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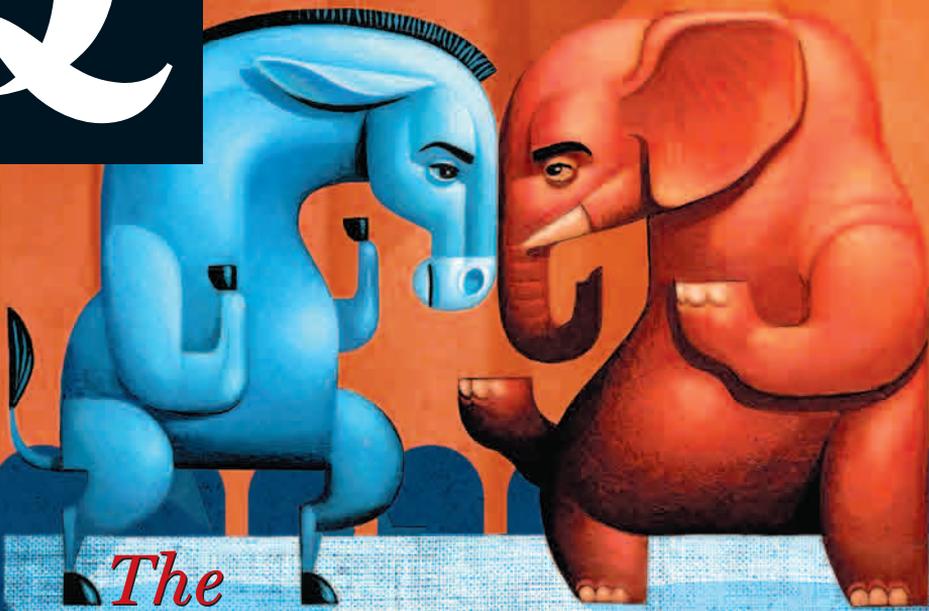
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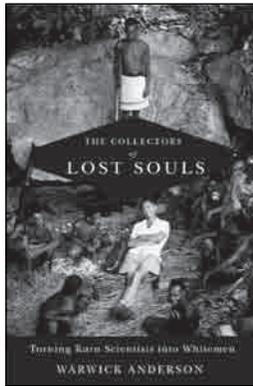
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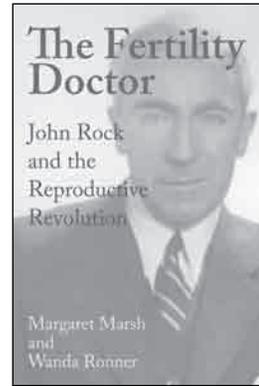
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Illustration of Jesus

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Dr. Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The author or editor of 17 books, he has received many awards and prizes during his tenure at UNC including the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for excellence in teaching.

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COVER STORY

43 THE GLORY AND THE FOLLY

Campaign '08 has stirred old discontents about politics. What's wrong with American democracy? Is the problem ill-informed voters who are buffaloes by attack ads and political ephemera, or is it that elections don't give adequate voice to the popular will? Or does a long view reveal that the American system works pretty well after all?

The Irrational Electorate | *By Larry M. Bartels*

An Admirable Folly | *By Denis MacShane*

Poll Power | *By Scott Keeter*

Bury the Hatchet | *By Gil Troy*

16 Only Words

By Charlotte Brewer | For a century, the *Oxford English Dictionary* has served as a monument to the English language. Now that the *OED* has emigrated to the Internet, will it ever be the same?

22 Regime Change 2.0

By Robert S. Litwak | U.S. policymakers need to put aside the recent obsession with changing the leadership of rogue states and focus on changing their behavior.

28 The New Kindergarten

By Douglas J. Besharov and Douglas M. Call | The campaign for universal pre-kindergarten could hurt the one group that most needs help: the children of low-income families.

36 The Big Thaw

By Joshua Kucera | Global warming is shrinking Greenland's ice sheet—and heating up its movement for independence from Denmark.

ON THE COVER: Illustration by Jon Reinfurt, www.reinfurt.com.

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DEPARTMENTS

4 EDITOR'S COMMENT

6 LETTERS

8 AT THE CENTER

12 FINDINGS

IN ESSENCE

OUR SURVEY OF NOTABLE ARTICLES FROM OTHER JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES

67 SOCIETY

Crime's New Address, from *The Atlantic*

Happiness Paradoxes, from *American Law and Economics Association Annual Meetings* and *American Sociological Review*

The Global Warming Diet, from *Environmental Science and Technology*

69 POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Inside-Out City, from *The New Republic*

70 FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Bogged Down Again, from *Survival*

And by the Way . . . , from *Foreign Affairs*

History Recharged, from *The American Interest*

Fortified Diplomacy, from *RAND Review*

73 ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The Long Tail Tale, from *Harvard Business Review*

The Graying of Kindergarten, from *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*

Beating the Market, from *The Journal of Wealth Management*

76 PRESS & MEDIA

Virtually Invisible, from *Science* and *BMJ*

77 HISTORY

Colonial Warming, from *The Journal of American History*

Medieval Protectionism, from *Comparative Studies in Society and History*

A Habsburg Plan for Brussels, from *Orbis*

80 RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Conservative Complicity, from *Claremont Review of Books*

Will Evangelicals Hail Mary? from *Theology Today*

82 SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The Arrow of Time, from *Scientific American*

What Is 'Natural'? from *Conservation Magazine*

84 ARTS & LETTERS

What's American About American Art? from *The New York Review of Books*

Paris's New Look, from *Metropolis*

Mesopotamian Treasures, from *The Art Newspaper*

86 OTHER NATIONS

The Battle of the Caspian Sea, from *Middle East Policy* and *The Middle East Journal*

Ability Grouping, from *Economic Development and Cultural Change*

India's Sick Democracy, from *India Review*

CURRENT BOOKS

89 A THOUSAND HILLS: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It. By Stephen Kinzer

WHEN THINGS FELL APART: State Failure in Late-Century Africa. By Robert H. Bates
Reviewed by G. Pascal Zachary

92 HIDDEN IN THE SHADOW OF THE MASTER: The Model-Wives of Cézanne, Monet, and Rodin. By Ruth Butler
Reviewed by Kate Christensen

96 THE OTHER HALF: The Life of Jacob Riis and the World of Immigrant America. By Tom Buk-Swienty
Reviewed by James McGrath Morris

97 AMERICAN THERAPY: The Rise of Psychotherapy

in the United States. By Jonathan Engel
Reviewed by Charles Barber

99 CONCRETE REVERIES: Consciousness and the City. By Mark Kingwell
Reviewed by Geoff Manaugh

100 WHITE HEAT: The Friendship of Emily Dickinson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. By Brenda Wineapple
Reviewed by Stephanie E. Schlaifer

101 TARGETING CIVILIANS IN WAR. By Alexander B. Downes
Reviewed by Hew Strachan

102 VOLUNTEERS: A Social Profile. By Marc A. Musick and John Wilson
Reviewed by Darcy Courteau

103 MARRYING ANITA: A Quest for Love in the New India. By Anita Jain
Reviewed by Renuka Rayasam

104 THE SCIENCE OF FEAR: Why We Fear the Things We Shouldn't—and Put Ourselves in Greater Danger. By Daniel Gardner
Reviewed by Evelin Sullivan

105 EINSTEIN'S MISTAKES: The Human Failings of Genius. By Hans C. Ohanian
Reviewed by David Lindley

106 BUCKMINSTER FULLER: Starting With the Universe. Edited by K. Michael Hays and Dana A. Miller
Reviewed by Edward Tenner

108 MASSACRE AT MOUNTAIN MEADOWS. By Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Glen M. Leonard
Reviewed by T. R. Reid

110 HOLLYWOOD UNDER SIEGE: Martin Scorsese, the Religious Right, and the Culture Wars. By Thomas R. Lindlof
Reviewed by Aaron Mesh

112 PORTRAIT
Prague, 1968

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Democracy by the Ounce

This magazine is known for airing both sides of the issues, but sometimes even that is not enough. Inspired by the quadrennial outbreak of complaints about American political life during this election year, we commissioned articles that stake out four sides on the question of what ails the American system.

The big surprise is that so much of what our authors debate is at bottom the same fundamental issue that engaged the Founders: How democratic should a democracy be? To what extent should it be ruled by the unadulterated will of the people and to what extent should it be guided by their elected, presumably better-informed, representatives?

The cluster leads off with an alarming portrait of irrationality in the American electorate by political scientist Larry M. Bartels. The implications of the voter incompetence he uncovers point in a very Madisonian direction, toward insulating the nation's political leaders more effectively against the fickleness of public opinion. Arriving at a similar destination by a different route, historian Gil Troy contends that our current discontents are rooted in the demise of the political parties as grassroots institutions that touch the lives of citizens, even though they remain powerful labeling and money-raising machines. Despairing of going back to the future, Troy looks to political leaders to restore "muscular moderation" in public life.

But political scientist and pollster Scott Keeter argues that Americans are quite competent citizens. He asserts that opinion polls, though often maligned, are an indispensable tool for giving citizens a stronger voice in government, especially those deprived by income or educational inequality of the opportunity to participate fully in American politics.

Since American political scientists often hold up parliamentary democracy as superior to the U.S. system, we also asked veteran British parliamentarian Denis MacShane for his perspective. To our surprise, what came sailing back across the Atlantic was a very large and fragrant bouquet for the American spectacle. As they say over there, have a look.

— STEVEN LAGERFELD



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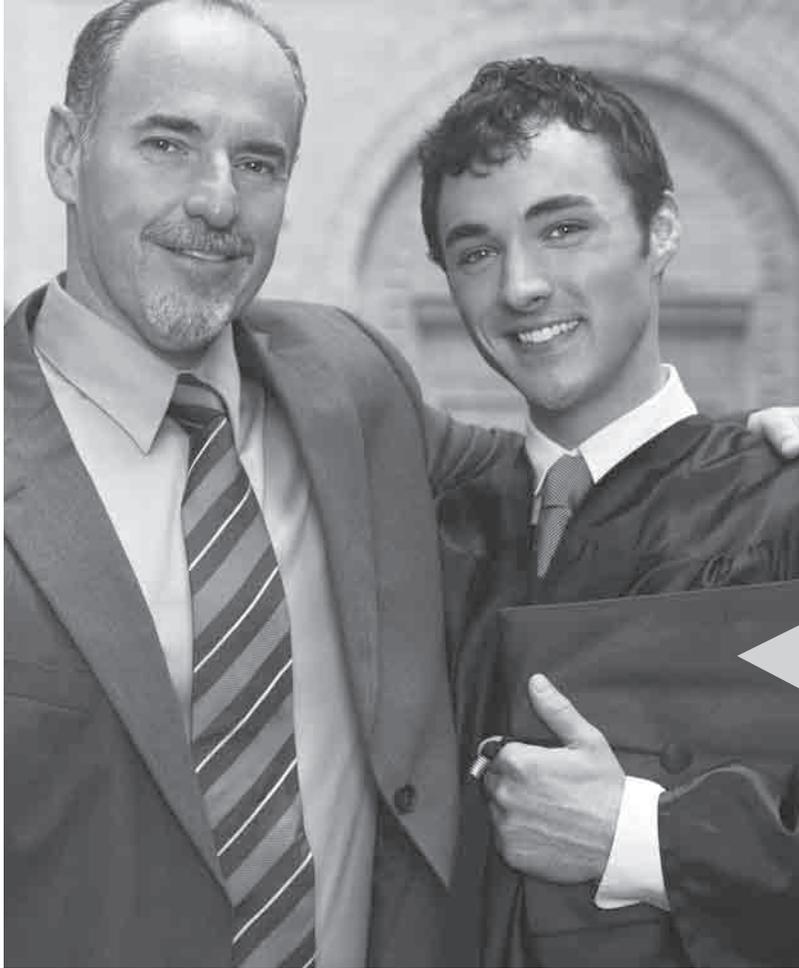
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LETTERS

POPULATION CONTROL'S MISSTEPS

THE SEARING CRITIQUE OF THE population control/family planning movement in Matthew Connelly's article ["Controlling Passions," Summer '08] can be summed up this way: Mistakes were made.

Early proponents, alarmed by unprecedented population growth, trampled human rights and health in pursuit of lower birthrates. But, as Connelly concedes, their better impulses ultimately prevailed. At the 1994 United Nations population conference, the world's nations endorsed the Cairo Agenda, which rejects top-down population control and affirms that all people should have the services, the rights, and the power to make their own choices about sexuality and childbearing.

Those aspirations remain unrealized. Today, some 120 million couples worldwide want to delay or prevent childbearing, but lack access to contraception. Every year, 80 million women have unintended pregnancies—45 million of which end in abortion, which is often unsafe. More than half a million women die from complications associated with childbearing.

Right now, the largest generation of young people ever is coming of age. Nearly half the world's population—three billion people—is under the age of

25. But while the need is increasing, funding for reproductive health services is flat or declining.

Why? It is not, as Connelly says, because the movement is "largely becalmed." Saying so diminishes the work of tens of thousands of reproductive health advocates around the world. It is, in large part, because of the strenuous opposition to contraception and abortion among religious conservatives in the United States who have used their influence within the Bush administration to export their ideology worldwide. Although it is not his intent, Connelly's work lends support to those forces.

Connelly is right about the danger of going backward; climate change, food shortages, and other crises could revive calls for "population control." But perhaps the greater danger is of not going forward and accomplishing the critically important goals set forth in the Cairo Agenda.

Laurie Mazur

Takoma Park, Md.

TO THIS DAY, FAMILY PLANNING and reproductive health are routinely regarded as "women's issues," except with respect to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. Men are mentioned in passing, but the assumption is that they probably have little to do with birth control because they don't want to share responsibility for preventing preg-

nancy. Intentionally or not, men have been largely excluded from governmental and non-governmental initiatives on reproductive health.

Folk beliefs about men's sexuality (and sexual irresponsibility) are exacerbated by men's institutional exclusion from family planning programs, including the development and marketing of contraceptive technologies that are invariably designed for women alone. The idea that men do not share in responsibility for birth control and the reproductive health of women or themselves is a self-fulfilling prophecy, in part due to these population control efforts. The implications are profound for those working to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Matthew Gutmann

Professor of Anthropology

Brown University

Providence, R.I.

MATTHEW CONNELLY PAINTS A distorted picture of international family planning prior to 1990. Indeed, there were highly reprehensible episodes in India and China, but the rapid decline in family size across Asia and Latin America was largely the result of voluntary family planning becoming available on a large scale.

Connelly also makes the common mistake of suggesting that correlations between education and family size are causal. Common sense tells us otherwise. I happen to have two doctorates, but as far as I know it

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does not affect my fertility. For family size to fall, the proximal determinants of family size—namely access to contraception and safe abortion—must be present.

Malcolm Potts

*Fred H. Bixby Professor of
Population and Family Planning
University of California
Berkeley, Calif*

IN 1960, ONLY 10 PERCENT OF women in developing countries used modern contraception; today, the figure is 53 percent. The most logical explanation for this social revolution is twofold: Most sexually active women and their partners find contraception useful for avoiding unintended pregnancies. And governments and international institutions have supported family planning programs in developing countries that make it easier for those who are inclined to use contraception. How, after all, can fertility decline unless couples interact with those who “work in family planning”? Does Matthew Connelly believe that sexually active couples postpone pregnancies by fashioning contraceptives in their kitchens or simply wishing?

Connelly seems to have interviewed no contraceptive users in developing countries to ask if “a movement made them do it” or whether they sought out contraception to improve their lives. Such conversations might have provided some balance to a historical interpretation so distorted it offers no lessons for today’s world.

Robert Engelman

*Vice President for Programs
The Worldwatch Institute
Author, More: Population, Nature,
and What Women Want (2008)
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MATTHEW CONNELLY PROVIDES an invaluable service in explaining the dangerous passions behind population control. But exposing misbegotten programs is not the same as saying that a problem does not exist. In my home country of Guatemala, the population today is five times what it was when I was born, and it could double again in my lifetime. Most women do not attend high school, and about half of them get pregnant by age 20. Last year, half of all children were malnourished, and the number living in poverty continues to rise. Population in itself is not the problem, of course. But in a struggling society, the more people there are, the harder it seems to solve all the other problems.

Paul E. Munsell

Doral, Fla.

Matthew Connelly replies: The point of my article was not that manipulation and coercion occurred everywhere, as Malcolm Potts implies, though they happened far beyond India and China, the two most populous countries in the world. Bangladesh, Singapore, Nepal, and South Korea also paid people to stop having children. Many countries, including Indonesia, punished those who refused, and still others, such as Guatemala, Egypt, Pakistan, Taiwan, and Tunisia, paid providers to perform more sterilizations or IUD insertions but offered no incentives for follow-up care.

Robert Engelman criticizes the absence of interviews, but other scholars have performed them and provided vivid accounts. My article was simply meant to show how and

AT THE CENTER

HISTORY SPEAKS

HORST BRIE, STILL STRIKINGLY TALL AND faintly bohemian-looking at 85, was one of the few Europeans in Pyongyang when North Korea was preparing to seize the USS *Pueblo* off its coast on January 23, 1968. As the East German ambassador to North Korea, Brie had sent his superiors cable after detailed cable laying out conditions in that most secretive of communist countries. He had been watching the North Koreans ratchet up pressure on South Korea, and recognized immediately that the seizure of the *Pueblo* was a North Korean provocation.

Kang In Deok, who oversaw North Korea intelligence for the South Korean spy agency, knew in advance that something was up. To little avail, he warned his government that an attack by North Korea was imminent. Sure enough, on the eve of the *Pueblo*'s capture, 31 North Koreans who had infiltrated the South tried to assassinate President Park Chung Hee in his home, which was adjacent to the U.S. Embassy in Seoul. That they failed, Kang says now, had more to do with luck than good intelligence.

Brie and Kang, along with 26 scholarly researchers and American and South Korean intelligence officers and diplomats who participated in the dramatic events of 40 years ago, were brought together in Washington in September for an exercise in “critical oral history”—an effort to fill the gaps in the historical record by consulting those who were present when history was being made. Critical oral history has developed over the past decade as a way to understand events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, and the assassination of Congolese prime minister Patrice Lumumba by going to living sources. Convened by the Wilson Center's North Korea International Documentation Project, directed by Christian F. Ostermann, in conjunction with the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, the conference was designed to clarify the historical record and gain insight into the behavior of the North Korean regime.

Over two days, the participants in “Crisis and Confrontation on the Korean Peninsula: 1968–1969” sat around a table armed with giant binders containing more than 1,200 pages of documents. Gathered by scholars from the diplomatic archives of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, East Germany, Romania, South Korea, and the United States, the documents hold the written record of the capture of the *Pueblo*. As tape recorders rolled, the participants compared their experiences with the written chronicle of the seizure. The North Koreans killed one crew member on the ship, a barely seaworthy Army supply vessel sloppily converted for spying at the height of the Cold War. They tortured the 82 surviving crew members until, after 11 months, the U.S. government issued a written apology to the North Koreans—repudiating it even before it was issued, but winning the freedom of the *Pueblo* crew. Ambassador Brie said he was struck at the time by America's unremitting determination to get its sailors back even at the cost of signing a false admission.

Although the conference produced no single explosive disclosure, the transcript, published in full on www.wilsoncenter.org/nkidp, will allow scholars to draw a more accurate picture of the events. And the conference added a human element almost entirely missing in the binders—the frightening threat of a confrontation on the Korean peninsula as the Vietnam War raged nearby.

For many Americans, the seizure of the *Pueblo* was quickly overshadowed by North Vietnam's Tet Offensive, the assassinations of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, and the election of Richard M. Nixon. But North Korea never forgot: The *Pueblo* is now a North Korean tourist attraction, newly outfitted with a flat-screen television that shows a video of the government's official version of its capture.

Lee H. Hamilton, *Director*

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why the United Nations, the World Bank, and a host of nongovernmental organizations pushed these harebrained schemes all over the world, and then paid for them.

Far from belittling the challenge facing health and reproductive rights advocates, this history helps explain what they are up against. Many advocates mean well, and did not intentionally provoke the backlash that threatens reproductive rights worldwide. But that is precisely why would-be humanitarians need to learn from this tragic history, and not passively accept that "mistakes were made."

21ST-CENTURY SLAVERY

JOHN R. MILLER'S ARTICLE "CALL It Slavery" is commendable for focusing on the fact that too little attention is paid to the modern scourge of human slavery in the form of trafficking [Summer '08]. Yet his assertion that Freedom House does not weigh slavery in its annual survey, *Freedom in the World*, is incorrect.

Those subjected to slavery in its various forms are denied the most basic rights we hold to be universal. Those rights—freedom of person, freedom of movement, equal access before the law, freedom of choice of employment—are all measured as fundamental civil liberties in our survey. Moreover, the survey's methodology specifically considers the trafficking of women and/or children in the scoring of civil liberties, and the problem is regularly cited in the narrative reports.

Few forms of abuse shock the conscience more than that of human trafficking. It is no coincidence that there is a strong correlation between

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countries that rank at the bottom of our survey and those that the U.S. State Department cites for failing to take adequate measures to prevent trafficking in its annual *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

Jennifer Windsor

Executive Director

Freedom House

Washington, D.C.

JOHN R. MILLER IS ABSOLUTELY right that most Americans assume that the Emancipation Proclamation brought a final end to slavery. This prevents them from acknowledging that slavery is still a problem today, long after the age of Lincoln. Miller tells the history of the 19th-century abolitionists not to say "Our work here is done," but as a call to action. Thankfully, he is in good company.

The State Department's 2007 *Trafficking in Persons Report*, Canada's secretary of state, the British government, and the United Nations have all drawn on the history of 19th-century abolitionism in working to end slavery. Even more important, slaves themselves continue a narrative tradition begun by Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman. In 2008, the bicentennial of the act that ended America's external slave trade, here's hoping we heed Miller's call to harness memories of the most revolutionary movement in America's past. Let's call it slavery, and then let's call our movement abolitionism.

Zoe Trodd

*Tutorial Board in History and Literature
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.*

A MAN WITH A PLAN

IN HIS ENGROSSING NEW BOOK *Traffic*, Tom Vanderbilt introduces readers to dozens of experts on the complex interplay of roads, vehicles, and people. For his article in the *WQ*, he had to choose just one. He could not have chosen a better subject than the Netherlands' "traffic guru," Hans Monderman ["The Traffic Guru," Summer '08].

To traffic experts, Monderman's story is fairly well known, as it should be. What is not well known is that Monderman was less a revolutionary than a counterrevolutionary. The paradigms that he challenged were themselves products of an earlier revolution in traffic engineering that began in American cities in the 1920s.

Since about 1930, the prevailing view has been that a congested urban road needs widening. But just a few

years earlier, a mainstream traffic engineer would have regarded such a proposal as absurd. If a street was crowded with automobiles, the problem was the car's prodigious demand for space. A typical recommendation was to give spatially efficient trolley cars the right of way.

The examples of the first traffic revolution and Monderman's career demonstrate that apparently inevitable truths about people, roads, and vehicles are not so inevitable after all. We will need these examples if we are to leave behind the outdated paradigms that dictate the growth of our cities today.

Peter D. Norton

*Assistant Professor
Department of Science,
Technology, and Society
University of Virginia
Author, Fighting Traffic: The Dawn of the
Motor Age in the American City (2008)
Charlottesville, Va.*

TOM VANDERBILT'S ESSAY IS AN excellent starting point for understanding the ideas (and the considerable charm) of Hans Monderman, the revolutionary Dutch traffic engineer. However, I was disappointed that the essay ended with a pessimistic assessment of whether we can incorporate Monderman's ideas into our American cities.

At the Congress for the New Urbanism, an organization dedicated to replacing placeless sprawl with walkable cities and towns, we strongly believe that Monderman's ideas show us how far a misguided understanding of safety has taken us from common sense. The most surprising feature of the changes Monderman favored is that they are visually underwhelming—removing pavement markings, signage, and pedestrian barriers are surprisingly subtle interven-

tions, meaning it will likely be easier, not harder, to implement his ideas compared to more sweeping reforms.

It is exactly these subtleties that will help people become more cautious without even realizing it. Just as Vanderbilt describes, people are relatively courteous at a country fair parking lot in a grass field with no traffic rules. What is to stop us from organizing our local main streets similarly?

Heather Smith

*Planning Director
Congress for the New Urbanism
Chicago, Ill.*

HOW DID TRAFFIC CONTROL IN the United States degenerate into its present mess, a sign- and limit-obsessed system where drivers are transmogrified into passive and inattentive robots? And why has this not happened to the same extent in Europe? Hans Monderman is part of the answer.

Monderman, sensitive to the needs of the driver, rather than to local tax collectors, litigators, and over-anxious parents, embraced a number of counter-intuitive ideas. Perhaps the most important is his insight that a "feeling of safety"—the illusion of predictability that is so much a part of the U.S. landscape, with its wide roads and highly controlling signs—is actually a very bad thing.

The result is a driving environment that emphasizes *control*—not by the driver, but by American traffic engineers. Unfortunately, the traffic engineers are not actually driving the car, and a system that robs drivers of their discretion has produced disastrous results. America would have roughly 6,000 fewer fatalities per year if our highway death rate per mile were the same as Britain's, where stop signs and traffic lights are used sparingly and law

enforcement more directly targets actual dangerous driving.

Monderman's maxim that "when you treat people like idiots, they'll behave like idiots" applies more to the United States than to any other country I have driven in. It's surely time we did something about it.

John Staddon

*James B. Duke Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, and Professor of Biology and Neurobiology
Duke University
Durham, N.C.*

THE EXAMINED LIFE

I READ WITH GREAT PLEASURE Wilfred M. McClay's "The Burden of the Humanities" [Summer '08]. In his attempt to explicate what the humanities are and why their study is important, he does well in moving beyond a listing of humanistic studies to a consideration of human concerns.

I would suggest that one further step back might help. The fundamental concerns of every thoughtful man and woman are: Who am I? What is my place in the world? What ought I to do with my life? These human questions invite us to ask in what sense we are collections of molecules and products of our genes, descendants of apes or children of God, thinking beings and lovers of wisdom, acquisitive animals and lovers of pleasure, sensible beings with appreciation for art as an expression of nature, and political animals and moral beings with rights and duties.

The human mind is not compartmentalized into humanities, arts, and sciences. We may have left and right sides of the brain, but we think with a single, whole mind. The humanities,

properly conceived, are about the whole human project, and transcend artificial disciplinary boundaries. The work of our colleges and universities ought to recognize the whole of this study and not just the parts. Students should be asking what it means to be human, and should be studying both the whole and its parts for some period of their undergraduate education.

McClay has done us a fine service in helping us see larger possibilities for the humanities.

Christopher B. Nelson

*President
St. John's College
Annapolis, Md.*

IN HIS SANCTIMONIOUS AND ALL too predictable essay, Wilfred M. McClay reheats many of the old platitudes that effete literary intellectuals have used to justify their hopelessly insular and inconsequential studies. He asserts that the humanities somehow detect things that the natural and social sciences cannot because the humanities "grasp human things in human terms, without converting or reducing them to something else." However, McClay does not bother to explain what "human things" and "human terms" are, nor why numbers and chemical models are different.

The result is that whatever is too hardheaded, or arithmetical, or simply not touchy-feely enough is considered alien to the human condition. This is the sort of disciplinary chauvinism that has done far more damage to the "humanities" than postmodernism or accusations of uselessness could ever do.

Stephen Thurman

Berkeley, Calif.

IN APPRAISING THE USE OF THE humanities, Wilfred M. McClay is right to take the long view and recall what the humanities have meant from the ancients onward. He casts the humanities as the study of things that distinguish us from animals, angels, and machines. An aged notion, yes, and though it retains its currency among the general public, it receives only an occasional endorsement from faculty members. When literature professors talk about race, sexuality, and colonialism, they do so in an abstract, theoretical idiom. As a result, people, including their colleagues in the sciences, ignore them.

But when literature professors discuss works that lift human beings out of drudgery, mindlessness, and vulgarity—art that transcends the moment, ideas that alter the path of civilizations—they garner respect. When they stand for the eloquence of Abraham Lincoln, the beauty of John Keats, or the wisdom of Leo Tolstoy, people listen. When great writers set commonplace beliefs such as freedom and liberty into their timeless prose, people recognize the vital role the humanities play in civic life.

Many professors stand squarely against this basic premise. Ironically, laypersons often have more conviction about the value of the humanities. Do humanities professors have enough faith in their material and themselves to stand up and affirm their subject's value? Still, McClay envisions a resurgence: "If the past is any guide, what we call 'the humanities' will survive and thrive."

Mark Bauerlein

*Professor of English
Emory University
Atlanta, Ga.*

FINDINGS

BRIEF NOTES OF INTEREST ON ALL TOPICS

Tourist Trapps

Cineplex and omnibus

Tourism once reflected a quest for authenticity, Erik Cohen writes in *Society* (July–August 2008), but these days, natural attractions can't compete with contrived ones. No surprise, then, that movies and TV shows lure audiences around the globe. "In the past, tourists have visited places related to books," says Sue Beeton, author of *Film-Induced Tourism* (2005). "Wordsworth caused people to look at the English countryside in a different way, encouraging visits

to places such as the Lake District. While that still happens, TV and movies now dominate."

New Zealand companies lead pilgrimages to *Lord of the Rings* sites. Near York, England, Castle Howard attracts people who adore movies shot there, not only *Barry Lyndon* but also *Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties*. On Location Tours in New York markets a *Sex and the City* outing: "Have a cupcake at the bakery where Miranda stuffed cupcakes into her mouth!"

A tourist favorite is *The Sound of Music*, the 1965 musical about the Trapp Family Singers. The hit film

spawned bus tours of movie-related sites in Salzburg, Austria, where the von Trapps had lived and much of the movie was shot. The bus tours continue today, complete with onboard sing-alongs. This summer, the von Trapps' onetime villa in Salzburg became a hotel, where you can sing "Edelweiss" between courses at dinner.

Lots of Salzburg residents aren't part of the chorus. One local complained to the *Austrian News*, "I think it's a strange marketing device for a city where Mozart was born." Another told Bavaria Radio, "Busloads of blue-rinse old dears arriving here give us all the willies."



For Salzburg, a few least-favorite things: Julie Andrews and co-stars in *The Sound of Music* (1965).

Breathe Uneasy

Propelling debate

America's 22.9 million asthma sufferers have nothing against clean air—on the contrary, they're fans—but they're protesting a looming antipollution rule. Most asthma inhalers now propel their medication, albuterol, into the lungs with ozone-sapping chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). Inhalers aren't big spewers of CFCs—they accounted for around 0.1 percent of emissions in 1987, when the United States ratified a save-the-ozone treaty. But the Food and Drug Administration has barred

the sale of CFC inhalers starting January 1.

Pharmaceutical companies have developed inhalers with a different propellant. They're more cumbersome to use, though: They take more effort to prime, and they have to be rinsed. In the view of some asthma sufferers, they're also less effective.

They're about three times as costly, too. "The issue is even more disconcerting considering that asthma disproportionately affects the poor and that, according to recent surveys, an estimated 20 percent of asthma patients are uninsured," says *Scientific American* (August 2008). Given the likelihood that many Americans with asthma will cut back on their medicine to save money, "what seemed to be a good, responsible environmental decision might in the end exact an unexpected human toll."

Men of the People

Safety last

From George Washington's time to the turn of the 20th century, American presidents took pride in mingling unprotected with the citizenry. As Richard J. Ellis explains in *Presidential Travel* (University Press of Kansas), armed guards represented the sort of royalist pomp that had no place in the New World. "A plain, republican President of the United States," John Tyler said of himself in 1843, "my bodyguard I desire to be the people, and none but the people."

From Abraham Lincoln, there



James Garfield's 1881 assassination helped spawn civil service reform but not Secret Service protection.

was this: "It would never do for a President to have guards with drawn sabers at his door, as if he fancied he were . . . an emperor." In truth, soldiers were posted outside the White House during the Civil War, and plainclothes police officers guarded the president 24 hours a day. At least, they were supposed to. When John Wilkes Booth reached the presidential box at Ford's Theatre, Ellis writes, the policeman had stepped away "for reasons that remain unclear."

In 1881, Charles Guiteau failed to win a federal job but succeeded in killing President James Garfield. So was it time to protect presidents more systematically? Not according to Congress. The Lincoln assassination was deemed a wartime fluke, Ellis says, whereas the Garfield assassination was blamed on patronage—Guiteau's bitterness over missing out on a political appointment. A few months after

Guiteau's execution, Congress enacted the Pendleton Act, a step toward replacing political appointees with civil service hirelings. But it did nothing to make presidents less vulnerable.

Only after the third presidential assassination in 36 years, that of William McKinley in 1901, did Congress seriously contemplate presidential safety. The issue proved contentious. One senator declared it "antagonistic to our traditions" to surround a president with "a sort of Praetorian Guard." Putting soldiers in civilian garb affronted some members of Congress more deeply still: The House Judiciary Committee said that plainclothes troops, "under the pretense of protecting the President," might follow "secret orders" to spy on the people. Some maintained that the values of the American republic likewise clashed with the idea of making presidential assassination a federal crime, punishable by death.

The killer of a president, said one senator, should “suffer the same penalty that would be inflicted upon him if he were to murder the humblest citizen.”

In fact, the Treasury Department’s Secret Service, created to battle counterfeiting, had begun in 1894 to assign a few officers to protect presidents, without congressional authorization. In 1906, Congress formally gave it the responsibility and appropriated funds for the purpose. Republican fraternity at last gave way to precarious reality.

Narcissism U.

Do re me me me

When high school students were asked if they had an above-average ability to get along with others, 100 percent said yes. It’s an example of how we flatter ourselves, Michael S. Gazzaniga writes in *Human: The Science Behind What Makes Us Unique* (Ecco). That feeling of specialness lives on after high school graduation, according to the *Journal of Personality* (August 2008). Jean M. Twenge and four coauthors examined 24 years’ worth of college students’ scores on the Narcissistic Personality Inventory test. Increasingly, according to the researchers, college students are addicted to self-love.

But not in California. Narcissism scores for students there have held steady, and they’re significantly below scores for students in other states. The reason may be Asian Americans, who “score significantly lower than Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics on measures related to individualism, including narcissism,”

report Twenge et al. Asian Americans now account for half of the freshman class on some California campuses, though they’re only one-sixteenth of college students in the United States as a whole.

Who’s to blame for the rise of campus narcissism outside California? The authors suggest taking a hard look at programs in primary and secondary schools to boost self-esteem. Most kids’ self-esteem is just fine, they say, and such programs’ effects “are likely to be negative for normal children. ‘I am special’ teaches narcissism rather than self-esteem.”

Or maybe we should ask if college students are mimicking their professors, 93 percent of whom, according to Gazzaniga, deem their work above average.

Pantry Power

No-penalty kicks

Predictably, the Olympics reinvigorated the debate over the use of steroids in athletics. Now, two studies suggest that performance enhancers may be as close as the kitchen.

At RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, endurance cyclists rode until exhausted, then drank a carbohydrate beverage, either unaltered or spiked with the equivalent of five to six cups of coffee. Four hours later, the caffeinated athletes had two-thirds more glycogen in their muscles than the other group. Glycogen helps muscles recover. “If you have 66 percent more fuel for the next day’s training or competition, there’s no question you’ll be able to go further and

faster,” says researcher John Hawley.

At the annual meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine in late May, Ronald W. Deitrick reported on another study. Deitrick gave 800-meter runners about 20 grams of baking soda 90 minutes before a competition. Some got nauseated, but the rest improved their times by an average of 2.2 seconds. “For a relatively short running distance, that’s very significant,” Deitrick says. To the list of substances prohibited by the Olympic Committee’s World Anti-Doping Agency—methyl-dienolone, 19-norandrosterone, hydrochlorothiazide, and parahydroxyamphetamine, among many others—Deitrick would add bicarb: “It violates the spirit of fair play by artificially enhancing performance.”

Says Who?

Fullish disclosure

“Finished intelligence should include careful sourcing for all analytic assessments and conclusions” to aid “verification of particular statements.” That’s among the recommendations in the 2005 report of the Silberman-Robb Commission, which investigated intelligence failures regarding Iraq’s putative weapons of mass destruction.

The recommendation echoes one made four decades earlier by a CIA analyst who used the pseudonym John Alexander. “After some dozen years’ immersion in intelligence, I still find myself reacting uncomfortably to its rather cavalier disregard for the footnote,” Alexan-

der wrote in the CIA's in-house journal, *Studies in Intelligence*, in 1964. An intelligence estimate prepared for readers at the highest level—the president and other senior officials—almost never identified sources and evaluated their reliability, in footnotes or anywhere else: “The more serious its import and the closer it is to the influential official who will act upon it, the slighter is its overt back-up.” The no-footnote system had become “job protection for the mediocre analyst,” Alexander wrote. “Living with undocumented intelligence has blunted our perception of its dangers and inadequacies.”

The June 2008 *Studies in Intelligence* reprints the Alexander article and assures readers that footnotes citing sources and indicators of their reliability “have become more nearly the norm, in practice and by directive.” But not soon enough.

Heating Oil!

Striking it richer

From Upton Sinclair's novel *Oil!* flowed the 2007 film *There Will Be Blood*, which won two Oscars. In 1927, the year it was published, the book earned a comparable honor: banned in Boston. Rick Wartzman tells the story in *Obscene in the Extreme* (PublicAffairs).

When Boston police arrested a bookstore clerk for selling the novel, Sinclair was delighted. “Your book is dead, and your wife and kids can't go to the seashore this summer,” he wrote in *The New Yorker*. “But then some good angel puts it into the head of a Boston preacher to read your

book and take it to the Boston police. . . . Instantly the press agencies flash the name of your book to every town and village in the United States, and your publisher gets orders by telegraph from Podunk and Kalamazoo. The literary editors grab the book out of the pile they had set aside to be turned over to the second-hand dealers. The printers of your book have to telegraph to the mill for a carload of paper for a new edition.”

Sinclair tried to get arrested for selling the book on Boston Common, but police ignored him. Next, he excised the nine allegedly ob-

scene pages from his book and marketed *Oil! Fig Leaf Edition* on Boston streets. Then he arranged to sell what he called an unexpurgated copy of the risqué novel to a police lieutenant. Before he could be prosecuted, though, police discovered that he had slyly slipped the cop a Bible. “Not all the wealth in New York could hire me to write a story as foul as the tale of what Lot's daughters did to their drunken old father in Genesis,” Sinclair wrote in *The New Yorker*.

In court, an exasperated magistrate said, “We think you have had enough publicity, Mr. Sinclair.”

—Stephen Bates



Upton Sinclair—activist, muckraker, and self-promoter—hawks expurgated copies of *Oil!* in Boston.

Only Words

For more than a century, the Oxford English Dictionary has dominated language lovers' bookshelves. Now it is online, and a new edition may never see book covers again. In the digital age, will the OED remain a cultural cornerstone?

BY CHARLOTTE BREWER

I CONSULT THE *OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY* almost every day. The binding on my first edition, the last installment of which was published in 1928, is disintegrating. Shreds of vellum flutter onto desk or carpet every time I open one of the 12 massive volumes, which can weigh as much as 15 pounds. Because I'm researching the history of the *OED*, I need to compare the first edition with the second. But truth be told, I also have a sentimental attachment to these cream-colored pages, stained by age and use, with the complex yet clear patterning of each element in an entry (headword, pronunciation, etymology, definition, quotations), which James Murray, the first chief editor of the *OED*, designed to be "eloquent to the eye."

Bibliophilic considerations aside, however, the *OED Online* is my dictionary of choice. This remarkable resource displays both the second edition of the *OED*, published with great fanfare in 20 volumes in 1989, and the gradually accumulating third edition, begun in 2000 and due to be completed some decades hence. The great value of the *OED*'s third edition is that it is the first revision ever undertaken of this vast dictionary. The 1989 edition merely spliced the first edition with sup-

plements produced during the previous two decades, but it did not venture to revisit the outdated Victorian and Edwardian scholarship of its elderly parent. That makes *OED3*, as aficionados call it, the hottest English-language lexicographical product around.

But could the online edition spell the end of the *OED* as we know it? Earlier this year the *OED*'s U.S. editor told *The New York Times Magazine*, "We have about 20 years' more work to do revising and adding entries. Who knows what will happen with technology in 20 years? We certainly don't." Bibliophiles and technophobes greeted this remark with intense anxiety, speculating that the *OED*'s publisher, Oxford University Press, would never issue a printed edition of the *OED* again.

At first, I wondered whether the sackcloth and ashes were warranted. True, books do furnish a room, and the 20 volumes of the second edition of the *OED* fulfill this purpose admirably. (The photographic reductions of the *OED* with which many dictionary lovers are familiar—two volumes for the first edition and three for the second, accompanied by a magnifying glass—aren't on the same scale, but still look quite handsome on the shelf.) The fact is, however, that the *OED Online* is the last word in space saving and portability, as well as lexicography. And it is now so much easier to look up words. Instead of determining which of the 20 volumes you need, pulling the heavy tome off the shelf, finding an uncluttered and sturdy surface on which

CHARLOTTE BREWER is the author of *Treasure-House of the Language: The Living OED* (2007). Her website *Examining the OED*, at <http://oed.hertford.ox.ac.uk/main>, publishes recent research and historical material on the *OED*. She is a fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, and professor of English language and literature at Oxford University.



Legendary editor James Murray, shown here around 1900, helped midwife the *Oxford English Dictionary* into being from millions of paper slips on which volunteers recorded individual instances of English word usage. The first edition of the dictionary required more than four decades to complete.

to lay it, and fumbling through the pages for the right entry, you can tap the keyboard and skip blithely from one end of the alphabet to the other in the blink of an eye, finding 10 words in the time it used to take to track down one.

So why all the hand-wringing about the loss of this unwieldy behemoth? Is it the sheer physical substance of this great work, the size and heft of it, that makes the prospect of its disappearance into the ether a cause for alarm? That's part of the answer, not least because the *OED's* history is one of agonizingly slow emergence into physical form. Reviewing the second edition in 1989, the novelist William Golding cast his mind back to its heroic and idealistic origins: "In the high days of Queen Victoria a dictionary was conceived, not to say dared, which matched her iron bridges, her vast ships and engines." A characteristically Victorian project, the *OED* set out to encompass the entirety of the English language, recording within its pages every single word. Of course, the editors

had to relinquish this ideal fairly quickly. Such a thing was as impossible then as it would be now, even with all the electronic aids we have to hand. The vocabulary of English, as of all languages, appears to be infinitely variable.

To many of those who contributed to the first edition of the *OED*, from around 1860 onward, their task must initially have seemed endless. The editors hoped to read as much as they could of everything that had ever been printed in English, relying on armies of volunteers to scour libraries and private collections and to write down, on slips of paper measuring four by six inches, the words they thought were worthy of inclusion, along with the authors and titles and dates of the works in which they had found them, and the sentences in which those words appeared. These quotation slips, thousands of them, were posted back to the editors and stored haphazardly in

sacks and boxes. Only when James Murray took over the editorship in 1879 were they thoroughly sorted and filed in pigeonholes. Not one page of the dictionary had yet been published, and it took another five years under the methodical and painstaking Murray before the first installment appeared, in 1884, covering the entries A–ant. The dictionary was finally completed 44 years later, by which time much of the earlier part of the edition was out of date and the editors were already compiling a supplement (published in one volume in 1933).

The array of massive volumes on the shelf is literally a

A DICTIONARY, wrote the French man of letters Anatole France, is “the universe in alphabetical order.”

monument to this protracted gestation period and to the vast quantity of material from which the *OED* was assembled. It also testifies to the scope of the English language. Right from the dictionary’s first appearance, readers and reviewers loved it for its awesome compendiousness, and its slowly increasing mass gave an appropriate impression of its scholarly substance. The novelist Arnold Bennett reported in 1928 that he had “been buying it in parts for nearly 40 years,” and judged it “the longest sensational serial ever written!”

You can get a sense of the *OED*’s intellectual capaciousness just by turning the pages in any of the enormous volumes and casting your eye down the extraordinarily detailed entries. What made the dictionary revolutionary when it appeared, and makes it revolutionary still, is that every definition it contains is based on a study of the empirical data: those masses of original quotation slips that recorded a word’s use in real historical sources from 1150 to the present day. From these scraps of paper (eventually numbering more than five million for the first edition) the lexicographers constructed their picture of the history of a word’s usage from the beginning of its life to its end—from cradle to grave, as they themselves said.

A dictionary, wrote the French man of letters Anatole France, is “the universe in alphabetical order.” Perhaps above all others, the *OED* encourages the idea that it contains everything that has ever been thought or said by anybody speaking English, and is hence a record of the language’s culture and history. As one reviewer wrote of the *OED* in 1899, “Everything is to be found here, but one feels that human faculties are inadequate to penetrate the details of so vast a collection.” Virtually every entry of the *OED* munificently displays quotations of real historical usage, often derived from the works of the great writers in the

language—Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope. The quotations are the reason the *OED* is so very long, and they are certainly the reason it is the greatest dictionary ever written (and such a fabulously good read).

Understandably, lovers of the *OED* find it alarming that this record of human labor, which stretches over

so many years and records such a vital aspect of our culture, might sublimate into a form without physical dimension. Still more alarming is the notion that the latest, and best, edition of the great work exists only on the Internet. Even *OED Online* enthusiasts concede that many things immediately evident in the printed book are obscured or not apparent on the screen: the length of an entry, which may stretch over several columns and pages; the relationship between one entry and its neighbors; the variation in page count among the letters—in the first edition, *C* has a massive single volume all to itself, the same size as the one devoted to all of *V, W, X, Y, and Z*.

It’s hard to avoid the conviction that such an accumulation of knowledge and erudition *should* have a physical dimension: The dictionary’s sheer size is important to our understanding of its value. As his poetry attests, W. H. Auden was a lifelong lover of the *OED*, and visitors to his flat in New York City often remarked on the battered copy of the dictionary that took up so much space on his shelves. After he moved to Austria in 1972 he kept it in his otherwise sparsely furnished workroom, except for the volume he used to sit on at table, as if (so one guest reported) he were a child too small for the

nursery furniture. Schoolchildren and college students who encounter the great work electronically have no way to fathom its physical might and bulk, and its weighty difference from all those other online dictionaries—whether today’s *Merriam-Webster* or its forebear, Noah Webster’s 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*, which in its online versions is sadly stripped of all quotations save those from the Bible.

The fate of Webster’s dictionary points up another problem with Internet reference works. You

can never be sure of what you are getting. Material can be silently subtracted and added. The editors add a new tranche of words and entries to *OED3* every quarter. These take two forms: first, slow and steady revision of each old entry (so that they might avoid cutting their teeth on the vagaries of the first edition’s treatment of *A*—on which the 19th-century lexicographers cut *their* teeth—

today’s revisers began in the middle of the alphabet, at the letter *M*); and second, new words and corrections from across the alphabet. No need for subscribers to squeeze a new volume of the revised work onto their shelves next to existing volumes. Instead, each fresh batch of cutting-edge scholarship miraculously materializes on everyone’s screen. In June *subprime* made its way into the *OED* for the first time, with the current meaning attested from 1993. So did *cookie cutter* and *wantaway*, a British word usually used to describe a professional soccer player who wants to transfer to a different club. Anyone familiar with the old way of doing things, when dictionary revisions took decades to appear or came out piecemeal in printed supplements, will agree that the swiftness, convenience, and neatness of Internet production is simply wonderful.

The new *OED* may be a revision-minded editor’s dream, but it’s trickier for readers seeking a truly definitive definition. The entry you consult in January may be different by March. The editors first revised the

entry for *make*, one of the most complex verbs in the language, in 2000. On several occasions since, they have made changes—I can’t give you chapter and verse, because the first version, and all the subsequent ones through June, have been expunged from the record. (I printed out the entry on two occasions, around 2002. The first time it came to about 98 pages, the second to about 102. But I mislaid these piles of paper, and now they are lost to me forever.) Scholars find this evanescence upsetting and infuriating; even the casual reader may find

it disconcerting. By contrast, the printed book is (more or less) permanent and unchanging. If a new edition supersedes the old, the old does not disappear.

Still, even those who caress their dog-eared *OEDs* must acknowledge that the dictionary is flawed. For instance, why did it take *cookie cutter* so long to reach its pages? The new June entry records the word’s first use in 1864, and as early as

1922 it was being used in a derived sense—“Characterized by homogeneity or lack of originality; conformist, unimaginative, generic”—indicating that the initial meaning was firmly established in the language. (The *OED*’s evidence is a quotation from the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*: “There are always ‘cookie cutter’ tendencies among us. One of these this year is the caracul trimmed coat which every other woman in New York wears.”) But the *OED* lexicographers passed the word by: Inevitably, in building so vast an edifice of scholarship, they have sometimes missed the occasional brick. As one of them wrote in 1951, when he was trying to persuade the publishers to take on the expense of revising the *OED* afresh, this greatest of dictionaries, despite its public reputation for unimpeachable authority, has “hosts of wrong definitions, wrong datings, and wrong crossreferences.”

So the electronic *OED* enables comparatively easy correction of past errors on the one hand, and swift addition of new words and usages on the other. But it also does something just as important, undreamt of by the *OED*’s first makers. However much we may lament



Heavy reading: The *OED*’s second edition weighs 150 pounds.

the loss of the material book in all its comfortable solidity, those thousands of pages of dense print were largely impregnable to any kind of systematic analysis. In the wake of digitization we can, for the first time, bring to light, and utilize, the rich linguistic and literary treasures previously scattered piecemeal among individual entries. In one respect, alphabetically organized dictionaries, or encyclopedias, are arranged arbitrarily: All that data—the quotations themselves, and information about etymology, pronunciation, definitions, spelling forms, and so on—is ordered not according to sense or date or provenance but by the letter with which the headword begins. Now we can run successions of searches and see all the words first recorded in the language in 1599 or 1776 or 1968, or all the quotations from Emily Dickinson, or all the *hapax legomena* (one-off coinages) that the second edition of the *OED* quoted from James Joyce's *Ulysses*. (The total for the last of these is 54, down to 44 in *OED3* because the lexicographers have recently found fresh examples of these words, some from earlier sources and some from later—meaning that they aren't *hapax legomena* any more.)

What's more, we can begin to assess the nature of the primary information from which the *OED* was constructed—its quotations—and the inevitable biases of selection and interpretation that went into its making. We might guess that both the Victorian and Edwardian lexicographers favored a particular literary canon from which to draw their quotations. This, as it turns out, was the case: The most quoted individual sources in the *OED*'s first edition were Shakespeare, Chaucer, Milton, Walter Scott, the Bible, and a medieval historical poem called *Cursor Mundi*. So were these works the giants that constructed the English language? Or were they the ones the lexicographers most delighted in quoting from?

Digitization of the *OED* has been an extraordinary gift, enabling us to better understand both the strengths and the weaknesses of the dictionary, as well as to look up lots of words quickly. This is due to the search tools Oxford University Press has provided, and to the enormous expense it lavished, in the 1980s, on transforming the physical object into electronic form in the first place. (All the different elements in each entry were electronically tagged, so that they could be subsequently

retrieved according to different taxonomic criteria. Keying in all the information, and checking it, took well over 200 person-years.)

Does a more comprehensive understanding of the *OED* compensate for the loss of those handsome volumes? Will it really matter if the *OED* is never printed again? Given the *OED*'s likely length (or size) when complete, would any of us be able to afford it if it were? On balance, I remain convinced that the advantages of digitization dwarf the disadvantages, for scholars, and even more so for the thousands of people who now have electronic access to this dictionary—many more than could ever have been envisaged for the printed form—whether at home or at an academic institution. (In the United Kingdom, you can access the *OED* free of charge at your local library; in the United States, an individual subscription costs \$295 a year.) The *OED*'s transformation is one more example of the democratization of knowledge in the digital age.

To say this is not to dismiss the attachment to books as mere sentiment. We are now, involuntarily and unceasingly, it often seems, assailed by a superabundance of electronic information, which can confuse and repel as much as it enlightens us. By contrast, when we pick up a book, we are making a deliberate choice that is limited to the contents between the cover, and we can see, feel, and smell what we are getting. As a material object, a book bears its own physical history of use (whether our own or other people's), without which, arguably, we cannot fully comprehend its social and cultural significance. I recognize that electronic resources can never replicate the range and character of experiences that accompany the consultation of a printed volume, and I can see the argument that the switch to digital resources is dehumanizing. Nevertheless, I think the trade is worthwhile, if not for all books then certainly for the *OED*. Anyone who knows and loves this work, one of the greatest of human endeavors, must agree that the more fully and intensely we can engage with its contents, the better. Indeed, that is the best way to repay the successive editors and contributors for the years of devotion they have poured into it. Whether or not the *OED* is printed again, the computer tells us more about this extraordinary intellectual achievement than those heavy volumes will ever do. So let us embrace digitization, not deplore it. ■

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Regime Change 2.0

There is more than one way to get a rogue state to change its ways.

BY ROBERT S. LITWAK

“THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN THE WORLD?” shouted the cover of *Newsweek*. Iran’s radical president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2008? No, the man was Libya’s Muammar al-Qaddafi and the year was 1981. Twenty-two years later, in late 2003, the Libyan dictator surprised the world with the announcement that his country would terminate its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. The strategic turnabout ended years of secret negotiations with the United States and Britain that had focused initially on Libyan complicity in the terrorist bombing of Pan Am flight 103 in 1988 and subsequently on Libya’s proscribed WMD programs. The Bush administration claimed the disarmament coup (coming just eight months after the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime) as a dividend of the Iraq war and declared that Libya could now emerge from its United Nations-imposed diplomatic isolation. Libya was poised to rejoin what American presidents from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush have metaphorically called “the family of nations.” Does the Libyan precedent—“The Rogue Who Came in From the Cold,” as a headline in *Foreign Affairs* put it—hold lessons for dealing with other states that egregiously violate international norms of conduct?

In 2005, when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice identified six countries—Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Zimbabwe, Burma, and Belarus—as “outposts of tyranny,” she conspicuously omitted Libya as a seventh. Yet though that former “rogue state” was no longer engaged in weapons proliferation or terrorism—the issues of urgent concern to the United

States after the 9/11 attacks—the Libyan regime’s miserable human rights record secured Qaddafi 11th place and a “dishonorable mention” in *Parade* magazine’s 2008 ranking of “The World’s Worst Dictators.” That pop compilation of autocrats included not only those Rice singled out but also, embarrassingly for an administration trumpeting a “freedom agenda,” the leaders of three key U.S. allies—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan. One man’s dictator is another’s indispensable partner in the “global war on terrorism.” The competition between contradictory values and objectives—on the one hand, President Bush’s Wilson-on-steroids rhetoric about “ending tyranny”; on the other, the ugly accommodations Washington has made with the “world’s worst” for the sake of counterterrorism and oil—has naturally fueled charges of hypocrisy. There may be no resolving this traditional tension in American foreign policy between ideals and interests, but the tension can be managed.

The roots of the current debate can be traced to an important conceptual shift that occurred around 1980. Before then, the terms “rogue,” “pariah,” and “outlaw” were used interchangeably to describe states whose repressive ruling regimes engaged in the most extreme violations of international norms governing the treatment of civilian populations; notorious examples were Pol Pot’s Cambodia and Idi Amin’s Uganda. After 1980, the focus shifted from the *internal* behavior of a state (how a regime treats its own people) to its *external* behavior (how it relates to other states in the international system). Two key criteria marked a state as “rogue”: the sponsorship of terrorism and the pursuit of WMD. In accordance with the shift to a concern with states’ external behavior, the State Department inaugurated an official listing of countries employing terrorism as

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Scared straight? Libya's Muammar al-Qaddafi gets a warm welcome in Brussels after abandoning his weapons of mass destruction program late in 2003.

an instrument of policy. And in a 1985 speech, President Ronald Reagan called Iran, Libya, North Korea, Cuba, and Nicaragua “an international version of Murder Incorporated” with “outlaw governments who are sponsoring terrorism against our nation.”

Over the years, the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism has been subject to politicization. Particularly glaring was the decision in 1982 to drop Iraq from the list as part of Washington’s “tilt” toward the Saddam Hussein regime just as Iraq was suffering battlefield setbacks in its attritional war with Ayatollah Khomeini’s Iran. Ironically, the country that would one day be held up as the archetypal “rogue state” was being courted, not penalized, by the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations through what proved a flawed engagement strategy. Iraq was not placed back on the State Department’s terrorist list until a month after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The new conception of rogue states was strongly reinforced by the coincidence of the end of the Cold War and the

waging of a hot war in the Persian Gulf in 1991 to reverse Saddam’s aggression. Richard Cheney, then secretary of defense, spoke of the need to prepare for the “Iraqs of the future.” This mission assumed added urgency with the post-war discovery by UN weapons inspectors of Iraq’s unexpectedly large WMD programs. The Clinton administration further elevated the rogue state concept in U.S. policy by asserting that the rogues, whose core group comprised Iran, Iraq, North Korea, and Libya, constituted a distinct category in the post-Cold War international system. The “rogue” rubric carried the dubious connotation of essentially crazy states not susceptible to deterrence and traditional cost-benefit diplomacy. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told the Council on Foreign Relations in 1997 that “dealing with the rogue states is one of the greatest challenges of our time . . . because they are there with the sole purpose of destroying the system.”

But the Clinton administration’s translation of rogue state rhetoric into strategy exposed major liabilities of the

term. The pejorative label was an American political rubric without standing in international law. And because it was analytically soft and quintessentially political, it was applied selectively and inconsistently. Syria, for example, a state with active WMD programs and links to terrorism, was then being wooed by the Clinton administration in the Middle East peace process and so was pointedly not referred to as a rogue state, whereas Cuba, which met none of the criteria, was included in the roster of rogue states because of the political clout of the Cuban émigré community. The definitional problem went further: How was one to categorize states that met some of the criteria, such as India and Pak-

istan after their 1998 nuclear tests? Another important reason that the term was so elastic was its focus solely on objectionable external behavior; the Clinton administration did not address odious actions *within* states, such as Burma, that violated international norms. Opponents of the administration soon appropriated the term for their own purposes. Thus, one conservative critic labeled China a rogue state because of its human rights abuses and nuclear cooperation with Pakistan and urged President Bill Clinton to cancel his 1998 state visit to Beijing. As with pornography, people know a rogue state when they see one.

ist Mohammed Khatami's surprise election in 1997 offered Washington a perceived opportunity for diplomatic engagement. Concluding that the category had become a political straitjacket, in 2000 the Clinton administration jettisoned the term "rogue state" in favor of the infelicitous "states of concern." But the incoming George W. Bush administration pointedly restored it to the U.S. foreign-policy lexicon in accordance with what observers called its "ABC"—"anything but Clinton"—stance.

Al Qaeda's terrorist attacks on 9/11 recast the American debate on rogue states. Bush administration officials argued that the threats to the United States in this new era were inextricably linked to the character of its adversaries—undeterable terrorist groups and unpredictable rogue states. Accordingly, administration hard-liners insisted that merely changing the behavior of these states would no longer suffice because the

BEFORE 9/11, THE United States sought to contain rogue regimes; afterward, the strategy shifted to undoing them.

bad behavior derived from their very nature. The proliferation of WMD capabilities to rogue states, in tandem with the sponsorship of terrorism by their unstable ruling regimes, created a deadly new "nexus." The nightmare scenario was that rogue regimes could transfer nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons to their terrorist clients, who would have no moral or political compunctions about using them against the United States. This redefinition of the threat led to a radical change in U.S. strategy. Viewing Iraq through "the prism of 9/11," in then-secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld's phrase, the administration made the decisive shift from a pre-9/11 strategy of containing regimes to a new strategy of undoing them.

The translation of the rogue state concept into policy sharply limited strategic flexibility. The assertion that these countries constituted a distinct class of states pushed policymakers toward adopting a one-size-fits-all strategy of comprehensive containment and isolation. Once a country was relegated to the "rogue" or "outlaw" category, critics viewed any deviation from hard-line containment and isolation as tantamount to appeasement. The rogue state strategy proved more an attitude than a coherent guide to policy. And in practice, the attitude came up against hard political realities—first in North Korea, where the threat posed by Pyongyang's advanced nuclear program in 1994 necessitated negotiation, and later in Iran, where reformist presi-

The UN Security Council crisis leading up to the onset of the Iraq war in 2003 began as a debate about Iraq and Saddam Hussein but turned into a referendum on the United States and the legitimate exercise of American power. The rancorous, divisive debate was in sharp contrast to the international solidarity mobilized in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. The terrorist attacks ushered in a new era of vulnerability, but despite the constant refrain at the time that "everything has changed," they did not alter the structure of international relations. To the contrary, they solidified that structure. Relations between the United States and

its former Cold War adversaries Russia and China moved to their closest since World War II.

Political scientist John Ikenberry has argued persuasively that the key to America's international success during the Cold War was the embedding of U.S. power in international security and economic institutions, such as NATO and the World Bank. That made the exercise of American power more legitimate and less threatening to other states and fostered the perception of the United States as a benign superpower, even as it advanced American national interests. It also explains why the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar Cold War system did not trigger the rise of a coalition of states to balance American power.

But as historian John Lewis Gaddis observes, "The rush to war in Iraq in the absence of a 'first shot' or 'smoking gun' left . . . a growing sense throughout the world there could be nothing worse than American hegemony if it was to be used in this way." The perception of the United States as a rogue superpower, which had arrogated an unfettered right of military preemption, unleashed a diplomatic effort by France, Germany, and Russia to block the use of force against Iraq by withholding the legitimizing imprimatur of the United Nations.

At the heart of the dispute was the cardinal principle of sovereignty. President George H. W. Bush faced a far easier task building an international coalition for a showdown with Iraq in 1991 than his son did 12 years later. In the first Gulf war, Security Council authorization and the forging of a broad multinational coalition to liberate Kuwait were diplomatically possible because Saddam Hussein had violated a universally supported international norm: State sovereignty is to be protected from external aggression. By contrast, in the bitter 2003 UN debate, the attainment of Security Council approval for military action was bound to rouse strong opposition rooted in that same international norm: Compelling Iraqi WMD disarmament through an externally imposed regime change would be a precedent-setting negation of state sovereignty.

In contrast to the change of regime in Iraq, the Libyan case offered the precedent of change *in* a regime. When Qaddafi announced that Libya was voluntarily terminating its covert WMD programs and submitting to intrusive international inspections to certify compliance, the Bush administration and its supporters claimed that he had been "scared straight" (as one analyst put it) by the regime-change precedent in Iraq. The Iraq war and the powerful video broadcast

worldwide of Saddam Hussein being inspected for lice by a U.S. military medic after his capture were no doubt an important factor affecting the timing of Qaddafi's WMD decision. It was a necessary but not sufficient condition for Libya's WMD disarmament. The crux of the Libyan deal was the Bush administration's willingness to eschew the objective of regime change and instead offer a tacit assurance of regime survival. In essence, if Qaddafi halted his objectionable activities in the areas of proliferation and terrorism, Washington would not press for a change of regime in Tripoli. Without such a credible security assurance, Qaddafi would have had no incentive to relinquish his WMD arsenal; to the contrary, the belief that he was targeted by the U.S. administration after Iraq regardless of any change in Libyan policy would have created a powerful incentive for him to accelerate his regime's efforts to acquire unconventional weapons as a strategic deterrent.

The contrasting precedents set in Iraq and Libya have important implications for the nuclear crises with North Korea and Iran, but they also raise a fundamental question about the meaning of a term that has been central to the U.S. foreign-policy debate: "regime change." The Iraq war reinforced the widespread but misleading connotation of regime change as a sharp split between old and new, and as something brought about by outsiders rather than insiders. The term is better viewed as embodying a dynamic process that occurs along a continuum. Total change—through war (Germany and Japan) or revolution (China and Iran)—that not only removes a regime's leadership but also transforms governmental institutions is rare. More commonly, the degree of change is limited, as when a newly elected political party makes a significant policy shift, or when one leader supplants another in an authoritarian regime. Leadership is perhaps the key determinant of change, affecting its pace and extent, or indeed influencing whether it will be undertaken at all.

The most important instance of regime change in the latter half of the 20th century was accomplished in the Soviet Union under President Mikhail Gorbachev through neither revolution nor war. In 1989, diplomat George Kennan declared an end to the Cold War, arguing that the Soviet Union under Gorbachev had evolved from a revolutionary expansionist state into an orthodox great power. Gorbachev's grand strategy—a form of regime change by inter-

nal evolution—was to integrate a transformed Soviet Union into the international order forged after World War II. The complementary U.S. strategy of the post-Cold War era has been to promote the integration of post-Soviet Russia into that international order.

Historically, the periods of greatest turmoil in the modern era have arisen from the emergence of expansionist great powers with unbounded ambition, such as Nazi Germany or Stalin's Soviet Union, seeking the wholesale transforma-

or compelled to comply with international norms? Through targeted strategies that create effective influence on their ruling regimes. The aim is to present each with a structured choice between the rewards of behavior change and the penalties for non-compliance. Of course, some outlaw states may still strongly resist this process of "resocialization" (to use political scientist Alexander George's term).

In the case of Libya, the origins of Qaddafi's strategic turnabout date to the mid-1990s, when Libya's domestic

economy was collapsing under the twin impacts of UN sanctions and low oil prices. With even the regime's core constituencies under stress, Qaddafi's hand was forced. The Libyan leader reportedly sided with the regime's pragmatic technocrats, who argued that the

THE UNITED STATES must make clear that its objective is to change the behavior of regimes, not replace their leaders.

tion of the international order. With the demise of the Soviet Union, the defining feature of contemporary international relations has been the absence of competition among the great powers that might bring with it the risk of major war. Although China's meteoric rise and Russia's uncertain political trajectory have prompted balance-of-power realists to question the long-term durability of this current condition, neither great power is mounting a frontal assault on the existing international order. Some commentators declared that Russia's military intervention in Georgia in August marked the return of the Cold War. This development could alternatively be viewed as the reassertion of traditional Russian national interests. Though a State Department official called Russia a "revisionist" state after its move into Georgia, its revisionism is in the conventional tradition of a great power seeking to create a sphere of influence on its periphery. This stance is closer to the Monroe Doctrine than to the Comintern. To be sure, Russia's new assertiveness carries risks of regional strife and inadvertent military escalation, but in contrast to its behavior during the Cold War, the Kremlin is not advancing an alternative vision of international order.

Operating beyond the bounds of international order are a diverse group of weak, isolated countries—ranging from Burma to Zimbabwe, and Belarus to North Korea—that defy global norms of behavior but do not threaten the stability of the entire system. How can these states be induced

country's radical foreign policies (which had landed the "dangerous" Qaddafi on the cover of *Newsweek* in 1981) had become a costly liability. Bowing to "new realities," Qaddafi even embraced economic globalization, declaring, "The world has changed radically . . . and being a revolutionary and progressive man, I have to follow this movement."

Globalization—the driving force of the world economy—is a double-edged sword. Reintegration, especially for an oil-exporting state such as Libya, offers tangible benefits. But opening up their countries and engaging in the global economy also carries for these beleaguered regimes the risk of political contagion that might threaten their survival. Dictators such as North Korea's Kim Jong Il realize that a soft landing for their society would likely mean a hard landing for their regime. Since autarky is not a viable long-term alternative to integration, their strategy is essentially to muddle through, gaining the benefits of outside economic links while attempting to insulate themselves from the political consequences.

If these states can't be induced to comply with international norms, they should be compelled to do so. By credibly threatening the interests of those who keep the regime in power—the military, security services, key ethnic groups, and other elites—the international community

can leverage a change in behavior. Comprehensive sanctions, as evidenced by the decade-long UN experience in Iraq, have an indiscriminate negative impact on the civilian populace. By contrast, targeted sanctions, such as travel and financial restrictions, are directed at individuals, commercial entities, and organizations. In the Libyan case, the impact of multilateral sanctions on the regime's power base ratcheted up the pressure on Qaddafi to alter course. When elite groups conclude that their country's defiance of global norms is a threat to their own specific interests, they become what political scientist Bruce Jentleson has characterized as "transmission belts, carrying forward the coercive pressure on the regime to comply." But such pressure can also be short-circuited (again, to use Jentleson's metaphor). Take the case of Iran, where the financial windfall from the elevated price of oil permits Ahmadinejad to



The Bush administration has gone head to head with Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad but has been unclear whether it is bent on replacing the regime or would settle for a change in its behavior.

cover his regime's economic mismanagement and buy off critics. Or the case of insular North Korea, where China, fearful of precipitating the collapse of the Kim Jong Il regime, has refused to exert its unique leverage on Pyongyang over the nuclear issue.

In offering a structured choice to these regimes, the United States must be prepared to take "yes" for an answer when one of them changes its behavior. Yet throughout the nuclear crisis with Iran, the Bush administration has sent a mixed message. Top officials have stuck to the familiar mantra "All options are on the table"—a clear reference to the possibility of military action. But to what end? Is the U.S. goal to change the behavior of this "axis of evil" member or to change its ruling regime? Iran faces profound societal contradictions and hard choices: Is the Islamic Republic an "ordinary" state that accepts the legitimacy of the international system, or a revolutionary state that rejects the norms of a system regarded by hard-liners as U.S.-dominated? But pushing Tehran to make the right choice also requires

Washington to make a choice, to resolve its own policy contradiction. It must make clear, as it did with Libya, that the U.S. objective is to change the behavior of regimes, not replace their leaders. Because of the cardinal principle of state sovereignty, Washington will be hard pressed to win the support of Russia and China for meaningful sanctions on Iran if Moscow and Beijing believe that the United States means to overthrow the Iranian regime.

The promotion of a rules-based international order also requires that the United States not turn a

blind eye to non-democratic allies, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, that are not pariahs along the lines of Burma and Zimbabwe but that also flout important international

norms. To avoid charges of hypocrisy and double standards where competing foreign-policy interests are at stake, the United States must be willing to set a minimum bar for compliance by its allies

and to pay the price when nations do not comply. Easier said than done, but that is the task facing U.S. policymakers.

Perhaps most important to America's efforts to support international order is the need to reaffirm its own commitment to work through international institutions and abide by their norms. After 9/11, President Bush asserted that Washington would not be so constrained; it did not need "permission" to defend America. The Iraq war was the high-water mark of that instance of U.S. unilateralism. Washington has since acknowledged that multilateralism conveys political legitimacy and that the involvement of other states provides practical utility. The embedding of U.S. power within international institutions would mark a return to what liberal internationalists view as America's formula for success after World War II. The pressing challenge for the United States in the post-9/11 era of vulnerability is to tend to the national interest without calling into question the nation's commitment to international norms of order. ■

The New Kindergarten

The case for universal pre-kindergarten isn't as strong as it seems.

BY DOUGLAS J. BESHAROV AND DOUGLAS M. CALL

IN HER CHRISTMAS 2007 CAMPAIGN AD, HILLARY Clinton was shown arranging presents labeled “Universal Health Care,” “Alternative Energy,” “Bring Troops Home,” and “Middle-Class Tax Breaks.” She then paused, looking somewhat puzzled, before delivering the punch line: “Where did I put universal pre-K?”

“Universal pre-K” has become a politically popular campaign cause. Clinton is no longer a candidate, of course, but Barack Obama has promised an ambitious pre-kindergarten agenda; John McCain’s advisers have hinted that he will do the same. And why not? The rhetoric surrounding pre-K programs is quite extraordinary: They close the achievement gap between low-income children and their more affluent peers; they prepare all children, including middle-income children, for school; and they provide financial relief to working mothers who have been paying for child care.

Yet as the Clinton TV spot unwittingly suggested, universal pre-K programs do not have an obvious place in today’s crowded child-care world. Sometimes called “the new kindergarten,” pre-K is in most cases just what its name implies: a year of publicly funded half-day school

before kindergarten—for all children, regardless of whether their mothers work and regardless of family income. Pre-K has hardly enjoyed a universal embrace. Twice in recent history, attempts to create similar national programs foundered on controversy and went down to defeat. In California, voters recently turned their backs on a statewide plan.

In a 2006 referendum, the Golden State’s voters rejected universal “free” preschool by a margin of three to two. Proposition 82, “Preschool for All,” was backed by the activist actor-director Rob Reiner and the California Teachers Association; it would have given all California four-year-olds “equal access to quality preschool programs” for three hours a day for about eight months a year—to be paid for by a 1.7 percentage-point increase in the tax rate for single individuals making more than \$400,000 and couples making more than \$800,000 (almost a 20 percent tax increase, by the way). Although attendance was theoretically voluntary, the proposition would have effectively withdrawn government subsidies from other forms of care, so that families needing or wanting a free or subsidized program would have had no choice but to use their local school’s pre-K.

The referendum sparked a statewide debate that went beyond the typical mix of platitudes, generalizations, and exaggerations. Yes on 82, the prime sponsor of the referendum, repeated the oddly precise claim of RAND

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And it's only the beginning. A youngster awaits the graduation ceremony at a preschool in Danville, Kentucky. Three-quarters of the nation's four-year-olds are currently enrolled in some form of organized child care.

researchers that “every dollar California invests in a quality, universal preschool program will return \$2.62 to society because of savings from reduced remedial education costs, lower high school dropout rates, and the economic benefits of a better-educated work force.”

Opponents pointed out, however, that more than 60 percent of California four-year-olds were already in a child-care center, a nursery school, or Head Start, and that the new program would have subsidized the middle-class families now paying for child care while, in the

mothers have always had little choice but to work, or go on welfare.) In 1971, spurred by this change, as well as the emerging women's movement, a group of liberal Democrats led by Walter Mondale (D.-Minn.) in the Senate and John Brademas (D.-Ind.) in the House pushed the Child Development Act through Congress. It was an expansive measure, designed to create a federalized system of child development services. Children were to be enrolled regardless of whether their mothers worked and needed child care, on the ground that all children would bene-

words of a *Los Angeles Times* editorial, establishing “a cumbersome bureaucracy . . . under the state Department of Education, which has done a disappointing job with K-12 schools.”

Strangely, the overwhelming rejection of universal pre-K by the voters of our largest state has had no discernible impact on the national debate. It's not that California just happened to have more preschool programs than the rest of the country. Nationwide, about 74 percent of four-year-olds now spend time in some form of organized child care.

To understand what is going on, a little history will help. Beginning in the 1950s, a steadily higher proportion of married women with children took jobs outside the home. Between 1950 and 1970, the proportion of *married* mothers in the work force doubled, rising from about 20 percent to about 40 percent. (Single

fit from a government-supervised child development effort.

Initially, key senior officials in the Nixon administration supported the measure, seeing child care as an important component of their approach to welfare reform. But after some uncertainty, President Richard M. Nixon vetoed the bill, famously criticizing its “communal approaches to child rearing over [and] against the family-centered approach.” His veto—and the specter

political force for their favored causes. Maurien McKinley of the Black Child Development Institute explained: “It is to the advantage of the entire nation to view the provision of day care/child development services within the context of the need for a readjustment of societal power relationships. . . . As day care centers are utilized to catalyze development in black and other communities, the enhanced political and economic power that results can provide effective leverage for the improvement of the overall social and

economic condition of the nation.”

In the next three-plus decades, child-care advocates struggled to come up with a formula that would be more attractive to voters, but they repeatedly overestimated support for government-provided child care for middle-class children

and underestimated the desire of parents for choice and flexibility.

In the years after Nixon’s veto, tens of millions of American mothers entered the labor force. By the 1990s, about 70 percent of married mothers had left full-time child rearing for jobs outside the home, and child-care options had proliferated. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), about 74 percent of all four-year-olds are in “formal” child-care centers for at least part of the day, while the remainder are in “informal” arrangements, a category that includes care by anybody from their parents or relatives to the lady down the street.

Married mothers entered the labor force in waves. First came married women with older children, who were in school anyway and often could take care of themselves after school. Then came those with young children, who needed someone else to care for them. In 1975, only 34 percent of mothers with a child under age three worked outside the home; by 1990, 54 percent did. Moreover, new mothers are quick to return to work. About seven percent do so within one month of their child’s birth, and about 41 percent within three months.

Some think that American mothers are in the process of completely abandoning their traditional child-rearing role, but the picture is more mixed. The influx of married women with children into the labor force largely came to a

**EVEN THOUGH THEY DO NOT “need”
child care, about half of stay-at-home
mothers place their children in a preschool
or nursery school.**

of “communal” child rearing—not only killed the bill but took the political wind out of the child-care issue for a decade. Mondale himself became alarmed by the backlash even in his politically liberal home state.

Most liberal commentators have seen only conservative politics in the Nixon veto, but even many supporters of a federal child-care program thought the bill was deeply flawed, in ways that its congressional backers may not have understood. The legislation would have jumped past the states to fund hundreds if not thousands of “prime sponsors” (mostly local governments and nonprofit organizations)—all to be selected by officials of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The prime sponsors were, in turn, supposed to establish local “child development councils” composed of parents, children’s services specialists, and community activists. These local entities would then fund as many as 40,000 individual providers.

If this web of federally administered, community-based programs sounds like an echo of the War on Poverty, that’s because it sprang from the same social agenda—and many of the same activists. They distrusted state and local governments and wanted “community groups” in control. The bill’s supporters boasted that this nationwide cadre of well-funded organizations would be a strong

halt in the 1990s. About 30 percent of all mothers today still do not work outside the home. Include those who work only part time—most often less than 20 hours a week—and you will find that almost 50 percent of all mothers, and almost 60 percent of those with a child under three, are not in the full-time labor force.

Although some of these women might take full-time jobs if child care were free, most have decided to delay returning to the labor force until their children are older. In fact, even though they do not “need” child care, about half of stay-at-home mothers place their children in a preschool or nursery school (for at least a year) because they want them to be with other children in a structured learning environment. For these mothers, government-funded pre-K might be a welcome financial break, but it would have little or no educational effect.

Except among women on welfare, the great increase in working mothers had taken place by the late 1980s, when child-care advocates made their second major push for a universal program. In 1987, the Act for Better Child Care Services, or the “ABC bill,” as its supporters happily dubbed it, was introduced in Congress. Like the legislation Nixon had vetoed 15 years earlier, the ABC bill sought to create a nationwide system of child development services.

This time, however, there was no Great Society model; the states would administer the program, although they were to be guided by local advisory councils. Each year, the states would distribute \$4.6 billion as grants to child-care centers or, in some circumstances, as vouchers to eligible families. Families would be eligible to receive assistance on a sliding scale if their income did “not exceed 115 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size.” In high-income states such as Connecticut and New Jersey, that meant a family of four with an income of more than \$100,000 would have been eligible. Nationally, the average income cut-off for eligibility for a family of four was about \$79,000. (Unless otherwise indicated, all dollar amounts in this essay are in 2007 dollars.)

The ABC bill seemed headed for easy passage until controversy broke out among its liberal backers over a new provision barring the states from expending child-care money for “sectarian purposes or activities.” In other words, no

money for child care by religiously oriented organizations—even though 28 percent of all center-based programs in 1990 were operated by religious groups—unless they removed all elements of religiosity from their premises.

That provision was a late addition to the bill, apparently at the urging of the National Education Association and the National Parent Teacher Association. These organizations were interested less in the theory of church-state relations than in maximizing the money available for public schools and their employees. And they worried that by using vouchers (thus avoiding strictures against federal aid to religious institutions), the bill would create a precedent for vouchers in K–12 education. Many of the advocacy groups that originally supported the ABC bill—especially those representing religiously based providers, such as the U.S. Catholic Conference and its allies—were incensed.

While the fight over aid to sectarian programs festered for almost two years, another, and ultimately more significant, rift developed among the Democrats who controlled Congress. Key leaders in the House, led by Thomas Downey (D.-N.Y.) and George Miller (D.-Calif.), decided that any new child-care bill should provide greater assistance to low-income families rather than attempt to start a universal child development system, as the ABC bill would. It is unclear whether they opposed a universal federal program in principle—as Marian Wright Edelman of the Children’s Defense Fund charged—or were simply being pragmatic. Their own explanation was that a universal system was unlikely to be funded (at least in any meaningful way) and that, in the meantime, low-income families needed help.

Meanwhile, Congress had passed legislation that encouraged mothers to leave welfare for work. Downey, Miller, and their allies wanted to “make work pay” for these mothers—by providing government-funded child care and by supplementing low earnings through an expanded Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

In 1990, Congress and President George H. W. Bush finally agreed on a law, much different from the original 1987 ABC bill, that created a \$1.3 billion annual program called the Child Care and Development Block Grant and a new half-billion-dollar entitlement for families “at risk” of becoming welfare recipients. It also doubled the EITC, from \$11.9 billion in 1990 to \$24.6 billion in 1993.

It is difficult to judge what would have happened had the original ABC bill become law, but the narrower

Downey-Miller approach was a boon to low-income families. The EITC is now a \$45 billion-a-year program, providing financial assistance to more than 23 million families. And the administrative structure it created—especially child-care vouchers—became the basis of the massive expansion of child-care funding six years later under President Bill Clinton’s 1996 welfare reform law. That year, the Republican Congress—pushed hard by the Clinton administration—decided that if mothers were expected to

18 percent of those under age two) receive child-care aid.

Both the Child Development Act of 1971 and the ABC bill of 1987 foundered, in part, on the seemingly wide political opposition to a universal child-care program that ignores the immediate needs of low-income families. But rather than learn from this lesson, advocates are pushing yet again for a universal program. This time, the selling point is “school readiness” rather than child development, and the focus is only on placing four-year-olds in public schools. But

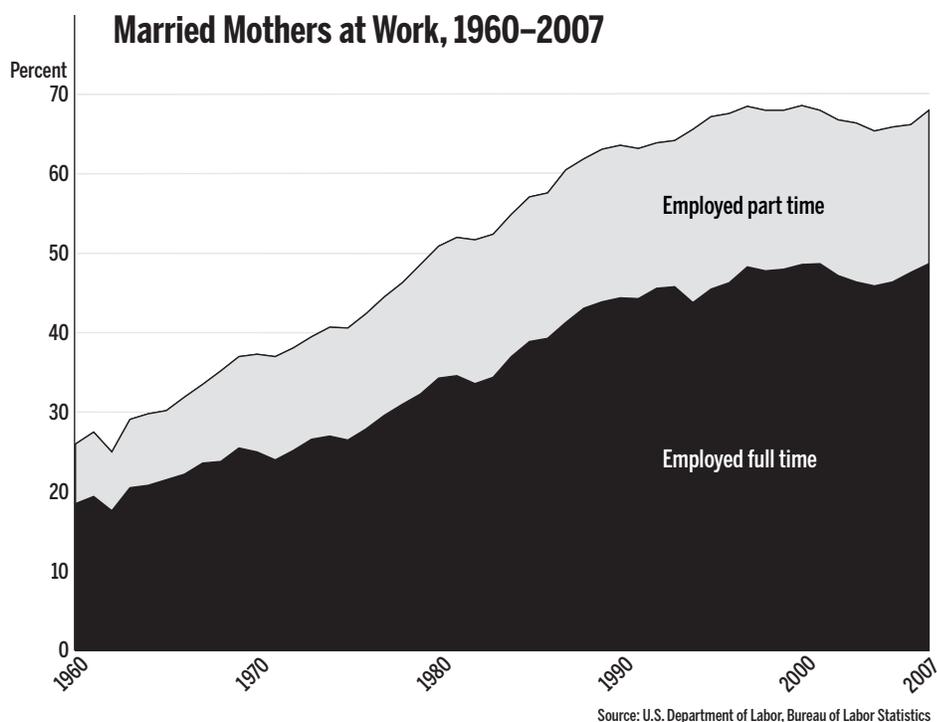
the result is the same: a middle-class-oriented program that does not meet the needs of low-income families.

Advocates claim that pre-K programs do not have to be in schools, and that they would be happy to see existing child-care centers improved with pre-K funds (though that would leave out sectarian programs). But the “quality” requirements these programs impose, such as college degrees and specialized credentials for teachers, are, in the words of *The Los Angeles Times*, “written in such a way to favor programs at public schools.”

In any event, given the strong political support

for universal pre-K from teachers’ unions and the allied educational establishment, it should not be surprising that most state pre-K money has gone to new programs in public schools. In the 2003–04 school year, about 90 percent of children supported by pre-K funds were enrolled in public schools.

Why add a new, school-based program for four-year-olds when, as we have seen, about 70 percent of all three- and four-year-olds nationwide *already* spend at least some time in some form of center-based child care or Head Start? Wasn’t this goal of universality the political and programmatic hurdle that brought down California’s Proposition 82?



The proportion of married women with children under age 18 who worked full time outside the home leveled off at about 48 percent in the late 1990s, a decade after part-time employment reached a plateau of about 20 percent.

work, the government should help pay for child care—the same argument that had appealed to Republicans as far back as the Nixon administration. In only five years, from 1996 to 2000, federal and related state child-care spending almost doubled, rising from \$7 billion to \$13.6 billion. Add in funding for Head Start, and the total rose from \$11.7 billion to \$19.9 billion. Spending has remained relatively flat since then.

The result has been an unprecedented increase in the number of children in government-subsidized child care. But more needs to be done. Only half of all eligible four-year-olds with low-income working mothers (and only

Would it not be sounder policy to expand the programs that already exist?

Perhaps the politicians supporting universal pre-K do not know the extent of existing preschool services. (That seems to have been the case in California.) After all, like the rest of us, they are constantly exposed to a barrage of complaints about the inadequacy of child-care services. And some governors seem to have been persuaded that a pre-K program would raise test scores, thus helping to prevent the financial penalties for failing to meet the standards of the No Child Left Behind Act.

The advocates of universal pre-K, however, know exactly what they are doing. In public, they justify creating a new program by claiming—often with some hyperbole—that existing programs are of such poor quality that displacing them will be a net good. Thus, Nathan James, a spokesman for Rob Reiner, asserted that as few as 25 percent of the four-year-olds in day care were in quality programs. Care for the others “could be baby-sitting or throwing a kid in front of a TV set,” he said.

That kind of exaggeration—with its remarkable suggestion that the majority of parents hand their children over to dreadful caregivers—distracts attention from the real question: Would it not make more sense to improve the existing programs than to start up a fresh group of efforts whose quality is far from guaranteed? For example, “Project Upgrade” (funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) used rigorous evaluation techniques to test a revised curriculum for child-care centers in Florida. It raised test scores on at least some elements of cognitive development as much as the best state pre-K programs—at a much lower cost. (Because pre-K pays teacher-level salaries, on an hourly basis it costs about 50 percent more than center-based care.)

In private, advocates give a more plausible explanation. They say that the phrases “universal preschool” and “universal pre-K” are meant to suggest the extension of public education. The idea is to finesse the major reasons why past efforts to enact a universal child-care program failed. If pre-K is just adding another year to schooling, then it is not taking over child rearing (a prerogative carefully guarded by

American parents). And if it is an education program, it might attract the children of stay-at-home mothers and would certainly justify taxpayer spending on middle-class and more affluent families. (After all, schools are free to all, regardless of income.)

Justifying free pre-K is politically important because, contrary to what the news media imply, two-parent families in which the mother works are actually much wealthier than those with stay-at-home mothers. As *The Los Angeles Times* complained, uni-

ONLY HALF OF ALL ELIGIBLE four-year-olds with low-income working mothers receive child-care aid.

versal pre-K makes a “taxpayer-funded preschool available to middle-class and rich families, which can easily afford it.” Although other factors are involved, consider that in 2006 the median income for households with two earners was \$76,635, almost 40 percent more than that for married-couple households with only one earner (\$55,372).

The key to this “pre-K is just another year of school” argument is the claim that, unlike Head Start, pre-K programs provide educational benefits to all children, not just the disadvantaged. “All children make phenomenal gains” in pre-K, claims Libby Doggett, executive director of the advocacy group Pre-K Now. Rob Reiner told the National Governors’ Association that pre-K programs produce a “huge impact” on how all children do “in school and later on in life.”

At first glance, the idea that starting school a year earlier would boost the learning of middle-class children might make sense. (Let’s pass on the worry that many experts have about the negative impact of starting formal education too soon.) We want our children to do the best they can in school, so, presumably, the earlier they start preparing for school, the better.

Unfortunately, no scientifically rigorous evidence supports the claims of pre-K’s impact on middle-class children. James Heckman, a University of Chicago Nobel laureate in economics, is one of the strongest voices in favor of

early education for low-income children, but here is what he says about applying the model to the middle class: “Advocates and supporters of universal preschool often use existing research for purely political purposes. But the solid evidence for the effectiveness of early interventions is limited to those conducted on disadvantaged populations.” As Bruce Fuller, an education professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and author of *Standardized Childhood* (2007), explains, “For middle-class kids the quality of preschool centers would have to approach a nirvana-like condition to present radically richer environments than the majority of middle-class homes, or home-based caregivers.”

It’s not that knowledgeable pre-K backers don’t know this. Fuller reports on a conversation he had with one of the key foundation funders of the pre-K movement: “When I asked [universal pre-K] benefactor Sue Urahn of the Pew Charitable Trusts why government should subsidize preschools for all families, rich or poor, she acknowledged that ‘you probably won’t get the degree of benefit for middle-class children that you would for poor kids.’ But, she added, universality may bolster the political will to widen children’s access to, and to improve the quality of, preschool.”

So that’s the strategy: promise the middle class a free lunch. Thus far, it seems to be working. Each year sees an increase in the number of children in pre-K programs. In the 2006–07 school year, the NIEER reports, 14 states had 25 percent or more of all four-year-olds in pre-K, and three states had reached 50 percent.

In most places, pre-K programs are simply being added to the mix of preschool programs, with little or no attempt to coordinate them with existing child-care programs or Head Start. The eventual goal, apparently, is to have universal pre-K programs substitute for all programs that now serve four-year-olds.

But is it the right strategy? What about the nearly 500,000 four-year-olds in Head Start? And what about the almost 1.6 million four-year-old children of full-time working women—children who need more than part-time care while their mothers are on the job?

Pre-K is already eating into Head Start enrollments. Last year, Congress responded to what was called “underenrollment” by allowing Head Start grantees to enroll more infants and toddlers, and to raise income eligibility ceilings. This is, at best, a

temporary fix to a long-term problem.

Nonprofit and for-profit child-care centers face a subtler threat. Full-time working mothers who use pre-K (whether because of its presumed quality or because it is free) no longer need their services. And because pre-K fills only a few hours of each day, these mothers tend to patch together some combination of before- and after-pre-K activities for their children. Because they generally cannot use child-care centers for this purpose, children are more likely to wind up in informal care, provided by neighbors, relatives, and others—the very care that pre-K advocates criticize most.

When researchers studying New York State’s universal pre-K program raised the possibility that pre-K programs “could negatively impact the enrollment of four-year-olds at nonpublic child-care centers and preschools,” a pre-K advocate asked, “Is this necessarily an all-negative outcome?”

Or perhaps advocates would prefer the Oklahoma solution. Using mostly federal funds, the state simply pays child-care centers for a full day for each child, even if the child is only present for four hours. (This practice is documented in government reports, but the folks in Washington either don’t know or don’t care about it.)

Another troubling aspect of the pre-K movement is that it is a retreat from parental choice in early childhood arrangements, an approach that has been nurtured since the passage of the block grant bill in 1990. Since then, more than \$100 billion in child-care subsidies has been distributed through vouchers—with nary a problem—while low-income parents have had the freedom to choose the providers they want, largely without government constraints. (Even unlicensed providers can be used in most states.) But parents in neighborhoods served by pre-K have only one choice: send their children to the public program or dig into their pockets to send them to one of their own choosing.

Vouchers are controversial for K–12 education, but they have been widely accepted in the child-care world—because the context is so different. Remember, the children involved are three-year-olds and four-year-olds. Even some strong critics of vouchers for the schools, such as John Witte, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, have concluded that *for preschool programs* a “voucher

system seems to be the best choice to maximize opportunity and equity and educational efficiency.”

Besides encouraging responsive programming and service improvement, vouchers provide a high degree of flexibility needed to accommodate the disparate needs of families. Some parents want, or need, only half-day care; some need evening or after-hours care; others need full-day care, perhaps with extended hours. Some parents want their children cared for by other family members; some want to use neighbors; others want a nursery school; still others prefer a care center, perhaps in a church. Some parents may want all their children of different ages in one place; others may not care. Some parents will want their children close to home; others will want them close to work. The variations are almost infinite. Accommodating such variation is all but impossible in a top-down, pre-K regime.

Perhaps most troubling, universal pre-K does little, if anything, to solve the most vexing educational problem facing America: the achievement gap that puts low-income, mostly minority children so far behind more fortunate children. On a host of important developmental measures, low-income children suffer large and troubling social and cognitive deficits compared with others. This translates into a lifelong achievement gap that curtails the educational attainment, employment opportunities, and earnings potential of large numbers of children—especially among African Americans, Latinos, and other disadvantaged minorities.

The achievement gap has many causes, from the poverty stemming from a history of discrimination and restricted opportunity to the child-rearing styles of many disadvantaged families. Cause and effect are intermingled in multiple and controversial ways. Early childhood education is a potentially important remedy to some of these problems, but the plain fact is that the family is the primary teacher of young children—and compensatory programs face a much larger challenge than pre-K advocates’ rhetoric commonly suggests. What parents do (and do not do) counts much more than any early education program.

Debate rages about how best to close the achievement gap, but all specialists agree that to be successful, programs must be focused on the children’s deep needs and be intense enough to make a difference. That means multiple years of educational and support services for the parents as well as the children—and that simply is not something pre-K and its three or four hours of school-based services will provide.

Some observers think that, if pre-K programs really worked for the middle class, they would widen the achievement gap. Bruce Fuller points out, “The well-orchestrated universal preschool campaign at once says their silver bullet will help all kids AND close early achievement gaps. That’s pretty difficult to pull off. It means that children from middle-class and wealthy families will accelerate in their development, AND then poor kids will accelerate even more.”

Perhaps sometime in the future all American children will be in free child care, at least by the time they are four years old. But we seem far from that goal. One research group estimates that a universal pre-K system would cost roughly \$55 billion a year, more than six times the roughly \$9 billion the federal and state governments now spend on four-year-olds. If past estimates for the costs of other social programs are any guide, it would not be unreasonable to double that forecast.

Universal pre-K might be a boon to the middle class—depending on whether, in the end, it is their tax dollars that pay for it—but it would still leave unmet the much more serious needs of low-income children. Half of all eligible low-income working mothers still do not receive child-care subsidies. Would it not be wiser policy to help them purchase better child care than to channel more funding into pre-K programs that serve higher-income children whose parents do not necessarily work?

Twice before, efforts to create a universal program stalled in Washington. But this round’s education-based strategy may work. Although it failed with the voters of California, special interests hold much greater sway in the nation’s capital. So, to answer Hillary Clinton’s question: Universal pre-K is caught in the midst of middle-class and interest-group politics. As usual, the most disadvantaged children may lose out. ■

The Big Thaw

To much of the world, Greenland is an obscure island sheathed in ice, a giant white blotch on the map. Now, a warming climate is freeing up the country's resources in previously frozen expanses of land and sea, and Greenlanders are bestirring themselves to seek independence from Denmark.

BY JOSHUA KUCERA

NUUK, GREENLAND, IS A POKY LITTLE PLACE. Its fanciest hotel shares a building with a grocery store. A town of brightly painted wooden houses against a dramatic mountain backdrop, Nuuk looks like a western ski resort with some European-style public housing thrown in. But in this sleepy setting, where a population of 15,000 lives a mere 150 miles south of the Arctic Circle, a revolution is brewing. Very slowly.

For decades, Greenlanders have gently agitated for greater freedom from Denmark, the nation that colonized them centuries ago. In 1979, they attained home rule—which produced, among other changes, a new, Inuit name for the capital, Nuuk (pronounced “nuke”), formerly known by the Danish name Godthåb. On November 25, Greenlanders will go to

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the polls to take another major step out of Denmark's shadow: They are likely to approve a law that will formally give Greenland the right to declare independence and make Greenlandic—which is closely related to the Inuit languages spoken in Canada—rather than Danish, the official language.



Sermitsiaq mountain towers over the harbor of Greenland's capital, Nuuk, a sleepy town where pro-independence sentiment is gathering force.

In an age of violent independence movements such as those of Kosovo and East Timor, this is national liberation in slow motion. The impulse toward self-determination is the same as in liberation movements elsewhere across the globe: Greenland's 56,000 people are mainly Inuits who have little in common with Danes.

But Greenland's independence aspirations are also getting a boost from an unlikely source: global warming.

Americans might joke about the visible effects of climate change during a spell of warm weather. But more than anywhere else in the world, Greenland is experiencing honest-to-God warming. The island's ice sheet—

which contains 10 percent of the world's fresh water, equivalent to the entire Gulf of Mexico—is melting at a rate of 57 cubic miles a year, and the loss is apparent everywhere. Midway up the back side of Nuuk's landmark mountain, Sermitsiaq, which looms over the city like Mt. Rainier does over Seattle, Greenlanders point out a gray band where the ice on the mountaintop has shrunk and the glacier below has receded. In 2007, the

more likely that Erik gave Greenland an attractive name to lure other settlers there.)

Denmark's colonization of Greenland began in 1721, when a missionary, Hans Egede, came there looking for the Norse settlers, who hadn't been heard from since the 14th century. Egede worried that the Protestant Reformation had passed Erik's descendants by, leaving them unredeemed Catholics. He found no Norsemen (they died out under mysterious circumstances in the 15th century), but stayed on to convert the Inuits to Christianity.

Egede's efforts opened the door to a Danish monopoly on trade in whales and furs with the island, and eventually colonization. Denmark's rule was marked by a combination

MUCH OF GREENLAND is covered by an ice cap so thick that no one knows whether the island is a single landmass or an archipelago.

Northwest Passage, which runs south of Greenland and along Canada's northern coast, was free of ice for the first time since scientists began monitoring it. All of this melting is helping to unlock the mineral and petroleum resources under land and sea, offering the prospect of Kuwaitesque wealth to Greenland's citizens.

Greenland is an unusual place. It's the world's largest island, three times the size of Texas, but it has no inter-city roads—people travel between Greenland's "cities" (a word Greenlanders use to describe even settlements of 2,000) by boat and helicopter. Jets arriving from abroad can't land in Nuuk because the airport runway is too short, so they must fly to one of two remote former U.S. air bases, hundreds of miles away, from which travelers continue on by helicopter or prop plane.

More than 80 percent of Greenland is covered by an ice cap so thick—10,000 feet at the center—that no one knows whether the island is a single landmass or an archipelago. Settlements lie only on the coasts; the icy interior is uninhabitable year round. But in summertime the coastal regions of the south are verdant with grass and wildflowers, and it is not difficult to understand why Erik the Red named the place Greenland when he was exiled there from Iceland in AD 982. (The commonly told story about his attempt to trick invaders by switching the names of Iceland and Greenland is almost certainly false; it is

of benign neglect and paternalistic social engineering. For example, while 18th-century missionaries attempted to end the Inuits' traditions of polygamy and communal living, a 1782 directive prohibited Danes from "corrupting" the Inuits with alcohol, limited contact between Danes and Inuits, and urged that the Inuits' welfare "receive the highest possible consideration, even override when necessary the interests of trade itself"

Though most Inuit Greenlanders converted quickly to Christianity, economic change came more slowly. Until the beginning of the 20th century they lived a life of dogsleds, igloos, and subsistence seal hunting, as their ancestors had for millennia. Then Denmark embarked on various modernization schemes that converted the economy into one based on industrial fishing and fish processing, and forced Inuits to abandon their traditional seminomadic lifestyle and settle in towns in Danish-built wooden houses.

A visitor familiar with Native American reservations or Canadian Inuit territory—the closest historical analogues to Greenland's experience—will notice the difference between such places and Nuuk immediately. Nuuk has the feel of a well-tended frontier outpost, with cheery wooden houses painted in primary colors competing for space with 1960s-era apartment buildings. (One such building houses a full one percent of Green-



In the eyes of former Greenland prime minister Lars-Emil Johansen, Denmark has been a generous colonial power. But Greenland's newly accessible energy deposits may end this antiquated relationship.

land's population.) Lately, the city has added a bit of cosmopolitan flair with several handsome examples of avant-garde Scandinavian architecture. The gently undulating wood-and-glass Greenlandic cultural center has been written up in the international design magazine *The Architectural Review*.

But aside from the dramatic scenery and Inuit faces, Nuuk isn't so peculiar as most visitors expect. Several years ago the Danish author of an academic paper on Greenland felt compelled to add in a footnote: "Most Danish cities have a minority of Greenlanders. Most blend in, but a small fraction constitutes a highly visible group of bums, carrying always an open beer bottle. Many Danes are surprised to come to Greenland and see cities that, as much as conditions permit, look like other small North European cities. On Sunday mornings many Greenlanders walk to the local bakery to buy freshly baked rolls."

Still, the social dislocation caused by Danish urbanization schemes is evident. The suicide rate is five times that of Europe, and one politician told me that the rate of child sexual abuse is 15 times higher than in Denmark. Alcoholism is rampant. I went to Nuuk's oldest watering hole, Kristinemut, on a Friday night, and encoun-

tered an unprecedented scene of drunkenness: Fully half the patrons were incapable of walking in a straight line.

Yet most Greenlanders acknowledge that their experience with Denmark has been more positive than negative. "Denmark is the best colonial power we could have had," Lars-Emil Johansen, a former prime minister in his sixties, told me. Johansen, like most Greenlanders, regardless of their ethnic background, has a Danish name and speaks Danish. (A notable exception is the current prime minister, who speaks only Greenlandic.) "We've never been at war with them or been oppressed, and the process of independence is

not a protest against Denmark. But we want a relationship based on mutual respect. We don't want to rely anymore on the goodwill of the Danes."

The negotiation of Home Rule put a Greenlander-run government in administrative control of nearly all state responsibilities in 1979. Today the only Danish government presence in Nuuk is a high commissioner of Greenland and a staff of a dozen to act as a liaison to the Danish prime minister's office. The Self-Government Act to be voted on in November lays out 32 areas, including the court system, immigration and border control, and education, in which the Greenland government will take more responsibility. Most significantly, the law will allow Greenland the right to exercise self-determination, or to declare independence outright.

This may seem like a tame step. But it suits the cautious nature of both Danes and Greenlanders: One scholar at the University of Greenland has argued that Danish rule has been so successful because both cultures value communitarianism, egalitarianism, and emotional restraint.

But it's not just emotional restraint that is keeping Greenlanders from impetuously throwing off the Danish yoke. There is also the matter of the most frequently cited number in Greenland: three billion Danish kroner

(about \$600 million), the amount of the annual Danish subsidy to Greenland's home-rule government. That amounts to more than \$10,000 for each of the island's residents, and about half the government budget. With independence, Greenland would lose that subsidy.

Traditionally, Greenland has had few options for industry: Seafood accounts for roughly 90 percent of its export income. It also depends on Denmark for access to higher education institutions (only 150 students attend Greenland's sole university) and health care. But Greenland's financial dependence on Denmark very soon could be history. Companies around the world are realizing that Greenland, that vast yet obscure country to the north, is sitting on a mother lode.

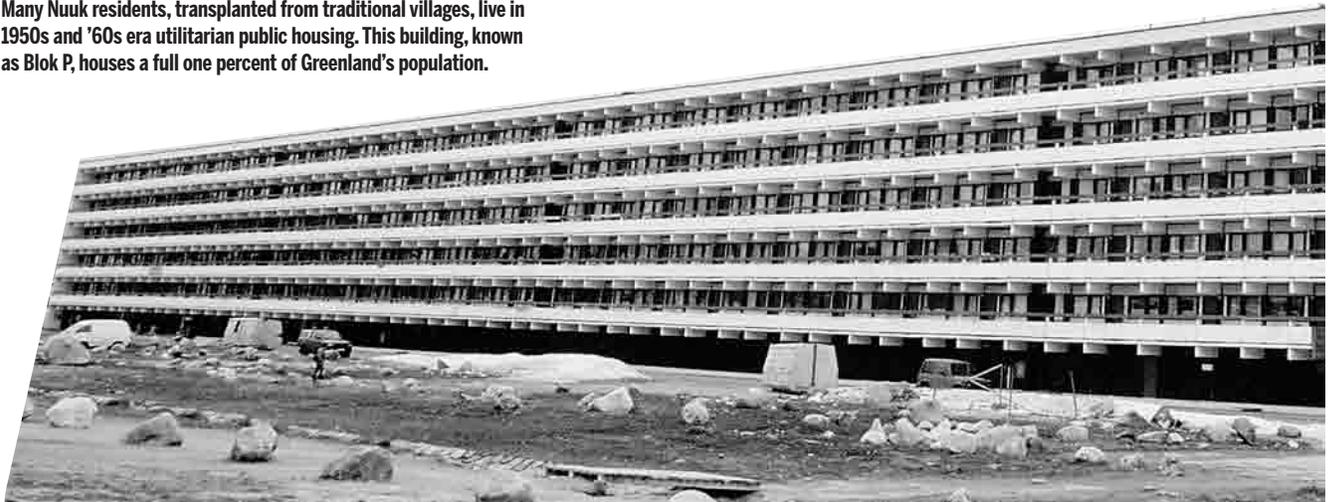
In the last four years mining companies, primarily based in Canada, Britain, and Australia, have begun operations at Greenland's first two mines—one for gold and another for olivine, a greenish crystalline mineral increasingly used in pollution-fighting carbon dioxide absorption. (The Danes operated mines throughout their colonization, but on a relatively small scale; all of them closed decades ago.) The government has given the green light to other companies to open five new mines by 2011. Thirty companies carried out another 78 prospecting explorations last year, and the government expects that gold, diamonds, rubies, and minerals such as olivine and niobium (used as a steel alloy) could soon become mainstays of Greenland's economy. Alcoa and the Greenland government are also contemplating the

construction of an aluminum smelter there, which would begin operating around 2015. (Greenland produces none of aluminum's ingredients, but its abundant hydropower can cheaply power smelters.)

Oil and natural gas exploration, too, have begun in earnest. Last year, the U.S. Geological Survey released its first comprehensive assessment of the oil and natural gas potential of the Arctic, and found that the seas off northeastern Greenland were among the most promising, with an estimated 8.9 billion barrels of oil and 86.2 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. "If this resource is proved and realized, northeastern Greenland would rank 19th" among the world's 500 oil and gas provinces, the report predicts. The seas to the west of Greenland are also rich with promise, estimated to contain beneath their floors 7.3 billion barrels of oil and 51.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

To say that change in Greenland's economy is moving at a glacial pace doesn't mean what it used to. The country's underground wealth, unlocked by global warming, promises to revolutionize the economy—and fast. In 2005, a British mining company announced that it had found "massive" deposits of zinc and lead on land that had recently been exposed by a retreating glacier. A dramatic reduction in sea ice—10 percent every decade since 1979—has made it easier to prospect for oil offshore. In a PowerPoint presentation at a Texas energy conference this year, Greenland's Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum maintained that while some models predict that the Arctic Ocean will be ice free in 2080, others

Many Nuuk residents, transplanted from traditional villages, live in 1950s and '60s era utilitarian public housing. This building, known as Blok P, houses a full one percent of Greenland's population.



show an ice-free Arctic Ocean as early as 2040.

The changing climate is even creating new opportunities in agriculture. Farming—a relatively new occupation in Greenland introduced by Danish settlers—is thriving on the southern coast. On a bucolic hillside near the town of Qaqortoq, I visited a government agricultural research station where agronomists experiment on little rows of turnips, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, and strawberries, and then teach local farmers to raise the crops. The government is hoping to reduce Greenland's dependence on food shipped from Denmark, and these efforts have gotten a boost from global warming: Since 1990, the growing season has lengthened by about three weeks, said Kenneth Høegh, the station's director. Agriculture will always be a niche activity, but the greening of Greenland has spurred its (surprisingly numerous) swanky restaurants to build menus around local foods. They proudly serve dishes that include ingredients such as reindeer, muskox, angelica root, snow peas, potatoes, and rhubarb (which featured in a cold dessert soup I sampled) that were grown, hunted, or gathered in the country.

Greenlanders have always been subject to the vicissitudes of the weather. Their traditional beliefs hold that the weather is a demanding god, named Sila, who must be appeased. Until the 1920s,

nearly all Greenlanders survived by hunting seal, whale, and muskox. But hunting requires favorable conditions—clear skies and solid ice. Bad weather frequently meant starvation.

Few Greenlanders live as subsistence hunters today, but in the northern part of Greenland many do, and they are keeping alive the traditions that all Greenlanders used to observe. Global warming threatens their livelihood and way of life. Solid ice is necessary for dogsleds (and the increasingly common snowmobiles) to get around, but as winters become milder, the Greenlanders' "roads" are growing slushy and dangerous and the hunting season is shrinking.

More snow is falling (warmer air holds moisture), making it harder for game animals to forage. Thunder and lightning, once unheard of, have been reported. Jacky Simoud, a tour operator in southern Greenland, said, "Here, a good winter is a cold winter—the sky is clear and the fjord is frozen so you can go anywhere by snowmobile. But for the last four or five years it gets warm and cold, warm and cold, and you never know what will happen with the ice. So you just stay home."

But for every negative effect of global warming, there is a positive one for Greenlanders. There is less hunting but more farming. The thawing of the fjords makes navigating northern Greenland in winter on a dogsled more difficult, but kayaking in the spring and fall is easier. Shrimp are fleeing the warmer seas, but cod are coming.

Overall, Greenlanders are fairly sanguine about these shifts. "We've always been subject to the weather in Greenland, and this has made us adaptable to the changes taking place," said former prime minister Johansen. "We need to use the opportunities that climate change gives us rather than complaining about the downsides."

Global warming presents "huge opportunities," said Mininnguaq Kleist, the bookish young head of the government office that is coordinating the transition to self-government. "Ten or 15 years ago, people would say



you were completely unrealistic if you talked about independence. But now it's very realistic."

It's realistic in large part because the route to economic self-sufficiency is more apparent now than it's ever been. The most important part of the November referendum is a revenue-sharing arrangement for the petroleum and mineral wealth. Under the new law, Greenland and Denmark would split the revenues until Denmark's share became equivalent to its annual \$600 million subsidy. After that, Greenland would keep the rest. Once Greenland no longer needed the subsidy, the main argument against independence would disappear.

The Greenland government is confident that the referendum will pass, but not everyone supports independence—at least at the pace at which the government appears to be pursuing it. One opposition party, the Democrats, has come out against the referendum, arguing that it adds extra responsibilities without creating any additional income. "The law is the next step to independence, and we want to see the oil before we start spending the money from it," said Jens Frederiksen, the Democrats' leader. "Independence is important, but not to the little child who goes to bed hungry, and there are a lot of children in Greenland like that." He sees a timeline of "30, 40, 50 years" before such an eventuality. Independence "depends on so many things, and maybe in the end it won't be possible," he said.

Others worry that independence would make Greenland vulnerable to other powers that may not have Denmark's gentle touch. That's the concern of Aqqaq Lyng, the top Greenland representative to the Inuit Circumpolar Council, an international organization representing Inuits in Greenland as well as Alaska, Canada, and Russia. He has argued that independence would put Greenland at the mercy of the United States and its oil companies.

The United States has another key interest in Greenland: Thule Air Base on the far northern coast of the island. On the base—built immediately after World War II, during which the United States assumed military control over Greenland to keep it out of the hands of Germany—is a radar installation that is part of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System. Independence advocates argue that the radar site gives Denmark, and by

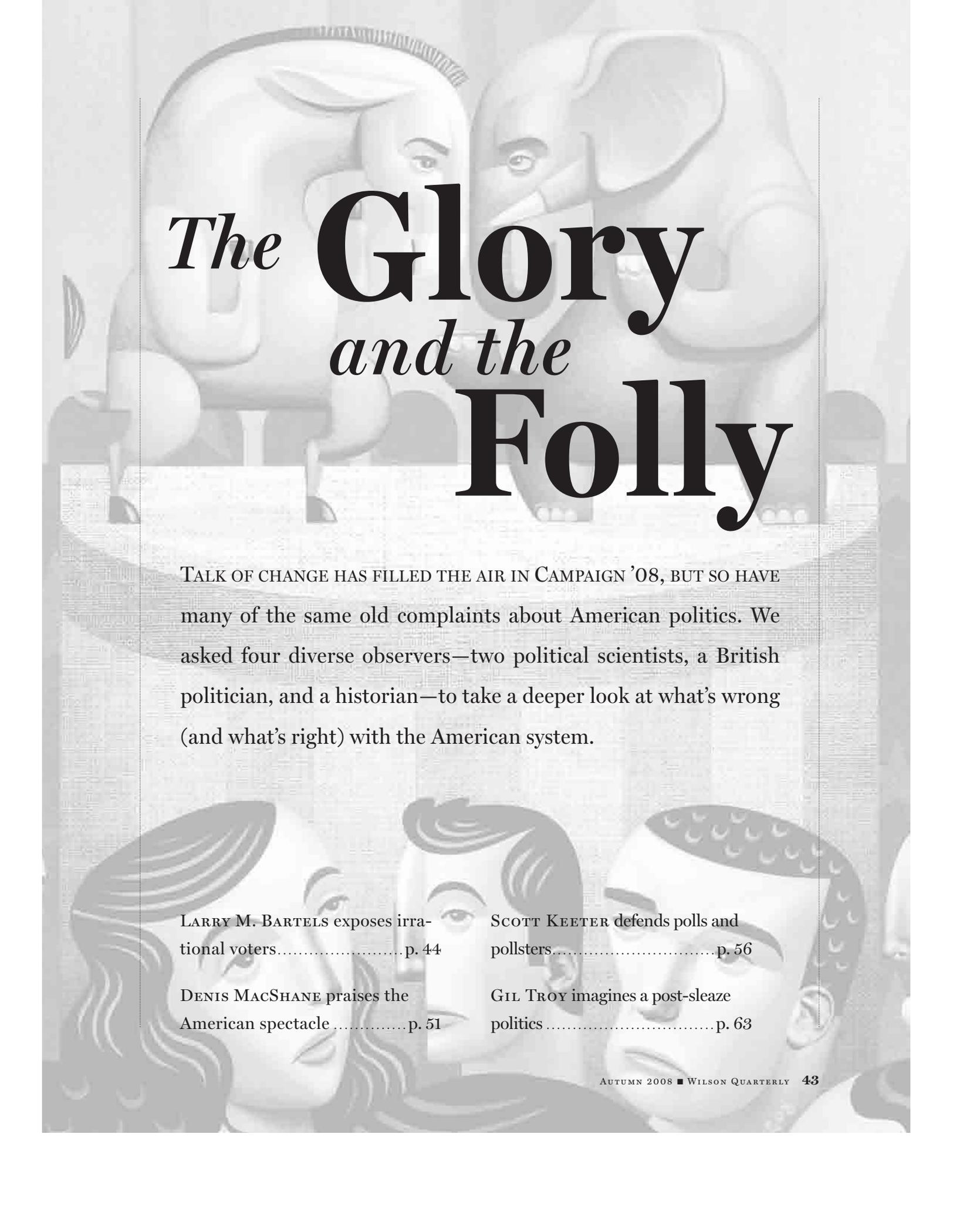
extension an independent Greenland, some leverage over the United States. The base "is a ticket to the world's only superpower," Kleist said.

Denmark is likely to go along with whatever Greenlanders decide on the independence question. A few Danish right-wing politicians oppose Greenland's independence, arguing that after supporting the island for decades, Denmark should reap the material benefits to come. But that's a minority opinion. Though some Greenlandic politicians accuse Denmark of dragging its feet, the Danes have largely gone along with the independence drive.

Pro-independence Greenlanders take inspiration from the experience of Iceland, which declared independence from Denmark in 1944 and now enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the world. Icelanders return the affection: Icelandic superstar Björk has dedicated "Declare Independence," a song on her most recent album, to Greenland. "Damn colonists," she sings. "Ignore their patronizing/Tear off their blindfolds/Open their eyes."

But Björk's angry rhetoric doesn't jibe with the mood in Greenland. In a more nationalistic place, Hans Egede, Denmark's first missionary colonizer, might be seen as a villain; in Greenland he's regarded with indifference. (Statues, paintings, and memorials to Egede are everywhere—Nuuk's main hotel is even named after him—but all the Greenlanders I asked said they didn't think much about his role in their history.) Some politicians suggest that Greenland might choose to stop somewhat short of independence from Denmark and opt instead for a free association arrangement, wherein Greenland would have its own constitution but retain some ties, mainly in defense and diplomacy, with Copenhagen. Aruba (the Netherlands), the Cook Islands (New Zealand), and Micronesia (the United States) are potential models.

In Johansen's small office in Nuuk's government building hangs a poster of his political idol, Nelson Mandela. Johansen identifies with Mandela not because he believes the Greenlanders suffer as grievously as blacks did in apartheid South Africa, but because Mandela emphasizes reconciliation. "His idea of looking to the future, not dwelling on the past, is something I admire," Johansen said. "We don't want to be a colony anymore, but we will still be friends with Denmark." ■



The **Glory** *and the* **Folly**

TALK OF CHANGE HAS FILLED THE AIR IN CAMPAIGN '08, BUT SO HAVE many of the same old complaints about American politics. We asked four diverse observers—two political scientists, a British politician, and a historian—to take a deeper look at what's wrong (and what's right) with the American system.

LARRY M. BARTELS exposes irrational voters..... p. 44

DENIS MACSHANE praises the American spectacle p. 51

SCOTT KEETER defends polls and pollsters..... p. 56

GIL TROY imagines a post-sleaze politics p. 63

The Irrational Electorate

Many of our worst fears about America's voters are true.

BY LARRY M. BARTELS

ONE OF THE BEST-SELLING POLITICAL BOOKS OF THE 2008 election season has been *Just How Stupid Are We?* a report on “the truth about the American voter” by popular historian Rick Shenkman. Shenkman’s little book presents a familiar collection of bleak results from opinion surveys documenting some of the many things most Americans don’t know about politics, government, and American history. “Public ignorance,” he concludes, is “the most obvious cause” of “the foolishness that marks so much of American politics.” Lest this pronouncement seem dispiriting, an obligatory hopeful coda offers anodyne proposals for civic improvement.

Never mind whether the additional civics courses and “democracy parties” Shenkman proposes are really going to stem the tide of public ignorance. The reader’s first response to Shenkman’s indictment should be: *So what?*

Does it really matter whether voters can name the secretary of defense or know how long a senate term is? The political consequences of “public ignorance” must be demonstrated, not assumed. And that requires focusing not just on what voters don’t know,

but on how what they don’t know actually affects how they vote. Do they manage to make sensible choices despite being hazy about the details of politics and government? (Okay, *really* hazy.) If they do, that’s not stupid—it’s efficient.

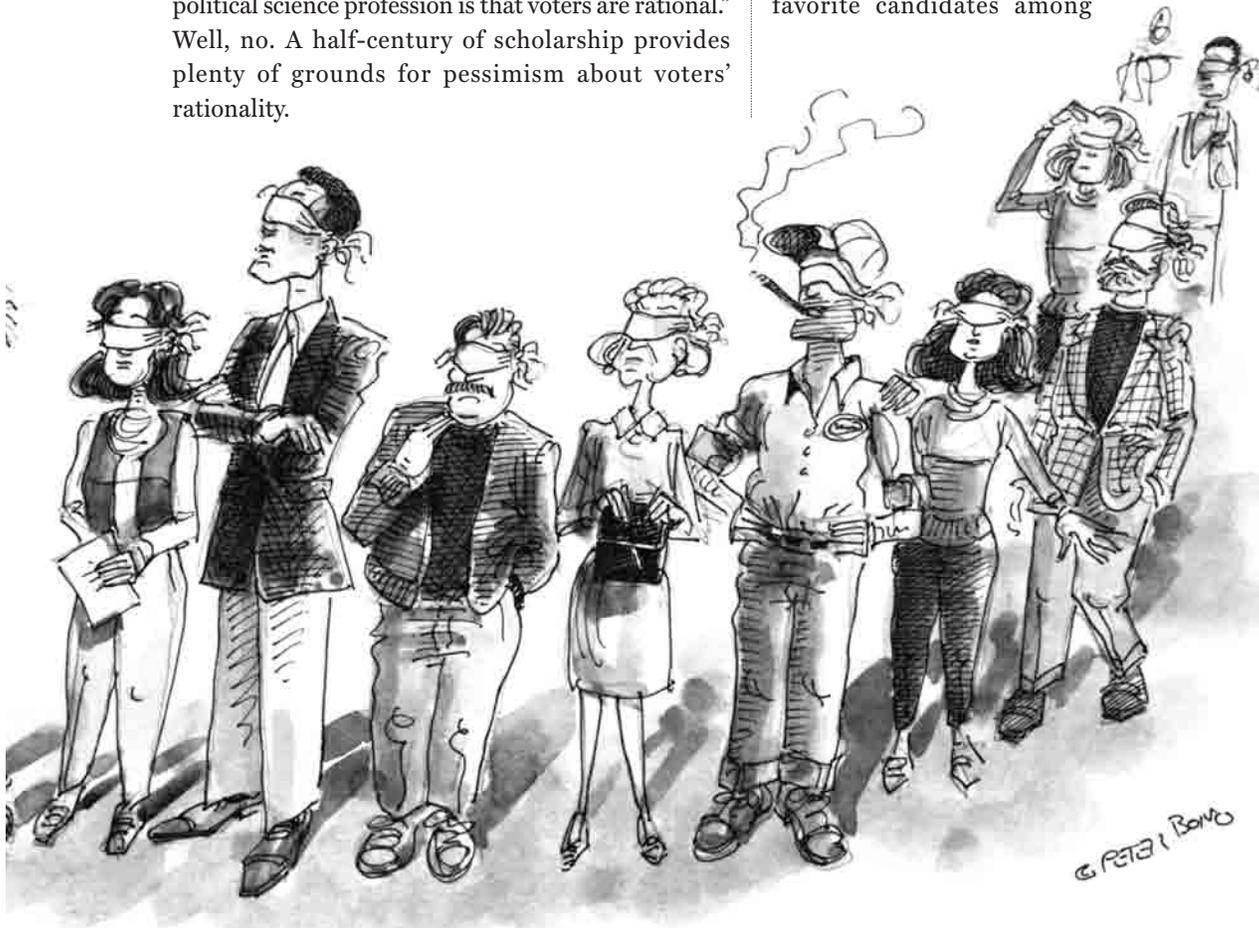


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Obviously, what counts as a “sensible choice” is itself a matter of legitimate disagreement. Shenkman seems to think that since “foolishness . . . marks so much of American politics,” voters *must* be making stupid choices. However, most analysts have aspired to judge voters by less subjective standards—criteria grounded in specific notions of procedural rationality, or in voters’ own values and interests, or in comparisons with the behavior of better-informed voters who are similar in relevant ways. Moreover, such analysts have recognized that what really matters is not whether individual voters go astray, but whether entire electorates do. A lot of idiosyncratic behavior can be submerged in the collective verdict of 120 million voters.

According to Shenkman, “The consensus in the political science profession is that voters are rational.” Well, no. A half-century of scholarship provides plenty of grounds for pessimism about voters’ rationality.

When social scientists first started using detailed opinion surveys to study the attitudes and behavior of ordinary voters, they found some pretty sobering things. In the early 1950s, Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues at Columbia University concluded that electoral choices “are relatively invulnerable to direct argumentation” and “characterized more by faith than by conviction and by wishful expectation rather than careful prediction of consequences.” For example, voters consistently misperceived where candidates stood on the important issues of the day, seeing their favorite candidates’ stands as closer to their own and opposing candidates’ stands as more dissimilar than they actually were. They likewise exaggerated the extent of support for their favorite candidates among



members of social groups they felt close to.

In 1960, a team of researchers from the University of Michigan published an even more influential study, *The American Voter*. They described “the general impoverishment of political thought in a large proportion of the electorate,” noting that “many people know the existence of few if any of the major issues of policy.” Shifts in election outcomes, they concluded, were largely attributable to defections from long-standing partisan loyalties by relatively unsophisti-

Rational Public argued that voters could use “information shortcuts” to make rational electoral choices even though they lacked detailed knowledge about candidates’ policies and platforms. These “shortcuts” could take many forms, including inferences from personal narratives, partisan stereotypes, and endorsements or other “cues” from trusted people or groups.

Unlike the analogous literature in psychology, this first wave of scholarship on political cues and

IN ONE STUDY, only about 70 percent of voters chose the candidate who best matched their own preferences.

“information shortcuts” stressed their potential value while paying little attention to the ways in which they could lead voters astray. In one of the most colorful examples of an “information shortcut,” political scientist Samuel Popkin sug-

gested that Mexican-American voters had good reason to be suspicious of President Gerald Ford in 1976 because he didn’t know how to eat a tamale—a shortcoming revealed during his Texas GOP primary campaign against Ronald Reagan, when he made the mistake of trying to down one without first removing its cornhusk wrapper. According to Popkin, “Showing familiarity with a voter’s culture is an obvious and easy test of ability to relate to the problems and sensibilities of the ethnic group and to understand and care about them.” Obvious and easy, yes—but was this a *reliable* test? Would Mexican-American voters have been correct to infer that Ford was less sensitive to their concerns than Reagan? I have no idea, and neither does Popkin.

rated voters with little grasp of issues or ideology. A recent replication of their work using surveys from 2000 and 2004 found that things haven’t changed much in the past half-century.

The intervening decades have seen a variety of concerted attempts to overturn or evade the findings of the classic Columbia and Michigan studies. In the 1970s, for instance, some scholars claimed to have discovered what the title of one prominent book called *The Changing American Voter*, a much more issue-oriented and ideologically consistent specimen than the earlier studies had portrayed. Unfortunately, further scrutiny revealed that most of the apparent improvement could be attributed to changes in the questions voters were being asked rather than a remarkable elevation of their political thinking. When voters were asked the old questions in the 1970s, their responses displayed no more consistency or sophistication than the responses from the 1950s described by the authors of *The American Voter*.

In the 1990s political scientists took a different tack, acknowledging that voters were generally inattentive and uninformed but denying that the quality of their political decisions suffered much as a result. A spate of books and articles with optimistic-sounding titles such as *The Reasoning Voter* and *The*

Lacking any objective standard for distinguishing reliable cues from unreliable ones, some scholars have simply asked whether uninformed voters—using whatever “information shortcuts” are available to them—manage to make similar choices to those of voters who are better informed, as the literature on “information shortcuts” suggests. That is what I did in a 1996 study, “Uninformed Votes,” which examined presidential elections from 1972 to ’92. Based on statistical analyses of votes cast in each election by well-informed and less-informed voters with similar char-

acteristics, I assessed how closely voters' actual choices matched the votes they *would have* cast had they been "fully informed." I found that the actual choices fell about halfway between what they would have been if voters had been fully informed and what they would have been if everyone had cast their ballots on the basis of a coin flip.

In *How Voters Decide*, political scientists Richard Lau and David Redlawsk analyzed the same elections using a less demanding criterion for assessing "correct" voting. (They took each voter's partisanship, policy positions, and evaluations of candidate performance as givens, ignoring the fact that these, too, may be subject to errors and biases.) They found that about 70 percent of voters, on average, chose the candidate who best matched their own preferences—a result, the researchers said, that left them "pleasantly surprised."

Lau and Redlawsk raised, but did not really attempt to answer, the more consequential question: "Is 70 percent correct enough?" Answering that question requires a careful assessment of the extent to which "incorrect" votes skew election outcomes.

Optimism about the competence of democratic electorates has often been bolstered (at least among political scientists) by appeals to what has been dubbed the "miracle of aggregation"—an idea formalized in a mathematical demonstration by the social theorist Condorcet more than 200 years ago. He showed that if several jurors make independent judgments of a suspect's guilt or innocence, a *majority* are quite likely to judge correctly even if every individual juror is only slightly more likely to reach the correct conclusion than he would simply by making a choice based on a coin flip. Applied to electoral politics, Condorcet's logic suggests that the electorate as a whole may be much wiser than any individual voter.

The only problem with this elegant and powerful argument for the efficacy of majority rule is that it may not work very well in practice. Real voters' errors are quite unlikely to be random and statistically independent, as Condorcet's logic requires. When thousands or millions of voters misconstrue the same rel-

evant fact or are swayed by the same vivid campaign ad, no amount of aggregation will produce the requisite miracle—individual voters' "errors" will not cancel out in the overall election outcome.

In addition to assessing how well each individual voter's choice matched his or her hypothetical "fully informed" choice, in "Uninformed Votes" I provided estimates of how well each overall election outcome matched what it would have been if every voter had been fully informed. The average discrepancy between the actual popular vote in each election and the hypothetical outcome if every voter had been fully informed amounted to three percentage points—more than enough to swing a close election. In four cases—1980, 1984, 1988, and 1992—the differences between actual and hypothetical election outcomes were large enough to provide strong evidence that "errors" by millions of individual voters did not entirely cancel out. These departures from "fully informed" election outcomes revealed a systematic bias in favor of incumbents, who generally did substantially better than they would have if voters had been fully informed, and a smaller bias in favor of Democratic candidates. Clearly, the "miracle of aggregation" is not sufficiently miraculous to render voters' ignorance politically irrelevant.

Studies of this sort make it pretty clear that political ignorance matters—not only for individual votes, but also for election outcomes. Thus, this research undermines the notion that "information shortcuts" or sheer aggregation can compensate for voters' shortcomings. Subsequent work has shed light on how some of the powerful political "heuristics" used by ordinary voters contribute to the problem. For example, a team of psychologists led by Alex Todorov established that candidates for governor, senator, or representative who are rated as "competent" by people judging them solely on the basis of photographs are considerably more likely to win real-world elections than those who look less competent. Brief exposure to the photographs—as little as one-tenth of a second—is sufficient to produce a significant correlation with actual election outcomes. A follow-up study showed that the electoral advantage of competent-looking candidates is strongest among less informed voters and those most heavily exposed

to political advertising.

The ideal of rational voting behavior is further undermined by accumulating evidence that voters can be powerfully swayed by television advertising in the days just before an election. A major study of the 2000 presidential election by Richard Johnston, Michael Hagen, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson tracked prospective voters' responses to changes in the volume and content of campaign ads as well as to news coverage and other aspects of the national campaign. Their analysis suggested that George W. Bush's razor-thin victory hinged crucially on the fact that he had more money to spend on television ads in battleground states in the final weeks of the campaign.

A team of scholars from UCLA elaborated on this analysis in an attempt to clarify how long the effects of advertising last. They found that most of the effect of any given ad on voters' preferences evaporated within one week, and that "only the most politically aware voters exhibited . . . long-term effects." (Of course, the fact that the most engaged voters were susceptible to long-term effects of advertising may itself be troubling, but at least they responded to a considerable accumulation of arguments over the course of the campaign rather than solely to the last arguments they happened to hear before stepping into the voting booth.) In another study, the same authors found even shorter half-lives for advertising effects in a variety of state-level and congressional races. A third study, by a different team, also found only ephemeral advertising effects in the early stages of a Texas gubernatorial race. A major ad buy produced a seven-point increase in voter support for the featured candidate a day after the ads aired, but no discernible effect two days later. The authors noted that this "pattern of abrupt change and equilibration" in voter intentions in response to campaign advertising "appears to be inconsistent with a model of rational learning."

These and other recent studies offer abundant evidence that election outcomes can be powerfully affected by factors unrelated to the competence and convictions of the candidates. But if voters are so whimsical, choosing the candidate with the most whimsical, choosing the candidate with the most competent-looking face or the most recent television ad, how do they often manage to sound so sensible?

Most people seem able to provide cogent-sounding reasons for voting the way they do. However, careful observation suggests that these "reasons" often are merely rationalizations constructed from readily available campaign rhetoric to justify preferences formed on other grounds.

Consider the role of Social Security privatization in the 2000 presidential election. It was a huge issue, the focus of more than one-tenth of all campaign-related television news coverage and about 200 ads on a typical television station in a battleground media market in the last week of the campaign. By Election Day, there was a strong statistical relationship between voters' views about privatization and their presidential choices—just as one would expect if voters were pondering this important issue and casting their ballots accordingly. However, a detailed analysis by political scientist Gabriel Lenz found very little evidence that people actually changed their vote because of the Social Security debate. What happened, mostly, was that people who learned the candidates' views on privatization from the blizzard of ads and news coverage simply adopted the position of the candidate they already supported for other reasons. The resulting appearance of "issue voting" was almost wholly illusory.

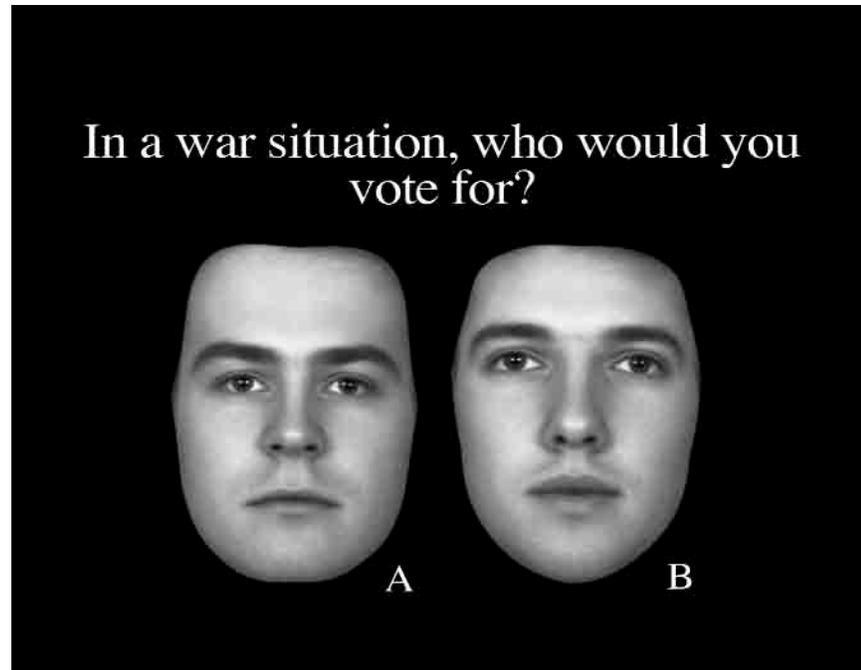
Findings such as these have led some political scientists to discount the role of "issue voting" in elections. Where else can one look to find support for the idea that voters are making rational choices? Perhaps they rely on a straightforward judgment about whether the country seems to be on the "right track" or "wrong track," as pollsters often put it. Incumbents do, after all, tend to prosper in elections when times are good and suffer when times are bad. In an influential 1981 book, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, political scientist Morris Fiorina attributed the electoral significance of economic booms and busts, successful or unsuccessful wars, and favorable or unfavorable social conditions to the fact that even uninformed citizens "typically have one comparatively hard bit of data: They know what life has been like during the incumbent's administration." The less they know about the details

of policies and platforms, Fiorina reasoned, the more likely they are to rely upon “retrospective” voting as “a cost-cutting element” in deciding how to vote.

Fiorina’s theory struck political scientists as plausible, if not entirely edifying, because it seemed to demand much less of voters than the old-fashioned, unrealistic view that they should follow the news, formulate policy preferences, study the candidates’ platforms and records, weigh the relative importance of cross-cutting issues, and render a considered verdict regarding the best future

course of government. Instead, they need only judge whether things are going well or badly. How hard can that be? Alas, my Princeton colleague Christopher Achen and I have produced a series of studies suggesting that even unheroic-sounding retrospective voting may be much harder than it sounds.

For one thing, voters’ perceptions may be seriously skewed by partisan biases. For example, in a 1988 survey a majority of respondents who described themselves as strong Democrats said that inflation had “gotten worse” over the eight years of the Reagan administration; in fact, it had fallen from 13.5 percent in 1980 to 4.1 percent in 1988. Conversely, a majority of Republicans in a 1996 survey said that the federal budget deficit had increased under Bill Clinton; in fact, the deficit had shrunk from \$255 billion to \$22 billion. Surprisingly, misperceptions of this sort are often most prevalent among people who should know better—those who are generally well informed about politics, at least as evidenced by their answers to factual questions about political figures, issues, and textbook civics. If close attention to elite political discourse mostly teaches people to believe what



When shown “transformed” images of George W. Bush (left) and John Kerry, subjects identified the Bush image as more masculine and dominant and one they preferred in wartime, but they favored the Kerry image in peacetime.

the partisan elites on “their” side would like to be true, the fundamental premise of books such as Rick Shenkman’s—that a more attentive, politically engaged electorate would make for a healthier democracy—may be groundless.

Even when voters do have an accurate sense of how things are going, they tend to be inordinately focused on the here and now. For example, studies of economy-driven voting almost invariably find that voters are strongly influenced by economic conditions during the election year, or even some fraction of it, but mostly ignore how the economy performed over the rest of the incumbent’s term.

That shortsightedness is not just a psychological quirk; it has significant political consequences. Over the past 60 years, there has been a marked partisan disparity in the timing of income growth, with Democratic presidents presiding over more *overall* growth (especially for middle-class and working poor people), but Republicans presiding over more growth (especially for affluent people) in presidential election years. Thus, voters’ economic myopia has produced a substantial Republican bias in presidential election

results—a bias large enough to have been decisive in three of the nine Republican victories since World War II: in 1952, 1968, and 2000.

No Republican boom seems to be forthcoming in this election year, and John McCain will be punished at the polls as a result. Whether the current economic distress is really President Bush's fault, much less Senator McCain's, is largely beside the point.

Voters have great difficulty judging which aspects of their own and the country's well-being are the responsibility of elected leaders and which are not. In the summer of 1916, for example, a dramatic week-long series of shark attacks along New Jersey beaches left four people dead. Tourists fled, leaving some resorts with 75 percent vacancy rates in the midst of their high season. Letters poured into congressional offices demanding federal action; but what action would be effective in such circumstances? Voters probably didn't know, but neither did they care. When President Woodrow Wilson—a former governor of New Jersey with strong local ties—ran for reelection a few months later, he was punished at the polls, losing as much as 10 percent of his expected vote in towns where shark attacks had occurred.

New Jersey voters' reaction to shark attacks was dramatic, but hardly anomalous. Throughout the 20th century, presidential candidates from incumbent parties suffered substantial vote losses in states afflicted by droughts or wet spells. Shenkman argues that "‘throw the bums out’ may not be a sophisticated response to adversity but it is a rational one." However, punishing the president's party because it hasn't rained is no more "rational" than kicking the dog after a hard day at work.

While voters are busy meting out myopic, simple-minded rewards and punishments, political observers are often busy exaggerating the policy content of the voters' verdicts. The prime example in American political history may be the watershed New Deal election of 1936. Having swept into office on a strong tide of economic discontent in 1932, Franklin Roosevelt initiated a series of wide-ranging new policies to cope with the Great Depression. According to the most authoritative political scholar of the era, V. O. Key, "The voters responded with a resounding ratification of the new thrust of governmental policy"—a

stunning 46-state landslide that ushered in an era of Democratic electoral dominance.

The 1936 election has become the most celebrated textbook case of ideological realignment in American history. However, a careful look at state-by-state voting patterns suggests that this resounding ratification of Roosevelt's policies was strongly concentrated in the states that happened to enjoy robust income growth in the months leading up to the vote. Indeed, the apparent impact of short-term economic conditions was so powerful that, if the recession of 1938 had occurred in 1936, Roosevelt probably would have been a one-term president.

It's not only in the United States that the Depression-era tendency to "throw the bums out" looks like something less than a rational policy judgment. In the United States, voters replaced Republicans with Democrats in 1932 and the economy improved. In Britain and Australia, voters replaced Labor governments with conservatives and the economy improved. In Sweden, voters replaced Conservatives with Liberals, then with Social Democrats, and the economy improved. In the Canadian agricultural province of Saskatchewan, voters replaced Conservatives with Socialists and the economy improved. In the adjacent agricultural province of Alberta, voters replaced a socialist party with a right-leaning party created from scratch by a charismatic radio preacher peddling a flighty share-the-wealth scheme, and the economy improved. In Weimar Germany, where economic distress was deeper and longer lasting, voters rejected all of the mainstream parties, the Nazis seized power, and the economy improved. In every case, the party that happened to be in power when the Depression eased went on to dominate politics for a decade or more thereafter. It seems far-fetched to imagine that all these contradictory shifts represented well-considered ideological conversions. A more parsimonious interpretation is that voters simply—and simple-mindedly—rewarded whoever happened to be in power when things got better.

Stupid? No, just human. And thus—to borrow the title of another current bestseller, by behavioral economist Dan Ariely—"predictably irrational." That may be bad enough. ■



An Admirable Folly

From afar, America's presidential contests often look more like playground antics than a shining example of democracy. But looks can be deceiving.

BY DENIS MACSHANE

EVERY FOUR YEARS, WHEN THE BRITISH AND other Europeans watch with shock, awe, and incomprehension the presidential contest that convulses the United States, I'm reminded of President Julius Nyerere's joking retort decades ago to American visitors who criticized his one-party state in Tanzania. The United States is a one-party state too, he would say, but since America is so big, it takes two parties to do the job. Nyerere saw no real difference between America's two major politi-

cal parties and nothing much at stake in its elections, a view typical of the mid-20th-century socialist tradition he absorbed as a student in England and one that still informs views of American politics from across the Atlantic.

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Because European politics are defined by an almost religious divide between socialist and conservative parties, we can look down our noses at the contest between Republicans and Democrats as the equivalent of a squabble over whether you take your tea with sugar or lemon. But this narcissism of small differences makes for hugely enjoyable elections, as personality appears utterly to dominate, and these contests are irresistible to the European news media. As a politician passionate about

EUROPEANS ARE AGOG at larger-than-life American politicians, so unlike their own machine professionals who crawl their way up the greasy pole of power.

making the idea of Europe work, it causes me some dismay that British coverage of politics in Germany or France or Spain is picayune by comparison.

The fabled British-Canadian press proprietor and politician Lord Beaverbrook insisted that all politics should be reported in terms of human interest, and there is nothing of greater human interest than the character of an American president. What novelist would have pitched a black freshman senator against a septuagenarian war hero? Europe is agog at the prospect of an Obama presidency, and there are no politicians in Europe who have John McCain's experience as a warrior and courageous prisoner of war. This is larger-than-life Hollywood politics for Europeans, whose politicians are machine professionals who crawl their way up the greasy pole of power.

Yet in their obsession with personality—the actor Ronald Reagan versus the moralizing Jimmy Carter, or the 1968-generation Bill Clinton versus the preppy George H. W. Bush—Europeans are blind to the fact that the American system is far more likely to produce dramatic change. The shift from the Jim Crow America of the early 1950s to the civil rights America bequeathed by Lyndon Johnson at the end of the 1960s was one of the biggest revolutions in relations between peoples in world

history. The gap between the détenteist foreign policy of the first President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker and the confrontationist foreign policy of Bush's son and Vice President Dick Cheney a handful of years later represents a far bigger distance between two approaches to international affairs than anything seen in Europe during the same period.

But foreign affairs do not loom nearly as large in America as they do in Europe. With Germany dependent on Russian gas and oil supplies, and Poland and the Baltic states unable to forget the Soviet occupation of their lands, European elections often turn on foreign issues. In 2004, the Socialist Party in Spain defeated the ruling Spanish conservatives led by José María Aznar because the latter was seen as a

puppet of Washington who sent Spanish troops to die in an unpopular war in Iraq. For more than a decade before Tony Blair assumed its leadership in 1994, Britain's Labor Party was seen as unelectable because it was hostile to European Union membership. Today, EU issues influence all national elections on the eastern side of the Atlantic to an extent unimaginable in the United States. In Britain, the Labor Party likes to present the oppositionist Conservatives as isolationist and anti-European, while right-wing parties present Labor as being too close to Europe and too willing to trade British sovereignty. In the United States, no matter what the rhetoric used to win the nomination, and despite the barrage of mutual accusations that so excites foreign-policy specialists, the question of America's international relations or foreign-policy perspectives does not sway many voters.

The key difference, however, remains that Europeans elect *politicians* to run their nations, while Americans elect *a* politician. Even the most dominant political leaders in Europe—the Margaret Thatchers and Tony Blairs—can only do what their parliaments allow, and must regularly appear before and answer pointed questions from their fellow parliamentarians. In the United States, the chief executive rarely ventures to

Capitol Hill except in magisterial passage to deliver his State of the Union speech, which rapt legislators are expected to receive with no sound but respectful applause.

The singularity of the American system—one vote for one person to head the nation—contrasts with the European tradition of one vote for one person who then with other parliamentarians decides who will run the country. It frequently happens that one prime minister can succeed another without a general election, as Gordon Brown did in replacing Tony Blair. The only exception to the European norm is France, with its relatively powerful president elected in a national vote, but even in France a presidency that amounted to an elected monarchy in the days of Charles de Gaulle and François Mitterrand is in the process of being reshaped into one more constrained and dependent on support in France's parliament.

In Europe, voters choose a team of political person-

alities in the knowledge that the person who will be finance or defense or interior minister will be as important as the head of government. American presidents, by contrast, are virtually unchallengeable for four years. Every head of government in Europe has to deal with a team of ministers who have their own power base because they have been elected and usually are party grandees. Thus, European voters know not just who will be their president or chancellor or prime minister, but who is likely to be foreign or finance minister. In America, voters decide on a single individual who will lead the nation and, as commander in chief, decide when to wage war. Cabinet members are mostly bit players, usually lacking the kind of independent authority European ministers possess.

American candidates seeking a presidential nomination have to promise the passionate and the angry in their political family that they will have what they want: an end to war, lower taxes, health care reform,



Tony Blair savors his last round of Prime Minister's Questions in parliament in June 2007 as Gordon Brown (right), his now-unpopular successor, looks on. The thrust and parry of parliamentary politics produces seasoned politicians but does not guarantee that they will be effective national leaders.

and so on. Once the candidate is past the hurdle of the nomination, however, these promises start to make contact with public-policy reality, and after the election many fly out the window, as Democrats become free-traders and Republicans embrace protectionism. Of course, European leaders, once in office, bend to reality and external events. But at least up to Election Day, they have to be coherent and offer a manifesto of specific promises that determines if they win or lose. And having won high office, European leaders still have to face fellow parliamentarians who believe in the party manifesto on which they were elected and expect their leader act on it. Failure to deliver on campaign promises can be fatal. A European leader who flubbed health care reform and saw his party lose control of the legislature, as Bill Clinton did in 1994, could never have survived.

To be sure, American presidents are not complete monarchs. They must contend with Congress, state and local governments, and a Supreme Court that decides major issues such as abortion, gun control, and capital punishment (matters that in Europe are reserved for elected legislators). And, of course, a president must face the voters. But America's chief executive has unparalleled powers, which is one reason why the personalities of candidates—their whims, impulses, and habits—matter more than they do in other countries.

Although the personality strengths and flaws of top political leaders in Europe are under constant scrutiny, nothing matches the minute examination of those who aspire to the White House. John Major succeeded Margaret Thatcher as Britain's prime minister in 1990 without anyone knowing or reporting that he was carrying on a passionate affair with a fellow Conservative member of Parliament and minister named Edwina Currie. The story came out only when she published her diaries after both had left public life. François Mitterrand became president of France while keeping his mistress and their child in a Paris apartment. I am not making a moral point, but a practical one. To the European eye, the American news media's relentless invasion of the privacy of those who seek the nation's highest office is another factor that firms up the perception that personality

rather than policy is central to U.S. presidential contests.

Another striking difference between the American and European styles of electoral warfare arises from the fact that paid political advertising is banned from European television, removing some of the heat and personal vitriol from campaigns and keeping the focus on policy differences. I once showed a group of hard-bitten British political infighters the Willie Horton ad George H. W. Bush's backers used to destroy Michael Dukakis in 1988, featuring the African American Horton, who committed violent crimes while on furlough from a Massachusetts prison. These veterans of the British political wars sat back in horror at the vicious but effective crudeness of the attack, with its blatant exploitation of fears about race and crime.

In British, German, and Spanish elections, televised political pitches are limited to formulaic party broadcasts. Each party is allocated a number of slots—usually of up to five minutes—after the main evening news. An independent commission oversees the broadcasts, and while the tone is partisan, direct onslaughts are out of bounds. Some broadcasts simply present the party leader talking directly to viewers—as boring as can be, especially compared to the normal fizz and snap of television advertising in Europe.

Because European politicians have little direct access to the public through the media, journalists are the perpetual mediators (which leaves politicians perhaps even more obsessed than their American counterparts with controlling the news). Televised inquisitions of wannabe government leaders are a major feature of elections. Some countries have formal debates in which the main candidates answer questions from a panel moderated by journalists. Face-to-face debates between aspirants do sometimes occur (though not, oddly, in Britain, where no prime minister has ever consented to debate the leader of the opposition). Yet, as in the United States, the TV duels usually disappoint, as both candidates are prepared and coached to be expert on defense so that punches rarely land. Moreover, since, other than in France, there are usually more than two main party leaders bidding to win seats in the parliament, there is rarely a one-on-one duel. Instead, European candidates endure tough individual inquisitions by respected TV political journalists who avidly seek to trip them up. This is a continuous process, not confined to elections, and any politician in Europe who aspires to high office has to face regular

hard-hitting interviews on TV and the still-popular European radio services such as the BBC, which command big audiences for political programs every week.

Aspiring American presidents mostly avoid such rigors, especially during the primaries, when candidates can largely confine their audiences to the adoring crowds of staged town hall meetings and the small caucuses in some supporter's living room. Anyone hoping to lead a government in Europe has to convince the public and party professionals over months, if not years, by dominating in parliament, public meetings, and the press, and by walking on the hot coals of a televised grilling without flinching or fumbling. By the time an election arrives, a principal candidate will have been battle hardened in dealing with the toughest of broadcast interrogations. When Tony Blair sought to oust Britain's Conservatives from power in 1997, he already had 14 years of tough parliamentary experience behind him and had forced his Labor Party to come to terms with economic and geopolitical modernity by imposing his will upon recalcitrant Labor leftists. But the Tories still sought to depict him as Bambi—a child without experience.

However, the greater scrutiny does not necessarily make for better leaders. Europe has had its share of duds. Although politicians such as John Major in Britain and Jacques Chirac in France won elections, the economic, social, and foreign policies of their countries under their stewardship were unimpressive. The Austrian Socialists won power in the fall of 2006, but so ineffective was the new Socialist chancellor that he had to dissolve his government and call fresh elections after less than two years in office. The center-left administration headed by Romano Prodi in Italy won power in 2006 but was so incoherent it could not stay in office for more than 20 months. Even under the presidential system in France, both Mitterrand and Chirac found themselves in office but having to share power with opposition parties that had a majority in the National Assembly and could determine who would be prime minister and hold other cabinet posts.

The differences between the American and European political systems have provided fodder for thousands of doctoral dissertations and books. But today the differences may be more

apparent than real. If in the 20th century the contest in Europe was between two different economic systems, free-market economics versus totalizing statism and welfarism, with America firmly supporting the former, the contest today is different. Europeans accept liberal market economics and struggle as American politicians do to find the right approaches to health care, social reform, and the demands of aging voters.

The 21st-century global political contest is now a three-way fight. In one corner is democracy. In another is a new form of autocracy represented by the Russian-Chinese model of politics, with its emphasis on stability, economic growth, and a strong centralized state. In the third corner is Islamist politics, whose practitioners, in different soft and hard manifestations, are seeking to win power from Morocco to Indonesia. Europe and America both support market economics, the rule of law, freedom of expression, and rights for women, gays, and minorities, and thus whatever fur may fly over American presidential contests should not hide the fact that a broader Euro-Atlantic community exists with common values independent of differing systems of political representation.

American democracy, even with the flaws, furies, and occasional fun of its quadrennial presidential bouts, remains an example for the world. When Barack Obama was born and John McCain was a young naval officer, half of Europe lay under communist rule and big Mediterranean nations such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, and intermittently Turkey were not yet democracies. By taking the democratic road that America exemplified, Europe has left poverty and bad politics behind. The United States is still needed to inspire others to follow.

European wiseacres often decry the vulgar animalism of the American political system. But it works. In their own way European politics are just as personal, crude, and creatively destructive, but their great differences, rivalries, and contests over who governs are often resolved by private carve-ups rather than the more democratic public spectacles that America conducts every four years. And given the limited quality of leadership it has to offer at the moment, Europe should look in the mirror before it looks down its nose. ■

Poll Power

“Pollsters and pundits” has become a dismissive epithet in modern politics. Pollsters, at least, deserve much better.

BY SCOTT KEETER

AS THE VOTES WERE COUNTED ON THE NIGHT OF THIS past January’s New Hampshire Democratic presidential primary, pollsters and other professionals in the political game began to grapple with an uncomfortable fact: Virtually all of them had been dead wrong. Despite unanimous poll results predicting a Barack Obama victory (by an average of eight points) on the heels of Senator Obama’s surprising triumph in the Iowa caucuses, Hillary Clinton was going to emerge the winner.

The New Hampshire debacle was not the most significant failure in the history of public-opinion polling, but it joined a list of major embarrassments that includes the disastrous Florida exit polling in the 2000 presidential election, which prompted several networks to project an Al Gore victory, and the national polls in the 1948 race, which led to perhaps the most famous headline in U.S. political history: “Dewey Defeats Truman.” After intense criticism for previous failures and equally intense efforts by pollsters to improve their techniques, this was not supposed to happen.

New Hampshire gave new life to many nagging doubts about polling and criticisms of its role in American politics. Are polls really accurate? Can surveys of small groups of people give a true reading of what a much larger group thinks? What about bias? Don’t pollsters stack the deck?

At a deeper level, the unease about polling grows out of fears about its impact on democracy. On the strength of exit

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polls in the 1980 presidential election, for example, the TV networks projected a Ronald Reagan victory—and Jimmy Carter conceded—even though people in the West still had time to vote. Critics charged that this premature call may have literally stopped some westerners from taking the trouble to cast their ballots. There is also a more generalized suspicion that polls (and journalists) induce political passivity by telling Americans what they think. As the New Hampshire story unfolded on January 8, former television news anchor Tom Brokaw seemed to have this idea on his mind when he said, with a bit of exasperation, that professional political observers should simply “wait for the voters” instead of “making judgments before the polls have closed and trying to stampede, in effect, the process.”

At the same time, some worry that polls put *too much* power in the hands of an uninformed public, and that they reduce political leaders to slavish followers of public opinion. In the White House, efforts to systematically track public opinion date back to the dawn of modern polling, during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and nobody seems to get very far in American politics today without a poll-savvy Dick Morris or Karl Rove whispering in his or her ear.

But while there may be reason to worry about the public’s political competence, a far more serious threat to democracy arises from the large disparities in income, education, and other resources needed to participate effectively in politics. Compared with most other Western democracies, the United States has a more pronounced class skew in voter turnout and other forms of political participation, with the



An Indiana couple fills out exit poll questionnaires after voting earlier this year in the state's Democratic primary. Because people respond just as they emerge from the voting booth, exit polls can offer special insights into what kinds of people turned out and what influenced their decisions.

affluent much more politically active than those who are less well off. This uneven distribution of political engagement is what makes public-opinion polls especially valuable. Far from undermining democracy, they enhance it: They make it more democratic. As Harvard political scientist Sidney Verba observed in 1995, "Surveys produce just what democracy is supposed to produce—equal representation of all citizens. The sample survey is rigorously egalitarian; it is designed so that each citizen has an equal chance to participate and an equal voice when participating."

Elections are blunt instruments for transmitting the public will. One candidate wins, the other loses. Did the victor prevail because he or she proposed a compelling agenda of new policies, or simply because the alternative was less acceptable? On the day after his reelection in 2004, President George W. Bush declared, "I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and now I intend to spend it." The president's troubles in his second term indicate that this reading of his mandate was incorrect, as he vigorously pursued many policies on which the public was, at best, divided. Opposition to the war in Iraq grew in 2005.

Most voters did not want to see private accounts created in the Social Security system. Seven in 10 disapproved of Bush's personal intervention in the case of Terri Schiavo, the brain-damaged Florida woman who was removed from life-support.

Obviously, polls do not always stop politicians from going their own way—and they should not always do so—but without polls we would not even know how disconnected official actions are from public opinion. Bush's actions were not unlike those of many other political leaders who mistook a narrow victory for a mandate. In such cases, polling can provide a useful check. Between elections, polls provide guidance to legislators, the executive branch, journalists, and the public itself about what the public wants and what it will stand for.

There is no question that modern American politics is drenched in public-opinion polling. More than 20 entities, from the Gallup Organization and the Pew Research Center (where I work) to the relatively new "robo-poll" firms, such as Rasmussen Reports, with their computerized telephone surveys, regularly conduct national political polls and make the results available to the public. Dozens more work at the state and local levels. The total number of surveys con-

ducted in a campaign is large, but impossible to count with certainty. Leaving aside all the research carried out for the campaign organizations, parties, and interest groups, at least 50 national opinion polls were released to the public in the month before the 2004 presidential election.

All told, including surveys by business, foundations, and others, marketing and public-opinion research is an \$8.6 billion industry, according to one recent estimate. But in addition to being a big business and an integral part of America's political machinery, survey research has also become an academic discipline, with its own academic journals, such as *Public Opinion Quarterly*, and input from scholars in related areas such as sociology and political science. People in the field have been grappling with a large number of problems. Fewer Americans are willing to participate in polls, and an increasing number are reachable only by cell phone; people with cell phones are more difficult for pollsters to reach and interview. And there are many knotty intellectual and methodological challenges, such as improving the accuracy of polls dealing with matters including drug and alcohol use or sexual behavior that many people are not willing to be frank about.

This phenomenon of "social desirability bias" is central to one theory about the failure in New Hampshire. Polling is a transaction between humans, and people may not answer a question honestly if they think the person interviewing them will judge them negatively. They regularly overreport their virtues, such as church attendance and charitable giving, and underreport their vices. When the American Society for Microbiology asked people whether they washed their hands after using the toilet, 94 percent declared that they always did. But when researchers watched what actually happened in public restrooms they found that only 68 percent did. In New Hampshire, it is possible that people who feared they would be branded racists didn't tell pollsters they were going to vote against Obama, even if race had nothing to do with their choice, while others simply avoided pollsters.

The race factor is well documented in the history of polling. In 1982, Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, an African American, reached Election Day in his race for California's governorship with a six-point lead in the polls but lost to white Republican George Deukmejian by less than one percent. Virginia gubernatorial candidate

L. Douglas Wilder was luckier in 1989, pulling out a narrow victory after leading by five to 10 points in the final polls. But the so-called Bradley effect seems to have died out after the 1990s—perhaps because of generational and attitudinal change. In five statewide contests in 2006 that featured black and white candidates, polls were very accurate. So race probably wasn't a factor in the New Hampshire surveys. In the 2008 primaries that followed New Hampshire, polls sometimes overestimated and sometimes underestimated Obama's support. The only clear pattern was that his strength was underestimated in states with large black populations, chiefly because Obama got a higher percentage of the black vote than the polls indicated he would.

We may never know what went wrong in New Hampshire. It is possible that the unique circumstances, with intense media scrutiny just days after the Iowa caucuses and two very popular candidates, created an extraordinary dynamic.

Exit polls were not the problem in New Hampshire, but in the past they have occasionally been a source of great controversy. In addition to the erroneous early call of Florida for Gore in 2000, leaks of early exit poll results in 2004 that showed John Kerry leading caused a sharp drop in the stock market and wild mood swings among partisans on both sides. Though the TV news organizations that largely fund the polls did not make any incorrect calls on election night, the leaks led them to agree to keep future exit poll results sealed until 5:00 PM (EST) on Election Day. Now the network's poll analysts are literally locked in a windowless "quarantine room" and deprived of all communication with the outside world. There were no leaks in the 2006 elections and the 2008 primaries.

The more serious challenge in conducting exit polls today is the growing number of voters who choose to vote before Election Day by absentee ballot or early voting procedures. In Oregon, all voters cast their ballots by mail, and in several other states more than a quarter of the votes will be cast early. Telephone surveys can create a picture of these voters, but voting in advance poses a growing problem.

Exit polls have other limitations as well: Respondents must fill out paper forms, limiting the number and complexity of questions that can be asked. Yet they provide a window on voter psychology that no other method allows. Interviews are conducted immediately after people leave the voting booth, offering a more definitive

accounting than other methods of who turned out and what motivated their choices.

Pollsters often hear the accusation that they can manipulate results, and it is true: They can. In a 1992 effort to gauge the impact of wording questions differently, for example, a *New York Times* poll offered two different questions about antipoverty efforts. When asked if they favored spending more money for “welfare,” only 23 percent of the respondents said yes; asked if they favored spending more on “assistance to the poor,” nearly two-thirds said yes. Pollsters working for groups that advocate particular viewpoints or solutions may be under pressure to find favorable results, and it is possible for them to formulate questions that get the most favorable response. (In fact, it is exceedingly difficult to write clear, unbiased, comprehensible questions, and pollsters will be the first to admit that they don’t always get it right.) Or, less ethically, pollsters can simply suppress results unfavorable to the client’s point of view. But most pollsters belong to associations with formal codes of ethics, and, more important, have a strong interest in maintaining their reputations, which is especially true for polling organizations that work in the public sphere.

Despite all the grumbling about polling, hard evidence that the public dislikes it is difficult to find. Pollsters, of course, have asked. More than three-fourths of respondents in a 1998 Pew Research Center study agreed that surveys on social and political issues serve a useful purpose. Still, there seems to be widespread skepticism about poll results. Another Pew study, for example, found that two-thirds of respondents didn’t believe that surveys of a small part of the population can yield an accurate picture of the whole population’s views.

We pollsters have a stock reply to this criticism: If you don’t believe in random sampling, ask your doctor to take all of your blood next time you need a blood test. Sampling is used in many fields—by accountants looking for fraud, medical researchers, and manufacturers testing for quality. The key is that every person in the population has a chance of being included, and that pollsters have a way to calculate that chance. The usual method of sampling the public is through random digit dialing, which gives every home tele-

phone number in the United States an equal chance of being included. (Internet polls posted on websites do not have random samples, since people volunteer for them and are thus very different from the average—much more engaged in public affairs, more ideological in their views, and not very typical demographically.)

Still, even with random sampling, some types of people are a little more likely than others to participate in polls. Statistical weighting—which gives greater clout to the answers

FEWER AMERICANS are willing to participate in polls, and an increasing number are reachable only by cell phone.

of people from demographic groups that are underrepresented in the survey and less to the overrepresented—can mitigate most of this bias. Because it typically increases the contribution of people with lower levels of education and income, weighting tends to increase the percentage of those who say they will vote Democratic. In a July Pew poll, the unweighted horse-race result among registered voters gave Obama a one-point advantage over John McCain, 44 percent to 43 percent. The weighted result was a five-point lead, 47 to 42.

Weighting does not cure all ills. People who are interested in the topic of the survey are more likely to participate, potentially leading polls to overstate how involved the public is in a subject, whether it is sports, politics, or technology. Weighting can only partially adjust for this, since interest in a topic may not be closely related to demographic factors. This is one of the reasons why post-election polls often overstate the percentage of the public that turned out to vote. (The charge that there is a liberal bias in telephone polls because conservatives are less likely to participate in surveys sponsored by the mainstream media, however, has been shown to be incorrect by experiments in which extraordinary efforts were made to ensure a high response rate. There was no ideological difference in the results.)

Participation rates have become a more generalized problem for pollsters in recent years. Americans are overwhelmed by demands on their time and are bombarded

with requests of all kinds, and they are increasingly using technologies such as voice mail and call blocking. As a result, survey response rates have declined sharply. The Pew Research Center's response rates are now around 22 percent, down from about 36 percent 10 years ago. That is fairly typical of the polling industry. As pollsters work harder to recruit participants, costs rise. The average political survey may require calling 15,000 numbers to identify approx-

shedding light on what's behind voters' positions.

Another problem facing telephone polling is that a growing number of people are out of reach because they have a cell phone and no landline—currently 15 percent of adults, according to U.S. government studies. Cell-only Americans tend to be much younger than average, more likely to be members of a minority racial or ethnic group, and less likely to be married or own a home. Pollsters are

responding; most of the major media polling organizations are now adding cell phones to the samples for some surveys. And, for now, experimentation by Pew and other survey organizations is finding that surveys that include cell-only respondents get the same

WHATEVER THEIR PITFALLS, election polls face the ultimate measure of accountability: reality.

imately 5,000 working telephone numbers, of which about 1,000 will produce a person who agrees to be interviewed. Altogether, this effort will require 30,000 to 40,000 phone calls. It is difficult to provide an average cost, but a typical telephone survey with a response rate of 20 to 25 percent and good quality control (including extensive interviewer training, questionnaire testing, and close supervision of the interviewing process) can cost \$40 to \$50 per interview or more.

Rising costs may have serious consequences, since they increase the temptation to cut corners. For example, reputable pollsters typically make multiple calls to each telephone number to obtain an interview. It is cheaper to dial fresh numbers and interview whoever is available and willing to talk, but that approach risks biasing the sample toward people who are usually at home and willing to participate. Another cost-saving measure is the use of interactive voice response technology, or “robo-polling,” in which a computer dials numbers and a recorded voice conducts the survey. About one-third of all published polls in the Democratic primary elections this year and a majority of the published statewide general-election polls completed by mid-September were robo-polls. Overall, they performed well in the 2006 elections and the 2008 primaries, achieving an accuracy rate comparable to that of conventional telephone surveys. But they typically have to include very few questions, which limits their value for

results on most topics as those without cell phone samples. This is because the kinds of people who are reachable only on cell phones—the young, the unmarried, renters, minorities—have the same kinds of attitudes as similar individuals reached on landline phones. But no one knows how long this will hold true.

Whatever their pitfalls, election polls face the ultimate measure of accountability: reality. By that standard, their track record is very good. In 2004, nearly every national pollster correctly forecast that Bush would win in a close election, and the average of the polls predicted a Bush total within a few tenths of a percent of what he achieved. Among statewide polls in races for governor and U.S. Senate, 90 percent correctly forecast the winner, and many that did not were still within the margin of sampling error. The record in 2000 was similar, though that was an even closer election.

It is doubtful that the Founding Fathers would have taken much comfort in the reliability of survey research. They were skeptical of public opinion and fearful of direct democracy, believing, as James Madison artfully declared, that the public's views should be “refine[d] and enlarge[d] . . . by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely

to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations.”

That skepticism is shared today by those who argue that the public simply does not know enough to form rational opinions on most issues of the day. But political leaders have to divine the public's views from somewhere in order to “refine and enlarge” them. If the public is too ill informed to be consulted through surveys, why bother consulting it through elections?

There are four essential arguments that support the case for a greater role for the public and public opinion in political life. First, while some citizens may be uninformed or irrational, collective public opinion as expressed in polls is rational and responsive to the events and needs of the times. Much as juries reach accurate decisions after pooling the perspectives and knowledge of a range of individual members, collective preferences in polls reflect an averaging of the perspectives of many different kinds of people that offsets the errors introduced by the uninformed.

Second, people are able to make effective use of “information shortcuts” to develop opinions and reach voting decisions that are consistent with their underlying values, even when they don't have detailed knowledge about the issues. Party affiliation is perhaps the most useful shortcut, allowing voters to select candidates likely to be ideologically in tune with them even if they know little about where the candidates stand on a range of specific issues. Voters also take cues from trusted

interest groups and organizations, such as the National Rifle Association, Planned Parenthood, or the League of Conservation Voters.

A third argument is that citizens are more knowledgeable than they seem. As psychologists have noted, people often cannot cite the specific factual information on which they base judgments, whether the subject is politics, movies, or even other people. But that does not mean they made their judgments in the absence of information. Rather, it reflects the fact that people often use facts to form impressions and then forget the facts while remembering the overall impression. I may recall that I liked watching *The Usual Suspects* and not recall who starred in it or the specifics of the plot. But if I watch it again, I am likely to reach the same conclusion about it.

Finally, opinion polls plumb other important questions apart from people's views on complex decisions about public policy. They gauge assessments of the state of the national and local economies, the health care system, the importance of one issue versus another, and people's day-to-day experiences and struggles. On these matters, the views of people with less political sophistication and knowledge can be as important as those of the better informed.

None of this is to say that shortcuts or collective public opinion always compensate for the failures of the citizenry, or that there is no room for improvement. But the larger point is that the public is better able to

make meaningful distinctions than many elites assume. When news of a possible affair between President Bill Clinton and former White House intern Monica Lewinsky began to seep out in January 1998, the common judgment in political Washington was that Clinton's presidency would be over if the charges proved to be true. The public would demand that the president resign or be removed, it was said. The charges did turn out to be true, but the predictions



“Never mind what the voters are saying. What are the pollsters saying?”

were wrong. From the very beginning, Americans told pollsters they opposed the idea of Clinton resigning or being impeached. Majorities described themselves as “disgusted” by the affair, but also said that special counsel Kenneth Starr should drop his investigation. The public was able to separate its judgments about Clinton the leader from those about Clinton the person. Indeed, Clinton’s job approval rating went *up* after the scandal broke: “It is not an exaggeration to say that these judgments saved Clinton’s presidency,” said my Pew colleague Andrew Kohut. “And it is inconceivable to think that public opinion could have had such an impact in an era prior to the emergence of the media polls.”

While political professionals must be attuned to public sentiment in order to survive, their perceptions are sometimes wrong. Polling can be an invaluable antidote in such situations. That doesn’t mean that leaders will always heed it. Later in 1998, polling showed strong opposition to the Republican Congress’s impeachment proceedings, but the GOP pressed on. It paid dearly for its persistence in the congressional elections that fall.

Clinton himself, the master of “triangulation,” embodies for some critics another fear about polls—that they will turn leaders into followers or panderers. In subtler form, this is a concern that polls provide an ultimately unreliable expression of the public mind, and because of their apparent authority as “the voice of the people” get more weight than they deserve. The Republican Party’s performance in the Clinton scandal is a good example of politicians *not* pandering. There is no doubt that politicians sometimes bend with the political wind—as they should in a democracy—but there is very little evidence that they slavishly follow polls. In fact, quite the opposite is true, according to a study by political scientists Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro. In *Politicians Don’t Pander* (2000), they wrote: “What concerns us are indications of declining responsiveness to public opinion and the growing list of policies on which politicians of both major political parties ignore public opinion and supply no explicit justification for it.”

Indeed, Clinton himself misjudged the potential for a public backlash when he moved ahead, early in his first

term, with a plan to ease the ban on homosexuals serving in the military. Polls showed that the public was, at best, divided on this question. That’s not to say that the military’s prohibition of service by gays and lesbians was right, but Clinton bucked strong opposition without adequately preparing public opinion for the change. The ensuing controversy weakened him and contributed to the troubles he and his party faced the following year in the 1994 midterm elections.

The leaders of the impeachment drive during Clinton’s second term were insulated from public opinion, in part because they represented states or districts that were homogeneously conservative and thus unlikely to rebuke them for reaching beyond what the general public would support, Jacobs and Shapiro say. This pattern is increasingly typical of a Washington populated by legislators who are from highly gerrymandered districts and can be pushed to extremes by partisan interest groups that demand ideological loyalty as the price for avoiding a challenge in the political primary before the next election.

Even when they turn to opinion polls, politicians may use them less for guidance than for manipulation—to help them craft rhetoric that will allow them to avoid conforming to majority opinion when it conflicts with their personal or ideological goals. This is not always a bad thing, but it is ironic that polling has made it much easier for officials to minimize the influence of public opinion when it serves their interests to do so.

For all their flaws, polls are a unique source of information about America’s citizenry—not just their opinions on issues but also their experiences, life circumstances, priorities, and hopes and fears. All of these elements of everyday Americans’ lives are potentially relevant to the making of policy, and—compared with phone calls and letters to public officials, campaign contributions, the actions of lobbyists and interest groups, or even elections—polls provide a fair and detailed accounting of them.

The eminent political scientist V. O. Key once defined public opinion as “those opinions held by private persons which governments find it prudent to heed.” Though by no means a perfect instrument, polls make it possible for more opinions, held by a broader and more representative range of citizens, to be known to the government and thus, potentially, heeded. ■

Bury the Hatchet

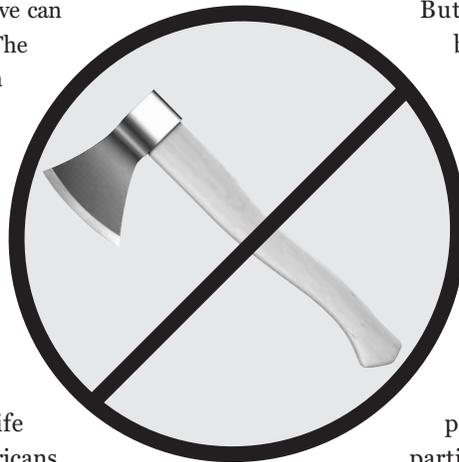
The antidote to frenzied partisanship won't be found in politics as usual but in problem-solving leaders who govern from the center.

BY GIL TROY

DESPITE SELECTING TWO MEN KNOWN FOR THEIR political civility as presidential nominees, Americans in the fall of 2008 have been enduring yet another nasty political contest. By September, both candidates could easily have sung along with Britney Spears, “Oops . . . I did it again.” A bit of historical perspective can soothe some of our discontents. The long-standing paradox of American presidential campaigning is that voters complain about political mudslinging but also respond to it. Repeatedly since Thomas Jefferson battled John Adams for the right to succeed George Washington, the Republic has survived partisan hysteria and citizen disappointment.

Yet the ugliness of public life somehow offends modern Americans more. Today’s festering unhappiness with politics is a product of the plummeting faith in politicians and political institutions that pollsters have tracked since the 1970s and the escalating spiral of cynicism and despair that has accompanied it. Intense partisanship among politicians, vicious political battles in the media, and nasty electoral campaigns coexist with extensive citizen apathy and pathetically low voter turnout.

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By contrast, our political ancestors often approached the political game in better humor and with a closer attachment to political life. Political skirmishing involved citizens in at least the most basic acts of democracy, especially voting.

But today, many Americans are bystanders left choking on the fumes of partisan combat. Our politics suffer from the paradox of strong partisanship combined with weak parties. Throughout much of the 19th and 20th centuries, Americans did politics via their parties. Partisans regularly read party newspapers printed by partisan printers on party payrolls. During campaigns, partisans marched in party parades to hear party leaders exhort them to vote the party line. American politics’ many military metaphors—the *standard-bearer rallied the troops*, telling the *rank and file* that this was a *do-or-die campaign*—testified to this intensity of party activity, not just party affiliation.

Strong parties fostered political engagement. With most Americans living on farms or in very small towns, and even city dwellers residing in close-knit neighborhoods, everyone knew who belonged to which party and, even more important, who could

deliver the goods. Party officials were true community leaders, not strangers with fancy titles. And these leaders made good—to reformers' eternal frustration. The infamous "Boss" William Marcy Tweed of New York was typical. In the 1870s, Tweed busily lined his and his buddies' pockets while also passing out constituent services personally and spectacularly, ranging from Christmas turkeys for the needy to roads, buildings, and parks to transform Manhattan.

Even the activities we mock today—the torchlight parades and the florid oratory—were community builders. They did not prevent mudslinging. But just as competition engenders a grudging mutual respect among political professionals, the widespread participation in party hijinks reinforced a shared commitment to America's future. And especially after the Civil War put the ultimate polarizing issue of slavery to rest, unifying rituals after Election Day helped heal the community's partisan wounds. In Delaware, citizens still celebrate the day after Election Day as "Return Day." In some counties, rivals parade together and in others they bury a ceremonial hatchet. Especially in small-town America, the post-campaign reconciliation was as routine as the pre-election combat. These rituals, once widespread, restored civility by shifting everyone's identity as active partisans to their more transcendent identity as patriotic Americans.

Since the rise of television in the 1950s, the media have become the central forum for American politicking, and increasingly today that role is being played by the blogosphere. With the blogger and the viewer replacing the pamphleteer and the parader, politicians focus on marketing themselves and their causes to passive consumers rather than mobilizing passionate soldiers. The new language of politics sounds like this: *Spin doctors stage photo ops as pollsters survey voter preferences, spawning celebrity candidates.* The old promise of a new kind of Internet-based citizen politics now looks more and more like a mere marketing ploy. Far from reflecting true citizen engagement, the volume of online donations and the number of website hits have simply been converted into indexes of candidate popularity.

The rise of media politics has spawned a new breed of freelancing politicians who excel at demand-

ing attention rather than working behind the scenes to get things done. These showboaters entertain or scare voters, often by affirming their common political identities. Problem solving invites reason, compromise, and, ultimately, mutual respect; identity building invites posturing, passion, and, ultimately, intolerance.

In the days of Rutherford Hayes and William McKinley, the parties loomed larger than individual politicians, who often seemed undistinguished and interchangeable. Matt Quay of Pennsylvania, Thomas Platt of New York, and other party bosses dominated local and national politics, bullying legislators and the blur of undistinguished bearded and mustachioed presidents between Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. Thanks to the democratization of the parties, the last time bosses dictated a nomination was in 1952, when Adlai Stevenson became the surprise Democratic nominee. Such top-down politicking would be almost unimaginable today. Earlier this year, when it appeared that the Democratic presidential primaries might not produce a clear victor, many party superdelegates were reluctant to make the party's choice, even though that is precisely the role assigned them. It was a telling indicator of the parties' weakness that Hillary Clinton, the favorite of the Democratic establishment, lost, while John McCain, noted for his deviations from party orthodoxy, won the GOP nomination.

Primary season highlights the parties' debility, reducing them to the role of referee among contenders. Then the winner takes over the party structure, frequently installing new leaders while commandeering party fundraising lists. The nominees function much like new sheriffs who swagger into town and dominate the scene for a dramatic but fleeting moment rather than like local deputies who rise through the system and last.

Despite being less powerful and more responsive to public opinion, parties brimming with edge but lacking a mass membership base produce further division and alienation. Party links tend to serve as convenient labels rather than defining allegiances. The modern mix of culture and politics has made party identity combustible and polarizing. Fortunately, no single issue like slavery divides the nation. Americans are more "purple" than the

red-blue narrative suggests. Still, the media showcases Chardonnay-sipping, *New York Times*-reading, pro-choice, pro-gay marriage, urban, progressive Democrats confronting beer-swilling, Rush Limbaugh--listening, pro-life, pro-traditional marriage, rural, conservative Republicans. It is Prius versus pickup, tennis versus NASCAR, Ivy League types versus state university grads and dropouts. The harsh fights reflect the rival groups' disgust for each other, as well as the competition for swing voters who transcend the rigid paradigms and can tip elections, such as blue-collar suburban Catholics and well-educated soccer moms. Thanks to these divisions, the mid-20th century's big-tent party coalitions, with Republicans including liberals such as Nelson Rockefeller of New York and Democrats including conservatives such as John Sparkman of Alabama, have vanished with the Rambler and the rotary phone.

Parties are now the political equivalent of professional sports teams. Individuals root themselves hoarse for their side, even occasionally confronting rival fans, but few save the pros actually play the game. Increasingly, parties seem less like armies of concerned citizens than coalitions of angry ideological and economic interest groups. While political scientists may hail the rise of intense partisanship as a spur to political activism, the interest-group jockeying only feeds the popular impression of politics as an insiders' game.

At the same time, an increasingly odious money game pollutes the whole spectacle. Beyond branding, candidates most appreciate the party infrastructures as fundraising vehicles. In 2004 the presidential candidates raised more than \$600 million, while the two parties raised an additional \$1.2 billion for both the congressional and national campaigns, despite the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform limiting "soft" funds. Money has become an unavoidable preoccupation of modern politics, draining time and attention from the public's business. Even incumbent senators estimate that they spend a third of their time

fundraising—which helps explain the influx into politics of multimillionaires who can finance their own campaigns.

So much money flows through the system that parties lose control. Independent political advocacy groups have proliferated to circumvent campaign finance laws limiting contributions and give extremists a voice. In 2004, these unregulated "527" organizations alone raised

LIKE FANS OF PROFESSIONAL sports teams, Americans root themselves hoarse for their team but seldom actively participate in politics.

\$400 million. The attack ads that renegade 527s produce so easily, and inject into the campaign narrative so effectively, such as the Willie Horton ads of 1988 and the Swift Boat ads of 2004, allow forces formally distanced from the parties to polarize the atmosphere, take the focus off policy, and sway elections.

The media increase the political nastiness while distancing voters from those clashes. Citizens become spectators. Headline-driven news emphasizes the extremes, the fights, the hysteria, the sensational. Political reporters, trying to appear objective by quoting two opposing sides to almost every story, mostly sharpen the differences, slighting any centrist position. The news media have for decades broadcast the shrillest voices from the pro-life and pro-choice movements, for example, even as most Americans have accepted a centrist position, disliking abortion theoretically but being too pragmatic to outlaw it. The media's Kabuki theater may not always sway Americans, but it demoralizes and distances them.

As has been the case with almost every new technology, from the telegraph to television, the rise of the Internet fed false expectations that it would create a new, more democratic, interactive poli-

tics. But blogging's harsh, unfettered nature has coarsened politics. The fact that so many bloggers are essentially anonymous allows them to spew rancor, rumor, lies, and obscenities. Increasingly, the MSM (mainstream media) appear by contrast staid, centrist, boring, even responsible. Deadlines—once daily, now without limit in the age of the Internet—demand a constant stream of stories, diluting the quality and upping the rhetorical ante in the effort to grab attention.

In an ever-escalating rhetorical spiral, political discussion in the media and the blogosphere becomes harsher, sleazier. At the same time, the stories that stand out are the sensational and polarizing ones rather than the constructive, bridge-building ones. A variation of Gresham's law applies: Just as bad money drives out the good, bad rhetoric and sleazy politics drive out—or at least eclipse and obscure—the good.

The strains within the American political system reflect a broader cultural crisis. It is hard to expect temperate leaders and reasonable politics in a culture of excess, a culture that encourages Americans to indulge almost every impulse. There are, however, signs of backlash. The two major party nominees of 2008 both rose to prominence by criticizing the political status quo, though as they consolidated their positions and charted strategy in the summer of 2008, the forces pushing for more partisanship prevailed.

Leaders willing to demand centrist government and less alienating politics are rare. Moderation is not considered sexy; bipartisan initiatives are frequently deemed boring. Ironically, it has been left to a media celebrity to fill part of the yawning gap in the middle. The comedian Jon Stewart of *The Daily Show* has become a hero to young Americans—and one of their primary sources for news—by throwing off partisan shackles and mocking the system. Stewart skewers Republican incompetence, Democratic impotence, and media irresponsibility with equal intensity. He says his comedy comes “from feeling displaced from society because you're in the center. We're the group of fairness, common sense, and moderation.”

Despite the forces pulling politicians to the extremes, Americans must remember that the United

States is not Europe. The American political tradition is pragmatic and centrist. Our greatest presidents led from the center, seeking the golden path of national unity. George Washington inspired Americans to rally around their “common cause.” Even at the nation's moment of maximum political extremism, Abraham Lincoln moderated the abolitionists' antislavery fervor to keep the wavering border states fighting for union. Franklin D. Roosevelt's big-tent New Deal incorporated some changes radicals demanded while preserving capitalism. These leaders understood that a democracy, resting on the consent of the governed, requires citizens to buy into politics. They were not namby-pamby wafflers, but muscular moderates, rooted in core principles but nimble, confident, and patriotic enough to compromise when necessary.

In an age of celebrity politics and weakened parties, presidents have to fill the void, transcending partisanship and combating alienation. The media obsession with the Celebrity in Chief gives the president far more power than any party boss ever enjoyed. The “bully pulpit” of the White House has never been so prominent in American life, with the president so able to set the national tone and shape the country's conversation. Future presidents should nurture civic engagement and restore confidence in government, even while maintaining a particular party identity.

Muscular moderation from our leaders, and a renewed faith among citizens, requires a new American nationalism, with national identity trumping party loyalty. The public's frustrated yearning for a patriotic and civic revival fueled both Ronald Reagan's success and Barack Obama's meteoric rise. Both men captured Americans' desire for greater faith in their leaders, their country, their system, themselves. The excitement about John McCain's compelling life story likewise reflects a yearning for simpler, more patriotic times, rooted in self-sacrifice rather than self-indulgence.

We will start reducing the tension and reviving some faith in politics when we have leaders who understand that they must lead from the center, uniting Americans around core values and ensuring that politics are once again about being rooted in community and solving problems, not just rooting for one set of culture warriors over another. ■

In ESSENCE

REVIEWS OF ARTICLES FROM PERIODICALS AND SPECIALIZED JOURNALS HERE AND ABROAD

Society 67 // Politics & Government 69 // Foreign Policy & Defense 70 // Economics, Labor & Business 73 // Press & Media 76 // History 77 // Religion & Philosophy 80 // Science & Technology 82 // Arts & Letters 84 // Other Nations 86

SOCIETY

Crime's New Address

THE SOURCE: "American Murder Mystery" by Hanna Rosin, in *The Atlantic*, July–Aug. 2008.

EIGHT SHOTS EXPLODED OUTSIDE a police station at the end of a suburban road recently, routine for a Tuesday night in what is now one of Memphis's crime hotspots. A little more than a decade ago the area was quiet, but that was before Memphis launched a noble social experiment, the demolition of inner-city housing projects and dispersal of residents into peaceful neighborhoods where they would be free from the debilitating effects of concentrated poverty. What happened instead, writes Hanna Rosin, an *Atlantic* contributing editor, was that crime followed their path, devastating new neighborhoods, spreading robberies and murders across a wider city swath and, in 2007, turning Elvis's hometown into the nation's most violent city.

How could such good intentions have gone so wrong? Surely the old

barricaded and claustrophobic public-housing complexes deserved the wrecking ball. But cities fell in love with federal programs that seemed to promise a better life for folks living in ghettos while freeing downtown land for spiffy redevelopment. And instead of counseling the departing residents and carefully helping them get established in affluent neighborhoods, most cities handed out vouchers and told them to move in a rush, without support.

Crime increased, Rosin writes, because the former residents of public housing chose moderately poor neighborhoods that were already on the decline, and the addition of thousands of poor newcomers pushed these areas beyond the limit of what a community can tolerate before crime and other social problems take off. While the spread of crime has a host of causes—unemployment, gangs, and rapid gentrification are also important—researchers are seeing a national pattern of crime pushing outward after projects come down.

The phenomenon is not confined to Memphis; it has also been reported in Louisville, Ky., Florence, S.C., and Chicago suburbs such as Maywood.

Why haven't the new neighborhoods influenced the inner-city transplants rather than the other way around? "Demonizing the high rises has blinded some city officials to what was good and necessary about the projects, and what they ultimately have to find a way to replace: the sense of belonging, the informal economy, the easy access to social services. And for better or worse, the fact that the police had the address," Rosin writes.

In Memphis, crusaders are pushing for better social services such as health clinics, child care, and job training in the former public-housing residents' new neighborhoods. But the problems of the poor are deeper than anything government by itself seems able to solve. Escaping poverty, Rosin writes, requires "a will as strong as a spy's: You have to disappear to a strange land, forget where you came from and ignore the suspicions of everyone around you."

In the interim, city leaders must acknowledge a bitter truth: The projects are gone in name only.

SOCIETY

Happiness Paradoxes

THE SOURCES: "Paradox of Declining Female Happiness" by Betsey A. Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, in *American Law and Economics Association Annual Meetings*, 2008, and "Social Inequalities in Happiness in the United States, 1972 to 2004: An Age-Period-Cohort Analysis" by Yang Yang, in *American Sociological Review*, April 2008.

GEORGE MCGOVERN AND George Wallace were running for president, Bangladesh had just become a country, and *The Godfather* was on movie screens when the first researchers from the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago began asking Americans whether they were "very happy," "pretty happy," or "not too happy." Thirty-six years later, the pattern of the annual answers they have given looks paradoxical.

Over the last three decades women have narrowed the pay gap with men, blasted ahead of them in education, and seen a slight rise in the amount of time their husbands spend tending house. Yet they are less happy than they were before these changes occurred, according to Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. The researchers express the female happiness shortfall in complex statistical equations. But its magnitude is roughly equivalent to the difference in misery between a state with 4 percent unemployment and one with 12.5 percent.

Stevenson and Wolfers suggest that women might be less happy than in the past because of increased anxiety as they struggle to balance traditional female roles with new competi-

tion in the unisex marketplace. The two researchers question whether women might have exaggerated their well-being in earlier surveys because they wanted to say what they thought researchers wanted to hear. And they wonder whether higher expectations might also contribute to the happiness deficit. The increased opportunity to succeed in new realms may have increased the "likelihood of believing that one's life is not measuring up," they write.

Another surprising finding is that older people are happier now than when they were young, writes Yang Yang, a sociologist at the University of Chicago. "Overall levels of happiness increase with age," she says. Forget the likelihood of declining health, loss of employment, and a shrinking network of friends. Older people tell researchers that these take a toll, but are counterbalanced by the benefits of retirement. The happiness meter seems to rise steadily until about age 70, then begins to level off.

Aside from the alternative, old age is not normally a sought-after state. But contrary to expectations, Yang finds, in general the odds of being happy improve five percent with every decade of life.

SOCIETY

The Global Warming Diet

THE SOURCE: "Food-Miles and the Relative Climate Impacts of Food Choices in the United States" by Christopher L. Weber and H. Scott Matthews, in *Environmental Science and Technology*, May 15, 2008.

WORRIED ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL cost of eating Chilean grapes

in January? Eager to help curtail global warming by grilling only locally grown beef? Then pay more attention to what you eat and less to geography. Surprisingly, write two engineers at Carnegie Mellon University, consumers can do more to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by shifting family menus one day a week from red meat and dairy products to chicken, fish, or vegetables than they can by buying 100 percent locally grown food.

Christopher L. Weber and H. Scott Matthews found that the delivery of food from producers to grocery stores accounts for only four percent of America's food-related greenhouse-gas emissions. Most of the environmental impact of food is the result of things that happen during the production phase. Transportation as a whole accounts for only 11 percent of food's life cycle emissions, and international air freight only two percent of that.

No matter how it is measured, Weber and Matthews write, "red meat is more greenhouse-gas intensive than all other forms of food," because of the long supply chains of animal feed. Dairy products are second. They are about half as intensive as red meat, calorie for calorie. Fruits and vegetables take about the same toll on the environment as chicken, fish, eggs, and nuts. The impact they have on the environment is less in the production phase, but greater in delivery and transportation.

Weber and Matthews estimate that if the average household bought every food product locally, it could save about as much energy in a year

EXCERPT

Sic Transit Gloria Doctorate

The case of Robert Mugabe gets one thinking about this most peculiar of academic nods [the honorary degree]. . . . In June the University of Massachusetts at Amherst rescinded the honorary doctorate it had bestowed on Zimbabwe's longtime president in 1986.

Last year the University of Edinburgh similarly withdrew its 1984 degree. . . . Maybe The Economist will cancel Mugabe's subscription next. . . . Are honorary degrees really such silly things that we should mock their bestowal or withdrawal? . . . They do seem to lack core importance in the academic enterprise. . . . On the other hand, eliminating honorary degrees would knock commencement ceremonies down yet another notch, to some still undiscovered level of boredom.

—CARLIN ROMANO, literary critic for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and critic at large for *The Chronicle Review*, July 11, 2008

as if it cut back on driving by 1,000 miles. If it substituted a bean or vegetable casserole for roast beef every Sunday, it could save the equivalent of the greenhouse gases produced by

driving 1,160 miles. If red meat were eliminated altogether, it could save emissions equal to driving 8,100 miles a year.

There are many reasons to buy

local food, including the taste of fresher, riper produce. But for the average family, saving the environment by reducing "food-miles" is not the most important.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Inside-Out City

THE SOURCE: "Trading Places" by Alan Ehrenhalt, in *The New Republic*, Aug. 13, 2008.

REMEMBER THE BREATHLESS spate of news stories when the first few couples moved into converted department stores in downtowns across America about a decade ago? Debunkers of this trend have pointed out the minuscule numbers ever since. Even so, writes Alan Ehrenhalt, executive editor of *Governing* magazine, cities are truly undergoing a complicated and profound "demographic inversion."

Central cities are becoming lighter in hue and deeper in pockets. Atlanta

is shifting from an overwhelmingly black city to one where African Americans are teetering on the verge of minority status. Before September 11, 2001, about 25,000 people lived south of the World Trade Center in Manhattan. Now the same area is home to 50,000. Charlotte, North Carolina, has 12,000 people living downtown, and will have more when its supply of homes catches up with demand. Vancouver, British Columbia, houses 20 percent of its 600,000 residents in two square miles at the city's heart.

Chicago, "Hog Butcher for the World, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat," is becoming like 19th-century

Vienna, where the people who can afford it live close to the center, and the poor and newcomers live on the outskirts, writes Ehrenhalt of the city where his grandfather operated a tailor shop on the site of what is now the University of Illinois science complex. Not even assistant professors live near the campus now. Too expensive.

The demographic inversion doesn't represent the abandonment of the suburbs or a mass movement of inner-city immigrants fleeing inflated gas prices. Rather, "the massive outward migration of the affluent that characterized the second half of the 20th century is coming to an end," Ehrenhalt says. The deindustrialization of the city, with its consequent loss of jobs, also heralds the loss of the noise and grime that accompanied them. Random street violence, while beginning to increase, is not the spec-

EXCERPT

The Park's New Wildlife

Any crime you find in the big city you'll find here in [Kentucky's] Daniel Boone National Forest, but no big-city police officer gets the chance to deal with such a variety of offenses: assault, murder, rape, turkey baiting, timber theft, drug trafficking, body dumping, ginseng poaching,



Where the bodies, the ginseng, and the marijuana are buried.

looting of archaeological sites, DUIs and off-road vehicle violations, illegal camping, fishing and hunting out of season. Marijuana is grown on the mountain-sides in the southern half of the Daniel Boone, and every fall, especially at Halloween, the woods are set afire. With fewer and fewer wild places left, less and less "outdoors," many more Americans flock to the national forests, bringing their own ideas of "wilderness" with them.

—KATHY DOBIE, author of *The Only Girl in the Car* (2003), in *Harper's Magazine*, July 2008

ter it was in the 1980s. A striking "pro-city sensibility" has emerged. "The demographic changes that have taken place in America over the past generation—the increased propensity to remain single, the rise of cohabitation, the much later age at first marriage for those who do marry, the smaller size of families for those who

have children, and, at the other end, the rapidly growing number of healthy and active adults in their sixties, seventies, and eighties—have combined virtually all of the significant elements that make a demographic inversion not only possible but likely," Ehrenhalt concludes.

The leafy suburbs of today are

unlikely to become the slums of 2030, but may retrofit themselves with more town centers and sidewalks and street grids superimposed on strip mall landscapes. The friendly mom-and-pop grocer will not reappear, but within our big cities, Ehrenhalt writes, "we are groping toward the new communities of the 21st century."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Bogged Down Again

THE SOURCE: "America's Quagmire Mentality" by Dominic Tierney, in *Survival*, Winter 2007–08.

WHAT DO POST-CIVIL WAR Reconstruction and U.S. nation-building efforts in the Philippines, Cuba, Haiti, Somalia, Kosovo, and

now Afghanistan have in common? The average American prematurely branded them all quagmires.

Americans are predisposed to see failure in state-building efforts, writes Dominic Tierney, a political scientist at Swarthmore College. Almost as

soon as federal troops undertook Reconstruction in the South in 1865, Northerners began to lose heart over the slow rate of progress. Deciding by 1877 that the effort was a failure, they supported the troop withdrawals that would leave blacks to their fate.

Fast-forward to the second wave of nation-building, at the turn of the 20th century—in the Philippines, Cuba, Haiti, and elsewhere. In Manila, Mark Twain wrote, America blundered into "a mess, a quagmire

from which each fresh step renders the difficulty of extraction immensely greater." In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt promised to end the interventions.

After the Cold War, the United States launched another round of interventions, in Somalia, Haiti, and Kosovo. "In a now familiar pattern," Tierney writes, "Americans perceived every one of these missions as a failure."

Yet in the course of intervening in Somalia during 1992 and '93, the United States saved probably around 100,000 lives, halved the number of refugees, and repaired much of the infrastructure, at a cost of 43 American lives. Likewise, the U.S. force present in Haiti from 1994 to '96 reinstalled an elected government, mitigated suffering, halted the exodus of refugees, supervised elections, and trained police at a cost of four American lives. Even so, Somalia is considered a military disaster; Haiti, a failure.

The long newsreel of U.S. nation-building includes only one scene that the public applauds as successful—the reconstruction of Germany and Japan after World War II. The postwar exception to the quagmire axiom shows that Americans approve of nation-building only when the nation turns out looking a lot like the United States.

Vietnam appears to be a turning point in quagmire history. It evokes such negative memories that even oblique references skew polling results about nation-building. Responses were 15 percentage points more positive toward U.S. efforts in Somalia when the question contained no allusion to Vietnam than when it did. Most observers do not compare the

Americans today are inclined to seize a verdict of failure from the jaws of success.

results of recent nation-building efforts to the results in Vietnam, but, rather, look at basic information about a mission and "see failure analogous to Vietnam," Tierney says.

Rogue states, failed states, weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism are likely to require more nation-building in the future, according to Tierney, even as Americans today are inclined to seize a verdict of failure from the jaws of success. The best presidential strategy for the inevitable need to rebuild chaotic countries is to avoid grandiose claims, promote a long-term perspective, and fight back the tide of skepticism and disillusionment.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

And by the Way . . .

THE SOURCE: "Morning in Latin America: The Chance for a New Beginning" by Jorge G. Castañeda, in *Foreign Affairs*, Sept.–Oct. 2008.

IT IS A RARE PRESIDENTIAL election that isn't billed as the most important in memory, but 2008 has a real claim to the title. The new president will face two ongoing wars, a flagging economy, huge federal deficits, high oil prices, and all the issues surrounding global warming. Meanwhile, four big challenges on the minds of our neighbors to the south barely make the list: Cuba, immigra-

tion, trade, and a handful of "swash-buckling" nations with hard-left presidents and easy access to Venezuelan oil money.

Jorge G. Castañeda, the former Mexican foreign minister who now teaches at New York University, says that whoever succeeds the deeply unpopular George W. Bush will enjoy a honeymoon that he can use to ease strained hemispheric affairs. Cuban relations will move toward normalization if America seizes the initiative by lifting its embargo and dropping restrictions on travel and remittances. Better Cuban deportment can come later—if Cuba really wants to be part of the international community, it will need to deal with the confiscated property claims of Miami émigrés and such. Immigration reform can be enacted along the lines of the measures recently defeated in Congress if a new, more popular president with a genuine mandate makes it an early priority. Trade pacts can be extended and improved with the addition of labor and environmental protections.

Perhaps most touchy will be dealing with Latin America's "two Lefts." There is a "modern, democratic, globalized, and market-friendly Left, found in Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, parts of Central America, and up to a point, Peru," Castañeda says. Then there is a hard Left—a "retrograde, populist, authoritarian, statist, and anti-American Left thriving in Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, and, to a lesser extent, in Argentina, Colombia, and Paraguay."

The soft-Left countries, Castañeda writes, are reluctant to stand up to the hard liners and don't try to export their models of democracy. But the

hard-liners do—and it is entirely possible they can realize a version of Che Guevara's old dream of entangling America in not two or three but many Vietnams by creating not two or three but "many Venezuelas." The strategy is to win power by the ballot, conserve and concentrate it through constitutional changes, then create armed militias and monolithic parties. All of it can be financed by the Venezuelan national oil company, and it can be accompanied by social policies carried out by Cuban doctors, teachers, and instructors, and backed by Russian arms.

One of the reasons the soft-Left countries don't go toe to toe with allies of the Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez is that they "all are terrified of being left hanging by Washington," Castañeda says. America has let down its friends by reducing promised drug-fighting aid to Mexico, maintaining high tariffs against Brazilian ethanol, and (so far) failing to pass a trade agreement with Colombia, its "best friend in the hemisphere."

If the new American president seizes the initiative, Castañeda believes, he has a unique chance to leave "a greater mark on the hemispheric relationship than any group of leaders in generations."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

History Recharged

THE SOURCE: "Ending Tyranny: The Past and Future of an Idea" by John Lewis Gaddis, in *The American Interest*, Sept.–Oct. 2008.

FIVE YEARS AFTER HE ENUNCIATED the Truman Doctrine, which promised support for "free peoples

who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities," President Harry S. Truman left office with an approval rating of 26 percent. And the Monroe Doctrine, which put America off limits to further European colonization, largely languished until President James Polk dusted it off in 1845 to support Manifest Destiny. A hundred years from now, could a revived Bush Doctrine help guide U.S. foreign policy? John Lewis Gaddis of Yale, who has been called the dean of Cold War historians, doesn't rule it out.

Gaddis finds the kernel of the Bush Doctrine in a single sentence of President George W. Bush's second inaugural address in 2005. "It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." The ultimate goal—"ending tyranny in our world"—sounds noble enough. But what about promoting "the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture"?

Democracy is not for every Tom, Dick, and Somalia. It thrives only where security, stability, and the rule of law are established, Gaddis says. Even James Madison, America's fourth president and principal author of *The Federalist*, had his doubts about the form of government. Madison was almost assuredly thinking of Athens, which democratically botched the Peloponnesian War, and Rome, where corruption and violence made the populace toss democracy aside and leap into the arms of Caesar Augustus.

In the 21st century, the imposition of democracy has had a rocky history. Making it the cornerstone of U.S. policy suggests that America knows the

"answer to how people should live their lives," Gaddis writes. But the other half of the Bush Doctrine—ending tyranny—suggests "freeing them to find their own answers."

After the end of the Cold War left the United States the only superpower standing, its leaders became convinced that democracy had triumphed because it was the indispensable political path to success. But when the Bush administration tried to impose it on Iraq, the U.S. actions looked like a ploy to concentrate power in America's own hands.

In his inaugural address, Bush paid tribute to two forms of liberty: promoting democratic movements wherever they push up small green shoots from whatever improbable sand, and ending tyranny, period. In Iraq, Gaddis says, the United States tried the first without notable success. He hopes that the "tyranny" sentence from Bush's second inaugural heralds a return to the earlier notion of liberating people so they can solve their own problems. "But sometimes," he says, "a speech is just a speech."

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Fortified Diplomacy

THE SOURCE: "The Future of Diplomacy: Real Time or Real Estate?" by Jerrold D. Green, in *RAND Review*, Summer 2008.

CONSIDER BELGIUM, A COUNTRY the size of Maryland with 10 million people and some of the world's best food. It is home to no fewer than three magnificent American embassies and missions housing ambassadors and staff that represent U.S. interests in



America's new embassy in Iraq is a fortress made up of two dozen buildings covering 104 acres. Its cost has escalated from \$592 to \$736 million.

Belgium, NATO, and the European Union. In an era dominated by the Internet, cell phones, videoconferencing, and modern airline connections, writes Jerrold D. Green, president of the Pacific Council on International Policy, "policymakers need to reassess whether retaining many traditional in-country functions of embassies still makes sense."

Embassies such as the one to Belgium, a historic building on a busy underpass recently surrounded by a chainlink fence and a jumble of bollards and barricades, are "vulnerable, expensive, and cumbersome." They wall diplomats in secluded

safety zones rather than immersing them in local culture.

America will always need representatives stationed overseas to handle sensitive or specialized tasks and to understand the cultural, linguistic, political, and social factors that make each country different, Green says. The antiquated embassy-based model may not achieve that goal. Embassies are impediments to understanding local culture and costly to staff. Twenty-first-century overseas representation needs to be sharper and smarter—but diplomats need to get their mail delivered to the countries where they are stationed only when there is

sufficient value added. Could routine visa applications be moved offshore? Could experts fly in for meetings with local officials? Britain is already experimenting with "laptop diplomats," and other nations are asking foreign service staff to cover more than one country.

The new U.S. embassy in Iraq is roughly the size of Vatican City, with desk space for 1,000 workers behind blast-resistant walls. Baghdad, to be sure, is a special case. But the world is full of unique challenges to American diplomacy. To be effective, Green writes, embassies need to be integrators, not bunkers, as they are today.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The Long Tail Tale

THE SOURCE: Should You Invest in the Long Tail?" by Anita Elberse, in *Harvard Business Review*, July–Aug. 2008.

WIRED EDITOR CHRIS ANDERSON made a big splash in 2004 with his article (later a book)

touting the revolutionary coming of the "long tail." His thesis: that online companies such as Amazon and Rhapsody could cheaply market hard-to-find products such as offbeat song tracks or books, and the individual sales

from such niche products would stretch out in a "long tail" on a sales chart, eventually overtaking the high-volume sales of the bestsellers.

Anita Elberse, a professor at Harvard Business School, recently tested Anderson's idea. Looking at Rhapsody music "plays" over a three-month span (more than 32 million transactions), she found that "the top 10 percent of titles accounted for 78 percent of all plays, and the

top one percent of titles for 32 percent of all plays.” Although the numbers represent a much greater diversity of songs (since even one percent of a million is still 10,000) than might be available at, say, a typical Wal-Mart store, Elberse found that overall Rhapsody sales were still more densely clustered around the “head”—the more popular offerings—than the “tail.” The same pattern held when she looked at Quickflix, an Australian service that rents DVDs by mail: “Some 150 titles (roughly the number of movies released annually to theaters by major Hollywood studios) accounted for nearly a fifth of all rentals.”

Elberse and a colleague also looked at Nielsen reports about online music and video sales. They showed that “sales did shift measurably into the tail.” Sales of obscure DVDs increased, for example. But the overall revenue from such sales still showed that “an ever smaller set of top titles continues to account for a large chunk of the overall demand for music.”

Elberse also uncovered some familiar patterns, matching those described by William McPhee in the early 1960s in his book *Formal Theories of Mass Behavior*. McPhee had suggested that people who shop sparingly tend to gravitate toward popular products—no big surprise—but also that high-volume consumers were much more willing to explore obscure items. When Elberse looked at video rentals, for instance, she found that volume

renters (those averaging at least 50 rentals over six months) did dare to “venture into the tail” to select rarely rented titles. Tellingly, though, all the consumers rated the popular movies as more enjoyable than the obscure ones. “It is a myth,” Elberse says, “that obscure books, films, and songs are treasured.”

Even though the online world offers consumers astounding diversity, Elberse writes, it also opens “a flood of products all competing for consumers’ attention.” In such a volatile marketplace, it’s always going to be easier for better-known products to rise to the top, a truism illustrated by a decision Hyperion Books made in 2006 to back a new title trumpeting a red-hot Internet phenomenon: Chris Anderson’s *The Long Tail*.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The Graying of Kindergarten

THE SOURCE: “The Lengthening of Childhood” by David Deming and Susan Dynarski, in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Summer 2008.

KINDERGARTENERS ARE GETTING older and older, and it’s not good for the economy, write David Deming and Susan Dynarski of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. The age of children entering school has gradually risen since 1968, so that today one in every six fails to start classes in the traditional year of the child’s fifth birthday.

A major reason for the graying

of kindergarten is that states have raised the minimum age of enrollment. But this accounts for only a quarter of the change. The rest is the “redshirting” of youngsters intentionally kept out of school by at least some parents who expect them to grow bigger, smarter, and more competitive in the “arms race” for high school football and Harvard.

Educators often describe this extra year of school-free childhood as a “gift of time” that gives socially or educationally underdeveloped children a chance to mature. But it can also enable enterprising parents to position their offspring to be the oldest in the class, instead of just average. There is no evidence that seniority guarantees success in the long run, but in sports, studies have shown that children who make the elite soccer, hockey, swimming, and tennis teams are disproportionately born just after the age cutoff for those leagues, write the two public-policy scholars.

Having a few hefty nearly-seven-year-olds in a class of children who recently turned five can skew the curriculum of the class as teachers “raise their standards, resulting in lower relative performance and increased grade retention rates for children who enter school at the statutory age,” the authors say. Redshirting parents are more likely to be richer and better educated than those who enroll their children as soon as they are old enough to attend.

Postponing kindergarten intensifies inequality in American life, Deming and Dynarski con-

clude. It puts the average five-year-old at a disadvantage when compared to children who are 12 to 15 months older. It means that younger children may be labeled immature (and studies have shown that such children are consequently more likely to be judged learning disabled). It makes drop-out rates a bigger drag on the economy because teenagers who leave school as soon as the law lets them often have less education under their belts. It also depresses lifetime earnings by delaying entry into the labor market.

In the end, the increased number of senior kindergarteners has implications for that “third rail of American politics,” Social Security. Reduced labor force participation among millions of young workers is problematic when the fertility rate is falling and the baby boomers are retiring. Delayed students are delayed workers who pay one year less into the Social Security trust fund.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Beating the Market

THE SOURCE: “The Elusiveness of Investment Skill” by Robert A. Jaeger, in *The Journal of Wealth Management*, Fall 2008.

YOU’VE HEARD IT A MILLION times: Nobody can beat the stock market, so just stash your investment dollars in index mutual funds and settle for “the average return.” Behind that nostrum is the so-called efficient market

A denizen of the hedge fund world says that investment prowess is no more common there than elsewhere.

theory, which holds that stock prices already reflect all the available information about a company, making it impossible for anybody to get a leg up.

Efficient market theory no longer dominates the academic discipline of finance, says Robert A. Jaeger, senior market strategist at BNY Mellon Asset Management, but it has left a legacy: the notion that there is no such thing as a skilled investor, and no way to distinguish skill from luck. Not true, Jaeger argues.

Two strands of the theory challenge the notion of skill. One is the idea that “there are no free lunches”: No market inefficiencies exist that might enable investors to make money without taking risk. Risk, the argument goes, will always catch up with successful investors, reducing their returns to the norm. The second idea is that “nobody knows anything”: Investors can’t predict the future. But, Jaeger says, those who have skill as investors don’t exploit market inefficiencies or use vatic powers to see tomorrow’s stock market. They make “intelligent judgments about risk and reward.”

Paraphrasing billionaire speculator George Soros, he writes, “The question is not whether you’re right or wrong—it’s how much you make when you’re right and how much you lose when you’re wrong.”

Efficient market theorists believe that investors are totally rational. In fact, Jaeger says, they are driven by fear, greed, and a host of behavioral “biases.” But irrationality still doesn’t create free lunches or predictable prices. Even during bubbles and panics, which are prime moneymaking opportunities for savvy investors, there are no riskless profits and no way to forecast market turning points. Many hedge funds lost money “selling short” too early during the market bubble of the past few years, and many sovereign wealth funds lost money buying too early during the ensuing panic.

Although the stock market is unpredictable, efficient market theorists are wrong to claim that it is a “random walk,” Jaeger adds. Random events can’t be explained even after the fact, but market events can.

Theorists resort to the example of coin tosses to explain the success of the few investors who do manage consistently to outpace the market. Just as it’s possible to get 20 straight “heads” when tossing a coin, so it’s possible by sheer luck to beat the market 20 years running. But there’s another possibility, Jaeger points out. Maybe the coin is biased—weighted in such a way that heads is more likely to turn up. A successful investor’s performance

may likewise be “weighted” by skill.

None of this means you should rush to place bets on your favorite stocks and mutual funds. Skill is rare, according to Jaeger. He is himself a denizen of the hedge fund world (and a former professor of philosophy at Yale), and he says

that prowess is no more common there than elsewhere. Hedge fund managers have more freedom to exploit unusual investment strategies than other managers do, but that also gives them more ways to get into trouble. A bad stumble one year can erase several years of outsize returns. Most discouraging of

all, even a 20-year record of outstanding skilled performance is no guarantee of a good showing next year—winners can freeze up, overreach, or fail to adjust to changing conditions. As they warn in the mutual fund business, past performance is no guarantee of future results.

PRESS & MEDIA

Virtually Invisible

THE SOURCES: “Electronic Publication and the Narrowing of Science and Scholarship” by James A. Evans, in *Science*, July 18, 2008, and “Open Access Publishing, Article Downloads, and Citations: Randomised Controlled Trial” by Philip M. Davis, Bruce V. Lewenstein, Daniel H. Simon, James G. Booth, and Mathew J. L. Connolly, in *BMJ*, Aug. 9, 2008.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE INTERNET ushered in a rapid expansion of library holdings everywhere. Readers suddenly had access not only to what rested on the shelves, but also to countless books and journals from all over the world. It seemed only a matter of time before scholars took this abundance of resources and translated it into broader and more innovative research. But if you’re waiting for that day, don’t hold your breath, advises James A. Evans, a sociologist at the University of Chicago.

Unlikely as it may seem, Evans’s study of more than 30 million articles found that as journals go online, researchers actually see less of their contents. For every additional year of ar-

chives a journal makes electronically available at no charge, the number of distinct articles cited in other journals falls by 14 percent on average. Moreover, the articles that are cited tend to be more recent. In other words, if a journal puts more of its older issues online, the effect will be that the newer articles receive more citations—perhaps because scholars are less likely to thumb through the shelved volumes when a journal’s online archive is extensive. For every additional year a journal’s online archive goes back, citations to that journal will reference articles that are, on average, 10 months more recent.

Researchers looking at a journal online may type in a search term or two and find just the article they had in mind. But what they won’t find are the older articles whose content, though perhaps not directly related, complements their research in surprising ways. Scholars have typically un-

earthed those little gems by manually flipping through the older issues on the bookshelf. Evans writes that his study “ironically intimates that one of the chief values of print library research is poor indexing.” Researching online may be more efficient, but it narrows the window scholars look through.

In a separate study, researchers at Cornell University examined what happens when a journal article is available for free to the public compared to when a subscription is necessary to view it. Philip M. Davis and his team found that providing unfettered access to an article does not increase the quantity of citations it receives. However, they studied not just how often an article was cited but how often it was read, and articles that are available for free are read much more frequently than those requiring a subscription.

As citations converge on newer and fewer articles, scholarly consensus emerges much faster. But, Evans warns, the haste may prove costly. Articles and ideas that don’t become part of the consensus will soon be lost in the never-ending flood of research.

Archive password: INDIGO

HISTORY

Colonial Warming

THE SOURCE: “Warming the Poor and Growing Consumers: Fuel Philanthropy in the Early Republic’s Urban North” by Sean Patrick Adams, in *The Journal of American History*, June 2008.

THINK THE ENERGY CRISIS OF the 1970s was America’s first? Think again. So lacking in home heating fuel were settlers in Boston in 1637 that they considered abandoning the city.

Nor were the next decades well fueled. A century after the Boston crisis, Benjamin Franklin noted that “wood, our common fewel . . . must now be fetch’d near 100 miles to some towns.” And by the time the British torched the White House in 1814, the want of wood during the winter constituted a real emergency in many northern towns and cities, especially for the poor, writes Sean Patrick Adams, a historian at the University of Florida.

Firewood merchants shut down for weeks at a time when heavy snowfall blocked the roads and frozen rivers halted barge traffic. Prosperous individuals could stockpile fuel, but most urban residents bought wood on the spot market, and it disappeared when they needed it most. Civic and religious leaders founded fuel charities, but their supplies were limited and their outreach was targeted primarily

at the meritorious poor. The Society for the Prevention of Pauperism preached “sober, industrious, and economical” behavior in return for aid. Philadelphia’s Fuel Savings Society sold firewood at artificially low prices to poor depositors who planned ahead by contributing 12 cents a week during the summer. The Pennsylvania Hospital almshouse used a fuel crisis near the turn of the 19th century to demonstrate a new-fangled furnace that consumed only a third of the firewood required by the traditional open fireplace.

But the scarcity of firewood coincided with the development of a new industry starting in the early 1800s: coal. Coal had been trickling into American ports from Britain for some time, but the discovery of deposits of anthracite coal relatively close to some of the nation’s foremost cities brought new opportunities. Huge capital expenditures were laid out to dredge waterways and

America’s first energy crisis was in 1637, when a lack of wood almost forced early Boston settlers to abandon the city.

dig canals to get coal to market. And the need to pay off investors spurred the coal barons to ramp up marketing.

At first, consumers balked. Anthracite’s high ignition temperature made it hard to burn in the fireplaces of the time. Jokes abounded about merchants passing off rocks as fuel when they were fit only for paving roads and of anthracite being used to extinguish a fire in Philadelphia in 1803. Using state-of-the-art tools that stoked wood fires—the poker and bellows—simply quenched coal fires.

Once the industry infrastructure was in place, by the late 1820s, coal was cheaper than wood. But burning it required grates, which cost as much as \$60. Furthermore, coal worked best in furnaces, which cost up to \$200. What better way to broaden the market for coal than to demonstrate how beneficial it would be as a heat source for the homes of the poor?

Philanthropists once again stepped up, offering subsidized grates and cheap stoves. Coal took off in the 1840s, Adams writes, when it became relatively cheap, plentiful, and easy to burn in the heating units of ordinary houses. The energy crisis ended not when the fancy new furnace technology of the rich trickled down to the hearths of the workers, but by the equally effective, but less dramatic, provision of cheap loaner stoves to the poor by charities funded, in part, by the nation’s new energy magnates.

HISTORY

Medieval Protectionism

THE SOURCE: “The Rise of Hamburg as a Global Marketplace in the 17th Century: A Comparative Political Economy Perspective” by Erik Lindberg, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, July 2008.

ITS ANCIENT NAME MEANS “lovely,” and the German port city of Lübeck in 1400 was one of the glories of Europe and a leading merchant trading center. In that distant era, as Europe recovered from the devastation of the Black Plague, Lübeck and its neighbor, Hamburg, had roughly similar social, economic, and religious profiles, writes Erik Lindberg, a historian at Uppsala University in Sweden. They could have been twin cities: Lübeck connected to the Baltic Sea via the Trave River and Hamburg to the North Sea via the Elbe. Their divergent fates illustrate the perils of extreme protectionism.

At the dawn of the early modern period, the two cities veered in opposite political directions. In the face of increasing Baltic Sea competition from upstart traders from London and Amsterdam, Lübeck chose to protect its powerful landowners and leading merchant guild by prohibiting importers from selling copper, furs, and grain to anybody other than a Lübeck merchant. Hamburg, by contrast, encouraged trade with Dutch, Flemish, and English merchants, and even a score of Portuguese Jews were invited to move in.

The copper-trading capital of Northern Europe, Lübeck began in 1607 to rigorously enforce a 12th-century imperial privilege that allowed it to prohibit “transit” trade. Commodities coming from Sweden had to be resold and reloaded for transport down the 40-odd miles of the Stecknitz Canal and connected waterways to Hamburg for shipment to the Atlantic, or inland along the Elbe River. This “right of staple” medieval privilege was considered a cornerstone of the city’s wealth. It was rigorously guarded by the five or six aristocratic families who dominated the ruling council and the approximately 20 merchant families

The fortunes of Lübeck and Hamburg diverged, with the former fading into near insignificance and the latter becoming Europe’s third most important trading center.

that controlled trade. Growth in the number of burghers was severely restricted to protect the income of the incumbents. For nearly two centuries Lübeck’s social and political structure remained frozen as cities elsewhere in Europe changed and grew.

This was the period of the Reformation, and as it swept through German cities such as Lübeck, the elite managed to stay in power even as Catholic institutions were abolished. In Hamburg, however, the religious upheaval led to the passage of the “Long Ordinance” constitution in 1562, which guaranteed

merchants substantial clout in city affairs and thus ensured that medieval guilds would not feel obliged to maintain a united front against the aristocrats. Aspiring merchants established the Hamburg Exchange, a market that brought in foreign traders and opened up business opportunities.

The presence in Hamburg of so many “merchant strangers” with knowledge and important contacts generated a commercial infrastructure. With 17th-century Europe convulsed by the Dutch revolt against Spain, Philip II’s annexation of Portugal (with its accompanying threats to the country’s Jewish merchant families), and King Louis XIV’s expulsion of Protestants from France, the relative freedom of religion and commerce Hamburg offered attracted refugees and entrepreneurs. And when the English parliament passed the Navigation Acts in the mid-17th century to protect England’s national shipping from competition, Hamburg was given a lucrative exemption—a payoff for its earlier open door to London.

The fortunes of the two German cities diverged, with Lübeck fading into near insignificance and Hamburg becoming the third most important trading center on the continent. In the absence of reliable trade statistics and other business data, population serves as the best measure of relative economic development, Lindberg says. In 1400 Lübeck and Hamburg were approximately the same size, and by 1700 Lübeck was still a city of around 25,000. Hamburg’s population was roughly 75,000.

HISTORY

A Habsburg Plan for Brussels

THE SOURCE: "Empire by Devolution: What Today's EU Can Learn From Franz Josef I's Empire" by A. Wess Mitchell, in *Orbis*, Summer 2008.

FEW MODERN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS seem more counterintuitive than the unification of 27 states that not so long ago were fighting one another in two savage world wars. The European Union now features a single currency, open borders, and an array of common policies on everything from the proper size of tomatoes to noise pollution.

Remedies for some of the European Union's growing pains may lie in lessons learned from the Habsburg Empire.

The march toward unity, however, has found more than a few of its 27 divisions downright mutinous. As the leaders of the EU forge an "ever closer union," member states are fighting to preserve national vetoes and voters are demanding the right to hold referendums on a multitude of issues.

The answer for Europe, according to A. Wess Mitchell, re-

search director at the Center for European Policy Analysis in Washington, is to seize the political playbook from an imperial court more famous for its Lipizzaner horses than its achievements in governance—the Habsburgs. The jigsaw Austro-Hungarian Empire presided over by Emperor-King Franz Josef I from 1867 to 1916 embraced 14 language groups and 11 nationalities. Of its 51 million inhabitants, half were Slavs, a quarter Germans, and a quarter Magyars, with scattered Italians and Romanians. It was a pseudo-democratic monarchy that kept the peace for half a century, and it worked by devolution.



German emperor Wilhelm II congratulates Austro-Hungarian emperor Franz Josef I (left) in 1914, watched by the potentates of a soon-to-vanish world of small domains and fiefdoms, including Anhalt, Lippe, Schaumburg-Lippe, Hamburg, Bayern, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Württemberg, Baden, and Oldenburg.

After failing to adopt a centralized constitution, Franz Josef's imperial bureaucrats decided to save the empire not by tightening control over their fractious subjects but by loosening it. They gave Austria and Hungary separate parliaments, with unprecedented political autonomy. They established unique conditions for economic success by setting up a vast single market that allowed people to buy and sell with a single currency, travel on an unbroken network of roads and railways, conduct business across a grid of telegraph and mail lines, draw credit from a

common banking system, and invest under the umbrella of universally recognized laws. They let the two "halves" of their empire make their own domestic and fiscal policies. The enterprise fell apart only when the Czechs and Slavs demanded similar political power and the emperor tried instead to tighten up.

Brussels should learn two lessons from Vienna, Mitchell writes. First, "a multinational union's chances of success increase in inverse proportion to its determination to concentrate political power at the center." Second, Bill Clinton had it right

when he rested his election campaign strategy on the notion that "it's the economy, stupid." Give primacy to economic integration.

America, too, can learn a Habzburg lesson: Don't push—or appear to push—the European states toward more unification than their own citizens are ready for, and cultivate countries willing to work with Washington on a bilateral basis rather than pursue a top-down strategy. The new member states of Central Europe have common interests with the United States. A smart superpower works with the little guys.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Conservative Complicity

THE SOURCE: "Civil Rights and the Conservative Movement" by William Voegeli, in *Claremont Review of Books*, Summer 2008.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR., THE influential conservative thinker who died in February at the age of 82, opposed every milestone achievement of the civil rights movement. He denounced the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* when it was handed down, opposed the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and belittled the 1964 Civil Rights Act as a marginal federal effort to "instruct small merchants in the Deep South on how they may conduct their business."

Yet Buckley was not himself a

bigot, commentators wrote upon his death, but merely either blind or indifferent to bigotry around him. Discrimination simply failed to engage him or many other conservatives in the 1950s and '60s as a struggle of "great moral urgency," writes William Voegeli, a visiting scholar at Claremont-McKenna College. The choice between shrink-

Conservative William F. Buckley Jr. opposed every milestone achievement of the civil rights movement, but he was no bigot.

ing Big Government and defeating communism on the one hand and ending entrenched and periodically brutal racial discrimination on the other wasn't a close call: Discrimination was regrettable, but governmental expansion was worse. Buckley hoped that attitudes would change incrementally in response to social rather than political pressures. "There is no way of knowing whether that train, running on those tracks, would have ever come into the station," Voegeli writes.

Buckley and the conservatives for whom he spoke wound up on the wrong side of history, and they allowed the conservative philosophy to be painted as a ruse designed to perpetuate racial inequality. Conservatives opposed to racial discrimination "had few obvious ways to act on that belief without abandoning their long twilight struggle to recon- fine the federal government within its historically defined riverbanks

after the New Deal had demolished all the levees,” Voegeli writes. But they didn’t look particularly hard for alternatives, either. Buckley eventually recanted, saying that his view that America could evolve its way out of Jim Crow was wrong. His own opinion had changed over time, however, and by 2004 he said flatly, “Federal intervention was necessary.”

Conservatives’ complicity in segregation during the early years of the civil rights movement made it easy for liberals to dismiss all their subsequent arguments against busing, affirmative action, and hiring goals and timetables. By drawing a line in the sand and then eventually conceding that it had been politically and morally indefensible, conservatives lost standing to affect the course of the debate. When faced with what they saw as the constitutionally reckless approach of the civil rights movement to ending segregation, these conservatives

shrugged their shoulders and proposed waiting until the segregationists got religion. By letting the best be the enemy of the good, Voegeli argues, conservatives “squandered the opportunity to fashion a constitutionally principled argument in favor of either augmenting the federal government’s powers so they were equal to the task of ending Jim Crow, or activating latent powers afforded by the Constitution that were not being brought to bear against segregation.”

By drawing the line in an indefensible place, conservatives ceded the high ground to those who insisted there should be no lines whatsoever—those willing to embrace any expansion of government that might further racial justice. “Liberals came to grief over civil rights because they had no stopping point,” Voegeli concludes, “while conservatives came to grief because they had no starting point.”

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Will Evangelicals Hail Mary?

THE SOURCE: “Evangelicals and Mary” by Tim Perry, in *Theology Today*, July 2008.

STARTING WITH THEIR OPPOSITION to abortion access, Catholics and evangelical Christians have a lot in common politically. But they still differ dramatically in their theology and everyday worship practices, and that is nowhere more apparent than in their reverence for Mary, the mother of Jesus. Among Catholics, the role of the Virgin has traditionally been central, among evangelicals, almost nonexistent. Now evangelicals are rediscovering Mary, writes Tim Perry, who teaches theology at Providence College and Seminary in Manitoba, for reasons both devotional and theological.

The near-universal veneration of Mary became a casualty of the

EXCERPT

End of the Mainline

America was Methodist, once upon a time—Methodist, or Baptist, or Presbyterian, or Congregationalist, or Episcopalian. . . . In truth, all the talk, from the 18th century on, of the United States as a religious nation was really just a make-nice way of saying it was a Christian nation—and even to call it a Christian nation was usually just a soft and ecumenical attempt to gloss over the obvious fact that the United States was, at its root, a Protestant nation. . . .

The denominations were often engaged in what

later generations would scorn as narrow sectarian debates. . . . Perhaps precisely because they were aimed inward, the Protestant churches were able to radiate outward, giving a characteristic shape to the nation: the centrality of families, the pattern of marriages and funerals, the vague but widespread patriotism, the strong localism, and the ongoing sense of some providential purpose at work in the existence of the United States.

Which makes it all the stranger that, somewhere around 1975, the main stream of Protestantism ran dry. . . . The great confluence of Protestantism has dwindled to a trickle over the past 30 years, and the Great Church of America has come to an end.

—JOSEPH BOTTUM, editor of *First Things*, Aug.–Sept. 2008

Reformation. As Protestant leaders rebelled against the sacramental and clerical system of the established Catholic church, Mary was almost written out of their version of Christianity, to be mentioned only at Christmas, if at all. Even the Dutch reform-minded humanist Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), no pushover for theological orthodoxy, thought that under the Reformation “not only have the abuses stopped, so has appropriate devotion.”

Evangelical preachers have long been wary of upholding Mary as

exemplary or symbolic for fear that they would be seen as too sympathetic to Catholicism, Perry writes. Now that is beginning to change among writers and theologians. Some are responding to genuine Catholic ecumenical overtures, and others have developed renewed interest in studying early church writings to understand the Bible without drawing too heavily on the “zeitgeist of contemporary Western culture,” Perry says.

Some of the emerging dialogue between Catholics and evangelicals over Mary became possible because

of a new receptivity resulting from what has been called the “ecumenism of the trenches,” Perry writes. Shared concerns over *Roe v. Wade* and “further ethical challenges posed by developments in biotechnology, embryology, and gerontology” have fostered alliances that previously did not exist. Moreover, he contends, evangelicals’ commitment to ecumenism regarding Mary is not optional, but rather “a gospel imperative.” Evangelicals must acknowledge a certain special status for Mary because, quite simply, the Bible does.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The Arrow of Time

THE SOURCE: “Does Time Run Backward in Other Universes?” by Sean M. Carroll, in *Scientific American*, June 2008.

THE MYSTERIES OF BLACK holes and supernovas notwithstanding, the universe on the whole is a law-abiding place. From galaxies of stars to the tiny particles that constitute atoms, objects interact with each other according to rules that scientists think they understand. But one aspect of the universe has them baffled. That component is time.

There is a satisfying symmetry to the physical universe. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction; for every negatively charged electron there is (presumably, somewhere) a positively charged positron. But time marches

on in only one direction. One way of looking at this idea is that it is the stuff of the *Back to the Future* movies: It’s fun to think about traveling to the past, but you can’t actually do it. And entropy—randomness or disorder—tends to increase with time. That’s the second law of thermodynamics. So the universe has been steadily growing more disorderly. When you add milk to your coffee, the milk spreads randomly throughout the cup; it doesn’t spontaneously separate into a layer on top. Humpty Dumpty didn’t suddenly reassemble himself; not even all the king’s horses and all the king’s men could put him together again.

But why should time go in only one direction? If the universe is otherwise symmetrical, what’s so

special about time? Sean M. Carroll, a senior research associate in physics at the California Institute of Technology, offers one possibility: Maybe, just maybe, ours is not the only universe there is. Maybe a big bang of the sort that is thought to have given birth to our universe happens every now and then. And maybe the arrow of time points in our direction (that is, toward the “future”) in half the universes and in the opposite direction (toward the “past”) in the other half. What if “we see only a tiny patch of the big picture, and this larger arena is fully time symmetric?” Carroll asks.

Not to worry, he says. In a universe in which the “past” was the “future,” people wouldn’t be born old and die as infants. In the confines of their universe, everything would proceed as in ours. It is only when they compared their universe to ours that anything would seem unusual. And each universe would be entirely separate and unknowable to denizens

of the other. Carroll can probably never be proved right or wrong. Regardless, the fact that milk spreads randomly through your coffee is another way of saying that time is always going in one direction, at least in this universe. In Carroll's formulation, it takes the existence of a parallel universe to preserve the symmetry of time, and the evidence comes from something no more elaborate than a cuppa joe.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

What Is 'Natural'?

THE SOURCE: "Confessions of an Entomological Hit Man" by Jeffrey A. Lockwood and Alexandre V. Latchininsky, in *Conservation Magazine*, July–Sept. 2008.

WHEN MASTER EXTERMINATORS Jeffrey A. Lockwood and Alexandre V. Latchininsky were summoned to the remote Hawaiian island of Nihoa in 2006 to wipe out the invading gray bird grasshopper, they expected a straight pest management job. Two years earlier the insect had nearly denuded Nihoa, which lacks both fresh water and topsoil. The grasshopper, an interloper from Venezuela, had devoured 90 percent of the tiny volcanic island's vegetation in a matter of months.

But Lockwood and Latchininsky landed smack in the middle of philosophical debates over the meaning of "native"

and how aggressively to restore ecological "balance" when a newcomer arrives and decimates the local habitat. By the time the exterminators, who also teach at the University of Wyoming, arrived, Nihoa was again "impressively verdant." All the native herbivores appeared to be doing well despite enduring a period of scorched-earth conditions, and the Nihoa millerbird, a species once on the edge of extinction, was thriving on a new grasshopper diet.

Hawaiian conservationists still insisted on turning the clock back to before 1977, when, they believed, the grasshoppers had stowed away on a freighter, ridden favorable winds to Nihoa, and lain low for a quarter-century waiting for the perfect combination of drought and heat to create the right conditions for them to multiply wildly and ravage their adopted paradise. But how far back should the clock be turned? At some point nearly every

living thing on the 155-acre volcanic rock had also arrived as an immigrant. "Eliminating the grasshopper would presumably return Nihoa to an earlier state," Lockwood and Latchininsky write, but which previous era was truly natural? When Nihoa was a steaming hunk of lifeless lava?

Ecologists focus on maintaining the integrity and stability of an environment, but the authors recognized an additional consideration that had come into play on Nihoa. The gray bird grasshopper was put on the hit list in part because it was considered biological litter; "offensive trash because of its cultural, religious, and literary associations with plagues and starvation." The decision to eliminate it had a subjective element—the grasshopper was an odious species and deserved to go.

Lockwood and Latchininsky offered the grasshoppers poison-laced entrées of peanut butter and honey with molasses, but the pests rejected both; only innocent ants succumbed. Unable to come up with an alternative without intolerable collateral damage, the authors declined the contract.

Back at the University of Wyoming, where Lockwood teaches writing and philosophy and Latchininsky entomology, they drew a moral from their adventure: "The natural world will, given enough time, do just fine whether or not we tinker with all this preserving, restoring, and reclaiming."

EXCERPT

A Short Proposal

We could solve virtually all of our environmental problems through the simple expedient of genetically engineering human beings to be four inches tall. Four-inch-tall people would consume fewer of the world's resources, ensuring sustainable development for the benefit of our tiny descendants living thousands or even millions of years in the future.

—ERIC POSNER, University of Chicago law professor, in *Convictions*, a blog on legal issues published on *Slate*, June 1, 2008

ARTS & LETTERS

What's American About American Art?

THE SOURCE: "The Clarity of Things" by John Updike, in *The New York Review of Books*, June 26, 2008.

WHEN IT COMES TO MAPPING the visible world, American artists tend to stay faithful in some essential way to the concrete reality of the things they paint, says Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist John Updike. He sees defining examples of this American "bias toward the empirical" in the work of the Boston-born titans John Singleton Copley (1738–1815) and Winslow Homer (1836–1910).

Working in isolation from the European art world in colonial Boston, Copley developed a portrait style that represented his subjects plainly and without flattery while rendering their clothes and other material objects with magical detail. In 1765, when Copley submitted a portrait of his half-brother Henry Pelham, *Boy With a Squirrel*, to the annual exhibition of the Society of Artists in London, Benjamin West, an American master of the English style, wrote to inform him that the London art world recognized Copley's raw talent but found his painting too "liney."

Art critic Barbara Novak suggested at a 1966 Copley retrospective that this liney sensibility stemmed from a "conceptual bias" rooted in

Puritanism. The great preacher Jonathan Edwards had stressed "the clarity of 'things'" as "manifestations God makes of Himself in His works." The material world is a reflection of God himself, and, in the minds of Copley and other American painters, capturing its reality is their essential task. Lines deliver the facts of an image and create a world that is not conceptual or illusory, but lavishly literal.

By 1776, Copley was living in London, where he embraced the romantic "theatricality" of the English style, illustrating the contrast between the American and European visions.

In his most famous picture from this period, *The Death of Major Peirson* (1783), there is but a single drop of blood on the felled man.

Working a century after Copley, Winslow Homer sought to observe and imitate the world around him, as surely as Copley did but through different means. If Copley was "liney," then Homer was

"painterly," ending his career as the "wettest of artists," dabbling in watercolors and applying "palette-knife slatherings of raw white" to canvases of wild seascapes. He endeavored to paint the subjects of his work just as they lived in nature. A frothy wave would not become a tame, thin coat of paint in Homer's hands, but a layer filled with impasto scribbles, dashes, and loops.

Updike sees this opposition between "lininess" and painterliness throughout the history of American art, down to Roy Lichtenstein, with his sharp-edged pop art, and Andy Warhol, the devoted colorist. Yet all of these artists were committed to the clarity of things, according to Updike. "All, it might be said, employ highly personal techniques to confront the viewer with something vitally actual, beyond illusion."



Boy With a Squirrel (1765), by John Singleton Copley

ARTS & LETTERS

Paris's New Look

THE SOURCE: "Looming Debate" by Véronique Vienne, in *Metropolis*, June 2008.

GREAT CITIES DON'T STAY THAT way by standing pat, and Paris is no exception. But existing regulations limit building heights in the center of the City of Light to 82 feet, and they relax to just 121 feet near the *périph*, the 22-mile-long concrete beltway that, Véronique Vienne says, "chokes the 41-square-mile capital inside city limits that have been set in stone for more than 150 years." With many of the six million people who live in the Paris metropolitan area commuting daily from homes beyond the *périph*, pressure has been growing on the city proper to provide more housing, and at affordable prices. The only place to go is up.

Since 2000, when architect Yves Lion proposed building 20-to-40-story towers in a no man's land at the edge of the beltway, a building height debate has raged in the city. The most prominent figure in this debate, says Vienne, an author of many books on art and architecture, is the city's popular mayor, Bertrand Delanoë. A "prominent Socialist and a likely candidate in the next presidential election," Delanoë has "imposed on private developers the same time-consuming competition-and-jury review procedure foisted on public projects." In the city center, the measure has encouraged builders to renovate and recondition older buildings rather than replace them with new ones, and the height restrictions have remained in place.

According to Vienne, there are

two reasons for the Paris height restrictions, one physical, one cultural. The City of Light is "built atop a city of shadows . . . laid over a subterranean limestone quarry, its huge system of ancient tunnels weakening the ground." But Parisians are "an unruly bunch," and the city's most typical architectural form is "not the mansard roofline or the Haussmann façade but the barricade." Parisians like low structures.

Delanoë has also undertaken to "blur the line separating affluent Parisians from their often less privileged neighbors," most of whom live beyond the *périph*. As part of this effort, the city is building a concrete canopy over sections of the beltway to buffer noise and reduce pollution but also to "create a series of attractive meeting grounds over the dividing line." The mayor has also enticed prominent architects, such as Christian de Portzamparc, to design low-income housing near the city's edge.

Many aspects of Delanoë's vision are not popular, especially among the more affluent, Vienne says. Some sneer at innovations such as self-service citywide bike rentals and dedicated bus lanes to ease commuter congestion. Many would like to see Paris undertake buildings on a grander scale, as has become common practice in Barcelona, Berlin, and other European cities. But some local architects, such as Antoine Grumback, are "very happy that Paris is not a design museum" and that Delanoë has, for the most part, eschewed blockbuster public buildings. As long as he is mayor, the city is likely to avoid the spectacular and focus on creating a more livable urbanity, Vienne says. Delanoë

"knows that living well is the most effective business incentive and the reason everyone wants to come to Paris."

ARTS & LETTERS

Mesopotamian Treasures

THE SOURCE: "Archaeological Sites in South Iraq Have Not Been Looted, Say Experts" by Martin Bailey, in *The Art Newspaper*, July 1, 2008.

RARELY HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE been so mistaken about a country as have been wrong on Iraq: Wrong about weapons of mass destruction. Wrong about mobile weapons labs. Wrong about the plundering of the National Museum. And now, wrong again about the ongoing destruction of the nation's most celebrated archaeological sites.

An international team of archaeologists helicoptered into eight of the country's ancient settlements this past June to check out reports of illegal digging. They found exactly zero evidence of looting, writes Martin Bailey, a correspondent for *The Art Newspaper*. Touching down for visits of between 40 minutes and two hours per excavation, they failed to find "a single recent dig hole." The archaeologists picked the sites to visit, surveyed the terrain, and were allowed to move freely around the areas under the armed protection of British guards.

The threat of looting was no small one. Among the excavations, the Iraq experts visited Ur, reputed birthplace of the Biblical patriarch Abraham, site of the best-preserved ancient ziggurat and location of a royal graveyard replete with gold and silver. They checked out Eridu, which contains 18

levels of building, the first possibly antedating the great flood recounted in ancient religious texts, and the last built a few years after the likely invention of writing. And they landed in Ubaid, cradle of a culture that thrived from about 5000 to 4000 BC, and Lagash, the original abode of some of the most spectacular artifacts now in the Louvre in Paris.

The experts toured only in the south, and visited only a tiny fraction of Iraq's thousands of archaeological

sites. They did find some damage. The worst instances were a dozen trenches dug in the mound at Ubaid by Saddam Hussein's forces in 2003 to disguise tanks and armored personnel carriers. The archaeologists also spied a few paper food wrappers that American troops had left behind at Tell el Lahm, and they found that the landscape of Ur had been marred by large numbers of troops tramping over the site in desert boots.

The team leader, John Curtis of

the British Museum's Middle East department, told Bailey that greater damage may have been forestalled by several watchtowers built with Italian assistance in 2003, roving police teams, and the continuing vigilance of local guards. Perhaps equally important was economics. With art dealers and customs inspectors around the world on the lookout for the contents of the National Museum, the international market for Mesopotamian antiquities has almost dried up.

OTHER NATIONS

The Battle of the Caspian Sea

THE SOURCES: "The Caspian Sea: Rivalry and Cooperation" by Mahmoud Ghafouri, in *Middle East Policy*, Summer 2008, and "The Iraq War, Turkey, and Renewed Caspian Energy Prospects" by Paul A. Williams and Ali Tekin, in *The Middle East Journal*, Summer 2008.

THE WELLHEAD OF THE OIL INDUSTRY in 1900 was not the Middle East but the Caspian Sea. Half of the world's oil came from Baku, Azerbaijan, where "liquid black gold" brought wealth in the 19th century and war in the 20th. In 1942, the German Army was lunging for Caspian oil when Hitler launched the Battle of Stalingrad, which cost as many as two million Soviet and German lives.

The area still contains one of the world's largest reservoirs of oil and natural gas, most of it beneath the 640-mile-long Caspian seabed. About 90 feet below sea level and

less than 16 feet deep in much of its northern basin, the Caspian is an icy, stormy body of water. Development has been hindered because the five riparian nations, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, can't agree, among other things, on whether it is a lake or a sea.

As a sea, it would be subject to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which allows states to extend mineral claims to the edge of their continental shelves. If the Caspian were a lake, the seabed could be divided up, with

The wellhead of the oil industry in 1900 was not the Middle East but the Caspian Sea.

Kazakhstan claiming the largest portion because of its longer coastline. Russia and Iran, whose predecessor states agreed that the Caspian would be a Soviet-Iranian sea, no longer share that view. Russia—worried about Western petroleum giants muscling in on its oil flanks—is looking out for itself and some of its former Soviet republics. Iran, with the shortest coastline, wants mineral resources to be prorated, like the costs in a condominium building, or doled out equally, 20 percent to each state.

Such differences are blocking the full development of oil resources just as potential returns are growing more lucrative. The region now produces roughly 2.3 million barrels of oil a day, and it has reserves that may be as great as 257 billion barrels. Development, however, will need unanimous consent, asserts Mahmoud Ghafouri, an assistant professor at Shahid Bahonar University in Kerman, Iran. And before the "Caspian five" nations can truly capitalize on their reserves, the poisonous relationship between Iran and the

United States must be repaired. The “second oil rush in the Caspian” requires pipelines or other pathways to get the oil to market, and the Western firms with the easiest access to capital are denied some of the most viable routes—through Iran—by U.S.-Iranian enmity.

Iran’s loss has been Turkey’s gain. The Iraq war, instead of opening floodgates of Iraqi oil, initially did the opposite, providing an unforeseen boost to Caspian oil. Pipeline projects that skirt both Russia and Iran attracted more interest with each uptick in oil’s price. Turkish oil and gas transport projects that seemed far-fetched in the 1990s have proven successful, and new ones have gotten increased impetus, write Paul A. Williams and Ali Tekin, professors at Bilkent University in Ankara. As the three recently independent Caspian states stand poised to become major players in the world economy because of their energy reserves, Turkey, the area’s energy have-not nation, has already benefited from increased energy transit fees and better access to oil for its own economy.

Ghafari concludes that the lure of oil wealth can go a long way toward promoting international cooperation in the Caspian. After years of rivalry in the Persian Gulf region, the joint development of offshore oil and natural gas resources is under way. And if the states in the volatile Persian Gulf can swallow their differences in the interest of making money, can the Caspian be far behind?

OTHER NATIONS

Ability Grouping

THE SOURCE: “Why Children Work, Attend School, or Stay Idle: The Roles of Ability and Household Wealth” by Marigee P. Bacolod and Priya Ranjan, in *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, July 2008.

THE SPECTER OF A 10-YEAR-OLD hauling bricks or stirring a vat of boiling liquid is far from eradicated in the developing world, where the International Labor Organization estimates that 218 million children are working at least part time instead of concentrating on school. But the reality of child labor is much more nuanced than such images suggest, according to new research by Marigee P. Bacolod and Priya Ranjan, economists at the University of California, Irvine. Poor children are not always consigned to work. New research from Cebu City in the Philippines shows that a significant percentage of children who are not in school are simply idle.

One of the main differences between children who go to school and those who don’t is academic ability. Children with high IQs—but with parents in the bottom third of the income scale—are nearly as likely to attend school (88 percent) as those from the most affluent third (89 percent), according to a study of 3,000 children in randomly selected Cebu City districts. Asked why their offspring were not in class, parents were most likely to respond that their children had “no interest” (36 percent). Even within the same poor family, children with high ability

were more likely to attend school than their less able brothers and sisters. Clearly, Bacolod and Ranjan say, some parents faced with paying the costs of education for children with low ability decide not to send them to work but to allow them to stay home. More than one in every 10 children in the study went to school and worked at the same time.

Richer families were more likely than poor ones to send their children with lower IQs to school. And parents were also more likely to dispatch their young of all ability levels to school if the facilities were better—judged by the presence of electricity, running water, toilets, and a usable blackboard.

An outright ban on child labor, which is often proposed as a solution to the horrors of the brick-yards and tanning factories, may have a perverse effect, according to the researchers. Parents who now send children to school while they are also working may respond to such a ban by pulling them out of school entirely and choosing the option of idleness.

OTHER NATIONS

India’s Sick Democracy

THE SOURCE: “India’s Parliament as a Representative Institution” by Jessica S. Wallack, in *India Review*, April–June 2008.

THE RECENT DEBATE OVER THE Indian-American nuclear cooperation agreement didn’t do a lot for the bottom-feeder image of the Indian parliament. Chanting, raging legislators heckled speakers and stormed

the well, members of parliament who had been jailed for murder were let out to vote, and a hospitalized lawmaker was wheeled in on a gurney. Three members of the main opposition, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), interrupted a Communist opponent in midspeech, waving wads of rupees they said were a down payment on a \$2.1 million bribe that the BJP members said they had been offered by the camp of the ruling Congress party to vote for the deal. On July 22 the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament, finally ended months of suspense by handing the government a slender victory, 275 to 256. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh squeaked out a vote of confidence to keep him in power until he can run again next May.

The Indian public blames the average parliamentarian—in 2004, one-quarter of the legislators had criminal backgrounds—for the sham-

bles that is the Parliament of India, writes Jessica S. Wallack, the director of the Center for Development Finance in Chennai, India. But the dysfunction of the legislative branch goes deeper than the presence of a few murderers and thugs. Some of the problems are embedded in the structure of the institution.

The symptoms of failure read like a political-science disaster checkoff: Budgets pass in a flash; deliberations barely occur. Absenteeism is rife, disruptions frequent, and policy research rare. The bureaucracy must make policy (because the parliament can't agree) even as it is subject to the tyranny of being transferred around the country by legislative fiat. Judicial activism has kept the government functioning, but legislative failures are so great that two Supreme Court justices recently wrote that the public is fast losing faith even in the courts.

The problem is fundamental, Wal-

lack writes: "India's parliamentary procedures stand out among parliaments around the world in the limitations they place on most members' ability to represent their constituents in the normal course of debate or policymaking." Average members have little or no chance to ask questions, introduce bills, propose amendments, participate in meaningful debate, or disagree with their party. "Coalition members' powers to dissent are limited to the 'nuclear option' of bringing down the government." There is no intermediate way to work out disagreements.

The main hope for change is the rise in political competition. With small parties nipping at the heels of the long-dominant Congress party and the BJP, Indian leaders may eventually decide that if they don't fix the fundamental parliamentary rules, they may find themselves on the outside looking in.



Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh (standing, center) tries to speak as members of the lower house of the Indian parliament shout bribery allegations.

Also in this issue:

James McGrath
Morris on Jacob Riis

Charles Barber on
American therapy

Geoff Manaugh on
philosophy and the city

Hew Strachan on
civilian deaths in war

Renuka Rayasam
on love in the New India

Evelin Sullivan on
weighing our fears

David Lindley on
Einstein's failings

T. R. Reid on the
Mountain Meadows Massacre

CURRENT BOOKS

REVIEWS OF NEW AND NOTEWORTHY NONFICTION

The Great African Hope

Reviewed by G. Pascal Zachary

EVEN THE MOST ARDENT ADVOCATE FOR democracy must admit that elections in Africa are messy, prone to fraud, and often merely a prelude to violence. In January, Kenya exploded after reports of vote tampering cast doubt on the results of a presidential election. Robert Mugabe, tyrant of Zimbabwe, has made a mockery of his country's elections. In Cameroon, Paul Biya, already in power for a quarter-century, wants the chance to rig one more election.

These are but three recent instances of electoral failure in sub-Saharan Africa. Though popular dissent and political mobilization are increasing in much of the region, national elections often embarrass liberal democrats. Most informed observers remain persuaded that Africa suffers from too little democracy. But on a continent where many people are poor, might other forms of government promote the kind of development that would lift more Africans out of poverty more quickly? Should international aid donors and well-wishers re-examine their insistence on liberal democracy?

Many African leaders, of course, already question the appropriateness of American-style democratic institutions for their

countries. They openly admire the "soft authoritarian" leaders of Asia for combining nationalist feeling and tight political controls with impressive national economic growth.

In Africa, Rwandan president Paul Kagame is widely regarded as the continent's foremost enlightened autocrat. A former rebel leader who helped to end the 1994 genocide against his minority Tutsi ethnic group, Kagame has, through equal measures of personal rectitude and political repression, brought stability to his mountainous country in central Africa. His rule provides the clearest test case in Africa of whether an enlightened authoritarianism can produce better results than liberal democracy.

That question animates an intelligent new book on Kagame and Rwanda, *A Thousand Hills*, by Stephen Kinzer, a former *New York Times* correspondent and distinguished writer on international affairs. Kinzer views Kagame as the embodiment of

A THOUSAND HILLS:

Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It.

By Stephen Kinzer.
Wiley. 380 pp. \$25.95

WHEN THINGS FELL APART:

State Failure in Late-Century Africa.

By Robert H. Bates.
Cambridge Univ. Press. 216 pp.
\$60, \$19.99 paper

the new Rwanda, and his book is as much a biography of the president as an account of the country's trials. Kagame is in many ways easy to admire. He is hard on government ministers who commit improprieties, and he drives his own children to school and attends their sports events—unusual displays of attention by an African father.

But the inevitable weakness of Kinzer's approach is that Kagame is treated *too* sympathetically. Interspersed throughout the narrative are long quotes from Kinzer's interviews with Kagame, self-serving monologues that contain no revelations and scant candor, at best merely

repeating views

Kagame has expressed elsewhere over the past decade.

Kinzer depicts Kagame as a sober and effective political leader of unusual vision and discipline, but concedes that he is

controversial. Impatient with critics and unwilling to listen even to his supporters, Kagame is effectively a dictator. He models himself after Lee Kwan Yew, the stern leader whose uncanny grasp of economic affairs catapulted Singapore into global prominence and prosperity after he helped the city-state achieve independence in 1959.

Kagame hopes to lead Rwanda on a similar path, though ethnic tensions remain a major obstacle to progress. Only 51 years old, the Rwandan president plans to stand for reelection in 2010 and is likely to rule until at least 2017. When I visited last year, I found Kagame—and the Tutsi elites who control the country's government machinery—devoted to a convenient and durable fiction. Ethnic groups, they say, no longer exist in Rwanda; to speak of ethnicity even in a constructive way is to invite government repression and accusations of disloyalty. Kinzer himself notes that ethnic consciousness is the "strongest" of the "taboos in today's Rwanda." Yet in private, Tutsi leaders implicitly keep alive their own eth-

nic identity by insisting, "Never again." Post-ethnicity is an effective tactic rather than a heartfelt ideal.

The prime directive of the new Rwanda—and Kagame's strongman rule—is to avoid another genocide. Tutsi security is more important than justice or economic growth. In this sense, Rwanda is following the path of Israel, another nation founded in the aftermath of genocide. In Kagame's mind, Rwanda is a kind of African Israel that deserves the world's sympathy and support even while its political leaders repress critics at home—and tell carping outsiders to shove it as well. Because foreigners abandoned Rwanda's Tutsis in 1994, Kagame feels justified in tuning them out today whenever he sees fit (notwithstanding the generous foreign aid flowing to Rwanda). He is especially dismissive of human rights critics and democracy advocates who often accurately identify abuses in Rwandan society. Kagame's position is accepted, indeed admired in some quarters both at home and abroad, for the simple reason that genocide lends moral credibility—and an outsized sense of entitlement—to the guardians of the victims.

Kinzer is strangely reticent on whether Kagame, the chief African beneficiary of what might be called a "holocaust dividend," is investing the proceeds wisely. A lot rides on the question. If Kagame can foster rapid economic growth in Rwanda, then his brand of authoritarian politics may deserve wider support. But if he cannot, he risks becoming simply another geriatric African president willing to risk the ruin of his country rather than retire.

Kinzer seems unfamiliar with the main economic currents in sub-Saharan Africa, confining most of his book to politicking. After decades of promoting industrialization as the means of economic salvation, most forward-looking Africans today recognize that agriculture holds the key to poverty reduction and national wealth. Countries as diverse as Kenya and Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia, depend heavily for their prosperity on the growth of commercial agriculture, including

The prime directive of the new Rwanda—and Paul Kagame's strongman rule—is to avoid another genocide.



President Paul Kagame used a strong hand to unite Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. Can that same hand guide Rwanda to economic success?

both export-oriented agribusiness and energized subsistence farmers who are growing additional crops for the markets.

Kagame, unfortunately, remains relatively uninterested in farming. He prefers the delicious dream of jump-starting a world-class Rwandan knowledge industry built on services such as consulting, telephone call centers, and information technology. Working against him are Rwanda's lack of skilled labor, a weak educational system, and paltry investment by world-class corporations. Kagame also enthuses about processing and packaging local farm products for shipment to Europe and the Middle East. The problem is that Rwanda doesn't have adequate production volumes to compete with much larger African neighbors that grow the same crops, hold better geographic positions, and have a substantial lead in the marketplace. If you factor out large aid flows and remittances by Rwandans living outside Africa, it's arguable whether the country's economy is even growing.

In need of a breakthrough, Kagame might do better to embrace biotechnology in order to

quickly and dramatically increase the productivity of Rwanda's farmers. As political scientist Robert Paarlberg recently argued in *Starved for Science* (2008), African governments are losing big by not doing so. They have caved in to pressure, exerted chiefly by European environmentalists, to ban genetically modified organisms—plants that are engineered to produce higher yields or to resist pests and diseases.

Kagame's near-total authority in Rwanda makes possible radical shifts in policy—the sort of stuff made legendary in Mahathir Mohamad's Malaysia and Lee's Singapore. Rwanda's small farmers—80 percent of the population—would benefit enormously. His failure to pursue biotech casts doubt on his flair for economic improvisation.

Robert Bates's *When Things Fell Apart* raises more serious doubts. Bates, a professor of government at Harvard, reviews the failures of African governments over the past few decades, demonstrating a strong link between the push for democratization and the failure of governments to deliver the goods. "Electoral competition and state failure go together," he

shrewdly observes, noting that in numerous African countries—Rwanda among them—where democratic reforms threatened established regimes, political disorder resulted. Certainly in Kagame's view, three and a half decades of majority rule appear to have led inexorably to genocide. Bates's argument, however, is nuanced. He suggests that repression may prevent disorder—and thus deliver Africans physical security—but without delivering prosperity. "Poverty," he concludes, "becomes the price of security."

Kinzer breathlessly presents Kagame as capable of leading an economic transformation, and of being the one great hope of Africa. Pulling Rwanda out of poverty, he says, is Kagame's "obsession." But good intentions are not enough.

Kinzer writes: "The reason Africa remains so far behind the developed world is not simply bad leadership. It is also because the challenges facing African countries are overwhelming. Uniting deeply divided societies and radically changing the mentality of entire populations are immensely difficult. Rwanda is an indigent society, crippled by generations of misrule. Turning it into a happy, stable, prosperous place is a task of Herculean dimensions."

That task is not Kagame's alone. The saga of his country—and of Africa—is a staggering work in progress.

G. PASCAL ZACHARY frequently writes about African affairs and is a former foreign correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*. His memoir, *Married to Africa*, is forthcoming in January.

Married to the Muse

Reviewed by Kate Christensen

THE LIBRARY OF ART HISTORY IS RIFE WITH biographies of The Artist—whomever he might be—as a young, middle-aged, old, and immortal man. But rarely does a book deal primarily with the woman he painted over and over, the ordinary model-wife whose face an artist immortalized in paint or bronze. Rarer still is the book that focuses on three such women and reveals them as biographical subjects in their own right.

Hidden in the Shadow of the Master is Ruth Butler's masterfully researched examination of the lives of Hortense Fiquet, Camille Doncieux, and Rose Beuret, the three women who modeled for, bore sons to, lived in poverty with, and eventually married three of the towering artistic geniuses of their time: Paul Cézanne, Claude Monet, and Auguste Rodin, respectively. All were ordinary girls plucked from the streets of Paris by their future husbands, hand-picked, apparently, with an eye toward muse-dom. Though they figure prominently in their

husbands' paintings and sculptures, beyond these evocations of their changing expressions, modes of dress, settings, and periods of life, little of substance was known about any of them before now.

Butler argues convincingly that her subjects are important to the history of art, and not for their faces and figures alone. At the turn of the 20th century, traditional artistic subjects, taken from myth, the Bible, and history, were giving way to a more quotidian, social, realistic mode. That Cézanne, Monet, and Rodin chose as their models the women they lived with was a revolutionary shift: The domestic and aesthetic became connected in an entirely new way. "These women," Butler writes, "weren't just models; they brought a whole spectrum of feelings with them, giving their husbands' art emo-

HIDDEN IN THE SHADOW OF THE MASTER:

The Model-Wives of Cézanne, Monet, and Rodin.

By Ruth Butler.
Yale Univ. Press.
354 pp. \$35

tional texture and substance, contributing elements for art as important as the light in which a scene is bathed, the space where an object sits, or movements that provide real character in a scene or to a figure.”

Butler, a professor emerita at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and the author of a biography of Rodin, re-creates these muses from a female, modern-day standpoint, so that we can feel, viscerally, looking at the paintings and sculptures of them, what it must have been like to keep house for their men, to live with them day in and



Madame Cézanne in the Conservatory (1891), by Paul Cézanne

day out, to contend with their moods, egos, and great gifts. The lives of both husband and wife were, in each case, inextricably intertwined and yet fraught with inequality.

The odd, curiously detached alliance between Hortense Fiquet and Paul Cézanne began sometime in 1869 and lasted until his death in 1906. Cézanne’s model-wife, “a sometimes handsome, sometimes plain, brunette with large dark eyes,” was of lowly birth and 11 years his junior. She

was also talkative and opinionated, and she spent too much money. The “blunt, graceless, balding” Cézanne, who generally feared women and disliked being touched, was fond enough of the young Fiquet to risk his income, which he received from his father and which was contingent on his remaining single, to live with her in secrecy. He also concealed the birth of their son Paul, but it wasn’t long before his parents discovered the existence of his household and reduced his allowance by half, thus creating a life of peripatetic poverty for the small family. (One advantage of using Fiquet as a model must have been that her services cost Cézanne nothing.)

Most of Cézanne’s friends disliked Fiquet. She was apparently frank to the point of insulting regarding his work. Matisse recounted to a friend that Fiquet once told him, “You know Cézanne did not really know what he was doing. He didn’t know how to finish his paintings. Renoir, Monet, they really knew their métier as painters.” Art critic Roger Fry described her, in 1925, as a “sour-looking bitch.”

Butler does not join that chorus. “Everyone who knew Hortense spoke of her gregarious nature, her love of conversation,” Butler writes, and sitting for at least 27 portraits, having to be still and quiet for so many hours on end, must have been difficult work, even if she could not always adequately appreciate the results. “Having invested so much of herself in these images, it’s worthwhile wondering how Hortense saw them,” Butler adds. “From what little we know, she did not see them very well. But then, there was only a small coterie of people who could really ‘see’ Cézanne’s work in the 19th century.”

In spite of Butler’s efforts to round out her subject, Fiquet “remains a puzzle.” There is not enough information recorded about her for a biographer or reader to feel a strong, clear, complex sense of who she was apart from her husband. In lieu of her own defin-

itive appraisal of Fiquet, Butler cites their long artistic collaboration as proof of the strong feelings they had for each other. “These two people counted for each other.”

Camille Doncieux and Claude Monet likely met in Batignolles, a Paris neighborhood where many young artists lived, when Doncieux was a teenager. “It’s not hard to imagine the slender, dark-haired Camille Doncieux doing her errands in these streets, catching the eye of Claude Monet on one of his forays to the café,” Butler conjectures. “He would surely have noted her bearing, the way she walked, the way she made every item of dress look stylish and fine.”



Camille Monet (1872), by Claude Monet

Where Fiquet “brought solidity and patience” to Cézanne’s work, “young Camille Doncieux brought a sense of style and an instinctive taste for feminine elegance to the painting of Claude Monet.” In his review of the Salon of 1859 art exhibition, Butler observes, Charles Baudelaire urged that the

costumes, coiffures, and gestures of the “contemporary woman” were bracingly modern subjects in painting. This was what Monet wanted to capture in his *Déjeuner sur l’herbe* (1865–66), in which five beautifully dressed women—three of whom Doncieux modeled for, Butler posits—enjoy an idyll in the woods with six young men and a servant. (This work should not be confused with Édouard Manet’s 1863 painting of the same name, in which the principal female model is nude.) The grace of Doncieux’s elegantly draped body, not her face, is the focus of Monet’s portraits of her.

Unlike Fiquet and Cézanne, Doncieux and Monet were happy together, despite severe money troubles. She bore him a son, Jean, at 20. During their time in Bennecourt, a placid hamlet on the Seine, Monet painted Doncieux’s portrait as she sat on the riverbank. Butler, scrutinizing the painting, delivers a beautiful description of the artist-muse relationship when she asks “whether Camille sensed that her own place in the scene was less that of an actress, as before, and more that of observer and anchor.”

When Doncieux was 23, they married. Rumor has it that Monet wed her for her dowry of 12,000 francs. But what part did love play? “From all evidence Camille Doncieux was a lovable charmer—a favorite amongst Monet’s friends,” Butler writes. Her husband “both used and ill-used” her, but “he adored his son, and he certainly loved her.” For Doncieux, “the marriage was the ultimate promise. No matter how frequent his absences, she would not be abandoned.”

But neither was she to enjoy a stable or predictable existence. The very next year, 1871, found her posing for a painting called *Repose*, clearly depressed and lonely in a dreary London flat, slumped on a chaise longue. Less than four years later, however, the Monets were the owners of a house in Paris, thanks to an upswing in Claude’s painting career. After her terrible death in 1879 fol-

lowing a protracted illness, Monet painted one of his most beautiful portraits of her, *Camille on Her Deathbed*. In her shroud, she looks almost like a bride asleep.

Butler's empathetic imagination is especially incisive in her treatment of Rose Beuret, an uneducated girl from the hinterlands who was working as a seamstress in a factory when Rodin hired her to sit for him. She was tiny and strong, and, as the model for the bust *Mignon* (c. 1864–65), fiercely beautiful, with high cheekbones, her gaze direct and alive.

Rodin admired her "physical vigor and her firm flesh of a peasant's daughter, she had that lively, frank, definite, masculine charm that augments the beauty of a woman's body."

She quickly bore him a son, after which the family moved to Montmartre, where Beuret posed and oversaw Rodin's studio. Both of them worked extremely hard. Nothing is known of her inner life; she could barely write. But the letters Rodin wrote her whenever they were separated were passionate, tender, and filled with longing. By the time she was in her late twenties she had aged a good deal, or so we can surmise from a portrait Rodin painted of her; it has always been known as *The Mother of the Artist*. However, Butler's case that the model was his wife is vividly convincing. Butler chronicles the physical changes the painting illustrated, then adds that Rodin "focused on a singular quality of Rose that remained part of her character all her life—her intensity and her passion."

Beuret in her early old age had a famously bad temper, failing health, and a morbidly shy

personality. She remained devoted to Rodin, even during their separations and his love affairs. At the end of their lives, they lived in a villa in Meudon, southwest of Paris. Rodin was a celebrated genius, and Beuret was a furtive, strange old woman who organized dinners and lurked about the property in old clothes.

Rodin and Beuret finally married in 1917, when Beuret was 72. Butler's account of the period leading up to their wedding is the most touching passage in the book.

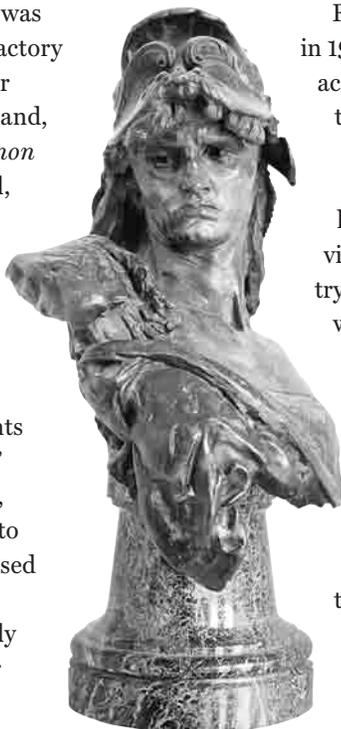
Rose was sick; Rodin was exhausted. They had no money. The villa was in a shambles. The country was at war. They wrote their wills. In the cold winter of 1916–17,

Rodin borrowed the money to buy her a gold ring. About two weeks after their January 29 wedding, Beuret died of pneumonia; when Rodin died later that year, he was buried next to her in their garden. The image of their two bodies lying forever side by side is a fitting metaphor for the complex partnerships this unusual book lays bare.

Hidden in the Shadow of the Master illuminates without softening or mitigation the similar ways in which all three women suffered immensely

because of their affiliations with men of artistic genius. So many of the things women hoped to gain in those days by marrying were closed off to them: legitimacy, security, social status. But as this book makes amply evident, these women's lives, no matter how difficult, painful, or uncertain, were never boring. Butler has shown that the silent muse is a compelling subject in her own right.

KATE CHRISTENSEN is the author of four novels, the most recent of which, *The Great Man* (2007), won the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction.



Bellona (1879), by Auguste Rodin (model, Rose Beuret)

HISTORY

Poverty of the Imagination

Reviewed by James McGrath Morris

MORE THAN A CENTURY HAS passed since the publication of *How the Other Half Lives*, Jacob Riis's portrait of poverty that shamed America. The effect of the book, which is still in print, was as profound as that of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Yet until now, Riis has been without a decent biography.

The Other Half is a comprehensive account of the Danish immigrant who became the Tocqueville of America's underclass. Using material passed over by others, such as Riis's diaries, written in Danish

THE OTHER HALF:

The Life of Jacob Riis and the World of Immigrant America.

By Tom Buk-Swienty.
Translated by Annette Buk-Swienty. Norton.
331 pp. \$27.95

and gathering dust in the New York Public Library, Tom Buk-Swienty amply portrays Riis's storybook life and his role in publicizing the horrors of Gilded Age poverty.

Born in a small town in Denmark in 1849, Riis made his way to the United States in 1870 after failing to win the hand of a local beauty. Remarkably, and Hollywood-like, Riis found financial success in the United States, after much hardship, and got the girl six years later.

It was as a New York City police reporter that Riis began the work for which he would become known. Few, if any, reporters possessed the temerity of Riis, who made it a habit to wander the streets and alleys of the Lower East Side, especially at night. It was almost as if a new and dangerous frontier were opening in the burgeoning urban landscape of America just as the fabled one in the West was closing. And, like an industrial-age Meriwether Lewis, Riis explored it.



As a young man, Jacob Riis left his native Denmark to escape a broken heart, and found his calling as a journalist who published exposés of the horrific conditions in which New York City's poor lived. He took this photograph around 1889 in a Ludlow Street sweatshop.

For a decade, he worked to awaken his readers to the privation that lay in the dozen square miles of dilapidated tenements only a few blocks from the city's prosperous avenues. Riis wrote about children dying from epidemic outbreaks of diphtheria, sleeping men falling to their deaths from roofs where they had sought refuge at night from the stifling summer heat, blind beggars living in hovels, and armies of tramps moving through the streets. But his dramatic newspaper accounts failed to stir the public to act.

In the late 1880s, technology offered Riis a new way to reach his audience. Armed with a hand-held camera and a revolutionary flash powder, he retraced his journeys through the Lower East Side. The photographs with which he returned have since become iconic images known to all, from schoolchildren thumbing through textbooks to scholars of American history. By combining graphic representations of poverty with anecdotal tales that humanized the victims and were buttressed with "scientific" statistics, Riis established a new kind of American journalism. The emotionally powerful formula, well suited to the emerging mass media, stoked newspaper circulations and fanned the flames of reform.

At the time, permanent poverty was an unthinkable social ill in the United States. Many in the comfortable classes believed that the worst poverty was confined to a few newcomers who would eventually join the middle class through hard work and frugality, as generations before had done. Those who remained poor did so because of their own failings. Riis's work brought this Jericho Wall of smug reasoning tumbling down. After the publication of *How the Other Half Lives* in 1890, it became broadly accepted that the poor were victims of circumstances, an idea that laid the groundwork for 20th-century efforts to combat poverty.

In this biography, Buk-Swienty, a Danish journalist, chronicles Riis's rise from poor immigrant to famous muckraker. But in doing so, the author condenses the remaining third of his subject's life to a scant 40 pages, implying that Riis rode off into the sunset like a Lone Ranger of social justice whose work was done. In fact, the remaining years until

his death in 1914 were productive: Riis wrote a dozen more books and finally possessed the power and influence—with friends such as Theodore Roosevelt—to make headway in ending the poverty he recorded.

This part of Riis's saga is as important as his rise, for it reveals the limits of muckraking. Riis managed to change some housing laws and raze some of the worst tenements, but beyond those small victories, he found it was one thing to provoke shame in his adopted land but another to bring about true and lasting social change.

JAMES McGRATH MORRIS, the author of *The Rose Man of Sing Sing* (2003) and *Jailhouse Journalism* (1998), is at work on a biography of Joseph Pulitzer. He edits the monthly newsletter *The Biographer's Craft*.

America on the Couch

Reviewed by Charles Barber

PSYCHOTHERAPY HAS BEEN A series of generally well-intentioned attempts to throw mud against a wall to see what sticks. Over the past century, that method has told us this: Psychotherapy works. Two-thirds of patients improve within six months of starting treatment

(longer treatment yields few further results). The therapist's training and the school or philosophy of therapy in use make little difference. What does matter is the empathy level the patient perceives in the therapist, the patient's willingness to engage in therapy, the severity of the patient's illness to begin with, and the appropriateness of match, or treatment alliance, between patient and practitioner.

The pursuit of therapy—if not happiness—is a largely American phenomenon, Jonathan Engel tells us in *American Therapy*. By the 1960s, the United States had more clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric social workers than the rest of the world combined. "The history of psychotherapy in the United States . . . is a classic American tale of discovery, entrepreneurship, and self-promotion," writes Engel, a professor of health care policy and management at Baruch College.

For it was in America, in the early 1900s, that

AMERICAN THERAPY:
The Rise of
Psychotherapy in
the United States.

By Jonathan Engel.
Gotham. 352 pp. \$27.50

Freudianism and psychoanalysis took hold as nowhere else (despite Sigmund Freud's personal antipathy toward the United States). A therapeutic parade has followed: behaviorism (which views human beings as stimulus-response machines in which only observable, measurable behavior matters); humanistic approaches (which focus on social relationships as the key to wellness); cognitive therapy (which posits that thinking and beliefs drive our behavior and emotions); populist self-help programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous; the largely 1960s-vintage therapies such as electroshock, transcendental meditation, and primal scream (the latter favored, briefly, by John Lennon and Yoko Ono); and so on.

There appears to be some truth to the notion that sick souls have a particular insight into what can make us well.

Engel writes, but does not write enough, about the characters who invented these various approaches. These doctors and visionaries were typically brilliant—and many were famously troubled. The humanist Harry Stack Sullivan (whom novelist Walker Percy called perhaps America's greatest psychiatrist), for example, championed the importance of social relations, but was alcoholic, depressed, and misanthropic. There does appear to be some truth to the notion that sick souls, such as the great early psychologist William James, have a particular insight into what can make us well. (Among the exceptions is midwesterner William Menninger, hugely influential in raising psychiatry's profile and credibility during and after World War II, who appears to have been a particularly sanguine character.)

Psychotherapy's progress did not come without much confusion and excess, and even cruelty—lobotomies, excessive use of electroshock therapy, and charlatanry. A 1970s study by the California State Psychological Association found that more than five percent of male psychologists had had sex with female patients, some claiming that intercourse was a bona fide

therapeutic technique. Today, such excesses have diminished. In recent decades, the profession for the first time has exposed itself to the light of day by objectively examining its actual clinical outcomes, producing what could be called a rational approach to psychotherapy. Good therapists these days are schooled in a variety of techniques and can deploy, with a fair degree of certainty, the appropriate approach for the individual patient.

American Therapy is a thoroughly researched and elegantly organized survey of therapy on America's historical landscape. It is a commendable effort and would make a fine ancillary text for introductory psychology courses. But therein lies the problem. Engel's assertion that the rise of psychotherapy is a uniquely American story—one that suits our nation's varying sensibilities of optimism, pragmatism, and reinvention—is absolutely true. Each school of therapy has reflected the particular preoccupations of the era in which it was invented: Behaviorism and cognitive approaches came of age in the rational 1950s, self-help and self-exploratory journeys in the trippy '60s, self-esteem interventions in the battered '70s. Since the '80s, we have seen the rise of approaches (and psychiatric medications, that new adjunct of—or replacement for—psychotherapy) designed to help us function in increasingly competitive economic times. Engel's narrative does not do justice to the fascinating dialectic (or the stimulus-response, if you will) between our exterior and interior landscapes.

But Engel does show that throughout this long, strange trip, psychotherapy has truly mattered in America. Has it served as an antidote to American individualism? Have we used it to refute F. Scott Fitzgerald's assertion that there are no second acts in American lives? Who knows. What we can conclude from *American Therapy* is a truth more universal than it is American: There has always been something unutterably and mysteriously healing about the unburdening of one's soul to another person.

CHARLES BARBER, a lecturer in psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine, is the author of *Comfortably Numb: How Psychiatry Is Medicating a Nation*, published earlier this year, and *Songs From the Black Chair: A Memoir of Mental Interiors* (2005).

ARTS & LETTERS

Mind and Matter

Reviewed by Geoff Manaugh

THAT EACH CITY MIGHT HAVE a particular psychological effect on its inhabitants, or that the very act of living in cities might entail its own brand of cognition, is not an original claim. Such lines of thinking have formed a thriving undercurrent in European thought for at least the past two centuries. Where Mark Kingwell tries to break new ground in *Concrete Reveries*, however, is in applying historical texts, from Walter Benjamin and René Descartes to Sigmund Freud and the novels of J. G. Ballard, to problems of contemporary city planning, including Chinese Olympic architecture and skyscraper design. In a book heavy on philosophy, Kingwell discusses boundaries, thresholds, and the multivalent borders that divide inside from out. He looks at how spatialization affects—and is affected by—historically specific styles of thinking.

Can a city be the material realization of an era of thought—and can cities retroactively inspire certain states of what Kingwell, a professor of philosophy at the University of Toronto, calls “consciousness”? The word choice here is not ideal; whereas a term such as “subjectivity” might have better communicated the changing, socially defined nature of thought, “consciousness” carries far too much baggage for use in a rigorous analysis. It becomes merely another word for the soul, and is, ironically, a holdover from another era of thought.

Kingwell’s basic line of inquiry is nonetheless exciting. When a building is added to—or, as in the case of the World Trade Center’s twin towers, violently removed from—the urban landscape, “how is your experience, and mine, altered by this new place”? Kingwell proposes a radical possibility here: that urban experience, as the “shared horizon” of humanity, can itself be politicized. In other words, what could be considered a private, internal experience—Kingwell’s “consciousness”—can be

CONCRETE REVERIES:
Consciousness
and the City.

By Mark Kingwell.
Viking. 292 pp. \$24.95

reconceived as a public event subject to political regulation, even to historic preservation. What would it mean to preserve somehow an era’s prevailing mode of thought—and is this perhaps what architecture has been doing all along? Rather than pursue these questions, which are seemingly the ultimate example of how difficult it can be to draw clean lines between inside and out, Kingwell steps away into a discussion of Descartes’ 17th-century ideas about individual self-perception.

As this example shows, Kingwell’s citations—the texts with which he aligns himself—often get in the way of the book’s promise. In fact, David Hume, Hannah Arendt, Jacques Derrida, Paul Virilio—all of the thinkers Kingwell calls upon—overshadow important questions at the heart of *Concrete Reveries*. Still, it is these questions that make the book worthwhile.

How *does* the built environment affect what Kingwell calls consciousness? In his examination of New York City’s Grand Central Station, for instance, he finds the possibility of an “expansive individualism” that exceeds the promises of more explicitly political monuments such as the Statue of Liberty. In Grand Central, Kingwell writes, “*movement is everything*”; it is a Romantic space that both inspires and enables a particularly American way of being. Nodes such as these within cities—New York, Shanghai, Berlin, Vancouver—deserve their own psychological catalog, their own social narrative, their own historical accounting. Pursued rigorously, this approach could offer revolutionary insights.

The irony, though, is that a book striving toward analytic radicalism comes across as remarkably well behaved. At moments it is tempting to pull Kingwell aside and assure him that many of the historical texts he trots out are relevant only insofar as scholars continue, unnecessarily, to quote them. Kingwell would have done himself a favor by sticking to the thoughts of Mark Kingwell—an original thinker with provocative ideas that, in the future, we must hope he will have the courage to explore.

Geoff Manaugh is senior editor of *Dwell* magazine; his blog, BLDGBLOG, can be found at bldgblog.blogspot.com. *The BLDGBLOG Book* is forthcoming next spring.

Bulletins from Immortality

Reviewed by Stephanie E. Schlaifer

IT WAS EMILY DICKINSON who initiated the correspondence, in 1862, sending Thomas Wentworth Higginson four poems and a brief query, "Are you too deeply occupied to say if my Verse is alive?" In *White Heat*, Brenda Wineapple explores the quarter-century relationship of Dickinson, the prolific and famously eccentric poet, and Higginson, a minister, political activist, and gentleman-of-all-trades. The book, Wineapple declares, is neither biography nor literary criticism, but an effort "to throw a small, considered beam onto the lifework of these two unusual, seemingly incompatible friends."

Wineapple illuminates the oft-neglected life of Higginson (1823–1911), who served during the Civil War as a colonel in the first Union regiment composed entirely of former slaves, was an avid contributor to *The Atlantic Monthly* (which published his article of advice to writers, "Letter to a Young Contributor," prompting Dickinson's first letter), and oversaw the posthumous publication of Dickinson's poems. But a greater portion of the book is devoted to Dickinson (1830–86), known as much for her reclusive behavior and her penchant for all-white garb as for her pithy verse with its signature long dashes and hymnal rhyme and meter. About her, there will likely always be more questions than answers.

Though they both lived in New England, the pair met only twice during their 25-year corres-

WHITE HEAT:

The Friendship of Emily Dickinson and Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

By Brenda Wineapple.
Knopf. 416 pp. \$27.95



Gentleman-of-all-trades Thomas Wentworth Higginson and poet Emily Dickinson corresponded for 25 years, but met in person only twice.

pondence. The first meeting, in 1870, evidently left Higginson so drained that he confessed to his disapproving wife, "I am glad not to live near her." They had been discussing poetry when Dickinson declared, "If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know *that* is poetry. . . . Is there any other way?"

Dickinson pressed Higginson many times to visit her again after a second meeting three years later, but he acquiesced only at her passing, when he attended her funeral. He once wrote to her, "I have the greatest desire to see you, always feeling that if I could once take you by the hand I might be something to you; but till then you only enshroud yourself in this fiery mist & I cannot reach you, but only rejoice in the rare sparkles of light."

Without explanation, Wineapple gives us only brief excerpts from the two's

epistolary exchange, and

this is a disappointment. Most of Higginson's letters to Dickinson were destroyed or lost.

But many of Dickinson's letters survive. (What is most remarkable about them is how similar the prose is to her poems—she seems not to have

been able to keep from expressing herself in meter and rhyme.) Still, through the bits of correspondence we are afforded, Wineapple shows us a central conceit of this complicated relationship: Dickinson often presented herself as pupil to Higginson's master or "preceptor"—a flirtatious ruse they both seemed tacitly to acknowledge and enjoy. If Dickinson habitually ignored Higginson's *suggestions* for her verse, he certainly influenced her. Wineapple includes a number of poems clearly prompted by essays, stories, and poems Higginson was publishing.

Dickinson's impassioned exchanges were not restricted to Higginson, and the book is most

engaging when exploring the handful of other close relationships Dickinson maintained—with her sister Lavinia (Vinnie), the exuberant writer Helen Hunt Jackson, and her sister-in-law Sue, the only person with whom Dickinson shared more of her poems than Higginson. Each of her carefully chosen companions served a distinct function in her life and after.

Dickinson instructed Vinnie to burn her papers upon her death, which she did. Emily evidently had said nothing about her poems, which were kept separately from the papers. Upon discovering these, Vinnie, Higginson, and the devil-may-care socialite and writer Mabel Loomis Todd set about publishing Dickinson's poems at last. It appears that Todd was responsible for the transcription of Dickinson's poems and the unforgivable liberties taken in editing them.

Todd is also remembered for her not-so-clandestine affair with Austin Dickinson, Emily's brother. Most of the book's true heat derives from the account of this affair—a juicy respite from *White Heat's* more serious literary thrust—one I admit I enjoyed.

STEPHANIE E. SCHLAIFER is a poet and editor based in St. Louis. Her work has appeared in *Fence*, *Delmar*, *elevenbulls*, and elsewhere.

CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

Victims of War

Reviewed by Hew Strachan

DURING THE 20TH CENTURY, Alexander B. Downes tells us, between 43 and 54 million noncombatants died as a result of war. However shocking, it is a statement without precision.

As he acknowledges, we have no firm bead on the civilian death toll in Iraq, let alone in the many conflicts of sub-Saharan Africa. The military losses of World War I are known to the nearest million, the civilian losses not even to so general an estimate. And how are we to define a combatant? Downes decides to treat the terms “noncom-

batant” and “civilian” interchangeably, though a few military personnel, such as doctors, are non-combatants, and many civilians are combatants.

Neither point contradicts the basic premise of Downes's book, that civilians have been targeted in modern interstate wars, and that this has been a problem of increasing international concern. Downes, a political scientist at Duke, argues that the pressure to target civilians has arisen in two types of war: those of territorial annexation, in which enemy civilians are displaced or killed to make way for settlers, and wars of attrition, in which desperation drives even (or particularly) democracies to target civilians in order to coerce the enemy to surrender. In Downes's view, the types of regime engaged in the war are not significant, nor is either military culture or the racial identity of the enemy.

Downes is a reductionist, anxious to seek a single set of explanations for a complex phenomenon.

He develops four principal case studies: the blockade of Germany in World War I, the strategic bombing of Japan (but not of Germany) in World War II, the conflict of 1947–49 associated with the founding of Israel, and the South African War of 1899–1902. In the latter conflict, the British decision to collect Boer families in “concentration” camps was less innovative than first appearances suggest. Though colonial annexation relied on assimilation more than ethnic cleansing, these wars still targeted the indigenous populations, because these populations sustained their warriors in the field. When the British invaded Zululand in 1879, they destroyed its agricultural base and sacked its capital, Ulundi: Women and children were not exempt from the consequences of that offensive, though Downes appears to believe they were.

The legacy of colonial warfare is an important strand in the argument about the origins of 20th-century “total war.” The British again waged economic warfare when they blockaded the Central

Desperation drives even democracies to target civilians in order to coerce the enemy to surrender.

**TARGETING
CIVILIANS IN WAR.**

By Alexander B.
Downes. Cornell Univ.
Press. 315 pp. \$29.95

Powers in World War I. Downes is forgiving if civilian deaths were caused unintentionally, for example by the sanctions imposed on Iraq in the 1990s. Though he does not acknowledge it, many of the consequences of Britain's blockade were also indirect and unanticipated. Downes attributes the fall in German food production solely to the effects of the blockade, overlooking the role the Germans themselves played in diverting agricultural labor to wartime mobilization efforts, mismanaging food distribution, and failing to understand the market. He ascribes all German excess civilian deaths, due especially to tuberculosis, to malnutrition. Finally, Downes concludes that the blockade contributed to the German decision to seek an armistice in 1918, though the choice was made by the German high command in response to the military situation.

Fortunately, most will read this book not for what it has to say about Germany, but for its argument that, at least until 1970, a democracy was as likely to target civilians as was any other type of regime (including the Nazis'), particularly in protracted wars. Downes is on surer ground when he examines the U.S. bombing of Japan during 1944–45 and the wars fought in 1947–49 during Israel's founding, both of which buttress his conclusion that domestic norms against the killing of civilians are, at best, secondary considerations in explaining how democracies choose to fight.

But there is a case for saying that—at least in the two world wars—regime type was a more important factor than Downes allows. British propaganda in World War I drew a distinction between the German people and the Kaiser. The logic of the blockade was that starvation might provoke revolution, and so effect a change in government. Believing that this was what had happened in 1918, the Allies hoped for the same effects when they bombed Germany in 1944. Hitler proved them wrong. Nonetheless, similar arguments were voiced in advance of the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Democracies have targeted civilians at least in part because they believe in the power of the people to overthrow tyrannical governments.

Finally, Downes needs to consider what makes a democracy fight a protracted war. As he rightly observes, no sensible democratic leader will knowingly undertake a long, bloody, and indecisive conflict. In the first half of the 20th century, democracies fought long wars because they saw themselves as defending core values, and so both military and moral imperatives justified breaching the principle of noncombatant immunity.

HEW STRACHAN is Chichele Professor of the History of War and a fellow of All Souls College at the University of Oxford, where he directs the Leverhulme Program on the Changing Character of War. His most recent book is *Clausewitz's On War: A Biography* (2007).

Labors of Love

Reviewed by Darcy Courteau

ASK ANYONE WHO HAS DONE much volunteering and you are bound to hear—along with heartwarming stories of teaching a kid to read or saving a church slated for demolition—

tales of abuse. A friend recalls the Saturday she sacrificed to help build a playground at a New Orleans community center. She arrived to find the well-heeled volunteers who had donated the space standing around complaining into their cell phones about the heat; she was handed a shovel. Six palm-blistering hours later, she “accidentally” tossed mulch on a slacker and left. “I just thought if we’re all in this together, let’s be in this together,” she said.

But it is our very self-reliance (and a distrust of government), sociologists Marc A. Musick and John Wilson write in *Volunteers*, that spurs Americans to donate their time. Bootstraps firmly in hand, we have the highest volunteer rate in the world—one study estimates that nearly two-thirds of Americans volunteer. Because such labor is motivated by ideals rather than cash, tapping this resource can be a delicate challenge. In a giant compendium—of other social scientists’ studies as well as analyses of survey data collected over two decades—Musick and Wilson set

VOLUNTEERS: A Social Profile.

*By Marc A. Musick and
John Wilson.
Indiana Univ. Press.
663 pp. \$39.95*

out to paint an exhaustive portrait of modern volunteers, and “help practitioners better recruit, train, motivate, and retain volunteers.”

The book examines volunteers’ motivations and backgrounds—including race, gender, and socioeconomic resources—and addresses subjects such as recruitment and types of service various groups favor. But the authors’ sweeping approach encounters a not-uncommon problem: Many of the studies mentioned contradict one another. So we are left with forehead slappers such as “In the opinion of many scholars, organizations will recruit volunteers only if they appeal to their values and beliefs” and “There is quite convincing evidence that volunteers are more empathic people than non-volunteers.” You don’t say.

Many recruiters won’t be surprised to learn that their best volunteer prospects are affluent, white, churchgoing women. (While women do not contribute more hours than men, they volunteer at a higher rate.) To be fair, people in each of these categories are the most likely to be asked—41 percent of white Americans, for instance, have been asked to volunteer, compared with 33 percent of blacks, and nearly two-thirds of Americans with household incomes over \$75,000 are asked compared with one-third of those earning less than \$25,000. Being asked is a strong predictor of who volunteers.

From amid the obvious conclusions and the sociological jargon, however, an engaging narrative begins to emerge, of Americans’—especially American women’s—relationship to labor. “In capitalist societies,” the authors write, “volunteers are often admired as people, but their work is devalued. We tend to assume that if a job is really worth doing, it will be paid for.” Often, the volunteer work that women do is “society’s ‘dirty work,’” similar to household duties—caring for children and the elderly, preparing meals, book-keeping. Men tend to have “more desirable” leadership roles in the public domain: coach, firefighter, board member. This imbalance led many in the feminist movement of the 1970s to resist volunteering. Activist Doris Gold put it

bluntly: “Voluntarism is clearly exploitative—in its implication that social justice for all classes can be achieved through the moral ‘service’ of some who are expendable, albeit out of choice.” From this perspective, our nation of do-it-yourselfers is a place where we are emphatically *not* all in this together.

Reading *Volunteers*, I wondered what would happen if Americans stopped being quite so gung-ho about signing up to help out. What if women took a break from the “dirty work,” and instead people were paid to do it? The warm-fuzzies sector might shrink, but the resulting jobs would allow those who couldn’t afford to volunteer to have a bigger role in helping others, even as—per the American way—they helped themselves.

DARCY COURTEAU, a writer living in New Orleans, has spent thousands of hours volunteering in education programs in the United States and India.

Spouse Hunt

Reviewed by Renuka Rayasam

RECENTLY, I DESCRIBED WESTERN dating to an uncle in India who is trying to arrange marriages for his two daughters. After sharing his own troubles finding suitable young men, he ruefully concluded, “Getting married here is one type of hell, but getting married there is another.”

Anita Jain has suffered the worst of both worlds. Fed up with the “emotionally excruciating uphill battle” of dating in New York City, Jain, a world-traveled financial journalist, returned to the country of her parents’ upbringing and her own birth. *Marrying Anita* chronicles her search for a husband when she moved to Delhi at the age of 32.

Jain, who grew up in the United States, figured that focusing her search for a year in India, where she believed men were more marriage oriented, would improve her odds of finding a husband. Besides meeting potential husbands in flashy Delhi bars and on Indian dating websites, Jain took a second stab at arranging a marriage

MARRYING ANITA:
A Quest for Love in
the New India.

By Anita Jain. Bloomsbury. 307 pp. \$24.99

through an ad her father placed in *The Times of India*. (She wrote in a 2005 *New York Magazine* article about the first attempt, which failed but left her more appreciative of the traditional Indian way of finding a mate, who is selected by one's family.)

Unfortunately, Jain seems more interested in stringing together amusing dating anecdotes than in making a sincere attempt at cross-cultural understanding. Many of the people she encounters in America and India read like caricatures. British journalists are “rapacious conversationalists”; men from Ohio are too earnest. Indian mothers care only about marrying off their daughters, while every unattached female New York professional spends her evenings poring over the “disturbing minutiae” of dating.

Jain's sharply trained reporter's eye is best used when she describes the rapid changes juxtaposed with the traditionalism encrusting Indian cities. She had been to Delhi before, but when she returned in 2005, “it was different.” Young, educated, tech-savvy professionals were transforming the ancient city through their demand for Western luxuries. Upscale coffee shops, Italian restaurants, nightclubs, and malls abutted centuries-old forts and open-air bazaars.

Searching for an apartment, Jain was shocked to find that many Delhi landlords didn't like renting to single women, fearing they might be prostitutes or at least would entertain males. She finally moved into a renovated flat with a view of the city's ancient landmarks, and herself became another dissonant element of the landscape. “I now marvel at the incongruities and ironies that abound in this country each day,” she writes. “I'm able to install Wi-Fi, allowing me to check e-mail from bed, but my cook, Amma—a small dumpling of a 70-year-old woman—who prepares fresh *sabzi*, *dal*, *chapatis*, and rice each day, extracts the utterly baffling third world rate of \$18.20 a month.” Cheap labor makes cooks and cleaners commonplace even in India's lower-middle-class households.

It's too bad the insight Jain exhibits when

describing modern India falters when she focuses inward. Often, she blames her romantic failures on the overused emigrant's complaint of neither fitting in here nor there—too liberated for Indian men, but not free enough for American ones. To Western ears, she says, her urge to settle down sounds “atavistic in nature, a throwback to a time when women couldn't financially support themselves.” Yet her own view of partnership is pretty dismal: She looks down on female friends who married right after college and disdains women who choose marriage over a career.

Jain decided to leave New York for Delhi after attending a Central Park picnic at which she was the only person not part of a couple. Fleeing in tears, she vowed not to become “that proverbial single thirtysomething female propped up at the bar waiting for her ship to come in.” But then she landed in India, only to find that the “razzle-dazzle” new country had created waves of the “young cads” she had hoped to escape. Same bar, different scenery.

RENUKA RAYASAM is a Washington, D.C.-based writer. Her work has appeared in *Condé Nast Portfolio*, *INC Magazine*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Fortune*.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Fear Itself

Reviewed by Evelin Sullivan

IN THE LAST CHAPTER OF his eminently readable exploration of our allegedly dangerous world, Daniel Gardner describes a cemetery in Ontario where a headstone commemorates the six children of one couple, all killed by diphtheria within less than a week

in 1902. Far from marking a freakish occurrence, the headstone is a reminder of the vast toll contagious illnesses took on children in the dark days before vaccines all but eradicated such diseases in the industrialized world. It is the final proof of what Gardner argues throughout *The Science of*

THE SCIENCE OF FEAR:

Why We Fear the Things We Shouldn't—and Put Ourselves in Greater Danger.

By Daniel Gardner.
Dutton. 339 pp. \$24.95

Fear: The world we have inherited is in many ways the safest—least risky to the individual and the species—that has ever existed.

So why, he asks, are we afraid of so many things? Why do homicides, abductions, and other statistically unlikely threats (Gardner includes terrorism among these) occupy an inordinate amount of our attention and consume resources that could be spent protecting us from statistically far more significant threats, such as preventable illnesses? Gardner's answer is that evolution has equipped us with a brain superbly suited to tell us what to do when we spot a large brown thing in the long grass: recognize it for a lion, get scared, and run like hell; once safe, tell everybody about what happened to the slowest one. But our brains are ill equipped to process—at that same speed, and based on the same need-to-know premise—the more subtle dangers coming our way.

The brain *Homo sapiens* possessed as early as 200,000 years ago has remained unchanged in the blink of an eye that constitutes the span of modern history. This brain consists of subconscious and conscious, or what Gardner calls “Gut” and “Head.” Once, Gut (feeling) kept people alive by rapidly, intuitively differentiating between safe and dangerous, and by prompting life-saving actions based on its split-second verdict. Head (reason)—the ability to use logic, analyze, do the math—was not useful, given the conditions.

Gut brought the species far, by instinctively following a set of rules. Gardner, a Canadian journalist, draws on a wealth of academic research to catalog these rules and show how necessary they were for making the world intelligible and survivable for prehistoric humankind. And he convincingly argues that they can thoroughly mislead *us*—and are used by manipulators of all stripes to do so. (What better way to sell us software X or burglar alarm Y than by frightening us with inflated numbers of Internet predators or crimes we're unlikely to become victims of?)

Take, for instance, “the Example Rule”: Gut tells us that the more easily we recall an event, the more likely it is to happen again. In an envi-

ronment where information is local, the example of one member of the tribe being eaten by a lion plants in the other members a vivid—hence, easy to recall—memory of the very real danger of lions and places frequented by lions. In an environment where information propagates rapidly, and a hundred million of us find out, through the media, about one gruesome homicide, the example, processed by Gut in the same way, does little or nothing to make us safer. But it does raise the national anxiety level and make us more easily persuaded to allocate funds for more prisons or to support the death penalty.

Gardner puts into context half a dozen other such rules. All of them share their immense usefulness for the survival of hunters and gatherers. And all of them share the unfortunate potential to make us bark up the wrong light pole in environments where light poles outnumber trees.

His analysis suggests that for the sake of *our* survival, one fear ought to become stronger: that of being afraid of the wrong things. He may not succeed in shutting up Gut when it says “Lock the doors or risk being murdered,” but he presents compelling evidence that unfounded fears pose real dangers. Only by recognizing these dangers will we be ready to give Head a chance and to fight wasteful and foolish measures proposed to keep us safe from what we needn't fear.

EVELIN SULLIVAN, a lecturer at Stanford University, is the author of *The Concise Book of Lying* (2001) and four novels. She is at work on a book about the natural history of fear.

Einstein, Relatively Speaking

Reviewed by David Lindley

PHYSICISTS SOMETIMES indulge in an entertaining but largely pointless debate about which of their two preeminent geniuses, Isaac Newton or Albert Einstein, deserves the all-time number one ranking. Hans

EINSTEIN'S MISTAKES:
The Human Failings of Genius.

By Hans C. Ohanian.
Norton. 394 pp. \$24.95

Ohanian has no doubts on the matter. Newton is worth several Einsteins, he tells us, although it would have been more in keeping with the frequently pedantic spirit of his book if he had let us know exactly how many Einsteins—three? four and a quarter?—stack up to one Newton. At one point, Ohanian even suggests that Einstein wasn't quite up to the level of Max Planck, the founder of quantum theory, but by the end of *Einstein's Mistakes* he has restored Einstein to the number two position. Putting Einstein in his place seems, at any rate, to be Ohanian's main purpose.

Though recent biographies have largely dispelled the cherished myth that Einstein was a dunce at school, it is true that the great physicist was not a natural mathematician. After making the enormous conceptual leap that connected the phenomenon of gravitation to the fact that space-time is curved, it took Einstein many excruciating years to find the appropriate mathematical expression for this idea and thereby create the theory of general relativity. Einstein's earlier attempts, some published, some abandoned, contained deep flaws. In his other revolutionary achievements too, Einstein's first pronouncements were rarely the last word. Over the years, those original insights were painstakingly polished to become the scientific theories we know today, and often it was other physicists—more rigorous than Einstein, if less imaginative—who filled in the gaps and supplied the finishing touches.

This, by and large, is nothing more than how science ordinarily progresses, but Ohanian, a former editor at the *American Journal of Physics* and author of several textbooks, seems intent on finding in the missteps and fudges of Einstein's papers a new and shocking portrait of the man. Einstein's pre-1905 efforts "have faded into the obscurity they richly deserve." He made blunders in his great works of 1905 because he "was not thinking like a physicist, but like a patent clerk." A mistake in the first attempt to prove that $E = mc^2$ "is the sort of thing every amateur mathematician knows to watch out for." And so on.

There is, to be sure, the germ of an interesting story here. Einstein's arguments were often makeshift and occasionally shoddy, but most of the time he knew where he wanted to go and found a way to get there. That, as Ohanian admits, is one definition of genius, but he shows little interest in pursuing the thought. Instead, facing up to the evident truth that Einstein repeatedly hit on answers to difficult puzzles before he could figure out a convincing justification for them, Ohanian can only throw up his hands and declare that Einstein was "a mystic in the throes of a revelation." In his minute analysis of Einstein's works, Ohanian reveals himself to be the kind of strictly logical, step-by-step physicist that Einstein plainly was not, and Ohanian's inability to cope with that difference almost seems to have turned into a personal animosity.

This is a scientific rather than a personal study, but still, Ohanian finds time to mention the less attractive aspects of Einstein's character: his shabby treatment of his first wife, his neglect of his children, his tendency to slight his colleagues' scientific contributions, his dreadful sardonic sense, his love of certain disgustingly heavy German foods. Only in the later chapters, when the aging Einstein has come to America to spend his final years working fruitlessly on a "theory of everything," does the tone soften. An eccentric, rather lonely figure, Einstein turns at last into a dotty old uncle whom Ohanian can regard with pity instead of scorn.

DAVID LINDLEY is the author, most recently, of *Uncertainty: Einstein, Heisenberg, Bohr, and the Struggle for the Soul of Science* (2007).

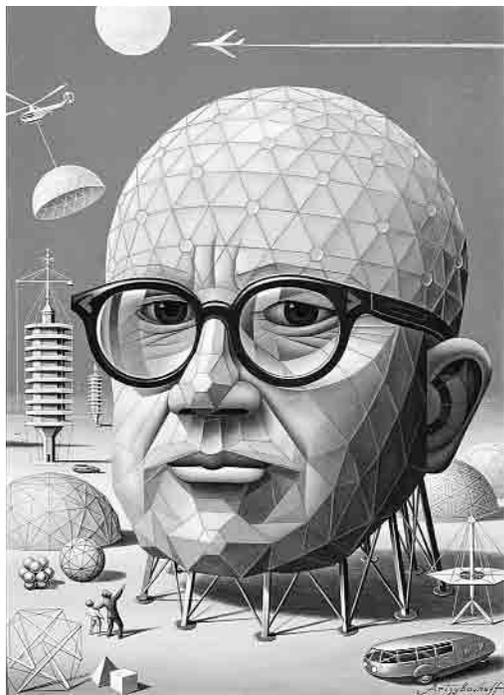
Fuller's Earth

Reviewed by Edward Tenner

WHEN HE DIED IN 1983, Buckminster Fuller was the world's most beloved designer, a pioneer of bold new geometric concepts in transportation (the streamlined Dymaxion Car), housing (the geodesic dome, a lightweight

BUCKMINSTER FULLER:
Starting With the Universe.

Edited by K. Michael Hays and Dana Miller.
Yale Univ. Press.
258 pp. \$50



Among those whom the visionary R. Buckminster Fuller inspired was Boris Artzybasheff, creator of this 1964 *Time* cover.

hemisphere of connected polygons), and urbanism (a supersized dome proposed to cover central Manhattan), a best-selling author and mesmerizing speaker, and a prophet of environmental stewardship. Two years later, investigators named a newly discovered spherical carbon molecule, with a structure like the dome's, the "Buckminsterfullerene" in his honor. The Nobel Prize in Chemistry they received for this work in 1996 helped create a new generation of Fuller admirers. But their prolific hero is hard to know.

Preppy nerd and buttoned-down bohemian, green guru and globe-trotting jet fuel consumer, a college expellee who relished honorary degrees, Buckminster Fuller (b. 1895) proclaimed a new cosmos of structural lightness and left a personal archive of 45 tons about it. It is indicative of Fuller's paradoxes that the cocurator of the Whitney Museum's exhibition of his work that closed earlier this fall, Harvard Graduate School of Design professor K. Michael Hays, should

open and close his introduction to this catalog by underscoring that Fuller was *not* an architect.

So what was he, then? Hays shows how Fuller's "lightful" plans of the 1920s and '30s for new housing suspended from vertical masts were part of a Modernist reaction against the values of weight and solidity that had prevailed from antiquity to World War I. Fuller's designs reflected the propagandistic architecture of the Soviet avant-garde before Socialist Realism's triumph, as well as the expansive vision of the Swiss master of self-invention and self-promotion, Le Corbusier. What distinguished Fuller from these contemporaries, Hays says, were a lack of "reflexivity" (conscious references in design to architecture's heritage), de-emphasis of stability in favor of dynamic relationships, and a denial that

nature, humanity, and technology are distinct entities. While a massive challenge to the uninitiated, Hays's chapter clarifies Fuller's complex symbiosis with Establishment architects and critics.

An essay on Fuller as scientist-artist, by Whitney associate curator Dana Miller, is more illuminating about the man himself, showing how much of Fuller's secret was his gift for friendship. This magnetism helped make Fuller exceptionally resilient, and a catalyst of colleagues' work. The chairs he designed for an avant-garde Greenwich Village bar collapsed on opening night in 1929 and were replaced by benches built by a carpenter. But his renown among the tavern's bohemian customers suffered not a bit; one patron, Isamu Noguchi, painted his studio silver following Fuller's plans, and created a chrome-plated bronze portrait head of Fuller

Buckminster Fuller was a preppy nerd and buttoned-down bohemian, green guru and globe-trotting jet fuel consumer; he proclaimed a new cosmos of structural lightness and left a personal archive of 45 tons about it.

echoed 35 years later in Boris Artzybasheff's illustration for a 1964 *Time* cover. Elizabeth Smith, a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, brings the story of Fuller's legacy in contemporary art up to date, seeing his influence in the work of artists such as Olafur Eliasson and Irit Batsry.

Antoine Picon, also of Harvard, makes the case for Fuller as a prophet of today's digital utopianism, as a brilliant innovator in the visual presentation of data (especially his geodesic projection of the globe), and as a progenitor of general-systems approaches to resource management. But Picon also rightly observes that Fuller was "at heart a traditional humanist." Mega-structures such as the planned Manhattan dome, in Fuller's view, were not opposed to human scale but a means of liberation from "the mechanical enslavement of the industrial era."

The great attraction of this book is the 175 plates and the other illustrations, superbly reproduced, that show the many sides of Fuller: geometric visionary, practical designer, and super salesman. But Fuller's contradictions remain unresolved, and some of his greatest predecessors and successors are absent from the book. For example, Walther Bauersfeld, developer of the Zeiss projection planetarium, patented a geodesic dome for it three decades before Fuller received his own dome patent in 1954. Hays reprints a 1928 photograph by László Moholy-Nagy of a Zeiss dome under construction, without citing Bauersfeld.

As chronological documentation and visual inspiration, *Starting With the Universe* will be an entry point for the study of this most unusual man. But the successors of the publics that responded so warmly to Fuller's many sides during his lifetime, from Pentagon technocrats to Haight-Ashbury hippies, will have to wait for a work that sets the real man in his own time.

EDWARD TENNER, a contributing editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*, is the author of *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences* (1996) and *Our Own Devices: How Technology Remakes Humanity* (2003).

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Saints and Sinners

Reviewed by T. R. Reid

IF HISTORY IS WRITTEN BY the victors, church history is usually written by the vicars. Naturally, these captive chronicles—generally churned out by priests, bishops, and in-house archivists—tend to accentuate the positive and gloss over errors and excesses.

So it is both surprising and admirable that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provided extensive official support to a new warts-and-all history of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, one of the darkest moments in the 180-year history of the Mormon Church. The church opened century-old archives for this account of the infamous mass murder in a high Utah meadow in 1857.

The church was not always so helpful. For nearly a century after some 120 California-bound emigrants were killed by local Mormons, church leaders relied on the stonewall. As late as 1990, when a memorial was unveiled at the massacre site—at the foot of the Mormon Range, in the desert corner where Utah, Nevada, and Arizona meet—descendants of the victims complained that the church was still concealing basic information about the crime.

Massacre at Mountain Meadows is not a formal Mormon publication, but its authors include an assistant church historian (Richard E. Turley Jr.) and a former director of the church's Museum of Church History and Art (Glen M. Leonard). Ronald W. Walker is an independent historian and a writer of Mormon history.

Their unparalleled archival access has not produced any major new conclusions. But in addition to a thorough account of the state of

MASSACRE AT MOUNTAIN MEADOWS.

By Ronald W. Walker,
Richard E. Turley Jr.,
and Glen M. Leonard.
Oxford Univ. Press.
430 pp. \$29.95

the Mormon Church and the Utah Territory in 1857, this volume contains the most information yet published on the individual militiamen, the individual victims, and the 17 babies and children whose lives were spared in the melee.

In the summer of 1857, the Mormons in the Salt Lake valley were celebrating the 10th anniversary of their arrival in Utah after an arduous westward trek to escape religious persecution. But their leader, Brigham Young, was terrified by the news that a U.S. Army expedition was making its way toward Utah. Unless the Mormons and their Indian neighbors were willing to fight, Young said, “the United States will kill us both.”

The Mormons’ sense that “the United States” was their bitter enemy is one of the most striking facts illuminated by this history. The Mormon Church is an intensely American religion. It was founded in 1830 by a New

York farmer named Joseph Smith, and its scripture places the Garden of Eden in Missouri and relates how a resurrected Jesus appeared and preached to American Indians. When the Mormon pioneers settled in Utah, Young himself was appointed the territory’s first governor.

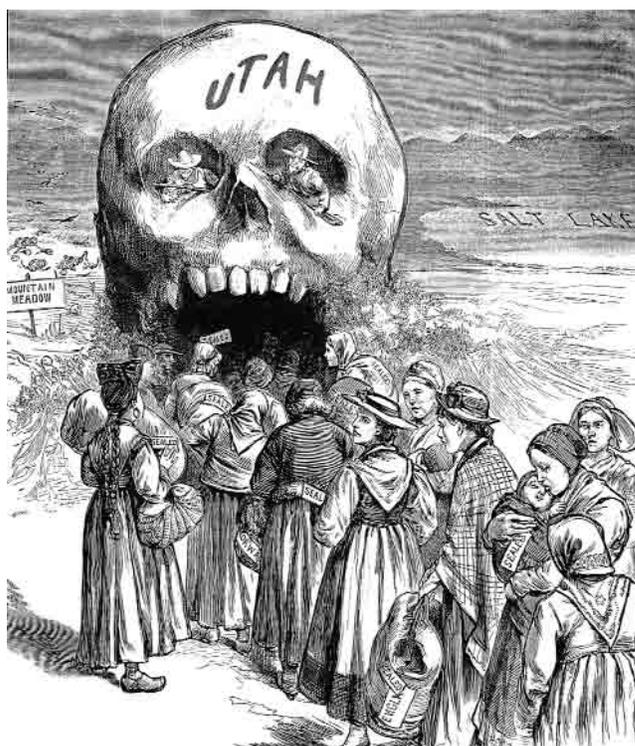
By 1857, though, the Mormons wanted nothing to do with the U.S.A., while most Americans saw the polygamous sect as a dangerous cult. The mutual fear and loathing occasionally flared into battles between Mormon settlers and the thousands of “overlanders” who crossed the Great

Mutual fear and loathing occasionally flared into battles between Mormon settlers and “overlanders” who crossed their lands heading for California.

Basin trails each summer in wagon trains headed for California.

In late summer, nearly 140 emigrants from Arkansas and Missouri—two states where Mormons had faced particularly bitter enmity—encamped at the Mountain Meadows. The local Mormon militia devised a plan to annihilate the whole party—men, women, and children—and place the blame on Indians. The local Paiutes trusted the Mormons (they referred to church president Brigham Young as “Big Um”), and some Indians did take part in the killing. But the authors make it clear that the Mormons designed the “improbably sinister” plan of attack: Under flag of truce, the white men convinced the emigrants to put away their weapons, then led them down the trail to a bloody ambush.

The authors conclude that



An 1882 newspaper cartoon warns immigrants of the dangers awaiting them in Utah, where 25 years earlier, Mormons had led a massacre of 120 westward travelers.

Young did not know about the planned attack in advance, but he did know the truth afterward, while his church pointed fingers at everybody else. In their view, Young and other church leaders were responsible for the general climate of fear and open hostility to emigrants that drove the local militia to “set aside principles of their faith to commit an atrocity.”

Except for Mountain Meadows addicts (and there are a lot of them, both Mormon and otherwise), this history is likely to disappoint. Other than a sketchy “epilogue” about the execution of one militia leader, John D. Lee, the book says nothing about the aftermath of the murders. A reader who cares to know how news of the massacre became public, how the church managed its long cover-up, and what happened to the perpetrators other than Lee will be left high and dry.

For those who are new to this historical episode, Juanita Brooks’s well-known 1950 chronicle *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* or Will Bagley’s *Blood of the Prophets* (2002) might be more satisfying. But for people already familiar with the sordid tale, or for readers who like their history awash in carefully documented detail, this history may be a useful addition to the library.

T. R. REID has covered the Rocky Mountain West and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for *The Washington Post* and National Public Radio. He is the author of several books, including *We’re Number 37!* which is forthcoming next year.

Hollywood’s Crucifixion

Reviewed by Aaron Mesh

WHEN MARTIN SCORSESE’S *The Last Temptation of Christ* was released in 1988, it met with thunderous outrage. Paul Schrader, the film’s screenwriter, recalls walking into Scorsese’s office to find the director bemoaning the furor. “I said, ‘Marty, we wanted to make a controversial film,’” Schrader re-

counts. “We have now *made* a controversial film.” Scorsese replied, “I know, I know, but I didn’t think it would be *this* controversial.”

Hollywood Under Siege is Thomas R. Lindlof’s detailed account of that controversy and how it dug the trenches for two decades of social battles between Christian conservatives and left-wing artists. Lindlof, a journalism professor at the University of Kentucky, observes that *Last Temptation* was released before the phrase “culture wars” had appeared much in print. The movie helped to make it part of the American vocabulary.

In a sense, then, the story of how *Last Temptation* came to be made is from a more innocent time. A prestigious director could make a movie featuring Jesus Christ fantasizing about having sex with Mary Magdalene, and a powerful studio, Universal Pictures, would green-light the project. Both parties thought nobody would mind—or that they would mind just enough to make the film notorious, and profitable.

The book plays as a bleak comedy of naiveté lost. During the summer of 1988, *Last Temptation* “survived the denunciations of preachers and politicians, mountains of mail delivered to Universal City, death threats to executives, demonstrations attended by thousands of citizens, and assaults on theaters and moviegoers.” As both Universal Pictures and Christian groups such as Focus on the Family congratulated themselves for standing firm, they created a template for unending hostility: Evangelicals believe that Hollywood is constantly plotting new blasphemies, while studios fear that any treatment of religious content will draw an outcry.

Lindlof documents absurdities on both sides. Conservative newsletters, for example, had long circulated rumors of a movie in the works that would portray Jesus as a homosexual, and many Christians’ fears about *Last Temptation* were intensified when they confused the two projects. Evangelical activists

HOLLYWOOD UNDER SIEGE:

Martin Scorsese, the Religious Right, and the Culture Wars.

By Thomas R. Lindlof.
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first threatened pickets when *Last Temptation* wasn't screened for them—and when Universal belatedly arranged a showing, they refused to attend. The most outrageous preachers relied on anti-Semitism—blaming Jewish studio heads for attacking Jesus—even though the movie was directed by a Roman Catholic, written by a Dutch Calvinist, and based on a novel by the Greek Orthodox writer Nikos Kazantzakis.

But Hollywood made its blunders, too. Scorsese, a lapsed Catholic whose faith was informed by existential doubt and struggle, failed to anticipate how violently evangelicals would react to a movie that was, as one executive said, basically *It's a Wonderful Life* with Jesus as George Bailey, conjuring an alternative world in which he sired children with several women instead of dying on the cross. Studio bosses were equally clueless, even when they thought they were taking pains to be sensitive: Young Paramount Pictures executive Jeffrey Katzenberg asked Scorsese to “pay special attention to not make Jesus unlikable” in a scene in which he rejects his mother.

Lindlof is better on the inner workings of

studio politics and crisis management than he is on evangelicalism. His case that fundamentalist leaders seized on *Last Temptation* to rebound from the sex scandals of Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker is purely circumstantial, and he never displays a firm understanding of the average protester's mindset. But *Hollywood Under Siege* correctly identifies the movie's release as a cultural watershed. It made \$8 million at the box office and broke even, but studios would never again assume that evangelicals were an extremist fringe, and grew shy of even mild religious material.

Nearly two decades after Scorsese's film, Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*—“a reverse image of *Last Temptation* in almost every respect,” Lindlof writes—raked in \$370 million and proved that fundamentalists would embrace a cinematic Jesus, so long as he was portrayed as a sacrificial lamb. It didn't even matter if that sacrifice was reenacted with ceaseless sadism. Hollywood had learned its lesson: If you can't beat 'em, join 'em in beating him.

AARON MESH is the chief movie critic and a culture editor for *Willamette Week*, an alternative weekly in Portland, Oregon.

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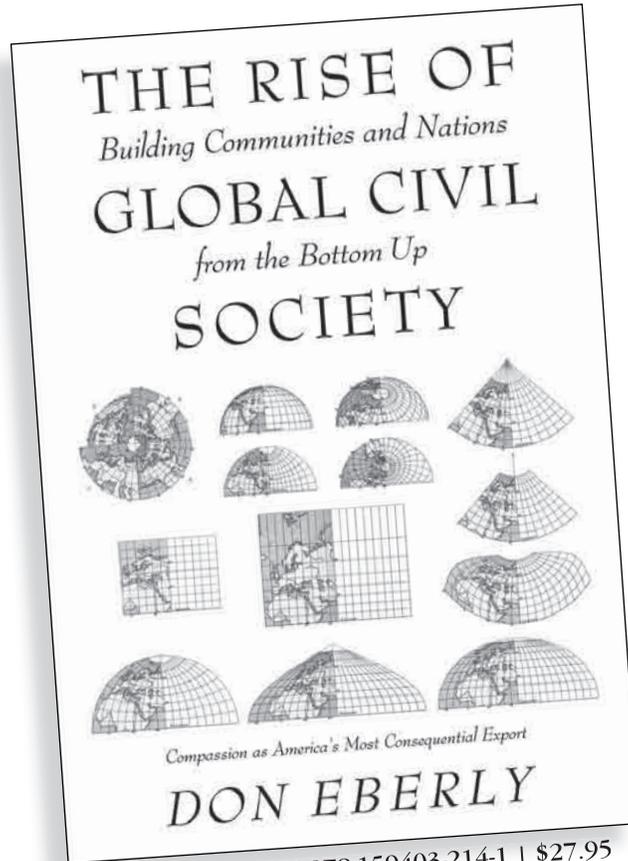
PORTRAIT



Prague, 1968

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 ended the reform moment called the Prague Spring. This photograph by Bohumil Dobrovolský of soldiers battling a tank fire in Prague is part of a 40th-anniversary exhibit at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

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