition, and much of American society in those postwar decades was still organized as if for the great military campaign it had recently completed, with individuals slotted into their appropriate roles in the great industrial corporations: Ford, General Motors, DuPont. Ruling over it all in sublime self-confidence was the WASP elite, whose sons progressed easily from prep schools to the top institutions in American society. In 1952, 90 percent of all sons of Harvard men who applied to the university were accepted. The average verbal SAT score of the freshman class was a modest 583 out of 800. The constraints that kept money in check came at a significant price.

The great shift in American economic life since the 1970s has been accompanied by a second salutary effect: a surprising decline in the concentration of wealth. In the early 20th century, the top one percent of households claimed 40 percent of the nation's private wealth; now their share is about half as large, according to Emmanuel Saez. For the most part, this decline is a product of the breakup of many 19th-century fortunes under the impact of the Great Depression, World War II (which saw many old industrial firms wither as the federal government channeled its spending to huge companies with more than 10,000 employees), and high levels of taxation that slowed the accumulation of new wealth. As a result,

TR and the Tyranny of Mere Wealth

BY PATRICIA O'TOOLE

SURELY THE BEST-KNOWN FACT about Theodore Roosevelt is that he was a sickly boy who transformed himself into a burly, fearless specimen of masculine strength. The makeover began with a humiliation. He was 13, traveling by stagecoach to a lake in Maine to recuperate from a bout of asthma, when he ran into a pair of bullies. Apparently finding him too puny to rough up, they merely toyed with him. Telling the story years later, he said he had vowed that he would never again “be put in that helpless position.” Boxing lessons followed.

Some Roosevelt biographers say that too much has been made of the showdown, but there is no denying that his memories of the bullies and his own helplessness lived on. His creed of the strenuous life was a warning that comfort and luxury could make a country slack, stupid, and vulnerable to the predations of the strong. The big-stick diplomacy of his presidential years (1901–09) was a weapon against potential aggressors. And the Square Deal, his economic agenda, can be seen as an effort to protect the defenseless from the bullies of capitalism—monopolists, inhumane employers, stock waterers, grabbers of public lands.

Lincoln Steffens, a reform-minded journalist who had met Roosevelt long before his presidency,

inadvertently gave the agenda its name. Steffens interviewed TR often and knew that he fancied himself a reformer too. Peeved by the caution of TR's first year in office, Steffens tried to embarrass him into action. “You don't stand for anything fundamental,” Steffens told him one day at the White House. “All you represent is the square deal.”

Roosevelt, plainly overjoyed, leapt out of his chair, pounded his desk, and bellowed, “That's it. That's my slogan: the square deal.”

To Steffens, a square deal was a mere transaction, all process and no content. But TR saw instantly that the words captured a universal yearning: Who *didn't* want to be dealt with squarely?

There was just one hitch: The bullies had long been accustomed to holding the aces, and the senators and representatives they sent to Congress ensured that the deck remained stacked. The most egregious special favors were embodied in a tariff that imposed high taxes on most goods made abroad. In this pre-income tax era, the tariff was the federal government's major source of revenue, but American manufacturers also exploited it to protect themselves from foreign competition. Prices and profits rose. Wages did not.

Congress occasionally talked of reforming the tariff but always stopped short of action. Bills to

improve the lot of the working class were shouted down as violations of labor's freedom to make its own bargains with employers. The courts helped too, by overturning laws at odds with the reigning principle of *laissez faire* and issuing injunctions against strikes on the ground that they deprived employers of the use of their property.

TR tried to assure the bullies that the Square Deal was not socialism. He did not plan to confiscate the aces and give them to the poor, he said; he meant only to prevent crookedness in the dealing. He had no objection to men of great wealth, only to the “mal-factors of great wealth,” as he would call them. He didn't name names, but the press was soon slapping the label on J. Pierpont Morgan and every other tycoon who ran into trouble with the trust buster. TR also declared that he would not tolerate demagogues who incited the have-nots to violence against the haves. From his presidency through his run for a third term in 1912, he would denounce class envy in one breath and in the next opine that “of all the forms of tyranny the least attractive and most vulgar is the tyranny of mere wealth.”

On the legislative front, the Square Deal proved a modest success. Roosevelt won stricter regulation of railroads, made employers liable for work injuries caused by management's negligence, banned the adulteration and

mislabeled food and drugs, and pushed through the Meat Inspection Act, which created a sanitary patrol for slaughterhouses.

TR's noisy pride in taking on the bullies naturally attracted snipers. They pointed out that he did nothing about the tariff, that his trustbusting did not slay the beast of monopoly, and that some of the new laws were not progressive. The Elkins Act, for example, ended the cut-rate pricing that railroads had given their largest shippers. The change did help the small shippers—but not nearly as much as it helped the railroads. Once the president signed the bill in 1903, the railroads proceeded to charge everybody full freight. Merrily they rolled along.

Roosevelt's successes were more impressive when he could act without Congress, as he did in the coal strike of 1902 (and many times afterward, prompting one newspaperman to say that TR had no more respect for Congress than a dog has for a marriage license). As the strike dragged on and coal supplies dwindled, the price sextupled. Fearing that winter would bring riots and leave the poor to freeze to death, Roosevelt asked the mine owners and the union to come to terms, for the good of the country. They refused. The president had no constitutional authority to intervene, but he did something unprecedented: He called both sides to Washington and kept at them until the miners agreed to go back to work while an arbitration panel reached a

settlement that would bind both sides. Wall Street harrumphed about his disregard of property rights, but his intervention drove home his point that in a world of concentrated power and wealth, only the federal government had enough muscle to check the abuses of the bullies.

In 1912, when TR founded the National Progressive Party (better known as the Bull Moose) to make another run for the White House, he positioned himself far to the left of the Square Deal. He did so to woo



A 1909 cartoon shows Theodore Roosevelt hunting down what he called “the malefactors of great wealth,” while leaving other trusts alone.

voters, of course, but he had also come to believe that socialism, which he abhorred, would lose its appeal if the bullies of capitalism were stopped. He called for a living wage, workers' compensation, a ban on child labor, an end to the seven-day workweek, and broad authority to

regulate big business.

The Socialist Party accused TR of stealing its best ideas and watering them down to make capitalism seem more benign than it was. The suspicion was not entirely wrong. As Lincoln Steffens might have told them, stealing ideas was one of Roosevelt's great political strengths. Another was his readiness to plant himself between the ruthless and the helpless. The boy had overcome his weakness, and the man recognized that such conquests were not always possible or permanent.

TR's decision to fight the bullies in the middle of the political road frustrated progressives hoping for more change and irritated conservatives devoted to the status quo. He understood that, but as he once wrote a friend, he hoped that whatever his critics thought, “the average American citizen, the man who works hard, who does not live too easily, but who is a decent and upright fellow, shall feel that I have tried to the very best of my ability to be his representative.”

His enormous popularity in his own time indicates that ordinary people did feel they had a champion in Theodore Roosevelt, and his great popularity now—among conservatives and progressives alike—suggests that a square deal is a good thing for just about all of the people, just about all of the time.

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the top of today's wealth pyramid is dominated by the "working rich." This is another reason why contemporary wealth disparities don't have quite the same bite. It would be harder to accept the spectacle of grandees winging around the world in private jets if their money were simply an accident of birth.

Yet the diminution of inherited wealth could be only a temporary phenomenon, as today's winners entrench their positions and create privileged positions for generations of their heirs. For a society already struggling to widen pathways of upward mobility such as elite higher education and to control the role of money in the political process, a permanent moneyed establishment could be disastrous.

War and depression do not seem like good antidotes. What about taxation? Saez's research shows that the top 0.1 percent of earners have greatly increased their (pretax) share of income in Canada and Britain as well as the United States—but not in the high-tax nations of France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. He suspects that high marginal tax rates helped keep those incomes in check—a person handing over a big chunk of every pay increase in taxes doesn't have a big incentive to ask for more. Saez acknowledges flaws in his theory. Canada didn't have deep tax cuts of the kind Britain and America did, and even in those two countries the timing of changes in income and tax rates doesn't correspond very closely. And, of course, there is the golden goose question: The three Continental economies have not kept pace with the English-speaking trio.

In any event, taxes designed simply to restrain the incomes of CEOs and movie stars are not likely to attract much public support in the United States. Karlyn H. Bowman of the American Enterprise Institute has gathered poll data on such questions going back to the 1930s. In 1939, when the nation was still in the grip of the Great Depression, a Roper poll for *Fortune* magazine asked, "Do you think that our government should or should not redistribute wealth by heavy taxes on the rich?" Only 35 percent answered "should," while 54 percent said "should not." Dozens of surveys asking the question in different ways over the years have revealed a hard core of about a third of the population that favors soak-the-rich taxes.

Public attitudes toward estate taxes are even more

revealing. It is a wonder why Republicans needed to dream up the "death tax" label in the unsuccessful campaign to repeal them, since they have been far and away the most unpopular taxes in the United States. Americans cherish the belief that they or their children have a decent chance of amassing the kind of wealth that would be taxed away. A Gallup/CNN/*USA Today* survey seven years ago asked: Would you personally benefit if the tax on estates over \$1 million were eliminated? Seventeen percent said they would and 43 percent said they would not. A hopeful 39 percent answered "Don't Know."

Americans will continue to debate the upsurge in wealth, but despite occasional gusts of soak-the-rich rhetoric, most of the arguments won't likely be about something as abstract as reducing the share claimed by the top one or 10 percent. People aiming to reduce federal deficits and others seeking to expand government programs will want the rich to pay somewhat more. Conservatives seeking to restrain the size of government and others convinced that higher taxes will reduce economic growth will oppose them. There will be compromises. Americans do not see globalization in the same light as many saw late-19th-century industry capitalism—a zero-sum game that benefits the rich at the expense of the rest. Vigorous policing of the executive suites; efforts that increase economic mobility; and policies that reduce the insecurities caused by outsourcing, health care costs, and rapid changes in the job market will help keep tensions in check.

Farther off in the distance is the specter of a wealthy class that creates for itself the kind of entrenched position once enjoyed by the WASP establishment. As the WASPs learned, an elite that frustrates popular aspirations for success will find it hard to sustain itself. Preserving upward mobility and social fluidity is a problem to be reckoned with by broadening the avenues to opportunity and ensuring that today's winners continue to be exposed to the withering forces of competition at home and abroad. The chief antidote to an entrenched elite of the wealthy is more of the hypercompetition that lifted them to the top of the heap in the first place. ■

Big Philanthropy

The surge of new wealth in America is creating a bumper crop of large foundations. History suggests that they can accomplish a great deal. But it's not always easy to do good.

BY LESLIE LENKOWSKY

WITH WARREN BUFFETT'S DECISION TO GIVE IT most of his fortune, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has established itself as the largest private philanthropy in the world. Added to the nearly equal amount the Microsoft founder had already contributed, Buffett's commitment of \$31 billion means the foundation will spend at least \$3 billion annually.

Extraordinary as that amount is, big philanthropy is no longer rare. For many years, the Ford Foundation was by far the largest grant maker in the United States and often the only one with more than a billion dollars in wealth ("the fat boy in the canoe," Dean Rusk used to call it when he was president of the Rockefeller Foundation in the 1950s). But today, a foundation with a billion dollars in assets would not even be among the top 50 grant makers. Ford alone is now worth more than \$10 billion, with several others within a good year's investment returns of equaling it.

Along with his donation to the Gates Foundation, Buffett gave each of his children billion-dollar gifts for their own foundations. The press generally characterized these as "small," which they were in relation to what Gates was promised. But less than a generation earlier, such a sum would have made a foundation one of the largest and most important in the United States.

Though not on Buffett's scale, more people are starting

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or contributing to foundations. Between 1975 and 2004, the number of grant-making organizations in the United States rose from 22,000 to nearly 68,000. According to *Giving USA*, an annual guide to American philanthropy, 11.5 percent of the quarter-trillion dollars Americans gave to charitable organizations in 2005 came from foundations, almost equaling the record share reached in 2001.

Not only has the number of foundations been increasing, but so too has the frequency of extra-large gifts to other kinds of nonprofit organizations. During 2006 alone, at least a dozen groups (besides the Gates and Buffett foundations) received pledges of \$100 million or more, including \$175 million from George Lucas to the University of Southern California's film school, \$150 million from Stanley W. Anderson to the Presbyterian Church (USA), and \$100 million from Mortimer B. Zuckerman to the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Before the mid-1990s, it was unusual to see more than a handful of such gifts each year.

Much of American philanthropy now rests on the generosity of the very wealthy. Nine out of 10 families in the top fifth of the income distribution contribute to charity each year, writes Arthur Brooks in *Who Really Cares* (2006), compared to six in 10 from the bottom fifth. While less well-off donors give a larger share of their income to charity, approximately two-thirds of all giving comes today from the most affluent three percent of American households.

Why this is the case is no mystery. The high-tech boom

of the 1990s not only created sizable new fortunes but helped established ones grow rapidly. (Despite the prominence of names such as Gates, Dell, and Packard on the list, most of the 50 largest foundations in the United States are products of the industrial era.) The 1990s also produced lots of givers who were apt to be more generous than the typical wealthy donor. According to a recent survey of high net

been volunteering more than in the past.

But this should not obscure the fact that charitable giving in the United States increasingly depends upon donations by the rich. And that has not always been regarded as a good thing.

Throughout American history, charitable donations by the wealthy have inspired more than a few misgivings.

THE AGING BABY BOOM generation has accumulated trillions of dollars in assets, and a large share of this bounty is likely to wind up going to charities.

Henry David Thoreau and some of his contemporaries regarded philanthropy as “over-rated,” seeing in the generosity of wealthy merchants an attempt to put doing good ahead of being good in their business pursuits. “If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious

worth households done by Indiana University’s Center on Philanthropy for the Bank of America, “entrepreneurs,” who earned at least half their fortune by starting businesses, give twice as much, on average, as rich people who inherited at least half of theirs. Those who became wealthy from increased savings, higher returns on investments, or rising real estate values lag further behind in their giving. Since high net worth households give about 50 times more than the typical American household, to the extent economic inequality grew during the 1990s, philanthropy was the beneficiary.

Nor has the “giving boom” by the wealthy run its course. According to calculations by Boston College’s Paul G. Schervish and John J. Haven, the aging baby boom generation has accumulated trillions of dollars in assets. A large share of this bounty is likely to wind up going to charities.

design of doing me good,” Thoreau wrote in *Walden*, “I should run for my life.” Nineteenth-century schoolchildren learned from McGuffey’s Readers to be wary of the kind of ambitious philanthropy that aimed to tackle big and distant problems (such as those the Gates Foundation is planning to address), and instead to prefer more modest efforts to do “a thousand little, snug, kind, good actions.”

Even the very rich had doubts about their giving. In one of his writings on philanthropy, which were collected under the title *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays*, Andrew Carnegie maintained that “the problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth.” Not only were too many of his Gilded Age peers devoting their wealth to luxuries, but those who were making gifts to charity were largely wasting them. “Of every thousand dollars spent in so-called charity today,” he wrote, “it is probable that nine hundred and fifty dollars is unwisely spent—so spent, indeed, as to produce the very evils it hopes to mitigate or cure.” By this, Carnegie meant that the money was helping to perpetuate poverty and fuel social unrest instead of assisting the less affluent to get ahead.

Many Americans of modest means still contribute significantly to charities of all sorts. Heart warming stories abound of cleaning women or factory workers who lived their lives frugally, saved their money, and made large gifts for scholarships to enable others to have the opportunities they missed, proving that one does not have to be rich to be philanthropic. People with more time than money at their disposal, such as teenagers and retirees, have also

Carnegie famously urged his counterparts to donate their “surplus” during their lifetimes and provided a list of causes he thought were best, including libraries, universities, parks, and concert halls. But today, Carnegie is



Now comes the hard part: Bill and Melinda Gates welcome Warren Buffett's \$31 billion contribution to help their foundation reach a set of ambitious goals.

more likely to be remembered as an industrialist who treated his workers badly than as a farsighted philanthropist. His ideas about giving are often criticized as paternalistic at best or a scheme to preserve the advantages of the rich while only mildly ameliorating poverty at worst. Recent Carnegie biographer David Nasaw sides with one of Carnegie's early critics who saw danger in the expectation that charity can do the work of social justice.

Far harsher criticism greeted John D. Rockefeller's idea, developed at the beginning of the 20th century, to use the bulk of his assets to create the Rockefeller Foundation. Though his plan was undoubtedly aimed partly at improving his public image, Rockefeller had been a devoted philanthropist throughout his lifetime, tithing regularly and putting his money behind a variety of worthwhile projects, including the creation of the University of Chicago. Still, his proposal to establish what has become the prototype for today's foundations was greeted with criticism, chiefly reflecting the concern that it would enable him to wield more power than he was already thought to have. When he sought a federal charter for his new grant-making body, the executive

branch and Congress—both led by midwestern Republicans—refused to grant it. Rockefeller even offered to cede control of his foundation to a group of public officials and university presidents, to no avail.

After receiving the necessary legal approval from the New York State legislature, the Rockefeller Foundation began operating in 1913. Not long afterward, it was entangled in the first of several congressional investigations aimed at examining whether grant-making organizations were really philanthropic or were serving the business and political interests of their donors.

The criticism climaxed in 1969 with the enactment of a federal law that singled out foundations underwritten by wealthy individuals or families for special scrutiny and regulation. By that time, the Ford Foundation had replaced Rockefeller as the most prominent philanthropy in the United States; moreover, Ford's vast size and interest in fostering large-scale social change made it an inviting target. A number of its grants had stirred controversy, including a pilot project on community control of schools that led to a racially charged confrontation between teachers and parents in New York

City and a voter registration drive in Cleveland that seemed to favor one candidate—Carl Stokes, who would become the city's first black mayor. And the Ford Foundation's leader at the time, McGeorge Bundy, was the former national security adviser to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson and had his share of detractors in Washington.

Following nearly a decade of hearings, the law passed by Congress came close to requiring foundations to give away their assets and go out of business. (Advocating that position was none other than then-Tennessee senator Albert Gore Sr., who warned his congressional colleagues about the dangers, in a society that valued equality, of allowing private fortunes to remain intact and grow for generations, even if they were intended to be used for charity.) Instead, the law required them to spend a minimum amount—the “payout requirement”—every year, and prohibited them from owning more than a minority share of businesses. It also placed a variety of restrictions on the kinds of grants foundations could make and imposed a special tax on them, supposedly to pay for increased supervision of their activities by the Internal Revenue Service. Charities that received support from the general public, rather than from a wealthy individual or family, as foundations typically do, were exempted from these rules.

If not as damaging as some had feared, the 1969 law suggested to most of big philanthropy's leaders that their undertaking was in big trouble. In a widely read 1978 article, John D. Rockefeller III warned that the nonprofit sector was “eroding before our eyes” and that philanthropic giving “has steadily lost ground in recent years.” He was not far from the truth. The poor economy of the 1970s, combined with the new rules placed upon philanthropic institutions and their wealthy donors, meant that the number of foundations and the inflation-adjusted value of foundation assets hardly grew at all during the decade.

A quarter-century later, the outlook for big philanthropy is much healthier. Indeed, nothing like the outcry accompanying the creation of the Rockefeller Foundation followed the announcement, in 1999, that Bill Gates was planning to set up a similar organization, let alone last summer's news about Warren Buffett's gift to

it. Critics of giving by the wealthy are still plentiful and have achieved a degree of institutionalization in universities, think tanks, newspapers, interest groups, and even the philanthropic world itself. But they usually concentrate their fire on questions of how much money is being spent and where it is going rather than on where it comes from or who is in charge of giving it away.

Congress recently launched a series of hearings on philanthropy, asking whether, in view of the sizable growth in their assets, foundations should be paying out more in grants and putting a greater number of independent directors on their boards, as businesses were required to do in the wake of corporate scandals at Enron and WorldCom. However, these issues were quickly put aside, and legislators turned to clarifying laws affecting charitable giving that may have been exploited by people seeking to reduce their taxes, such as methods for valuing the donation of used cars and other kinds of property. The populist fervor that drove earlier investigations of foundations was nowhere to be seen.

Will this fervor return? The growing influence of the very wealthy in philanthropy—and the size of the grant-making organizations they are building—creates the kind of environment in which it might. But whether that will happen depends considerably on how the new leaders of philanthropy conduct themselves.

Today's foundations and big donors reap the benefit of being able to cloak themselves in a record of accomplishment by their predecessors. Starting with the Rockefeller Foundation's support of medical research and scientifically based treatment, and continuing through its backing (with the Ford Foundation) of the green revolution, which developed new strains of crops for famine-prone countries, grant-making organizations have demonstrated that they can put large sums of money to good use. Likewise, big gifts such as Andrew Mellon's donation to launch the National Gallery of Art, Alfred P. Sloan and Charles F. Kettering's to create a cancer research center, and Julius Rosenwald's to build schools for southern blacks, not to mention countless endowment gifts to hospitals and universities, have made enduring contributions. Whatever one thinks of more recent giving (and a case can be made that it has fallen short of earlier achievements), the effectiveness of grant-making organizations has quieted some of the doubts that were expressed upon their establishment.

The challenge for big philanthropy now is to build on this

record. That will be difficult. Many of the largest foundations are seeking to address extraordinarily complex problems, that generate significant differences over what to do. The Gates Foundation has already encountered such challenges in its efforts to improve urban school systems, with results that have been judged middling—at best. As it works to find cures for the world's most deadly diseases, it is likely to come up against even greater problems.

Moreover, the unprecedented size of the resources at the disposal of today's wealthy donors creates its own obstacles. Philanthropists (and their advisers) are as susceptible to embracing intellectual or political fashions as anyone else, and maybe more so, in an age in which fundraising has become extremely sophisticated. What seems deserving of their support today may look less promising tomorrow, but honest feedback is often in short supply in the philanthropic world. (As an old adage puts it, three things never happen again to people who work for a foundation: They never sleep in anything but a first-class hotel, eat in anything but a first-class restaurant, or have anyone tell them the truth about their work to their face.) And as organizations become larger and more dominant in their fields, change becomes more difficult, as commitments to programs grow stronger and interest in preserving them more entrenched.

Their sheer number and scope give today's philanthropic institutions an advantage their predecessors lacked. Although there may not be one in every neighborhood, foundations are no longer located chiefly in the Northeast, as they used to be. Nearly 68,000 are scattered throughout the United States, with the most rapid growth occurring recently in the South and West.

Almost every conceivable cause now has its philanthropic patron, as do some that most people could hardly imagine, such as creating upscale shelters for stray dogs, a preoccupation of one high-tech billionaire. There are even grant makers promoting conservative intellectual and public-policy ideas, partly dispelling the impression—if not the reality—of a liberal bias in the foundation world.

With charitable giving having become so diversified, stirring up populist resentment toward it will be more difficult. But demanding a portion of it is not. At a 2006 meeting organized by the Council on Foundations, the association that represents the largest grant makers, Senator Max Baucus, a Democrat from Montana, complained that his state was not receiving enough money from foundations and

pointedly invited his audience to make amends. Since he is the new chair of the Senate Finance Committee, which is responsible for legislation affecting philanthropy, it is unlikely Senator Baucus's suggestion will go unheeded.

The real danger philanthropists face today is not that their greatly increased wealth will provoke political attacks, but rather that they will be smothered by the public sector's embrace. In contrast to Carnegie, Rockefeller, and other early philanthropists who came on stage when the ambitions of American government were small and its resources limited, Gates, Buffett, and other big donors are stepping up their giving just as the American government's aspirations have risen considerably but its willingness to provide the necessary financing has diminished. Hence the efforts of Senator Baucus—and many other public officials (including retired ones, such as former president Bill Clinton)—to get foundations and other givers to “pick up the slack,” as Reagan administration aide Michael K. Deaver once put it. Instead of seeking to restrain big philanthropy, they hope to enlist it in the service of their priorities. Furthermore, even with tighter budgets, government remains an important force in education, health care, and virtually every other area of concern to philanthropy, providing givers with a strong incentive to cooperate.

If they fail to do so, political recriminations are likely to ensue. But if they oblige, the consequences may be even worse. At the heart of the American tradition of philanthropy is the belief that public life is enriched if there are many ways of promoting social improvements, not just those that can pass the test of political acceptability. With the growth of big philanthropy, the potential for such innovations may be greater than ever before. But if their wealth leads foundations and other donors to become overly sensitive to public pressures and work too closely with problem-ridden government agencies, their ability to accomplish much at all will be impaired.

The rise of big philanthropy—in the United States as well as other parts of the world—offers an unprecedented opportunity to creatively address many long-standing problems. But if a new “golden age” of giving is in the offing, as its enthusiasts have already proclaimed, those whose hard-earned wealth is making it possible need to realize that more than vast amounts of money are needed to succeed in truly doing good. ■

One Iraq Or Three?

GROWING VIOLENCE IN BAGHDAD PROMPTS MANY TO QUESTION WHETHER IRAQ CAN SURVIVE or should be divided among its Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds. The first questions to ask ought to be historical: Is modern Iraq built on a solid foundation or is it largely a patchwork cobbled together by European grandees nearly a century ago? What precedents exist for a divided Iraq? Our two contributors advance contrasting visions of Iraq's past and future maps.

Lines in the Sand

BY F. S. NAIDEN

BEFORE WORLD WAR I BROUGHT AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY to the mapmaker's art, seeing a nation whole was not as simple as looking at a picture. It was an act of imagination. And few countries were the subject of more imaginings than Iraq. The Ottoman Turks saw it as a stop on the route to the Persian Gulf and thus to India. Earlier, the Romans and Macedonians had imagined it the same way. Alexander the Great made the trip to India, and the Roman emperor Trajan followed him 450 years later, in AD 117, though he was forced to turn back after reaching the Persian Gulf. But others would follow. Much of the

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world ended up as a way station to India, or the idea of India—the West Indies, the East Indies, the Indian Ocean.

Now imagine a modern Alexander or Trajan. He knows where India is and he has conquered most of it. He must now administer it. India is British, and Iraq is about to be administered as part of India. It is the fall of 1914, the early days of World War I, and Britain's Indian army has landed in the south of Iraq, on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Its 50,000 men do not intend to seize the country. They only want to prevent Britain's enemies or even Britain's allies from using it as a backdoor to India. Iraq, on the other hand, is not even a name on a map. India will give it one.

Then administrators at 10 Downing Street start interfering. They do not want the colonial but autonomous gov-



A 1921 conference on the future of the Middle East held in Cairo brought together Gertrude Bell, Arnold Wilson (standing to the left of Bell), and T. E. Lawrence (fourth from right in the second row). Winston Churchill, then Britain's colonial secretary, is seated in the front row.

ernment of British India to draw the map. They want to draw it themselves. So the battle begins. The Indian government draws maps of Iraq. London redraws them. India thinks small—for it, Iraq is a small thing. London thinks big. India makes its point by moving its army. London makes its point by drawing. London eventually wins. But winning will take a few maps.

I

WHEN THE INDIAN ARMY ARRIVED IN 1914, SOMEONE was put in charge of maps. It probably was Captain (later Colonel, then Sir) Arnold Wilson. From the neck up, he might have passed for King Edward VII; from the neck

down, for a champion rugby player. (In the picture above, Wilson is standing on the far left.) He later held a seat in Parliament, and served in the Royal Air Force in World War II. All malevolent common sense, he admired what the British called the “martial races”—the Gurkhas and Sikhs who manned the Indian army, but also the Turks, who in 1914 had ruled Iraq for 400 years. Wilson’s admiration sprang from fear. Yes, the Indian army could defeat the Turks, but could it replace them? After the fall of the Chinese Empire in 1912, the Caliphate was the oldest of the world’s leading states. It included not just Iraq but Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, most of Saudi Arabia, and most of the Persian Gulf ministates. Not long before, it had included most of the Balkans, Egypt, Libya, and Algeria.

Turkish Iraq ran north from the gulf in three *vilayets*, or districts. Wilson did not make the mistake of calling them provinces. A province was something Canadian—or worse yet, French. Every square foot in a province would have a pig or a hedgerow, every house an address, every hamlet its own kind of cheese. Not Iraq, much of which was desert or swamp. Each of the three *vilayets* bore the name of its chief town—Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul. Basra occupied the southern third of the country, Baghdad the central third, Mosul the larger, northern third. West of Mosul was a subdistrict, Dair al-Zor, that divided Mosul from the *vilayets* of what is now Syria.

The Tigris and Euphrates rivers ran through all three districts, but some 120 miles above the Persian Gulf they flowed together as the muddy Shatt al-Arab, which needed constant dredging. In the center of Iraq, ancient irrigation canals crisscrossed the country, many of them silted over since the Mongols wrecked them seven centuries before. The chief town, Baghdad, a steam bath of mud-brick buildings beside the Tigris, was not accessible to ocean-going vessels. In the north, the rivers drew apart and formed Al-Jazira, “the island,” a large swath stretching into the mountains of Armenia. Too dry for good crops, it belonged mostly to Kurdish or Arab nomads.

No single name applied to these disparate regions. The phrase “Al-Iraq” (the lowland) was a topographical expression, not a political one, and it did not apply to the mountains in the north. “Mesopotamia” (the land between the rivers) was another topographical expression, and it applied neither to the mountains nor the Shatt al-Arab. “Mesopotamia” was a Greek word, and Wilson, who did not know Arabic, had an old boy’s advantage in dealing with Greek words. “Mesopotamia,” he knew, dated from the Hellenistic era, and there was nothing Hellenistic about Iraq.

When Wilson later wrote his memoirs, he alluded several times to the region’s long history. Basra had once been Sumer, the first civilization in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, dating from about 3000 BC. Sumerians built the first canals. The Babylonians, who occupied the center of the country from about 2200 BC, built the rest. Assyria later occupied the north, beginning about 1800 BC. No one ruled all three regions for more than a short time. The Persians ruled them longest, but only from about 530 to about 330 BC. Even the Romans could not hold all of Mesopotamia. By the time Islam came to the

region, in the seventh century AD, the Persians had regained Sumer and Babylonia, but not Assyria.

An Arab dynasty, the Abassids, had united Iraq, just as the greatest of the Persians had, but like them they had made it part of something bigger. In 762 BC they founded Baghdad, and it became a new Babylon, important well beyond the confines of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The Abassids’ best soldiers came from the Central Asian steppes, thousands of miles away. Their best administrators were Afghan ex-Buddhists who had been the hereditary patrons of the two great statues of the Buddha at Bamiyan—the statues destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. The best of the Abassids, Haroun al-Rashid, was the only Arab ruler to make a hajj against the Byzantines and a hajj to Mecca in the same year. Haroun was the protagonist in the book that made Baghdad famous—*The Arabian Nights*.

All this was schoolboy history—Sumer, Babylonia, and Assyria scattered in fine print across the desert. New conquerors, the Ottoman Turks, arrived in the 16th century, but they made the same three-fold division. In the south they found Shiite Muslims under the spell of imams sometimes trained in Persia. Acknowledging the power of the clergy—Wilson called it the “Persian” clergy—the Turks governed the south through either the imams or the sheikhs of the local tribes. In the center of the country, the Turks found mostly Sunnis along with a scattering of Shiites and Jews. The Sunnis looked not to Shiite Persia but to the larger Muslim world, and so they were loyal subjects. Sunni landlords helped govern the region, and educated Sunnis served as bureaucrats and army officers. Here, unlike in the south, the Turks made some effort to collect taxes. The remaining region, the north, was the most backward. The chief group, the Kurds, were Muslims, but they were not Semites like the Arabs. They may have been descendants of the ancient Medes, horse-riding kin of the Persians. That would explain their yearning for independence, their pastoralism, and their unexampled poverty, Wilson thought. In some spots in the north, Christian minorities languished.

Having come from India, with its medley of princes, faiths, and races, Wilson did not wish to disturb this pottage. He only wanted to make Basra British—to build roads, clear canals, collect taxes, and supple-

ment Muslim courts with British ones. Burma was part of British India. Why not Basra? Then, in November 1915, came the news that the Indian army, which had taken Basra easily, had gone north to seize the railhead in Baghdad from the Turks, met with defeat, and surrendered. The next month, another British attack on Turkey, at Gallipoli, also ended in disaster. These setbacks aside, Wilson could not forget another thing. Like Wilson himself, Britain's Muslim soldiers felt some respect for the Turkish Caliphate. For the time being, London agreed with Wilson, too. The foreign secretary, at least, would be content with Basra. Sir Edward Grey, the last Liberal to hold this post, was an imperialist, but he did not forget his party's dislike of foreign lands (as opposed to foreign trade). The British, he concluded, should govern as little of them as possible without withdrawing.

And so Wilson and the British government in India decided to do as little as they dared. They were far from abolishing the three *vilayets*. Instead, they would take Basra and leave Turkey the rest. In response, a cabinet committee headed by Sir Maurice de Bunsen drew a new map, seen at the top of page 56. It was not the only map the committee drew, but it carried weight with policymakers in the British government, and it embodied the consensus of 1915. On this map, Basra became British. The rest of Iraq stayed Turkish, but not for long. In 1915, World War I was only a year old.

II

BY 1916 SIR EDWARD GREY HAD RETIRED, AND control over Middle Eastern policy now moved from the Foreign Office in Whitehall to the "Garden Suburb"—a group of ramshackle temporary buildings erected in the yard behind 10 Downing Street, then occupied by Prime Minister H. H. Asquith. Unlike Arnold Wilson and Edward Grey, some of the denizens of the Garden Suburb were intellectuals. The first of them to draw a map of Iraq was Sir Mark Sykes, a Tory member of Parliament who was not

so rich as to disdain writing travel books about the Middle East. A Sykes book was mostly a *mélange* of his racial and religious opinions, each more flavorful than the last.

If Arnold Wilson liked the Turks, Mark Sykes did not. He divided them into "old" and "young." The Old Turks had governed the Caliphate until 1908. They resembled the Persians of antiquity—that master race taught to ride, shoot, and tell the truth. But the Young Turks, who gained control of the Caliphate in a coup that same year, were "Levantine." A Levantine was a Middle Easterner of mixed culture. Greeks were often Levantines; so were Armenians. Jews, surprisingly, were not—but as we shall see, Sykes had

"AL-IRAQ" (THE LOWLAND) was a topographical expression, not a political one, and it did not apply to the mountains in the north.

a theory about Jews. Whatever his nationality, a Levantine was too much of a mongrel to rule others. The Turkish Levantines could never reform the Caliphate, Sykes said. Look at their record since the coup.

But Sykes did not like the Arabs, the alternative to the Turks. He described them in a passage of his 1904 book *Dar-ul-Islam*:

Eloquent, cunning, excitable and cowardly, . . . diseased from years of foul living, contemptuous of villagers with all the loathsome contempt of a stunted cockney for a burly yokel; able to quote poetry in conversation; . . . ready to riot and slay for the sake of fanaticism as long as there is no danger; detesting Europeans with a bigoted, foolish, senseless hatred; . . . ready to cry "Kafir" to a stranger and fly ere his head is turned.

As for the desert-dwelling Bedouins, he wrote, "a more rapacious, greedy, ill-mannered set of brutes would be hard to find."

Yet the town and country Arabs were still better than the Turks. Sykes was even willing to consider British-



In a 1915 de Bunsen committee map, Basra belonged to the British and the rest of Iraq remained with the Turks.

sponsored Arab rulers for Iraq. But he was not willing to consider independent Arab rulers. Sunni or Shiite, the Arabs were incapable of self-government. So were the Kurds (though they were more trustworthy; Sykes thought they were good riders and shooters—after all, they were Medes—and reliable when bribed). So Sykes envisioned an Iraq in which the British would keep Basra, but would manipulate puppets elsewhere.

His ideas dovetailed with events in 1916 and the year before. Since Gallipoli, the British had been planning to attack Turkish territory in Arabia, Palestine, and Syria. They knew that the Arabs of these regions would not help them. Some of the Arabs were officers in the Turkish army, the same as the Sunni officers from Iraq. But the Arabs of the remote desert, the Bedouins, were everything Mark Sykes said, at least so far as the Turkish adminis-

tration was concerned. They had long harassed the Turks and levied illegal tolls on pilgrims to the shrines of Mecca and Medina. If some notable or other—no Bedouin, of course—could be made king of the Arabs, he might recruit them. They could then attack those usurpers of the Caliphate, the Young Turks, in the name of Islam. The new king would be an authentic (and docile) Arab. He might even mollify Arnold Wilson and the Indian army command, who did not like ordering Muslim soldiers to attack the troops of the Caliph. Now they would be ordering these

soldiers to fight alongside an Arab king—say, a descendant of the Prophet. And the British found just such a king—Husein ibn Ali, a descendant of the Prophet who was the hereditary custodian of the shrines in Mecca and Medina. The negotiations between Husein and the British, and later between Husein's sons and the British, affected the



Another de Bunsen map incorporated T. E. Lawrence's ideas, numbering the kingdoms he favored 3, 4, and 5.

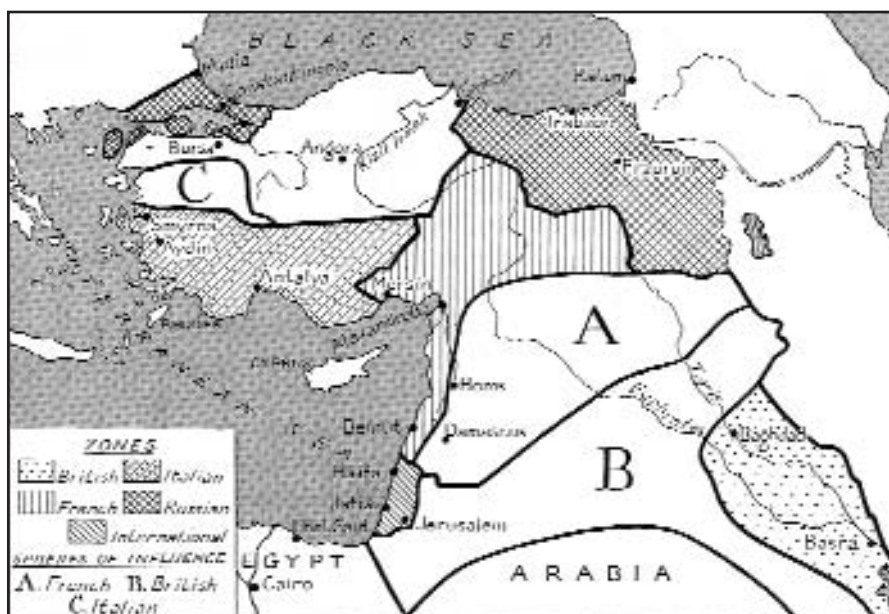
future of Palestine, Jordan, and what later became Saudi Arabia, but they also affected Iraq. They were complicated and tentative; Sykes might have called them “Levantine.” But two things about them are clear: Husein wanted Iraq, and the British did not want him to have it. The Garden Suburb did not know what it wanted, but it did not want that. When the British pledged their support to Husein in October 1915, they warned that “no guarantee for the unconditional delivery” of Iraq could be given.

In reply, Husein complained of British “ambiguity.” He was willing to be patient and give the British time to drive the Turks from Mesopotamia, but then they must turn it over and pay compensation. The British said that Mesopotamia required “special administrative arrangements.” They knew that Husein lacked the troops to drive them out of Basra. He could not even drive the Turks out of Medina.

What lay behind the words “special arrangements”? Britain’s ally, France. The Garden Suburb’s unofficial emissary, Mark Sykes, was in touch with his French counterpart, François Georges-Picot. When the two conferred in early 1916, Picot brought in the French ambassador to Russia, Maurice Paléologue. The three of them reached what became known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The agreement was simple. The Allies were to dismember the Caliphate. Russia would get the Dardanelles, the portion closest to Russia. Italy would get a nearby slice. The French and the British would get big pieces. The French would get Lebanon, where they had long interfered on behalf of Maronite Christian enclaves. The British would keep Basra. As for the rest of the Fertile Crescent, including the rest of Iraq, we come to Sir Mark Sykes’s theory about the Jews. Jerusalem and vicinity would fall under an international administration that would let the Jews of the Levant—or, for that

matter, the Jews of Berlin—settle there as herders. Sheep and goats, Sykes contended, would authenticate the Jews. That way they would not become Levantines, like the Turks and the Greeks. The Royal Navy would keep watch from Haifa, a nearby seaport that was another piece for the British.

To the Arabs Sykes offered a consolation prize, several towns in central Syria. But the Arabs would govern this region only on French sufferance, for Syria was another



In the Sykes-Picot scheme of 1916, Iraq was to be largely divided between the British and French.

piece for France. The same would be true of the Arabs of the Baghdad district, who would govern themselves on British sufferance. The Mosul district would go to France, a concession partly to Britain’s ally but partly to the Indian army, which did not want to have to patrol it. Let the French deal with the Kurds, Sykes thought. Or let the French try to deal with them and fail. If Kurdistan were in turmoil, Turkey would be the weaker for it.

Sykes’s map (above) was diplomatic. Wilson’s had been administrative. Neither map reflected public opinion. Both, in fact, were secret. A politically tolerable map would come from two writers who, unlike Wilson and Sykes, were never in Parliament—T. E. Lawrence and Gertrude Bell, but especially Bell. Their chance came after the end of the war, when the military situation had changed some more, and influenza had carried away Sir Mark Sykes.

III

T. E. LAWRENCE BECAME “LAWRENCE OF ARABIA” after Lowell Thomas made newsreels about him. Thomas had started in the Klondike, where he was the first man to report on the 1897 gold rush with the help of a movie camera. Although he came years after the era of travel by kayak, he paid local residents to let him board their boats and film the worst of the rapids. Narrating the footage to the accompaniment of a player piano made him famous in his early twenties. When the U.S. government sent him to Europe in 1916 to make movies about the war, Thomas avoided anything so confining as trenches and headed for the Middle East. He got to Jerusalem just after the British army reclaimed the city for Christendom. A few Bedouin irregulars in the British service were the stuff of an extra reel, and so Thomas interviewed them, only to find that one of the Bedouins was a sometime archaeologist less than fluent in Arabic. That was Lawrence. Lawrence told Thomas how a son of Husein had raised a force of several hundred, had tried but failed to seize Mecca and Medina, and then had ridden north to capture the village of Aqaba on an inlet of the Red Sea. After that, Husein’s men had accompanied the British Army north, raiding. Thomas had Lawrence take him into the desert to watch the Arabs reenact their marches. He took the footage to the United States and warmed up on Broadway for 12 weeks. Next: Covent Garden, London, for which Thomas hired an orchestra and veiled dancers, plus the Royal Welsh Guards Band. The show, titled *Lawrence of Arabia*, was the first movie Rudyard Kipling saw. To accommodate demand, Thomas had to move to Albert Hall. From there he went to Balmoral Castle, where the king and queen saw *Lawrence*. There would be many more like it—*Beyond the Khyber Pass* (narrated from the viewpoint of the Indian army), *Lauterbach of the China Sea*, and *Tall Stories: The Rise and Triumph of the Great American Whopper*. The hero was always speed, the enemy was always distance, and the action was a pageant—in *Lawrence*, a warrior prophet cantering ahead of a king, Husein, whom Lawrence could introduce in an Oxford common room.

Lawrence went to see the picture too, but incognito. Something of his reaction to being a public personality can be seen in the photograph on page 53, where he stands in the same row as Arnold Wilson, unsure what to do with his hands. The reason for his disquiet was not just personal.

Thomas was an imperialist, and Lawrence was an anti-imperialist. The Arabs, he thought, were blessedly ungovernable: “[The Arabs’] idea of national union is episodic, combined resistance to an intruder. Constructive politics, an organized state . . . are not only beyond their capacity but anathema to their instincts.” Lawrence sometimes made this point in philological terms: “Unless he has learned English or French, the inhabitant of these parts has no words to describe all this country. . . . Sham in Arabic is the town of Damascus. An Aleppine always calls himself an Aleppine, a Beyrouti a Beyrouti, and so down to the smallest villages. The verbal poverty indicates a political condition.” Yet these same episodic, impoverished Arabs had been Britain’s allies. Had the Americans been more prompt, or the Italians more steadfast? The Arabs deserved some reward—say, a small kingdom or two. This appeal to fair play appeared again and again in articles, letters to the editor, and private communications with British politicians. Arnold Wilson and Mark Sykes faced a competitor.

Lawrence proposed that the Arabs rule three kingdoms: “Lower Mesopotamia, Upper Mesopotamia, and Syria, to be placed respectively under Abdullah, Zaid, and Faisal, sons of King Husein. Husein himself would remain King of Hejaz [i.e., Mecca and Medina]. . . . He would have no temporal authority in the three states above mentioned and in fact no position there at all save insertion of his name in Friday prayers in all mosques.” The British government took this plan seriously enough to let the de Bunsen committee embody it in another of its maps, shown on the bottom of page 56. The committee, though, did not want to give kingdoms to the Arabs. That was Lawrence’s idea.

Several developments favored Lawrence’s plan. In November 1918, the British and the French responded to the twelfth of Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points by promising to “establish indigenous governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia.” The British government refused to heed Arnold Wilson’s protests, or his counterproposal that an Englishman serve as high commissioner in “Mesopotamia” for at least five years. The next month the French yielded any claim to Mosul, assigned to them two years before under the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This part of Iraq now fell to the British, the same as Basra and Baghdad. The French compensated themselves by taking Syria—

depriving Husein and his sons of any chance to rule in this quarter. But “Mesopotamia” was still left, and the chief administrator of it, Arnold Wilson, now unwittingly helped Lawrence. In 1919, he built the first railway south of Baghdad. In that same year, he also established an irrigation department to cope with floods and drain marshes, and an agriculture department to encourage the production of cotton. The British were starting to turn the southern half of the country into something like India, and so it was all the easier for Lawrence and others in Cairo and London to ask whether the British might not turn Iraq into something else—something new.

Nor had the Americans been idle. By 1919 the Paris Peace Conference was looming, and the Americans, who now learned of the existence of the Sykes-Picot Agreement (revealed by Russian Bolsheviks after they seized the papers of Ambassador Paléologue), objected to what they called new “colonies” and secret agreements. Woodrow Wilson’s confidante, Colonel Edward M. House, wrote in his memoirs, “It is all bad and I told Balfour so. They are making [the Middle East] a breeding ground for future war.” Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary, agreed to an American proposal to conduct a plebiscite asking the people of Iraq which government they preferred. That blunted the charge of colonialism, and so did the decision to give Britain the three Turkish districts in the form of a mandate granted by the new League of Nations. This decision provided for eventual independence for Iraq.

It was only two years since Sykes had worked his will on the boundaries of the Caliphate, but it might have been a thousand. As Balfour said, the Sykes-Picot Agreement was “alien to those modern notions of nationality



The British fastened on Husein ibn Ali, a descendant of the Prophet, as a leader of the Arabs in the war against the Ottoman Empire. One son got the throne of Jordan while another, Faisal, became king of Iraq.

which are enshrined in the Covenant [of the League of Nations]. . . . These documents proclaim that if we supply an aggregate of human beings, more or less homogeneous in language and religion, with a little assistance and a good deal of advice, if we protect them from external aggression and discourage internal violence, they will speedily and spontaneously organize themselves into a democratic state on modern lines.”

But the British did not meet with anything like spontaneous democratic statehood. The plebiscite proposed by the Americans never took place. Instead, Arnold Wilson conducted a plebiscite of his own in late 1919. Using lists of Ottoman taxpayers, he established a voter roll dominated by property owners in Basra and Baghdad, and used army officers and translators to ask them

whether Iraq should be protected by the British or be subjected to some other regime. Wilson allowed freedom of the press, something new in Iraq, but the result was predictable: The Arabs, no less respectful toward British uniforms than they had been toward Turkish ones, mostly voted to be protected by the British. A few voted to be governed by an Arab notable under a British protectorate. Hardly any voted to be governed by the sons of Husein. Wilson thought he had silenced London and the Americans, too.

**ARNOLD WILSON AND T. E. Lawrence
met their match in the woman who proved
to be the last of the mapmakers, the English
author and administrator Gertrude Bell.**

He had not silenced the Arabs. The freedom of the press that accompanied the plebiscite made resistance easier, and the loss of Syria to the French made resistance attractive to troops under Husein's son Faisal. Nor were Faisal and his men without resources. Embarrassed by the disappointment of Arab hopes to rule Syria, the British were still paying them. British forces in the north had met with trouble among the Kurds, and British troops all over the country were beginning to go home to India. There was one more map to be drawn, and rebellious Arabs in Faisal's employ hoped to draw it.

IV

THE ARAB REBELS, ARNOLD WILSON, AND T. E. Lawrence met their match in the woman who proved to be the last of the mapmakers. This was the English author and administrator Gertrude Bell. Her contemporaries knew her all too well. Virginia Woolf, for one, was afraid of her. Woolf wrote a friend who was traveling in Iraq, "Now where are you? With Miss Gertrude Bell, I suppose. . . . Miss Bell has a very long nose: she is like an Aberdeen terrier; she is a masterful woman, has everyone under her thumb, and makes one feel a little inefficient."

Gertrude Bell was taller than any terrier; that is her, next to Wilson in the group photo on page 53. But physiognomy and height were not all that made her intimidating. She had climbed a number of the Swiss Alps, one of which was named for her. (She had given up mountain climbing when a bolt of lightning struck her ice pick as she was ascending the Finsteraarhorn in a thunderstorm.) A man like Sykes could not compete, as he learned one year when she kept him out of Syria. She had convinced Turkish officials in Damascus that Sykes's brother-in-law was

the prime minister of Egypt. This was nonsense, but her Arabic was good, and her reputation was too, and so Turkish objections to the policies of the prime minister kept Sykes out. He called her "a flat-chested, rump-wagging man-woman—a blethering windbag," and many agreed with him, but

to no effect. She had been the first woman to take a first in history at Oxford, had grown up in a house decorated by William Morris, and was the granddaughter of one of Britain's greatest industrial chemists.

Because she was a woman, Bell could move more freely in Muslim countries, where a female traveler would not arouse as much suspicion as a man. Unlike Sykes, she consulted local leaders, wrote judiciously, and did not presume to give advice to governments in London and elsewhere. Unlike Wilson, she did not ignore Lawrence's Arab irregulars, and unlike Lawrence, she did not overestimate them. Far from hating "Levantines" or Arabs, she admired them. The only cause she ever took part in was that of the anti-suffragettes.

Lawrence knew her weakness: She tended to judge any opinion by her own opinion of those who held it. When she came to Iraq in 1916 to work under Arnold Wilson, she recognized his ability and agreed with him about the future of what was not yet Iraq. Later, when the war ended, she made several trips to Europe and Egypt to report to officials who needed to deal with Iraq at the Paris Peace Conference or other, later conferences, and she saw much of Lawrence. Now she changed her mind. After meeting Lawrence in Cairo in 1919, she wrote in her diary,

We sat in the garden under the night, his homely, unromantic face and stout person illuminated by the lights on the verandah, where, before we had finished our talk, a crowd of British officers and Englishwomen were dining. My heart burned, my heart ached as I listened to him. [The heartache] is all the more bitter because the thoughts were nobler and the desire ran in broader channels.

Bell realized that Lawrence wanted something bigger than Wilson's *India Inferior* or Sykes's zone of control—something like a nation. He had come up with three kingdoms. After the British took Mosul, he switched to advocating just one kingdom. This switch inspired Bell to help him. A kingdom would need a name and it would need boundaries. Lawrence's notion of a king of the Arabs would not suffice. There would have to be an Iraq for the king to rule. The inhabitants would have to accept him.

She had already made a start. Wilson had put her in charge of antiquities, and she had gone on to found the Iraqi National Museum. Iraq is the only country in the world in which the national museum is older than the nation, and the reason is that Gertrude Bell did not think that a museum only ought to commemorate. It also ought to inspire. The ideal viewer was a citizen, not a connoisseur, and the ideal staff were visionaries, not scholars. What Greek and Latin tags were to Wilson, and what classical archaeology could not be to Lawrence (for he had left the profession), the mounds that hid Babylon and other cities were to Bell. Others would quote. She would create. And she would be as efficient as Woolf would have expected.

To accomplish her goal, she would have to get rid of Arnold Wilson, but what should have been impossible proved easy. In June 1920 the Arab rebels rose against the British, and Wilson made the mistake of predicting the rebellion without preventing it. He even knew where it would start—Dair al-Zor, the border district of Ottoman times. Faisal's forces had gathered here at the end of the war. That June, 300 men raided Iraq and killed Englishmen near Mosul. Wilson pointed out that the attackers were on the British payroll and asked London to discharge them. Partly at the urging of Lawrence, London refused. Wilson was surprised, but he would have been even more surprised to learn that Bell agreed

with London. She wrote to her father, "I think we're on the edge of a pretty considerable Arab nationalist demonstration with which I am a good deal in sympathy. It will, however, force our hand and we shall have to see whether it will leave us with enough hold to carry on here."

When the "demonstration" came, Wilson was more than equal to it. He thought the chief threat came from the Sunnis of the central region, quick to act because they had been accustomed to political and military service under the Turks. Meeting with Sunni leaders, he tried to discourage them: "I reminded them that only the British mandate stood between them and the resumption by Turkey of her former position in Iraq. . . . One of the three remarked that the Turks were after all Muslims and were prepared . . . to give Iraq autonomy. I mentioned the Kurdish minority and the powerful Shia elements on the Euphrates. . . ; they replied that both groups were ignorant peasants who could easily be kept in their place, the former by the mutual jealousies of their leaders, the latter by the same agency and through the Shia priesthood, who, they said, were at one with the Nationalist party."

Seeing that his threat had failed, Wilson tried to keep the Sunnis and Shia from cooperating. The Turks

Iraq: A Chronology

| | |
|---------|---|
| 1914 | British troops land at Basra |
| 1915 | British defeated at Baghdad |
| 1916 | Sykes-Picot Agreement |
| 1917 | British control extended to Mosul |
| 1920 | Iraqi rebellion against the British |
| 1921 | Monarchy established under King Faisal |
| 1930 | British League of Nations mandate ends |
| 1941 | British reinforcements remove pro-Axis government |
| 1958 | Fall of the monarchy |
| 1979 | Saddam Hussein becomes president |
| 1980–88 | Iran-Iraq war |
| 1990–91 | Iraq invades Kuwait and is expelled by a U.S.-led coalition |
| 2003 | U.S. and coalition forces invade Iraq |



The only woman present, Gertrude Bell takes center stage at a 1922 picnic with King Faisal (second from right) and others.

had done that, and now Wilson did it well enough so that when the Sunnis at Dair al-Zor asked for Shiite help, the Shiite clergy refused to give any, saying that Faisal's men were "vestiges and remains of the Ottomans and their servants." Success, though, was Wilson's second mistake. Suppressing the rebellion cost 50 million pounds, or a quarter of a billion dollars. It also tied down the Indian army. And it took six months at a time when the government wished to devote its efforts to the deteriorating situation in Europe, where communists held or threatened Russia, Germany, and Hungary.

In the London *Times* of August 22, 1920, Lawrence asked, "How long will we permit millions of pounds, thousands of imperial troops, and tens of thousands of Arabs to be sacrificed on behalf of a form of colonial administration which can benefit nobody but its administrators?" Wilson paid no attention, but when Bell and others said the same thing, he replied, "The population is so deeply divided by racial and religious cleavages and the Shiah majority after two hundred years of Sunni domination are so little accustomed to holding high office that any attempt to introduce institutions on the lines desired by the advanced politicians

would involve the concentration of power in the hands of a few."

When this argument failed to sway the government, Wilson made his last mistake. He told what he thought was the truth: "We cannot maintain our position as mandatory by a policy of conciliation of extremists. Having set our hand to the task of regenerating Mesopotamia, we must be prepared to furnish men and money and to maintain continuity of control for years to come." He concluded, "If His Majesty's Government regard such a policy as impracticable or beyond our strength (as well they may) I submit that they would do better to face the alternative, formidable and from the local point of view, terrible as it is, and evacuate Mesopotamia."

Govern, said Wilson, or evacuate. The British government did not want to do either, and so it was Wilson who evacuated, resigning in October of 1920. Britain decided to make Faisal king of Basra, Baghdad, and Kurdistan too. (A brother got Jordan. The father got Mecca and Medina, until the Saudis expelled him.) But a king of Iraq could not be created in London. He had to enter the country, pass through Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul, uniting the country through his visit, and

receive popular support. He had to be crowned, and he had to make the British army and the local police believe that he was king. Most of all, he had to believe it himself. Otherwise, no one else would.

Working under Wilson's successor, Sir Percy Cox, Bell helped arrange another plebiscite, this one to accept Faisal. Complicating her task was the lack of any formal way to give power to the Iraqis. The British were still administering the country as though it were part of India. So Bell dispensed promises to various Iraqis who were frequent dinner guests at her home. When Faisal arrived from Medina in June 1921, Bell and others squired him through the country, engineering support. Crowning Faisal was another chore:

The enthronement took place at 6 am on Tuesday, admirably arranged. A dais about 2 ft 6 ins. high was set up in the middle of the big courtyard . . . by the Tigris. . . . [I]n front were seated blocks of English and Arab officials, townsmen, Ministers, local deputations. . . . Exactly at 6, we saw Faisal in uniform, Sir Percy in white diplomatic uniform with all his ribbons and stars, [and] Sir Aylmer [the military commander]. . . . We all stood up while they came in and sat when they had taken their places. . . . Then the Secretary of the Council of Ministers stood up and read Sir Percy's proclamation in which he announced that Faisal had been elected King by 96 per cent of the people of Mesopotamia, long live the King! With that we stood up and saluted him. The band played 'God Save the King'—they have no national anthem yet.

But the chief obstacle was Faisal himself. He had never been to Iraq. At the enthronement he looked "dignified but much strung up—it was an agitating moment." Bell needed something more inspiring than Sir Percy Cox with his stars and ribbons. She took Faisal to the ruins of Ctesiphon, the capital when the Arabs invaded, bringing Islam. She wanted him to think that Iraq and Arabia formed a whole, and that he could come from the one to the other and be king. And there, in the ruins, she succeeded:

The Ctesiphon expedition was an immense success. . . . After we had reconstructed the palace and seen the [Persian] Khosroes sitting in it, I took him

into the high windows to the south, when we could see the Tigris, and told him the story of the Arab conquest as Tabari records it, the fording of the river and the rest of the magnificent tale. It was the tale of his own people. You can imagine what it was like reciting it to him. I don't know which of us was more thrilled. . . . I sometimes think I must be in a dream.

Away with districts, zones, or kingdoms—there was to be a nation. But Gertrude Bell was no Lowell Thomas speaking to an audience of one. She was an administrator, and so, when she returned Faisal to Baghdad and she and Cox put the new state through its first budget cut, she was able to plot the consequences on a map. The Indian army had gone. From now on, the British would control the country in a new way. Rather than hold port towns and oases, they would build airstrips every several hundred miles and patrol from the air. A dozen Royal Air Force squadrons able to bomb villages and caravans would be far more powerful than an army, and would cost far less.

“The most interesting thing which happened during this week,” Bell wrote her father in July 1924, “was a performance by the R.A.F., a bombing demonstration. It was even more remarkable than the one we saw last year at the Air Force Show because it was much more real. They had made an imaginary village about a quarter of a mile from where we sat on the Diyala [Sirwan] dyke and the two first bombs, dropped from 3,000 ft, went straight into the middle of it and set it alight. They then dropped bombs all round it, as if to catch the fugitives and finally firebombs which even in the sunlight made flares of bright flame in the desert. They burn through metal, and water won't extinguish them. At the end the armoured cars went out to round up the fugitives with machine guns.

“I was tremendously impressed. It's an amazingly relentless and terrible thing, war from the air.” Arnold Wilson would have agreed with her. Sir Arnold, as he then was, died in combat in the skies over France in 1941. Bell had died 15 years earlier. Lawrence wrote her grieving father, “The Irak state will be a fine monument: even if it only lasts a few more years.” ■

Other People's Maps

An American-inspired redrawing of the Iraqi map along sectarian lines would do violence to the facts of Iraqi history.

BY REIDAR VISSER

OVER THE PAST YEAR, INCREASING NUMBERS OF American commentators have suggested various “territorial” solutions designed to extricate U.S. forces from Iraq. These proposals have come in several guises, involving different degrees of decentralization and compartmentalization: “Soft partition,” “controlled devolution,” and “Dayton-style *détente*” (a reference to the 1995 Bosnian settlement) are but a few of the concepts that have kept policymakers in Washington busy of late. All these proposals assign a role to foreign hands in drawing up internal federal or confederal border lines that would drastically reshape the administrative map of Iraq. At the very least, they foresee a role for the United States in “advising” the Iraqis on how to implement this process of demarcation, as, for instance, Senator Joseph Biden (D.-Del.) has advocated. And invariably, the authors of these proposals fix their sights on ethnicity as the guiding principle for the division of the country: Iraq is to consist of three separate subunits for what are seen as its “basic components”—Kurds, Sunni Arabs, and Shiite Arabs.

The practical arguments against this sort of approach are legion—and, by now, they are mostly familiar and well accepted, as seen in the confluence

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of opinion between the Bush administration and the Iraq Study Group on this issue. For millennia the lands between the Euphrates and the Tigris have been a meeting place for civilizations, ethnicities, and religions. Never before has any attempt been made to reshape the entire region by establishing ethnic and sectarian cantons; doing so now would involve extensive displacements of people in areas with mixed populations. Families in multiethnic cities would be torn apart as the intermixed Iraqis would be forced to choose sides, and communal violence would spread throughout the country as cities such as Basra, Nasiriyah, and Hilla saw more of the kinds of atrocities that currently occur in many parts of Baghdad.

The consequences at the regional level would likely be equally dire. Few believe that Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Iran would sit still while their Iraqi neighbor became engulfed in comprehensive civil war, and an involvement of their standing armies would pose a far greater risk than the less-invasive meddling by proxies that marks the current situation. A regional conflagration—possibly involving the entire Persian Gulf and its oil resources—could come to provoke Shiite-Sunni tensions on a previously unimagined scale. The new borderlines so enthusiastically promoted by armchair strategists in the West could easily become flash points comparable to the Kashmir line of control fought over by India and Pakistan for



Karbala, 2003.

decades. Today, Kashmir is routinely described as “the most dangerous spot on Earth.”

However, many partition zealots believe that history is their trump card over practical arguments. Iraq, they claim, is an “artificial” entity; once the birth pangs have subsided, their own “ethnic” alternative, with its supposed noble ancestry, will provide a superior basis for regional stability. Ironically, however, history is probably where the partition argument is at its weakest. What history shows is that using sects as the bases for political entities is among the most marginal and least tested approaches to state building in the land between the two rivers.

Ever since the establishment of Islamic rule in the seventh century, Iraq has been organized on the basis of

regions, not sects. Never was there any significant overlap between these two categories: The line that divided the Ottoman provinces of Baghdad and Basra, for instance, was much farther south than today’s partitionists have realized; it created regional legacies that sometimes pitted the Shiites of Basra against the Shiites of Baghdad, Najaf, and Karbala (where they always had their greater demographic strength). Throughout almost 400 years of Ottoman rule, from 1534 to 1914, no secessionist attempt based on sectarian identity ever emerged. Instead, the one recurrent concept of super-regional identity was “Iraq.” Every historical study that is based on Ottoman documents proves that the idea of “Iraq” was omnipresent in the vast region from Basra to Samarra in the 19th century, contrary to the fashionable

(but hopelessly unsubstantiated) theory that Iraq as a regional concept was somehow “created” by the British in 1920. Those who claim that Iraq did not exist prior to World War I will have great difficulty explaining why it made sense to the Basra historian Abdallah al-Basri (who died in 1831) to casually quote a medieval work on geography that observed, “There are two Basras, a big one in Iraq, and a small one in Morocco.”

When the British overran the Ottomans in 1914, they soon grasped this situation. Whereas British strategists in London and Arabia held wildly conflicting ideas about what to do with the region, all British officials based in Baghdad from 1917 onward consistently came out in favor of the idea of a large Iraq from Basra to Mosul—this includes figures such as Arnold Wilson (whose axiom was that “the connection between Baghdad and Mosul is as close as between Baghdad and Basra”), Percy Cox, Gertrude Bell, Henry Dobbs, and Francis Humphrys. To the extent that there was uncertainty in British circles, it concerned the status of Mosul province as well as the precise location of the northwestern border with Syria. But a Shiite-Sunni split on a purely confessional basis was simply never on the agenda.

Moreover, outside of the Suleimaniya district in the Kurdish area, the only substantial native resistance to the vision of a large unitary state was confined to the port city of Basra. Here, in the 1920s, a group of wealthy merchants advocated the establishment of a commercial mini-republic limited to the gulf city and its fertile rural hinterland. Characteristically, though, that project had nothing whatsoever to do with sectarianism—rather, it brought together notables of Sunni, Shiite, Christian, and Jewish backgrounds who aimed for a tranquil mercantile republic under special British protection. But Iraqi nationalism proved stronger—even at this early stage—and in a peaceful propaganda struggle, Basra separatism was roundly defeated by a coalition of Iraqi nationalists whose ethnic complexion was just as diverse as that of the separatists: Some of the most fervent Iraqi nationalists of Basra in the 1920s were lower-class Jews, Shiites, Kurds, and Turkmens.

The history of Iraq in the 20th century underlines

this theme of a multiethnic polity with few discrete territorial subdivisions. The record of peaceful coexistence during monarchical rule before the onset of military coups in 1958 shows that Iraqi nationalism cannot possibly be dismissed as an artificial construct forced on the population by militaristic regimes. And even though the support base of the various Iraqi regimes in the second half of the century did gradually narrow, this was manifested mainly through favoritism and tribal or localist patterns of recruitment to top government posts (thus the preponderance of people from Tikrit in positions of power under Saddam Hussein) rather than through wholesale degeneration to sectarianism as ideology (which was more episodic, if horribly violent, as after the uprisings that followed the 1991 Gulf War).

Throughout the 20th century, the idea of territorial secession remained foreign to Iraqis living south of Kurdistan, and even to the increasingly radicalized exiled opposition. As late as 1997, Hamid al-Bayati, a high-ranking London-based member of the opposition Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), quoted his party’s spiritual leader, Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, to make it clear that the Shiites had never had an interest in special territorial privileges, but instead wanted improvements in the general level of freedom of speech and religion in Iraq. And during the run-up to the Iraq war in 2003, when the idea of a federal Iraq finally found some support beyond the Kurds (primarily among members of the exiled opposition), the relatively few who embraced federalism among Shiite and Sunni politicians were careful to stress that any sectarian implementation of a devolution scheme would be anathema.

Even in today’s Iraq, where sectarian violence has reached unprecedented levels since the February 2006 bombing of the Shiite shrine in Samarra, there remains a glaring mismatch between the positions of Iraqis and the partitionist ideas being floated in the United States. Support for an ethnic remapping of Iraq is universal only among the Kurds, whose claims to regional autonomy have long been recognized and generally accepted. South of Kurdistan, opposition to a federal formula based on sectarian divisions remains strong. Sunni Arabs have tended to reject

the very notion of federalism but have lately moved toward acceptance of certain nonsectarian federal alternatives: either Arab-Kurdish binational federation or a “geographical” federation based on the 15 existing governorates south of Kurdistan.

Many Shiites share the Sunni skepticism toward federalism, although since 2004 some in the south have contemplated miniregions that would separate the oil-rich governorates of Basra and Maysan (and possibly Dhi Qar) from the other Shiite areas—again on a nonsectarian basis.

The more recent idea of a single Shiite region, on the other hand, is still struggling to make headway outside its SCIRI core constituency. (SCIRI accounts for slightly less than a quarter of the deputies of the Shiite Islamist coalition known as the United Iraqi Alliance.) Nevertheless, among Green Zone-focused foreign journalists this project has received immense attention. As a result, the Western mainstream news media frequently portray the Shiites as a community united in the call for a Shiite super-region from Basra to Baghdad.

While many Westerners ignore Iraq’s complex historical legacy, the country’s constitution recognizes it. However much certain Iraqi elites would have loved to carve up the Iraqi state to create their own fiefdoms back in 2005, they simply did not dare go that far. Instead, they created a hybrid constitutional system in which federalism is made optional: It can be chosen by those areas that desire it, but it is not mandatory. Furthermore, the territorial demarcation of any new federal regions is to be directed “from below,” starting with the governorates, instead of being imposed from the outside—whether by Iraqi politicians or foreigners. Thus, apart from recognizing the Kurdish region, the Iraqi legal framework—which in its approach to federalism “from below” is quite unique in the world and comparable only to the Spanish constitutions of 1931 and 1978—does not offer advantages for any particular combination of governorates into new regions. A major flaw in much of the partitionist propaganda

of U.S. politicians is related to this point, because many seem to believe that a tripartite sectarian federal subdivision of Iraq is somehow preordained by the new law on implementing federalism. Quite the contrary, for outsiders to advocate any particular combination of governorates into federal regions would be gross interference with a bottom-up process. Indeed, such a course of action would be tantamount to tearing up the Iraqi constitution itself.

Similarly, the widespread belief in the West that

THE IDEA OF A SINGLE Shiite region is still struggling to make headway outside its SCIRI core constituency.

federalization in Iraq needs to be comprehensive and symmetrical is an affront to more sophisticated Iraqi interpretations of the 2005 constitution. Many leading Iraqi politicians expect that the combination of an 18-month moratorium on the implementation of federalism (regions can only be formed after April 2008) and the imminent adoption of a law that gives the governorates substantial decentralized powers (*within* the unitary state framework) will go far toward muting the federalism question in Iraq. In their view, federal regions—probably small-scale ones—could become the exception and not the rule in the Iraq of tomorrow, because many governorates would be happy to remain as ordinary provinces of Baghdad once their powers of local government were firmly established.

Needless to say, any loud antics by influential partition-inclined foreigners could upset this delicate process. The debate on the distribution of Iraqi oil revenue is a case in point. There are many good arguments in favor of an arrangement that would guarantee all Iraqis a share of the country’s oil wealth through development and reconstruction, but it would be completely illogical (and disrespectful of the constitution) to demand that this guarantee be defined in sectarian terms. With the implementation of federalism delayed

until 2008, the only impartial way of distributing revenue would be to employ the politically neutral existing governorates as points of departure. This kind of approach could achieve exactly the same result as a sectarian model in terms of advantages for the individual citizen, but without further inflaming sectarian tensions. Frequently overlooked by the advocates of sectarian partition is the fact that 16 of the 18 Iraqi governorates actually stand to profit from this kind of arrangement, because most Iraqi governorates have no oil, or relatively little of it—Basra and Kirkuk being the two exceptions. In another distorted portrayal of Iraqi society, partitionists have construed the “Shiite” governorates as “rich in oil” and the “Sunni” areas as “oil deficient”; the hard fact is that there is not much more oil in “Shiite” Najaf, Karbala, Babel, and Qadisiyya than in “Sunni” Anbar.

In the United States, the Democratic Party has had until recently a virtual monopoly on the drawing of such imaginary lines on Iraq’s increasingly crumpled map. The Bush administration has consistently avowed support for a unified state, with a meaningful role for Baghdad as capital. There are, however, signs that George W. Bush and his advisers may also be toying with hazardous plans containing some kind of sectarian territorial component. At the very least, notions such as the “80 percent plan”—leaked from the State Department this past December and based on the assumption that the Kurds and the Shiites, who together comprise nominally 80 percent of the population, could be enlisted en bloc for pro-U.S. policies—reveal fallacious assumptions about the internal coherence and meaningfulness of these sectarian and ethnic categories. Similarly, recent moves by the Bush administration to invite selected sectarian politicians to Washington (Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim for the Shiites and Tariq al-Hashimi for the Sunnis), ostensibly as “paramount” representatives of their communities, could be a worrisome indication of a search for a tripartite solution to Iraq’s crisis.

To address conflicts by drawing lines is a very Western way of approaching complex political situations, as centuries of European warfare in the name of religious and linguistic standardization

have shown. The Iraqis themselves are not searching for any magic sectarian formula to define the new Iraq. On the contrary, most Iraqis want sectarianism to go away. This is why repeated attempts to get the Sunni Arabs of Iraq to “think in terms of federalism” are unlikely to produce results. Similarly, the perception that there is a massive demand by Iraq’s Shiites for a “Shiite region” says more about SCIRI’s ability to tap into Western ignorance about Iraq than it does about the true level of the support for this scheme within the country. Perhaps the United States could engineer a temporary territorial truce between selected sectarian elites and thereby declare victory, but that would be a settlement based on an extremely fragile fundament. In Iraq today there is already considerable internal Shiite-on-Shiite violence—as seen in the several deadly confrontations over the past couple of years between SCIRI and followers of the young cleric Moqtada al-Sadr—and this might become an even more serious problem if the idea of a single political leadership for the entire sect is embraced by external forces such as the United States.

But the dangers of a partitionist approach to the Iraq conflict extend beyond Iraq itself. The real issue is not whether the lines drawn in the sand are historically sound or not. It is the very act of drawing such lines that is problematic. Even today, the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement—the World War I pact that sought to create Western zones of influence in the dying Ottoman Empire—has few rivals as an object of universal hatred throughout the Middle East. Sykes-Picot is regularly held up as exhibit number one in Islamist and Arab nationalist criticism of the Western legacy in the Middle East, and it is no exaggeration to say that bitterness about such imperial line-drawing has been a key factor in the rise of radicalism in the region. This rancor was one of the elements that produced the attacks of September 11 and other calamities, and people such as Osama bin Laden would no doubt be euphoric at the prospect of a modern-day equivalent to Sykes-Picot, say, a Gelb-Biden Agreement. With these realities in mind, America’s new Iraq cartographers ought to re-evaluate not only their novice works but their choice to draw lines on other people’s maps at all. ■

In ESSENCE

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FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Flavors of Anti-Americanism

THE SOURCE: “Anti-Americanisms” by Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, in *Policy Review*, Oct.–Nov. 2006.

THE FOUNDERS WERE STILL scraping up votes to ratify the U.S. Constitution in 1787 when Alexander Hamilton fought back against the anti-Americanism that was already popular in Europe. Only “arrogant pretensions,” he wrote in one of the early *Federalist* papers, allowed serious men to claim that the American continent was so degenerate that “even dogs cease to bark.”

Two hundred and twenty years later, anti-Americanism hasn’t tapered off. It isn’t even a single phenomenon, according to Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane, political scientists at Cornell and Princeton, respectively. It reaches far beyond what the United States *does* to what the United States *is*. The complexity and kaleidoscopic nature of American society trigger a similar broad and complex range of anti-

American feelings, and their examination has become something of an academic cottage industry. Katzenstein and Keohane wrestle the phenomenon into six categories.

The most benign, “liberal anti-Americanism,” thrives in some former colonies of Great Britain, the authors write. These and other advanced industrialized communities mourn America’s failure to live up to its high principles. They see democratic America as a hypocritical, self-interested power, for example, supporting dictatorships or advocating free trade while protecting its own farmers from competition.

“Social anti-Americanism,” found most commonly in Scandinavia and Japan, decries Uncle Sam’s relatively unfettered capitalism and go-it-alone exceptionalism in international affairs.

“Sovereign-nationalist anti-Americanism” is particularly strong in China, where the history and aspirations of the ancient kingdom combine

to trigger virulent outbursts in response to any perceived lack of “respect.”

“Elitist anti-Americanism” is not confined to French intellectuals, but they form its epicenter. Americans, Katzenstein and Keohane write, are viewed by this small but vocal group as uncultured materialists without concern for the finer things of life.

“Legacy anti-Americanism” lingers in societies such as Iran, where American intervention in the past supported despised rulers.

The most dangerous form is “radical anti-Americanism,” whose adherents see America as so depraved that it must be destroyed. This brand of hatred animates suicide bombers and



An anti-American slogan is displayed on a street in Caracas, part of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez’s crusade against President George W. Bush.

the remaining Marxist-Leninist rulers. Only America's renunciation of its political-economic system and culture can rectify the situation, the radicals say.

Unitary grand explanations for anti-Americanism are futile, Katzenstein and Keohane contend. The phenomenon is too broad and diverse, reflecting the attitudes of America-haters as much as the America they hate. The most puzzling thing about it is why Americans care so much. Americans had an insatiable need for praise in 1835, said Alexis de Tocqueville, and apparently they have not yet had enough. Perhaps, the authors conclude, it is because they lack self-confidence and are uncertain themselves about whether the nation should be a source of pride or dismay. "Anti-Americanism is important for what it tells us about United States foreign policy and America's impact on the world," they write. "It is also important for what it tells us about ourselves."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Bad New Era

THE SOURCE: "The New Middle East" by Richard N. Haass, in *Foreign Affairs*, Nov.-Dec. 2006.

THE SUN HAS SET ON THE brief American era in the Middle East, writes Richard N. Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations. A modern, Europe-style region marked by democracy, prosperity, and peace will not arise. Instead, the emerging Middle East is far more likely to cause harm to itself, the United States, and the world.

Napoleon's entry into Ottoman Egypt in 1798 with archaeologists,

linguists, and poets in tow opened the region's modern era. The collapse of the Ottoman caliphate at the end of World War I began a second new era of colonial rule, followed by Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. With the demise of the Soviets, the United States enjoyed unprecedented influence and freedom in the region. But after less than two decades the American period is over, according to Haass.

The principal reason, he writes, is America's decision to attack Iraq. The war stripped power from the Sunni religious minority in Baghdad, which had kept Shi'ite Iran in check, and propelled Iran into position as one of the two strongest countries in the region. Israel, the other strong power, is weakened by its military involvement in Lebanon and will be further weakened if Iran matches Israel's nuclear arsenal.

Haass says America will have more influence in the region than any other country, but its position will be increasingly undermined by competing foreign interests of Europe, China, and Russia. No viable peace process seems likely. "The United States has lost much of its standing as a credible and honest broker," he concludes.

Iraq, at best, will remain a divided society with a weak central government and regular violence. At worst, a civil war will overwhelm Iraq and draw in its neighbors. The price of oil will remain high. Militias will be emboldened by their role in Iraq and the survival of Hezbollah in Lebanon. "Islam will increasingly fill the political and intellectual vacuum in the Arab world," he predicts. Arab regimes will "remain authoritarian

and become more religiously intolerant and anti-American."

The new Middle East will threaten America, but its dangers can be turned up or down by U.S. policies, Haass writes. Relying on military force to remove threatening governments or nuclear installations would make things worse. Counting on democracy to produce friendly regimes is wishful thinking in the short run. Talking to Iran and Syria, reviving diplomacy in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, shoring up America's defenses against terrorism, and reducing dependency on Middle Eastern oil are numbingly familiar ideas and slow to bear fruit. "It is all enough to make one nostalgic for the old Middle East," Haass says.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Give Peace a Pass

THE SOURCE: "Cowboy Nation" by Robert Kagan, in *The New Republic*, Oct. 23, 2006.

THROUGHOUT THE IDEOLOGICAL vicissitudes of the Clinton and two Bush administrations, the United States deployed troops to or bombed Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, averaging a new military adventure every 19 months. A new direction? Surprisingly, no. "Americans stand almost alone in believing in the utility and even necessity of war as a means of obtaining justice," writes Robert Kagan, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and author of *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World From Its Earliest Days to*

the Dawn of the Twentieth Century (2006).

Kagan's portrait of America is precisely the opposite of its self-perception. "The United States, as the world knows, will never start a war," said President John F. Kennedy at the height of the Cold War. "The United States is a peaceful nation." Indeed, as America struggles militarily in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kagan says, there is a sense that the nation has gone astray, becoming too militaristic, too idealistic, and too arrogant. It has become an empire rather than the reluctant good neighbor that seeks only peace and stability.

From its march down the *Mayflower* gangplank to its toppling of the Saddam Hussein statue, Amer-

ica has been a revolutionary power, consistently expanding its participation and influence in the world, Kagan argues. From the 1740s through the 1820s, Americans pressed westward from the Alleghenies to the Pacific, southward to Florida and Mexico, and northward to Canada, eventually subduing the native Indians as well as pushing France, Spain, and Russia off the continent. Only Great Britain managed to hang on, clinging to the northern latitudes.

This did not happen by accident. Thomas Jefferson saw a vast "empire of liberty." Secretary of State William Seward predicted that America would become the world's dominant power, "greater than any that has ever existed." Dean Acheson called the

United States "the locomotive at the head of mankind," and Madeleine Albright said it was the world's "indispensable nation."

Americans decry war. They are uncomfortable with using war to achieve their objectives, suspicious of power (even their own), uneasy with using influence to deprive others of freedom, and disapproving of ambition. So they compose comforting narratives of their imagined innocent past.

"It is easier than facing the hard truth," writes Kagan. "America's expansiveness, intrusiveness, and tendency toward political, economic, and strategic dominance are not some aberration from our true nature. That *is* our nature."

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Stealth Amendment

THE SOURCE: "Constitutional Culture, Social Movement Conflict, and Constitutional Change: The Case of the De Facto ERA" by Reva B. Siegel, in *California Law Review*, Oct. 2006.

IN 1982, AS TIME RAN OUT ON the drive to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), supporters fought desperately to win over the necessary last three states. They appealed to the Supreme Court, sued in state courts, organized marches, sponsored boycotts, sought extensions, and fended off efforts to rescind state ratifications. And when their efforts finally fell short, they reintroduced the legislation. All for naught.

Except that some scholars now believe that America has a de facto ERA, according to Reva B. Siegel, a Yale law professor. The unsuccessful fight to pass and ratify a constitutional amendment to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex so changed the "constitutional culture" of the country that courts, and even conservative judges, began interpreting the existing Fourteenth Amendment as if it did forbid such discrimination.

"There is no practical difference between what has evolved and the ERA," Siegel writes, quoting Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg from a newspaper article. "As a result of

dramatic post-1970s changes in judicial interpretation of the equal protection clause," University of Chicago law professor Cass Sunstein wrote in *The Second Bill of Rights* (2004), "the American constitution now has something very much like a constitutional ban on sex discrimination."

In the first century after the 1868 ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees equal protection under the law, "no court interpreted the Constitution to prohibit state action favoring men over women," Siegel writes. Governments could—and did—bar women from practicing law, exclude women from juries, and prohibit women from working in the same occupations as men. Without exception, courts found the prohibitions to be perfectly reasonable exercises of public power.

The fight over the ERA reversed this, according to Siegel, not by changing the Constitution but by changing public opinion. But the ferment surrounding the amendment was not an unqualified victory for the women's movement.

During the ratification debate, substantial numbers of Americans became concerned that by signing on to an ephemeral promise of sexual equality, women would lose the concrete protection the law provided in the workplace, during pregnancy, after divorce, and throughout child rearing.

ERA opponents seized these issues. Their powerful arguments forced amendment supporters to back off from claims that women should be treated as strictly and totally equal. Soon the pro-ERA

group embraced the notion that women's "unique physical characteristics" could entitle them to disparate treatment in certain circumstances, because only females, for example, could get pregnant.

At the same time, the supporters' arguments had a countervailing effect on the opponents of the amendment, who began to stress their profound support for the principle that women should be "equal citizens."

As the debate raged, with each side characterizing the other's position in the most extreme negative fashion and more narrowly describing its own, the Supreme Court itself, absent the ERA, stepped into the sex discrimination arena. In 1971, the Court ruled that an Idaho probate court

was wrong in automatically choosing a man over a woman to administer an estate, and that the husband of an Air Force lieutenant was entitled to be treated the same as a wife in determining employee benefits. These represented the first times the Court held that the Fourteenth Amendment protected women from discriminatory treatment by state or military officials.

Many other rulings have followed. Even Chief Justice William Rehnquist, one of the early critics of the ERA, eventually came to endorse its principles, Siegel says. In one of his last cases, he wrote that a state had unconstitutionally discriminated against an employee based on a "sex-based overgeneralization" that women, not men, were caregivers for the sick.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Primogeniture Unmasked

THE SOURCE: "Who Should—and Shouldn't—Run the Family Business" by Stephen J. Dorgan, John J. Dowdy, and Thomas M. Rippin, in *The McKinsey Quarterly*, 2006: No. 3.

FAMILY-OWNED COMPANIES tend to be better run than other firms—except when they are run by the eldest son. Researchers with McKinsey & Co. and the London School of Economics studied 700 manufacturers in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States, ranking them on productivity, market share, sales growth, and market valuation.

On average, family firms were ranked no better or worse than the average company. But when family-owned businesses were broken down into those run by outsiders and those run by the eldest son, the division was stark. Companies in which one family owned a majority of the stock but hired a professional to manage the operation performed 12 percent better than the average of all firms. Manufacturing businesses run by eldest sons did 10 percent worse.

Stephen J. Dorgan, John J. Dowdy, and Thomas M. Rippin,

all with McKinsey, explain that family ownership makes it possible for managers to take the long view. Unlike managers who must meet Wall Street's expectations every three months, they feel somewhat less pressure to increase earnings every quarter. Family members have a direct stake in the outcome of decisions, and may pay closer attention to day-to-day operations than an outside board of directors. They are better situated than public shareholders to police any conflicts that arise between the interests of the managers and those of the stockholders.

Among family-owned companies in the four countries, family management is most common in Britain, at 50 percent, followed by



Lachlan Murdoch (left), eldest son of Rupert (center), was heir-apparent of the family firm, News Corp. Undercut, he left the \$55 billion company. Younger brother James (right) remains a contender.

France, 44 percent, the United States, 30 percent, and Germany, 10 percent. Part of the explanation for these variations may be feudal legacy; part may be modern tax policy. In England and France, the eldest son typically inherits the family property. In Germany, the property is divided among the sons. Today, family-owned enterprises worth \$10 million or more receive inheritance tax exemptions of 50 percent in France, 100 percent in the United Kingdom, and 33 percent in Germany. There is no exemption in the United States, although there is widespread support among Republicans for abolishing what they call the “death tax” altogether.

Family management is not the curse, only the automatic designation of the eldest son. The authors observe that “someone who expects to lead a company by birthright may put less effort into acquiring the necessary skills and education than do people who

expect to compete for their jobs.” Family-owned businesses that select their CEOs from all family members fare no worse than companies that select talent from *hoi polloi*.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The Disability Disaster

THE SOURCE: “The Growth in the Social Security Disability Rolls: A Fiscal Crisis Unfolding” by David H. Autor and Mark G. Duggan, in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Summer 2006.

A \$134 BILLION-A-YEAR entitlement that most people have never heard of is gobbling up an ever-larger share of the Social Security budget, raising troubling questions about whether it is being abused. Social Security Disability Insurance supported 2.6 million people in 1984; now it has 6.5 million beneficiaries—and the numbers are rapidly rising. The annual price tag is nearly three and a half times the budget of the

Department of Homeland Security, write economists David H. Autor and Mark G. Duggan, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Maryland, respectively.

The increasing number of people judged to be totally and permanently disabled—even as Americans get healthier and live longer—suggests that the program is out of control, according to Autor and Duggan. The initial purpose of disability insurance has been dwarfed by a new role. Originally an insurance scheme for workers prematurely felled by heart attacks and cancer, the program has been transformed into a system of benefits for the unemployable. Payments are now most commonly made to people with back pain and mental disorders, potentially disabling problems in the workplace to be sure, but conditions with relatively subjective diagnoses, the authors say.

As the labor market has become more competitive, more and more low-wage workers have applied for disability benefits. When the unemployment rate increases, so do applications for disability benefits; when it decreases, applications do likewise. High school dropouts are the most likely to seek payments. In 2004, men between the ages of 40 and 65 who had not finished high school were twice as likely to receive disability benefits as men who had a diploma. Because wages at the bottom of the employment ladder have stagnated or fallen, disability benefits and the health insurance that comes with them have become more and more attractive. An average disabled worker gets a monthly check of about

\$1,100. Medicare benefits worth \$640 are automatically included.

The system breaks down in the appeals process, according to the authors. Nearly two-thirds of initial applications are denied because the applicant is found not to be totally disabled. More than 83 percent of the denials are appealed, most with the assistance of lawyers who specialize in disability litigation. Appeals are made, first, to an alternate team of evaluators, then, successively, to an administrative law judge, the Social Security Appeals Council, the U.S. District Court, and finally the U.S. Court of Appeals. The Social Security Administration, which cannot be represented by a lawyer in the appeals hearings (the judge is supposed to represent both the applicant and the public interest simultaneously), loses nearly three-quarters of the appeals. In 1997, the last year for which figures are available, the government paid nearly half a billion dollars to attorneys representing disability applicants.

What has changed since the disability program began is not the incidence of poor health and injuries, but the nature of the labor market, the authors believe. Jobs for low-skilled workers are disappearing, and workers who would have been able to find something two decades ago are now unemployable.

Disability insurance reform has been tried and failed. When the system ran out of money in 1977, eligibility criteria were tightened and 380,000 beneficiaries were tossed off the rolls. The backlash was overwhelming, prompting Congress to establish the current system of far easier access for significantly more numerous impairments.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Ready, Set, Agree

THE SOURCE: "Do Economists Agree on Anything? Yes!" by Robert Whaples, in *The Economists' Voice*, Nov. 2006.

"I'M TIRED OF ECONOMISTS who say, 'On the one hand . . . and then on the other hand,'" complained President Harry S. Truman when his fiscal advisers were waffling, as usual. "Send me a one-armed economist."

Today, Truman might get a straighter answer. Economists, despite appearances in the media to the contrary, overwhelmingly agree on a surprising number of issues, according to Robert Whaples, chair of the economics department at Wake Forest University.

They agree on free trade, the freer the better, Whaples found in a survey of 84 Ph.D.-holding economists selected randomly from the ranks of the American Economic Association. Tariffs and agricultural subsidies should go, as should subsidies to professional sports franchises. Two out of three economists favor vouchers that parents can use for either private or public schools; four out of seven would junk the U.S. Postal Service's remaining monopoly on mail delivery. Six out of 10 believe that the United States should broaden its use of nuclear power and increase energy taxes. Nearly half favor the elimination of the minimum wage. Eight out of 10 think that the gap between Social Security income and payout will become unsustainable in 50 years unless policies are changed.

Of four possible ways to fix Social Security—raising the retirement age, cutting benefits, moving to mandatory personal accounts, or boosting payroll taxes—there is widespread, if tepid, accord. More than 75 percent of economists agree that an increase in the retirement age (now 67 for those born after 1959) is the best plan, but very few "strongly agree."

But even halfhearted consensus collapses over the impact of rising levels of greenhouse gases on the economy. On that issue, the economists' views were scattered like birdshot. The largest single cluster of economists (36 percent) thought that allowing greenhouse gases to increase throughout the century would have little economic impact. About 21 percent of those surveyed thought that increased greenhouse gases might reduce gross domestic product by one to five percent. More than 16 percent thought that such a situation might *increase* GDP by the same amount. The issue, Whaples writes, is so complex that the question on greenhouse gases had the lowest response rate in the survey.

Most professional economists recognize that great swaths of economic turf have been conquered by one argument or another. But the public watching a televised debate between two economists on the elimination of the estate tax, for example, might wonder what *most* economists think, writes Whaples. More than 60 percent are opposed, but on the other hand, 35 percent are in favor.

SOCIETY

Moving to Disillusionment

THE SOURCES: "Improved Neighborhoods Don't Raise Academic Achievement" by Lisa Sanbonmatsu, Jeffrey Kling, Greg Duncan, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, as summarized in *The NBER Digest*, Sept. 2006; "Blacks at Racially Integrated High Schools Operated by the U.S. Army Produce SAT Scores Superior to Blacks at U.S. Public Schools" in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Summer 2006.

NO MORE PERPLEXING QUESTION has beset social science and politics in the past half-century than the educational gap between African Americans and whites. From *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 to the No Child Left Behind Act in 2002, every decade has brought new theories and strategies, but a persistent theme has been that better neighborhoods would produce better students. Testing the hypothesis has taken decades, and some important and sobering results are now in.

In 1962, Chicago capped a public-housing construction boom by erecting 28 towers that stood like 16-story toast slices near the shore of Lake Michigan. The huge bloc of 4,300 apartments, all inhabited by the poor, became a slum almost instantly. Activists in the War on Poverty era sued the government on behalf of resident Dorothy Gautreaux, contending that housing officials were discriminating against African Americans by concentrating them in ghettos and

refusing to build public housing in white neighborhoods. In a landmark 1976 ruling, the Supreme Court held that public-housing authorities can be ordered to place units not only in white areas but in white suburbs beyond city limits in order to relieve racial segregation. Chicago responded by helping 7,000 poor, mostly African-American families move to 100 suburban

Every decade has brought new theories and strategies, but a persistent theme has been that a better neighborhood would produce better students.

communities in the metropolitan area.

Initial studies promised important results. Not only had the tenants moved into more affluent and less crime-ridden neighborhoods, but their children were more satisfied with their teachers, had better attitudes about school, and were only a quarter as likely to drop out of high school before graduation as were children remaining in the segregated schools of the city. The only problem was the data: The sample sizes were small, and the movers

were not randomly chosen to represent public-housing residents.

Nearly 20 years later, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development launched a huge, expensive, randomly assigned, scientifically evaluated, long-term test of a new "Moving to Opportunity" program. Nearly 5,000 poor children in Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York were divided into three groups, according to Lisa Sanbonmatsu, Jeffrey Kling, Greg Duncan, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, of the National Bureau of Economic Research, Princeton University, Northwestern University, and Columbia University, respectively. An "experimental" group got vouchers and assistance in moving to more affluent neighborhoods. A "treatment" group got housing vouchers to move to any private apartment or home—but no help in moving into a neighborhood with less poverty—and the control group stayed in public housing.

Four years later, the researchers began checking the "experimental" children to see if their academic performance or behavior had improved compared with children left behind in the projects and nearby areas.

"The results of this very large-scale experiment indicate no evidence of improvement in reading scores, math scores, behavior problems, or school engagement overall," the researchers report. Early results in one city, Baltimore, suggested that the program had a positive impact on children from kindergarten to sixth grade,

but a long-run analysis showed that the pupils did not sustain their gains. Overall, studies of the programs in all five cities showed “no appreciable educational or social improvement.”

The authors raise the possibility that the lack of progress may have occurred because the families didn’t move to or stay in significantly better neighborhoods than they had left. They acknowledge that while the new neighborhoods were better off economically, they were not truly affluent. Most new neighborhoods were not racially or ethnically integrated—in contrast to the ones to which the Gautreaux beneficiaries had moved. Moreover, the schools in the new places were only slightly better ranked than the ones the children had previously attended. In some cases, the families sent their children to the same schools as before they moved because they thought the children would be happier. Overall, the researchers conclude that “interventions focused exclusively on neighborhoods . . . are unable to solve the myriad problems of children growing up in poverty.”

The editors of *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, struggling to explain the similar puzzle of the educational achievement gap between black and white children, studied the SAT scores of children of military families serving overseas who attended 220 schools run by the U.S. Army in 13 countries.

They reasoned that the military schools, enrolling black and white children whose parents held similar jobs and earned similar incomes in a racially integrated culture, would

be an ideal place to test whether the segregated environment of much of the United States is responsible for the large gap between the SAT scores of blacks and whites.

“No such luck,” the magazine concludes in an unsigned article.

Black students at Army-run schools did score an average of 38 points higher than black students in public and private schools within the United States. But in 2005, the editors say, whites at Defense Department schools scored 172 points higher than their black schoolmates on the combined SAT. The average score for blacks at the DoD schools was 902 out of a possible 1600; for whites it was 1074.

It is quite likely, the editors say, that the very large scoring gap reflects residual differences in “social and economic characteristics.” They speculate that the parental educational levels of black and white children may be quite different and that black test-takers may have spent their elementary school years at inferior inner-city schools before their parents were transferred overseas. They also wonder whether black students are more likely to be the children of enlisted personnel, while more whites are the offspring of career officers.

The editors say that their primary finding, however, is that black students who are given the opportunity to study at well-financed integrated high schools are able to improve their SAT scores, suggesting that greater equality in school financing and quality in the states might at least reduce the gap significantly.

SOCIETY

Born in the U.S.A.

THE SOURCE: “Defining ‘American’: Birthright Citizenship and the Original Understanding of the Fourteenth Amendment” by James C. Ho, in *Green Bag*, Summer 2006.

ACCORDING TO A RECENT POLL, 49 percent of Americans believe that the U.S.-born child of an illegal alien should not be entitled to U.S. citizenship. Removing this right would take away one of the magnets drawing illegal immigrants into the country, say critics, and relieve the states and localities of costly outlays for schools and social services. Some legislators and legal scholars say it can be done. But there’s a major barrier: the Fourteenth Amendment. James C. Ho, a former chief counsel of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittees on the Constitution and Immigration who is now an attorney in Dallas, says, “Text, history, judicial precedent, and Executive Branch interpretation confirm” that citizenship is granted exactly as the amendment says, to “all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof,” including the offspring of illegal aliens.

Ratified in 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment overturned one of the central holdings of the *Dred Scott* decision (1857), which had denied citizenship to the American-born child of a slave. But though the “birthright citizenship” principle is based on English common law, there was vigorous debate about including the clause in the amendment. Senator Edgar Cowan (R-Pa.), likely sensitive about a large Gypsy population in his home state, wanted to ensure that “if [a state] were overrun by another and a different race, it would have the right

Archive password: NATIVE



Children hoist a flag during a national rally for immigration reform last May. Nearly half of all Americans oppose citizenship for children of illegal residents, despite Fourteenth Amendment guarantees.

to absolutely expel them.” Congress withheld the right only from Native Americans (who were thought to have sovereign status within the United States) and, in keeping with long-standing international practice, foreign nationals on diplomatic missions.

The first notable court challenge was *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, in 1898. Wong Kim Ark, born in San Francisco to two Chinese parents, had traveled to China on a temporary visit and was denied reentry on the grounds that his parents’ alien status made him a noncitizen. The Supreme Court, in a 6–2 decision, swept aside the government’s argument, holding that the Fourteenth Amendment upheld the “ancient and fundamental rule.” To deny citizenship to children “of citizens or subjects of other countries, would be to deny citizenship to thousands of persons of English, Scotch, Irish, German, or other European parentage, who have always been considered and treated as

citizens of the United States,” the Court added.

In 1982, in a 5–4 decision in *Plyler v. Doe*, the Court ruled that Texas could not deny free public education to undocumented children, and, says Ho, “all nine justices agreed that the Equal Protection Clause protects legal and illegal aliens alike” (emphasis his). More recently, Yaser Hamdi, an alleged Taliban fighter, was deemed by the courts to be “an American citizen” because he had been born in Louisiana, even though “his parents were aliens in the U.S. on temporary work visas.”

Despite the history of judicial affirmation of birthright citizenship, it remains a political football. Pro-immigration members of Congress may allow repeal legislation to be attached to a comprehensive immigration reform package as a way to win votes, assuming that the courts will strike it down anyway. Says Ho: “Stay tuned: *Dred Scott II* could be coming soon to a federal court near you.”

SOCIETY

Disaster History

THE SOURCE: “Rebuilding NOLA” by Witold Rybczynski, in *Wharton Real Estate Review*, Spring 2006.

IN THE LOG OF URBAN DISASTERS over the past 350 years, the flood that devastated New Orleans in 2005 is neither the most deadly nor the most destructive. The number one catastrophe, judged by loss of both life and property, belongs to a man-made event, the destruction and razing of virtually the entire city of Warsaw by Nazi Germany in 1945. But rebuilding New Orleans poses peculiar challenges not present in Warsaw or any of 19 other major cities hit by disasters since

Of 20 cities struck by disaster since the 17th century, only Rotterdam and Skopje have been substantially changed in rebuilding.

1666, writes Witold Rybczynski, an urbanism professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a widely published author. Just rebuilding the levees that protect the below-sea-level city, for example, would cost as much as \$30 billion—or about \$200,000 for every household in New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina hit.

Reconstructing New Orleans makes festering urban issues of demographics, economics, and leadership—hardly unique to the Big Easy—painfully visible. New Orleans’s population has been declining

since 1965. Its famous port, considered the hub of its economy, is the smallest regional port, vastly overshadowed by those in South Louisiana and Baton Rouge. Its slow recovery has been blamed on political inertia and lack of leadership.

What will be the extent of “real demand” for rebuilding in the city? Rybczynski asks. How will the city, state, or federal government provide for the poor, given America’s dismal track record in the field? Should rebuilding follow a new model—streets rerouted or areas returned to swampland—or should the old city be reconstructed, house by house? History offers little guidance. Of 20 cities struck by disaster since the 17th

century, only two have been substantially changed in rebuilding, Rotterdam and Skopje, Yugoslavia, now Macedonia. Central Rotterdam was almost entirely destroyed by German bombing in World War II. When it was rebuilt, it was reconfigured to incorporate one of the world’s first pedestrian-only shopping districts. Skopje, hit by an earthquake that left 150,000 of its 200,000 people homeless in 1963, was redesigned by a Japanese architect as part of an international effort.

Normally, however, rebuilding starts immediately in the existing pattern, in part dictated by landownership, street patterns, and other infrastructure issues. New Orleans’s

very modernity makes rebuilding harder. Water, electricity, phone and Internet cables, and other city services need to be in place before residents can return. The list of essential services is surprisingly long, Rybczynski writes. Somebody must restore them, but there is little housing for such workers. Authority is divided, plans are contested.

Judging by the experience of other cities, he writes, it is likely that New Orleans will be as much as 50 percent less populous than before the flood, that rebuilding will require a major federal effort on the scale of the Depression-era Tennessee Valley Authority, and that the entire process will take 10 years.

PRESS & MEDIA

Kitty Genovese, Revised

THE SOURCE: “Nightmare on Austin Street” by Jim Rasenberger, in *American Heritage*, Oct. 2006.

THE STORY APPEARED AT THE bottom of the front page of *The New York Times* on March 27, 1964. It began, “For more than half an hour, 38 respectable, law-abiding citizens in Queens watched a killer stalk and stab a woman in three separate attacks in Kew Gardens.

“Twice the sound of their voices and the sudden glow of their bedroom lights interrupted him and frightened him off. Each time he returned, sought her out and stabbed her again. Not one person telephoned the police during the assault; one witness called after

the woman was dead.”

The killing of Kitty Genovese by a mentally ill machine operator named Winston Moseley led to more than 1,000 books, articles, plays, scripts, and songs—not about the crime, but about the Bad Samaritans, the 38 ordinary Americans who watched their neighbor die.

But the story wasn’t quite true, writes Jim Rasenberger, an author and screenwriter. It *is* true that neighbors should have done more to help Genovese when she was chased and stabbed after returning at 3 AM from her job as a bar manager. And it *is* true that some people, perhaps as many as seven,

saw something of an attack, and a larger number heard her call for help.

Other conclusions and facts, however, were exaggerated or wrong, Rasenberger writes. Moseley didn’t attack her three times, but two. The police got that wrong. Thirty-eight people could not physically have watched the murder because of the geography of the site. After Genovese was first stabbed on the street, she stumbled around the back of a building and into a foyer, out of view and earshot of nearly all potential witnesses. That is where Moseley found her the second time, tried to rape her, stabbed her, and left her to bleed to death. Someone called the police after the first attack.

The story triggered nationwide soul-searching about callous, inhuman New Yorkers who would stand by during a murder because, as one witness explained in the story, “I

didn't want to get involved." Subsequent psychological research suggested that the reason was more likely to be confusion, fear, misapprehension, or uncertainty. Some neighbors may have thought that it was a lover's quarrel, or that Genovese was drunk when she staggered from the scene of the first attack. An account pieced together from court testimony by lawyer and Kew Gardens resident Joseph De May (at oldkewgardens.com) suggests that some of the elderly residents of the apartment complex thought the fight may have spilled out of a bar near where the first stabbing occurred. Only one person admitted seeing a knife.

The late *New York Times* editor A. M. Rosenthal stood by the newspaper's account until his death last May. "In a story that gets a lot of attention, there's always somebody who's saying, 'Well, that's not really what it's supposed to be,'" he told Rasenberger. "There may have been 38. There may have been 39."

PRESS & MEDIA

The Mute Majority

THE SOURCE: "The Gendered Blogosphere: Examining Inequality Using Network and Feminist Theory" by Dustin Harp and Mark Tremayne, in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, Summer 2006.

FOR MORE THAN A GENERATION, the editorial pages of America's newspapers have been assailed as testosterone terra firma. Even as women moved into nearly four of 10 editing and reporting jobs, they still

contributed only about 10 to 20 percent of opinion pieces. The free, uncensored, unedited World Wide Web was supposed to change this. Guess what? The number of women among the top 30 political bloggers was exactly three, or 10 percent, in 2004, according to Dustin Harp and Mark Tremayne, journalism professors at the University of Texas, Austin.

This would be merely another anecdote in the inexplicable realm of gender differentials if the number of blogs—Web logs or online



Conservative blogger Michelle Malkin

entries in diary form—were not growing so fast. About 32 million people reported reading them in 2004, and researchers increasingly find that young Americans regard them as a superior form of citizen journalism. They are free, include a wider range of views than traditional newspapers and magazines, and provide opportunities for dialogue.

Of the 30 top-ranked political blogs in 2004, the most popular female-written blog, "A Small Victory," at No. 13, has disappeared from the Web. The conservative blog

MichelleMalkin.com, then ranked 23rd, continues, and liberal and raunchy Wonkette.com, then written by Ana Marie Cox, was 26th.

Harp and Tremayne argue that one of the most common explanations for women's paltry showing among the top blogs—that there just aren't many female bloggers—doesn't hold up to scrutiny. While it is true, they say, that women were slower to start blogging than men, women now write 43 percent of all blogs, and hundreds of female bloggers—at least 466, according to a recent list—write about politics.

A more fruitful explanation might be found in the history and culture of the Web, as bloggers link to one another and boost each other's readership. "Original players in any network have an advantage: The longer you have been around, the more links you are likely to acquire. In the 1990s, men outnumbered women on the Web by a sizable margin. While that is no longer true, the early advantage may continue to grow and snowball." Men also may simply prefer to link to other men, they suggest.

Could it be that women's political blogs are inferior? Harp and Tremayne dismiss the notion. As long as quality is judged by popularity—and popularity is skewed by historical patterns—there is no way to make unbiased judgments. Their verdict: "Patriarchal hegemony" should be actively combated by women bloggers and others "who understand the importance of inclusive spheres of discourse."

HISTORY

Bulgaria's Universal Buffoon

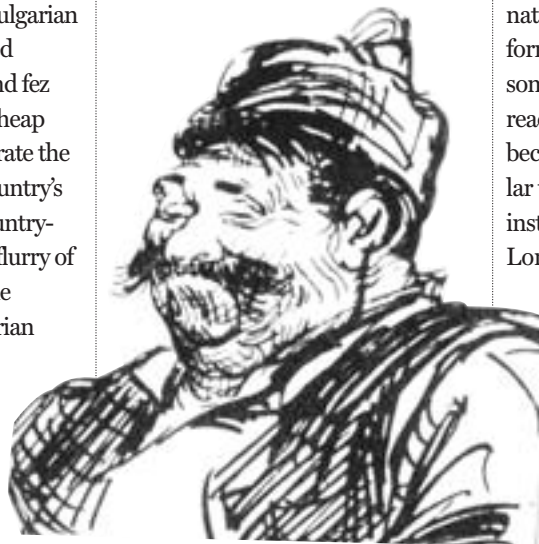
THE SOURCE: "To Chicago and Back: Aleko Konstantinov, Rose Oil, and the Smell of Modernity" by Mary Neuburger, in *Slavic Review*, Fall 2006.

BAĬ GANO, THE MOST FAMOUS character in Bulgarian literature, was conceived in the back of a kiosk at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. His creator, Aleko Konstantinov, was a Bulgarian satirist and writer, and son of a successful Ottoman merchant. An early world's fair aficionado, Konstantinov was dazzled by the Columbian Exposition, and humiliated by the contrast between its technological wonders and his country's backwardness. In a small curiosity shop, one of only two Bulgarian displays at the fair, Konstantinov came upon a Bulgarian salesclerk wearing an outdated costume of billowing pants and fez while presiding over vials of cheap geranium oil—used to adulterate the rose oil that was one of the country's prized exports. This rustic countryman became the model for a flurry of journal articles chronicling the fictional exploits of the Bulgarian antihero Baĭ Gano. He would become the most exhaustively analyzed cultural figure in the nation's history.

Konstantinov was on his fourth world's fair when he and his crowd of Sofia intellectuals and raconteurs

arrived in Chicago. There, according to Mary Neuburger, a historian at the University of Texas, Austin, he was so impressed by the garlands of electrical bulbs bathing the fairgrounds in light that he wrote that he "felt sorry for the moon. How poor and pale she seemed in comparison."

Bulgaria had only recently won autonomy from the Ottoman Empire and was modernizing and Westernizing at an exhilarating pace. But what Konstantinov saw in Chicago illuminated only his country's meager progress. He was awed by the immensity of the Chicago fair's Palace of Manufacturing. He wrote



Fictional Baĭ Gano, the unwashed traveling rose oil salesman of Bulgaria, epitomizes the backward rube meeting the modern world, then and now.

that he expected that, at least in farming, Bulgaria could not be outdone. He was shattered when he saw the display of goods from California's fields and orchards.

Upon his return to Bulgaria, he created the bumbling character of Baĭ Gano, modeled on the world's fair salesclerk who sat like a rube in the midst of modern splendor. In articles that became a book of the same name (published in 1895), Baĭ Gano stumbles around Europe trying to sell the bottles of rose oil hidden in his suit. Emitting a foul smell, the salesman contrasts ironically with his precious wares, used throughout Europe to make the finest perfume and soap.

Only once does he unveil a vial, but when he offers it to a refined Czech woman to sniff, she can detect nothing but the stench of sweat and fish on his hand.

Baĭ Gano, sliced and diced as a national figure of self-ridicule for more than a century, purveys this natural essence to Europe, transforming rose oil into a commodity somehow out of the experience and reach of those who created it. He became a satiric archetype, so popular that customers awaited each installment of his exploits the way Londoners anticipated new chapters by Charles Dickens.

"Many East Europeans then and now have difficulty seeing themselves without looking at their own reflection in West European eyes . . . ; without lamenting their unequal cultural and economic relationships," Neuburger concludes.

HISTORY

The Basque Invasion

THE SOURCE: "Myths of British Ancestry" by Stephen Oppenheimer, in *Prospect Magazine*, Oct. 2006.

DNA TESTING HAS SPRUNG the innocent from prison, nailed the guilty with child support, and may now have finished off the concept of the WASP, the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, in favor of the unpronounceable WBP. It turns out that the ancestors of most English are not Anglo-Saxons at all, but Basques, writes Stephen Oppenheimer, author of *The Origins of the British: A Genetic Detective Story* (2006).

For the past few centuries, the Anglo-centric world has believed that the English are descended from the Angles and the Saxons, who supposedly took over southern England after the Romans decamped. As for the rest

of the kingdom, the Scots, Welsh, and Irish have been thought to be the successors of the indigenous Celts, who had a glorious culture of spiral art forms and gold metalwork. Some Viking progeny were understood to have been sprinkled around the edges.

The genetic evidence is quite different. Three-quarters of the ancestors of the English arrived on what became the British Isles between 15,000 and 7,500 years ago, at the end of the last ice age, when England was still attached to the mainland of Europe, Oppenheimer writes. They were hunter-gatherers, and shared a genetic heritage with the Basques, who lived in the mountainous former ice-age redoubt their descendants still inhabit.

Periodic invasions of the British Isles began in the Neolithic Period, when humans took to farming, about 6,500 years ago. But these incursions had little effect on the basic Basque genetic heritage. That heritage is

strongest in Ireland, where only 12 percent of the population descends from migrants who came after the Basques. In southern and eastern England, nearer the Continent, the figure is about one-third.

Oppenheimer studied DNA samples collected in small, long-established towns in the British Isles from residents whose grandparents had lived in the same place, and compared them with similar samples taken from the ancestral homes of Celts, Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Belgians, Vikings, Normans, and other ancient peoples.

The Anglo-Saxons and the Celts were small immigrant groups. "Neither group had much more impact on the British Isles gene pool than the Vikings, the Normans or, indeed, immigrants of the past 50 years," he writes. After the Basques, no single migrant wave contributed more than about five percent of today's genetic mix.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Reason and Religion

THE SOURCE: "Socrates or Muhammad? Joseph Ratzinger on the Destiny of Reason" by Lee Harris, in *The Weekly Standard*, Oct. 2, 2006.

ALL BUT LOST AMID THE firestorm of responses to Pope Benedict XVI's September 12 speech about faith and reason was the argument he was trying to advance. Muslims, along with major news outlets, focused most of their attention on a

small section of the speech, in which the pope quoted Manuel II Paleologus, a 14th-century Byzantine emperor: "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you

The pope did not mean to inflame—or even to address—Muslims.

will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

The pope did not mean to inflame—or even to address—Muslims, says Lee Harris, the author of *Civilization and Its Enemies* (2004). Rather, he was taking aim chiefly at secular thinkers in the West, by pointing out the severe limitations of modern reason—scientific reason, which excludes whatever is not scientifically provable from "the universe of reason." Modern reason has nothing to say on questions of ethics and religion, and no response to offer Islamic radicals because matters of faith be-

long to the irrational. In the pre-Enlightenment world, the pope relates, reason emanated from the questioning model established by Socrates, and it was possible to confront issues in ethics, just as Manuel II did over the relative merits of Christianity and Islam. "To convince a reasonable soul," the emperor asserts, "one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind." Reason will yield the answer as to which faith is the truer one.

The pope's larger point is precisely that reason has strayed so far from its roots that it has lost the ability to render such judgments. It is profoundly significant to the pope that the Greek word *logos* means both "reason" and "word"—as in "In the beginning was the Word . . ."—and that this conjunction forms, in the pope's view, "an encounter between genuine enlightenment and religion. From the very heart of Christian faith . . . Manuel II was able to say: Not to act 'with logos' is contrary to God's nature."

The pope recognizes that this same conjunction of Greek thought and religious faith that led

to the Enlightenment in the West also spawned philosophers such as Immanuel Kant (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781). Under Kant's withering gaze, Harris writes, "all religious faiths are equally irrational, all systems of ethics equally unverifiable." The pope finds this state of affairs not only unacceptable but even "dangerous . . . for humanity." He has no desire to reject modernity, but asks, "Can modern reason really stand on the sidelines of a clash between a religion that commands jihad and a religion that forbids violent conversion?"

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

No Consensus on Census

THE SOURCE: "Religion as Identity in Post-war America: The Last Serious Attempt to Put a Question on Religion in the United States Census" by Kevin M. Schultz, in *The Journal of American History*, Sept. 2006.

IN TRADITIONAL HISTORIES of the 1950s, religion united Americans in a way of life that

contrasted with that of their godless Soviet counterparts across the Cold War divide. Not so, writes historian Kevin M. Schultz, a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. In 1956 and '57, deep rifts among American Catholics, Protestants, and Jews became evident in a fierce debate sparked by something no less mundane than the U.S. Census. On a 1956 list of official considerations for the 1960 census, one question topped them all: Should the census for the first time gather data on religious affiliation?

Catholics came out in strong support. Knowing where their parishioners resided would enable them to better locate hospitals and parochial schools. Less overtly, many Catholics hoped that statistical proof of their numbers would enhance their political power. Protestants largely steered clear of the debate, realizing that the data would probably affect them little.

The Jewish community, however, raged in opposition. Publicly, Jewish leaders built their

EXCERPT

One Nation, Under Four Gods

America, it turns out, is not one nation under one God. We answer, in actuality, to four Gods. . . . The most popular God, backed by 31 percent, is an "authoritarian" father figure who takes a very hands-on approach to his domain. He rewards the faithful and smites the sinful. Another 23 percent envision God as essentially "benevo-

lent"—a loving spirit who provides help and guidance when asked. For 16 percent, God presides over the universe like a taciturn judge, . . . tallying up sins and virtues, and rendering a verdict when people die. Finally, 24 percent see God as a mysterious prime mover who engineered the Big Bang and evolution, . . . then backed off to watch how it would all come out.

These differing conceptions of God, [a new survey by Gallup for Baylor University] found, are ultimately more important to people's political and social views than their party registrations or church affiliations.

—WILLIAM FALK, editor in chief, in *The Week* (Oct. 6, 2006)

argument upon the great bedrock of constitutional law—the separation of church and state—while they acknowledged quietly that their opposition sprang from the concerns that such statistics could be misused. With the horrors of the Holocaust never too far from memory, Jews feared that correlating wealth and education with religion would feed latent anti-Semitism in the American public. One commentator wrote that such information “might become the entering wedge for the kind of secret government files . . . that were detested features of the Nazi and Fascist regimes.”

By late November 1957, Robert W. Burgess, director of the Bureau of the Census, realized that he

EXCERPT

Pious Stress

The anguish of the believer striving for inner obedience will be clear to anyone who has been immersed in the evangelical world. There is a kind of correlation between all the promises of peace, the assertions of joy, and the reality of inner turmoil. . . . When every thought, and not just every action, must be obedient to Christ, and faith is fidelity to what you cannot actually sense, the result is a formula for zeal, to be sure, but also for pious stress, and even breakdown.”

—TODD SHY, Raleigh, N.C., writer and self-described recovering evangelical, in *Image* (Fall 2006)

could no longer let the debate fester; he risked stirring opposition to the entire census and losing respondents en masse. Upon the removal of the question from formal consideration, the American Jewish community proclaimed “a

victory for religious liberty.” The success, due in no small part to a letter-writing campaign aimed at congressional representatives, demonstrated Jews’ influence in political life.

The Census Bureau had conducted two trial surveys of the religion question. The answers had been as expected. Two of every three people over age 14 regarded themselves as Protestant, one of four as Roman Catholic, and about three of 100 as Jewish. But the full report was never

released. The Commerce Department, in consultation with the White House, said it was “not feasible” to release statistics of such nature. It was an enduring result: To this day, the census has never included a question about religion.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Smoking Your Money’s Worth

THE SOURCE: “Taxes, Cigarette Consumption, and Smoking Intensity” by Jérôme Adda and Francesca Cornaglia, in *The American Economic Review*, Sept. 2006.

BOOSTING TAXES ON CIGARETTES may be hurting the health of those it doesn’t drive to quit, researchers at University College London have found. That’s because

smokers, especially the poor, react to the higher cost of cigarettes by smoking each cigarette more intensively. They take more puffs, inhale more deeply, smoke closer to the end, and block the ventilation holes on the filter.

Several studies since 2000 have found that as taxes rise, cigarette

consumption goes down. But economists Jérôme Adda and Francesca Cornaglia write that many adult smokers are compensating by extracting far more nicotine from each cigarette. They studied levels of cotinine, a byproduct of nicotine, in 20,000 Americans who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey from 1988 to 1994 and 1999 to 2000. Their surprising finding: A one percent rise in taxes increased smoking intensity by 0.47 percent. And more intensive smoking is especially unhealthy. “Smoking a cigarette

more intensively, up to the filter, leads the smoker to inhale more dangerous chemicals and has been shown to cause cancer deeper into the lung,” the researchers say.

Adda and Cornaglia write that most smokers would prefer to smoke more often but less intensively because the last part of a cigarette tastes worse. Tobacco near the filter or butt has been heated up by smoke. Less frequent but more intensive smoking also produces uncomfortable nicotine highs and lows during the day.

Today, combined federal, state, and local taxes range from a high of \$4.05 a pack in Chicago to a low of 46 cents in South Carolina, and smokers are highly sensitive to price. A 10 percent increase in taxes results in an overall four percent decline in cigarette consumption—with most of the “lost” sales involving teenagers and pregnant women, specialists say. Smokers are disproportionately likely to have low or medium levels of education, and to work in unskilled

Even a one percent rise in taxes caused smokers to smoke more of the cigarette, inhaling more dangerous chemicals shown to cause lung cancer.

and manual occupations. Men and the young are more likely to smoke than women and older individuals, the authors write.

Smoking intensity also varies by race. Whites smoke about 40 percent more cigarettes per person than Hispanics and five percent more than African Americans, but blacks have the highest level of cotinine. Blacks extract 56 percent more nicotine per cigarette than Hispanics or whites, Adda and Cornaglia say. This figure helps explain the medical literature showing that even though African-American men are not the heaviest smokers, they have the highest incidence of lung cancer.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Who Killed the Wild ‘Alalā?

THE SOURCE: “Do No Harm” by Mark Jerome Walters, in *Conservation in Practice*, Oct.–Dec. 2006.

THE ‘ALALĀ HAD DECLINED TO only a few dozen birds by the early 1970s, when biologists warned that “midnight” for the traditionally sacred creatures was near. Once common in the cloud forests of Mauna Loa, the Hawaiian raven—believed to guide the dead to the afterlife—was near extinction.

Fearing the loss of the last remaining ‘alalā, biologists captured a half-dozen to breed in captivity. Housed in understaffed and underfunded state facilities, the birds failed to reproduce. More were captured. Most grew old without leaving behind a single offspring.

Why didn’t they reproduce? Were they disappearing because of loss of nesting habitat or as a result of attacks by alien predators? Were

EXCERPT

Bill Gates Meets iPod

I pulled out the iPod and put it in front of [Bill] Gates.

“Have you seen this yet?” I asked.

Gates went into a zone that recalls those science-fiction films where a space alien, confronted with a novel object, creates some sort of force tunnel between him and the object, allowing him to suck directly into his brain all possible information about it.

Gates’s fingers, racing at NASCAR speed, played over the scroll wheel and pushed every button combination while his eyes stared fixedly at the screen. I could almost hear the giant sucking sound. Finally, after he had absorbed every nuance of the device, he handed it back to me.

“It looks like a great product,” he said. Then he paused a second. Something didn’t compute.

“It’s only for Macintosh?” he asked.

Yes, it was. (Then.)

—STEVEN LEVY, *Newsweek* senior editor and author of *The Perfect Thing: How the iPod Shuffles Culture, Commerce, and Coolness*, in *Wired* (Nov. 2006)

they weakened by exotic diseases? The rare birds were an increasingly alluring topic of research, writes Mark Jerome Walters, a University of South Florida journalism professor. Although some biologists warned that close observation of breeding pairs seemed to drive the birds from their nests, scientists believed that time was running out. Time-lapse movie cameras were installed near several remaining wild nests. But the cameras clicked loudly when they powered up. About 3,800 hours of nesting activity were filmed, but many of the pairs abandoned their nests during the study. By 1980, when the project ended, fewer than three dozen ravens were left, two dozen in the wild and nine in captivity without offspring.

By 1992 the wild 'alalā population had shrunk to 11, nine of which lived on Cynthia Salley's ranch. She refused to let the biologists in to study them. "There are only a few 'alalā left in the world," she recalled

telling them. "You've got one experiment trying to raise them in captivity. And you've got other experiments to study them in the wild. Well, I've got my own experiment going on here. It's called the 'Leave Them Alone Project.'" Environmental groups sued for access.

Meanwhile, the National Research Council, an



Today 52 Hawaiian 'alalā cling to life in captivity, survivors of state efforts to save the sacred ravens.

independent scientific group in Washington, weighed in. Leave the 'alalā in the wild, their report said. Allow qualified biologists to pluck eggs from the nests of the ravens to be hatched in new, professionally

staffed, and better-funded facilities. Within months, so many ravens had hatched that they could be returned to Mauna Loa. Initially they thrived, but soon began to succumb to disease and hawks. Twenty-one of the 27 released 'alalā were gone by 1999. Three years later, none remained alive in the wild. The

questions about their demise have never been fully answered. Today, 52 remain in captivity.

The tragedy of the 'alalā is an all-but-universal parable about endangered species, writes Walters. The "lure of technology" tips the balance toward action instead of minimizing the risk of making matters worse. Saving the ravens became a consuming mission for many biologists at the end of the last century, but harm was done by going to great lengths to do good. Sometimes, Walters says, the best policy with endangered species is one laid out by Hippocrates 2,400 years ago: First, do no harm.

ARTS & LETTERS

Eyes of the Creators

THE SOURCE: "View Masters" by Margaret S. Livingstone and Bevil R. Conway, in *Skeptical Inquirer*, Nov.–Dec. 2006.

EVEN A PARTIAL LIST READS like a Facebook of 20th-century art: Marc Chagall, Gustav Klimt, Edward Hopper, Jasper Johns, Man Ray, Frank Stella, Willem de

Kooning, Roy Lichtenstein, Andrew Wyeth, Pablo Picasso.

What unites this collection of originals is the likely diagnosis of stereoblindness—a misalignment of the eyes that prevents stereopsis. Ninety percent of the population automatically masters stereopsis, which is the ability to take

the slightly different image recorded by each eye and merge the two images into a seamless three-dimensional scene. But about 10 percent fails. Margaret S. Livingstone, a neurology professor at Harvard Medical School, and Bevil R. Conway, a junior fellow at Harvard, write that misaligned eyes of the kind that can cause torment to a child on the playground may actually be an asset for an artist.

Livingstone and Conway studied photos of 53 famous artists

The stereoblindness of Picasso, Hopper, and Wyeth may have helped make them great artists.

and found that 28 percent of them were slightly cross-eyed or walleyed, or had otherwise misaligned eyes. Photographs are frequently used to study stereopsis. The two researchers compared the relative positions of light reflections in the eyes and found that misalignments were nearly three times as common among the famous artists as in the general population.

They suspect that the poor depth perception caused by stereoblindness might have enhanced the artists' efforts to flatten a three-dimensional scene onto a two-dimensional surface. "Someone who cannot perceive depth from stereopsis may be more aware of—and therefore better able to capture—the other, monocular clues to depth and distance, such as perspective, shading, and occlusion," they write.

Picasso, Hopper, and Wyeth generated depth using precisely those techniques, while de Kooning, Klimt, and Stella accentuated flatness.

Maybe, the authors say, certain traits that seem like handicaps might be advantageous in other circumstances. It may not be necessary to be cross-eyed to be a great artist, but perhaps it can help.

ARTS & LETTERS

All Literature Is Local

THE SOURCE: "Keeping a Private Address" by Gregory Wolfe, in *Image*, Fall 2006.

IN A FAMOUS ESSAY TITLED "Must the Novelist Crusade?" Eudora Welty wrote that "fiction has, and must keep, a private address." Life is lived in a private place, she said, and meaning exists only in the mind and in the heart.

Gregory Wolfe, the publisher and editor of *Image* magazine, decries the growing tendency

among writers to ignore Welty's advice and make ideological commitments the defining characteristic of their creative work. Popular novelist Barbara Kingsolver has established the Bellwether Prize for the Literature of Social Change. Author Anne Lamott sprinkled her latest book, *Plan B*, with "snarly asides" against President George W. Bush, Wolfe says.

Better are the characters drawn by authors such as Cormac McCarthy and Wendell Berry. McCarthy's plots explore the intellectually harrowing conflict between antithetical good things. John Grady Cole and Billy Parham in his *Border Trilogy* are virtuous American heroes who cross the border to another culture to bring about justice, but bring ruin on themselves and those they love. Such stories can elicit more profound reflection on American intervention around the world than an entire library of politicized books, Wolfe writes. Kentucky author Wendell Berry's characters build

EXCERPT

Jaundiced Genius

Edgar Allan Poe, that strange genius of a hack writer, lived in such a narcissistic cocoon of torment as to be all but blind to the booming American nation around him, and so, perversely, became a mythic presence



in the American literary consciousness. . . . Living in the freedom of the happiest and most advanced social constructions, the democracy that Lincoln would call the last best hope of mankind, Edgar Poe, with his dark tales, laid out its unavoidable nightmares.

—E. L. DOCTOROW, author of *Ragtime* and other novels, in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Fall 2006)

strong, some would say extreme, cases for environmental causes and against big business. But their stories are grounded in love, marriage, family, and work. What gives Berry's writing gravitas is that it emerges out of geography, history, and community, without feeling narrow and ideological, Wolfe says.

To say that art needs a private address is not to dodge a moral imperative to speak out on matters of social importance. "It is to remind us that both art and life begin in the immediacy and concreteness of the local," Wolfe writes.

ARTS & LETTERS

The Poet of Work and Delight

THE SOURCE: "Seamus Heaney, Digging With the Pen" by Adam Kirsch, in *Harvard Magazine*, Nov.-Dec. 2006.

SEAMUS HEANEY, BORN THE eldest of nine children on a 50-acre farm in Northern Ireland, would seem an unlikely candidate for preeminent poet of his generation. Just a partial list of his accomplishments bears witness: author of 11 volumes of poetry, translator of an edition of *Beowulf* that became a bestseller, and, in 1995, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Through it all, says Adam Kirsch, Heaney has stayed true to the promise he announced in "Digging," the initial poem in his first published volume, *Death of a Naturalist* (1966). Moving from admiration for his father's and grandfather's connection to

the soil ("By God, the old man could handle a spade,/Just like his old man."), Heaney proclaims his commitment to them in the same breath as his determination to chart his own course:

But I've no spade to follow men like them.
Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

Yet Kirsch, author of *The Wounded Surgeon: Confession and Transformation in Six American Poets* (2005), warns us not to take Heaney's commitment to heritage or obligation as a sign that he is a chronicler or "merely a didactic, moralizing poet." Heaney is ever conscious of being "a Catholic native of Northern Ireland . . . born into one of the most intransigent ethnic and religious conflicts in the world." That identity renders his rural Ulster "not a pastoral idyll but the theater of wrenching moral dramas." In one of Heaney's most personal renderings of the sectarian violence, "Casualty," from *Field Work* (1979), he relates his frustration as a bystander, when the Troubles claim a man he fished with, a drunkard, says Kirsch, "who was killed by his fellow Catholics when he violated an IRA curfew to go out to a bar":

How culpable was he
That last night when he broke
Our tribe's complicity?
"Now you're supposed to be
An educated man,"
I hear him say. "Puzzle me
The right answer to that one."

But with the publication of *Station Island* (1984), Heaney announced a new direction:

Let go, let fly, forget.
You've listened long enough. Now strike
your note.

This was "not an abdication of Heaney's earlier moral concerns in favor of some pure aestheticism," Kirsch argues, but more a "turn from the local and political to the spiritual and universal." Now 67, Heaney has just published *District and Circle*, in which he seems, says Kirsch, "increasingly occupied with last things." In "Quitting Time," we catch a glimpse not just of the connection between poetry and physical labor but also, perhaps, a "portrait of an aging farmer as a veiled self-portrait":

a home-based man at home
In the end with little. Except this same
Night after nightness, redding up the work,

The song of a tubular steel gate in the dark
As he pulls it to and starts his uphill trek.

The great poets all feel a sense of responsibility to something greater than themselves, says Kirsch, "speaking truthfully, bearing witness, offering sympathy; or to an aesthetic ideal—the radiance of beauty, the genius of language." In his view, what elevates Heaney to greatness is "that his sense of responsibility extends to pleasure itself. The poet, he knows, must delight and instruct; and without the delight, the instruction is worse than useless."

OTHER NATIONS

The Lagging Continent

THE SOURCE: "Latin America in the Rearview Mirror" by Harold L. Cole, Lee E. Ohanian, Alvaro Riascos, and James A. Schmitz Jr., in *The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Quarterly Review*, Sept. 2006.

ECONOMICALLY, LATIN AMERICA is the sick man of the West. While many ailing nations—Italy, Spain, and Portugal—checked out of the financial hospice after World War II, Latin America grew more feeble. Compared with the United States, the region has become dramatically poorer over the past 50 years, while the economies of Europe have taken off. Ireland, only recently a basket case, is now 80 percent as well off as America, in terms of its per capita gross domestic product (GDP). Argentina, which 200 years ago was richer than the United States, has fallen to 30 percent of the U.S. level of GDP. Since 1950, the average Western European country has boosted its typical citizen's income from 40 percent to 70 percent of the U.S. level. Meanwhile, Latin America has fallen from 28 to 22 percent.

Latin America, argue economists Harold L. Cole, Lee E. Ohanian, Alvaro Riascos, and James A. Schmitz Jr., should do better. Its citizens share descent, language, religion, and form of government with the world's wealthiest nations. "Latin America and the other Western countries should have the same innate ability to

learn and adopt successful Western technologies, and . . . with similar cultures, they should have similar preferences for market goods," Cole and his colleagues write.

The authors rule out many of the usual explanations for the region's lagging performance. Compared with the rest of the world, Latin America does not suffer from massive unemployment, a lack of basic education, a capital shortfall, a staggeringly high birthrate, or an utter lack of democracy. Quite the contrary, say Cole and Ohanian, professors at UCLA, and economists Riascos, of the Banco de la Republica de Colombia, and Schmitz, of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

The Latin American employment rate is about 70 percent of the rate in Europe and the United States, a significant gap, but not enough to explain the region's economic stagnation. Argentina's and Chile's over-25 populations in 1990 had 7.8 and 6.2 years of schooling, respectively, the authors say. Latin America has not experienced a major deficiency in the amount of capital available for investment in recent decades, and Latin American governments on average have been almost as democratic as those in Western Europe over the past 15 years, according to research cited by the authors.

To be sure, some Latin Amer-

ican countries are doing better than others. But compared with the United States, which had a per capita gross national income of \$43,740 in 2005, Chile weighs in at \$5,870, Venezuela \$4,810, and Bolivia \$1,010. The figure for the poorest developed Western European country, Portugal, is \$16,170.

The inefficiency of Latin American economies can be traced, in part, to government policies, the authors say, including tariffs, quotas, multiple exchange-rate systems, regulatory barriers to foreign products, inefficient financial systems, and large, subsidized state-owned enterprises.

In one of several instances when barriers were lifted—foreigners were allowed to invest in Chile's previously nationalized copper industry—copper production grew by 175 percent in 10 years. Individual mines became more efficient, and Chile's relative productivity increased from 30 percent to 82 percent of the U.S. level. The 1991 privatization of the Brazilian iron ore industry, after nearly 20 years of negligible growth, sent productivity soaring more than 100 percent by 1998. One key to the growth of the industry, the authors say, was changes in work rules that had limited the number of tasks a worker could perform. Machine operators, for example, were prohibited from making even trivial repairs to their machines. With looser rules and private ownership, output increased by 30 percent.

In contrast, the authors say, the nationalization of the Venezuelan oil industry in 1975 led to a decline of 70

percent in productivity and 53 percent in oil output in less than 10 years.

Why would a government choose to make its economy unproductive? The answer, the authors contend, is that a small part of society would be harmed by economic changes, and this group has sufficient resources to block their adoption.

Governments have an incentive to make it virtually impossible for foreign competitors or even local entrepreneurs to start businesses that compete with incumbent, low-efficiency producers. "When competitive barriers are eliminated and Latin American producers face significant foreign competition, they are able to replicate the high productivity level of other Western countries," the authors conclude.

OTHER NATIONS

Unique Model

THE SOURCES: "Compensated Kidney Donation: An Ethical Review of the Iranian Model" by Alireza Bagheri, in *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, Sept. 2006; and "Payment for Kidneys: A Government-Regulated System Is Not Ethically Achievable" by William Harmon and Francis Delmonico, and "Kidney Vending: The 'Trojan Horse' of Organ Transplantation" by Gabriel M. Danovitch and Alan B. Leichtman, in *Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*, Oct. 4, 2006.

IN THE UNITED STATES LAST year, roughly 18 people died every day while waiting for an organ transplant, leaving more than 93,000 remaining on waiting lists. Most of them needed a kidney, but only one was donated for every four eligible patients.

Nobody dies on a waiting list for a kidney transplant in Iran. An "Iranian model" of "compensated

donations" has achieved unique success in eliminating any waiting list for kidney transplants, writes Alireza Bagheri, a research associate in the Graduate School of Law at Kyoto University. The Iranian system, which disregards the taboo on compensation, has attracted international attention as kidney disease has become more widespread throughout the world.

The sale of kidneys is prohibited in the United States, but Bagheri argues that the ban is ethically backward. Depriving donors of legitimate compensation for giving up one of their two kidneys is unjustifiable. Everyone participating in organ procurement is paid except the donor, and the donor's sacrifices should be recognized. Further, compensating a kidney donor is not the same as buying an organ. It is the "recognition that somebody who comes forward to donate an organ should receive appreciation and some level of reimbursement for time taken from work, travel, and loss of earnings incurred, and even perhaps to be incurred in the future," the author writes.

The Iranian system allows transplant candidates to apply to a charitable organization for help in finding a donor. The Charity Foundation for Special Diseases, a non-governmental organization, compensates donors with a flat sum of \$1,090, a little more than a third of the annual per capita Iranian income at the time of Bagheri's research. Donors and recipients sign pledges that they will not ask for or pay more than the flat amount. Transplants between citizens of different nationalities are

prohibited to prevent "transplant tourism."

About 80 percent of all donors are poor, and slightly more than 50 percent of kidney recipients are also poor. Iran has had no waiting list since 1999. Nearly 20,000 kidney transplants have been performed since the program began.

Harvard Medical School doctors William Harmon and Francis Delmonico say that although the Iranians should be commended for providing health care to the kidney donor and for prohibiting transplant tourism, the Iranian model fails to meet ethical standards. "It is the poor person who bears the burden of being the kidney source for transplantation," they write. This person is "coerced to make this donation decision" out of financial desperation.

Moreover, kidney markets cannot truly be regulated. Once there is a market for kidneys, Harmon and Delmonico argue, what is to stop donors from seeking the highest possible price by soliciting under-the-table payments?

Drs. Gabriel M. Danovitch and Alan B. Leichtman of UCLA and the University of Michigan, respectively, say that the open discussion of kidney "vending" threatens the core values that have permitted organ transplantation to flourish in the past half-century. The altruism that has motivated donors and the families of deceased donors to contribute kidneys is at stake.

Safe donation, they write, requires honesty and openness about health, family history, and past high-risk behavior. When altruism motivates the donation, the

donor has no incentive to knowingly give a potentially defective kidney. When the motive is money, that safeguard is gone.

Kidney vending might seem like a tempting solution to the organ shortage, according to Danovitch and Leichtman, “but like the Trojan horse of old, once we permit it within our gates, we may find that it brings destruction and not relief.”

OTHER NATIONS

Secondhand Kennedy

THE SOURCE: “Textile Skin” by Hanna Rose Shell and Vanessa Bertozzi, in *Transition*, Issue 96.

THE DOCKSIDE MARKET AT Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is ablaze in color. Mounds, walls, rooms, and stalls made of piles of secondhand clothes, called *pèpè*, shelter rows of tailors working furiously at their foot-powered sewing machines. The *pèpè* arrives at Haiti’s major ports by the ton and is unloaded and filtered through the dressmaking brigade. American discards become Haitian fashions. Baggy pants are restitched to Haitian proportions. Shapeless blouses become fitted, a t-shirt gets a bow.

Traditional retail clothing stores have largely disappeared from Haiti, writes Hanna Rose Shell, who, with Vanessa Bertozzi, produced *Secondhand (Pèpè)*, a documentary film about Haiti. “Despite—or more likely, because of—the abundance of *pèpè*, people in Haiti are by and large the best dressed in the hemisphere,” Shell says. Every item can be reshaped. Women’s clothes fit better in Haiti

than in the United States, according to Shell, a doctoral candidate in the history of science and a filmmaker.

The term *pèpè* may have originated with crowds who mocked a preacher who began handing out the clothes while trying to calm the recipients, shouting, “*Paix! Paix!*”—French for peace. Or it could be derived from the markings on boxes headed for Port-de-Paix (PP). In Haiti, *pèpè* also goes by other names: *sinistre*, which has a connotation of victimhood as well as charity, and

odeide, for the family name of the first woman to make a living trading in secondhand garments.

Another name dates from the 1960s, when the United States started shipping secondhand goods to Haiti as part of an international aid program announced by President John F. Kennedy. The president became the face of the discarded garments arriving from his government. Even today, Shell writes, many older people still talk of “wearing Kennedy.”



A Haitian peddler displays his sock inventory at Port-au-Prince market last May. *Pèpè*, or secondhand clothing, blankets La Saline Market, and is so abundant it serves as informal currency.

Also in this issue:

Grant Alden on Nashville music's minor figures

Robert E. Wright on America's fights over money

Martin Walker on the world's first artists

Tim Morris on our evolving palates

Michele Hilmes on ham radio culture

Mark Kingwell on Heidegger's hut

John McGowan on Paul Ricoeur

Haleh Esfandiari on women in the Middle East

CURRENT BOOKS

REVIEWS OF NEW AND NOTEWORTHY NONFICTION

A Few (More) Good Men (and Women)

Reviewed by Philip Gold

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF WAGING WAR IN Iraq, the U.S. Army is imploding. Its soldiers are exhausted, as are members of the Army Reserve and the National Guard. Last year, the Army met its goal of 80,000 new hires only by lowering physical and educational standards and issuing waivers for some criminal convictions. And its 490,000-member force is still about 200,000 soldiers shy of what it needs. Where will the necessary additional recruits come from? Can today's volunteer system produce enough quality soldiers to marshal America's future? Or must we return to the draft?

To address these questions, we need to review where we were when Vietnam-era conscription ended, and how we navigated the next 34 years of the all-volunteer force to reach the current mess. *I Want You!* is an invaluable aid in that project. It is a book that economists, bureaucrats, and think-tank poguees (a venerable military term for anyone who's farther from the fighting than you are) will love: 800 pages of dense pack. But with a little digging, general readers also will find the book rewarding.

Its author, Bernard Rostker, is currently a senior fellow at the RAND Corporation, and he has served as under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, under secretary of the Army, and assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower and reserve affairs. If a Democrat takes the White House in 2008, Rostker will be, deservedly, on the short list for another high Pentagon position. An economist by training, he has written a history of how economic reasoning and analysis helped move America away from conscription in the early 1970s, and contributed to the birth and development of the professional force that, after a rocky start, served America well for a quarter-century.

The book is arranged chronologically, from the 1960s, when the Vietnam draft grew discredited and discussion of alternatives began, to the present. Narrative chapters alternate with ones that assess the analytic studies done in support of policy decisions and, on occasion, their use as models outside the military.

I WANT YOU!
The Evolution
of the
All-Volunteer Force.
By Bernard Rostker.
RAND. 800 pp. (with
DVD). 68.50 cloth

For the most part, these studies deal with pay scales and compensation packages, effects of advertising, measurements of recruit quality, etc. (Many of the original studies and related correspondence between government officials are available on a fine accompanying DVD.) But let me dwell instead on a few aspects of our military's history that Americans would prefer not to consider, but may not be able to avoid much longer.

The first is the official reasoning that led to the abolition of conscription in 1973. After World War II ended in 1945, the Army basically discharged itself. By 1948, however, it was clear that voluntarism could not meet early Cold War needs, and

“Arguably,” writes Rostker, “the single group most responsible for the success of the all-volunteer force has been women.”

the Truman administration reinstated the draft. When the Korean War ended in 1953, the situation was the reverse: a vast excess of bodies. Deferments and exemptions were passed out like Halloween candy, with a disproportionate number going to young men from relatively privileged families, to encourage them to engage in activities deemed socially desirable: attending college and graduate school, marrying, having kids, pursuing designated occupations, and having more kids. By the Vietnam War, the draft was a significant determinant of American economic life. However, not everyone valued its contributions.

Economist Milton Friedman provided the leitmotif. Conscription was a “tax in kind,” levied upon a small minority of the nation: draft-age males. It was economically inequitable and, worse, inefficient. It hid the true costs of defense, misallocated resources, and forced young men to make economically and personally irrational choices in order to avoid service, such as getting Ph.D.'s in comparative literature when they'd rather be selling insurance, or getting married when they'd prefer to stay single. Shortly after his inauguration, Richard Nixon convened the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force, more commonly known as the Gates Commission, to propose a plan

for ending the draft. In its 1970 report, the commission focused on economic rationales for switching to an all-volunteer force.

This economic emphasis provided a convenient exit strategy from the draft, but it did not require the nation to reflect on two aspects of conscription that invalidated it as a system for raising manpower: the curious notion that draftees could be sent on missions unrelated to protecting the homeland, and the inequities and corruptions built into selective service.

After World War II, nearly all democracies drafted (Britain ended its draft in 1962). But conscription was tied to clear legal and customary restraints on the uses to which draftees could be put. The draft was and is acceptable in Switzerland, for example, because its sole purpose is defensive; Switzerland isn't about to invade anybody. West German draftees could not leave their country; neither could French conscripts after the Algerian War. Other NATO countries tied conscription to the need to deter a possible Soviet invasion.

Only the United States assumed that draftees could be sent anywhere to do anything. When that anything proved to be the unpopular and futile Vietnam War, the modicum of legitimacy not already destroyed by massive draft dodging and manipulation of the system vanished. As a result, the draft, like the war, simply faded away. There was no closure.

The all-volunteer force formed in the wake of the draft did not fare particularly well at the start. Quality fell precipitously during the 1970s, as evidenced most spectacularly by the Pentagon's infamous “misnorming” of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery. The test said recruit quality was fine; the folks in the field knew better. Moreover, the cost of the force sailed past early predictions. Idiotic advertising campaigns with slogans such as “Today's Army Wants to Join You” didn't help, especially when the services were paying full freight for advertising and no longer relying on time and talent provided by agencies and media as a public service.

The result was predictable. Year after year,



Seventeen-year-old Cortland Ely, right, is sworn into the Marines at a ceremony in Dallas, Texas, last spring, bringing the Marines one body closer to its recruitment goals. As America's all-volunteer armed services scramble to enlist soldiers, there are whispers of a renewed draft.

cohorts weak in intelligence, education, and motivation entered the system, and because the military cannot draw its middle management from outside its own ranks, the problems these recruits (including officers) caused were lasting. Still, all the analytic studies conducted by the Defense Department and various government-contracted think tanks, including RAND, on everything from recruiting to compensation, may have resulted in policies that plugged some of the holes in the dike.

Then the Army discovered women.

"Arguably," writes Rostker, "the single group most responsible for the success of the all-volunteer force has been women." No study done before 1972 had seriously entertained the expanded use of women. But as the '70s wore on, the Army found that women, with their generally higher educational attainment, superior performance on intelligence tests, and lower incidence of disciplinary problems, could substitute for some of the high-quality men who weren't signing on.

At roughly the same time, however, organized feminism attacked the military as the last bastion of machismo, to be opened up—or brought down—by any means necessary. The new and growing dependence on women may have improved the statistical profile of the American soldier, but many male soldiers and their leaders resented their female comrades in arms, and the feminist assault didn't help matters. The consequences were predictable and ugly: scandal, criminal harassment and assault, misguided "sensitivity training," and micromanagement of behavior, including one regulation that defined eye contact of more than five seconds as sexual harassment.

From the start, the Army maintained that its female troops would not be sent into combat. But as time wore on, military leaders understood ever more clearly that women would have to fight. Despite law and stated policy, the Army kept moving women into combat units, saying that they were temporarily "attached," not permanently "assigned." The result is that today women

are vital to the U.S. Army—they constitute about 15 percent of the force. And they are assigned to patrols and small units that routinely go into combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Neither the Army nor the nation has begun to come to terms with this reality.

Rostker's historical account is exhaustive and meticulous. At the last, however, he falters, for he concludes that the all-volunteer force can probably suffice for America's future needs. True, the all-volunteer force did well during the Reagan years. It did well during Desert Storm, as did the service reserves and the National Guard, its vital partners in the Total Force. But as President Bill Clinton reduced and underfunded the force while increasing its deployments and tempo of operations, a certain frazzle set in among both full- and part-time volunteers.

Five years of war under President George W. Bush have demonstrated an ineluctable truth: People wear out. They wear out as soldiers who, whatever their devotion, can't keep returning to war. And they wear out as human beings who want to spend time with their families.

Whatever happens in Iraq, this nation needs a much larger Army to deter or deal with future

conflicts—in Iran, North Korea, Africa. In the face of this reality, Rostker notes only that “increased incentives [i.e., bonuses] have always proven to stretch enlistments, but there is a limit.” Seasoned military leaders will do everything they can to ensure the all-volunteer force's continued success, he concludes, but “only time will tell.”

Indeed it will. Time will tell us that voluntarily putting oneself in harm's way solely for pay is an activity fit for mercenaries, not Uncle Sam's soldiers; that women must be admitted to full equality under arms; and that we cannot much longer avoid renewed consideration of how to raise the Army America needs—whether through the old-style direct federal draft, some form of national service, or an entirely new volunteer arrangement, such as a contract to fight only in the cause of homeland defense. If history is any indication, the coming debate will be acrimonious and ill informed. Those interested in bringing some reason to the table will do well to consult *I Want You!* We can't know where we're going unless we know where we've been.

PHILIP GOLD is author of *The Coming Draft: The Crisis in Our Military and Why Selective Service Is Wrong for America* (2006).

Nashville's Forgotten Little People

Reviewed by Grant Alden

THE 1950S WERE THE AMERICAN DREAM, OR at least they have seemed so ever after. A generation worn hard by the privations of the Depression and harder by the demands of World War II found itself unexpectedly atop a world of plenty, the leaders of a great and kind and undamaged nation in which anything truly *was* possible. We born after can never grasp quite what that meant, or how it felt.

Caricatured today as a time of lockstep conformity, the postwar era saw enormous artistic, economic, and social innovation. The failure of one

idea—one scheme—only begat a dozen others, one of which was simply bound to work. It was a time when, as one aging bohemian put it a decade ago, “We took jobs for sport.”

And America danced. The country was hungry for music, for wartime rationing of shellac had made new records scarce. Years of unrecorded songs awaited capture, and all over the country, men who had nurtured dreams at small-town

A SHOT IN THE DARK:

Making Records in Nashville, 1945–1955.

By Martin Hawkins.
Vanderbilt Univ.
Press/Country Music
Foundation Press.
318 pp. (with CD). \$65

radio stations and learned their way around the new electronic gizmos of the battlefield decided they'd have a try at the music business. A few had carried tape recorders home with them, discovered amid the ruins of German invention. Most were simply businessmen chasing a dollar.

The great, complicated stew of American popular music was enriched by their risk, though only a few of their record labels are remembered as innovators: Sun (Memphis), King (Cincinnati), and Chess (Chicago), say. But solely in Nashville, argues music historian Martin Hawkins, did their efforts create a new industrial center. Today, Nashville is marketed as the home of country music (and Christian, and gospel). But until at least the 1970s, city fathers were none too keen to have the place known for hillbilly music, preferring that their self-styled Athens of the South be known as a financial and religious hub.

Indeed, at various times Atlanta, Dallas, Knoxville, and Cincinnati might as easily have ended up hosting Music Row, the intimate neigh-

borhood around Nashville's Sixteenth Avenue that has, since the early 1960s, been home to most major players in the country music business. Without that small community, country music might have been assimilated into the broader strains of popular music and never have settled into a separate genre. But instead, country music made its home in Middle Tennessee, and by 1960 Nashville was well on its way to becoming a third mecca of the music industry (after New York and Los Angeles).

Country music historians typically argue that Nashville benefited from a confluence of luck, talent, and geography (Nashville is a day's drive from some 30 states and a crossroads of major interstate highways), as well as the dominance of radio station WSM's 50,000-watt signal and its Saturday night show the *Grand Ole Opry*. Hawkins is little interested in that argument, choosing instead to advance his case for the importance of a motley crew of pioneering businessmen.



R&B singer-songwriter Jimmy Sweeney, center, records a song for Hickory Records. The label, founded by music entrepreneur and renaissance man Fred Rose, was one of several "indies" that sprang up in Nashville after World War II to cater to America's appetite for new music.

He begins their story in 1945, with a short conversation between serial entrepreneur Jim Bulleit, restaurateur and jukebox operator C. V. Hitchcock, and gospel singer-songwriter Wally Fowler. After perhaps 20 minutes, the three men agreed to go into the record business together. Fowler, like many musicians before and after him, apparently lacked the money to join the new enterprise, though he gave it the name Bullet before Bulleit walked through the door. And so, for \$1,500 each (roughly \$17,000 today), Hitchcock and Bulleit started a record label. A bit later, an assistant cashier at the First American National Bank named Orville Zickler bought into their business.

They were, apparently, the first to try such a thing in Nashville, and were quickly (if not widely) imitated. From 1946 to 1952, Bullet released some 500 records, then collapsed. Bullet was followed into the marketplace by Nashboro/Excello (which specialized in black music), Hickory (launched by Hank Williams's music publisher, Fred Rose), and Dot (which grew out of Randy Wood's Gallatin, Tennessee, record store). Only Dot, which was moved to Los Angeles and sold to Paramount in 1957, survived long enough to provide any kind of retirement fund for its owners.

Hawkins details the fates of a number of even smaller labels, whose operators discovered either that creating a hit was not as easy as it seemed or that handling the demand for a hit record once they had one (and preventing better-known artists from covering it) was beyond them. But they were willing to *try* anything, to cross color barriers, to record unknowns, and to play fast and loose—with social mores, audio fidelity, legal niceties, bill collectors, musical conventions, and each other.

The music produced by and for these postwar entrepreneurs was hardly limited to country. The 20-track CD accompanying this volume goes some welcome distance toward explaining what the major releases sounded like, and represents a broad spectrum of artists—including dance bands, blues and R&B performers, and some of

our finest gospel singers. A few of these songs were major releases: Pianist Francis Craig's big band hit "Near You" apparently sold two million or more copies for Bullet, though it's hard today to know why such a modest riff caught the nation's ear. It is somewhat easier to guess why Dottie Dillard's "Save That Confederate Money Boys," recorded with the Owen Bradley Orchestra, found a much smaller audience.

Hawkins has been working on this book off and on from his home in England since 1975, when he became fascinated by the original indies that sprang up in postwar Nashville while he was working with Colin Escott on the pioneering study *Good Rockin' Tonight: Sun Records and the Birth of Rock & Roll* (1991). Beyond preserving the music, the principal achievement of *A Shot in the Dark* is the appendix, for which Hawkins and a handful of collector-collaborators have painstakingly reassembled these obscure labels' discographies. No small task, that, especially given that Hawkins found that Bullet tossed its masters into a Dumpster after filing for bankruptcy in 1952, and that Excello's founder saved money by taping his favorite easy listening LPs over master sessions.

In some ways, the text of *A Shot in the Dark* functions best as a long series of footnotes to that appendix. Most performers' lives and careers are summarized in a tight paragraph, with major players spilling into a few hundred words more. This is in part because Hawkins is chiefly interested in the history of the business itself; in part because many of the performers involved are, like honky-tonk singer Lattie Moore, of importance only to devoted collectors and scholars; and in part because Hawkins has amassed so much detail (despite how much remains unknowable) that he scarcely has room in which to thread a narrative.

Sometimes his book offers fascinating glimpses into the early careers of, say, jazz legend Herman "Sonny" Blount (Sun Ra), rock 'n' roll pioneer Little Richard, and Richard's crooning

white imitator, Pat Boone. Indeed, the figures at the edges of *A Shot in the Dark* who went on to shape the music industry are the musicians who played on these indie sessions. Blues bassist, songwriter, and producer Willie Dixon became integral to Chess Records, while Owen and Harold Bradley would go on to create much of the music that came to be identified as the Nashville sound. But none of these early indie labels produced a star, much less an indelible signature recording.

Most of the businessmen behind these labels were not absorbed into the increasingly professional music business—particularly the distribution side—as it emerged and consolidated in the 1960s and '70s, and they seem neither to have understood nor much cared about the nuances of publishing and union contracts. They provided a training ground for others, and became object lessons themselves. (One of their odder legacies is a surviving Nashville record-pressing plant.)

One of Hawkins's main goals is to rehabilitate

the memory of Jim Bulleit, whose oral history and business dealings run through this volume. Too few of Bulleit's collaborators were alive to give accounts that might balance his testimony, though clearly he was a gifted salesman and promoter. Ultimately, his desire to record pop music with full orchestras—and the commercial failure of the expensive sides that resulted—drove him from Bullet three years after it was founded. The label did well for a time after his departure, then ran out of creative steam and closed in 1952. Bulleit subsequently invested in and was a promoter for Sun Records, but eventually he drifted far from the music business. He was a candy broker when he died in 1988.

Bulleit's dream, however, remains alive in Nashville. Today, dozens of indie labels thrive and struggle in the shadow of Music Row, each hoping that their latest shot in the dark will somehow top the charts. And every once in a while, one does.

GRANT ALDEN is coeditor and art director of the alternative-country music magazine *No Depression*.

IN BRIEF

HISTORY

Old-School History

FREEDOM, JUSTICE, AND luxury are the preoccupations that drive Robin Lane Fox's one-volume survey of classical Greece and Rome. Rather than organize his book around modern theories, Lane Fox instead follows these three explanatory threads, favored by ancient historians, through the turbulent centuries from about 800 BC through AD 138. His account begins with Homer's archaic Greece and traces classical civilization through the death of Hadrian, the

THE CLASSICAL WORLD:

An Epic History From Homer to Hadrian.

By Robin Lane Fox. Basic Books. 656 pp. \$35

Spanish-descended Roman emperor who embodied, through his "Greekling" tastes, the "common classicizing culture" that bound together the empire's far-flung elite.

An Oxford historian and the adviser to Oliver Stone on his 2004 film *Alexander* (though he might wish his name removed from the credits), Lane Fox has produced a work of exhaustive scholarship, but what proves more winning is his willingness to take sides. Freedom, he tells us, was a contested value always and everywhere in the classical world. That freedom reached its (relative) apogee in classical Athens, he is certain. "The nearest to an ideal state in the classical world was not the state of Plato or Aristotle: It was the Athenians," he flatly declares. His passionate admiration for Athenian democracy

enlivens the chapter on the birth of that institution in 508 BC, and leaves no doubt about the contrasting grimness of life in Sparta and the despotism of the Persian kings or of an emperor such as Nero.

Lane Fox has a deft way of showing how intimate the connections were between Greece and Rome, and yet how starkly different the two could be. In 166 BC, for instance, Rome was embarked on a period of intense Hellenization following its triumph over Macedon the previous year. But when famous Greek flute players and dancers were brought to Rome, the audience soon tired of their performance, and “they were told to liven it up by starting a mock battle.” Boxes climbed onstage. The Greek historian Poly-

bios, who was likely present, “could not even bring himself to describe it for his serious Greek readership.”

In compressing the events of a thousand years into roughly 600 pages, Lane Fox reduces some of the

most compelling personalities of the ancient world to ciphers—an unfortunate shortcoming in a history billed as “epic.” Alcibiades, the glamorous Athenian general who led the expedition to Sicily that was to prove so disastrous for Athens in the Peloponnesian War, is here only a dim presence, as is Catiline, the upper-class demagogue who led a coup against the Roman Senate in 63 BC. Other figures, however, are finely sketched; the portrait of Cicero is about as clear-eyed and generous as one could wish.

The Classical World is old-fashioned narrative history at its finest, though Lane Fox occasionally comes off as a bit crusty. In his brief discussion of Sappho, the preeminent Greek poet of erotic desire, Lane Fox blushingly marvels at her lesbianism—“she really desires these ladies”—before changing tack and deeming her a “poetess of flowers.” (Perhaps it’s his horticulturalist’s eye, not old-fogeyism, that’s to blame: He writes a

The Classical World is old-fashioned narrative history at its finest, though Lane Fox occasionally comes off as a bit crusty.

weekly gardening column for *The Financial Times*.)

Throughout this dense yet leisurely telling, the author comes across as urbane, genial, and a tad snifty: in short, the consummate don. His occasional aperçus could just as well be delivered over a glass of port at high table as between the covers of his book. After extolling the talents of the typical Greek aristocrat—raised to speak eloquently in public, ride, play music, and compose verses—Lane Fox remarks drily, “He was accomplished in ways in which his modern critics tend not to be.” One can imagine the appreciative chortles of a tableful of Old Etonians and Harrovians.

—Amanda Kolson Hurley

Fighting Over Money

FROM THE LATE COLONIAL ERA until the establishment of the Federal Reserve System in the early 20th century, conflicts over America’s money supply shaped the country’s history. Those taxes in the American colonies on stamps, tea, and the like may

THE MONEY MEN:
Capitalism,
Democracy, and the
Hundred Years’ War
Over the
American Dollar.

By H. W. Brands.
Norton. 239 pp. \$23.95

have tipped the scale in favor of rebellion, but the Revolutionary War’s main economic causes were volatile interest rates and Britain’s restrictions on what could be used as money in the colonies. The monetary chaos that emerged during the American Revolution and the severe deflation that followed it drove the movement for a new constitution. And contentious political battles in the 18th and 19th centuries over the Bank of the United States, championed by capitalists who desired the stability of a central bank, were obviously related to monetary policy.

Control of the money supply meant control of the price level and interest rates, a situation that pitted Americans against each other: Consumers and lenders benefited when the price level fell and were hurt when it rose, while, for producers and borrowers, the inverse was true. Likewise, high interest rates (adjusted for inflation) aided

lenders; low rates helped borrowers. Little wonder, then, that money was a political hot potato until 1913, when the Federal Reserve Act bureaucratized and thereby largely depoliticized monetary policy, ending a roughly century-long money war and shifting politicians' attention to taxes.

H. W. Brands, author of some 20 books and a history professor at the University of Texas, Austin, relates the history of that war through the lives of five fairly familiar figures: Alexander Hamilton (1757?–1804), America's first treasury secretary and founder of the country's first central bank; Nicholas Biddle (1786–1844), the financier who served as president of the second Bank of the United States until Andrew Jackson succeeded in killing it; Jay Cooke (1821–1905), who mobilized the Northern masses to buy the bonds that partially financed the Civil War; railroad magnate and financial speculator Jay Gould (1836–92); and investment banking titan J. P. Morgan (1837–1913).

Nothing of such practical and widespread use as money is so misunderstood, and *The Money Men* does little to educate readers about money and finance. The discussion of restrictions on colonial bills of credit is garbled, for instance, as are explanations of early banking and securities markets. Brands's grasp of finance improves as his narrative advances chronologically, but one might say of him what he writes of Andrew Jackson, that he "knew next to nothing about banks, a little more about money, and a great deal about democracy."

It is in the political arena where Brands shines. His biographer's knowledge of the policies, rhetoric, and backroom shenanigans of important players such as Benjamin Franklin, Andrew Jackson, and Theodore Roosevelt brings his account to life. He has a knack for keeping his yarn moving while generously peppering it with interesting and occasionally telling anecdotes and quotations, as when he dramatically describes William Jennings Bryan's famous "cross of gold" speech, which cemented Bryan's 1896 presidential nomination, writing that "the audience absorbed the rhythms of Bryan's voice."

And he has a sharp, observant eye for the big picture, noting, for example, that "the Civil War began as a revolt by Southern democrats and ended as a revolution by Northern capitalists."

Overall, Brands's account of American history as a series of monetary struggles is a fruitful interpretation well worth a reader's dollars.

—Robert E. Wright

Painting the Truth

DURING WORLD WAR I, photographers and cameramen commissioned by the U.S. military produced more than 35,000 still photographs for the files of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF).

This work, largely done by the newly established Army Signal Corps Photographic Section, was intended to provide military intelligence, a historical record, and educational and propaganda materials. At the same time, a much smaller and less-remembered image production project was under way: The AEF commissioned eight prominent illustrators as captains to produce a "historical record" of what became known as the Great War.

In *Portrait of War*, historian Peter Krass takes his readers from the artists' initial enthusiasm when they signed up to the beginning of the Allies' occupation of Germany. The men met numerous difficulties as they sought to reach the frontlines and capture scenes of war: fears about their own safety, military stonewalling and physical roadblocks, and a desperately frustrating lack of transport. Like the military's official photographers, the artists reported to the War Department and to the Committee on Public Information, the government agency that packaged the war for American consumption. They struggled to reconcile Washington's expectations (drawings of "action" and heroism that would appeal to the press and the public) with what they felt moved

PORTRAIT OF WAR:

The U.S. Army's First Combat Artists and the Doughboys' Experience in WWI.

By Peter Krass. Wiley. 342 pp. \$30

to cover (wounded soldiers and civilians, devastated villages). From Krass's account, it appears that the artists' work was published only sporadically during the war, though afterward the original sketches and paintings were exhibited publicly.

With the aid of a rich record of letters and journals, Krass meticulously recounts the illustrators' war careers, and his subjects emerge as more than the stolid faces in sepia-toned World War I-era photographs. But Krass fails to explore the significance of the eight illustrators' artistic efforts, the reasons for their recruitment, or how the art was used. It is not until late in the book that we learn that the artists had "their own, self-designed specialties," or that one pro-

What could illustrators bring to coverage of the Great War that photographers could not?

duced only 30 finished works while others created several times that many. Belatedly, he discloses that, in all, the eight men produced 507 works of art for the AEF—a trifling

number compared to the tens of thousands of photographs.

What could illustrators bring to coverage of the Great War that photographers could not, especially if their mandate was the same—to make a visual historical record? There's the hint of an answer in artist Harvey Thomas Dunn's observation about one subject proposed for a picture: "The idea of the two old soldiers talking together is good, but is not successful because they have no foil. . . . It would have been better to have a little child all dressed up in fluffy ruffles rolling a hoop, perhaps, in front of them." This addition, Krass comments, "would add meaning; now there would be the innocent victim of man's inhumanity or hope instead of weary resignation. It was time to seize the truth of human existence." Yet Krass never grapples with what "truth" is—or should be—in wartime.

Nor does he acknowledge that today we believe that fabricated elements detract from

rather than augment a historical record. Visual documents untouched and free of manipulation, such as the amateur snapshots from Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison or the security camera video of the attackers who bombed London's subways in 2005, appear to us to convey what's true. So how could the AEF's eight illustrators, recruited by the government, end up creating images that, as a *New York Tribune* reviewer at the time noted, prompt viewers to "kindle . . . to their truth, to their unmistakable value as records"? Has our understanding of truth changed over the last century? Or are artists—even if they're soldiers—exempted from faithfully documenting specific moments in war in order to capture some larger essence of "war"? It will require another book to answer these questions.

—Susan D. Moeller

ARTS & LETTERS

Allegories of the Caves

THE PEOPLE WHO PAINTED in caves in France and Spain millennia ago are at once deeply familiar and utterly baffling. The images they left on stone walls and ceilings are imbued with an almost spiritual power: the

sheer weight of the bulls that stalk the great cave of Lascaux, the colors and grace of the elegant beasts at Altamira, the near-worshipful placement of bear skulls alongside the proud lions of Chauvet. These figures are not simply recognizable as great artistic achievements; they also move us as the products of an evidently human sensibility. Though we know little of these ancestors who produced humanity's first art, a thread of continuity binds us to them, across some 600 generations and 20,000 years.

Greg Curtis, a former editor of *Texas Monthly* whose 2003 book on the Venus de Milo was a

THE CAVE PAINTERS:
Probing the Mysteries of the World's First Artists.

By Gregory Curtis.
Knopf. 278 pp. \$25



In southwest France, ancient artists populated the walls of Lascaux's now-famous caves with bison and other animals.

breezily entertaining and iconoclastic romp through art historians' various views of the statue, now takes the same approach to the caves. His technique is less to describe and analyze the paintings and engravings than to assess the theories that successive experts have advanced to interpret them and to explain a culture that lasted in one form or another from 40,000 to 10,000 BC. (Interest declared: I made my own attempt to describe the cave painters' way of life in a 2002 novel about Lascaux, *The Caves of Périgord*).

Few domains in art history have provoked as much intellectual rancor as the caves. Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola, who discovered the stunning Spanish cavern of Altamira in 1879, was widely accused of fraud and of working in cahoots with the Jesuits to denigrate Darwin's theory of evolution. He died a decade later, deeply depressed and discredited. His main tormentor, the French expert Emile Cartailhac, condemned the Altamira paintings as "a vulgar joke by a hack

artist," without having seen them. He later recanted publicly.

Curtis may be rather too respectful of the eminent French archaeologist Abbé Henri Breuil (1877–1961), who memorably called the Lascaux cave "the Sistine Chapel of prehistory." Shortly after the cave's discovery in 1940, he drained water from basins above it, incautiously flooding away much archaeological evidence. Though Breuil was the father of prehistoric studies, his fundamental theory that the paintings were a form of hunting magic was wrong-headed; the people of the caves lived primarily on reindeer, an animal rarely depicted in their art.

Curtis does have some fun with another esteemed French expert, André Leroi-Gourhan (1911–86), who saw the paintings as a grand representation of the male-female principle and deduced that all the bison were female symbols and all the horses male. Alas, some of the Lascaux horses are visibly pregnant. Curtis unfortunately neglects to put Leroi-Gourhan's theory into the essential context of the tumult over structuralism and the search for a grand theory of signs, symbols, and linguistics that was sweeping French intellectual life in the 1960s. He also omits the beguiling theory that the animals on the cave ceilings represented the stars and galaxies visible in the night skies overhead. Scholars have spent eons trying, with limited success, to make the paintings fit the stars.

For all of Curtis's bubbly enthusiasm, his scholarship appears wider than it is deep. Nonetheless, he has produced an entertaining, informative, and valuable book. He understands that the theories advanced by various scholars say as much about our own times as they do about prehistoric society. As Leroi-Gourhan observed, "All theory is a piece of self-portrait." We will probably never know why our ancestors painted so many animals in the way they did, with little sense of the landscape around them and few depictions of human figures or of killing. But then, what would art historians of the far future make of our own culture, if all they had to guide them were Rothko's canvases, Warhol's portraits, and Damien Hirst's severed cows?

—Martin Walker

Matters of Taste

“TELL ME WHAT YOU EAT, and I’ll tell you who you are,” declared French epicure Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. In *Food Is Culture*, Italian culinary

historian Massimo Montanari demonstrates that who we are is also a function of how, when, and with whom we eat, in what order we consume our food, and how far from our homes it is grown.

To read this disarming collection of brief essays is to witness a superbly stocked mind grappling with matters that are vital to human survival. The fact that we must eat daily might suggest that food is more a biological necessity than a cultural artifact, but for Montanari, even a hermit in the desert, eating what roots and grasses he can scrounge, is making a cultural choice by rejecting the long-established tradition of processed foods. Our food preparations, necessarily informed by culture, “cannot be ideologically neutral,” he observes.

Montanari’s special insights arise from his synthesis of medieval history (his primary field) with current alimentary debates. Medieval cookery was a matter of mixing the elemental principles of the four “humors” (hot, cold, moist, dry) to arrive at a balanced diet. Our present-day fussing over carbs, fats, micronutrients, and antioxidants is its lineal descendant. What is a medieval hermit, after all, but a trendy raw-food vegan waiting for the 21st century to give him cookbooks, restaurants, magazines, and cable-access TV shows?

During a promotional campaign a few years ago by one fast-food chain, you were supposed to say “Broiling beats frying” at the restaurant counter in order to get a free food sample. But expressing such preferences amounts to much more than catch-phrase marketing. Montanari shows how, in the Mid-

FOOD IS CULTURE.

By Massimo Montanari.
Translated by Albert
Sonnenfeld. Columbia
Univ. Press.
149 pp. \$22.50

dle Ages, roasting beat boiling: To roast meat was to enjoy it fresh from the hunt, lavishing its fats on a crackling fire. To boil meat was to hoard up the juice in a stock, husbanding all the by-products. Royalty roasted, peasantry boiled. You suggested beef stew to Charlemagne at your peril.

In another essay, Montanari describes how medieval cooks, who by necessity used local ingredients, set great store by exotic imports. Today, when blueberries from Chile or asparagus tips from Peru are more readily available than produce grown in one’s own neighborhood, the global village has no higher term of esteem than “local.” We humans always want what’s hard to get. Despised peasant grains of the past (barley, rye, spelt) are today’s re-ché health foods. Pure white bread, once the ne plus ultra of refinement, is today’s white-trash feed.

These seemingly arbitrary shifts in taste are the central theme of *Food Is Culture*. Coffee, for instance, may seem merely a functional stimulant. Yet Montanari shows how, over the centuries, coffee has sometimes been a drink of privileged classes and their exclusive venues, and at other times has served as the daily dram of the working classes. We never simply drink the stuff; we display our social standing by means of complicated preparations and far-fetched beans. Ordering coffee is, perhaps, a roundabout way of ordering our social world.

—Tim Morris

Final Cut

THE DECLARATION LAST year by Japan’s new prime minister that he intends to rewrite his country’s constitution, which renounces war, came too late for Yukio Mishima. The world-famous writer resented the pacifism imposed on his country after World War II and wanted Japan to turn aside from what he

MISHIMA’S SWORD:

Travels in Search of
a Samurai Legend.

By Christopher Ross.
Da Capo. 262 pp. \$26

saw as its drift into Western decadence. In the end, he sacrificed his life for the cause. On November 25, 1970, after a botched attack on a Japanese defense base, he committed seppuku—ritual suicide with a sword.

In the eyes of many, Yukio Mishima (the pseudonym adopted by Kimitake Hiraoka, b. 1925) was a right-wing fanatic and a national embarrassment. But he was also a phenomenally talented and prolific writer, three times nominated for the Nobel Prize, whose novels and plays still fascinate Western audiences. The very day he committed suicide, Mishima mailed his publisher the final pages of the fourth book in his epic tetralogy *The Sea of Fertility*, a work of historical fiction that blends the brutal drive for self-destruction with the beauty of reincarnation.

The history that has intervened since Mishima's death makes him ripe for a re-evaluation, but such is not the project of Christopher Ross, an adventurer whose previous book narrated his experience working as a London tube station assistant. Instead, he has written an entertaining mash-up of a biography that blends elements of travelogue, memoir, and martial arts manual, illuminating some of the mysteries of Yukio Mishima, Japan, and, of course, Christopher Ross.

Mishima admired the traditional values he saw embodied in the samurai, who disappeared along with Japan's feudal system, and he strove to imitate these warriors. But if Mishima styled himself a samurai, he was a strange one: a sickly and effete child who eventually developed a well-muscled physique, a preening celebrity who courted the spotlight, a homosexual who lived with a wife and children. Above all, he desired to become famous and to die heroically.

His death—whether heroic or not—is what inspired Ross's search for Mishima's legacy. But though Ross comes across as clever and worldly, he lacks the requisite nihilism. And he can't keep from inserting himself into Mishima's story, as when he disrobes and

descends into a torture chamber to meet someone whom he believes to have been one of Mishima's lovers. (He discovers that the man had instead been conscripted to witness Mishima pretend to commit ritual suicide, a variety of role-playing Mishima found immensely arousing.)

Because Ross is such a charming rogue, we don't mind that he never decides if the book is about Mishima or himself. Or that he can't refrain from digressions into the comically obscure—metallurgical arcana, say, or the ways a human body can be dismembered. The book gains traction when Ross focuses on his search for the antique sword that Mishima used to kill himself.

At last, a mysterious phone call reveals its whereabouts. But succeeding in his quest leaves Ross cold. When he sees the sword, he writes, "I am no longer thinking of death." And this is where he and Mishima part ways. For a short time, however, Ross grew very close to his protagonist. We know because he tells us that while he was writing this book, he was stricken with severe pains in his abdomen, pains he eventually realized were the pangs of a phantom seppuku.

—Andrew Starner

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Still on the Radio

KRISTEN HARING HAS WRITTEN a valentine to the ham radio community. This largely invisible sphere of two-way radio communication among technical enthusiasts blossomed in

the early 20th century, as amateurs built radio sets with tubes, wires, and switches, and launched Morse-coded messages on the newly discovered airwaves. In the decades since, changes in technology and shifts in the culture have diminished the romance of radio amateurs, but not their numbers. Today, they

HAM RADIO'S TECHNICAL CULTURE.

By Kristen Haring. MIT
Press. 220 pp. \$27.95

can still be found in basements and garages, logging distant contacts and keeping up with regulars on the frequencies that remain available to them.

Haring, a historian of science and technology, takes an anthropological approach to ham radio culture that reflects the concerns and values of its denizens while acknowledging the realities of its male-dominated culture, in which female hams have been disparaged on the air and discouraged from joining the fraternity. Her emphasis, however, is on respectful description rather than critical analysis. The ham radio community will likely receive this book with accolades (part of it that was previously published won a prize from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers). For the rest of us, though, the experience of reading it may sometimes feel like an encounter with Uncle Alvin, the ham radio enthusiast, at a family get-together. Our eyes glaze as we nod tolerantly, hoping that we don't have to trek yet again to the radio shack and pretend an interest in circuits, call signs, and wall charts.

Those seeking an account of ham radio enthusiasts' contributions to American broadcasting, an analysis of *why* technical pursuits are so frequently gendered, or an exploration of how ham radio operators' marginalization may have inspired other technological countercultures, such as pirate radio or computer hacking, won't find what they're looking for here. Instead, Haring has given voice to the hams themselves, trolling patiently through journals well known within the ham community such as *CQ* and *QST* along with texts as specialized as *Jobber News and Electronic Wholesaling* and *RCA Ham Tips* (not a cookbook). She also dusted off books with titles only a hobbyist could love (e.g., *Vacuum Tube Circuits for the Electronic Experimenter*).

Haring situates radio hobbyists not only in the technological realm but within the worlds of work and home, as consumers and as contributors to civil defense. A thread of domestic

tension runs throughout this history, as reflected in one ham's query soliciting "anyone [who has] managed to build a ham rig into a modern home and keep it unobtrusive." During the first half of the century, hams often faced government suspicion that they might be using their instruments to communicate with "foreign" agents, though in the World War II years they dubbed themselves the minutemen of radio and some joined the (tightly supervised) War Emergency Radio Service. By the 1960s, anxiety about what those tinkerers were up to in their backyard shacks had eased, just as the emergence of integrated circuits posed another threat to ham radio: If anyone could buy a prepackaged set and be on the air within hours, what made the hobby distinctive?

Yet ham radio remains popular in this era of cellular phones, CB radios, and the Internet. Why? Haring argues that in ham radio's heyday, men found fraternity, indulged a fascination with gadgetry, and gained the respect of employers through this community. Though today's advanced technologies have rendered much of their expertise obsolete and undermined the "powerful, skilled, precise, and manly" ham image, says Haring, an "emotionally charged technological nostalgia" lingers. This sounds like the same motive that drives others to collect records or attend *Star Trek* conventions. The technical side of ham culture, then, may be less relevant to its endurance than its hobbyist aspect—but that's a subject for another book.

—Michele Hilmes

The Skinny on Skin

IF PLEASURE IS THE ABSENCE of pain, as Epicurus proposed, I might add that it is also the absence of itch. Such was my frame of mind as I approached Nina G.

Jablonski's treatise on skin while in the midst of a flare-up of seborrheic dermatitis. Dermatolo-

SKIN:
A Natural History.
By Nina G. Jablonski.
Univ. of California Press.
266 pp. \$24.95

gists aren't sure what causes this chronic skin condition or how to cure it, and so, since my teenage years, I have applied one cream and then another whenever my skin blooms with red, itchy patches.

The condition is an uncomfortable reminder of how mysterious a thing is the flexible body wrapper we call "skin," which is, in fact, our largest organ. In this exhaustive treatment, Jablonski, an anthropology professor at Pennsylvania State University, traces skin's evolution from a simple epidermis on early multicellular organisms to the complex layers that cover modern humans, composed of keratin proteins and melanocytes in our outer layer, the epidermis, and collagen fibers, nerves, blood vessels, and hair follicles in the dermis layer beneath. Along the way we also learn why snakes shed their skin (the individual scales cannot grow), why crocodile skin is so tough (it contains bones called ossifications), and why hippopotamuses have pink sweat (it acts as a sunscreen).

But Jablonski's focus is the human animal and the link between our skin and our behavior. For example, she makes a strong case that after we evolved into bipedal creatures who moved around under the African sun, we lost most of our body hair to make our sweat-based cooling process more efficient. The hair that remains on the tops of our heads, she suggests, protects the scalp from ultraviolet radiation.

Indeed, the sun, in Jablonski's estimation, has played an important role in our skin's development. Human skin must protect the body from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation even as it uses that radiation to produce beneficial vitamin D. Darker-skinned peoples living in tropical areas that receive high amounts of ultraviolet radiation find an evolutionary advantage to having lots of melanin to protect them from solar radiation, despite the fact that melanin greatly slows vitamin D production. By contrast, lighter-skinned peoples in cooler climates, such as Scandinavia, where solar exposure is limited, run the sun-damage risks attendant upon their lower levels of melanin in order to produce as

much vitamin D as possible.

Jablonski concludes with a look at what's ahead for skin, exploring how gene therapy and collagen scaffolding may help treat psoriasis sufferers and burn patients, how people may bleach or tan their skin by deactivating or activating melanin production, and how pollution sensors and identification chips embedded beneath the skin could make us physically safer—though more vulnerable to invasions of privacy.

Jablonski is sometimes perfunctory, as in the too-few pages she devotes to our sense of touch and to the wear and tear that skin endures. She's at her best when she plays to her strengths as an anthropologist, for example, in her persuasive later chapters on the various ways humans have modified their skin to express themselves—piercing it, tattooing it, scarring it, painting it, and injecting it with Botox.

I grew up listening to my chemist father chide my sister for applying eye shadow because it contained suspected carcinogens that could be easily absorbed through the skin. And he opposed piercing and tattooing less for aesthetic reasons than because such epidermal embellishments compromise the body's natural barrier against the hostile outside world. Like many fathers before him, however, he was railing against ancient, powerful desires. The frozen body of a late-Neolithic man, recovered from a glacier in 1991, shows that the practice of tattooing dates back at least 5,000 years.

—Aaron Dalton

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

A Philosopher's View

FROM 1922 UNTIL HIS death in 1976, the controversial German philosopher Martin Heidegger often lived and worked in a three-room cabin in the Black Forest mountains. "Die Hütte" (the hut), as he called it, was a retreat as well as a source of inspiration. His

HEIDEGGER'S HUT.

By Adam Sharr.
MIT Press.
112 pp. \$24.95

influential writings on technology, poetry, place, and dwelling are rooted in this small house, which is backed by one mountain and looks across a valley at another. Anyone who has struggled to parse Heidegger's dense reflections on "the fourfold" (earth, sky, divinities, and mortals) or the notion that "poetically man dwells" will surely find the task easier from this vantage.

We are all shaped by as well as shapers of our built environment, which exists more in time than in space.

Adam Sharr's detailed study of the structure, the first of its kind, marries architectural precision with philosophical interest to create a handy guide to this famous, perhaps notorious, house. Was it here

that Heidegger felt the tug of blood and earth that would underwrite his 1933 inaugural address as the rector of Freiburg University, a corrupt defense of National Socialism as the true destiny of the German universities? Was it the anti-cosmopolitan, premodern texture of this mountain region that sustained his critiques of liberalism and technology's assimilation of the world into mere resource, or "standing reserve"? More generally, how does the site of any philosopher's reflection affect the direction of thought?

Sharr, an architect and lecturer at Cardiff University, in Wales, does not attempt to answer such questions, though he raises them ably enough and provides a basis for further investigation. There can be little doubt that such investigation is needed, and not simply as a means of untangling Heidegger's peculiar legacy. It is not merely academic to wonder how Michel de Montaigne's spacious library affected his views on toleration, or whether René Descartes could have conceived the *Meditations on First Philosophy* anywhere but from within his study, for such questions embrace

wider ethical and political concerns. We are, all of us, shaped by as well as shapers of our built environment—a landscape, as renowned architect Daniel Libeskind likes to remind us, that exists more in time than in space. Heidegger's thoughts on dwelling are central to these issues, even if the role of his Nazi-leaning politics in his philosophy remains unsettled.

It has to be said that the hut itself, which still stands but is on private property and thus inaccessible to visitors, is of limited architectural interest. A simple country house, it was built anonymously and somewhat crudely. This fact renders the detailed middle sections of Sharr's book, which dissect plan, site, and materials at extravagant length, a little precious, if not downright comical. (It is as if we had been invited to a solemn architectural charette on a prefab trailer home.)

But the book also offers nicely turned though all too brief contributions on the importance of place in architectural thought by Simon Sadler and Andrew Benjamin, two leading theoreticians of the built environment. Included as well is a series of photographs by the photojournalist Digne Meller-Marcovicz, showing Heidegger and his wife, both in their seventies, pottering around the hut, or the philosopher assuming various meditative attitudes in the field beyond. These images are at once goofy and profound, and add the human dimension to this most celebrated of minor dwellings.

Sharr does not so much challenge the prevailing Heidegger myths as presuppose them, and his book lacks the eerie intellectual richness of David Barison and Daniel Ross's 2004 film *The Ister*, which covers some of the same territory, using Heidegger's lectures on Friedrich Hölderlin as a basis. For all that, it is a valuable small volume that belongs in the collection of anyone interested in the relations between thought and place.

—Mark Kingwell

Finding Our Tongues

FRENCH PHILOSOPHER PAUL Ricoeur, who died in 2005 at the age of 92, was both the John Dewey and the Aristotle of post–World War II philosophy. Like Dewey, Ricoeur was a sweet-tempered and optimistic thinker who wrote important and original works well into his eighties. Like Aristotle, he sought to embrace the world as it is rather than chase after a unifying Truth or Being hiding elsewhere. Ricoeur—whose major works include *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (1970), *The Rule of Metaphor* (1977), the three-volume *Time and Narrative* (1984–88), and *Memory, History, and Forgetting* (2004)—wrote about everything from religion to the logic of the social sciences, working from within a hermeneutical framework that emphasized the complexity and multiplicities of this world and of the ways humans make sense of it.

The three short lectures on translation gathered in this tiny book date from 2004 and are vintage, albeit not path-breaking, Ricoeur. If philosophy begins from wonder at the fact that there is something rather than nothing, Ricoeur's great gift was to make us fully cognizant of the inspiring challenges that the imperfect somethings of the universe present to humans. Translation, he tells us, follows from two ineluctable features of the human condition: the plurality of natural languages and the non-transparency of the self to others, or even to itself.

Quite unconvincingly, Ricoeur asks us to read the biblical story of Babel not as narrating “an irremediable linguistic catastrophe,” but merely as recording, with “no recrimination, no lamentation, no accusation,” the multiplicity of languages as a fact of life. More persuasively, he recommends a practical response to this fact, a response that finds a mean between two “paralyzing” theoretical positions: one, that “translation is impossible,” and two, that we must create an ideal artificial and universal language to overcome the deficiencies of natural languages. Ricoeur calls on us to roll up our sleeves

ON TRANSLATION.

By Paul Ricoeur.
Translated by Eileen
Brennan. Routledge.
46 pp. \$17.95

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and do the hard work of translation, fully aware as we do so of the many forms of resistance to doing that work well. The ceaseless re-translation of the classics—Shakespeare, Montaigne, Goethe, and the rest—testifies to “the desire to translate” despite all the obstacles and the self-conscious acknowledgment of inevitable inadequacy.

Opening ourselves to the foreign starts with abandoning all “pretensions to self-sufficiency.” We

The ceaseless translation of Shakespeare, Montaigne, Goethe, and the rest testifies to “the desire to translate” despite all the obstacles.

must learn, against strong resistance, to hate “the mother tongue’s provincialism,” for the foreign is all too often experienced “as a threat against our own linguistic identity.” The “test of the foreign” leads us to understand

that, in a phrase Ricoeur borrows from literary critic George Steiner, “to understand is to translate.” Even within the same tribe, every utterance partakes of “correspondence without adequacy,” as each individual struggles to make itself understood. We constantly experience the frustration of not having gotten it exactly right, of feeling that we have not captured precisely in words the experience, feeling, or thought we are striving to communicate.

The possibilities of alienation (these words do not reveal the real me) and of misinterpretation (no, that’s not what I meant at all) are ever present. Our desire to translate ourselves to ourselves and to others is always shadowed by the fear of failure and by resentment of the very necessity of the task. The development of “linguistic hospitality,” the welcoming of the foreign into the privacy of the self, is the ethos Ricoeur promotes as the proper and humble response to the fact that some ideal union between a text and its translation, between our sense of self and the words with which we express that sense, and, ultimately, between the self and others, can never be achieved.

Ricoeur insisted, especially in later works such as *Oneself as Another* (1995), that the path to self-understanding lies through the detour of an encounter with the other. His essays on translation

dramatize this call to recognize in the foreign the lineaments of one’s own imperfection.

—John McGowan

CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

Trading Digits

THE TRADING FLOORS OF stock and commodities exchanges have been potent symbols of financial centers such as Chicago, London, and New York for a century.

In these huge rooms, sometimes called pits, thousands of traders buy and sell their way to fortune or ruin. Now trades are often made electronically rather than through a combination of yells and gestures, and the frenzied pits are being replaced by rows of staid computer cubicles. What might this change mean for the breed of famously crass traders who have long been the lifeblood of the market?

To find out firsthand, New York University anthropologist Caitlin Zaloom worked as a clerk at the industry-leading Chicago Board of Trade and as a trader in a recently established electronic trading office in London. The result is *Out of the Pits*, an examination of the culture of futures traders. These pit denizens make money or hedge against risk, for themselves or for clients, by betting on the ups and downs of contracts whose value is linked to the future price of everything from wheat to interest rates. Traders, especially the “locals” working for themselves, may buy and sell hundreds of times a day; they make—or lose—their money on the margins between the purchase and sale prices. Their presence in the pits has ensured the market’s liquidity, which rests on the presumption that for every buyer there is a seller, and for every seller, a buyer.

Unlike pedigreed financiers, futures traders are mostly working-class men whom the pits have fashioned into a species Zaloom

OUT OF THE PITS:

Traders and Technology From Chicago to London.

By Caitlin Zaloom.
Univ. of Chicago Press.
224 pp. \$29



A trader works the “pit” at the Chicago Board of Trade. Will online trading mean the extinction of his boorish, boisterous culture?

calls “economic man.” They often curse and sometimes drink on the job, exchange photos of women in sexual poses, wear bizarre clothing, and may, like superstitious ballplayers, refuse to change their socks or brush their teeth during winning streaks. These performances, Zaloom argues, help traders cast off the constraints of civility

to become the risk takers they have to be.

Electronic trading, which began proliferating in the mid-1990s, was designed to “splinter this flesh and bone market into separate parts.” Online

trading might have been expected to transform the culture of the traders as well, yet *Out of the Pits* concludes that it has not been as subversive as that. Absent the social cues of the pits’ open-outcry system, traders must base their decisions to buy or sell on rows of numbers on screens, each signifying a price for a futures contract. Online trading’s

Futures traders curse and sometimes drink on the job, and may, like superstitious ballplayers, refuse to change their socks or brush their teeth during winning streaks.

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innovators intended that the new market would rely on “pure” information, but traders assign names (e.g., Spoofer) and character traits to the other traders they discern in these numbers’ patterns.

Fewer traders are required, and some of the old guard can’t adapt to the new technology, but those who do carry their culture and their dedication to liquidity with them. One trader in Zaloom’s London office, where she arrived in 2000 and observed the transition, kept a baseball bat nearby, and would slap it into his palm when he was doing badly. Another, named Freddy, picked his nose and chanted his own version of a well-known hip-hop number, “Who let the Fred out? Woof, woof, woof.” “Freddy’s performances epitomize economic man, trader-style,” Zaloom writes in her formal, academic style. “His ratty self-presentation and loutish deeds display the aggressive and naked desires of the debased market creature.”

Though insightful, *Out of the Pits* reveals more about yesterday’s market than it does about tomorrow’s. The conversion to electronic trading has untied the world’s great exchanges from the cities they have inhabited for so long, but Zaloom fails to explore the implications of this seismic shift. The once-teeming pits of the Chicago Board of Trade, which soon will merge with the more technologically advanced Chicago Mercantile Exchange, already stand half empty. If they disappear, what will the silence mean to Chicago?

—Elizabeth MacBride

Life Behind the Veil, and Without It

THIS REMARKABLE BOOK enriches the field of Middle Eastern studies, to which Nikki Keddie has devoted herself for the past four decades. She has made it her particular concern to exam-

WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

Past and Present.

By Nikki R. Keddie.
Princeton Univ. Press.
389 pp. \$24.95

ine the lives of the region’s women, and the most important research of recent years on that subject informs this essential new volume. Even among scholars, there is a tendency to generalize about Islam and about Muslim countries, particularly about the role of women there. Keddie’s goal is to “avoid sweeping timeless generalizations about such things as ‘Arab women’ or ‘Islam,’” and one of the chief strengths of her book is that it consistently points up the diversity of women’s lives in the Middle East.

She begins with a historical overview that reaches back to women in pre-Islamic Arabia, then goes on to consider, among other topics, the rise of Islam, the portrayal of women in the Qur’an, the various interpretations accorded the Qur’an’s verses about women, and the influence of the West on women’s status. In many countries of the region today, family law is still largely based on Islamic law, or sharia, as it has been for hundreds of years. Women have no right to divorce, and, if their husbands divorce them, they lose custody of their children. To work, to study, or to travel, they must obtain the permission of their husbands, fathers, or male guardians.

But the lives women lead in different parts of the Middle East vary greatly, which Keddie highlights by dividing her discussion of 20th-century and contemporary history into sections that focus on individual countries. In the last century, Egyptian women were at the forefront of the rights movement, and many of them had ceased to wear the veil by the late 1930s. Iran, by contrast, saw the reverse of progress: Before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, women were free to dress as they liked, even in miniskirts, but today Iranian law requires that all women there observe Islamic rules regarding dress.

In the 20th century, Turkish president Kemal Atatürk, Iran’s Reza Shah, and King Amanullah of Afghanistan promoted change in their countries, although, argues Keddie, their primary concern was modernization, not

women's rights. Nevertheless, these men loosened sharia's restrictive impact on women, opened education to them, discouraged veiling, and raised the legal marriage age for girls. Keddie takes note as well of more recent developments, including the rise of Islamists in the region; the discussions of Islam, democracy, and women's rights fomented by secularists; the gradual inclusion of women in the political arenas in Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, and other Persian Gulf states; and women's access to education—but exclusion from political life—in Saudi Arabia.

After the regional history, Keddie turns her attention to developments in the nascent field of Middle Eastern gender studies. She welcomes the trend away from reliance solely on "ideal" sources, such as the Qur'an and the traditional sayings of Muhammad, as indicators of what life was like for women in the Middle East in the past. And she warns against the tendency of some scholars to romanticize the lot of women in previous eras, for example, in pre-Islamic Iran or in Egypt

before the Ottoman conquest. Keddie urges greater use of anthropological studies and comparative perspectives, more focus on the "undocumented women" of the lower classes, heightened sensitivity to how history shapes the present, and special attention to the variety of women's experiences as determined by factors such as class, social position, and rural vs. urban lifestyles.

The book concludes with material from two 1990 interviews in which Keddie—currently an emeritus professor at the University of California, Los Angeles—traced her life from her early days as a scholar of European history and literature focused on 19th-century Iranian history. Realizing that she had overlooked the role of women in her own work, Keddie began to focus on gender issues. To read these interviews from almost two decades ago is to be struck by how much the world and Middle Eastern studies have changed since. For the new prominence of scholarship about women, no little credit is due Nikki Keddie.

—Haleh Esfandiari

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PORTRAIT



The transitional ISBN format, showing both the old 10-digit and the new 13-digit codes.

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