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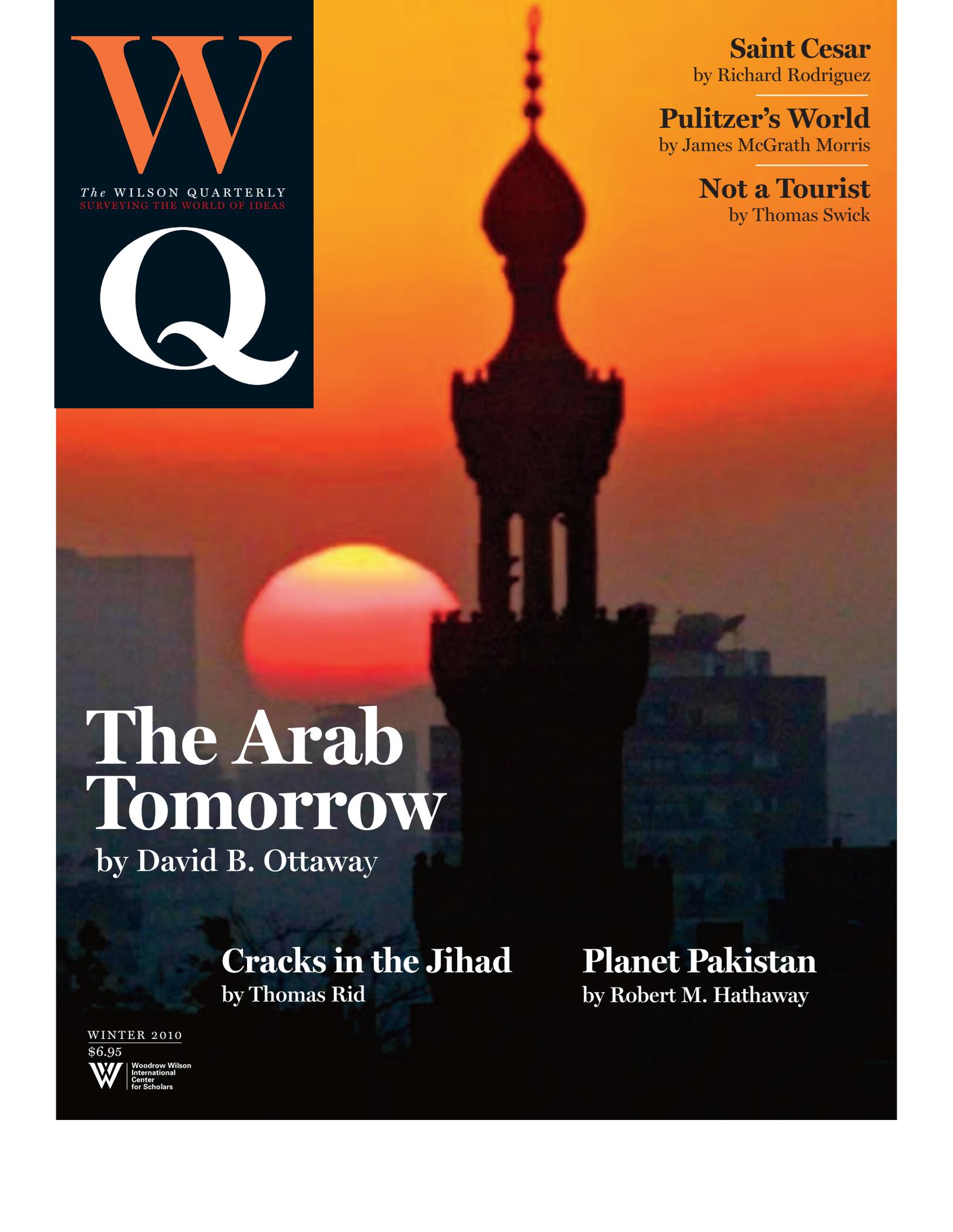


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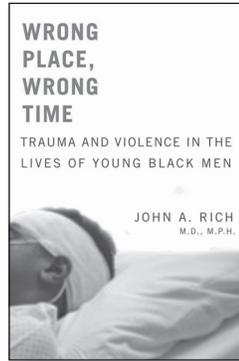
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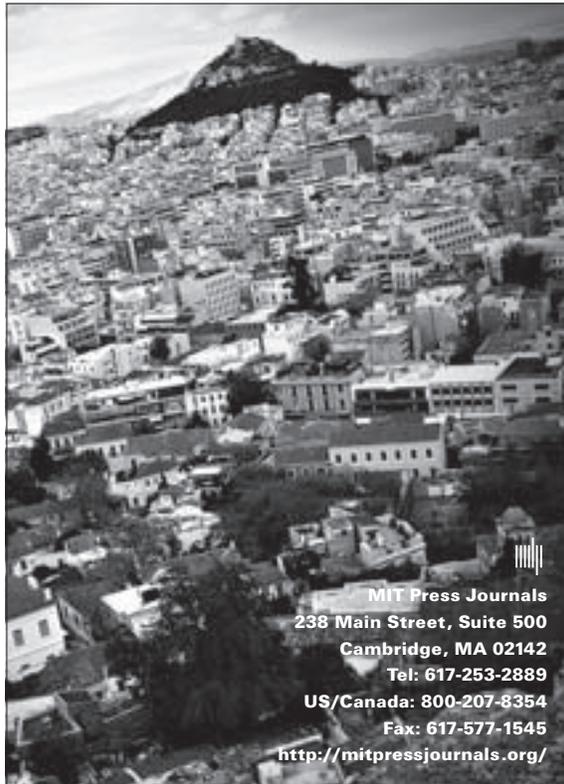
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University. He earned his M.B.A. with High Distinction and his D.B.A from Harvard Business school, where he also taught for six years. Professor Roberto received Harvard University's Allyn A. Young Prize for Teaching in Economics.

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ON THE COVER: Cairo at sunset, photograph by Marwan Naamani/AFP.

The views expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

An Uncertain World

In this issue we feature a trio of articles too loosely related to be grouped into one of our usual clusters yet too closely connected to escape a collective identity. If I had to put a name to them, I would call them “a constellation of woe,” for they deal with some of the world’s great sources of anxiety and turmoil: terrorism, Pakistan, and the Arab world.

All three articles coincidentally come from authors here at the Woodrow Wilson Center. Thomas Rid analyzes new developments in the vanguard of the global jihad, delivering the good news that growing splits are dividing the world’s Islamic extremists, and the bad news that those schisms are strengthening the movement in important ways. Radical Islam is also a focus of Robert M. Hathaway’s article on Pakistan. As we often strive to do in the *WQ*, Hathaway shows how the world appears through the eyes of another, and what we see in the Pakistani vision is an alarming failure to register the dangers of the many Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters who find sanctuary on the country’s soil. The opposite problem can be seen in David B. Ottaway’s unnerving portrait of the Arab world, where leaders transfixed by the threat of radical Islamists and other foes have done their best to choke off change of any kind.

Yet in highlighting the Arabs’ failed leadership, Ottaway affirms the hopeful proposition of all three articles, that nations, like individuals, are the pawns of neither heaven nor ineluctable earthly forces. With good leaders and good choices, error can be overcome.

What’s true of the world of practical politics is also true of the world of ideas, and I can’t let this moment pass without paying tribute in print to the man who gave me my start in letters, an intellectual leader who provided a model for what serious journalism should be. When he died in September at 89, Irving Kristol was widely remembered as “the godfather of neoconservatism,” a title he accepted with humor while surely savoring the irony that it was bestowed upon him for a life’s work, as coeditor of *The Public Interest* and in many other undertakings, in defense of the liberal idea. Decency, reasoned debate, intellectual rigor, and an impassioned commitment to truth are among the things he stood for, and which inspire the magazine you hold in your hands.

— STEVEN LAGERFELD



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LETTERS

THE BOOK'S OUTLOOK

I AM SYMPATHETIC TO CHRISTINE Rosen's argument in "In the Beginning Was the Word" [Autumn '09]. Ours is increasingly a culture better suited to "4ming txts" than pushing through *War and Peace*. I am uncomfortable, however, with Rosen's eagerness to ascribe consumerism, social narcissism, and a general lack of focus to the practice of screen reading. Reading electronic texts, whether a novel on a Kindle or a scholarly article on a library computer, should not be viewed in such monolithic terms.

Rosen describes reading on a screen as a "secondhand experience" that cannot compare to the empathy created by reading a book. I would argue the contrary. Digital media, such as firsthand accounts of the protests in Iran (articles, blog posts, and tweets), offer a greater potential for intimacy and empathy than a book on the subject published years hence. The form in which an experience is related—be it a papyrus scroll, vellum codex, or e-book—is ultimately less important than the content.

While preliminary studies indicate that reading words on a screen is functionally different from reading them on a piece of paper, we should not rush to judgment. One might wonder what neurobiologists would have said to the fourth-century bishop Ambrose, whose unusual practice of silent reading stunned Augustine when he first witnessed it. It wasn't until the 10th century

that silent reading became common. Throughout history, the act of reading has changed just as much as the texts themselves.

Alex Wright appropriately describes the book as a "fluid entity," and he cautions against eulogizing the medium prematurely ["The Battle of the Books"]. Books still have an important place in our culture and continue to be printed at impressive rates. Surveys indicate that the average child between two and five years of age watches more than four hours of television per day; we might pause for a moment, consider the problems of attention span and consumerism, and wish that children were spending those hours reading Kindles.

Nicole Howard

*Author, The Book: The Life Story of a Technology (2005)
Associate Professor of History
California State University, East Bay
Hayward, Calif.*

I FORESEE THE PUBLISHING HOUSE of the future offering, for instance, a poet's latest work in multiple formats simultaneously, each at a different price: an e-text version with links to all current reviews or related scholarly and popular comment; a hard-copy text, produced and delivered to one's home as a single print-on-demand traditional book (with cheap and pricey paper and binding-quality options to choose among); a limited-edition fine press hand-printed

copy in a leather binding, signed by the poet; or a video or audio of the poet herself reading the text. It will be revolutionary to have these choices available from one source, and the interesting question at hand is, which is the real text—the original, authoritative version?

For the time being, many of us are likely to consume some combination of these formats. But there is little question in my mind that the future of the book will, in part, mean a return to a more oral, visual, and performance culture.

My guess is the digital book will soon be here to stay, but a truly user-friendly e-version of the codex has yet to be invented. We have a lot of work to do to equal the storage and retrieval capabilities of the traditional book.

Timothy Barrett

*University of Iowa Center for the Book
Iowa City, Iowa*

AS MUCH AS WE FRET ABOUT THE decline of books and celebrate the rise of the Internet, we rarely link these developments to another big trend of the last 30 years: the crisis in our education system. The arduous task of renovating our schools and enlivening our universities receives scant attention compared with the exciting possibilities opened up by high-tech media. Most pundits prefer to speculate about the effects of technology on "the culture" and "the mind" without paying much attention to the institutions that form minds and shape culture.

Alex Wright's essay comes as a welcome reminder that today's media overload has ample precedent. While pulp

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novels, penny dreadfuls, and pornography flew off the shelves in the 19th century, it was not these products that ultimately rewired readers' brains. This was the century that also gave us kindergarten, compulsory mass schooling, and the research university. Discipline was the real ethos of Victorian society; it gave students the means to learn their ABCs, graduate to Greek and Latin, and (for the best of them, at least) make contributions to various fields of higher learning.

Books and ideas, whatever their physical form or mode of delivery, are only as powerful as the minds that have been trained to receive them.

Ian F. McNeely

*Coauthor, Reinventing Knowledge:
From Alexandria to the Internet (2008)
Associate Professor of History
University of Oregon
Eugene, Ore.*

CRITICS OF DIGITAL TEXT INSIST THAT we read differently online, scanning, skimming, jumping hyperactively from link to link, in contrast to the deliberate, reflective practice that paper demands. But plenty of offline texts are also designed to be read in fits and starts. Our desultory reading of newspapers, encyclopedias, phone books, catalogs, cookbooks, and reports is a function of those genres, not the media in which they appear. The common practice of moving back and forth within any text regardless of the technology encoding the words suggests that reading from beginning to middle to end is but one kind of reading.

Many readers still prefer the printed page, not because paper promotes meditation but because, at least for now, books are more convenient than screens and strain the eyes less. Computers don't

seem poised to replace books any more than they're replacing pencils.

Dennis Baron

*Professor of English and Linguistics
Department of English
University of Illinois
Urbana, Ill.*

TODAY'S DISCUSSION ABOUT THE transformative effect of technology continues a process that is eons old. Cave paintings, scrolls, the codex, the teletype, the telephone, radio, and television all preceded the computer and the Internet in determining how we access data.

As a book publisher and information entrepreneur, I have come to believe that the essence of our latter-day reinvention is choice. In 2005, the MacArthur and Carnegie foundations established a project we call Caravan, which has enabled leading university and nonprofit presses to master multiplatform book publishing. We have neither subscribers nor advertising, so unlike newspapers and magazines, we won't lose those revenue sources. Technology is our ally in improving access and bringing down costs.

Information and entertainment are indispensable commodities in the organization of civilization. We are clearly at a major juncture in the ways these goods are made available. Whatever the outcome in the short term, books in various forms will endure—in your hand, on the screen, in your ear.

Peter Osnos

*Founder, PublicAffairs Books, and Executive
Director, The Caravan Project
New York, N.Y.*

WHILE I WOULD GIVE EVEN FOUR tweets for the Web, I wouldn't do the same for Tyler Cowen's wrong-headed

views on multitasking ["Three Tweets for the Web"].

He writes that the word *multitasking* "makes it sound as if we're all over the place. There is a deep coherence to how each of us pulls out a steady stream of information from disparate sources to feed our long-term interests." But multitasking, a concept that comes from computer science, means the ability of a system to concurrently deal with multiple, possibly independent tasks. So yes, it does allow you to be all over the place. More important, Cowen's huge claim that there is a "deep coherence" to how people multitask is contrary to what many of us in postsecondary education see every day in our students.

He concedes that Web readers, particularly younger ones, "may lack the intellectual framework needed to integrate all the incoming bits into a meaningful whole." Yes, they do, and all the more so because of multitasking. The ability to focus for long periods of time on difficult subject matter is extremely valuable, a skill that all levels of education try to inculcate in students. Multitasking harms that effort by encouraging the opposite.

Alex Simonelis

Montreal, Quebec

RAILING AWAY

MARK REUTTER'S DISCUSSION OF high-speed trains ["Bullet Trains for America?" Autumn '09] is enlightening and especially relevant at a time when the United States is contemplating an investment of billions of dollars.

The potential for building European-like lines linking our major metropolitan areas, however, is handicapped by the American federal system.

Unlike most other developed countries, the United States throughout its history has had trouble investing with national interests in mind because of the important role state and local officials play in making decisions on infrastructure.

The major exception to this rule was the Interstate Highway System. The Bureau of Public Roads provided the general layout of the system in 1955, and Congress, in passing the Federal Aid Highway Act the next year, guaranteed states the financing to build the roads. This advanced planning and simple funding structure made possible the integrated, well-designed network Americans enjoy today.

Unfortunately, there has been no similar effort to define specific routes for a national high-speed rail network. And although they allocated \$8 billion to the project in the stimulus bill, neither the White House nor Congress has developed a standard, efficient approach to ensuring longer-term financing. States are left flailing, unsure whether to promote projects that better serve their own interests or those of the country as a whole. This disordered process could produce major blunders—disconnected routes, underused stations, and even half-built corridors.

Yonah Freemark

*Founder, The Transport Politic
Durham, N.C.*

HISTORICALLY, THE PRIVATE SECTOR has played an important role in infrastructure financing. In the 18th century, private joint-stock companies and non-profit organizations financed road, river, and canal improvements by issuing bonds and levying tolls. In the mid-19th century, private companies built railroads throughout [Continued on page 9]

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AT THE CENTER

THE BIN LADEN TAPES

IT'S A WORLD AWAY FROM FLAGG MILLER'S quiet office overlooking the Woodrow Wilson Plaza to a ransacked house in Kandahar, Afghanistan, yet Miller spends his days trying to piece together clues about that house's former occupant, Osama bin Laden. The house, struck by U.S. missiles after the 9/11 attacks when intelligence reports fingered it as Al Qaeda's headquarters in southern Afghanistan, served as a meeting ground for militants and potential recruits from 1996 through late 2001. A subsequent search there turned up, among other artifacts, an abandoned cache of some 1,500 audiocassettes and videotapes. Bin Laden can be heard on at least 20 of the cassettes, but also included are recordings of more than 200 religious scholars, intellectuals, and militants from around the Muslim world. The immense audio library allows a rare glimpse into the intellectual development of the world's most notorious terrorist.

How Miller—an associate professor of religious studies and a linguistic anthropologist at the University of California, Davis, who is spending this year as a Woodrow Wilson Center fellow—came to be in possession of the collection is a tale in itself. Acquired by CNN after the fall of the Taliban in the winter of 2001–02, the tapes were vetted by the FBI, which determined that they contained no clues to the whereabouts of bin Laden. Several years later, the collection wound up in the hands of the Williams College Afghan Media Project. That's when Miller got involved, after he was invited to translate and study the tapes. (The collection has since been transferred to Yale, where it is being digitized and is due to be released publicly in the next few years.) While studying Arabic in Syria and Yemen during the early 1990s, Miller became fascinated by the use of audiocassettes in the Arab world and has since published a book and a number of articles on the subject. "Audiocassettes are user friendly, they're cheap, and they don't require a lot of resources to produce," he says. "They're also very hard for the governments to censor, because they can be passed hand to hand."

The voices on the bin Laden tapes range from well-known figures such as Abdallah Azzam, one of Al Qaeda's founders, to obscure local preachers, who might be

known only to a handful of followers. Collectively, though, they represent an impressive catalog of a number of strains of Islamic thought, especially those from the late 1980s, when bin Laden was exhorting Muslims to join him in the fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

One thing Miller hopes to discover, by comparing the rhetoric on the audiocassettes with bin Laden's pronouncements since 9/11, is how a Muslim listener might become radicalized when exposed to unorthodox ideas. "Bin Laden is a complex jihadi," Miller observes. "He's an eclectic thinker, and doesn't have formal religious training or expertise in Islamic law. On some of these tapes, for instance, one can hear listeners disputing his ideas, forcing him to abandon reasoned arguments for more creative associations with Islam's heroes both past and present."

But Miller believes that bin Laden's very unorthodoxy gives him authority among certain segments of the Muslim world. He can claim, for instance, that the imams who criticize him are puppets of their countries' regimes, and that he is the one who offers a vision of true reform. He bolsters such claims with lofty rhetoric borrowed from the tapes, with appeals to Arab roots and tribalism, and with allusions so ancient they predate the founding of Islam. One example Miller cites is a tape released in 1994 in which bin Laden praises pre-Islamic Arab tribes in Mecca for foiling the advances of a massive army under Ethiopian viceroy Abraha in the sixth century. Those tribes drove Abraha out of Mecca, bin Laden tells his listeners, and weakened his grip on Yemen (the homeland of bin Laden's father), thus removing his protection from Christians on the Arabian Peninsula.

That bin Laden would use such a complex allusion in response to the buildup of U.S. troops on the Arabian Peninsula might surprise a Western audience. But Miller suggests that his speaking style, which can seem highly varied and rambling to untrained ears, and which may well have been developed and enhanced by the tapes found at the Kandahar house, are laced with enticements that appeal to potential recruits. "If we want to defeat bin Laden's vision of the world," Miller says, "we have to grapple with the ideas that resonate with his audience."



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[Continued from page 7] the world. Governments issued rights of way, regulated fares, and provided subsidies—land grants, dividend guarantees, or interest guarantees—but the level of public financing remained small.

President Barack Obama has pointed to “bold actions and big ideas” of the past as models for the country to follow in developing high-speed rail. Certainly, building an extensive, publicly funded high-speed rail network would be bold. But allowing private companies to propose and pay for high-speed rail projects would be a step at least equally bold.

Dan Bogart

Assistant Professor

Department of Economics

University of California, Irvine

Irvine, Calif.

ALTHOUGH MARK REUTER CLAIMS that President Obama's high-speed rail plan “follows the precedent” of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System, there are huge differences between these programs.

First, gas taxes and other user fees paid 100 percent of the cost of interstate highways. By comparison, virtually all of the capital costs and much of the operating costs of high-speed trains will be born by taxpayers who will rarely if ever ride the trains.

Second, interstate highways connect all 48 contiguous states, more than 300 major metropolitan areas, and thousands of smaller towns. In contrast,

Obama's high-speed rail plan consists of six unconnected networks whose infrequent trains will reach only 33 states and about 100 major metropolitan areas, and won't serve smaller towns.

Third, the Interstate Highway System moves the average American 4,000 miles per year. The most optimistic estimates project that the average American will ride Obama's high-speed trains less than 60 miles annually.

The rail fan's fantasy of a national network of bullet trains would cost taxpayers around \$1 trillion to build and billions more to operate each year. Yet it would serve mainly downtown office workers—bankers, lawyers, and government officials—who need no taxpayer subsidy. The environmental benefits of such a project would be virtually nil, as by 2025 the average car on the road will be both cleaner and more fuel-efficient than any passenger train.

American tourists may enjoy European and Japanese high-speed trains. But by any objective standard, they are a failure in those countries as well, costing taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars and serving only a small elite. High-speed rail makes no sense in the United States.

Randal O'Toole

Senior Fellow

Cato Institute

Camp Sherman, Ore.

EUROPE AND JAPAN ARE INDEED showcases for the potential of high-speed rail. However, these systems are the culmination of investments over many decades. As Ohio Department of Transportation director Jolene Moloris testified on Capitol Hill in April, “Successful high-speed passenger rail projects have their foundation in a robust, incremental development of rail

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infrastructure and improvements starting from conventional service.”

Frequency, accessibility, and trip times are more important to the traveler than top speed. With top speeds of just 79 mph (90 mph in a few places on one line), but also with more frequent service, new stations and trains, and feeder buses, California’s three state-supported corridors now have more than five million annual riders, 19 percent of Amtrak’s national ridership. Today’s Amtrak Chicago–St. Louis run takes six hours, mainly due to bottlenecks and single-track segments. For under \$6 million, trip time could be cut by two hours, making the ride an hour faster than driving. Providing this quality of service nationwide could set the stage for future “supertrains” by helping revive American train-riding culture and enhancing economic development along the improved lines.

Ross B. Capon

President and CEO

National Association of Railroad Passengers

Washington, D.C.

THE FALL OF THE WALL

THE CENTRAL QUESTION REMAINING about the events in Europe in 1989 is whether change came from above or below.

One finishes Andrew Curry’s eloquent article believing the latter, and with good reason [“Before the Fall,” Autumn ’09]. Those protesting the oppressive East German regime numbered first little more than a dozen; then they were hundreds, then thousands, and finally hundreds of thousands. Their peaceful protest disarmed the regime’s very legitimacy.

But we should not conclude that people power alone mattered. Curry

concludes by quoting Rainer Eppelmann that no foreign leader won freedom for Eastern Europe’s masses. But a foreign leader might well have crushed the movement, no matter its numbers. We all know the story of Tiananmen Square. Communists were well capable of resorting to force to retain power. Curry notes that East Germany’s dissidents were prepared for similar hostilities. But to understand why a Chinese solution did not occur in Leipzig or East Berlin, we need to look to Moscow, where Mikhail Gorbachev had neither the inclination nor, frankly, the stomach for such repression. Indeed, Romanian and East German leaders had earlier in the summer implored him to employ force to put down protests in Hungary. He refused, putting states on notice that Soviet troops—and there were upward of a million of them stationed in Eastern Europe—would not aid in any government crackdown.

The truth is that change occurred in 1989 from the bottom up and also simultaneously from the top down. We need not compare courage, nor indeed seek to divvy up praise (or blame) for change too precisely. The year was a victory of conviction expressed by millions, and of prudence exhibited by those who held the levers of power.

Jeffrey A. Engel

Editor, The Fall of the Berlin Wall:

The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989 (2009)

Scowcroft Institute for International Affairs

College Station, Texas

A TURNING POINT

MICHAEL BARONE IS RIGHT [“The Seventies Shift,” Autumn ’09]. The 1970s were a “hinge point” in American politics. There are, however, two underlying themes to the changes

he identifies: geographic inequality and self-segregation.

After World War II, American communities grew more similar. Incomes converged. By 1970, people with college degrees were remarkably evenly distributed among American cities. Communities over time voted more alike, at least in presidential elections.

Beginning in the 1970s, however, people with college degrees began to cluster in particular cities. Average incomes from county to county grew increasingly unequal. Rich people migrated in one direction, while the poor moved in another. Life expectancy from county to county diverged, and regional accents strengthened.

Places came to differ by way of life as Americans self-segregated into like-minded communities. By the 1990s, people in America’s high-tech cities were more likely to “try anything once” compared with those who lived in factory towns, who were more likely to engage in community activities. Counties tipped either Republican or Democratic in presidential elections after 1976—and then kept tipping, as local partisan majorities grew. The nation had a series of exceedingly close presidential elections from 1976 to 2008, but in most communities the results were increasingly lopsided.

The result of Barone’s “Seventies shift” is today’s United States, where there are greater distinctions from place to place, but fewer differences within the communities where we live. The country has both more diversity and more conformity. What’s been lost, however, is any sense of the whole.

Bill Bishop

Coauthor, The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart (2008)

Austin, Texas

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We wish all our readers a Happy New Year! Thank you for joining the editors and writers of the *WQ* as we survey the world of ideas. We look forward to further improving our services and appreciate your patience during this transition.

FINDINGS

BRIEF NOTES OF INTEREST ON ALL TOPICS

Churchill on Technology

Tweets from the past

Winston Churchill was a prolific historian, but he also gazed into the future. In 1932 he published a collection of essays called *Thoughts and Adventures*, now back in print from ISI Books. In



Winston Churchill, media master . . . and visionary

“Fifty Years Hence,” he forecast a revolution in communications. Video chats—what he called “telephones and television”—would enable someone “to connect up with any room similarly installed, and hear and take part in the conversation as well as if he put his head in through the window. . . . It would rarely be necessary to call in person on any but the most intimate friends.”

Savvy as he was about the tech-

nology, Churchill proved a bit shaky on the implications for society. “The congregation of men in cities would become superfluous. . . . The cities and the countryside would become indistinguishable. Every home would have its garden and its glade.” For that, we’re still waiting.

Of course, Churchill didn’t foresee Twitter. *Prospect* magazine recently asked Britons what historical figures they’d like to follow via the online service, which limits messages to 140 characters. Churchill proved most popular, notwithstanding his “talent for speeches consid-

erably longer than 140 characters.” Jesus came in second, followed by Charles Darwin, Martin Luther King Jr., and Leonardo da Vinci.

Not So Terrifying

The 2004 bin Laden video

Days before the 2004 election between President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry, Osama bin Laden issued a video message to the American people.

Bin Laden boasted about 9/11, derided President Bush for having ignored warnings about terrorism, and said that “your security is not in the hands of Kerry, nor Bush, nor Al Qaeda—no, your security is in your own hands.” A widely reported *Newsweek* poll found that Bush’s margin over Kerry grew from two percentage points to six in the wake of the video. Kerry later said the video had cost him the White House.

Not necessarily, John A. Tures writes in *Homeland Security Affairs* (September 2009). To start with, the *Newsweek* poll took a three-day snapshot of public opinion; the bin Laden video was released late on the third day. Further, many polls conducted after the appearance of the video found, *Newsweek* notwithstanding, that the race was tightening—suggesting that “if the videotape did anything, it hurt Bush and helped Kerry.” Moreover, a CNN exit poll found that Kerry received a slight majority of the vote among people who said they were “very worried” about a terrorist attack.

Tures also cites polling data indicating that, contrary to conventional wisdom, the terrorist attacks on Madrid’s commuter trains on March 11, 2004, didn’t

change the outcome of the Spanish elections three days later. “The only effect that Al Qaeda seems to produce with pre-election activities,” he concludes, “is the media’s fascination with the terrorists’ supposed ability to ‘control foreign elections.’”

Hidden Code

Liberian logjam

Reform’s all well and good—as long as it’s bought and paid for. In 2006, Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf appointed former justice minister Philip Banks to head a commission to codify the nation’s law, much of which was scattered about in loose-leaf pamphlets. The U.S. Department of Justice sent \$400,000 to support the project, and Banks set to work, reports *Foreign Policy* on its Web site. But when the money ran out and the Justice Department declined to send more, Banks copyrighted the assembled laws in his own name. As a result, no one can publish them without his approval.

Banks tells *Foreign Policy*, “These are resources that you’ve had to expend in putting all of this together, and the question is, should you be compensated? I hold the view that you should.” He and his allies are negotiating to transfer the copyright to the government for a six-figure sum. For now, says *Foreign Policy*, “lawyers, courtrooms, and even the government are operating blindly; it’s impossible to be certain if they are following a legal code they don’t have.”

Bathroom Twofers

Watered down

In the movie *Psycho*, which came out 50 years ago, Janet Leigh’s character resolves to return the \$40,000 she has stolen from her employer. But she has spent \$700 on a car. She sits at a table and, David Thomson writes in *The Moment of Psycho* (Basic), “does a sum that hardly speaks well of her education: \$40,000 minus \$700.” Then she steps into the bathroom, drops the paper in the toilet, and flushes it.

“Apparently, in all of American film,” Thomson writes, “there had never been a scene that showed a toilet being flushed before.” Hitchcock may have relished the challenge of getting the toilet scene (as well as the shower scene) past censors. Thomson observes, “It really is quite exhilarating to see what tender creatures we were in 1960.”

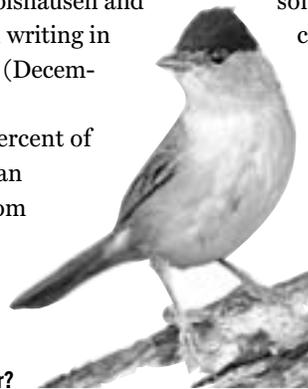
Birds Formerly of a Feather

Going in different directions

Is your bird feeder spurring evolutionary change? Maybe so, according to Gregor Rolshausen and three coauthors, writing in *Current Biology* (December 29, 2009).

Around 10 percent of Central European blackcaps fly from southern Germany to the United King-

Is the UK blackcap evolving at the feeder?



dom every winter, lured by human-provided birdseed. The rest of these warblers head to Spain. The split migration has been going on since the 1960s, and the researchers report that the two groups have evolved differently. The UK blackcaps have rounder wings, reflecting the shorter distance they travel. And their beaks are longer and narrower, well suited to bird feeders. By contrast, the Spain-goers’ broader beaks are better for fruit trees. The ultimate result, the researchers say, may be two distinct species.

Babysitters United

Sofa solidarity

On a quest for equal rights, many American babysitters informally unionized in the late 1940s. Some demanded extra pay for working late at night, according to *Babysitter: An American History* (New York University Press), by Miriam Forman-Brunell. Sitters in West Branch, Michigan, demanded an extra 15 cents for washing dishes. In Leonia, New Jersey, babysitters demanded “adequate heat.”

But unionization couldn’t solve all problems. “Little children are bothersome beings that have to be waited on hand and foot, who are generally around when not wanted, and who are, all in all, a nuisance,” one girl later wrote of her inaugural experience as a babysitter. Her name was Sylvia Plath.

Slave States, Free Press

*Dixieland takes
its stand*

While Abraham Lincoln suppressed more than 300 newspapers during the Civil War, Jefferson Davis took pride in not suppressing any. On the contrary, media historian Debra Reddin van Tuyl writes in an unpublished paper, Confederate leaders often stepped in and protected journalists from would-be censors in the military.

When a general tried to censor *The Richmond Dispatch* in 1862 for publishing troop locations, Confederate secretary of war Judah P. Benjamin intervened. Keeping secrets, he said, was a job for the military, not for the press.

The same year, a major general threatened to jail any journalist who disclosed anything that might

sap the public's confidence in Confederate leaders. A Tennessee member of the Confederate congress declared the general a menace to the "great pillars" of freedom, and both houses of the congress passed legislation to rein in the powers of the military.

Jefferson Davis suspended the writ of habeas corpus (as did Lincoln) and imprisoned some critics, according to van Tuyl, but he never went after the press. Press freedom was a foundation of the U.S. Constitution, and, Davis asserted, the Confederacy "alone has remained true to the original principles of the United States." To a friend, he reportedly said, "It is a dangerous thing to interfere with the liberty of the press, for what would it avail us if we gain our independence and lose our liberty?"



Abraham Lincoln was vilified in some quarters for abandoning the principles of the Founding Fathers during the Civil War.

Pops and the Poet

Mispronunciations

He may be Louie to his fans, but that wasn't Louis Armstrong's preferred pronunciation, according to Terry Teachout's *Pops* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). Armstrong in 1944 wrote that "All White Folks call me Louie." Explains Teachout, "Many blacks did so, too, including several of his sidemen and at least one of his four wives, though he pronounced his first name 'LEW-is.'"

John Keats may have

had his own pronunciation problems, Caleb Crain reports in *The New York Times Magazine* (November 1, 2009). It seems the poet dropped his



Louis—not Louie—Armstrong in 1944

R's: He rhymed *thorns* with *favens* and *parsons* with *fastens*. Although *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* took issue with such "Cockney rhymes" in 1818, scholar Lynda Mugglestone terms *R*-dropping the "then-current educated usage." Crain observes that Keats had a keen appreciation of dialect, and adds that he was "probably too gifted a linguist to have been saddled long with an accent that embarrassed him."

America's Literary Left

French fantasy

The trouble with America's leading writers, John Gerassi said to his friend Jean-Paul Sartre in the early 1970s, was that they were "liberal but not leftists." Not so, Sartre replied, according to Gerassi's *Talking With Sartre: Conversations and Debates* (Yale University Press).

Sartre said he had read Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969)

and E. L. Doctorow's *Book of Daniel* (1971). "Those authors are with us, Gerassi, whatever they or their critics say. Perhaps they haven't experienced decision making by a collective, a true collective where they are totally equal to all. But they're there. . . . America has not suffered an invasion, a foreign occupation, a bloody dictatorship. So it's hard for its intellectuals to expect and want total structural change. They're all stuck on reforms. That's normal. But when the revolution comes, they'll be on its side."

"What is Sartre saying here?" Doctorow responds by e-mail to the *WQ*. "If an invasion, a foreign occupation, or a bloody dictatorship came to my country, I would resist. I would fight to restore our democracy. I would be with the resistance. Resistance is not revolution. Is it possible that the great Sartre, a sometime member of the French Resistance in World War II, would, in a cloud of tobacco smoke, conflate the two? Or is the revolution he imagines supposed to arise indigenously from the Republic we have now—complete with idealized 'collective decision making'? Didn't Babel, Mandelstam, Akhmatova, Pasternak, experience decision making by a collective? Do I have that wrong? Tell me I am to conform my writing to the dictates of a collective and I am out the door. Vonnegut, I am fairly sure, would walk out with me."

M*A*S*H Cash

Painless profits

For a scene in his 1970 film *M*A*S*H*, director Robert Altman wanted a song about suicide, but it had to be "the stupidest song that was ever written." He tried to

write it himself, according to Mitchell Zuckoff's *Robert Altman: The Oral Biography* (Knopf), but couldn't do it. "I

minutes." Mandel put them to music.

"They paid me 500 bucks and gave me 50 percent of the song,"



Director Robert Altman on the *M*A*S*H* set with Elliott Gould and Donald Sutherland.

can't get anything nearly as stupid as I need," Altman (who died in 2006) told composer Johnny Mandel. "But all is not lost. I have this kid who is a total idiot. He'll run through this thing like a dose of salts."

"I was writing a lot of poetry at the time," Michael Altman, then 14, remembers. His father told him to try writing a song called "Suicide Is Painless." After some false starts, the son wrote the lyrics "in about 10

says Altman fils. Then the TV series *M*A*S*H* came out, with "Suicide Is Painless" as its theme. "I got another check for, like, 26 bucks. And then the second check was like \$130. . . . And the next check was like \$26,000. . . . I think I ended up making close to \$2 million. And [Robert Altman] had gotten paid \$75,000 to direct the movie and no points." His father was "livid about that for years."

—Stephen Bates

Saint Cesar of Delano

As the leader of the farm workers' movement, Cesar Chavez became an iconic figure of the 1960s. But his union was largely a failure. It was as a martyr who embodied the psychic contrast between Mexico and America that he commanded our attention.

BY RICHARD RODRIGUEZ

THE FUNERAL FOR CESAR CHAVEZ TOOK PLACE IN AN open field near Delano, a small agricultural town at the southern end of California's Central Valley. I remember an amiable Mexican disorder, a crowd listening and not listening to speeches and prayers delivered from a raised platform beneath a canvas tent. I do not remember a crowd numbering 30,000 or 50,000, as some estimates have it—but then I do not remember. Perhaps a cool, perhaps a warm spring sun. Men in white shirts carried forward a pine box. The ease of their movement suggested the lightness of their burden.

When Cesar Chavez died in his sleep in 1993, not yet a very old man at 66, he died—as he had so often portrayed himself in life—as a loser. The United Farm Workers (UFW) union he had cofounded was in decline; the union had 5,000 members, equivalent to the population of one very small Central Valley town. The labor in California's agricultural fields was largely taken up by Mexican migrant workers—the very workers Chavez had been unable to reconcile to his American union, whom he had branded “scabs” and wanted reported to immigration authorities.

I went to the funeral because I was writing a piece on Chavez for *The Los Angeles Times*. It now occurs to me that

RICHARD RODRIGUEZ, an editor with New America Media in San Francisco, is the author of *Brown: The Last Discovery of America* (2002) and *Days of Obligation: An Argument With My Mexican Father* (1992), and other books. Currently he is writing a book about the Desert God and the Abrahamic religions.

I was present at a number of events involving Cesar Chavez. I was a teenager at the edge of the crowd in 1966, when Chavez led UFW marchers to the steps of the capitol in Sacramento to generate support for a strike against grape growers. A few years later, I went to hear him speak at Stanford University. I can recall everything about the occasion except why I was there. I remember a golden light of late afternoon; I remember the Reverend Robert McAfee Brown introducing Cesar Chavez. Something about Chavez embarrassed me. It was as though someone from my family had turned up at Stanford to lecture undergraduates on the hardness of a Mexican's life. I stood at the back of the room. I did not join in the standing ovation. I would not give him anything. And yet, of course, there was something compelling about his homeliness.

In her thoroughly researched and thoroughly unsentimental book *The Union of Their Dreams: Power, Hope, and Struggle in Cesar Chavez's Farm Worker Movement*, journalist Miriam Pawel chronicles the lives of a collection of people—farm workers, idealistic college students, young East Coast lawyers, a Presbyterian minister, and others—who gave years of their lives at subsistence pay to work for the UFW. By the end of her book, every person Pawel profiles has left the union—has been fired or has quit in disgust or frustration. Nevertheless, it is not beside the point to notice that Cesar Chavez inspired such a disparate, devoted company.

We easily forget that the era we call “the Sixties” was not



Seated beside U.S. Senator Robert F. Kennedy and fed by Presbyterian minister Chris Hartmire, Cesar Chavez breaks his 1968 fast in a symbolic tableau.

only a time of vast civic disaffection; it was also a time of religious idealism. At the forefront of what amounted to the religious revival of America in those years were the black Protestant ministers of the civil rights movement, ministers who insisted upon a moral dimension to the rituals of everyday American life—eating at a lunch counter, riding a bus, going to school.

Cesar Chavez similarly cast his campaign for better wages and living conditions for farm workers as a religious movement. He became for many Americans, especially Mexican Americans (my parents among them), a figure of spiritual authority. I remember a small brown man with an Indian aspect leading labor protests that were also medieval religious processions of women, children, nuns, college students,

burnt old men—under the banner of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

By the time he had become the most famous Mexican American anyone could name—his face on the cover of *Time*—the majority of Mexican Americans lived in cities, far from the tragic fields of California's Central Valley that John Steinbeck had made famous a generation before. Mexican Americans were more likely to work in construction or in service-sector jobs than in the fields.

Cesar Chavez was born in Yuma, Arizona, in 1927. During the hardscrabble years of his youth, he dropped out of school to work in the fields of Arizona and California. As a young man he accumulated an autodidact's library. He read books on economics, philosophy, history. (Years later, Chavez was apt to quote Winston Churchill at UFW staff meetings.)

He studied the black civil rights movement, particularly the writings of Martin Luther King Jr. He studied most intently the lives and precepts of St. Francis of Assisi and Mohandas Gandhi.

It is heartening to learn about private acts of goodness in

CESAR CHAVEZ SEEMED to understand, the way Charlie Chaplin understood, how to make an embarrassment of himself.

notorious lives. It is discouraging to learn of the moral failures of famously good people. The former console. But to learn that the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was a womanizer is to be confronted with the knowledge that flesh is a complicated medium for grace. To learn that there were flaws in the character of Cesar Chavez is again to test the meaning of a good life. During his lifetime, Chavez was considered by many to be a saint. Pawel is writing outside the hagiography, but while reading her book, I found myself wondering about the nature of sanctity. Saints? Holiness? I apologize for introducing radiant nouns.

The first portrait in *The Union of Their Dreams* is of Eliseo Medina. At the advent of the UFW, Eliseo was a shy teenager, educated only through the eighth grade. Though he was not confident in English, Medina loved to read *El Malcriado*, the feisty bilingual weekly published by the UFW. He remembered that his life changed the Thursday night he went to hear Chavez in the social hall of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Delano. He was “disappointed by the leader’s unimpressive appearance.” But by the end of the evening, he had determined to join the union.

No Chavez speech I have read or heard approaches the rhetorical brilliance of the Protestant ministers of the black civil rights movement. Chavez was, however, brilliantly theatrical. He seemed to understand, the way Charlie Chaplin understood, how to make an embarrassment of himself—his mulishness, his silence, his witness. His presence at the edge of a field was a blight of beatitude.

Chavez studied the power of abstinence. He internalized

his resistance to injustice by refusing to eat. What else can a poor man do? Though Chavez had little success encouraging UFW volunteers to follow his example of fasting, he was able to convince millions of Americans (as many as 20 million, by some estimates) not to buy grapes or lettuce.

Farmers in the Central Valley were bewildered to find themselves roped into a religious parable. Indeed, Valley growers, many of them Catholics, were distressed when their children came home from parochial schools and reported that Chavez was used as a moral

exemplum in religion class.

At a time in the history of American entrepreneurialism when Avis saw the advantage of advertising itself as “Number Two” and Volkswagen sold itself as the “bug,” Chavez made the smallness of his union, its haphazardness, a kind of boast. In 1968, during his most publicized fast to support the strike of grape pickers, Chavez issued this statement (he was too weak to read aloud): “Those who oppose our cause are rich and powerful and they have many allies in high places. We are poor. Our allies are few.”

Chavez ended his 1968 fast in a tableau that was rich with symbol and irony. Physically diminished (in photographs his body seems unable to sustain an erect, seated position), he was handed bread (sacramental ministrations after his trial in the desert) by Chris Hartmire, the Presbyterian minister who gave so much of his life to serving Chavez and his union. The Protestant activist was feeding the Catholic ascetic. Alongside Chavez sat Robert F. Kennedy, then a U.S. senator from New York. The poor and the meek also have allies in high places.

Here began a conflict between deprivation and success that would bedevil Chavez through three decades. In a way, this was a struggle between the Mexican Cesar Chavez and the American Cesar Chavez. For it was Mexico that taught Chavez to value a life of suffering. It was America that taught him to fight the causes of suffering.

The speech Chavez had written during his hunger strike of 1968, wherein he compared the UFW to David fighting Goliath, announced the Mexican theme: “I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness

is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally non-violent struggle for justice. To be a man is to suffer for others. God help us to be men.” (Nearly three decades later, in the program for Chavez’s funeral, the wording of his psalm was revised—“humanity” substituted for “manliness”: *To be human is to suffer for others. God help me to be human.*)

Nothing else Chavez would write during his life had such haunting power for me as this public prayer for a life of suffering; no utterance would sound so Mexican. Other cultures in the world assume the reality of suffering as something to be overcome. Mexico assumes the inevitability of suffering. That knowledge informs the folk music of Mexico, the bitter humor of its proverbs, the architecture of its stoicism. *To be a man is to suffer for others.* The code of machismo (which in American English translates too crudely to sexual bravado) in Mexico derives from a medieval chivalry whereby a man uses his strength to protect those less powerful. *God help us to be men.*

Mexicans believe that in 1531 the Virgin Mary appeared in brown skin, in royal Aztec raiment, to a converted Indian peasant named Juan Diego. The Virgin asked that a church be erected on the site of her four apparitions so that Mexican

Indians could come to her and tell her of their suffering. Our Lady of Guadalupe was a part of every UFW demonstration.

Though he grew up during the American Depression, Chavez breathed American optimism and American activism. In the early 1950s, while still a farm worker, he met Fred Ross of the Community Service Organization, a group inspired by the principles of the radical organizer Saul Alinsky. Chavez later became an official in the CSO, and eventually its president. He persuaded notoriously apathetic Mexican Americans to register to vote by encouraging them to believe they could change their lives in America.

If you would understand the tension between Mexico and the United States that is playing out along our mutual border, you must understand the psychic tension between Mexican stoicism—if that is a rich enough word for it—and American optimism. On the one side, Mexican peasants are tantalized by the American possibility of change. On the other side, the tyranny of American optimism has driven Americans to neurosis and depression—when the dream is elusive or less meaningful than the myth promised. This constitutes the great irony of the Mexican-American border: American sadness has transformed the drug lords of Mex-



Cesar Chavez leads farm workers and supporters on a 340-mile march from his hometown of Delano to the steps of the California state capitol in Sacramento in 1966. The union leader called the journey the *Peregrinacion* (Pilgrimage), imbuing it with religious overtones.

ico into billionaires, even as the peasants of Mexico scramble through the darkness to find the American dream.

By the late 1960s, as the first UFW contracts were being signed, Chavez began to brood. Had he spent his poor life only to create a middle class? Lionel Steinberg, the first grape grower to sign with the UFW, was drawn by Chavez's charisma but chagrined at the union's disordered operations. "Is it a social movement or a trade union?" Steinberg wondered. He urged Chavez to use experienced negotiators from the AFL-CIO.

Chavez paid himself a subsistence annual wage of \$5,000. "You can't change anything if you want to hold onto a good job, a good way of life, and avoid suffering." The world-famous labor leader would regularly complain to his poorly paid staff about the phone bills they ran up and about what he saw as the misuse of a fleet of second-hand UFW cars. He held the union hostage to the purity of his intent. Eliseo Medina, who had become one of the union's most effective organizers, could barely support his young family and, without even the prospect of establishing a savings account, asked Chavez about setting up a trust fund for his infant son. Chavez promised to get back to him but never did. Shortly after, discouraged by the mismanagement of the union, Medina resigned.

In 1975, Chavez helped to pass legislation prohibiting the use of the short-handled hoe—its two-foot-long haft forced farm workers to stoop all day. That achievement would outlast the decline of his union. By the early 1970s, California vegetable growers had begun signing sweetheart contracts with the rival Teamsters Union. The UFW became mired in scraps with unfriendly politicians in Sacramento. Chavez's attention wandered. He imagined a "Poor Peoples Union" that would reach out to senior citizens and people on welfare. He contacted church officials within the Vatican about the possibility of establishing a religious society devoted to service to the poor. He grew interested in the Hutterite communities of North America and the Israeli kibbutzim as possible models.

Chavez visited Synanon, the drug rehabilitation commune headed by Charles Dederich, shortly before some of its members were implicated in a series of sexual scandals and criminal assaults. Chavez borrowed from Synanon a version of a disciplinary practice called "the Game," whereby UFW staff members were obliged to stand in the middle of a circle of peers and submit to fierce criticism. Someone sympathetic to Chavez might

argue that the Game was an inversion of an ancient monastic discipline meant to teach humility. Someone less sympathetic might conclude that Chavez was turning into a petty tyrant. I think both estimations are true.

From his reading, Chavez would have known that St. Francis of Assisi desired to imitate the life of Jesus. The followers of Francis desired to imitate the life of Francis. Within 10 years of undertaking his mendicant life, Francis had more than 1,000 followers. Francis realized he could not administer a growing religious order by personal example. He relinquished the administration of the Franciscans to men who had some talent for organization. Cesar Chavez never gave up his position as head of the UFW.

In 1977 Chavez traveled to Manila as a guest of President Ferdinand Marcos. He ended up praising the old dictator. There were darker problems within the UFW. It was rumored that some within the inner circle were responsible for a car crash that left Cleofas Guzman, an apostate union member, with permanent brain damage.

Chavez spent his last years protesting the use of pesticides in the fields. In April of 1993, he died.

In death, Cesar Chavez became a Mexican saint and an American hero. The year after his death, Chavez was awarded the National Medal of Freedom by President Bill Clinton. In 2002, the U.S. Postal Service unveiled a 37-cent stamp bearing the image of Cesar Chavez. Politicians throughout the West and the Southwest attached Chavez's name to parks and schools and streets and civic buildings of every sort.

In 1997 American painter Robert Lentz, a Franciscan brother, painted an icon of "Cesar Chavez of California." Chavez is depicted with a golden halo. He holds in his hand a scrolled broadsheet of the U.S. Constitution. He wears a pink sweatshirt bearing the UFW insignia.

That same year, executives at the advertising agency TBWA/Chiat/Day came up with a campaign for Apple computers that featured images of some famous dead—John Lennon, Albert Einstein, Frank Sinatra—alongside a grammar-crunching motto: THINK DIFFERENT.

I remember sitting in bad traffic on the San Diego Freeway and looking up to see a photograph of Cesar Chavez on a billboard. His eyes were downcast. He balanced a rake and a shovel over his right shoulder. In the upper-left-hand corner was the corporate logo of a bitten apple. ■

Planet Pakistan

In Pakistan, people see Al Qaeda as an imagined threat, and shadowy U.S. agents as the secret power behind major events. How can the United States forge a better partnership with this country that has become the epicenter of global terrorism?

BY ROBERT M. HATHAWAY

AN AMERICAN VISITOR IN PAKISTAN CAN'T HELP thinking at times that he has arrived in a parallel universe. Asked about the presence of Al Qaeda on their country's soil, Pakistanis deny that there is any evidence of it. They lionize A. Q. Khan, who created the country's nuclear weapons program and sold essential nuclear technology and knowledge to Iran, North Korea, and Libya, and they are incensed by American worries about the security of their country's nuclear assets. Suicide bombings and political assassinations are near-daily occurrences, yet many Pakistanis are astonishingly complacent about the murderous groups behind them. They rail instead against the government that is powerless to prevent these attacks and an America that would like nothing better than to see an end to them.

Last October, when I visited, Pakistanis were fuming over the U.S. aid package recently approved by

Congress. The \$7.5 billion Kerry-Lugar bill tripled American support for Pakistan over a five-year period and reversed the overwhelmingly promilitary slant of previous U.S. aid. Instead of going almost entirely to the armed forces, American dollars will flow to schools and clinics, economic development, and efforts to promote the rule of law and democratic governance. Pakistan's friends in Washington were jubilant. Yet most Pakistanis I spoke with insisted that because the aid came with conditions—the U.S. secretary of state must certify that Pakistan is working to end government support for extremist and terrorist groups, for example—it was an affront and a threat to their country's sovereignty. One legislator complained that what Pakistan was being asked to accept was less an aid package than a treaty of surrender.

Denial is a national habit in Pakistan. With a long history of failed governance and political leaders who put their personal interests first, Pakistanis point

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their fingers at the United States, their arch-enemy India, or the all-purpose malefactor often described in the local news media as the “hidden hand”—anyone but themselves to explain their nation’s past failings and precarious present.

If they were characters in a television sitcom, Pakistan and the United States would be a perfectly mismatched pair in a series guaranteed a long run. But in the real world of international affairs, this is a difficult relationship that the United States must repair. Pakistan is too important for us to sit idly by while it deteriorates. Its 175 million people make it the sixth most populous country in the world; and other than Indonesia, no country is home to more Muslims.

EVEN IN THE SWANKIEST neighborhoods of Islamabad, power blackouts are so frequent as to merit no comment.

With roughly 650,000 active-duty personnel, its military is almost as large as the combined forces of Britain, France, and Germany. And Pakistan is one of the world’s nine nuclear-armed states, with perhaps 50 to 100 weapons.

It is a conservative, patriarchal society, yet it has twice been led by a female prime minister, Benazir Bhutto. Women play highly visible roles not only in politics but in the news media and in professional life; on three separate occasions, Pakistan’s ambassador in Washington has been a woman, a fact that underscores the contradictory character of the country and the relatively modern outlook of its educated classes. Ruled by the army for more than half its history, Pakistan nonetheless boasts an obstreperous civil society and a free, often unruly press. It is a feudal society where tribal and clan ties loom large, and powerful landowners control thousands of votes on election day. Men, women, and children still carry huge piles of firewood on their shoulders along city streets, as if the past 500 years had never occurred. Yet the country also boasts an active stock exchange, a cultured

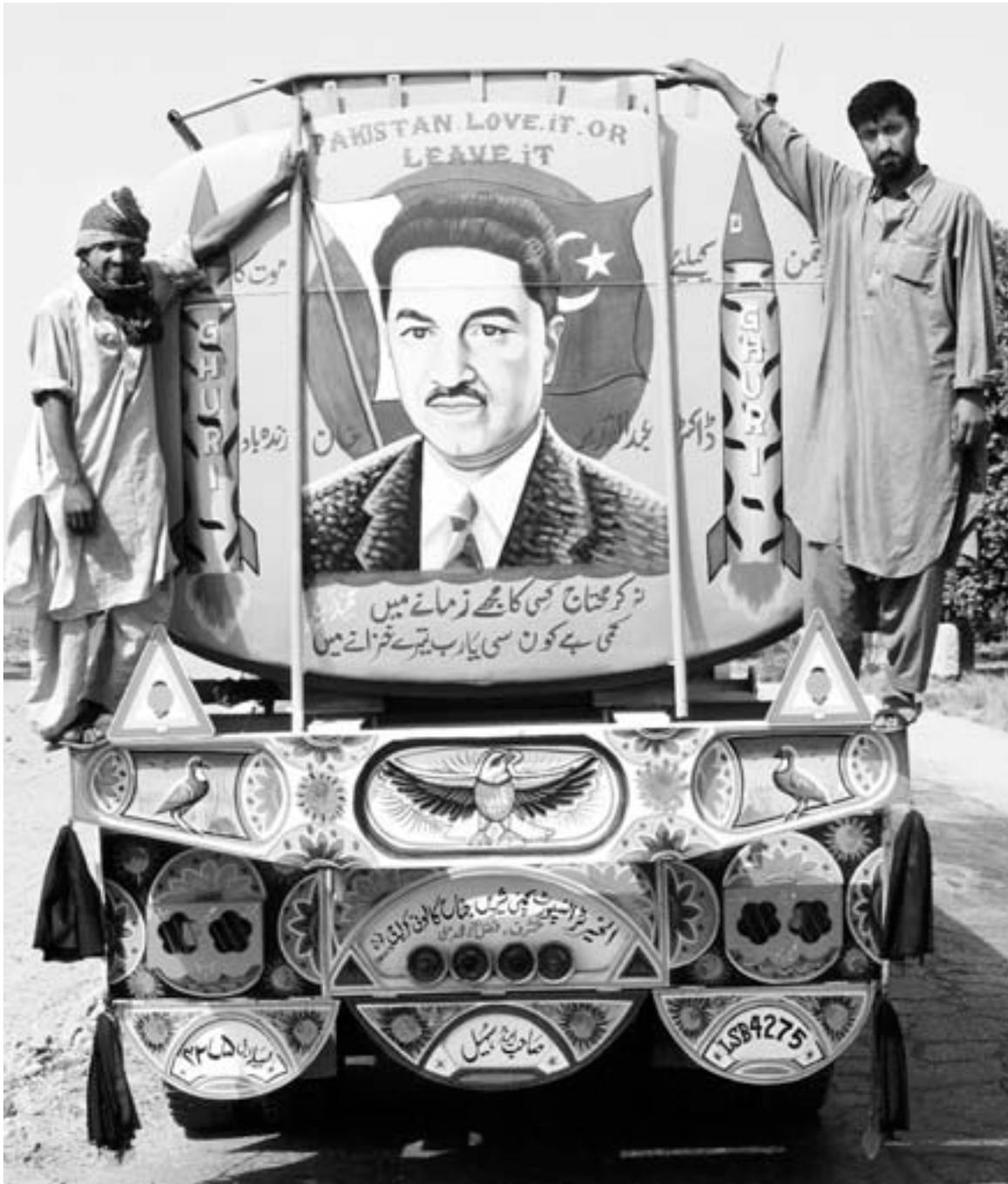
urban elite that enjoys its Scotch, and, of course, those 21st-century nuclear weapons.

Pakistan’s troubles are alarmingly plentiful and plain to see. Its economic growth rate is the lowest in South Asia, while its inflation rate is among the highest in the world. Its education system is in shambles, its judicial system inefficient and frequently corrupt, its political institutions ineffectual. Pakistan comes in near the bottom on most human development indexes. According to the United Nations, it ranks below 133 other countries in adult literacy. Power shortages are endemic, aggravating already high levels of unemployment and increasingly stoking demonstrations and other signs of political instability. Even in the swankiest neighborhoods of Karachi, the country’s commercial and financial hub, or the capital city of

Islamabad, blackouts are so frequent as to merit no comment—a good host always keeps plenty of candles at the ready.

Instability has become a way of life for Pakistan. Islamabad’s authority does not even extend over the entire country. Baluchistan, the largest of the country’s four provinces, is home to a low-level but long-running separatist insurgency. Armed gangs, some affiliated with political parties, periodically bring the great city of Karachi to the edge of anarchy. The tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan have never been fully incorporated into the Pakistani body politic, but have enjoyed a semi-autonomous status and are best known for their fierce resistance, sometimes by force of arms, to Islamabad’s control.

More urgently, a variety of loosely linked Islamist groups known in the West as the Pakistan Taliban, many with ties to Al Qaeda, have in recent years unleashed attacks on markets, schools, restaurants, hotels, mosques, and other public places throughout the country. On the day I arrived in mid-October, a suicide bombing in the rugged northern district of



As the father of the Pakistani bomb, A.Q. Khan is a folk hero at home. Elsewhere he is known as the man who sold nuclear secrets to rogue states.

Swat killed more than 40 people. The previous weekend, extremists had carried out a bold attack on the army's general headquarters, in the city of Rawalpindi, killing a Pakistani general and 22 others.

A day earlier, 50 people had died in a car bombing in Peshawar. Overall, terrorism took the lives of more than 300 Pakistani civilians in October.

Many of the groups that now besiege the country



were nurtured over several decades by Pakistan's military and intelligence services. That support, which in retrospect appears ill judged if not suicidal, was the product of the country's obsession with India, its existential enemy since Pakistan was born out of the violent partition of the Subcontinent in 1947. India and Pakistan have fought four wars since then. The thinking in Islamabad was that these groups would tie down Indian forces along the border, especially around the disputed region of Kashmir, helping to compensate for Pakistan's conventional military inferiority while enabling Islamabad to deny any responsibility for their guerrilla activities. Only recently have the government and army begun to rethink this policy. Meanwhile, Pakistan has bled. With the exception of Iraq and Afghanistan, which are active war zones, Pakistan has suffered more from terrorism in recent years than any other nation in the world. According to the U.S. National Counterterrorism Center, it experienced more than 1,100 terrorist

attacks in the first six months of 2009, or more than six a day. The final count for the second half of the year will almost surely be higher.

Pakistan has become the epicenter of global terrorism, earning a reputation as the most dangerous place on earth. Pakistanis bridle at the label, yet U.S. intelligence believes that the remnants of Al Qaeda's leadership are hiding either in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan, or in the mountainous tribal areas straddling the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. A passport recently found in the tribal areas has been linked to two of the hijackers involved in the 9/11 attacks.

A visitor to Islamabad cannot avoid daily reminders of the extremist threat. Police

checkpoints interrupt the flow of traffic every few blocks. Heavily armed soldiers bivouac in tents along the city's broad boulevards. Coils of concertina wire sit atop a wall surrounding the U.S. embassy, giving it the look of a beleaguered outpost in enemy territory—hardly an advertisement for American soft power. Hotels are ringed with security barriers. A new blast wall prevents easy access to the Marriott hotel, the site of an attack two years ago that killed at least 53 people and injured more than 260. I find that these days I think much more about personal security than during my earlier visits. When my driver's wrong turn took us down a dead-end street in October, I instinctively thought of kidnapping and scanned the streetscape for an escape route.

And yet, one suspects that many of the security measures I saw are just for show. As my car approached checkpoints, police would peer inside, see my Western features, and wave us through. But they did the same thing with nearly every car, making one wonder what

they were looking for, or what the purpose of these traffic stops actually was. Still in denial?

The United States looms large in the minds of most Pakistanis. Nothing in Pakistan, one hears repeatedly, happens except at the instigation of one of the three *A*'s: Allah, the army, or America. When I visited last fall, the newspapers and especially the sensationalist television talk shows were obsessed with rumors that heavily armed U.S. diplomats were prowling the streets of Islamabad. The notorious (especially in Muslim countries) U.S. security company Blackwater, which has tried to "rebrand" itself as Xe Services, was said to be scouring the country for Pakistan's nuclear arsenal in preparation for a U.S. commando attack. In Islamabad, the U.S. Embassy's plan to expand in order to accommodate the influx of workers that will come with increased U.S. aid was cited by commentators as fresh evidence of an American plot to take over the country.

Alas, none of this is new. For more than 50 years, the U.S.–Pakistan relationship has been for both sides one of repeated disappointment. Pakistanis embrace a narrative of American betrayal. Exhibit A is the U.S. withdrawal from the region following the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the late 1980s, and the 1990 termination of most American assistance to Pakistan, required by U.S. law because of Pakistan's increasingly obvious efforts to develop nuclear weapons. The United States treated Pakistan as a pawn in its Cold War struggle against the Soviets, runs the oft-repeated complaint, then disposed of it "like a used Kleenex."

Missing from this historical recollection is any recognition that Pakistan used its Cold War partnership with the Americans for its own purposes—notably, its rivalry with India. American arms meant to shore up Pakistani defenses against possible Soviet aggression were employed instead against India, a U.S. friend. American political and diplomatic support was repaid by Pakistani efforts to smuggle sensitive tech-

nologies out of the United States, in direct violation of U.S. law. Solemn Pakistani pledges to forgo nuclear weapons were flagrant lies. If Pakistanis believe the United States has been an unfaithful friend, Americans have every reason to complain that Pakistani governments since the 1950s have repeatedly and consistently deceived the United States. But these inconvenient facts do not fit within the Pakistani narrative. All too seldom does one find a willingness even among educated Pakistanis to accept responsibility for anything that might have gone wrong in their country's 60-year history.

In Washington, meanwhile, the notion that the United States cleverly orchestrates events in Pakistan

NOTHING IN PAKISTAN, one hears repeatedly, happens without Allah, the army, or America.

strikes most American Pakistan-watchers as nonsensical. From their vantage point, the United States has painfully little influence in Pakistan. It was powerless to persuade, coerce, bribe, or otherwise prevent Islamabad from going down the nuclear path in the 1980s, or from crossing the final threshold and testing a nuclear weapon in 1998. American hopes that Pakistan would evolve into a stable democracy and a modern, progressive society have been repeatedly disappointed. U.S. efforts to encourage Pakistan to abandon its obsession with India in favor of tackling its many domestic challenges have failed abysmally. Great power has not always conveyed great leverage.

A recent case in point: Washington's desire in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks to find in Pakistan a stalwart ally in the war against terrorism has repeatedly run aground on the reality that Pakistan defines terrorism very differently from the United States. Convinced that America will eventually tire of fighting in Afghanistan and once again withdraw from the region, the Pakistani military and intelligence services regard many of the groups Washington deems "terrorists" as a necessary hedge in the inevitable renewed competition with India



The message was clear in this protest march in Lahore last October. The demonstration's Islamist organizers demanded that Pakistan reject the \$7.5 billion aid package recently approved in Washington.

for influence in Afghanistan.

Most Pakistanis disapprove of America's war in Afghanistan and believe that terrorism in their country is a direct outgrowth of U.S. military operations across the border. They angrily denounce America's use of drone aircraft to target Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan's tribal areas. Many Pakistanis suspect that Washington's antiterrorism agenda merely masks a plot to seize Pakistan's prized nuclear assets. Such dramatic differences of perspective do not make for a comfortable alliance. Indeed, during her visit to Pakistan at the end of October, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton publicly asked how it was possible that no one in Pakistan's military and intelligence services knew where Osama bin Laden and his top lieutenants were hiding. Many Pakistanis professed to be offended by the question.

Notwithstanding the unhappy past and confounding present, the United States has an enormous strategic interest in seeing Pakistan succeed. If the world's second-largest Muslim-majority country can become a force for tolerance, pluralism, and modernity, this will

carry immense benefits for the United States—and not incidentally, for Pakistanis. If, on the other hand, Pakistan collapses into anarchy, it will pose a far greater threat as a terrorist haven than Afghanistan did on September 10, 2001. And this does not even take into account the nightmare scenario of Pakistan's nuclear assets falling into the wrong hands.

Despite the profound differences separating the two countries, a mutually beneficial partnership is not inconceivable. Pakistanis are not a people who disdain America's values. Until very recently Americans were welcome in Pakistan, and felt at ease traveling into the far corners of the country. Pakistani families send their children to study at

U.S. universities; many have relatives living in the United States. An American green card, entitling the owner to work in the United States, is a prized possession. The practice of Islam in Pakistan has historically been tolerant, reflecting the influence of the faith's mystical Sufi branch among the country's worshipers. Only since the 1980s has Islam in Pakistan evolved into something less comfortable for Americans—the result of inroads by Saudi-financed dogmatic Wahabbism; the cultivation of extremist groups to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan; the policies of the pious Zia ul-Haq, Pakistan's military ruler in the 1980s; and a general failure on the part of successive Pakistani governments (and outside aid donors) to provide young Pakistanis with political and economic opportunities.

No doubt, the new strength of Pakistani Wahhabism has pushed the country in a conservative direction. But the excesses of the extremists, while cowing many Pakistanis, have also had a contrary effect, encouraging many to rethink who their friends really are. Polls, news media comment, and other evidence

portray a decided shift in sentiment away from those who perpetrate violence in the name of godliness, and toward support of the use of force to eradicate them.

The army, which for decades has cultivated many of the groups responsible for the violence in Pakistan, now appears to have concluded that domestic extremism represents an even greater threat to the country than India does. Last spring, the military abandoned its earlier strategy of negotiating so-called peace accords with these groups and launched a major offensive to drive the militants from the Swat Valley. In October, during my visit, it mounted another large operation, this time in mountainous South Waziristan, along the border with Afghanistan. The region is home to some of the most violent extremists, notably the Mehsud tribe, said to be responsible for many of the most egregious suicide bombings in Pakistan in recent years. The fighting has been intense, but the army has continued to push forward. The shocking attack on its general headquarters in Rawalpindi seems to have personalized the Islamist threat for the military high command.

To be sure, Pakistan's governing institutions remain pathetically weak, a deficiency that must temper any optimism prompted by the army's newfound vigor in pursuit of extremists. Few Pakistanis have confidence in the civilian-led government headed by President Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of Benazir Bhutto. Zardari swept to victory at the polls in February 2008 in the aftermath of her assassination, but since then he has squandered his mandate and almost certainly could not win an election today. As if allegations of ineptitude and corruption, on top of a poor relationship with the army, were not enough, he is seen by most Pakistanis as America's man—a sizable irony considering that few in Washington have any great confidence in his abilities.

For the time being, however, the government and the army are in accord on the need to move forcefully against the extremists. This, at any rate, is a start. It raises the possibility that the fight against terrorism might at last

bring the United States and Pakistan together rather than divide them.

But antiterrorism by itself is not a sufficient foundation for a long-term partnership. A positive agenda is needed, one that recognizes shared bonds and mutual interests, not merely common enemies. The Kerry-Lugar aid bill, by putting the United States firmly behind the proposition that Washington supports civilian-based

DENIAL, SCAPEGOATING, and a willful refusal to embrace reality are luxuries Pakistan can no longer afford.

democracy, economic development, the rule of law, and access to decent education and adequate health care in Pakistan, is an important step in that direction.

An additional ingredient is needed, however, if the United States and Pakistan are to build a real partnership: truthfulness. During Secretary Clinton's October visit to Pakistan, she was on the receiving end of a seemingly endless barrage of complaints about the United States and its policies. And she pushed back. She admitted past U.S. mistakes—acknowledging, for instance, that America had not always been a stalwart friend—but she also insisted that building a long-term relationship requires two equally committed parties. Denial, scapegoating, and a willful refusal to embrace reality, she seemed to be saying, are luxuries Pakistan can no longer afford.

Clinton's candor was refreshing. More than that, it was essential: It is past time for Pakistanis and Americans to have an honest conversation. For instance, Clinton bluntly told Pakistani business leaders they must pay more taxes. Some might find it odd for a secretary of state to be dispensing advice of this sort (particularly in view of America's own fiscal failures). But Clinton's impolitic remark underscored an abiding reality: The United States cannot save Pakistan; only Pakistanis can do that. Unless they accept responsibility for their own future, Pakistan will have no future. That is not a prospect anybody should contemplate with equanimity. ■

Man of the World

Today, as newspapers are shuttered and reporters panhandle for work, it's worth remembering Joseph Pulitzer, whose taste for sensationalism and sense of public service midwifed American journalism into the modern era.

BY JAMES McGRATH MORRIS

IN MAY 1883, AFTER ATTENDING A FUNERAL IN Vermont, *New York World* reporter James B. Townsend returned to Park Row, the stretch of buildings across from New York City Hall that served as America's Fleet Street. There, the *Herald*, the *Tribune*, and the *Sun*, along with less known papers such as the *Times* and the *World*, plied their trade within earshot of one another. With the exception of the *Sun*—a vanguard of the penny press that covered urban tales and partisan politics—the papers produced a dignified and subdued tally of the latest goings-on in American politics, foreign capitals, finance, and polite society that was consumed by those with the economic wherewithal to spend as much as a nickel.

When Townsend had left, a few days earlier, the *World* was on its last legs, and appeared unlikely to be rescued by its owner, the financier Jay Gould. Townsend, one of the few reporters still with the paper, was startled by what he found upon reaching the *World's* offices. "It seemed as if a cyclone had entered the building," he

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recalled later, "completely disarranged everything, and had passed away leaving confusion." Striving to avoid collisions with messenger boys exiting with urgent deliveries, Townsend made his way to the city room and found his colleagues running around excitedly. He asked the general manager about the cause of all the commotion.

"You will know soon enough, young man," the fellow replied. "The new boss will see you in five minutes." He then glanced up at Townsend and added. "After us the deluge—prepare to meet thy fate."

The new owner was Joseph Pulitzer, a 36-year-old Jewish Hungarian immigrant who had come to New York City from St. Louis, where in the short span of five years he had transformed a bankrupt evening newspaper into a moneymaking, politician-breaking, must-read sheet. Pulitzer was part of a new order of journalism—lively, independent, and crusading—that was growing in cities outside New York, like a stage play previewing out of town, working out the kinks while awaiting its chance to open on Broadway.

Townsend was summoned to Pulitzer's office.



Joseph Pulitzer, shown in a 1901 drawing, revolutionized newspapers 100 years ago with splashy headlines and lurid stories. But the man who helped to color journalism yellow was after more than greenbacks.

Dressed in a frock coat and gray trousers, Pulitzer stared at him through his glasses. “So, this is Mr. T.,” he said. “Well, sir, you’ve heard that I am the new chief of this newspaper. I have already introduced new methods—new ways I propose to galvanize this force: Are you willing to aid me?”

Almost as if the breath had been sucked from him by Pulitzer’s vigor, Townsend stammered that he would

like to remain on the staff.

“Good, I like you,” replied Pulitzer. “Get to work.”

During the following days, editors and reporters arriving in the early morning found Pulitzer already in his office, often toiling in his shirtsleeves. When the door was open and he was dictating an editorial, recalled one man, “his speech was so interlarded with sulphurous and searing phrases that the whole staff shuddered. He was the first man I ever heard who split a word to insert an oath. He did it often. His favorite was ‘indegod-dampendent.’”

As the staff settled in for the day’s work, they couldn’t escape Pulitzer. No detail was so small that he considered it beneath his attention. He was once overheard disputing the number of cattle an editor estimated had arrived in New York from the West the previous day.

At first, Pulitzer sought solely to inculcate in his staff the principles by which he believed a paper should be written and edited. This effort, however modest it may seem, is how the *World* began on its path to becoming the most widely read newspaper in American history. (To match the reach, in comparative terms, of the million-

copy circulation of Pulitzer’s *World*, today’s *New York Times* would have to increase its paid readership by 300 percent.) In an era when the printed word ruled supreme and 1,028 daily newspapers across the country vied for readers, content was the means of competition. The medium was not the message; the message was.

The paper abandoned its old front-page headlines. **BENCH SHOW OF DOGS: PRIZES AWARDED ON**

THE SECOND DAY OF THE MEETING IN MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, which appeared on May 10 in the last editions before Pulitzer assumed control, was succeeded on May 12 by SCREAMING FOR MERCY: HOW THE CRAVEN CORNETTI MOUNTED THE SCAFFOLD. Two weeks later, the *World's* readers were greeted with the words BAPTIZED IN BLOOD, atop a story that, with the aid of a diagram, detailed how 11 people were crushed to death in a human stampede when panic broke out in a crowd enjoying a Sunday stroll on the newly opened Brooklyn Bridge. Pulitzer's dramatic headlines made the *World* stand out from its competitors like a racehorse among draft horses.

If the headline was the lure, the copy was the hook. Pulitzer could craft—or teach his editors to craft—all the catchy headlines he wanted, but it was up to the reporters to win over readers. He admonished his staff to write in a buoyant, colloquial style consisting of simple nouns, bright verbs, and short, punchy sentences. The “Pulitzer formula,” if there was one, was a story written so simply that anyone could read it, and so colorfully that no one would forget it. “The question, ‘Did you see that in the *World*?’” Pulitzer instructed his staff, “should be asked every day, and something should be designed to cause this.”

The *World's* stories were animated not just by the facts the reporters dug up but also by the voices of the city they recorded. Pulitzer drove his staff to aggressively seek out interviews, a relatively new technique in journalism. Leading figures of the day, accustomed to a high wall of privacy, were affronted by what Pulitzer proudly called “the insolence and impertinence of the reporters for the *World*.”

Not only did he have the temerity to dispatch his men to pester politicians, manufacturers, bankers, and society figures for answers to endless questions, he also instructed them to return with specific observations. Vagueness was a sin. A tall man stood six feet two inches. A beautiful woman had auburn hair, hazel eyes, and demure lips that occasionally turned upward in a coy smile.

Pulitzer had an uncanny ability to recognize news in what others ignored. He sent out reporters to mine the urban dramas his competitors consigned to their back pages. Typical, for instance, was the tale that ran on the *World's* front page, soon after Pulitzer took

over, about the destitute and widowed Margaret Graham. Dockworkers had seen her walking on the edge of a pier in the East River with an infant in her arms and a small child clutching her skirt. “All at once the famished mother clasped the feeble little girl round her waist and, tottering to the brink of the wharf, hurled both her starving young into the river as it whirled by. She stood for a moment on the edge of the stream. The children were too weak and spent to struggle or to cry. Their little helpless heads dotted the brown tide for an instant, then they sank out of sight.” Graham followed her children into the river, but she was saved by the onlookers and taken to jail to face murder charges.

Pulitzer pushed his writers to think like Charles Dickens, who wove fiction from sad tales of Victorian London, to create compelling entertainment from the drama of the modern city. In the Lower East Side's notorious bars, called “black and tans” for the blend of stout and lager they served, or at dinner in cramped tenements, men and women did not discuss society news, cultural events, or happenings in the investment houses. Rather, the talk was about the toddler who fell to his death from a rooftop, the brutal beating police officers meted out to an unfortunate waif, or the rising fares of streetcar trips to the upper reaches of Fifth Avenue and the mansions where so many working people toiled as servants.

The *World* drew in these readers, many of whom were immigrants struggling to master their first words of English. Writing about the events that mattered in their lives in a way they could understand, Pulitzer's *World* gave these New Yorkers a feeling of belonging and a sense of value. The moneyed class learned to pick up the *World* with trepidation. Each day brought a fresh assault on privilege.

In one stroke, Pulitzer simultaneously elevated the common man and took his spare change. He found readers where other newspaper publishers saw a threat. Immigrants were pouring into New York at an unprecedented rate. By the end of the decade, 80 percent of the





To be close to New York City Hall, newspapers clustered on Park Row in the late 1800s. Here, a crowd reads news bulletins about the Spanish-American War.

city's population was foreign born or of foreign parentage. Only the *World* seemed to consider the stories of this human tide deserving of news coverage.

Pulitzer's own story would have been front-page material had he permitted it. Having arrived in the United States in 1864 as a penniless teenager who had been recruited as a mercenary for the Union

army, Pulitzer gained his first perch as a reporter for a German-language daily newspaper in St. Louis by the time he was 20. Teaching himself English, he entered the hurly-burly world of immigrant politics under the wing of Carl Schurz, the prominent 19th-century German-American politician who served in the U.S. Senate and as secretary of the interior. Pulitzer served briefly as an elected state legislator and was a key member of the reform-minded Liberal Republican Party, a short-lived

wing of the Republican Party that launched a failed insurgency against President Ulysses S. Grant. Afterward, Pulitzer became a lifelong Democrat.

In his time, politics and journalism were two sides of the same coin. Out-of-work politicians became newspaper editors, and successful editors became elected politicians. In 1878, Pulitzer purchased *The St. Louis Dispatch* at a courthouse-steps bankruptcy auction, merged it with *The Evening Post*, and pioneered through experimentation the techniques that would make him a success in New York.

Within a few years of arriving on Park Row, he had transformed the *World* into the unquestionable ruling paper of the nation. Its power made it the 19th-century

formed in the public interest.”

History tends to forget this lofty aspect of Pulitzer, because in pursuit of readers the *World* found itself locked in a no-holds-barred competition with *The New York Journal*, owned by William Randolph Hearst, an upstart imitator who had discovered that clamoring for war with Spain in 1898 boosted readership. The fight between the two sucked the newspapers into a spiraling descent of sensationalism, outright fabrications, and profligate spending that threatened to bankrupt both their credibility and their businesses.

In the end, the two publishers survived this short but intense circulation war. But their rivalry became almost as famous as the Spanish-American War itself. Pulitzer was indissolubly linked with Hearst as a purveyor of yellow journalism. In fact, many later surmised that Pulitzer’s endowment of Columbia University’s journalism school and the establishment, at his death, of national prizes for journalists were thinly veiled

**PULITZER USED HIS PAPER to
promote a progressive—almost radical—
political agenda.**

equivalent of CBS, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post* combined. (Every day, six acres of spruce trees were felled to keep up with the *World’s* demand for paper, and almost every day enough lead was melted into type to set an entire Bible into print.)

But Pulitzer’s motive for chasing readers was not simply pecuniary. He regarded journalism as a source of political power, the kind he had sought when he ran for office. He unabashedly used the paper as a handmaiden of reform, to raise social consciousness and promote a progressive—almost radical—political agenda, ranging from a tax on luxuries and large incomes to a crackdown on corrupt officials.

In his conception, this was the most important role of a newspaper. Reporting the news enabled him to build a readership that would turn to the editorial page for his own sage counsel on affairs of state and politics. “The *World* should be more powerful than the president,” Pulitzer once said. “He is fettered by partisanship and politicians and has only a four-year term. The paper goes on year after year and is absolutely free to tell the truth and perform every service that should be per-

attempts to cleanse his legacy. While the actions may have raised his historical standing, Pulitzer’s motives to improve the professionalism of journalism were heartfelt.

Aside from accumulating considerable political power, Pulitzer midwifed the birth of the modern mass media. He was the first media lord to recognize the vast social changes triggered by the Industrial Revolution, and to capitalize on them by harnessing the converging elements of mass entertainment and technological advances in printing and communication. In filling his newspapers with stories of human interest and sensation harvested from urban life, he radically changed the focus of the news by reporting on matters relating directly to his readers. Like many brilliant ideas, it is a notion that strikes one as common sense today but was radical in his time.

Pulitzer offered this wonder for a penny or two, a price almost anyone could afford. He made news into a commodity, as Ted Turner did a century later when he built CNN to cater to—and stimulate—viewers’ insatiable appetite for news (the same appetite that now drives readers to the Web).

Although he was at times an innovator in journalism,

invention was not Pulitzer's strength. Rather, he possessed remarkable foresight and had an uncanny ability to recognize value where others didn't. He was willing to take risks based on his insights when others remained timid.

For example, when evening papers were the weak sisters of morning editions, Pulitzer risked his last remaining savings on the *Post-Dispatch*. He was convinced that evening papers had a great future—and he was right. The advent of the telegraph and faster printing presses made it possible to publish an afternoon newspaper with news as fresh as that day, making morning papers look as if they were publishing yesterday's news, which in fact they were. Urbanites, particularly factory workers and professionals heading home from work, had a voracious appetite for news and were primed to buy an evening paper. Gaslight, and subsequently electric light, also made reading the newspaper an important evening pastime. In a few years, evening newspapers outnumbered morning ones.

Pulitzer was halted before he had a chance to build a national chain of newspapers, as his younger rival Hearst would eventually do. In 1887, at age 40, he began to lose his eyesight; his deteriorating vision drove him into a personal purgatory of real and imagined illnesses, insomnia, and fanatical intolerance of all sound. The demons that beset him never rested until his death, after years of ill health, in 1911.

During his last two decades, he roamed the globe, living off the paper's profits and his vast accumulated wealth. At any moment, he might be found consulting doctors in Germany, taking the waters in the south of France, resting on the Riviera, walking in a private garden in London, riding on Jekyll Island, hiding in his "Tower of Silence" (as he called a specially constructed turret at his Maine vacation home), or cruising aboard the *Liberty*, a luxurious private yacht rivaled in size and extravagance only by J. P. Morgan's *Corsair*. At sea, the ship's twin steam engines drove propellers set at different pitches and running at varying speeds in order to minimize vibrations carried through the hull. So engineered, the *Liberty* became, in effect, a seagoing counterpart to the Tower of Silence.

Throughout his long exile, Pulitzer never relaxed his grip on the *World*. A stream of telegrams, all written in a code of his own invention, flowed from ports and distant destinations to New York, directing every part of the paper's operation, down to the typeface to be used in advertisements and the vacation schedules of editors.

Managers shipped back reams of financial data, editorial reports, and espionage-style accounts of one another's work. Although he had set foot in the skyscraper headquarters he built in 1890 on Park Row only three times, whenever anyone talked about the newspaper it was always "Pulitzer's *World*."

What would the founder of modern American journalism do today if he ran a newspaper, a product with fewer and fewer readers and of diminishing interest to advertisers? For one, he would sell its presses. The migration to the Web would be an unmistakable trend to a man with Pulitzer's predictive sense. But he would probably be—as are today's media lords—without a cure for the economic cancer eating away at the news media. In his day, the only way businesses could reach consumers was in print. The newspaper with the most readers held the key to the kingdom of profits because it offered the most efficient way for advertisers to make this connection. In those circumstances, it was easy for Pulitzer to tell his readers, when he reduced the price of his paper to a penny, "We prefer power to profits."

But following that dictate today has put the members of the Graham, Ochs, and Sulzberger newspaper families in an intractable quandary. They are giving away their work on the Internet in order to retain their influence in an era in which they no longer offer the most viable venue for advertising. Pulitzer's descendants saw the writing on the wall in 2005 and sold all their remaining media holdings, including his original St. Louis newspaper, while these assets could still fetch billions of dollars.

For Pulitzer, journalism was a sacred pillar of democracy. Though he entered newspaper publishing with the goal of obtaining political power to further his reformist aims, over time he recognized that the craft in which he had met with such success had a higher calling. For that reason, when he outlined his plans for the Pulitzer Prizes at the end of his life, he included public service among the original journalism award categories. "Our republic and its press will rise or fall together," he said, in words that today are inscribed on the walls of Columbia's journalism school. "An able, disinterested, public-spirited press, with trained intelligence to know the right and courage to do it, can preserve that public virtue without which popular government is a sham and a mockery." ■

Not a Tourist

In the age of Google and YouTube, there's no such thing as terra incognita. But it's still possible to travel to unknown places—with a little imagination.

BY THOMAS SWICK

ROW 24, SEATS A, B, AND C.

The young woman by the window turns to the man in the middle and smiles. He smooths her hair and tells her she is going to love his city. Not even off the ground, and they have already created a private lair in the still-upright theater of coach.

The man in the aisle seat immediately experiences feelings of exclusion, envy, and inadequacy. Travel, most people believe, is best when shared—an attitude that makes the solitary traveler one of life's losers.

Just in time, the man reminds himself that he is not a loser. He is a travel writer. He will not be engaged in the superficial pursuits of tourists but in the difficult task of trying to make sense of an alien culture. He looks over somewhat pityingly at the couple, who are now discussing an evening trip to the casino.

Once the plane is airborne, he glances across the aisle at the woman sitting with an open laptop. He overhears her tell her neighbor that she is a public health expert going to fight malaria. She would present an affront to a businessman's sense of importance. The travel writer leans back with a grimace, caught in the eternal no-man's land between pleasure and purpose.

The travel writer, when thought of at all, is regarded

as a charmed figure, never stymied in front of a customs officer or a computer screen. The travel writer, when he reflects, sees himself as aimless, clueless, but nevertheless underappreciated.

He picks a destination, or is assigned one, and often it's a place he's never been. Before departure he reads travel books, histories, relevant novels—even learns a few words of the language—but he remains hopelessly behind the humbling crowds of specialists, anthropologists, diplomats, fieldworkers, exchange students, business travelers, expatriates, flight crews, and repeat vacationers who have preceded him.

So he scrunches into seat 24C, furiously skimming the guidebook he didn't quite get to during his pre-trip preparations. A long flight is an opportunity to cram, a seat-belted all-nighter. There will be a test in the morning.

After the landing, the lovebirds and the do-gooder and all the other passengers disappear in a rush to restart their lives, and the strangeness of the travel writer's surroundings distracts him from the fact that he doesn't have one. At least not here, not yet.

Why didn't he bring his wife, or a friend? Some writers don't want their assignment looking like a lark. Those who embellish their accounts understandably prefer not to have witnesses. Also, going with a like-minded companion makes you susceptible to feelings of

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A travel writer's solitary work can look a lot like play—though it is anything but carefree.

cultural superiority. But the real reason to travel alone is to be free from distractions, to be uninterruptedly absorbed in the place.

Those first few hours are always the most vivid, as everything stands out in its immense originality: buildings, people, cars, mannequins. In a few days these props will pass in a near-familiar blur, but now—right now—the world crackles with high-definition details. And in fact there is no test; the day you arrive is more like an orientation film. Tomorrow you begin your work.

I am talking here of narrative travel writers, not the compilers of information for guidebooks. They tend to hit the ground running, pressed as they are for time and money. It is tiring, thankless work, though—if Thomas Kohnstamm's *Do Travel Writers Go to Hell?* (2008) is to be believed—you can skimp on the research and become a kind of note-taking rock star. Sex, drugs, and flora 'n' fauna.

The traveler in pursuit of atmosphere and essence has a more elusive task. If all writers are by nature

outsiders—standing on the periphery, taking in the action—the travel writer is an outsider times two. He repeatedly ignores the oldest saw of the trade: Write what you know. He is an observer who frequently doesn't know what he's observing. A few years ago in Bangkok, I walked out of my hotel every morning past men and women hunched over bowls whose contents remained a mystery to me. And I asked myself: How can I know what these people are thinking when I don't even know what they're eating?

Audacity didn't strike me as a job requirement when I chose this career. I was fresh out of college with a desire to be a writer and a conviction that, after a lifetime of school, I had nothing to write about. So I went to France to learn French, and two years later I moved to Poland to marry a woman I had met on my way home from France. Teaching English in Warsaw, I acquired another language and enough experiences (this was the early 1980s, the days of Solidarity and martial law) to write my first book. Living in a foreign country not only

gives you a deep understanding of another culture, it introduces you to new ways of being and seeing that are of inestimable value on later journeys.

Yet nonstop observation—even of things you understand—is not enough for the travel writer. After a few days a feeling of futility, not to mention loneliness, sets in. Business travelers have their meetings, aid workers their clinics, tourists their museums. Foreign correspondents are in search of news. Travel writers have no

with the new. Shunning the tour groups, we traipse through neighborhoods and sit in bars and inadvertently make ourselves even more out of place. We are engaged in work that looks a lot like play—even to us. But it lacks play's essential carefree quality. A story has to result. And it weighs on us, this knowledge, along with the idea of our impertinent existence.

But we press on, watching people with purpose go through their day, remembering friends back home

who said they've always dreamed of visiting the place where we now schlep. And without any prompting, we think of Bruce Chatwin—not his 1977 masterpiece *In Patagonia*, but his posthumous 1989 collection *What Am I Doing Here*.

EVELYN WAUGH CLAIMED that he preferred “all but the very worst travel books to all but the very best novels.”

itineraries or obligations (mummies bore us, nobody's expecting us), and we have no leads, since frequently we don't know what our story is. In the absence of a special event, or a specific assignment, we have to find our story, and often it is whatever happens to us.

So we wander, mosey, poke around. This is another reason we go alone: We don't have to explain to anyone what it is we think we're doing. A lot of travel writing is creative hanging out. And, inevitably, it looks pretty pointless. But we're hoping for an incident or a character or even a calamity that can become our subject. The worst trips, it is famously said, make the best stories, a philosophy that fuels the trend in adventure travel. Risk—its heated buildup and colorful consequences—is an irresistible subject. The problem with much of the writing that results is that it's heavy on personal rather than worldly insight, portraying not the place but the author's mettle. A beautiful exception is Joe Kane's *Running the Amazon* (1989), which shifts between gripping accounts of kayaking the length of the world's largest river and evocative depictions of the lands passed through.

Unlike the adventurers, who have a quest, the rest of us struggle with definition. We are not tourists, though we share their transport, their hotels, their intoxication

It is one of the most perfect titles in the history of travel writing, but it could only have graced the cover of a modern travel book. The first travel writers entertained no such uncertainty about their mission. They followed in the footsteps of the explorers, or were explorers themselves. Their objective was clear: to describe to the folks back home an unknown world.

In the 19th century, travel writing became more personal. Alexander Kinglake, in *Eothen* (1844), described not only how the Middle East looked, but also how it felt. To enliven *The Bible in Spain* (1843), George Borrow hung out with Gypsies, theirs being one of the handful of languages he spoke. These writers were joined by others, including novelists—Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Mark Twain—who brought the imaginative and intuitive skills of their trade.

The 20th century gave us “specialists”: Freya Stark in the Arab world, Norman Douglas in Italy, Gerald Brennan in Spain, Patrick Leigh Fermor and Lawrence Durrell in Greece. Durrell, best known for the rich sensuality of the novels that make up *The Alexandria Quartet* (1957–60), grew up on Corfu and lived on a number of other islands. As a novelist who also wrote travel books, he continued in the tradition of D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, and Graham Greene. Evelyn Waugh is remembered as a novelist, but he also wrote *Labels* (1930) and *Remote People* (1931), and claimed

that he preferred “all but the very worst travel books to all but the very best novels.”

Travel writing was one of World War II’s casualties, and really didn’t engage the general population again until the mid-1970s, when Paul Theroux published *The Great Railway Bazaar*. Joy-riding on trains through Europe and Asia, the young American novelist boldly ignored the sights and harrumphed about the people. And he made the travel book fashionable again (until it was swept aside by the memoir).

Curiously, the genre’s renaissance coincided with the appearance of its obituary. In 1980, the cultural critic Paul Fussell published *Abroad*, a superb study of British travel and travel writing between the wars that concludes

with the pronouncement that the postwar age of tourism killed real travel and, by extension, the writing that was its offspring. It didn’t finish off either, any more than televised baseball brought an end to a day at the ballpark. There is still the authentic experience, but, like being a spectator at a game, travel is now altered by its well-recorded popularity.

In an age of mass tourism (and YouTube), the travel writer’s job has changed. It is not enough anymore simply to describe a landscape—we must root out its meanings. British writer Jonathan Raban, playing the immigrant in *Hunting Mister Heartbreak*, goes shopping in 1980s Manhattan and is struck by the tone of bombastic abundance. “Macy’s was scared stiff of our boredom,” he writes, nailing the frenetic nature of not only an American department store but American capitalism. Writers such as Raban, Colin Thubron, Jan Morris, and Pico Iyer possess, in addition to the requisite eye for detail, an agile and well-stocked mind for synthesis, and their findings are riveting (and often surprising), even to people intimately familiar with their subjects. The physical hardships these writers endure in the course of their journeys often pale in comparison to



Months after the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, Scottish journalist Rory Stewart walked across the country accompanied by a retired fighting dog to write *The Places in Between*.

those of their predecessors—though Thubron continues to travel rough—but the scaled-down suffering is offset by the greater creative challenge.

A somewhat related development has been the emergence of the political travel book. Writers such as Robert Kaplan, who has written about the Balkans and other incendiary places, and Rory Stewart, who walked across Afghanistan in *The Places in Between* (2004), resemble to some extent the doughty adventurers of the past as they go off to lands of conflict and return with a mix of history, description, reportage, and analysis.

Sitting at the opposite end of the spectrum—like the pretty cheerleader voted most popular in the class—is the escapist travel book. Peter Mayle sipping pastis in the south of France in *A Year in Provence* (1990) and Frances Mayes rhapsodizing about her Italian garden in *Under the Tuscan Sun* (1996) prove Fussell half right, as they are the age of tourism’s frothy answer to Gerald Brenan’s amateur anthropology in *South From Granada* (1957) and Norman Douglas’s raffish erudition in *Siren Land* (1911). People read Mayle and Mayes not to learn about the world but to dream of their own idyllic retirements. More recently, the most popular travel narrative has

been *Eat, Pray, Love* (2006), by Elizabeth Gilbert, the Freya Stark of the Oprah generation in that she circles the globe in search of self-realization.

These books have done a great deal to romanticize the profession. (Tell people you are paid to travel and write about it, and you will be greeted with exclamations of envy.) They help explain why Raban flatly disassociates himself from the tribe—so emphatically that he now writes novels—and why Theroux once claimed that he does his travel writing with his “left hand.” “Travel

Coimbra, I went to the university English department and accosted the first person I saw. This turned out to be Bibi, a woman from Rotterdam who was spending a semester teaching Dutch. At a nearby café she told me about her friend in Lisbon, a poet named Casimiro whom I should call when I returned there.

Casimiro invited me to dinner, after which we went to a bar for fado music. On my solitary strolls I had passed numerous restaurants advertising “folk-

lorique evenings”; this wasn’t one of them. It was a smoky dive, full of what looked like stevedores sitting at long tables before a gaunt guitarist perched on a stool. Occasionally a lone brute would stand up and belt out a song of outstanding melancholy.

Casimiro translated. “It smells of Lisbon,” he said after one almost upbeat number. “It smells of flowers and the sea.”

That night I learned how to travel as a travel writer: You approximate, as best you can, in the short time allotted you, the life of a local.

And this is achieved through personal encounters. It is something the adventure writers often miss. Everyone can climb Kilimanjaro, or at least attempt to. They will all, for sure, have their individual responses to the experience, but they all go up the same mountain. Whereas the person you meet in your travels is yours alone (provided you avoid the cliché of writing about your guide or your taxi driver or your hotel receptionist).

In addition to uniqueness, residents give you a sense of the present (as opposed to museums and monuments, which are all about the past). It’s extremely difficult, and usually presumptuous, to write about a place without meeting and talking to the people who live there. This was Steinbeck’s mistake in *Travels With Charley*, the book about his 1960 road trip around the United States with his pet poodle. Even a dog can hold you back.

People also provide, occasionally, an emotional dimension. In *Reading Chekhov: A Critical Journey* (2002), Janet Malcolm goes to Russia and comes to

MOST TOURISTS ARE passive observers, and are less engaged by their travels than they are on a typical Monday at home.

writer” may be the one title everyone wants except the people who have it.

We suffer a recurring crisis of confidence. We wonder not just what we’re doing here (wherever “here” is) but how we can ever discover its essence. How can we possibly describe all these faces, all these doorways and shop windows? The scale of every place overwhelms: hundreds of streets we can never walk down, thousands of people—many of them, surely, perfect embodiments of their city’s spirit—we will never meet. A dozen just passed, lost forever. Who, after all, are we to pronounce on this place, and who, outside of our families, cares to hear our pronouncements? Why bother describing in words what can be seen in a video?

Miraculously, these doubts vanish when observation gives way to participation.

My first trip “on assignment” was to Spain and Portugal. It was October 1989, two months after I had taken a job as travel editor of the *Sun-Sentinel* in Fort Lauderdale. (I had never thought of living in Florida, but I had long dreamed of traveling for a living.) For two weeks I walked the streets—Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Lisbon—ate in the restaurants, took in the sights. I was always alone and painfully aware that something was missing. Desperate in

the realization that travel is an inherently “low-key emotional experience.” This runs counter to the popular perception of the activity, which elicits—not just in advertisements but, sadly, in many travel articles—words such as “adventure,” “excitement,” “romance.” But, Malcolm argues, most tourists aren’t doing anything exciting or romantic; they are passive observers—visiting cathedrals, looking at paintings—and are less engaged than they are on a typical Monday at home.

Even when I’m in search of a story, many of my trips are uneventful. But it does sometimes happen that I find good people, learn new things, participate in the life of a place. And there are times—like unexpected gifts—when the people become friends, the information becomes insight, the participation becomes engagement; I develop an emotional attachment to the place. And then I think: It’s not the worst trips that make the best stories, it’s the best trips.

Row 37, seats J, K, and L. The teenager slumped against the window is snoring loudly, and the man in the middle weighs 300 pounds. Nevertheless, the woman in the aisle seat leans back and smiles. She is a travel writer, and for the first time in a long while she has nothing to do. The place she obsessed about for months has disappeared beneath the clouds. All the anxiety she felt on the flight over is now replaced by exhausted elation (especially if her notebook is full). She luxuriates in the lull between legwork and composition.

The feeling of contentment doesn’t last long. At her computer the old doubt returns, though this time it’s not stirred by the confusion of the new. The chaos of travel has given way to the order of home. She is, as one never is on the road, in control. Her late-night stumble into a slum is rendered calmly, with carefully weighed words.

Yet even when those words are flowing, uncertainty creeps in. What am I doing here? becomes, in its domestic form, Why am I writing this?

It sometimes seems that as more people go out into the world, there is less interest in reading about the world. How else to explain the decline of the travel book in the age of globalization? True, there has been a concurrent rise in travel blogs, but these seem to be, for the

most part, cyberspace’s version of the vacation slides people used to inflict on friends.

For some time now, the travel writer has been viewed as a kind of subspecies. Few modern travel books, with the exception of Chatwin’s, have been heralded as literature. Travel writing courses are rarely included in creative writing programs (an omission that may work to the genre’s advantage). Magazines and newspaper sections devoted to travel are mostly unreadable, having moved over the years from gushing boosterism to drab consumerism.

And yet, good travel writing continues to be written and published. Each autumn *The Best American Travel Writing* appears like a national health report confirming the surprising robustness of the genre. A few of the stories in this annual anthology are found hidden between resort ads in the travel glossies, but most are plucked from the less sumptuous pages of general-interest magazines and literary quarterlies.

The best writers in the field bring to it an indefatigable curiosity, a fierce intelligence that enables them to interpret, and a generous heart that allows them to connect. Without resorting to invention, they make ample use of their imaginations. They do what many of their compatriots find impossible: They speak another language (or two). They have a solid grounding in history, culture, religion, politics, economics, architecture, food, plants. You would think this wide range of knowledge would earn travel writers respect (if not a loyal following), but in an era of specialization it tends to do the opposite, painting them as irrelevant generalists.

The travel book itself has a similar grab-bag quality. It incorporates the characters and plot line of a novel, the descriptive power of poetry, the substance of a history lesson, the discursiveness of an essay, and the—often inadvertent—self-revelation of a memoir. It revels in the particular while occasionally illuminating the universal. It colors and shapes and fills in gaps. Because it results from displacement, it is frequently funny. It takes readers for a spin (and shows them, usually, how lucky they are). It humanizes the alien. More often than not, it celebrates the unsung. It uncovers truths that are stranger than fiction. It gives eyewitness proof of life’s infinite possibilities.

This is why you write it. ■

Cracks in the Jihad

Al Qaeda and the Taliban are at odds, and even Internet jihadis are taking fewer cues from Osama bin Laden. Yet it is only growing more difficult to defeat the global jihad.

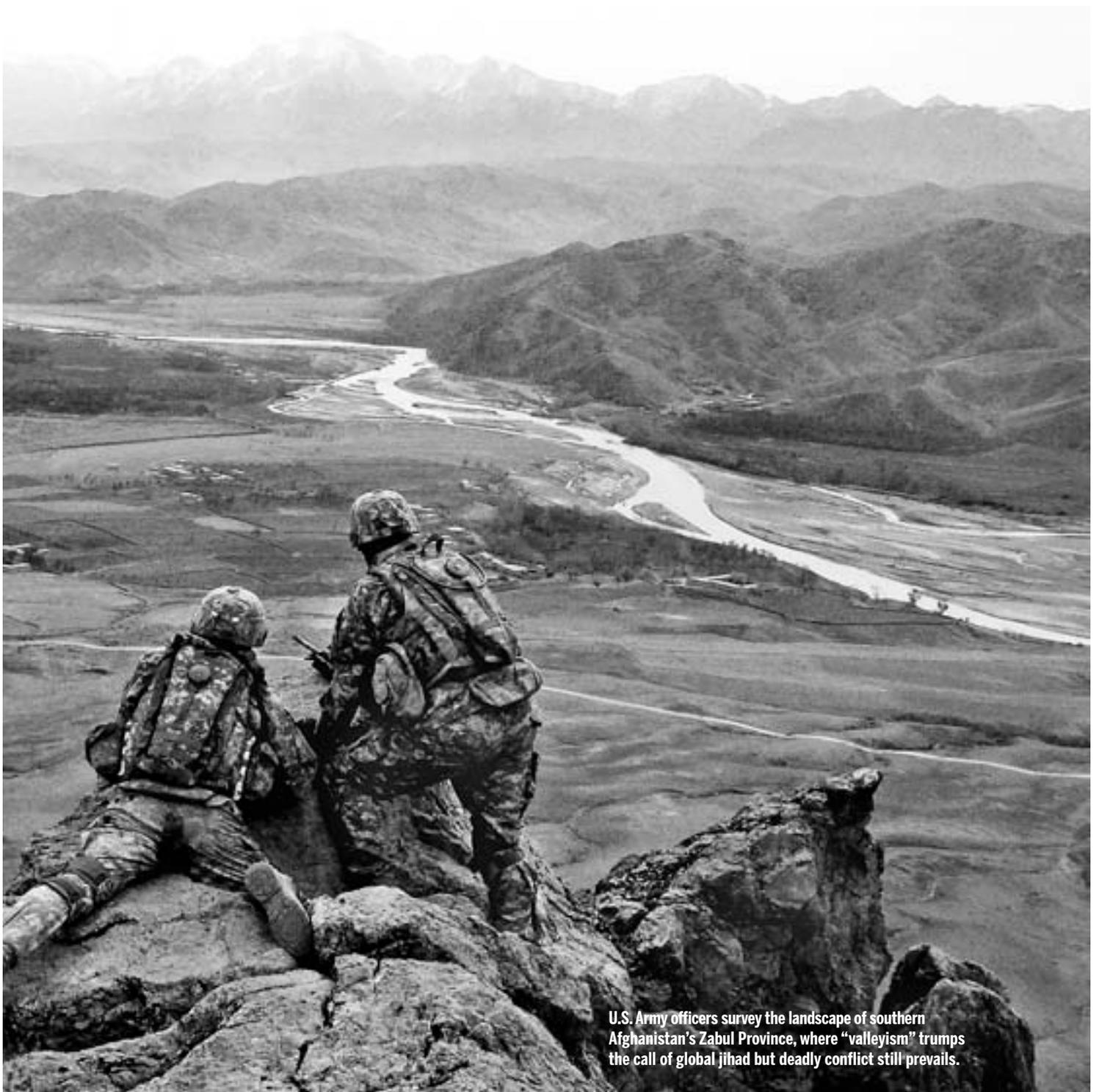
BY THOMAS RID

“GET READY FOR ALL MUSLIMS TO JOIN THE HOLY war against you,” the jihadi leader Abd el-Kader warned his Western enemies. The year was 1839, and nine years into France’s occupation of Algeria the resistance had grown self-confident. Only weeks earlier, Arab fighters had wiped out a convoy of 30 French soldiers en route from Boufarik to Oued-el-Alèg. Insurgent attacks on the slow-moving French columns were steadily increasing, and the army’s fortified blockhouses in the Atlas Mountains were under frequent assault.

Paris pinned its hopes on an energetic general who had already served a successful tour in Algeria, Thomas-Robert Bugeaud. In January 1840, shortly before leaving to take command in Algiers, he addressed the French Chamber of Deputies: “In Europe, gentlemen, we don’t

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U.S. Army officers survey the landscape of southern Afghanistan's Zabul Province, where "valleyism" trumps the call of global jihad but deadly conflict still prevails.

just make war against armies; we make war against interests.” The key to victory in European wars, he explained, was to penetrate the enemy country’s interior. Seize the centers of population, commerce, and industry, “and soon the interests are forced to capitulate.” Not so at the foot of the Atlas, he conceded. Instead, he would focus the army’s effort on the tribal population.

FORMER FIREBRAND IMAMS have started questioning the theological justifications of holy war.

Later that year, a well-known military thinker from Prussia traveled to Algeria to observe Bugeaud’s new approach. Major General Carl von Decker, who had taught under the famed Carl von Clausewitz at the War Academy in Berlin, was more forthright than his French counterpart. The fight against fanatical tribal warriors, he foresaw, “will throw all European theory of war into the trash heap.”

One hundred and seventy years later, jihad is again a major threat—and Decker’s dire analysis more relevant than ever. War, in Clausewitz’s eminent theory, was a clash of collective wills, “a continuation of politics by other means.” When states went to war, the adversary was a political entity with the ability to act as one body, able to end hostilities by declaring victory or admitting defeat. Even Abd el-Kader eventually capitulated. But jihad in the 21st century, especially during the past few years, has fundamentally changed its anatomy: Al Qaeda is no longer a collective political actor. It is no longer an adversary that can articulate a will, capitulate, and be defeated. But the jihad’s new weakness is also its new strength: Because of its transformation, Islamist militancy is politically impaired yet fitter to survive its present crisis.

In the years since late 2001, when U.S. and coalition forces toppled the Taliban regime and all but destroyed Al Qaeda’s core organization in Afghanistan, the bin Laden brand has been bleeding popularity across the Muslim world. The global jihad, as a result, has been torn by mounting internal tensions. Today, the holy war is set

to slip into three distinct ideological and organizational niches. The U.S. surge in Afghanistan, whether successful or not, is likely to affect this development only marginally.

The first niche is occupied by local Islamist insurgencies, fueled by grievances against “apostate” regimes that are authoritarian, corrupt, or backed by “infidel” outside powers (or any combination of the three). Filling the second niche is terrorism-cum-organized crime, most visible in Afghanistan and Indonesia but also seen in Europe, fueled by narcotics, extortion, and other ordinary illicit activities. In the final

niche are people who barely qualify as a group: young second- and third-generation Muslims in the diaspora who are engaged in a more amateurish but persistent holy war, fueled by their own complex personal discontents. Al Qaeda’s challenge is to encompass the jihadis who drift to the criminal and eccentric fringe while keeping alive its appeal to the Muslim mainstream and a rhetoric of high aspiration and promise.

The most visible divide separates the local and global jihadis. Historically, Islamist groups tended to bud locally, and assumed a global outlook only later, if they did so at all. All the groups that have been affiliated with Al Qaeda either predate the birth of the global jihad in the early 1990s or grew later out of local causes and concerns, only subsequently attaching the bin Laden logo. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, for example, started out in 1998 as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, an offshoot of another militant group that had roots in Algeria’s vicious civil war during the early 1990s. Pakistan’s Lashkar-e-Taiba, the force allegedly behind the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, India, that killed more than 170 people, was formed in the 1990s to fight for a united Kashmir under Pakistani rule. In Somalia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other countries, the Al Qaeda brand has been attractive to groups born out of local concerns.

By joining Al Qaeda and stepping up violence, local insurgents have long risked placing themselves on the target lists of governments and law enforcement organizations. More recently, however, they have run what may be an even more consequential risk, that of removing themselves from the social mainstream and losing popular support. This is what happened to Al Qaeda in Iraq during the Sunni Awakening, which began in 2005 in violence-ridden al-Anbar Province and its principal city, Ramadi. Al Qaeda had declared Ramadi the future capital of its Iraqi "caliphate," and by late 2005 it had the entire city under its control. But even conservative Sunni elders became alienated by the group's brutality and violence. One prominent local leader, Sheikh Sattar Abdul Abu Risha, lost several brothers and his father in assassinations. Others were agitated by the loss of prestige and power to the insurgents in their traditional homelands. In early 2006, Sattar and his sheikhs decided to cooperate with American forces, and by the end of the year they had helped recruit nearly 4,000 men to local police units. "They brought us nothing but destruction and we finally said, enough is enough," Sattar explained.

The awakening (*sahwa* in Arabic) was not limited to al-Anbar. One after another, former firebrand imams, in so-called revisions, have started questioning the theological justifications of holy war. The trend may have begun with Gamaa al-Islamiya, Egypt's most brutal terrorist group, which was responsible for the assassination of Egyptian president Anwar el-Sadat in 1981 and the slaughter of 58 foreign tourists in Luxor in 1997. As the Iraq war intensified during the summer of 2003, several of Gamaa al-Islamiya's leaders advised young men not to participate in Al Qaeda operations and accused the organization of "splitting Muslim ranks" by provoking hostile reactions against Islam "and wrongly interpreting the meaning of jihad in a violent way."

Another notable revision came in September 2007, when Salman al-Awda, an influential Saudi cleric who had previously declared that fighting Americans in Iraq was a religious duty, spoke out against Al Qaeda. He accused bin Laden in an open letter of "making terror a synonym for Islam." Speaking on a popular Saudi TV show on the sixth anniver-

sary of 9/11, al-Awda asked, "My brother Osama, how much blood has been spilt? How many innocent people, children, elderly, and women have been killed . . . in the name of Al Qaeda?"

Other ideologues have followed, including Sajjid Imam al-Shareef, one of Al Qaeda's founding leaders, who used the nom de guerre Dr. Fadl. "Every drop of blood that was shed or is being shed in Afghanistan and Iraq is the responsibility of bin Laden and Zawahiri and their followers," he wrote in the London-based newspaper *Asharq Al Awsat*.

In Afghanistan, coalition soldiers see the global-local split replicated as a fissure between what they call "big T" Taliban and "small t" Taliban. The "big T" ideologues fight for more global spiritual or political reasons; the "little t" opportunists fight for power, for money, or just to survive, to hedge their bets. A family might have one son fighting for the Taliban and another in the Afghan National Army; no matter which side prevails, they will have one son in the right place. U.S. Marines in Helmand Province say that 80 to 85 percent of all those they fight are "small t" Taliban. The U.S. counterinsurgency campaign aims to co-opt and reintegrate many of these rebels by creating secure population centers and new economic opportunities, spreading cleared areas like "inkblots." But the Taliban have long been keen to spread their own inkblots, with a similar rationale: attracting more and more "accidental" guerrillas, in the famous phrase of counterinsurgency specialist David Kilcullen, not just hardliners.

Yet even Afghanistan's "big T" Taliban, the ideologues, cannot simply be equated with Al Qaeda. Last fall, Abu Walid, once an Al Qaeda accomplice and now a Taliban propagandist, ridiculed bin Laden in the Taliban's official monthly magazine *al-Sumud*, for, among other things, his do-it-yourself approach to Islamic jurisprudence. A number of veterans had criticized bin Laden in the past, among them such towering figures as Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, one of the key architects of the global jihad. But Abu Walid's criticism was more biting. Bin Laden's organization lacks strategic vision and relies on "shiny slogans," he told Leah Farrell, an Australian counterterrorism specialist, in a much-noted dialogue she reported on her blog. Consequently the Taliban would no longer welcome the ter-

rorists in Afghanistan, he said, because “the majority of the population is against Al Qaeda.”

At the root of the disagreement between the two groups is the question of a local, or even national, popular base. Last September, Mullah Omar, the Taliban’s founding figure and spiritual overlord, issued a message in several languages. He called the Taliban a “robust

promise of good neighborliness and future cooperation with Afghanistan’s neighbors, including China, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—all of whom face their own jihadi insurgencies and are on Al Qaeda’s target list.

The Taliban’s new tactics are throwing an “ideological bridge” not only to nearby countries but to parts of the current Kabul elite, most notably politically mobilized university students, notes Thomas Ruttig of the Afghanistan Analysts Network. Even the newly moderate Taliban, it should

THE TALIBAN IS MODERATING its tone and throwing an “ideological bridge” to parts of the Kabul elite.

be clear, remains wedded to inhumane and medieval moral principles. Yet Omar’s pragmatism immediately affects the question of who and what is a desirable target of attacks.

Perhaps the greatest tension between the local and global levels of the jihad

grows out of a divide over appropriate targets and tactics. Classical Islamic legal doctrine sees armed jihad as a defensive struggle against persecution, oppression, and incursions into Muslim lands. In an attempt to mobilize Muslims around the world to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan, Abdallah Azzam, an influential radical cleric who was assassinated in 1989, helped expand the doctrine of jihad into a transnational struggle by declaring the Afghan jihad an individual duty for all Muslims. Azzam also advocated *takfir*, a practice of designating fellow Muslims as infidels (*kaffir*) by remote excommunication in order to justify their slaughter. Al Qaeda ideologues upped the aggressive potential of such arguments and expanded the defensive jihad into a global struggle, effectively blurring the line between the “near” enemy—the Arab regimes deemed illegitimate “apostates” by the purists—and the “far” enemy, these regimes’ Western supporters.

Islamic and nationalist movement” that had “assumed the shape of a popular movement.” Probably realizing that pragmatism and a certain amount of moderation offer the best chance of a return to power, Omar vowed “to maintain good and positive relations with all neighbors based on mutual respect.”

Al Qaeda’s reaction was swift and harsh. Turning the jihad into a “national cause,” in the purists’ view, was selling it out. Prominent radicals, in a remarkable move, compared the Taliban’s turnabout to the efforts by Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza to distance themselves from Al Qaeda. Hamas in particular, perhaps because it is, like Al Qaeda, a Sunni organization, has been the subject of “relentless” criticism in Al Qaeda circles, says Thomas Hegghammer of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. When a self-proclaimed Al Qaeda faction appeared in Gaza, Hamas executed one of its leading imams and many of his armed followers. Jihadi ideologues were aghast. The globalists shuddered at the thought that local interests could compromise their pan-Islamic ambitions. “Nationalism,” declared Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda’s number two, “must be rejected by the *umma* [Muslim community], because it is a model which makes jihad subject to the market of political compromises and distracts the *umma* from the liberation of Islamic lands and the establishment of the Caliphate.”

A few weeks later, Mullah Omar pointedly reiterated his

In the remote areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan that produce many of today’s radicals, however, local and tribal affiliations are powerful. One U.S. political adviser who worked in Afghanistan’s Zabul Province, a hotbed of the insurgency, describes prevailing local sentiment as “valleyism” rather than nationalism. It is a force that drives the tribes to oppose anybody who threatens their traditional power base, foreign or not—a problem not just for the Taliban and Al Qaeda but for any Afghan government. Al-Zawahiri complained of this in a letter after the invasion of



Cuneyt Ciftci, a German-born jihadi of Turkish descent, staged a suicide bombing in Afghanistan in March 2008, killing two U.S. soldiers and two Afghans. Many of the global jihad's latest recruits are Western-born but rootless, drawn to the identity-building certainties of radical Islam.

Afghanistan: “Even the students (*talib*) themselves had stronger affiliations to their tribes and villages . . . than to the Islamic emirate.” The provincial valleyists, to the distress of Al Qaeda’s more cosmopolitan agitators, are selfishly eyeing their own interests, with little appetite for international aggression and globe-spanning terrorist operations.

The contrast with the character of jihad in the Muslim diaspora could not be starker. For radical Islamists in Europe, the local jihad doesn’t exist. And they understand that toppling governments in, say, London or Amsterdam is a fantasy. These radicals are less interest driven than identity driven. Many young European Muslims are out of touch with their ancestral countries, yet not fully at home in France or Sweden or Denmark. For some, the resulting identity crisis creates a hunger for clear spiritual guidelines. The ideology of global jihad, accord-

ing to a report by EUROPOL, the European Union’s police agency, “gives meaning to the feeling of exclusion” prevalent among the second- and third-generation descendants of Muslim immigrants. For these alienated youth, the idea of becoming “citizens” of the virtual worldwide Islamic community may be more attractive than it is for first-generation immigrants, who tend to retain strong roots in their native countries.

The identity problems of these young people seem to have affected the character of the jihad itself. Like the disoriented Muslim youth of the diaspora, the global jihad has loose residential roots and numb political fingertips. One sign of this disconnection from the local is that Al Qaeda’s rank and file does not include many men who could otherwise join a jihad at home: There seem to be few Palestinians, Chechens, Iraqis, or Afghans among the traveling jihadis, who tend to come from countries where jihad has failed, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and Syria.

Al Qaeda's identity crisis is also illustrated by how it treats radicalized converts, often people without religious schooling and consolidated personalities. Olivier Roy, one of France's leading specialists on radical Islamism, has pointed out that convert groups assume responsibilities "beyond all comparison with any other Islamic organization." Roy has put the proportion of converts in Al Qaeda

past decades, from emotional pulse beats and scattered reactions into a phenomenon which is guided and utilized, and whereby the project of jihad is advanced so that it becomes the Islamic Nation's battle, and not a struggle of an elite." The global jihad was to function like an "operative system," without vulnerable, old-fashioned organizational hierarchies. That method is intuitively attractive for a Face-

book generation of well-connected young sympathizers, but the theory contains an internal contradiction. Self-recruited and "homegrown" terrorists present a wicked problem for Al Qaeda. As a bizarre type of self-appointed elite, they undermine the move-

AL QAEDA'S LATEST RECRUITS look more like a self-appointed elite than representatives of the Muslim "masses."

at between 10 and 25 percent, an indicator that the movement has become "de-culturalized."

These contrary trends, in turn, create chinks in Al Qaeda's recruitment system. The most extreme Salafists, deprived of identity and cultural orientation, have an appetite for utopia, for extreme views that appeal to the margin of society, be it in Holland or Helmand. Recruitment in the diaspora, as a result, follows a distinctive pattern, not partisan and political but offbeat and outré. The grievances and motivations of European extremists and the rare American militants tend to be idiosyncratic, the product of unstable individual personalities and a history of personal discrimination. Many take the initiative to join the movement themselves, and because they are not recruited by a member of the existing organization, their ties to it may remain loose. In 2008 alone, 190 individuals were sentenced for Islamist terrorist activities in Europe, most of them in Britain, France, and Spain. "A majority of the arrested individuals belonged to small autonomous cells rather than to known terrorist organizations," EUROPOL reports.

As a result of the change in its membership, the global Al Qaeda movement is encountering strong centrifugal forces. The rank and file and the center are losing touch with each other. The vision of Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, who laid much of the ideological foundation for Al Qaeda's global jihad, blends a Marxist-inspired focus on popular mass support with 21st-century ideas of networked, individual action. Al-Suri's aim was to devise a method "for transforming excellent individual initiatives, performed over the

ment's ambition to represent the Muslim "masses."

The problem is embodied in the online jihad. For Al Qaeda, Web forums operated by unaffiliated Islamists have been the most important distribution platform for jihadi materials. But after the arrest of a top-tier online activist in London two years ago, the connection between the forums and Al Qaeda's official media center, al-Sahab, began to loosen. Al Qaeda has lost more and more control of the online jihad. And, just like others online, jihadi Web administrators face increasingly tough competition for visibility. Within the forums the tone has become harsher. Brynjar Lia, a specialist on Salafism at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, says that "interjihadi quarrels seem to have become more common and less 'brotherly' in tone in recent years."

Some far-flung jihadi groups are enjoying newfound independence of another kind, as a result of criminal ventures they have established to fund their efforts. This too is intensifying the centrifugal forces within the global movement. Some groups are tipping into a more purely criminal mode.

A cause is what distinguishes an insurgency from organized crime, as David Galula, an influential French author on counterinsurgency, noted decades ago. Organized crime does not have to be incompatible with jihad. It may even be justified in religious terms: Baz Mohammed, an Afghan heroin kingpin and the first criminal ever extradited from Afghanistan, bragged to his co-conspirators that selling heroin in the United States was jihad because

it killed Americans while taking their money.

A budding insurgency has only a limited window of opportunity to grow into a serious political force. If the cause withers and loses its popular gloss, what remains as a rump may be nothing but a criminal organization, attracting a following with criminal energy rather than religious zeal, thus further damaging jihad's status in the eyes of the broader public. For some groups, this already appears to be happening. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb funds itself through the drug trade, smuggling, extortion, and kidnappings in southern Algeria and northern Mali. Indonesia's Abu Sayyaf Group and the Philippines' Jamiyah Islamiyah engage in a variety of criminal activities, including credit card fraud. The terrorist cell behind the 2004 Madrid bombings earned most of its money from criminal activities; when Spanish police raided the home of one of the plotters, they seized close to \$2 million in drugs and cash, including more than 125,000 Ecstasy tablets, according to *U.S. News and World Report*. The Madrid bombings had cost the terrorists just \$50,000.

The goal of leading Islamists has always been to turn their battle into "the Islamic Nation's battle," as al-Suri wrote. Far from reaching this goal, the jihad is veering the other way. Eight years after 9/11, support for Islamic extremism in the Muslim world is at its lowest point. Support for Al Qaeda has slipped most dramatically in Indonesia, Pakistan, and Jordan. In 2003, more than 50 percent of those surveyed in these countries agreed that bin Laden would "do the right thing regarding world affairs," the Pew Global Attitudes Project found. By 2009 the overall level of support had dropped by half, to about 25 percent. In Pakistan, traditionally a stronghold of extremism, only nine percent of Muslims have a favorable view of Al Qaeda, down from 25 percent in 2008. Even an American failure to stabilize Afghanistan and its terror-ridden neighborhood would be unlikely to ease Al Qaeda's crisis of legitimacy.

But it would be naive to conclude that the cracks in Al Qaeda's ideological shell mean that the movement's end is near. Far from it. Islamist ideology may be losing broad appeal, and the recent global crop of extremists may be disunited and drifting apart. Yet in the fanatics' own view, the ideology remains a crucial cohesive force that binds together an extraordinarily diverse extremist elite. Salafism, despite its crisis, continues to be attractive to those at the social margins. One of the ideology's

most vital functions appears to be to resolve the contradictions of jihad in the 21st century: being a pious Muslim, yet attacking women and children; upholding the authority of the Qur'an, yet prospering from crime; depending on Western welfare states, yet plotting against them; having no personal ties to any Islamic group, yet believing oneself to be part of one.

Al Qaeda's altered design has a number of immediate consequences. The global jihad is losing what David Galula called a strong cause, and with it its political character. This change is making it increasingly difficult to distinguish jihad from organized crime on the one side and rudderless fanaticism on the other. This calls into question the notion that war is still, as Clausewitz said, "a continuation of politics by other means," and therefore whether it can be discontinued politically. Second, coerced by adversaries and enabled by the Internet, the global jihadi movement has dismantled and disrupted its own ability to act as one coherent entity. No leader is in a position to articulate the movement's will, let alone enforce it. It is doubtful, to quote Clausewitz again, whether war can still be "an act of force to compel the enemy to do our will." And because jihad has no single center of gravity, it has no single critical vulnerability. No matter what the outcome of U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan and other places, a general risk of terrorist attacks will persist for the foreseeable future.

In combating terrorism, therefore, quantity matters as much as quality. But some numbers matter more than others. How many additional American and European troops are sent to Afghanistan matters less than the number of terrorist plots that don't happen. Success will be found subtly in statistics, in data curves that slope down or level off, not in one particular action, one capitulation, or even one leader's death. It will be marked not by military campaigns and other events but by decisions not taken and attacks not launched. Because participation in the holy war in both its local and global forms is an individual decision, these choices have to be the unit of analysis, and influencing them must be the goal of policy and strategy. As in crime prevention, measuring success—how many potential terrorists did not join an armed group or commit a terrorist act—is nearly impossible. Success against Islamic militancy may wear a veil. ■

The Arab Tomorrow

The Arab world today is ruled by contradiction. Turmoil and stagnation prevail, as colossal wealth and hyper-modern cities collide with mass illiteracy and rage-filled imams. In this new diversity may lie disaster, or the makings of a better Arab future.

BY DAVID B. OTTAWAY

OCTOBER 6, 1981, WAS MEANT TO BE A DAY OF celebration in Egypt. It marked the anniversary of Egypt's grandest moment of victory in three Arab-Israeli conflicts, when the country's underdog army thrust across the Suez Canal in the opening days of the 1973 Yom Kippur War and sent Israeli troops reeling in retreat. On a cool, cloudless morning, the Cairo stadium was packed with Egyptian families that had come to see the military strut its hardware. On the reviewing stand, President Anwar el-Sadat, the war's architect, watched with satisfaction as men and machines paraded before him. I was nearby, a newly arrived foreign correspondent.

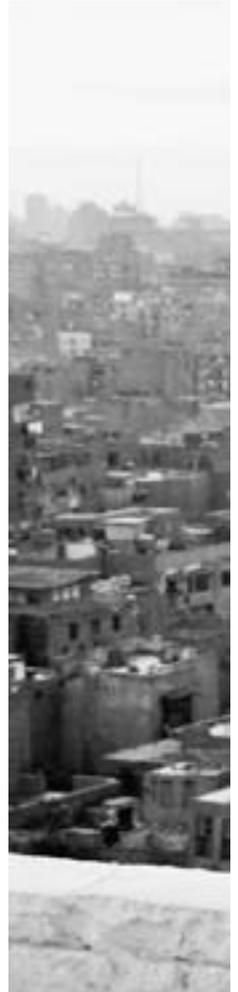
Suddenly, one of the army trucks halted directly in front of the reviewing stand just as six Mirage jets roared overhead in an acrobatic performance, painting the sky with long trails of red, yellow, purple, and green smoke. Sadat stood up, apparently prepar-

ing to exchange salutes with yet another contingent of Egyptian troops. He made himself a perfect target for four Islamist assassins who jumped from the truck, stormed the podium, and riddled his body with bullets.

As the killers continued for what seemed an eternity to spray the stand with their deadly fire, I considered for an instant whether to hit the ground and risk being trampled to death by panicked spectators or remain afoot and risk taking a stray bullet. Instinct told me to stay on my feet, and my sense of journalistic duty impelled me to go find out whether Sadat was alive or dead.

I wove my way through the fleeing crowd and managed to reach the podium. It was pandemonium. Wild-eyed Egyptian security men were running every which way, trying to apprehend the assassins and attend to the scores of foreign and local dignitaries present, seven of whom lay dead or dying. The utter chaos allowed me to get close enough to witness another unforgettable scene: Vice President Hosni

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Mubarak emerging from beneath a pile of chairs security men had thrown helter-skelter over him for protection. He was brushing dirt off his peaked military cap, which had been pierced by a bullet.

Mubarak, lucky to be alive, pulled himself together admirably that day to take over leadership of the shaken Nile River nation. But Egypt and the rest of the Arab world would never be the same. For centuries, Egypt had prided itself on being the center of that world. Seat of a 5,000-year-old civilization that at times had thought of itself as *umm idduniya*, “mother of the world,” it was the most populous and economically and militarily powerful Arab state, a

The beautiful vista from Old Cairo to the distant skyline of the modern city promises a great deal but delivers much less. Many Egyptians have been disappointed by the stagnant modernity of the past few decades.

center of culture and learning that supplied physicians, imams, and technical experts to other Arab nations. Under Sadat and his predecessor, the pan-Arab hero Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918–70), Egypt had reasserted its primacy as the Arabs broke free of colonial rule after World War II and entered an era of soaring hopes. Sadat had even begun some pioneering reforms—allowing opposition political parties, implementing market-oriented economic changes—

that might have rippled through the Arab world had he lived. Though many reviled him for signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, Egypt remained the most dynamic force in Arab affairs.

Mubarak's accession would bring an abrupt end to Egypt's preeminence. Cautious and unimaginative, the former air force commander has never in his 29-year reign come close to filling the shoes of his predecessors. Afflicted by health problems, he will turn 82 in May and is not expected to reign much longer. Cairo is awash with speculation about who will

CAIRO IS AWASH with speculation about who will replace the aging Hosni Mubarak.

replace him. Its discontented intelligentsia is debating intensely whether Egypt any longer has the wherewithal, or vision, to shape Arab policies toward an immovable Israel, a belligerent Iran, fractious Palestinians, or an imposing America, much less grapple with the Islamist challenge to secular governments.

During the Mubarak years, other voices and centers have arisen, particularly on the western shores of the Persian Gulf. There, monarchies once thought quaint relics of Arab history—including Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates—have taken on new life. The accumulation of massive oil wealth in the hands of kings and emirs amid soaring demand and prices over the past few decades has given birth to a far more diverse and multipolar Arab world. It has made possible innovations in domestic and foreign policy and supplied vast sums for the building of glittering, hypermodern “global cities” that lure Western and Asian money, business, and tourists away from Cairo.

As the Mubarak era nears its end, Egyptians are not alone in wondering whether a new and more dynamic leader will restore the nation to its central role and take the lead in giving the Arabs a stronger and more united voice in global affairs. Whether any Egyptian leader, or for that matter any Arab leader,

can rise to lead this fragmented world will be a central issue in the years ahead. Another is whether Arab unity is any longer a desirable goal.

Arabs have long shared an unusually strong sense of common identity and destiny. The Arab states, unlike those of Western Europe, Africa, Asia, or Latin America, are bound together by a common language and shared religion. They have a border-transcending culture rooted in 1,400 years of Islam, with its memory of the powerful caliphates based in Damascus and Baghdad. With the exception of Saudi Arabia, which escaped the European yoke, they also share a history of fer-

vent anticolonial struggle against France and Britain that began with the crumbling of the Ottoman Empire during World War I. The Ottomans had ruled the Arabs for nearly 500 years, deftly dividing them while governing with a relatively light hand. The Arab Revolt (1916–18) against the Ottoman Turks, led by the emir of Mecca, Sharif Hussein ibn Ali, and abetted by Britain's legendary Lawrence of Arabia, ignited the dream of a reunified Arab nation.

But the victors of World War I had different ideas. The League of Nations put the vanquished Ottoman Empire's provinces in present-day Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine under French and British mandates, giving fresh impetus to the Arab awakening. During World War II the European rulers cynically encouraged hopes for independence, intent on preventing the Arabs from siding with Hitler's Germany. With the war's end in sight, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, then the region's only independent countries, joined with four other Arab lands to raise the banner of the League of Arab States, a new association dedicated to ending European rule.

The Arabs' sense of common cause was jolted to a new level of intensity in 1947, when the United Nations approved the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. The ensuing war over its creation led to what Arabs call the *naqba*, or disaster, meaning the

loss of Arab lands to the Israelis and the flight of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to neighboring Arab states. The struggle against Israel replaced the anticolonial effort as the Arabs' defining mission, keeping them bonded together like no other peoples. Starting with the first Arab-Israeli war, in 1948, their failure to obtain a state for the Palestinians has also kept alive a sense of shared guilt and injustice at the hands of the West.

There were moments of great hope for Arab unity, illusory as it proved to be. Riding to power in an army coup in 1952, Nasser quickly became the undisputed Saut el-Arab, or Voice of the Arabs, his views broadcast far and wide through a powerful Cairo-based radio station of the same name. With his rabble-rousing speeches, Nasser offered a vision of an Arab world transformed from a colonial jigsaw puzzle of artificially defined states into one big *umma*, a single Muslim community stretching from Morocco on the Atlantic to Oman at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

Nasser preached pan-Arabism and Arab nationalism to rally the masses against the two Cold War superpowers and Israel. Initially, his record was impressive. He electrified the Arab world in 1956 by boldly nationalizing the Suez Canal, then in the hands of a British-run company. And, with indispensable backing from President Dwight D. Eisenhower, he faced down France, Britain, and Israel when they invaded to take back the canal. Nasser also took the first step toward formal Arab unity by convincing Syria two years later to join Egypt in a "United Arab Republic" (though the union was short-lived). And with consummate diplomatic cunning, he succeeded

in catapulting Egypt to the head of the Non-Aligned Movement, whose members sought to maintain their independence from the two Cold War blocs, and deftly extracted billions of dollars in arms from the Soviet Union and \$800 million in wheat and other foodstuffs from the United States.

Nasser's star dimmed considerably, however, after his army's crushing defeat by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War, a disaster that led him to dramatically offer



At the 1981 military parade in which he would fall to assassins' bullets, Egyptian president Anwar el-Sadat (right) reviews the passing troops with Vice President Hosni Mubarak at his side.

his resignation to the Egyptian people. The war ended with Israel in possession of Egypt's vast Sinai Desert as well as Syria's Golan Heights and Jordan's West Bank and East Jerusalem. Weeping Cairenes nonetheless poured into the streets to insist that Nasser remain their leader. But the grand old Voice of the Arabs never recovered his prestige before a heart attack killed him in 1970.

Sadat emerged from Nasser's shadow offering a different style of leadership, one equally bold and imaginative though far more contested by other Arab capitals. He scuttled Nasser's socialism by launching the *infitah*, an "open-door" policy aimed at liberalizing the economy, and he forged a new political order

The Arab World



	Population (millions)	GDP per capita (dollars)	Oil reserves (BBL)	Illiteracy rate	Women's rights (Most free=25 Least free=5)	Political rights (Most free=1 Least free=7)
Algeria	33.9	3,996	12.2	24.6		6
Bahrain	0.8	21,421	0.12456	11.2	13.1	5
Comoros	0.6	714	0	24.9		3
Djibouti	0.8	997	0	N/A		5
Egypt	80.1	1,729	3.7	33.6		6
Iraq	29.5	N/A	115	25.9		6
Jordan	5.9	2,769	0.001	8.9		5
Kuwait	2.9	42,102	104	5.5	12.9	4
Lebanon	4.2	5,944	0	10.4		5
Libya	6.2	9,475	43.66	13.2		7
Mauritania	3.1	847	0.1	44.2		6
Morocco	31.2	2,434	0.00075	44.4		5
Oman	2.7	14,031	5.5	15.6	11.4	6
Palestine	4.0	1,160	N/A	6.2		N/A
Qatar	1.1	64,193	15.21	6.9	11.6	6
Saudi Arabia	24.7	15,800	266.71	15	7.2	7
Somalia	8.7	N/A	0	N/A		7
Sudan	40.4	1,199	5	39.1		7
Syria	20.5	1,898	2.5	16.9		7
Tunisia	10.1	3,425	0.425	22.3		7
UAE	4.4	38,436	97.8	10	11.9	6
Yemen	22.3	1,006	3	41.1		5

SOURCES: United Nations Development Program (population, GDP, and illiteracy); U.S. Energy Information Administration (oil reserves); Freedom House (political and women's rights). UNDP data are from 2007; all other data from 2009.

by ending single-party rule and allowing new parties to form. He survived an Israeli counterattack in the 1973 Yom Kippur War that nearly wiped out his army, and then decided on his own to make peace with Israel, regaining the Sinai for Egypt. After his iconoclastic trip to Jerusalem in 1977, Sadat pushed through a bilateral peace agreement with Israel that took effect two years later, provoking the Arab League (as the League of Arab States was now known) to oust Egypt, effectively ending its leadership of the Arab world. But Sadat stood firm. As events would prove, even his assassination at the hands of Islamist militants who were vehemently opposed to peace with Israel could not reverse his feat. Sadat had single-handedly changed the course of Middle East history.

Since Sadat's demise, the Arab world has struggled to find its ideological bearings. The old secular leftist ideologies of Arab nationalism, Arab socialism, and pan-Arabism are rarely mentioned anymore. Their last two standard-bearers, Hafez al-Assad of Syria and Saddam Hussein of Iraq, proved unequal to the task of leading the Arab world and were discredited, along with the "isms" they represented. Assad, who ruled for 29 years, was able to extend his influence no farther than neighboring Lebanon. Hussein came to power in 1979 and was an international pariah after 1990, when he invaded Kuwait, a brother Arab country.

Time has made a mockery of Arab aspirations to unity as well. The 21 countries of the Arab League (plus the Palestinians), embracing 350 million people, have come to live in a state of endless squabbling and continuing fragmentation. Even smaller wannabe regional blocs, such as the six Arab monarchies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman) and the four Mediterranean countries of the Maghreb (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria,

and Libya), have made precious little headway toward unity.

Instead, the Arab world has been plagued by civil wars (Sudan, Lebanon, and Somalia), militant Islamist insurgencies (Algeria, Iraq, and Somalia), and sectarian strife between Sunni and Shiite Muslims (Iraq, Lebanon, and Bahrain), as well as an intramural struggle for the hearts and minds of Sunni Arabs pitting extremists against mainstream elements over the very meaning of Islam (Saudi Arabia,

THE DREAM OF ARAB unity has given way to civil wars, Islamist insurgencies, and Sunni-Shia strife.

Egypt, and Algeria). Terrorism, embodied by Al Qaeda, has become a scourge, survival a 24/7 preoccupation.

Central to the region's turmoil is the widening rift between Sunnis, who account for nearly 90 percent of the Arab population, and Shia, who form tiny minorities in most Arab countries but constitute a majority in Iraq and Bahrain and probably a near majority in Lebanon. The Sunni-Shia conflict is almost as old as Islam, rooted in unforgotten bloody battles over who was the rightful heir of the Prophet Muhammad. It was given new life by the Iranian revolution of 1979, which produced a Shiite theocracy determined to expand the political and religious influence of this non-Arab power deep into the Sunni-dominated Arab world. More recently, Iran's efforts to develop a nuclear capacity, perhaps including nuclear weapons, has further heightened tensions. Leaders of the Arab countries—most of whom are Sunni, with the notable exception of Iraq's prime minister, Nuri al-Maliki, a Shia—are acutely aware that Iran is both Shiite and Persian.

The challenge from Iran helped stoke Sunni fundamentalism and put Islam front and center in the political discourse and daily lives of Arabs. And 1979, the year that saw the birth of theocracy in Iran, also

brought the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the rise of an anti-Soviet jihad that intensified and spread the new religious fervor across the Arab world. Thousands of Arab would-be holy warriors signed up for the anticommunist cause in Afghanistan, then returned home to revolt against corrupt and repressive rule in their own countries. Islamic political par-

any reform impulses they may have had and leaving them concerned almost exclusively with their own day-to-day survival. To these leaders, most ideas for change or reform now look like foolish high-risk gambits, all the more so since some of the prime promoters of change have been Western outsiders. The resulting stasis has contributed to a remarkable lack

**THE THREAT POSED by political Islam
has swept away the last reform impulses of
most Arab rulers.**

ties preaching a return to the letter of the Qur'an and sharia law have now surpassed secular parties as the most dynamic forces in Arab political life. Mosques have become cauldrons of political activism. Preachers such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the fiery Egyptian Sunni cleric who broadcasts from Qatar, and Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's supreme Shiite authority, exercise far more sway than any politician. In Egypt, the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood has taken over as the main opposition political party, and other like-minded Islamist groups now occupy a central role in the politics of many Arab states.

The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 also played a major role in keeping Islamic militancy alive and well and sharpening Sunni-Shiite animosities. The overthrow of Saddam Hussein meant an end to Sunni rule in Iraq as the Bush administration, in the name of democracy, ushered the Shia into power for the first time in the country's contemporary history. By the thousands, Iraqi Sunnis joined an insurgency against the new government, while others found their way to Al Qaeda, which deliberately sought to incite a Sunni-Shiite confrontation by bombing Shiite neighborhoods and holy sites.

The tidal wave of political Islam has rocked the Arab world's mostly autocratic rulers, sweeping away

of turnover in leadership. In his 29-year reign, Mubarak has employed an increasingly unpopular state of emergency to crush his opponents and extinguish hopes for multiparty democracy in Egypt. Muammar al-Qaddafi, until recently an

international outcast because of Libya's terrorist activities, celebrated the 40th year of his reign last September. Sudanese president Omer Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir, wanted on war crimes charges by the International Criminal Court, came to power 20 years ago. In Oman, Qaboos bin Said deposed his father in 1970 and has remained sultan ever since. Ali Abdullah Saleh has been the leader of Yemen for 31 years, and Zine el-Abidinia Ben Ali has led Tunisia for 22.

The staying power of these autocrats pales next to the longevity of the royal houses of the Persian Gulf. The ruling families of Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain have reigned for centuries, including a long spell under "protectorates" imposed by the British. The Saudi royal family, in a land that escaped colonial domination, has ruled on and off for more than 250 years. But the record for Arab longevity lies in a land far beyond the gulf, in Morocco, where Mohammed VI reigns as the 18th king in a dynasty that came to power in 1666.

Secular Arab leaders have been working hard to establish their own family dynasties. As he had arranged, Hafez al-Assad of Syria was succeeded upon his death in 2000 by his 35-year-old son, Bashar, a British-trained ophthalmologist who had previously shown little interest in politics. Both Mubarak and Qaddafi have been grooming their sons to take over from them, as has President Saleh in Yemen.

Surveying the Arab world in the troubled aftermath of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, President



Martyr's Day in Beirut last November brought a show of force by Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed militant organization in Lebanon. The group has become a polarizing force in the Arab world, opposed by rulers who fear Iran's growing influence in the region but supported by a number of others.

George W. Bush saw the dead hand of autocracy as a key cause of the Arab world's stagnation, and he even conceded that the United States had helped keep Mubarak and other Arab autocrats in power. Bush proposed a radical cure. His "forward strategy of freedom" would bring democracy to the Arabs. "As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish," he declared in 2003, "it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export." No longer would the United States accept the Arab status quo. Bush called specifically on America's chief Arab allies, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to "show the way toward democracy in the Middle East."

Mubarak and Abdullah (still crown prince at the time) denounced the American diktat, insisting that each country must determine its own path to reform. Yet Arab leaders did respond to Bush's call, and they proved master manipulators of democracy. They held

elections, loosened press censorship, and allowed a bit more space for dissident voices on the Internet. And they quickly learned how to diffuse, divide, and checkmate even this feeble opposition.

Mubarak simultaneously rigged election laws to make himself president for life and allowed the birth of a semifree opposition press. Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika permitted many political parties and 76 independent national daily newspapers to flourish even as he altered the constitution to perpetuate his rule. Qatar's al-Thani ruling family dropped plans for an elected parliament but launched the al-Jazeera satellite television channel, which has revolutionized Arab news coverage with its critical reports, lively debates, and airing of the radical views of Islamists as well as secular oppositionists.

Arab leaders skillfully used elections to illustrate the dangers democracy might end up posing to U.S.

interests—exactly contrary to what President Bush had predicted. Saudi Arabia held municipal elections in early 2005, and Egypt elected a new parliament late that same year. The results: The most conservative, anti-Western Wahhabi candidates swept the Saudi contests, and the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood became the main opposition group in the Egyptian parliament. Finally, after the militantly anti-Israeli Hamas won a large majority in the 2006 elections for a new Palestinian parliament, Bush quietly shelved his “freedom agenda.” So far, President Barack Obama has carefully avoided making democracy promotion a signature cause of his administration. Indeed, he has been vigorously chastised by human rights advocates, Republican and Democrat alike, for abandoning the U.S. mission to spread democracy in the Arab world.

The experience of the past few years has left a bad taste in the mouths of many of democracy’s most fervent Arab supporters. After Bouteflika won a third five-year term in 2009, Algerian news commentator Mahmoud Belhimer opined that the electoral process there and elsewhere in the Arab world served “merely to perpetuate the permanent monopoly of the ruling elite on power, thus denying the vast majority of society the right to participation in public affairs.”

To further cement their monopoly, Arab leaders have seized upon the threat of Al Qaeda terrorism to promote their civilian and military intelligence services—the *mukhabarat*—to the forefront of political life. The heads of these agencies have become so powerful that they often play the role of kingmaker, or simply become candidates for the top job themselves. After fighting an Islamist insurgency throughout the 1990s, the intelligence service in Algeria is now the mainstay of the regime and the decisive factor in choosing presidents. In Saudi Arabia, the domestic civilian security chief, Minister of the Interior Nayef bin Abdulaziz, has emerged as a possible successor to King Abdullah after leading a successful crackdown on Al Qaeda terrorists. Mubarak has made his ubiquitous *mukhabarat*, with its two million agents and its jails filled with Islamist and secular dissidents, the backbone of his regime as well. The head of the Egyptian General Intelligence Services, Omar Suleiman, has become the leading can-

didate to succeed Mubarak should his son Gamal falter.

The argument that a “freedom deficit” lies at the core of the Arab world’s woes was not invented by President Bush. It was earlier advanced by a group of independent Arab scholars who in 2002 began producing a regular series, the Arab Human Development Reports, for the United Nations. “The wave of democracy that transformed governance in most of Latin America and East Asia in the 1980s and Eastern Europe and much of Central Asia in the late 1980s and early 1990s has barely reached the Arab states,” they wrote.

The group has systematically probed the causes of the Arab failure to keep up with the rest of the world in areas ranging from education to the advancement of women. Sixty-five million Arab adults, mainly women, remain illiterate; less than 1 percent of Arab adults use the Internet, and only 1.2 percent have computers. No Arab university has any standing in world rankings. Arab regimes’ miserable failure to meet the challenges of globalization has led to high rates of unemployment and poverty. In 2002, one in every five Arabs was living on less than \$2 a day. The report blamed the Arab world’s stagnating economies, particularly in non-oil-producing countries, on many leaders’ fixation with “discredited statist, inward-looking development models.”

In 2008, the average unemployment rate still stood at a disturbing 15 percent in North Africa and 12 percent in the rest of the Arab world, according to the International Labor Organization. Among the young it was higher—17 percent in Egypt and 25 percent in Algeria. In these and other Arab states, high food prices, poor housing, and a lack of jobs constantly threaten to ignite social explosions and give Islamist groups a popular cause to ride.

In Egypt, the specter of bread riots haunts the political elite decades after Sadat’s attempt to cut subsidies in 1977 sparked nationwide street protests and forced him to call out the army. Eight hundred people died in the ensuing clashes, and Islamic militants took advantage of the disorder to sack dozens of alcohol-serving nightclubs along the tourist route to Cairo’s pyramids. Sadat quickly reversed himself.

Selling for the equivalent of a penny, the flat, round *baladi* bread is the staple of poor Egyptians and literally keeps the social peace. In March 2008, when there was a sudden shortage of bread, an anxious Mubarak called upon the army to use its own flour supplies to bake *baladis*. But Egyptians forced to stand in endless lines clashed with police, and both the Muslim Brotherhood and secular opposition parties took to the streets to show their solidarity and denounce the government.

Algeria harbors an even greater potential for social unrest and Islamic agitation. Because of their long and successful liberation strug-

gle against France (1954–62), Algerians are more likely than most Arabs to believe in revolts and demonstrations as means of changing the status quo. Riots in Algiers over bad living conditions nearly brought down the military government in 1988 after the outburst grew into a national protest movement that Islamic militants were able to take over. The military then fought a bloody, dirty war against disaffected Islamists throughout the 1990s. It has remained ever since in fear of another Islamist uprising. Last January, security forces rushed to halt a march by tens of thousands of Islamists from the suburbs into downtown Algiers. The crowds had taken to the streets to show their solidarity with the radical Palestinian faction, Hamas, then battling



In Algeria, bad housing conditions sparked several days of protests in the capital city of Algiers last October, and police clashed violently with demonstrators. For Arab rulers, the possibility that even minor public disruptions will snowball into regime-ending cataclysms is a constant worry.

Israeli forces that had invaded its stronghold in the Gaza Strip.

This nervousness about the Arab Street prevails in virtually every capital in the Arab world—except, surprisingly, among the Persian Gulf monarchies, regimes one might expect to be the most worried. But

NERVOUSNESS ABOUT the Arab Street prevails in virtually every Arab capital.

the monarchies are blessed with small populations and enormous wealth. Their special circumstances call into doubt whether they can serve as a model for the rest of the Arab world. But this is what they are aspiring to do, starting with a renovation of their backward education systems.

The gulf states have begun pouring billions of dollars into new universities and inviting American and other Western universities to set up local branches. There are new American-run or -supported institutions in Kuwait (two), Qatar (three), Oman (three), Bahrain (one), and the United Arab Emirates (nine). In Qatar, the government has set aside land in the capital, Doha, to build an entire “Education City” to attract foreign universities.

Last September, the first 400 students, including 20 Saudi women, arrived at Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), a state-of-the-art coeducational graduate research institute endowed with \$10 billion from the king’s personal coffers. Located along the Red Sea shore 50 miles north of Jidda, KAUST represents a bold gamble by Abdullah to promote social change over the heated objections of his own backward-looking Wahhabi clerical establishment. Taboos of Saudi society have been thrown out the window: Women not only take classes together with men, they are allowed to drive on the campus and do not have to veil their faces. One senior cleric roundly denounced such practices as “a great sin and a great evil.” Abdullah responded by firing him from the kingdom’s highest religious council, after making

clear his intent to have KAUST serve as a “beacon of tolerance” for all Saudi society.

Saudi Arabia is the one new Arab powerhouse to have emerged as a player on the international scene. Its status as the world’s central oil bank—it has the largest reserves (267 billion barrels) and production capacity (12.5 million barrels a day)—and holder of massive dollar reserves (\$395 billion in mid-2009) puts it in a unique position among the Arab states. The kingdom is the only Arab

country in the Group of 20, the organization of the world’s major economic powers. In that role, to the displeasure of some other oil-producing nations, it has so far remained a firm supporter of the dollar’s role as the world’s reserve currency.

In many ways, the Saudi king stands out as a notable exception to the criticism that old age and longevity in power have ossified Arab leadership. Now 86, Abdullah has proven unexpectedly energetic and innovative. As crown prince in 2003, he launched a formal “National Dialogue” that forced leaders of the feuding Sunni, Shiite, and smaller Muslim sects to discuss their differences. He then convoked Saudis from all walks of life to discuss hot-button social and religious issues. After taking the throne in 2005, Abdullah fired some of the most reactionary clerics running the religious establishment, sidelined others in the government, and promoted reformers to replace them. He has also cracked down on the excesses of the Taliban-like Wahhabi religious police, and launched a nationwide campaign to reeducate Wahhabi clerics away from extremism.

Conscious that his country’s reputation was damaged by the fact that 15 of the 19 hijackers of 9/11 were Saudi citizens, Abdullah has reached out to the West. In 2008, he addressed a Saudi-promoted “culture of peace” conference at the UN General Assembly, the first time in half a century a Saudi king had appeared before the world body.

The Islamists' Dilemma

When Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika won a third five-year term last April with a reported 90 percent of the vote, Algerians reacted with sullen disdain. It was just the latest in a string of crooked elections in Algeria and other countries that have tarnished democracy's reputation in much of the Arab world. Now many Islamist parties in several Arab countries are reconsidering their commitment to electoral politics.

I arrived in Algiers shortly after the election to find the country's Islamist parties in turmoil. Many of their natural supporters had boycotted the election, and their leaders were under intense pressure to quit the electoral process. One group, adherents to Saudi Arabia's fundamentalist Wahhabism, had decided to do just that and withdraw into their own isolated communes. Criticism of electoral politics was also being heard among Islamists in Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Egypt.

I was struck by how much Algeria's political landscape had changed since I lived there in the first few years after it won independence from France in 1962. Back then, Algeria was a hotbed of European communists and Trotskyites bent on launching a socialist revolution. After a military coup in 1965, the country slowly morphed into a breeding ground for Muslim militants just as determined to establish an Islamic republic.

That came very close to happening after Islamists won parliamentary elections in 1991, but the military again stepped in. The result was a decade-

long Islamist insurgency and civil war that cost 150,000 lives and left Islamic radicalism in bad repute. (Diehard extremists still fight on in the mountains 60 miles east of Algiers, where attacks on police and army patrols were reported almost every day during my visit in June.) But the Islamization of the country continued apace. Today, many women wear the veil; the once dominant French-language media have increasingly given way to Arabic competitors.

Still, I found a deep malaise among many Islamists. In the mid-1990s, the Algerian military invited them to participate in elections as part of a strategy to neutralize them, and it worked. In 1995, a faction that today calls itself the Movement of the Society for Peace scored a second-place finish in the presidential election, and several MSP leaders were invited to become ministers in the new government. Fifteen years later, the MSP is still part of the coalition that supports Bouteflika, but it has very little to show for its loyalty, and its ties to the autocratic president have hurt its reputation. Its popularity has plummeted. Because the MSP ran as part of a multiparty bloc, it is impossible to know how many votes it won in April, but one indicator of the religious parties' overall strength is the tally of the sole independent Islamist party in the race: just 176,000 votes.

The latest election has roiled even the MSP. One MSP faction split off to form a new party pledged to greater militancy. Another decided to chal-

lenge MSP leader Bouguerra Soltani from within. Both groups believe the party is losing its popularity and vitality by being part of the government. Soltani himself resigned from Bouteflika's cabinet, though two other MSP ministers stayed.

I spoke to Soltani at his party's headquarters, where he vehemently defended the strategy of participation. His main objective, he said, remained the same—to convince the military that “it is possible to work with Islamists” and entrust them with important ministries. But even MSP vice president Abderrazak Maki disagreed. He said the party should quit the government, concentrate on rebuilding its popular support, and press its agenda for a stricter adherence to Islamic norms from the outside.

The discontent has spread to other countries where Islamist parties have been willing to give multiparty democracy a chance. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, which became the main opposition group in the 2005 parliamentary elections, is now debating whether to participate in elections later this year. One option for disillusioned Islamists is simply to drop out of the public realm, as Algeria's Wahhabis did. Some may choose to join the jihad against the growing U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. But another option is to revert to underground resistance, a prospect that does not augur well for the Arab experiment with authoritarian democracy.

—David B. Ottaway

More remarkably, Abdullah engineered the boldest Arab initiative to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli deadlock since Sadat flew to Jerusalem. In retrospect, it seems something of a miracle that he succeeded in getting the entire 22-member Arab League to adopt his initiative at its Beirut summit in 2002. The plan offered peace, security guarantees, and normalization of relations with Israel in return for an Israeli withdrawal from Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war. Not so long ago, Arab leaders would have objected to even an implicit recognition of Israel. Unfortunately, Abdullah's initiative elicited no response from either Tel Aviv or Washington.

ernment accused the Iranians of fomenting rebellion among members of a local Shiite sect.

But the anti-Iranian campaign served more to divide than to unite the Arab world. Last January, after Israeli troops invaded the Gaza Strip in a bid to destroy Hamas, Qatar defied Saudi Arabia's king Abdullah and President Mubarak by calling for an emergency Arab summit to show support for the radical Iranian-backed group. Fourteen of the Arab League's members sent representatives, while Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the league's wealthiest and most populous members, respectively, could only join others in a boycott.

SAUDI ARABIA, THE powerhouse of the Arabian peninsula, cannot impose its will even on its tiny neighbors.

The powerhouse of the Arabian Peninsula cannot impose its will even on its tiny neighbors in the Gulf Cooperation Council. The GCC brought together six monarchies—kingdoms, emirates, and a sultanate—in 1981 to deal with the challenge from Iran's mili-

For all his efforts, Abdullah has not been able to rally the Arab Street or, apart from the Beirut summit, other Arab leaders. Saudi financial largesse has lost its purchasing power in other Arab capitals, and Saudi diplomacy now has limits even in the kingdom's backyard on the Arabian Peninsula. The spread of massive oil wealth since the sharp increase in global oil prices began in the late 1990s has made it possible for even the tiny emirates to defy the mighty Saudi kingdom.

tant Shiite clerics, who were bent on exporting their revolution across the Persian Gulf. It established a collective defense force in 1986 under Saudi command, but the so-called Peninsula Shield never amounted to more than a nucleus of at most 9,000 soldiers. Pentagon efforts over the years to encourage GCC members to integrate their air, land, and sea defenses have had limited results.

The limits of Saudi influence became painfully apparent when the Saudis, alarmed by the rise of a Shia-led government in Baghdad after the fall of Saddam Hussein, joined with Egypt and Jordan in an effort to rally other Sunni Arab leaders against the spread of Iranian influence. By then, Tehran had already made inroads into Lebanon by supporting the Shiite faction, Hezbollah, and into Palestinian politics by backing Hamas. Jordan's King Abdullah warned of an emerging "Shiite crescent" stretching from Iran to Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. In Egypt, authorities uncovered a network of secret Hezbollah cells, and last year in Yemen the gov-

Why this failure of collective self-defense even among a subgroup of similar Arab countries confronted by a common threat? One constant of GCC politics is fear of Saudi hegemony. The United Arab Emirates and Qatar both have had territorial feuds with the Saudis, and there have been numerous economic squabbles. When Bahrain infuriated the Saudis by signing a bilateral free-trade agreement with the United States in 2004, for example, the kingdom retaliated by temporarily cutting off Bahrain's portion of the output from an oil field they share.

Nowhere are GCC members' differences more on display than in their attitudes toward Iran. For Saudi Arabia, the Shiite theocracy looms as the main chal-



At the Arab League's 2002 summit, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia won surprising assent to an Arab-Israeli peace plan, but he couldn't sell it elsewhere.

lenger to its religious and political influence in the Sunni Arab world. The prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran has alarmed the Saudis because of their fears that Tehran would be able to bully its Arab neighbors. The kingdom has been the most disposed of all the GCC members to support tougher economic sanctions, possibly even U.S. military action, to stop Iran's drive to join the world's nuclear club.

Qatar, on the other hand, has maintained an open-door policy and even at times aligned itself with Tehran against Riyadh—influenced in part by the fact that it jointly exploits a huge offshore gas field with Iran. To great Saudi displeasure, the Qataris invited Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to attend the 2007 GCC annual summit, a first for any Iranian leader. Qatar has also sided with Iran's militant friends in the Arab world, namely Hezbollah and Hamas; it even took over floundering Saudi efforts to mediate among Lebanese factions in 2008

in brokering an accord that gave Hezbollah a decisive voice in forming a new government, succeeding in Beirut.

Oman has also gone out of its way to remain on good terms with Tehran, partly because the two countries face each other across the Strait of Hormuz, the passageway for all oil tankers leaving the Persian Gulf. So has the United Arab Emirates, a constellation of seven semiautonomous city-states. The largest emirate, Dubai, is the main transshipment point for Iranian exports and imports, still often ferried across the gulf in old-fashioned wooden dhows. This flourishing trade continues unabated despite UN economic sanctions on Iran, not to mention Iran's continuing military occupation of three islands claimed by the emirates.

How has it been possible for these statelets to forge such independent foreign policies? The answer lies in their massive oil and gas wealth. For example, Qatar,



The Arab future? At Ski Dubai, with its enclosed 400-meter ski slope, the materialistic zeal of the prosperous gulf states assumes crystalline form.

with an indigenous population of less than 200,000, boasts the world's third-largest natural gas reserves, after Russia and Iran, and is the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas. It had a gross domestic product of \$106 billion in 2008. Egypt, with its 80 million people, had a GDP of only \$158 billion. Even counting Qatar's foreign resident population of slightly more than one million, its per capita income of \$93,204 was twice that of the United States in 2008, ranking second worldwide.

The case of the United Arab Emirates is just as striking. With an indigenous population of 1.3 million (out of a total population of 4.3 million), it had a GDP of \$270 billion in 2008, more than half that of Saudi Arabia, which has 20 times as many nationals. Its sovereign investment fund—the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority—was the world's largest in 2008, with assets of \$627 billion. Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman had similarly outsized economies.

Fabulous wealth has made it possible for the gulf ministates to do more than just dream impossible dreams. The rulers of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar have invested hundreds of billions of dollars in glitzy new “global cities” that aspire to become centers for play, business, and finance appealing to Arabs and non-Arabs alike. They host UN conferences and celebrity-studded events that trumpet their high hopes. The Doha Tribeca Film Festival in Qatar boasts Robert DeNiro among its marquee names. Abu Dhabi's plans include both a “Louvre Abu Dhabi” and a Guggenheim museum designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry.

There is an air of unreality about these would-be global cities. Doha's skyline is dotted with cranes, and its downtown is an unending series of construction sites and twisting highway detours. Pakistanis, Indians, Sri Lankans, Nepalese, Filipinos, and Egyptians have come by the hundreds of thousands to build a new shining city on the sands around a barren bay. The quaint old quar-

ters at the city's heart are surrounded by towering hotels and conference centers. Native Qataris seem a vanishing species. A visitor could easily pass a week in Doha rarely meeting a Qatari or hearing Arabic spoken.

Even before Dubai essentially defaulted on \$60 billion in debt last November, the world financial crisis of 2008–09 had brought a halt, or at least a pause, to the great Dubai dream of a new

global city. Scores of projects were put on hold and tens of thousands of foreign workers sent home. Oman, too, was hard hit. But the other gulf statelets simply dug deeper into their foreign reserves to ride out the downturn, while Saudi Arabia, with \$400 billion in its pocket, hardly skipped a beat.

If tiny Qatar can defy giant Saudi Arabia, what is the likelihood that the Arab world will ever produce another charismatic *zaim* of the stature of Nasser or Sadat, or that Egypt will re-emerge as its political dynamo? The chances appear exceedingly slim. Egypt may still have some of the key ingredients for leadership—the mightiest army, the biggest population, and the most central geographic location. But it remains resource poor and heavily dependent on unreliable revenues from abroad—multibillion-dollar grants from the United States, European and Arab tourism, and remittances from the two million Egyptians who work in other countries.

Not only has the center of Arab wealth moved to the gulf; so, too, has the source of new initiatives and thinking. Visiting Cairo last April, a *New York Times* reporter found its chattering classes demoralized and despairing. A leading television writer, Osama Anwar Okasha, lamented that Egypt had become “a third-class country.” It is “not influential in anything,” he grumbled. Cairo has lost even its role as the soap opera capital of the Arab world, its state-sponsored offerings trounced in the ratings during the critical Ramadan month of fasting by livelier confections such as Turkey's *Noor*, which follows the heart-rending story of a young couple forced into a traditional family-arranged marriage. Egyptians

were embarrassed last year by Mubarak's effort to promote culture minister Farouk Hosny, widely seen as Cairo's Savonarola, as UNESCO's new director-general. Hosny blamed the failure of his candidacy on a Jewish

CAIRO HAS LOST even its role as the soap opera capital of the Arab world.

conspiracy “cooked up in New York.” As if this were not enough, Egyptians suffered another blow to their self esteem last November when Algeria eliminated their soccer team from World Cup contention. In the ensuing dustup, both countries recalled their ambassadors.

The decline of Egypt has been an especially bitter pill for the country's best and brightest to swallow. The literate are divided over whether the blame lies chiefly with the peace treaty with Israel, which deprived Egypt of a military option and thus weakened its diplomacy with Tel Aviv, or with Mubarak. The Egyptian president himself seems to have supplied the answer, allowing King Abdullah to eclipse him with his 2002 peace initiative and failing in his effort to mediate among feuding Palestinian factions.

Mubarak's son and possible successor Gamal has deftly promoted his image at home and abroad as a reform-minded modernizer, but it seems unlikely that any leader will be able to restore Egypt to its role as *umm idduniya*. Some reformers' hearts fluttered in December when Mohamed ElBaradei, who won a Nobel Prize as head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, declared his interest in running for Egypt's presidency in 2011, but he attached conditions the government is unlikely to satisfy.

Washington regularly bemoans the lack of an “Arab partner” in the peace process, and presses Egypt in particular to do more. Abdullah's success in pulling Arab rulers together behind a plan illustrates that strong leadership can serve to forge a single Arab voice on even the most divisive issues. But the single, clear voice of 2002 did little to help achieve a breakthrough in the Israeli-Palestinian deadlock; nor has Arab unanimity in backing a multitude of anti-Israel resolutions at the

United Nations accomplished anything. And the Arab League's unanimous support for Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir, faced with war crime charges by the International Criminal Court, has not enhanced the Arab voice in world affairs.

It is no longer clear, either, what the Arab world stands to gain by an Egypt strutting back to center stage. There is no enticing "Egyptian model" for development—political or economic. New thinking, visions, and initiatives have come largely from the Persian Gulf states and their freewheeling, competitive rulers, while Egypt still seems encumbered by its Pharaonic nature from embarking on radical change. On the whole, the Arab world has gained in vitality in Egypt's decline.

That world now stares at two sharply contrasting models of its future: the highly materialistic emirate state obsessed with visions of Western-style modernity, and the strict Islamic one fixed on resurrecting the Qur'an's dictates espoused by fundamentalists and Al Qaeda. The struggle between these two models for the hearts and minds of Arabs is intense, particularly among a questioning, restless youth. The lure of the new, shiny emirate cities remains powerful, but there is a soulless quality about these places that raises questions about their lasting appeal. On the other hand, Muslim terrorism unleashed against other Muslims has done nothing to enhance the call for an Islamic state.

There are signs, perhaps false, that the appeal of militant Islam is waning. Support for Islamic parties has dropped in recent elections in Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, and Algeria. But this may only reflect the growing disillusionment with government-rigged elections, as falling voter turnout strongly suggests. In fact, there is a fierce debate under way within the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and like-minded Islamist groups elsewhere over whether they should continue to participate in the electoral process. (See box, p. 59.)

Analysts of the Arab world are all too aware that prediction is a fool's game. As a journalist covering the region, I have reported more times than I can count the confident predictions after the shah fell in 1979 that the Arab monarchies were next. Today, those same regimes are not only alive and well but thriving. Militant

Islam has not swept them away. Predicting the outcome of the continuing struggle between Arab autocrats, royal and secular, and their Islamist opponents seems equally perilous today. The Arab future is not limited to a choice between autocracy and theocracy. As both Turkey and Indonesia powerfully illustrate, there is nothing inherently contradictory between Islam and authentic multiparty democracy. These countries, too, were once ruled by autocrats, and they both have had to figure out the role of Islam in politics.

Whoever comes to rule Egypt after Mubarak will walk upon an Arab landscape that has undergone change that is probably irreversible. Not only is the Arab world multipolar in wealth and influence; its eastern and western flanks are slowly being pulled in opposite directions by different global markets. Centrifugal economic forces are becoming more powerful than centripetal political ones. For the oil- and gas-exporting gulf states, the thriving economies of China, India, and other Asian nations have become a powerful magnet; for the Maghreb countries, the European Union plays that role. Saudi Arabia aspires to become the prime supplier of foreign oil to gas-guzzling China; Algeria is doubling the capacity to transport its Sahara gas by underwater pipelines to energy-starved Italy and Spain.

By and large, the economic prospects for most Arab countries appear reasonably hopeful. A majority have oil or gas, and even non-oil-producing countries such as Jordan and Morocco, and minor producers such as Tunisia, have fair to good prospects. Many were on the move economically before the latest world financial crisis, and they have not come to a halt because of it. Even war-devastated Iraq has struck deals with foreign firms to nearly triple its current production of 2.5 million barrels a day in the next six years.

By contrast, Arab political prospects are deeply troubling. Monarchs, once thought headed for history's dustbin, are doing surprisingly well at the moment. Both royal and secular autocrats are holding their Islamist challengers at bay thanks to highly manipulative or repressive security services. However, this prevailing model of Arab autocracy, dependent on the *mukhabarat* and a fabricated popular vote, does not seem a recipe for lasting political stability. Indeed, the Arab political cauldron contains all the ingredients for explosions in the years ahead. ■

IN ESSENCE

REVIEWS OF ARTICLES FROM PERIODICALS AND SPECIALIZED JOURNALS HERE AND ABROAD

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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Transparency Traps

THE SOURCE: "Against Transparency" by Lawrence Lessig, in *The New Republic*, Oct. 21, 2009.

THE BASIC PREMISE OF THE call for more transparency in government is quite simple: Greater openness will ultimately lead to better governance. Just think how it would be if citizens could know exactly whom their representatives met with every day, or could easily track the dollars funding reelection campaigns. Advocates also clamor for more transparency in banking, medicine, and the news media. As Justice Louis D. Brandeis famously said, "Sunlight is . . . the best of disinfectants."

Not so fast, writes Harvard Law professor Lawrence Lessig. Transparency has emerged as "an unquestionable bipartisan value," but "we are not thinking critically enough about where and when transparency works, and where and when it may lead to confusion, or to worse. . . . The inevitable success of this movement—if pursued alone,

without any sensitivity to the full complexity of the idea of perfect openness—will inspire not reform, but disgust."

Take the issue of campaign contributions. For 30 years it has been possible to find the name of everyone who gives significant amounts to federal election campaigns, but it wasn't always easy. You had to get yourself to a government file cabinet, often located far from anywhere convenient. If you made it that far, you'd find that the files were a few months behind. Even today, Senate staffers collect campaign contribution data in sophisticated computer programs, only to print out their lists, forcing Federal Election Commission personnel to manually reenter the information into their own databases. The resulting lag allows senators to accept campaign contributions right before an election knowing they will remain under wraps until after the votes have been cast.

Transparency advocates hope to change this by employing informa-

tion technology that would make it "trivially easy" to access the records. With little work, interest groups would be able to draw direct lines from congresspersons' campaign finances to their votes. The trouble is, Lessig writes, "it is impossible to know whether any particular contribution . . . brought about a particular vote, or was inspired by a particular vote. . . . If there are benign as well as malign contributions, it is impossible to know for any particular contributions which of the two it is." Transparency raises the specter of corruption, but fails to prove its existence. Elevated levels of suspicion encouraged by this "tyranny of transparency" corrode the public's trust in Congress, whose approval rating is already hovering around a measly 20 percent.

What's to be done? Without transparency, it's impossible to discern the corrupting effects of money on a legislator's decisions, but with transparency it's too easy to see impropriety everywhere. Lessig says that the solution is to do away with the source of the insinuations altogether: the system of privately funded elections. "Sunlight may well be a great disinfectant," he observes. "But as anyone who has ever waded through a swamp knows, it has other effects as well."

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

The Politics of Complexity

THE SOURCE: "District Complexity as an Advantage in Congressional Elections" by Michael J. Ensley, Michael W. Tofias, and Scott de Marchi, in *The American Journal of Political Science*, Oct. 2009.

IDEOLOGICALLY DRIVEN

gerrymandering over the past several decades has produced an increasing number of relatively homogenous congressional districts represented by legislators with little to fear from most challengers.

But anyone who thinks more diverse districts are rough-and-tumble rings of fierce political competition has another thing coming. Political scientists Michael J. Ensley of Kent State University, Michael W. Tofias of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and Scott de Marchi

of Duke University write that in districts where the political landscape is especially hard to understand, potential challengers rarely materialize, and when they do, they are more likely to lose.

The trio gauged the complexity of congressional districts by examining opinion-poll data on residents' views on economic issues such as taxation and on cultural questions—what to do about abortion, guns, and school prayer. Districts where the two areas of belief were highly correlated have "simple" political landscapes; a candidate in such a district can make accurate predictions about how constituents feel about gun control based on how they feel about taxes. In districts where people have, say, uniformly conservative economic views but heterogenous social values, potential challengers face a problem. In these "complicated" districts, putting together an accurate picture of

people's views requires a lot more polling than in a simple district (a process that can be quite expensive).

The 2000 election bore out the authors' argument. In districts with greater political complexity, a serious challenger was far less likely to emerge, and those who did fared much worse come Election Day. In the ever artless language of political scientists, "If we compare a district with a complexity score two standard deviations below the mean to a district with a score two standard deviations above the mean, there is a 2.5 percent difference in the incumbent's expected share of the vote." Simply put, the more complex a district, the better the incumbent fared. Ensley and colleagues explain, "By definition, an incumbent has done a good job of finding a successful platform at least once." Best of luck to the go-getters who want to throw their hats in the ring.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

The Wrong Fix for Foreclosures

THE SOURCE: "Reducing Foreclosures" by Christopher L. Foote, Kristopher S. Gerardi, Lorenz Goette, and Paul S. Willen, in *Research Review*, Jan.-June 2009.

ONE SOLUTION TO THE RECENT surge of foreclosures has gained a lot of currency: Rewrite the lousy mortgages that are the source of this mess. It's a win-win plan: Borrowers would keep their homes, and banks would

save money they would have lost in foreclosure. Sheila Bair, chairwoman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, has estimated that this strategy could prevent 1.5 million foreclosures. Since each foreclosure is estimated to cost the lender an average of \$120,000, total savings could be as much as \$180 billion. At the end of September, 14 percent of the

nation's borrowers were either delinquent or in foreclosure. But loan modifications just aren't happening at the rate one would expect. Why not?

A new study by Christopher L. Foote and Paul S. Willen of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Kristopher S. Gerardi of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, and Lorenz Goette of the University of Geneva shows that rewriting the terms of mortgages nearing foreclosure would be bad business for banks. The reason is two-fold: Banks would be overly inclusive and rewrite mortgages that wouldn't have gone into foreclosure; and of those they would rewrite, many



Boarded up and vacant homes are an all too common sight in Gary, Indiana, where foreclosures outpaced sales through the end of 2009.

would go into foreclosure anyway.

Foote and his colleagues found that foreclosures are not being driven chiefly by exorbitant interest rates or other qualities of the mortgages themselves. They point instead to what they call the “double-trigger”: the interaction of an “income shock”—a job loss—and falling home prices. “Consider a borrower who has lost his job. No permanent modification can make the house affordable if the borrower has no income.” Moreover, “when the value of the house that collateralizes the loan is falling,” the servicer who delays foreclosure risks an even larger loss in the future.

To test their theory, the authors tweaked data covering more than half of the U.S. mortgage market. What happens if mortgage debt rises as a percentage of people’s incomes? What if more borrowers are unemployed? For each variable they altered, they could see the effect on payment delinquency. What they found is that even a 10

percent increase in the ratio of debt to income that a borrower takes on at the start of a loan increases the risk of a 90-day delinquency by only seven to 11 percent. In contrast, just a one-percentage-point increase in the unemployment rate raises the probability by 10 to 20 percent. Worst of all, a 10-percentage-point fall in house prices raises it by more than half.

Some economists have contended that banks have been slow to modify loans because it’s very complicated to do so with mortgages that have been sold and repackaged in securitized bundles. But Foote and his colleagues found that securitized and non-securitized loans have been modified at about the same rate.

The authors argue that it’s a mistake for Washington to focus on making it easier to modify loans. Rather, it should create a bridge for people who have recently lost their jobs to help them get through the rough patch without losing their homes.

Ditch the Dollar

THE SOURCE: “The Dollar and the Deficits” by C. Fred Bergsten, in *Foreign Affairs*, Nov.–Dec. 2009.

WHEN CHINESE OFFICIALS began talking openly last year about the possibility of unseating the dollar as the world’s reserve currency, they got the brushoff from Washington. But C. Fred Bergsten, director of the Peter G. Peterson Institute for International Economics, argues that that was a mistake. After nearly a century, the dollar’s role as the world’s dominant currency is no longer in America’s national interest.

It may make Americans feel good that everybody needs greenbacks to do business in the global economy, but the costs to the United States have grown very high. China and other nations game the system by keeping the value of their currencies artificially low relative to the dollar, allowing them to sell their goods more cheaply in the United States while hamstringing U.S. exports. Then they pour the vast dollar holdings they’ve amassed into the United States, providing easy money that fosters government deficits, high-risk mortgages, and debt-fueled consumer spending—key elements in the recent boom and bust.

In 2006, the U.S. current account deficit (which includes interest and other money flows in addition to trade in goods and services) topped \$800 billion, a

record six percent of gross domestic product (GDP). But that's small potatoes compared with what's in store if nothing changes. While the recession has brought the current account deficit down, Bergsten's institute predicts it will reach 15 percent of GDP by 2030. America's net foreign debt will rise from \$3.5 trillion today to \$50 trillion. The interest alone will come to \$2.5 trillion annually. That means that the United States will be shipping seven percent of its GDP overseas every year—if economic disaster doesn't strike first.

Bergsten does not advocate a total abdication of the dollar. Rather, he thinks it should share its role with the euro, the Chinese yuan, and other currencies, as well as the new Special Drawing Rights system of the International Monetary Fund, which is based on a basket of currencies.

At bottom, though, Bergsten

Job one for the United States must be to reduce the staggering federal budget deficit.

believes that the fundamental problem is U.S. government deficits. The dollar glut is an enabling condition. As Washington borrows more money to finance the deficits, interest rates rise, attracting foreign investors and pushing up the value of the dollar. The trade deficit grows. And the writing on the wall suggests a dark future: This year's \$1.5 trillion federal budget shortfall was more than triple the previous record, but trillion-dollar deficits stretch into the foreseeable future.

Job one for the United States must be to reduce those budget deficits, Bergsten writes. That

would allow the Federal Reserve to keep interest rates (and the value of the dollar) relatively low. But Washington must also work to “prevent and counter deliberate currency undervaluations by other major countries” that harm U.S. competitiveness. China is the chief offender—despite a recent climb, the yuan remains undervalued by 20 to 40 percent—but there is a long list of others, including Germany, Japan, and Switzerland. Multilateral “name and shame” efforts directed at currency manipulators and the enforcement of certain provisions of the World Trade Organization are two possible antidotes. But the stakes are high enough that Bergsten thinks the United States should be prepared to take unilateral action, perhaps by imposing import surcharges on products from countries that continue to game the system.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Clipping the President's Wings

THE SOURCE: “Presidential Power Over International Law: Restoring the Balance” by Oona A. Hathaway, in *The Yale Law Journal*, Nov. 2009.

IT MAY BE CONGRESS'S JOB TO write the laws in America, but when it comes to international affairs, the legislators have all but relinquished their role. Today,

roughly 80 percent of the United States' international commitments are made by the president acting alone, writes Oona A. Hathaway, a professor of international law at Yale Law School.

In the years after World War II, Congress began passing statutes that delegated power to

the president to make certain kinds of international agreements without further congressional input. Although many of the initial provisions were carefully constrained, today's are vague and open-ended, giving the president unilateral and expansive authority over almost every area of international law, from fisheries to atomic energy. In the past decade, the State Department has reported an annual average of 200 to 300 agreements made by the president under the authority of these statutes. One such agreement, made in 2007, dealt with

the safety of drugs and medical devices imported from China. In that same time span, Congress has ratified just 20 treaties annually.

But presidential power grab it wasn't. Rather, it was Congress that, "because of a combination of institutional myopia and political incentives," more or less unwittingly gave away its power bit by bit. Handing over international lawmaking to the president meant more time to work on the domestic issues that decide elections. The courts, Hathaway writes, "have done nothing to correct the imbalance."

Some have argued that the resulting arrangement is preferable—that Congress is ill suited to making international policy. An effective international negotiator must have the authority to sign an agreement that will not be second-guessed and amended by Congress, they contend. Hathaway is unconvinced. Not only is it "inconsistent with basic democratic principles" for the executive to have unmitigated power in conducting international affairs, but it "can lead to less favorable agreements" that don't have necessary support from Americans who will be affected. And a negotiator who has to answer to Congress often has a stronger position, she argues. With the legislative branch lurking in the background, the president can refuse to give ground on certain provisions, on the pretense that such a deal will never garner approval.

Hathaway proposes compre-

hensive reform in how the United States makes international law. Congress could continue delegating authority to the president to make international agreements, she suggests, but those delegations should be narrow and include sunset provisions. The president should have to submit more agreements to Congress for review before they go into effect, a requirement that would encourage him to seek the legislative branch's input throughout the process. And legislators should adopt an expedited process for approving agreements. Through such changes, Congress would be brought back into the process. Hathaway stresses that making international law should not be the prerogative of the president.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

E-Warfare

THE SOURCE: "The Cyberwar Plan" by Shane Harris, in *National Journal*, Nov. 14, 2009.

THE MILITARY OF THE UNITED States reigns supreme on land, in the air, and at sea. But who will rule cyberspace remains an open question.

Shane Harris, a correspondent for *National Journal*, reports that cyberwarfare—attacks on a nation's power grid, air traffic control system, banks, Web servers, or phones—is now an integral part of U.S. military strategy. The government has made its efforts to keep American computers secure well known, but now evidence that the United States has engaged in an

offensive cyber-strategy is piling up. Harris reveals that in May 2007 President George W. Bush authorized an attack on the cell phones and computers of insurgents in Iraq. Unnamed former officials credit such operations with helping to "turn the tide of the war." Some suggest they were even more instrumental than the thousands of additional troops President Bush sent to Iraq as part of the surge in 2007.

With the creation of high-level posts to coordinate U.S. cyber-strategy and the emergence of a younger generation of leaders, the new way of war is getting more attention from the defense establishment. But the United States faces major challenges in keeping pace with Russia and China. An independent study published in July found the nation's cyberwar staff fragmented and inadequate; the study blamed low salaries and a hiring process that can stretch on for months.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has said that the military is "desperately short" of cyber-warriors. The Defense Department graduates about 80 students each year from schools devoted to teaching cyberwarfare and hopes to quadruple that number in the next two years. But the government must compete with the private sector for top talent. For example, defense contractor Raytheon Company recently posted a "Cyber Warriors Wanted" advertisement on its Web site and announced 250 open spots.

The United States appears to have proceeded cautiously, in part

out of awareness that the weapons of cyberwarfare are very different from conventional ones, producing systemic effects that can be hard to anticipate. Planners considering an attack on the Iraqi banking system before the 2003 U.S.-led invasion backed off when they realized that the Iraqi networks were tied to ones in France that would also be affected. Moreover, the computer coding used in any assault is at

risk of being captured by an adversary, refined, and redeployed. Mike McConnell, a former director of national intelligence, has said that a coordinated cyberattack “could create damage as potentially great as a nuclear weapon over time.”

Old-fashioned Cold War-style deterrence theory plays a big role in the new thinking. Harris writes, “Presumably, China has no interest in crippling Wall Street, be-

cause it owns much of it. Russia should be reluctant to launch a cyberattack on the United States because, unlike Estonia or Georgia [which Russia is believed to have cyber-attacked in 2007 and 2008, respectively], the United States could fashion a response involving massive conventional force. . . . If nations begin attacking one another’s power grids and banks, they will quickly exchange bombs and bullets.”

SOCIETY

Good Vibrations

THE SOURCE: “Effects of Internet Commerce on Social Trust” by Diana C. Mutz, in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Fall 2009.

HARDLY A DAY GOES BY WITHOUT some headline declaring a new ill the Internet is visiting upon society. One oft-heard lament: Local shopkeepers are losing business to online retailers, and as a result, small interactions that once strengthened the social fabric of a neighborhood or town are no more. Is the Internet eroding the connections that keep society together?

Not at all, writes Diana C. Mutz, a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania. Face-to-face interactions may be on the wane, but positive e-commerce experiences (and 80 percent of those who have purchased online characterize their

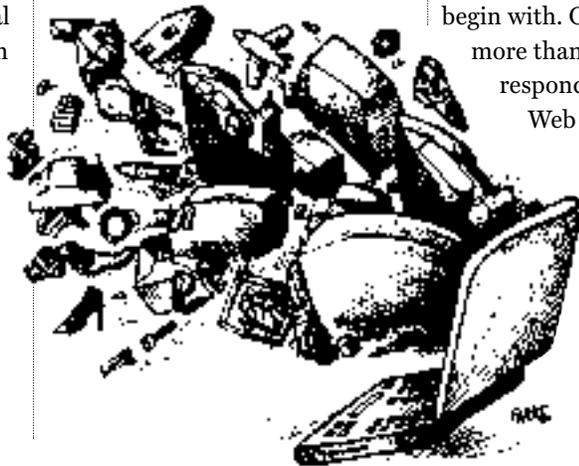
experience positively) tend to boost a generalized sense of faith in other people, particularly strangers.

Earlier studies have established that people who are more trusting are more likely to participate in e-commerce in the first place. And Mutz finds that when they do so and have a positive experience, they become even

more trusting. In a carefully crafted experiment, she tested the effects of good and bad online shopping experiences on people who had never bought anything on the Web before. Those whose packages arrived promptly and without hassle answered positively to survey questions about strangers’ honesty and helpfulness, and human nature’s essential goodness. Those who received broken goods and then poor customer service experienced a sharp drop in warm and fuzzy feelings toward their fellow man.

In general, people are not very trusting of online merchants to begin with. One study found that more than 60 percent of respondents believed that

Web businesses were likely to try to cheat them, while only 21 percent said the same of local shops. What’s more, many more people believed that online businesses could



get away with scamming their customers. Mutz suspects that it is this initial sense of apprehension followed by the pleasant surprise of an honest transaction that builds trust. When e-commerce becomes a more routine form of shopping (much as catalogs are today), no one will be surprised when an order arrives on time and as advertised, and the positive effects on general trust will diminish.

Of course, businesses act honestly because it's in their self-interest to do so, not out of

altruism. Mutz writes, "By engaging in economic transactions with those we do not know and probably will never meet, we enhance our faith in the general goodness of others. . . . Thus good business practices have important ramifications for the long-term well-being of societies."

SOCIETY

Don't Cry for Eyak

THE SOURCE: "The Cosmopolitan Tongue: The Universality of English" by John McWhorter, in *World Affairs Journal*, Fall 2009.

IN 2008, THE LAST NATIVE speaker of Eyak died in southern Alaska. Her death, and that of her mother tongue, was the subject of international news media attention. Observers mourned the loss of another indigenous

EXCERPT

Twain's World

Perhaps you will believe with me that civilizations are not realities, but only dreams; dreams of the mind, not of the heart, and therefore fictitious, and perishable; that they have never affected the heart and therefore have made no valuable progress; that the heart remains today what it always was, as intimacy with any existing savage tribe will show. Indeed the average human brain is not a shade higher today than it was in Egyptian times 10,000 years ago.

—MARK TWAIN, in a letter to Carl Thalbitzer, who had asked Twain to write about "the advantages and drawbacks of civilization," in *Harper's* (Dec. 2009)

language, one of thousands that are expected to meet the same fate in the next 100 years.

Get over it, says Columbia University linguist John McWhorter. The passing of these languages is not as meaningful as some think, and strenuous efforts to keep them alive are unlikely to succeed.

A small but vocal number of people have romantic notions about the unique "cultural worldview" an individual language represents. But language differences have more to do with geography than culture. The fact that the Latin *augustus* became *agosto* in Spain and *août* in France is merely one of the many "chance linguistic driftings" with no cultural significance that separate languages. And elements of a culture often remain intact long after the death of an indigenous language. "Native

American groups would bristle at the idea that they are no longer meaningfully 'Indian' simply because they no longer speak their ancestral tongue," McWhorter points out.

There is undeniably an aesthetic loss when a language dies, but it is meaningful to relatively few people. Technology allows us to record and preserve the clicks, whistles, and trills of obscure languages that delight linguists (and frustrate students). Ultimately, language death is "a symptom of people coming together," with all the

good things that entails: economic opportunity, shared space, and the exchange of ideas. Indigenous languages survive only in isolation, "complete with the maltreatment of women and lack of access to modern medicine and technology." When given the opportunity, these languages' users often voluntarily abandon their own ways in pursuit of a better life.

A hundred years from now the world could have as few as 600 living languages, with English serving as the "global tongue." As someone who has learned more than a few languages himself, McWhorter says the world could do much worse than English. Unlike, say, Czech, English has no sounds that a non-native can't closely approximate; nor does it require three genders, as Russian does, or the memorization of immense numbers of characters,

as other languages do. To read a simple story in a Chinese newspaper, a reader needs a working knowledge of 2,000 characters—yet another reason why a Chinese imperium is not a pretty thought.

SOCIETY

Crime's Great Convergence

THE SOURCE: "Crime and U.S. Cities: Recent Patterns and Implications" by Ingrid Gould Ellen and Katherine O'Regan, in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Nov. 2009.

FROM THE EARLY 1990S TO 2005, crime rates in America plunged by a third. But the overall national trend obscures other important developments, including the much bigger strides that have been made in reducing the victimization of minority groups.

In a study of 278 cities, New York University public policy professors Ingrid Gould Ellen and Katherine O'Regan describe drastic changes in

the period between 1992 and 2005. Property crime decreased by 38 percent and violent crime by nearly half. In 2005, one-quarter of cities were safer than their surrounding suburbs had been in 1992.

But the benefits were not universal. Northeastern cities with large minority and immigrant populations and high rates of poverty experienced the greatest drop. These cities tended to have higher crime rates to begin with. In contrast, the 70 cities where crime decreased the least—or even, in a few cases, increased—were on average three-quarters white, had far fewer immigrants, and were mostly in the South, West, and Midwest. Overall, the trends indicate a regional convergence.

Another convergence emerged when Ellen and O'Regan trained their sights on the dynamics within cities. Each population group (white, black, Hispanic, immigrant, poor, and not poor) experienced far less crime in 2005 than it had in 1992. Sectors of the population that saw the most crime in 1992 were exposed to less in

2005 than those that were safest 20 years earlier. But again, the trends did not affect all groups equally: The incidence of crime fell more sharply among minorities than whites, narrowing the gap between them.

The sole exception to this general convergence was found in an expanding gap between foreigners and native-born residents. In 1992, they had nearly the same level of "crime exposure." By 2000, immigrants experienced noticeably less crime than the average U.S.-born city resident. In fact, at the start of the millennium, the jurisdiction of residence of the average American Hispanic city dweller was safer than that of the average white city dweller.

The authors venture no explanations for the trends they describe. Among those commonly advanced are changes in the number of young men in the population, improved policing methods, and the ebb and flow of illicit drugs such as crack and methamphetamine and the criminal activities that accompany them.

PRESS & MEDIA

Can a Free Press Hurt?

THE SOURCE: "Watchdog or Lapdog? Media Freedom, Regime Type, and Government Respect for Human Rights" by Jenifer Whitten-Woodring, in *International Studies Quarterly*, Sept. 2009.

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE observed that a free press is "the chief democratic instrument of freedom." Today, this bit of

conventional wisdom pops up in the demands of human rights groups and the ideals of American foreign policy: Where a free press flourishes, democracy will surely follow. One small problem: In countries with autocratic regimes, a free press may actually incite an increase in human

rights abuses.

Jenifer Whitten-Woodring, a political scientist at the University of Southern California, argues that a free press can only reduce human rights violations such as political imprisonment, murder, disappearance, and torture if citizens have a means of holding their leaders accountable. Where leaders rule with impunity, critical media coverage has the opposite effect—regimes crack down on journalists and political activists. Whitten-Woodring's case rests on

a complex statistical analysis of evidence from 93 countries between 1981 and 1995, and is illustrated by the experiences of Uganda and Mexico during those years.

In Mexico in the 1990s, the news media became “increasingly independent and critical of the government,” exposing massacres of peasants and other atrocities committed by the incumbent regime. Did reform follow? Quite the opposite. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, as the Mexican press became more dogged in its reporting, journalism became a more dangerous occupation. Over time, however, persistent coverage of government scandals helped strip the regime of its legitimacy, and in 2000 the Institutional Revolutionary Party lost the presidency after more than 70 years of single-party rule. But in Uganda, a feisty press continues without success. Reporters there run roughshod over President Yoweri Museveni’s attempts to tamp down their reports of massive human rights violations, but he remains at the helm, as he has since 1986.

PRESS & MEDIA

Signal Effects

THE SOURCE: “Do Television and Radio Destroy Social Capital? Evidence From Indonesian Villages” by Benjamin A. Olken, in *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, Oct. 2009.

IT IS A COMMON CHARGE THAT excessive television viewing drives down rates of civic and social involvement. A recent

study by Benjamin A. Olken, an economist at MIT, shows just how true that is, measuring how much people’s community participation decreases for every channel they receive.

Indonesia boasts a strong tradition of community involvement. A typical village has a broad range of civic activities, including religious study groups, women’s organizations, savings and credit partnerships, and neighborhood associations. In Olken’s study of 600 villages in east and central Java—one of the most densely populated places on earth—the average community had nearly

In Indonesia, when a new TV station became available, villagers’ community participation was reduced by 11 percent.

180 different groups. But that number dropped precipitously in areas with better television and radio reception. With just one more TV station available than average, the number of community organizations dropped by about 12.

There are 11 major stations broadcasting throughout Indonesia (up from just one, the government-owned TVRI, in 1993), but the average household in Olken’s study received only five. The Indonesians in his survey spent 123 minutes watching TV and 60 minutes listening to the radio each day. When a sixth channel was available, household viewing

increased by 14 minutes a day and attendance at meetings fell by 11 percent.

Over a three-month period, the extra time in front of the tube correlated with participation in four percent fewer social activities.

The decline in participation was more pronounced among organizations dedicated to improving local infrastructure, school committees, neighborhood associations, and savings and credit partnerships. Religious groups, which made up about one-fifth of the groups but drew about 40 percent of the attendance of all groups combined, didn’t see their numbers drop quite as steeply as the secular groups. Richer respondents with more TV channels reduced their participation in social groups more than other demographics.

Interestingly, the decline in the quantity of civic participation was not matched by a decline in the quality of the civics. Some of the meetings Olken examined were related to a massive road-building project financed by the World Bank. Although attendance was lower in areas with greater TV reception, just as many people were likely to speak, and they discussed the same number of problems. Of course, Olken points out, these small meetings about local roads didn’t receive much media attention. But for higher levels of government, increased TV reception means more time in the public eye—which might have a greater impact than additional meeting attendees.

HISTORY

The Father of Political History

THE SOURCE: "The Student of Political Behavior" by Donald Kagan, in *The New Criterion*, Sept. 2009.

WHO DESERVES TO BE CALLED the "Father of History"? Herodotus, who chronicled the defense of Greece by Athens and Sparta against the invading Persians in 480 and 479 BC, is traditionally accorded the title, but Thucydides, the fifth-century BC author of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, likely deserves it more. Although Herodotus may have been the first to use on-site investigations to uncover new

facts about the past, Donald Kagan writes, he employs "a meandering style full of discursive side trips" and readily accepts "the causal role of the gods in human affairs." Thucydides, says Kagan, a historian at Yale and author of a four-volume history of the Peloponnesian War and the forthcoming *Thucydides: The Reinvention of History*, "substituted rational, even scientific, thought for myth as a means of understanding and explaining the world and the universe."

Thucydides was uniquely positioned to explicate the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC),

which pitted democratic Athens, the unmatched naval power and ruler of a far-flung Aegean island empire, against oligarchic Sparta, whose legendary prowess in land battles had been amply confirmed during the Persian invasion earlier in the century. Thucydides, born into one of the noblest Athenian families between 460 and 455 BC, was in his twenties when the struggle began, and, although members of his family were bitter rivals of the Athenian leader Pericles, he greatly admired him.

When a plague struck Athens, it claimed Pericles as one of its victims, in 429 BC. Thucydides himself barely survived a bout with the disease, recording its effects with the same meticulous care he later employed to describe the disastrous invasion of

EXCERPT

All Roads Lead to Chicago

If New York was the country's largest metropolis, Chicago epitomized the spectacular velocity of urbanization. An obscure frontier outpost in the early 1830s, [by 1890] it was America's second city, with a population of 1,099,850. By 1909, the count was two million, and some predicted it would soon be the largest city in the world. . . . In 1909, the Commercial Club—an elite private organization consisting of exceptionally successful businessmen devoted to civic improvement—published the Plan of Chicago.

Arguably the most influential document in American city planning history, the Plan states that the inefficient, unsightly, and unhealthy American cityscape can and must be redeemed. Championing the rational application of enlightened expertise, it is an exemplary expression of Progressive Era thinking. At the same time, it is a magisterial treatise on the proper relationship between people and the cities they build and inhabit.

The Plan's creators had no intention of settling merely for order and convenience. They sought to remake the city so brilliantly that it would equal or even surpass the glory of ancient Athens and Rome.

—CARL SMITH, professor at Northwestern University and the author of *The Plan of Chicago* (2006), in *Humanities* (Sept.–Oct. 2009)

Sicily by the Athenians. Without Pericles, and weakened by the loss of a third of its population, Athens abandoned the strategy of attrition that Pericles had employed to drain Sparta's resolve and force it into peace negotiations. Thucydides was placed in charge of a fleet dispatched to guard Thrace, but he was blamed for the loss of a Thracian city and sent into exile. He later wrote that his disgrace allowed him "to know what was being done on both sides . . . and this leisure permitted me to get a better understanding of the course of events."

Just as Sophists during that time tried to understand the role of man in society and followers of Hippocrates studied man's physical being, so Thucydides tried to uncover "the society of man living in the polis," Kagan says. Modern social historians, particularly Fernand Braudel, have dismissed "the elements of politics, diplomacy, and war as mere *événements*, transient and trivial in comparison with . . . geography, demography, and social and economic developments," but Thucydides championed "the role of the individual in history and his ability to change its course." Thucydides believed Pericles' loss doomed Athens, and though the Athenians were able to fight on for another quarter-century, they were finally undone by the intervention of the Persians, who incited some of Athens's island colonies to rebel; the treachery of the Athenian general Alcibiades; and their own internal conflicts.

Thucydides, says historian Donald Kagan, "substituted rational, even scientific, thought for myth as a means of understanding and explaining the world and the universe."

Even though Thucydides never finished his *History*—it leaves off in 411 BC, and does not recount Athens's ultimate surrender in 404 BC—its lessons, equally applicable to the Cold War and the conflicts of the present day, "continue to be inescapably crucial and central in the understanding and conduct of human affairs."

HISTORY

Lincoln's Rabble-Rousers

THE SOURCE: "'Young Men for War': The Wide Awakes and Lincoln's 1860 Presidential Campaign" by Jon Grinspan, in *The Journal of American History*, Sept. 2009.

ANY STUDENT OF AMERICAN history knows that soon after Abraham Lincoln was elected president, hostilities broke out and the nation plunged into civil war. Jon Grinspan, a doctoral candidate at the University of Virginia, writes that historians have not paid enough attention to the role played by a movement called the Wide Awakes in setting

the scene for these events.

The Wide Awakes emerged out of a hard-fought political contest for the governorship of Connecticut, considered "a presidential election in miniature." In March 1860, several young textile clerks and rifle makers organized a group to escort Republican speakers through the dangerous streets of Democratic Hartford. They wore black capes covered with shiny enamel to protect their clothes from oil dripping from the torches they carried. Soon the organization's headquarters teemed with young Republican men. When the Republican gubernatorial candidate squeaked out a victory by a few hundred votes, many chalked up the win to the fervor whipped up by the Wide Awakes.

Within months, Wide Awake groups sprang up across the country. They let go of their original purpose as escorts and focused primarily on nonviolent parades in support of Republican candidates. Leaders drew up circulars detailing the Wide Awakes' history, constitution, and structure, and sent samples of their uniform to the local units. Tailors experienced shortages of the enameled cloth used to make the signature capes.

For the most part, Wide Awake clubs filled their ranks with white men in their teens, twenties, and thirties. They were partisans, not abolitionists. At the time, their numbers were purported to be as high as half a million nationwide, but Grinspan thinks the figure is probably

closer to 100,000. Still, he says, that's nothing to scoff

at—as a percentage of the U.S. population, that would be equal to about one million people today. Northerners became so accustomed to the roving bands of Wide Awakes that when a small earthquake struck Boston in mid-October, some thought the sounds came from the Wide Awakes running drills on Boston Common.

Although the Wide Awakes were non-violent, militarism permeated the group's style and ethos. They marched in lockstep, practiced infantry drills (taught to them by former and future military icons including Ulysses S.



Wide Awakes on parade, sporting their distinctive black enameled capes

Grant), and wore uniforms. Onlookers in the South perceived a threat. Many historians point to

the establishment of the Minute Men in South Carolina in 1860 as a major stepping-stone on the path to civil war, but few recall that they emerged “as an offset to the Wide Awakes of the North.” When the Wide Awake chapters did not disband after the election, Southerners feared a permanent national movement.

Grinspan writes, “While certainly not a cause of the war, the Wide Awakes’ presence ratcheted up sectional pressure and invested Lincoln’s election with weighty significance.”

Wide Awakes later said the group had presaged the Civil War, but Grinspan says that “at the time they barely saw it coming.”

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

The Parishioner Is Always Right

THE SOURCE: “Religious Competition and Ethnic Mobilization in Latin America: Why the Catholic Church Promotes Indigenous Movements in Mexico” by Guillermo Trejo, in *American Political Science Review*, Aug. 2009.

THE LATTER DECADES OF THE 20th century were an explosive time for the Mexican Catholic

Church. Clergy across the country joined radical indigenous peasant movements to protest the Mexican government’s human rights abuses and demand land redistribution. Many onlookers regarded the church’s newfound political awareness as

a consequence of liberation theology, a doctrine sweeping across Latin America that sees political activism in the pursuit of economic and social justice as part of the struggle for salvation.

But Guillermo Trejo, a political scientist at Duke University, says that explanation falls short, overstating the extent to which clergy supported political movements and ignoring regional variations in their involvement. A better explanation: the growing presence of Protestants.

Trejo’s theory looks at relig-

Archive password: NATIVE

ions as economists look at goods. When a new sect threatens a church's dominance (external shock), the established church (a "lazy monopoly," in the words of Adam Smith) will vie for its members' adherence by one-upping the upstart. In the case of the Catholic Church in Mexico, that meant becoming a major institutional force in the rural indigenous movements for land redistribution when Presbyterians and other mainline Protestant sects began to appear.

Not all instances of religious competition will encourage churches to join the political fray, but in Mexico the circumstances were just right. The evangelizing strategy of the Presbyterians directly empowered indigenous adherents in ways that the Catholic Church had not: translating the Bible into Indian languages, establishing

Did the Catholic Church in Mexico embrace political activism out of a commitment to liberation theology or in response to the growing inroads of Protestants?

local churches led by native clergy, and providing social services such as literacy assistance and health care. The Catholic Church, handicapped by what Trejo calls a "reputation deficit" developed by serving "the interests of the rich and powerful for centuries," had to go beyond what the Presbyterians offered. Throwing its weight behind Indian peasant movements was a "radical and credible member

retention strategy."

Trejo examined Mexican indigenous peasant protests from 1975 to 2000. Regions with more religious competition (in particular, Chiapas) were hotbeds of political activism. Where the Catholic Church enjoyed a monopoly (in the south-central state of Puebla), there were rarely any protests at all.

One region—the Yucatan—had intense religious competition but very little protest. The competition there, notes Trejo, came from Pentecostals, who focus on spiritual rewards rather than worldly concerns. As a result, the Catholic Church spent less energy on land redistribution and more on promoting a "spiritual approach to everyday problems."

The Catholic Church may not like to think of itself as a business, but when threatened by a competitor, it surely knew how to tweak its product.

EXCERPT

Sage Advice

In terms of the history of an idea, it is a remarkable fact that most modern thinkers (in the West at least) have not been much concerned with the virtue of wisdom. Their dominant concerns have been elsewhere, as new concepts captured the imagination: Reason, Natural Law, Science, Wissenschaft, Technology. But the last 30 years have seen something of a renewal of academic interest in the idea of wisdom, with many calls for a "scientific study of wisdom." . . . Fear is once again the

beginning of wisdom, but now it is the fear of war, famine, pestilence, flood, and other man-made apocalypses. For many, the global challenges of the 21st century require a combination of many qualities: an integrated theoretical knowledge; intelligent judgment or pronesis in applying theory to particular needs; reflection on what our needs really are; openness to new possibilities; humility before the complexities of nature and the human soul; calm; and perhaps most of all intuition into what is good, that immediate "knowledge of good and evil" that is the kernel of wisdom.

—WILLIAM DESMOND, a lecturer at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, in *In Character* (Fall 2009)

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

No Method for Madness

THE SOURCE: “Current Status and Future Prospects of Clinical Psychology: Toward a Scientifically Principled Approach to Mental and Behavioral Health Care” by Timothy B. Baker, Richard M. McFall, and Varda Shoham, in *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, Nov. 2008.

WOULD YOU GO TO A DOCTOR who was ignorant of the medical advances made since Harry Truman was president? No way. But the average clinical psychologist’s practice today doesn’t look much different than it did 60 years ago, and the patients keep coming.

It’s not for lack of scientific progress, write professors of psychology Timothy B. Baker of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Richard M. McFall of Indiana University, and Varda Shoham of the University of Arizona. Many newer psychological treatments have proven to be highly effective. For example, multiple clinical trials have shown that cognitive therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy provide more lasting benefits to people who suffer from depression than antidepressant medication. (In cognitive behavioral therapy, therapists help patients think through emotional patterns and work to change them so as to avoid fear or depression.) These and other recent-vintage psychological therapies have also proven effective for treating addiction, bulimia, schizophrenia, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Moreover, these treatments are “scientifically plausible”—they are a good fit with our knowledge about how the brain works. But many of the country’s 93,000 psychologists don’t use these methods and, what’s more, don’t understand the science behind them. Baker and colleagues write, “Considerable evidence indicates that many, if not most, clinicians view science or research as having relatively little relevance to their practice activities. . . . They privilege their intuition and informal problem solving over what the research literature has to offer.”

Aspiring clinical psychologists can get their credentials by completing one of two degrees—a doctorate of psychology (Psy.D.) or a doctorate of philosophy (Ph.D.). Psy.D. programs tend to be much less selective; furthermore, their graduates do not perform as well on the national licensing exam, and students and faculty are much less likely to engage in scholarly research. Yet the number of degrees awarded by Psy.D. programs grew by 170 percent between 1988 and 2001, while the number of Ph.D.’s remained the same.

Increasingly, many people suffering from psychological disorders—a population said to have doubled in size over the last 20 years—are turning to primary-care practitioners. These physicians

do what they’re trained to do—prescribe pharmaceuticals (something psychologists for the most part cannot do, since they are not M.D.’s). If psychologists continue to neglect science and fail to make an evidence-based case for their care, many health care plans won’t cover their services in the future, the authors warn.

The history of medicine provides an example of how psychologists can reform their profession. In the early 20th century, the American Medical Association began rigorously grading medical schools on how their students performed on science-based licensing exams. The number of medical schools fell from 162 in 1906 to 95 in 1915, but the quality of medical education markedly improved. Rigorous new accreditation standards are just the therapy psychology needs now.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Great Expectations

THE SOURCE: “Promises, Promises” by Stuart Blackman, in *The Scientist*, Nov. 2009.

MORE THAN 20 YEARS AGO, AN editorial in *Science* magazine called on the federal government to boost spending on the effort to sequence the human genome, which the author said could lead to a cure for mental illness and thus prevent many from joining the ranks of the homeless.

Clearly, this hope has not come to fruition, and that’s no great surprise, says Stuart Blackman, a science writer based in Edinburgh. A tendency to

promise more than they can deliver has long been a feature of scientists' work, but in recent decades overly bold promise-making has become more central to the scientific process.

It's easy to blame a media culture that demands "uncomplicated, definitive, and sensational statements" to drive stories, but scientists often have their own reasons for hyping their research, glossing over challenges they face, or laying out unrealistic timelines. After *The New York Times* ran a story in 1980 urging readers not to expect immediate miracles from research on cancer-fighting interferons, researchers complained that such public expressions of doubt would undermine their ability to get funding for their work.

And there's the rub. Intense competition for research dollars encourages scientists to overstate the importance of their research and the immediacy of the expected benefits. Moreover, a growing focus on scientific research as an engine of economic growth means that science must produce not only knowledge, but products that can be sold at a profit. Funders now customarily ask applicants for an estimate of their work's economic impact. Intense competition for publication in prominent journals adds further momentum to the cycle of scientists trying to "rhetorically overbid" each other.

More pressure comes from the fact that "politics is becoming more reliant on science to provide predictions to guide policy," Blackman writes. Last year, then-prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of Denmark appealed to a gathering of climate scientists, saying, "I need fixed targets and certain figures, and not too many

considerations on uncertainty and risk." Recognizing uncertainty and risk, however, is central to good science.

Cures for diseases such as Alzheimer's, cystic fibrosis, and Parkinson's have seemed to be just around the corner for years. If the only thing that comes down the pike in the near term is more disappointment, the public's current high esteem for science may erode. Blackman cautions that scientists (and the journalists who cover them) need to be more guarded in describing what the public can expect from their research, and when to expect it. As the eminent physicist Niels Bohr quipped, "Predictions can be very difficult—especially about the future."

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Nuclear Power Goes Global

THE SOURCE: "The Growth of Nuclear Power: Drivers and Constraints" by Richard K. Lester and Robert Rosner, "Nuclear Energy and Climate Change" by Robert H. Socolow and Alexander Glaser, and "Nuclear Power Without Nuclear Proliferation?" by Steven E. Miller and Scott D. Sagan, in *Daedalus*, Fall 2009.

THE RISING SPECTER OF GLOBAL warming, along with expected increases in the price of oil, is reviving the fortunes of nuclear power around the world. Today's critics are talking less about the accidents at Three Mile Island (1979) and Chernobyl (1986) than about the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation exemplified by North Korea and Iran.

Today, 30 countries operate 436 commercial nuclear reactors, produc-

ing about 16 percent of the world's electricity with minimal emissions of greenhouse gases. Another 44 units are under construction, and, according to the World Nuclear Association, ground may be broken for an additional 70 in the next 15 years. There is also a larger and more indefinite "proposed" category. Some 50 countries have declared an interest in exploring nuclear power.

That sounds like a lot of activity, but it will take a much bigger surge of construction to make a dent in emissions of greenhouse gasses. Richard K. Lester and Robert Rosner, of MIT and the University of Chicago, respectively, report that the world would need to at least double the amount of electricity derived from nuclear power in order to eliminate just a quarter of the increase in carbon dioxide emissions expected between now and 2050.

The writers in this issue of *Daedalus*, which is devoted exclusively to nuclear power, are less concerned with technological problems than political ones. Lester and Rosner say there are two possible paths into a nuclear future. One is to continue the long-term trend toward standardization of everything from reactor design to training and regulatory procedures. Pioneered by France with its 58 reactors and increasingly embraced in the United States, which has 104, this strategy has produced an excellent record of safety and efficiency. But as developing countries seek nuclear power, smaller, more customized plants with more built-in passive safety features might be required.

What about the radioactive spent fuel? Reprocessing in "breeder" reactions creates byproducts needed in making weapons, but the more com-



A machine used to excavate a five-mile tunnel emerges from Yucca Mountain, a possible nuclear waste repository in Nevada, in 1997.

mon and desirable method is to store the wastes. Lester and Rosner say that existing surface storage techniques can be improved, but the longer-term solution probably lies in new “deep borehole” technologies that bury the wastes far underground.

Robert H. Socolow and Alexander Glaser, both of Princeton, note that uranium must be enriched in order to produce fuel suitable for power plants, and even a small factory could be modified to make the more highly enriched form used in nuclear weapons—enough to make 25 to 50 bombs.

For the next decade, most new plants will come on line in countries that already have nuclear power. But the list of longer-term aspirants includes many countries that are rela-

tively poor, unstable, and undemocratic, ranging from Indonesia to Algeria, Kazakhstan, Haiti, and Belarus. Some are plagued by high levels of terrorism, including Thailand, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka. This raises concerns about safety as well as proliferation, note Steven E. Miller of Harvard and Scott D. Sagan of Stanford, and makes it imperative to think carefully about prevention. Strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is

Dozens of countries, including many that are relatively poor, unstable, and undemocratic, want to build nuclear plants.

one obvious path, but without movement toward complete nuclear disarmament, a goal of the treaty, such revision would be futile, they believe. The incentives for nuclear power nations to become nuclear weapons nations would be too great.

Socolow and Glaser advance a detailed agenda for controlling proliferation as nuclear power expands, including multinational control of the fuel process, from enrichment through disposal, and an end to reprocessing. But they warn that panic over global warming could lead to bad decisions about nuclear power. Until a solid nonproliferation scheme is in place, they conclude, it will be riskier to expand nuclear power than to endure the increase in global warming it might prevent.

ARTS & LETTERS

Writing on the Brain

THE SOURCE: "The Rise of the Neuro-novel" by Marco Roth, in *n+1*, Fall 2009.

THE OBSESSION WITH DESCRIBING human personalities in the cold language of neuroscience has reached beyond the pages of the popular press and such influential books as Daniel Dennett's *Consciousness Explained* (1991). It's now the stuff of fiction, writes Marco Roth, a founding editor of *n+1*. Behold, the neuronovel.

This literary breed was memorably inaugurated by Ian McEwan's 1997 novel *Enduring Love*, in which a science journalist is stalked by a man with de Clérambault's syndrome, a condition in which the sufferer believes that another person is secretly in love with him. Other examples include Jonathan Lethem's *Motherless Brooklyn* (1999), in which the protagonist has Tourette's syndrome; Mark Haddon's *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003), narrated by an autistic teenager; and Rivka Galchen's *Atmospheric Disturbances* (2008), about a man who suffers from Capgras syndrome and stops recognizing his wife.

By the early 1990s, Roth writes, psychoanalysis was regarded as "bankrupt"—and Prozac was in. A "new reductionism . . . explained proximate causes of mental function in terms of neurochemistry, and

ultimate causes in terms of evolution and heredity." A comprehensive explanation of consciousness has yet to emerge, but even so, novelists, whose stock in trade has been the same as Freud's—"introspection of the self and observation of others"—are struggling for traction.

Neuronovelists are engaged in a perilous exercise, Roth suggests. In many neuronovels, the author indulges in "fancy language or rare perceptions, and then hastens to explain why, on medical grounds, this is allowed." This, Roth observes, is the opposite of the modernist project, which proposed stylistic novelty and profound interiority as new ways of describing everyone. But if "modernism is just the language of the crazy, then real men must speak like [thriller writer] Lee Child." Furthermore, the "pathological premise" of most neuronovels forecloses the necessary "interpretative leap" that fiction readers make as they discern metaphors for the universal human condition: "Mere biological contingency has a way of repelling meaning."

Why have novelists taken this wrong turn? One reason, Roth speculates, is that in the neurological anomalies they describe, they see a reflection of their own circumstances. In this "new medical-materialist world," novelists are special cases who suffer from an

"inexplicable compulsion" to write, need their own special institutions (MFA programs), and require families that accommodate their strange habits.

Even when 20th-century writers could no longer take society or religion for granted as novelistic frameworks, Roth says, they could still fall back on the subject matter of the self. Now even the self is "an object whose intricacies can only be described by future science." The rise of the neuronovel "appears as another sign of the novel's diminishing purview."

ARTS & LETTERS

Boogie On!

THE SOURCE: "When I Say Get It: A Brief History of the Boogie" by Burgin Mathews, in *Southern Cultures*, Fall 2009.

THE BOOGIE IS EVERYWHERE. We say "Let's boogie" to mean "Let's get going." Madonna sings its praises. Country's Johnny Cash, rock 'n' roll's Chuck Berry, the blues' John Lee Hooker, and countless others rode its distinctive propulsive rhythm. Though the word once referred to a very particular musical style, diffusion throughout American culture means that it has come to represent much more than a kind of music. It's all about a certain feeling—and that feeling's a good one, says Burgin Mathews, a writer living in Birmingham, Alabama.

The boogie emerged at the turn of the 20th century and for a time went by a variety of names—barrelhouse, walking the basses, the sixteen, the fives, western rolling

blues, and many others. The term didn't appear in print until 1928, when a recording by pianist Clarence "Pine Top" Smith was released with the title "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie." The music may have had many names, but its original sound was distinct—piano music featuring right-hand improvisations over a heavy left-hand bass pattern, known as a "rolling bass." Often the style is explained as an attempt to translate the sounds of a guitar or banjo to a piano, but Mathews suspects it sprang from another source: the sound of a train. One student of the genre wrote that it represented "the haunting sound of whistles, expresses romping along on a full head of steam, wheels clattering over points and, of course, the insistent rhythm of the driving wheels."

Boogie spread from the rural South westward into Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, and north to the Midwest by way of the turpentine and lumber camps where many African Americans labored in the early 20th century. On weekend nights, the hearts of these camps were their rowdy social halls, called barrelhouses, where traveling musicians would play the boogie and people would dance and drink the night away. In the 1930s, as many African Americans migrated to the urban centers of Birmingham, New Orleans, New York, Kansas City, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and, above all, Chicago, they brought the boogie with them.

By the end of the 1930s the sound had crossed over into white American culture, a transition per-

haps best captured by an acclaimed performance of a Chicago-based boogie piano trio at the "Spirituals to Swing" concert in 1938 at Carnegie Hall, the temple of white American music.

In the decades that followed, the boogie lost ground as a distinctive genre, but its influence only grew as the sound was diluted. It laid the groundwork for rock 'n' roll. Disco dancers, gangsta rappers, and country musicians all owe it their due. "Boogie [became] broad and flexible enough to encompass any type of music, provided that music contained some element of high energy and upbeat dance," Mathews says. The barrelhouse dance halls and rumbling bass lines may be things of the past, "but the boogie-as-idea persist[s]."



Boogie music spread across the South and Midwest via the barrelhouses of lumber and turpentine camps such as this one in Minglewood, Tennessee, in 1920.

ARTS AND LETTERS

Art From Artifice

THE SOURCE: “East-Central European Literatures Twenty Years After” by Michael Henry Heim, Peter Sherwood, Kristin Vitalich, et al., in *East European Politics and Societies*, Fall 2009.

“IT’S DAMNED DIFFICULT TO tell a lie if you don’t know the truth,” Hungarian novelist Péter Esterházy writes in *Celestial Harmonies* (2004). Esterházy’s “stunned discovery that his father had acted as an informant under Hungarian Stalinism,” says Peter Sherwood of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, inspired him to produce “perhaps the most distinguished work of art so far from Central and Eastern Europe’s still-ongoing process of coming to terms with its communist past.”

Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the work of the region’s writers underscores, as Michael Henry Heim of the University of California, Los Angeles, points out, how they “entered on their new life from a different point of departure.” Introducing a dozen short surveys of the literary scene in *East European Politics and Societies*, he writes that “it would be a mistake to assume, as many assumed during the Cold War,” that the region’s writers are “a kind of indistinguishable gray mass.”

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, for instance, the perspectives of many contemporary writers have been as fractured as the alliances in that war-ravaged area. Commentator Kristin Vitalich, of the University of Washington, observes that “many artists felt compelled to set aside their traditional genres and

professional roles to document the dramatic changes they were witnessing.” Erstwhile writers of fiction “produced a variety of creative nonfiction accounts of life in Sarajevo during the siege,” she writes, and a number of others “fashioned poetry that contemplated both the personal and collective experience of war.” Many were forced to choose sides; novelist Ivan Aralica in Croatia came to be viewed as a mouthpiece for the repressive regime of Franjo Tuđman, while Dubravka Ugrešić was branded a traitor by the press and forced to go into exile.

In the Czech Republic, where cultural leaders became the de facto vanguard of the Velvet Revolution, the most pressing task for the country’s writers in the early 1990s was to “recover its lost chapters, to publish works that had been previously banned or had appeared only in samizdat or exile,” writes Harvard’s Jonathan Bolton. More recently, younger novelists such as Stanislav Komárek and Pavel Brycz have had success with what Bolton calls the “novel of the century”: an epic-length form in which the writer traces the twists and turns of the Soviet period. While literary lions such as Milan Kundera continued to publish from abroad long after the reasons for their exile had disappeared, those who had stayed through the bad times—most of them contemporaries of Václav Havel, born in 1936—found themselves “forced to re-explain the communist period to younger readers who have no personal memories of political repression.”

Some of the most inventive work during the postcommunist period has emerged from unexpected cor-

ners. Albanian Ismail Kadare’s parables of communist manners such as *The Pyramid* (1996) and *Spring Flowers, Spring Frost* (2002)—two of his 15 novels now available in English—helped win him the 2005 Man Booker International Prize. In Romania, the work of the newest generation of writers, says Sean Cotter of the University of Texas, Dallas, “abounds in energy, crispness, and humor and is sometimes inspired by magical realism.”

Nowhere has literature shown such a range of cultural responses as in Poland. Initially, says Harvard’s Joanna Nizynska, writers there struggled both to explain the new world of democratic freedom and to come to terms with the repressed horrors of the Holocaust. But more recently new voices have been heard, including a group of distinctively Polish feminists (Magdalena Tulli, Kinga Dunin, and others), and Michal Witkowski, whose best-selling 2005 “queer” novel *Lubiewo* depicts a campy, proudly marginalized “world of Polish queens under communism.”

It is no surprise that in many of these countries, writers initially felt compelled to address the communist period in literature that engages social reality with more enthusiasm than generally is seen elsewhere in the West. As Heim observes, “They had grown up in societies that treated culture—especially literary culture—as inextricably intertwined with politics, societies in which the writer was treated by the Communist Party as an arm of ideology and by the dissidents as a moral force, as virtually an opposition government.”

OTHER NATIONS

Land of the Rising Fun

THE SOURCE: “Wink on Pink: Interpreting Japanese Cute as It Grabs the Global Headlines” by Christine R. Yano, in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Aug. 2009.

IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION, the land of the samurai and the salaryman has acquired a strange new identity. Japan now shows itself to the world as a country of “pink-clad girls, animated fantasies, and winking Kitty logos,” writes Christine R. Yano, a professor of anthropology at the University of Hawaii.

Kawaii, or “Japanese cute,” has become a global phenomenon. The rage for cute stretches from the prepubescent haunts of the world’s shopping malls to the cat-

walks of haute couture. At New York City’s Fashion Week last year, one show featured the work of 30 cutting-edge designers inspired by Hello Kitty, the iconic mouthless cartoon kitten that engendered Japanese cute. In Times Square, shoppers flocked to a newly opened Sanrio Luxe boutique peddling diamond-encrusted Hello Kitty watches and fine luggage.

Sanrio is the company that launched Hello Kitty and the whole cute phenomenon in the 1970s. Founder Tsuji Shinitarou saw the cartoon figure as “the Japanese cat that would overtake the American mouse,” according to Yano. He is the de facto father

of “pink globalization.”

Japan’s government has actively promoted the cute image, twice issuing Hello Kitty postage stamps and appointing three models to serve as *kawaii taishi*, or ambassadors of cute, playing the roles of Lolita, who appears in sexualized doll clothing; Harajuku, a symbol of Japanese youth; and a schoolgirl in uniform. In 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed the brightly hued Doraemon, a robotic cat, to be a “cartoon cultural ambassador.”

Yano sees the phenomenon as one part commercial exploitation and one part, well, something else. A clue as to what’s really going on may lie in the career of artist Takashi Murakami, an Andy Warhol-like figure who has played a big role in taking cute global. In 2005 he curated an exhibit in New York titled “Little Boy: The Arts of Japan’s Exploding Subculture.” “Little Boy” was a reference to the atomic bomb the United States dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, but it also “highlights what [Murakami] believes Japan has become in relation to the United States” since World War II—“a forever-emasculated ‘little boy.’” Cute is a symptom of Japan’s infantilization, but as an “exploding subculture” it is also an assertion of Japanese soft power throughout the world, albeit an ironic one.

Yet some Japanese don’t think their country looks pretty in pink. A few years ago the editors of *The Japan Times* wrote, “Japan has



Hello Kitty welcomes customers at the world’s largest Sanrio store, located in Tokyo. The feline celebrated her 35th birthday in 2009, but she doesn’t look a day over 30.

exported hundreds of things and ideas—from haiku to Hondas, swordsmanship to sashimi—of which it can be proud. Hello Kitty . . . is another story.” They titled the essay, “Time for Good-bye Kitty?”

OTHER NATIONS

O Nunavut!

THE SOURCE: “Nunavut at 10,” multiple articles edited by Ailsa Henderson in *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Spring 2009.

THE MASSIVE TERRITORY OF Nunavut lies in the northernmost reaches of Canada. Occupying one-fifth of the country’s land area, it is home to just 31,000 Nunavummiut, who live in 25 communities scattered across the tundra. And it’s in those small towns that Canada is trying to figure out how to bring down sky-high levels of suicide (11 times the national rate), poverty, and illiteracy. About 85 percent of the population is Inuit.

In April 1999 Nunavut became a Canadian territory after a decades-long campaign by Inuit leaders to break off from the Northwest Territories. (Unlike Canada’s 10 provinces, the territories are creatures of the federal government.) The hope was to create a government shaped by Inuit values. Early on, Inuit

elders encouraged the adoption of Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ)—literally, “that which has been long known by Inuit”—as the organizing principle of the new government. But, as University of Toronto political scientist Graham White writes, “Allowing flextime for [government] employees to go hunting, clam digging, or berry picking at opportune times, involving elders in policy development, and incorporating cultural ceremonies into bureaucratic activities . . . do not fundamentally alter the nature of government.”

Half of all jobs in Nunavut are in the public sector, and efforts to

hire Inuit to work in the territorial government have been an important part of spreading employment beyond the Qallunaat (non-Inuit) minority. By the end of 2007 some progress had been made, with half of all government jobs held by Inuit, up from 42 percent in 2003. Attempts to use Inuktitut—the language spoken by about 80 percent of the Inuit—in government have been frustrated by low literacy levels. Only 25 percent of students graduate from high school, and those who do receive very limited Inuit-language instruction, due to a shortage of Inuit-speaking teachers.

Government could do more to incorporate Inuit culture, notes Frank Tester, a professor of social work at the University of British Columbia. Consider the problem of homelessness. For pretty obvious reasons, being homeless in Nunavut does not mean sleeping on the street but rather “couch surfing,” which creates severe overcrowding. Ottawa has attempted to address the housing shortage through programs designed to jump-start a private market. But relying on a system of Western-style market economics makes little sense in a society that strongly emphasizes relationships among extended

EXCERPT

The Golden Hour

One of the things that I have lost totally and irremediably—I realized this when I returned to [Spain] after an 11-year absence—is the golden hour of siesta. . . . When we were children, the siesta hour meant freedom, simple and radiant. It was the blessed hour when the grownups slept. The racket from the kitchen was stilled, and the maids too were encased in mysterious silence, as though they had been paralyzed in some shadow: that of their bedrooms, high at the top of the house, or perhaps in the vegetable garden. It was our hour. The hour when the boys from the other side of the river whistled, rhythmically and oh so sweetly, imitating blackbirds or quails, or the wings of the singing dragonfly. It was the hour of the cruel and unpleasant sun, which irritates adults.

—ANA MARÍA MATUTE, author of *Paraíso inhabitado* (2008) and other novels, in *The Drawbridge* (Autumn 2009)

family. It would make more sense for government to create new housing cooperatives designed for large extended families.

In the future, Canada stands to make a lot of money in the north from natural resources and shipping routes that will become newly accessible as Arctic ice melts. The stakes are high for Nunavut's fledgling government, and as more money flows out of Canada's north, they're only going to get higher.

OTHER NATIONS

Mobile Monitoring

THE SOURCE: "Mobile Phone Diffusion and Corruption in Africa" by Catie Snow Bailard, in *Political Communication*, July-Sept. 2009.

THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF BUZZ about how cell phones are making it easier for Africans to do business. A woman who catches and sells fish for a living can take orders by phone, ensuring that she doesn't end up with rotting, unsold fish. Business owners in remote areas can manage bank accounts with text messages.

Catie Snow Bailard, a professor at George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, says cell phones have another, less noted effect—reducing corruption.

From 2000 to 2007, the percentage of Africans with a cell phone ballooned from under two to 30, and demand is still strong. When mobile service providers

were slow to expand coverage in the Congo, villagers built 50-foot-high tree houses in order to get a better signal. But service is rapidly improving; in 2007, nearly two-thirds of all Africans lived in an area with cell phone reception. That could be good news for corruption fighters.

Corruption can flourish when aid dollars flow into a community where there is so little transparency that local officials can siphon off money without detection. One 2004 study found that only 14 percent of funds designated for school fees in Uganda actually got to the schools. Without cell phones, it was difficult for aid donors to communicate to school leaders how much money they should be receiving. Kept in the dark, the educators didn't know when money went missing. Now, equipped with cell phones, school leaders are kept in the loop and middlemen cannot pocket money undetected.

Using data from Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, the United Nations, and the Afrobarometer survey, Bailard finds trends pointing toward lower levels of "perceived corruption" as cell

In Africa, cell phones help reduce corruption by making it easier to spread the word about malfeasance.

phone use increases. (Because corruption is impossible to measure, scholars use data on perceived corruption as a proxy.) In Cameroon, the expansion of cell phone use from almost nothing in 1999 to 24 percent of the population in 2006 correlated with a nationwide drop in perceived corruption of seven-tenths of a point on a 10-point scale. Moreover, Bailard observes a drop not just in perceived corruption, but in experienced corruption as well. In one comparison, residents of Namibia's Oshikoto province, which has very good cell phone reception, were 15 percentage points less likely to pay a bribe for municipal services than people living in Kavango, a neighboring province with terrible cell phone coverage.

Bailard raises a caveat: Corruption that directly and immediately benefits "the masses" may actually increase as a result of cell phone use. For example, at election time, villagers who sell their vote can make quick use of the small amounts of food or cash they receive in return. Such schemes may be easier to orchestrate when more people are reachable by phone.

Of course, cell phones do not by themselves make for cleaner politics. Someone has to be "on the other end of the line committed to the fight against corruption. If there are no concerned citizens, aid agency representatives, reformers, or journalists 'dialing in' in the fight . . . phones alone will likely make little difference," Bailard writes.

Also in this issue:

Felipe Fernández-Armesto on the map that named America

Louis Bayard on letters

Andrei Lankov on ordinary North Koreans

Martin Walker on Britain's Glorious Revolution

Michael Anderson on the 1950s

Frank Shuffelton on Abigail Adams

Aaron Mesh on poker

Catherine Tumber on green cities

Peter Skerry on Muslims in America

CURRENT BOOKS

REVIEWS OF NEW AND NOTEWORTHY NONFICTION

Living on the Edge

Reviewed by Tom Vanderbilt

JOEL KOTKIN, ALONG WITH HIS SOMETIME nemesis Richard Florida, is perhaps the leading purveyor of a kind of psycho-economic demography, a predictive chronicler armed with Census tract data, Pew surveys, and some old-fashioned shoe-leather reporting, all recounted in an urgent, assuaging, insider-y tone—a kind of *Kiplinger Report* for the national soul. I can imagine Kotkin and Florida randomly encountering each other—in, say, the Admiral's Club at DFW, as each is en route to his assignation with civic leaders eager to sup the sooth—and engaging in a dueling-PowerPoint exercise, with Florida touting his “creative class” metropolises and their cappuccino-fueled dynamism, and Kotkin his “ephemeral cities”—places such as Portland that are elaborate stage sets for hip urban play, ultimately overregulated and hostile to the wants of average Americans, who would find fuller expression of their economic (and reproductive) potential in a place such as Boise. Only one man would be left standing amid the acrid tang of overheated hard drives, but I'm not sure which.

In his latest oracular production, Kotkin—whose other books include *The New Geography* (2000) and *The City* (2005)—takes as his starting point a single, arresting statistic: “According to the most conservative estimates, the United States by 2050 will be home to at least 400 million people, roughly 100 million more than live here today.” This next 100 million will be a bit different from the last 100 million; for one, the “vast majority,” Kotkin notes, will be Asian or Hispanic. For another, many of them, he predicts, will reside not in the great megaregions, but in the “Heartland”—which seems here to be somewhere around Nebraska—reversing a trend of disinvestment and depopulation. The country will become more suburban, more dispersed. The good news, Kotkin writes, is that “even with 100 million more people, the country will still be only one-sixth as crowded as Germany.”

At its best, *The Next 100 Million* combines deftly energetic and sweeping

THE NEXT HUNDRED MILLION:
America in 2050.
By Joel Kotkin. Penguin.
320 pp. \$25.95

analysis, spanning everything from the sociology of immigrant communities to labor economics, with healthy smatterings of revelatory facts (“between 1990 and 2005 immigrants, mostly from the Chinese diaspora or from India, started one of every four U.S. venture-backed public companies”). Kotkin is particularly good at countering casual assumptions with larger data patterns. For example, while the portrait of the dying Middle American town, struggling with foreclosure and meth addiction, has become familiar, Kotkin writes that “demographer

Richard Rathge states that since the 1950s the overall population of the Great Plains has more than doubled.” And Kotkin’s interpretation of American exceptionalism offers a suasive

Joel Kotkin offers a suasive rejoinder to the idea that it will be China, not the United States, that is dominant in 2050.

rejoinder to the idea that it will be China, not the United States, that is dominant in 2050.

But the book is not always so refreshingly elucidating. For one, it often seems to be revisiting material from *The New Geography*. (Fawning profile of lifestyle-center developer Rick Caruso? Check. Beguiling Japanese sociological phrase borrowed to describe U.S. trends? Check.) For another, Kotkin spends too much time rebutting old canards (e.g., the history of antisuburban bias). His evidence often seems selectively framed—while there is certainly something to be celebrated in the fact that “scores of . . . Heartland towns and cities, such as Sioux Falls, Des Moines, and Bismarck all grew well faster than the national average through 2008,” it would be nice to know if, say, that increase came off a bottom reached after decades of stagnation and decline. There are moments of repetition (an economist’s unremarkable observation that “suburbanites like the suburbs” appears twice), and on several occasions banal obser-

vations are tossed off as keening insights, such as this (footnoted!) kernel: “Today, in the age of computers and cell phones, children who leave home are no longer ‘gone.’ They send text messages, maintain blogs, and write e-mails to keep parents informed of their activities.” Once upon a dark time, they also used landlines and sent letters.

While Kotkin’s optimism about the American future can seem a tonic against unquestioning prophecies of American decline or Dobbsonian nativist screeds, the book has an unremittingly Pollyannaish tone, like a gauzy-hued sales document for a master-planned community in one of the author’s beloved suburbs. Worried about the impact of all those new people settling into dispersed exurbs? No problem—we’ll be living in “Greenurbia” (one of several lamentable portmanteaus). “Development is often castigated as poor for the environment, but research suggests that modest, low-density development can use less energy than denser urban forms.” (He doesn’t define modest, nor suggest, since he seems to be antizoning, how such development would be regulated.) What about all those new people driving all those new miles? Here he cautions that “some aspects of suburban life,” such as long commutes, will “have to be changed,” not by government, but rather by market forces. To wonder about the carbon footprint of all those new people or to ponder having fewer children is presented as radical environmentalism, a worldview nothing short of that depicted in Cormac McCarthy’s post-apocalyptic novel *The Road* (despite his proclaimed nonpartisanship, Kotkin hews to a rigidly anti-Smart Growth position).

Far from being homogenous, Kotkin argues, suburbia will become the new melting pot, the direct portal of new immigration; suburbs, as he quotes one researcher, “can give rise to a much more integrated, rather than ‘balkanized,’ relationship among groups.” But there’s



plenty of evidence to the contrary; for instance, a recent Pew Hispanic Center report noted that even as Hispanic school enrollment grew sharply in the past decade, segregation in many districts increased. And research at the State University of New York, Albany, has identified segregation patterns—ethnic enclaves—within suburbs. Sociologist Robert Putnam has put forward the unsettling proposition that “social capital” actually *decreases* with diversity; he notes, for example, that “interracial friendships (apart from that structural constraint on opportunities for contact) appear to be actually more common in less diverse settings.” People may like some of the trappings of diversity—what I’ll call menu multiculturalism—but to suggest that suburbs will become polyglot meccas with no social discord seems overly optimistic. (Already there are myriad stories of increasing suburban crime.)

Similarly, Kotkin’s boosterism of post-automotive cities is relentlessly breathless, and often meaningless. “Conceived as a bucolic collection of suburbs,” he writes of Los Angeles, “it has matured into a dense network of communities, organized more like the random-access memory of a computer than the linear, hierarchical pattern that was common to cities for millennia.” Los Angeles is

A crowded melting pot: By 2050, roughly 100 million more people will call the United States home.

non-hierarchical? Something to remember the next time you go shopping for real estate in Brentwood or Compton. In his zeal to defend suburbia from its elitist critics, Kotkin tends toward monochromatic depictions of “luxury cities” such as New York, which he calls a “demographic dead end,” a place filled with dour antinatalists harboring Scandinavian tendencies. He sets up a false dichotomy between “cultural cachet” and “family friendliness.” In material terms, yes, cities are expensive—Kotkin warns that “an individual from Houston who earns \$50,000 would have to make \$115,769 in Manhattan and \$81,965 in Queens to live at the same level of comfort.” True in terms of raw numbers, but one doesn’t move to New York expecting Houston-sized real estate, just as one doesn’t move to Houston expecting all that New York has to offer.

Kotkin takes a particular, and often justifiable, glee in recounting the various doom-saying (and largely unmet) prophecies of previous futurists, from Malthusian alarmists to premature peak-oilers. But this also reminds us of the frailty of societal prognostication,

not to mention the power of hindsight. It now seems easy to chart the reasons why Argentina, which once possessed one of the world's most powerful economies, declined in the 20th century, but for a time, those 19th-century forecasts of a Pax Argentina looked pretty spot-on. On Kotkin's own Web site, we are told that *The New Geography* "focuses on the digital revolution's surprising impact on

cities: Their traditional role as the centers of creativity and the crossroads for trade and culture is becoming ever more essential in a globalized information-age economy." Now, less than a decade later, he's telling us that the suburbs are where all the action will be.

TOM VANDERBILT is the author of the 2008 book *Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do (and What It Says About Us)* and its companion blog, *How We Drive* (www.howwedrive.com). He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

America's Namesake

Reviewed by Felipe Fernández-Armesto

RENAISSANCE SOPHISTICATES sneered. How could a sleepy little backwoods town like Saint-Dié in distant Lorraine, deep in upland pine forests, home to flax weavers and log sawyers, presume to rival the great centers of humanist learning at the beginning of the 16th century? Saint-Dié seemed too poor and remote for glory and fame. Yet under the ambitious patronage of the young Duke René, a group of learned men gathered, around the town's printing press and cathedral library, to undertake an audacious project—overly rash, by the standards of the town's resources. They proposed to bring out an updated edition of the most acclaimed geographic text of classical antiquity—Ptolemy's *Geography*, compiled in the second century AD—and to supplement it with the new knowledge of the planet revealed by recent and current explorations. Eventually, the project collapsed. The scholars died or dispersed, and the focus of Ptolemaic research moved away from Saint-Dié. Meanwhile, however, the effort had changed the world by generating two maps of enormous influence

THE FOURTH PART OF THE WORLD: The Race to the Ends of the Earth, and the Epic Story of the Map That Gave America Its Name.

By Toby Lester.
Free Press. 462 pp. \$30

and significance—the work of jobbing humanists who probably had been fellow students.

The world maps Martin Waldseemüller made in Saint-Dié, with the help of his colleague, Mathias Ringmann, were technically innovative. One was the world's first printed globe. The other was a vast map, engraved in black on multiple squares of gray-ing paper, designed to be trimmed, joined, and pasted onto a study wall. The content was innovative, too: The wall map was, as far as we know, and according to the cartographer's own commentaries, the first to attach the name "America" to the Western Hemisphere. Its fragility condemned it to hazard—worn and scraped off a thousand walls. But one copy survived, neglected for centuries, unmounted, in an old folder in a musty munitions room in a German castle. In 1901, an erudite Jesuit schoolteacher searching for medieval Norse documents happened on it and recognized it at once for what it was. It is now the costliest treasure in the Library of Congress. In Waldseemüller's day, however, copies abounded, helping to fix the name of "America" in scholars' minds and on other maps.

Ironies enshroud the story. Waldseemüller

and Ringmann chose the name because they revered an account of transatlantic voyages attributed to the Florentine adventurer Amerigo Vespucci. But Vespucci was not the real author of the work, which was a publishers' confection, issued to exploit a market for marvelous travelogues. The work the humanists admired claimed that Vespucci had discovered the mainland of the New World before Columbus—a claim that turned out to be false. (In a later map, Waldseemüller suppressed all mention of Vespucci and drew attention to Columbus's prior landfall in what the cartographer now, less catchily, called "Terra Incognita.")

Vespucci, in any case, was not the innovative geographic visionary depicted in historical tradition: He hardly modified ideas he borrowed from Columbus and thought the "New World" was part of Asia. Moreover, Waldseemüller misread the supposed Vespucci text. Where the Florentine was credited with discovering "a fourth part of the world," Waldseemüller understood the allusion to be to a fourth continent, to stand alongside Europe, Asia, and Africa. But all Vespucci meant, in an authentic work of his own in which he first used the phrase, was that he had navigated across 90 degrees of the surface of the globe—a "fourth part" of the total. Even this claim was probably false, but had it been true, it still would not have justified the mapmaker's inference that Vespucci had disclosed the existence of a previously unknown continent.

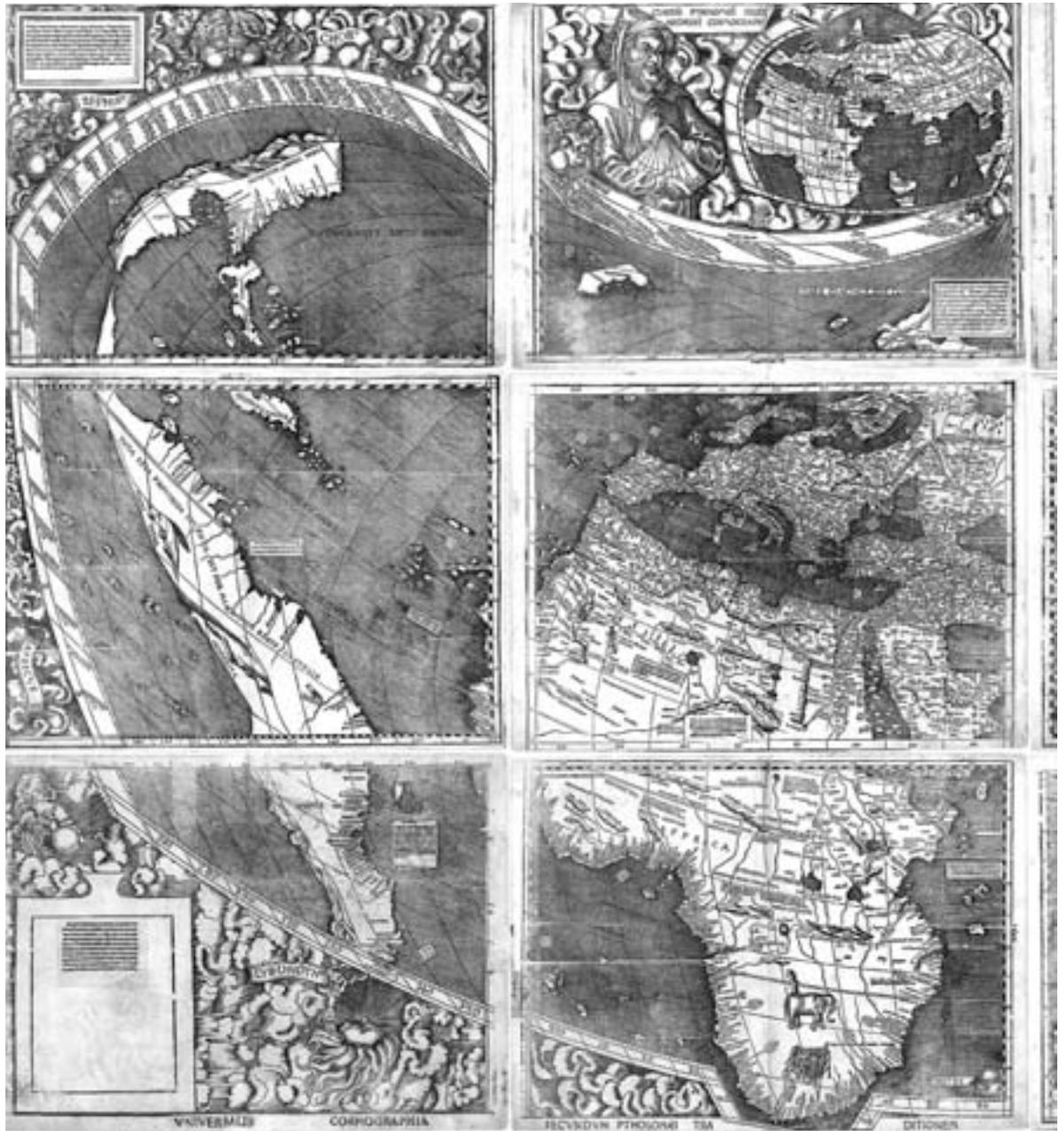
The Saint-Dié set accepted Vespucci's claims to have improved on the techniques of practical navigators in his day by using astronomical instruments to reckon a ship's progress in terms of the motions of celestial bodies. Waldseemüller was so impressed by Vespucci's credentials as a scientific navigator that, in the Library of Congress map, he engraved the Florentine's portrait in a cartouche at the top, from which the navigator looks down on the world in proprietary

fashion, next to a depiction of Ptolemy, equal in size and symmetrically placed. In the Renaissance, there could be no higher compliment than to feature a modern man as equal to one of the great figures of antiquity. The basis of the compliment, however, was phony. Vespucci never took an accurate astronomical reading at sea.

Tragedy followed irony. The Saint-Dié circle began to break up when Duke René died in 1508. Mathias Ringmann followed his former master to the grave in 1509, deploring the corrosive effects of his sickness on his ability to think in Latin of classical purity. By 1516, Waldseemüller was so disgusted with his own earlier work that he not only withdrew the name of America but repudiated the map that had given that name to scholarship. It was, he wrote, "filled with error, wonder, and confusion. . . . As we have lately come to understand, our previous representation pleased very few people." He was being excessively modest; the map he valued so humbly cost the Library of Congress \$10 million in 2003.

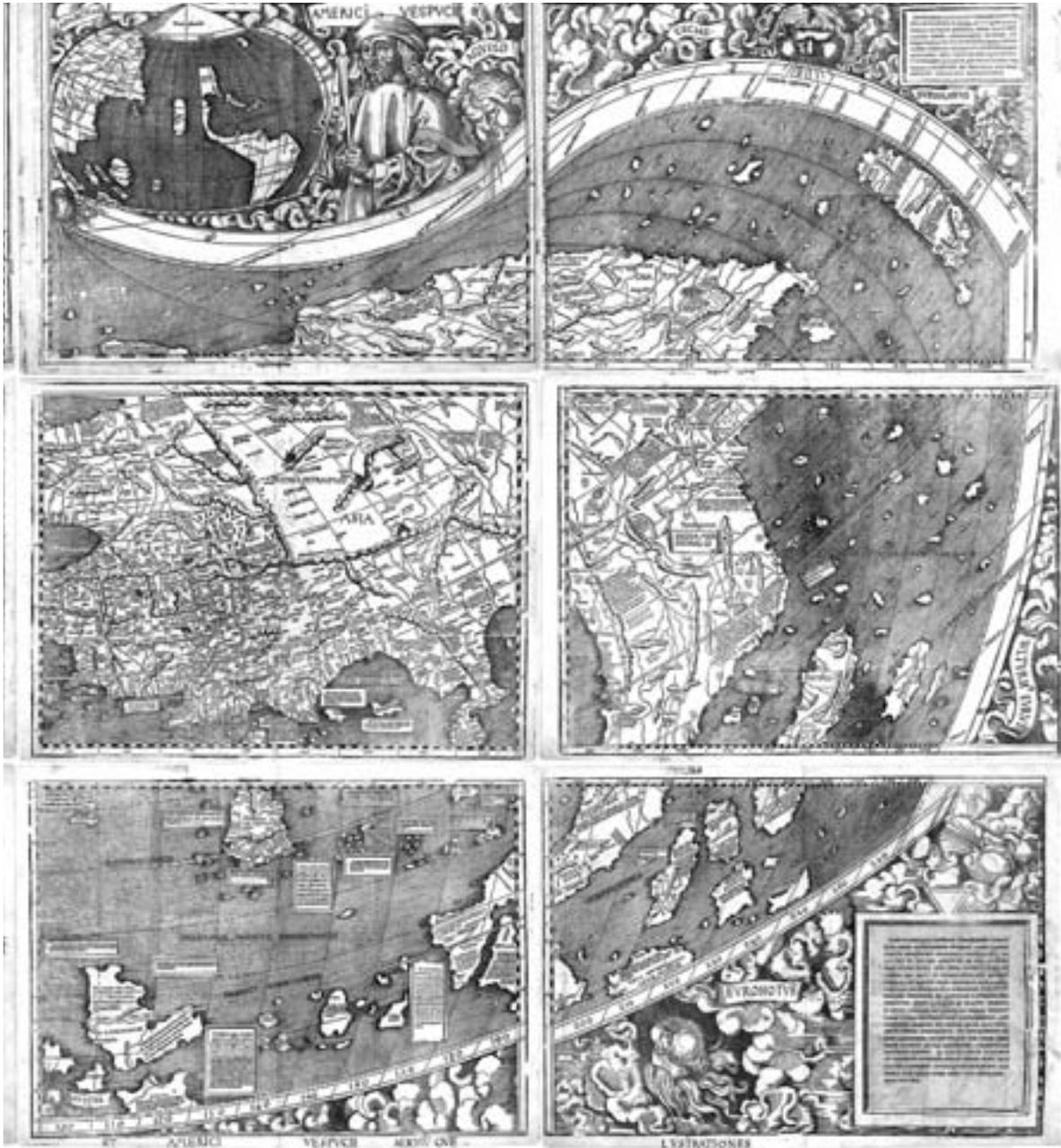
In every respect, the story of Waldseemüller's map is impassioned: as a source of insight into the history of our knowledge of our world; as an object lesson in the gropings and failings of Renaissance humanism; as a detective story in which a vital document mysteriously disappears to be startlingly rediscovered; as an instance of the role of chance and error in making history; as a cautionary tale of the overlap of obscurity and influence, notoriety and fame; and as a case study of stunning historical *supercherie*. In *The Fourth Part of the World*, Toby Lester, an *Atlantic* contributing editor, tells the story better than anyone has told it before. But he devotes little more than a quarter of the book to the map itself, choosing rather to locate it in an immense context of 300 years of European efforts to picture the globe in the late Middle Ages and early modern period.

Focusing on the work of the 13th-century



English monk Matthew Paris, he starts with the high-medieval project of encompassing the whole of knowledge in encyclopedic compendia. He then turns to the effects of encounters with the Mongols in enlarging European knowledge of Asia, before examining the efforts to explore the western ocean that began in Genoa in 1291, and continued

for two centuries in the seaports of Mallorca, Portugal, Castile, and other places on Europe's Atlantic rim. He also covers the impact of the rediscovery of classical geographic texts, and the contributions of learned armchair cosmography among scholars in Florence and Portugal (though he skips over the importance of Nuremberg as a center



of geographic inquiry and of Bristol as a launch pad of exploration).

Understandably, in attempting to cover such a huge swath of highly problematic material, Lester relies on the work of professional scholars, whom he treats, I think, with excessive respect. One longs for him occasionally to seize and shake his authorities, and

In 1507, Martin published a drawing of the world that labeled the Western Hemisphere “America.” Though he later repudiated his map, it tagged two continents with a name that stuck.

treat them more searchingly and critically, especially on Columbus and Vespucci, in regard to whom much of the scholarly tradition has been discredited. Even so, Lester’s

deftness in narrating a long and complex tale is impressive: fluent, clear, well informed, and perfectly paced. In short, he is an example of a phenomenon increasingly embarrassing to professional historians: a journalist who writes history better than we can.

When he gets around to Waldseemüller's map, Lester makes a formidable contribution. His convincing reasoning sheds new light on the relationship between "Ringmann, the writer, and Waldseemüller, the mapmaker." His analysis of the learned puns encoded in the Greek version of the name of America proposed in the Saint-Dié cosmographers' *Introduction* to Ptolemy is satisfying. His account of Waldseemüller's cartographic sources is enlightening. His study of the map from an iconographic point of view, though very selective, is challenging. (He sees, not entirely convincingly, the imperial eagle as an organizing shape hovering around the map.) Some aspects are omitted: It would have been of great interest, for instance, to read Lester's thoughts on the many curious legends and labels included in the map, in which information about animals is puzzlingly prominent. The entire treatment is tantalizingly brief: It is a pity the author did not give himself space to broach more of the problems and deepen the analysis.

Of the unposed questions, the most intriguing, perhaps, concerns the date of the

printing of the Library of Congress copy. No one can doubt that it is genuinely an early impression of the long-lost map Waldseemüller published in 1507. But the surviving example was made from a well-worn plate at an unspecified time, perhaps years after the first printing. This fact raises a potentially headline-grabbing possibility. In 2003, the Library of Congress invested an unprecedented sum to acquire a map whose status as the oldest to bear the name of America is open to challenge.

For more than a hundred years, the John Carter Brown Library, affiliated with Brown University, has housed a rival: an undated work by the same cartographer, showing an outline virtually identical to that of a map known to have been printed in 1513. This version, however, is unique—or at least different from the rest of Waldseemüller's output of that year—in that it includes the name "America." Lester dismisses this map's claims to priority in a brief appendix; but until the possibilities of scientific analysis, especially of hyperspectral imaging, are exhausted, the printing dates of both maps remain open to question. There may be twists yet to come in the tale of "the map that gave America its name."

FELIPE FERNÁNDEZ-ARMESTO is a history professor at the University of Notre Dame. His books include *Amerigo: The Man Who Gave His Name to America* (2007) and *1492: The Year the World Began* (2009).

Personal Compositions

Reviewed by Louis Bayard

MY FATHER WROTE me once a week when I was in college. Chitchat, for the most part. "Your Uncle Joe called. . . . Dishwasher went

YOURS EVER:
People and
Their Letters.

By Thomas Mallon.
Pantheon.
352 pp. \$26.95

out. . . . Had a nice jog this morning." Exactly the kind of stuff people post on Facebook now. I read each of his letters exactly once and put it . . . where? That's what I couldn't remember in the days and weeks after his death. I went through box after box, hunting

for those ancient relics, and when I realized they were well and truly gone, I felt as if I'd betrayed not just my father but the whole point of his writing me in the first place.

For isn't there a sacred premise behind every letter? That it will be kept and savored as long as there are eyes to read? Then again, how many of the letters we've received over the years are still with us? And what has happened to the letters we ourselves cast into the world? Is anyone brooding over those?

Letter writing may be an art, as Thomas Mallon argues in his richly entertaining overview, but it is a highly contingent and perishable one—a bit like the mural that Joyce Cary's half-mad artist, Gulley Jimson, paints as a valedictory on a condemned church. For a letter to survive, someone must deem it worth saving, and someone must deem it worth passing down. The famous correspondence of Madame de Sévigné, valued as much for its aphoristic pith (“I fear nothing so much as a man who is witty all day long”) as for its insights into the court life of Louis XIV, was pruned and, in some cases, rewritten by her granddaughter. Scottie Fitzgerald would coldly examine her illustrious dad's notes for “checks and news,” then dump them in her desk drawer. (It was her daughter who later compiled and published them.) Tennessee Williams's letters to his sometime muse Maria St. Just have been set aside for posterity, but where are the pages she wrote in reply? Did Williams toss them away in a fit of pique? Or did they just vanish into the maelstrom of his life?

Even letters that survive the test of time may face a stiffer test from history. The words of Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill will always command attention. But what of a long-forgotten literary critic named Francis Matthiessen, whom we find in Mallon's book building a romantic life with another man? What of the deaf English seamstress tensely negotiating her future with a tailor? The Oxford language student

struggling to remain faithful to her soldier lover on the far side of the world?

It's to Mallon's credit that he is attuned to the drama of these seemingly undramatic lives—and to the grim irony that letter writing today thrives most in extremis, among the prisoners and refugees who have been deprived of electronic communication. “Our situations are very different,” an imprisoned dissident writes Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping; “you are at the top of a billion people and I am at the very bottom—but life isn't easy for either of us. It's just that I am not the one making your life difficult, while you're the one making it hard for me.”

That power imbalance is, at least in the context of this letter, neutralized. Addresser speaks to addressee on equal terms. Still, Mallon knows that most of us approach a volume like this not for democracy in action but for the aristocracy of gossip. This he delivers in abundance. H. L. Mencken on Wallis Simpson: “a highly oxidized double-divorcée.”

Hannah Arendt on Vladimir Nabokov: “There is something vulgar in his refinement.” Oscar Wilde on fickle Bosie (his former lover Lord Alfred Douglas): “The mere fact that he wrecked my life makes me love him.”

Telegrams, suicide notes, memos, execution-eve manifestoes—they're all here. Oh, sure, you may mourn the critters who got away: Elizabeth Bishop or Evelyn Waugh or, hell, Émile Zola. (Was “J'accuse,” his open letter defending Alfred Dreyfus, too public a performance?) But you're as likely to be astonished by how much Mallon has packed into so small a space: Helene Hanff's transatlantic flirtation with Charing Cross bookseller Frank Doel; Walter Raleigh's curiously pragmatic and, as events would prove, premature last testament; Sullivan Ballou's heart-

For a letter to survive,
someone must deem it
worth saving, and
someone must deem it
worth passing down.

rending farewell to his wife on the eve of Bull Run (almost impossible to read now without the strains of “Ashokan Farewell” in your ear).

If *Yours Ever* runs more wide than deep, that is at least partly a function of its subject. Letters must often compress a great deal of ore into a small seam—they make a virtue of their own impoverishment—and the best letter-writers are those who strike pay dirt with the least amount of spadework. This is what Mallon does, again and again. He writes of Colette, living her life “as a kind of giant maw.” Of Lord Byron, bent from birth on “becoming an adjective.” Of John Keats: “No matter how hard circumstances press, the bedsprings of his self are available for falling back on; the harder his fall, the more cheerful his squeak.”

I particularly liked Mallon’s take on Philip Larkin, who “craved sooty windows the way others do bright lights” and whose letters illuminate “the distinction between happiness and fulfillment. The former may be what one wants, but the latter is what one needs, and as such is much more profound. Philip Larkin’s natural temperament was deeply, depressingly fulfilled.”

We might question Mallon’s fondness for puns (“Pushkin came to shove”) and his dismissal of John Milton, an advocate for divorce and a free press, as “English literature’s most august and terrifying adherent to convention.” There are moments, too, when the literary worth of a particular writer (Jean Harris, say, or Neal Cassady) is more obvious to Mallon than to the reader. But there is no denying the love that undergirds the author’s labor or the seemingly laborless way in which he calls these dead pages back to life.

What *kind* of life, though? That’s the question that began niggling at me the moment I closed this delightful book. *Yours Ever* is conceived as a museum for a lost art, and it is not hard to see Mallon as the docent in the cardigan sweater, ushering us into each room and then sending us off into the gloaming of mod-

ernity. “Mr. Jobs’s world,” he calls it. By which he means a benighted land where people have lost all capacity for reflection and “considered exchange.” Where even educated folk are reduced to sending text messages that read, in their entirety, “r u there?” Where “addictive gratifications have replaced the old, slow anticipation of the daily visit from the mailman.”

There is, in short, a reflexive melancholy to Mallon’s self-appointed mission, and I’m not convinced that all his *belletristesse* is merited. (Then again, waiting for the mailman has always struck me as a dubious pleasure.) When I sift through my past week’s electronic in-box, I find easily half a dozen messages that qualify as letters in every traditional sense. They are coherently structured, written with care and design. They enlighten, they illuminate, they endear. They even follow the old epistolary ritual of signing off (not “yours ever,” but some venerable variant: “yours” . . . “cheers” . . . “all best” . . . “xo”). My e-mail may not ascend to the level of Madame de Sévigné, but then, neither did Madame de Sévigné all the time.

More to the point, these messages would probably never have come my way if the senders had been obliged to take out pen and paper. Indeed, it is the very facility of electronic communication that makes the Luddite soul tremble. When Mallon complains that e-mail has “made the telegram’s instant high dudgeon affordable to all,” it is clear that the access troubles him as much as the dudgeon. *Look at me! I’m a belletrist, too!* But does the relative ease of an e-mail’s composition necessarily detract from its value? Are postage stamps a bona fide of literary intent?

Even in the age of tweets and pokes and blasts, the impulse to bring order to our thoughts and lives persists, and at the risk of sounding like a technojoingist, one might argue that technology facilitates this impulse as much as it impedes it. One might even envision a day when the electronic message

becomes more durable than the letter, when we no longer have to rummage through cellar shadows for our father's old notes because our hard drives have tucked them away in some brightly lit corner.

That's not the story Thomas Mallon set out to write, but with his wit and range of reference, his curiosity and gift for synthesis, he is as equipped as anyone to write it. Let us hope,

then, that he hasn't signed off on the subject completely, that he is even now composing some postscript that will, instead of making a fetish of loss, observe without prejudice as our missives leave the printed page and head in still-unguessed directions.

LOUIS BAYARD is the author of several novels, including *The Black Tower* (2008), *The Pale Blue Eye* (2006), and *Mr. Timothy* (2003). His reviews have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Salon*.

CONTEMPORARY AFFAIRS

Quiet Desperation

Reviewed by Andrei Lankov

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF books on North Korea. Thanks to its nuclear ambitions, it attracts a surprising amount of attention for a country whose population and economy are roughly the same size as Ghana's. But little is said about average North Koreans. They come across as faceless people who obediently follow the orders of their Dear Leader, as Kim Jong Il is officially known, and his opaque inner circle. *Nothing to Envy*, by journalist Barbara Demick, rounds out the picture. Working in Seoul and Beijing as a *Los Angeles Times* correspondent, she interviewed numerous people who had fled North Korea, into which few foreigners are allowed. Defectors' accounts of the country they left are susceptible to distortion, so Demick focused her interviews on people who came from the city of Chongjin, which enabled her to check their stories and experiences against each other.

Through their interwoven personal stories, Demick shows us the lives of ordinary citizens as they navigated the ravages of the last two decades, a time of social disaster, famine, and economic collapse. These defectors were not

NOTHING TO ENVY:
Ordinary Lives in
North Korea.

By Barbara Demick.
Spiegel & Grau.
314 pp. \$24

motivated by political conviction. Generally, it was some combination of famine and personal circumstances that drove them—a teacher whose father was a former prisoner of war turned coal miner; a scientist; a street tough; a medical doctor; a couple of petty officials—to cross the border to China and then make their way to South Korea. For some of them it was a risky undertaking; one, helped by money from a relative in Seoul, had a “VIP” defection, during which border guards ensured her safety.

In North Korea, self-isolation and daily control have reached heights that would have seemed extreme in the Soviet Union under Stalin. People are completely insulated from sources of information other than what is provided by the government (owning a radio set with free tuning is a crime, and foreigners are virtually never seen), and as a result they sincerely believe that their impoverished country is an island of prosperity in an ocean of destitution and suffering. Those few who harbor doubts have to be careful not to share their thoughts even with their best friends.

As a student at a prestigious university, the North Korean analogue to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Jun-sang, a promising young scientist, had access to restricted material. It was seemingly innocuous books—such as *Gone With the Wind* (to read it required a security clearance)—that caused

him to reconsider the picture of Westerners as mindless machines driven by sex and money, and prompted his decision to leave. After years of intense (but chaste) romance with Mi-ran, a teacher, the two conceived of and planned their escapes separately, not sharing a word; they still could not trust each other. A few years later they met again in Seoul, but by that time they were living separate lives.

Demick's narrative is not always inspiring: One of the chapters is titled "The Good Die First." Those among Demick's subjects who witnessed the North Korean famine of 1996–99, in which anywhere from 600,000 to two million people died, observed that the honest and goodhearted were less likely to stay alive. Most who survived did so by rediscovering the market: The famine was a time when "reluctant" capitalism boomed in North Korea. Contrary to what is sometimes assumed, the country long ago ceased to be a centrally planned economy. The old Stalinist economy of iron and coal is largely dead, with only a handful of military factories still operating somehow.

About 17,000 North Korean defectors live in South Korea, and most do not fare particularly well. They arrive with an education that is both anachronistic and distorted; they must adjust to a society that is decades ahead of their native land and acquaint themselves with the basics of modern life. Demick's subjects do better than most, but their success is often equivocal. For example, a once rebellious teenager now runs a karaoke club where North Korean girls work as hostesses and part-time prostitutes.

Sooner or later the Kim dynasty will be consigned to the dustbin of history, but it will take many more decades for the country's 23 million people to heal the social and psychological wounds inflicted by the brutal social experiment that is North Korea.

ANDREI LANKOV is a professor of history at Kookmin University, in Seoul. He is the author of several books on North Korea, including *North of the DMZ: Essays on Daily Life in North Korea* (2007).

World-Class Club

Reviewed by Rahul Chandran

IN THE SWELTERING SUMMER of 1944, two months after D-Day, British and Soviet diplomats joined the Americans in Washington to discuss how the three powers that were shaping the world could preserve the peace in the years to come. Their answer

was a grand body of member states—the United Nations—with responsibility for peace and security falling to a "Security Council." This elite club would have five permanent members—the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, plus France and China—with the power to veto any proposed resolution, and 10 other members elected on a rotating basis from the galaxy of states. In the 65 years since its creation, the Security Council has frustrated those who thought it would mean an end to violent conflict, disappointed many who assumed that nations would actually unite, and alienated the American Right, which considers it a constraint on U.S. power. Yet the fact remains that the Security Council is a critical venue for international dialogue.

In *Five to Rule Them All*, David L. Bosco, a professor of international politics at American University, guides readers through the history of the Security Council, from its first peacekeeping endeavor in the Congo, through the Cold War, to the present. This fine book blends insight into great-power politics with saucy anecdotes, including an account of the American-led sally to a famous New York City nightclub, Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe, designed to ease tensions during those 1944 negotiations. The only wish a reader might have is for more discussion of the current challenges that face the Security Council.

Bosco highlights the Security Council's successes, such as the tireless work of then-secretary-general Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and his team to end the Iran-Iraq War in 1988. He is also frank about

FIVE TO RULE THEM ALL:

The UN Security Council and the Making of the Modern World.

By David L. Bosco.
Oxford Univ. Press.
310 pp. \$24.95

the body's failures, among them its inability to facilitate peace in the Middle East and to stop the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the Srebrenica massacre, in Bosnia, in 1995. He is astute about the impact of seemingly subtle decisions by the Security Council, as when the Soviet Union's permanent seat was transferred to Russia in 1989 "with scarcely a whisper of debate." In rushing through this transition, Bosco writes, the Security Council missed an opportunity to realign power that "might have allowed adjustment to reflect new realities and refresh the council's legitimacy with the rest of the world," though, in keeping with the non-prescriptive nature of the book, he doesn't say what that realignment ought to have looked like.

Today, we have moved beyond the post-Soviet moment. America is no longer the sole superpower, yet it has no equal. As Bosco notes, large non-Western blocs of nations have consistently criticized the Security Council for paying too little attention "to what many poor nations saw as the root cause of much conflict: disparities in economic development." Today these objections are heard less often, in part because the loudest critics, including India and Brazil, have gained enough power to pursue their own interests aggressively. But the Security Council's relevance and legitimacy are still in question in two key ways.

First, the informal arrangement that allowed the Security Council to intervene in and mitigate violent conflict over the last two decades in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Haiti, Kosovo, Guatemala, and elsewhere is increasingly unstable. In the past, permanent members would make the decision to intervene, others (Japan and Germany) would pay, and a third group (often including India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) would provide troops. It makes less sense, with each passing year, to the Japanese and Germans to foot the bills



For six decades, the UN Security Council has brought the world's great powers to the table.

without a guaranteed say in the decisions, or for India, which has more than 15 percent of the world's population, to assume risks without a share of control.

Second, the role of the Security Council in dealing with problems that lack clearly defined borders—climate change, resource scarcity, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, subnational violence—is uncertain. President Barack Obama's decision to chair a recent Security Council summit on nuclear nonproliferation signals that the body has a role in dealing with this issue, but the precise nature of that role remains unclear.

Hovering over Bosco's book is an abiding sense of the failure of the great powers to recognize change, combined with a quaintly desperate desire to preserve privileges and rights of a bygone era. Set against this is the remarkable success of the Security Council in preventing conflict among the great powers; its existence accounts, at least in part, for the fact that we have avoided another world war. Unless the five permanent members can find a pathway to sharing and extending their power, the legitimacy of the Security Council will continue to erode.

RAHUL CHANDRAN is deputy director of the Center on International Cooperation at New York University.

Monochrome Life

Reviewed by Darryl Lorenzo Wellington

BETWEEN 2007 AND 2009, the young African-American political commentator Rich Benjamin spent much of his time living a suburban fantasy—posing as a home buyer researching high-end properties, living in fashionable condominiums and gated communities, and studying with professional trainers to sharpen his golf game. His foray into enclaves of wealth and comfort might seem a mere vacation if it weren't also a sociological study. "Statistics can tell you only so much," he explains at the outset. "Understanding the spirit of a people and the essence of a place requires firsthand experience."

The dwindling statistical dominance of whites in the country as a whole has been accompanied by a marked rise of segregated white enclaves; in these upscale communities, whites make up 85 percent or more of the residents. While traditional suburbs diversify and the poorest urban areas warehouse minorities, since 2000 Whitopias (i.e., white utopias) have posted at least six percent population growth, most from non-Hispanic whites. Culturally, they are conservative; politically, they are typically Republican. Often, they are designed by developers to cater to old-fashioned, Ozzie and Harriet values. The residents are neither blind to the homogeneity of their environs nor apologetic about it. "I don't like the use of the term white flight," says a resident of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. "It's sort of cultural flight."

Aside from Coeur d'Alene, Benjamin spent time in Forsyth, Georgia, and St. George, Utah, as well as a blue-state Whitoopia: the Carnegie Hill neighborhood of Manhattan. He says that he encountered no overt racial hostility in these places, and, while his very presence was an implicit critique of these

SEARCHING FOR WHITOPIA:

An Improbable Journey to the Heart of White America.

By Rich Benjamin.
Hyperion. 354 pp. \$24.99

communities, his judgments (arguably) err toward generosity.

He empathizes with Whitopians' fear of urban crime. He defends the principle of ethnic diversity, but commiserates with those who have abandoned it because they have seen "diversity done badly." He writes of bonding with his neighbors while playing golf, in rapturous prose that gently mocks the game's stereotypical associations: "On the resplendent green, I too escape my modest city abode, my work stress, my history, my identity, my skin. Whack!" He even puts the best face on a visit to a church that preaches racial purity, expressing mere annoyance rather than real rancor. Overall, Benjamin concludes, Whitopias are populated by decent and "delightful people" who have inoculated themselves against guilt or discomfort over yawning socioeconomic inequities.

The dark side of Whitopias is revealed less in interpersonal relations than in residents' peculiar obsessions, most notably with illegal immigrants. In St. George, Benjamin attends a meeting of a group that calls itself the Citizens Council on Illegal Immigration, at which a speaker presents a slide show of ominous images of wild-eyed, dark, Hispanic men. Benjamin observes that St. George's safety fixation—the maze of security systems installed in home after home, restrictive zoning laws, and fierce anti-immigration sentiment—smacks of fear beyond a rational relationship to the immediate threat. Zealotry, if not racism.

Benjamin concludes his book by attempting to make a broader argument about how to achieve racial harmony and eschew ethnic and class balkanization in the 21st century. Mapping a plan to achieve a post-racial America, he tosses off easy summary judgments. Inner-city blacks must "redouble their efforts to achieve the American dream," he declares, though the daily hardships of the poor have received scant attention in the

book. More than the absence of black and Latino perspectives, however, it's the lack of attention to working-class and poor whites that hampers his attempt to wade through a mire of diversity issues. Still, Benjamin's case against Whito-pias is clear: By tying power and privilege to racial identity, he suggests, they impoverish our understanding of one another and undercut collective commitment to a social contract. Fearsome institutions—though not populated with fearsome people.

DARRYL LORENZO WELLINGTON is a culture critic whose essays frequently appear in *Dissent*.

HISTORY

Britain's Big Year

Reviewed by Martin Walker

STEVE PINCUS HAS PRODUCED the most important new work of English history in many years. His revolutionary and persuasive analysis of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 overthrows the traditional Whig interpretation of steady progress toward representative and elected government through Parliament that Lord Macaulay proposed in the mid-1800s. Along with Macaulay's parallel narratives of the defeat of absolute monarchy, the flourishing of free institutions, and the triumph of commerce, this version has since become one of the founding myths of modern Britain—and also of the United States, whose Founding Fathers of 1776 saw themselves as defending the liberties secured in 1688.

Macaulay argued that the replacement of King James II, a Catholic who sought to be an absolute ruler, by his Protestant daughter Mary and her husband, William of Orange, the leader of the Dutch Republic, was a classic exercise in English good sense and moderation. He saw the Glorious Revolution as a

1688:
The First Modern
Revolution.

By Steve Pincus.
Yale Univ. Press.
647 pp. \$40

calm, almost bloodless event, led by the traditional aristocracy and gentry asserting the authority of Parliament. Pincus, a Yale historian, shows that it was far bloodier than the myth allows, with riots and armed skirmishes breaking out across the country. One minor incident in Reading saw 60 royal troops killed, far more than the number of protesters who died in the famous Champs de Mars massacre in 1791, during the French Revolution.

Supported by the traditional ruling classes though the 1688 revolution may have been, it clearly involved so many of the common people that it came strikingly close to national democracy in action. Pincus cites local records of association, voluntary statements of loyalty, to show that more than 450,000 people publicly affirmed their loyalty to King William after

James sought to retake his throne with French and Irish troops in 1689 and an assassination plot against William was uncovered in 1696. James's hopes of support from British

loyalists proved highly and fatally exaggerated.

In the national mythology, 1688 marks a quintessentially English event, despite the arrival of a Dutch prince and his crushing victory in 1690 on the banks of Ireland's River Boyne over James's Franco-Irish army. Pincus demonstrates that the Glorious Revolution was intimately bound up with the grander politics of Europe, and that King James's attempt to copy the Catholic and absolute monarchy of France's King Louis XIV represented a triple threat to British interests. First, James's monarchy was Catholic, whereas Britain was largely Protestant. Second, it was pro-French, whereas Britain was largely pro-Dutch, for commercial reasons as much as for religious ones. Third, it was an autocracy, whereas Britain had been advancing down the path of limited monarchy

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was far bloodier than the myth allows, with riots and armed skirmishes breaking out across Britain.

under law since the days of Magna Carta, and had, within living memory, fought a civil war and executed King Charles I to resist royal absolutism.

This analysis leads to Pincus's key insight, that the Glorious Revolution represented a battle between two competing projects of modernization. King James had sought to modernize the country along French lines, establishing a large standing army and professional tax-raising bureaucracy, and bringing crucial institutions into line, by, for instance, appointing militant Catholics to run Oxford and Cambridge colleges. The consequences of a successful counterrevolution by James, warned the English cleric James Gardiner, "would have been a French government." The Bishop of Gloucester preached that "twill be crime enough to be an Englishman."

But James faced the competing Whig and commercial project of modernization, whose great instruments were Parliament and the Bank of England, the latter of which was able to finance the national debt incurred by the new foreign policy of resisting French dominance across Europe. The Whig project was decentralized, whereas James had sought to consolidate power in his own person; it was participatory, whereas James had sought an exclusive power; it was urban and mercantile, whereas James and his Tory supporters had believed that all wealth came from the land; it was about limiting and challenging and balancing power, whether it was based in London or Paris or Rome, rather than submitting to it.

The Britain that resulted (which, after the Act of Union of 1707, included Scotland) transformed its political system, political economy, church and state systems, and foreign policy. Absolute monarchy and Catholicism had been defeated by Protestantism, Parliament, and commerce. Britain had become not simply a different state but a different country, and so deeply rooted were these changes that the cardinal principle of resisting any other power that sought to

dominate Europe has remained the bedrock of British policy for three centuries.

Why didn't this bold perception ever take hold? Pincus provides his own challenging answer: "A central point of this narrative has been that the hyper-specialization of history has not only made historical writing accessible to ever narrower audiences but that the breakdown of historical processes into social, religious, intellectual, political, constitutional, military, and diplomatic history has made it impossible to specify broad revolutionary shifts and identify their causes." Pincus proves himself wrong: This is an all-embracing narrative history in the grand tradition.

MARTIN WALKER is a Woodrow Wilson Center senior scholar. His latest novel, *Bruno: Chief of Police* (2009), has been translated into 10 languages.

Tame Rebellion

Reviewed by Michael Anderson

HAS ANY DECADE OF THE American Century been written about more yet understood less than the Fifties? In both the popular and the scholarly minds, it exists as caricature, one held in

contrast with an equally cartoonish conception of the Sixties: either a prison preceding liberation, or Eden before the Apocalypse. "When conservatives look back to the 1950s," Alan Petigny writes, "they see an era of sexual reticence, a time when conservative Christianity was on the march, a halcyon era of order and tradition untarnished by the turmoil that would come. Conversely, liberals often vilify this time for its hypocrisy and repression." More sensibly, scholars have recognized that one decade flowed into its successor, that the Fifties paved the way for the Sixties. Although Petigny would have it otherwise, *The Permissive Society* demonstrates the truth of the middle way.

THE PERMISSIVE SOCIETY:
America,
1941-1965.

By Alan Petigny.
Cambridge Univ. Press.
292 pp. \$24.99

Born from his doctoral dissertation, the book displays more bumptiousness than brilliance. American manners and mores “had been on the march for at least half a century,” he writes, and the pace accelerated ever more rapidly after World War II. This moment he portentously calls “the Permissive Turn”; it was, in fact, the final triumph of the social trend increasingly dominant since World War I (an event *The Permissive Decade* ignores), urban modernism. Petigny essentially transposes contemporary culture wars back a half-century. What he approves of is “open and democratic,” not to mention “modern”; what he disdains are prejudices such as “elitism and sexual prudery.” The first, no surprise, is “liberal,” the second “conservative”—labels now so greasy that they would scarcely have utility even with the careful definition Petigny neglects to provide. A pity, because his hours in the stacks have yielded a profusion of data that might facilitate some genuine insight into a pivotal era.

Anyone middle-aged in 1950 had experienced three worldwide catastrophes—two world wars and an equally devastating economic collapse. Reconstruction was in order, for individuals as well as for society, and to replace the gods that had failed, Americans eagerly embraced ones that seemed more promising. As Petigny details, psychology was valorized: In 1955, the publishers of *MAD* magazine issued a new comic called *Psychoanalysis*; alcoholism was converted from a sin to a disease; and the clergy set about “transforming theology into therapy.” Religion itself substituted appeasement for apocalypse; Brotherhood Week “explicitly cautioned celebrants against engaging in discussions of theology or church policy,” and Dwight D. Eisenhower famously advocated “deeply felt religious faith, and I don’t care what it is.”

Perhaps most tellingly, as described in Petigny’s best-argued chapter, the status of women was ever on the rise. They were no longer junior partners in marriage. “As Pat

Boone crooned in his 1958 hit, marriage was now a ‘50-50 deal.’” A majority of Americans, both male and female, told pollsters they could endorse a woman as president, and “by the end of the 1950s, not only were there significantly more women serving as state legislators than at the end of World War II or at the close of the 1940s, but there were slightly more . . . than at the end of the 1960s.”

At the same time, however, Americans yearned for the simulacrum of stability. Indeed, a faux nostalgia for normalcy gripped the popular imagination, a desire to remember a world that never was. This was manifested most spectacularly in the Red Scare, but, perhaps not surprisingly, the urge to create an idealized past was visited particularly heavily upon the next generation. Despite the near-hysterical condemnations of their music (rock ‘n’ roll “often plunges men’s minds into degrading and immoral depths,” declared Martin Luther King Jr.), their clothes (a juvenile court judge cited blue jeans as “a factor in sex delinquency”), and their deportment (“Going steady is a menace to the purity of our youth,” the principal of a Roman Catholic high school proclaimed), Petigny perceptively notes that “the rebelliousness of teenagers was not only tolerated by the larger culture, but was, to a large degree, sanctioned.” No surprise: The “rebellion” was epitomized by the pranks of Dennis the Menace; the putatively defiant heroes of *The Wild One* and *Rebel Without a Cause* wound up “affirming the ideals of the larger society.”

Uneasy, unsettled, traveling in competing directions, the unacknowledged act uneasily conjoined with the camouflaging word: This is the prescription for anxiety, the situation Sigmund Freud considered the besetting condition of modern man (not “guilt,” as Petigny writes). Little wonder that the decade saw the finest works from cinema’s master of psychological subversion, Alfred Hitchcock—the Fifties were indeed the Age of Anxiety.

MICHAEL ANDERSON is writing a biography of the playwright Lorraine Hansberry.

A Revolutionary Woman

Reviewed by Frank Shuffelton

IN THE FOUNDING FATHERS' race for enduring fame, John Adams had a secret resource.

Her name was Abigail. Most of the Founders' wives offered silent support, usually in the form of affectionate encouragement and the management of household and family matters, but few contributed as much to their husbands' success as Abigail Adams. Previous biographies have tended to emphasize how she embodied the new possibilities for women that emerged with the rise, in the latter 18th century, of companionate marriage, which prized affection over dynastic or economic considerations. "Dearest Friend" was the greeting that opened many of Abigail's letters to her husband.

Woody Holton's biography recognizes this aspect of the Adamses' marriage, but he complicates the picture by showing the stresses and differences of opinion that cropped up between Abigail and John, even if they never became serious rifts. (For instance, in her most famous letter, written to John while he was attending the Continental Congress in 1776, she requested that he "Remember the Ladies." What's less recalled is his jocular response: "I cannot but laugh.") In Holton's version of the relationship, Abigail is occasionally a whetstone against which her husband sharpens his thinking. And Holton, a historian at the University of Richmond, shows more fully than earlier biographers how Abigail's financial acumen created a secure foundation for the Adams family and helped pioneer a new kind of economic empowerment for women.

Well into the 19th century, married women were bound by the legal notion of coverture, which put their property under the control of their husbands. Nevertheless, Abigail drew up a will that disposed of personal property such as dresses and jewelry and also included financial

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

By Woody Holton. Free Press. 483pp. \$30



Abigail Adams had a marriage many have envied—but she fought not to let it define her legal rights.

bequests to family members, friends, and dependents—and when she died in 1818, John honored it. Abigail's resistance to coverture, which in effect suspended a woman's legal existence while she was married, is a theme of Holton's book. Abigail's crusade, however, was a relatively private one. She exercised her "protofeminist ideals within her own household," he notes. Her will, for instance, opens with the statement that it is made "by and with [her husband's] consent," and she typically expressed her resentment at the limits placed upon women in correspondence with female friends and relatives.

Abigail was born in 1744 in Weymouth, Massachusetts, where her father, William Smith, was pastor of the Weymouth church's north parish. She never attended school, partly because of frequent bouts of ill health, and partly because her parents did not value education for girls beyond reading and basic arithmetic. She was, however, an avid reader, and Holton suggests that an important element of her education was "networks of friends" who recom-

mended books to one another and discussed them in conversation and letters. Her wit impressed her future husband unfavorably when they met, but a couple of years later she had apparently softened some of her sharp edges, and he had grown appreciative of her ability to counter his self-acknowledged vanity, admiring her “Saucyness” and calling her “Miss Adorable.” They married when she was 20.

The Adamses’ 54-year marriage was marked by long periods of separation, beginning with John’s travels as a young lawyer on the court circuit and extending through his many years as a national public servant beginning in 1774. When left on her own, Abigail coped with farm labor shortages, illnesses, and four children. She also earned money by providing hard-to-find items including pins, ribbon, and handkerchiefs to Boston merchants. John acquired the wares in Philadelphia and later in Europe at a favorable price, and by reselling through agents she could avoid the appearance of impropriety—proper ladies were not supposed to be in business.

During the Revolution, she accumulated a tidy nest egg that she invested in state and national bonds bought at steep discounts and eventually redeemed at par, dealings of which her husband was not always fully aware. Her financial enterprises, along with the couple’s thriftiness, laid the basis for the fortune that kept the family afloat during the hard times after the Revolution that wrecked other members of the founding generation.

Holton’s biography stands out for its treatment of Abigail’s entrepreneurship, and if earlier biographers have discussed her proto-feminist opinions, he is often more thorough and nuanced than they were. His skillful use of primary sources, including Adams family correspondence, affords a fuller understanding of events in Abigail Adams’s life than we have had. Holton’s biography is required reading for anyone interested in the Adams family.

FRANK SHUFFELTON edited *The Letters of John and Abigail Adams* (2004) and *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (2009).

ARTS & LETTERS

Song of Myself, Sung Again and Again

Reviewed by Eric Liebetrau

A GLANCE AT ANY BEST-seller list demonstrates the popularity of memoir. Books such as Mary Karr’s *The Liars’ Club* (1998), Augusten

MEMOIR: A History.

By Ben Yagoda.
Riverhead.
291 pp. \$25.95

Burroughs’s *Running With Scissors* (2002), and Elizabeth Gilbert’s *Eat, Pray, Love* (2006) have become literary touchstones for American readers, many of whom identify with the authors’ troubled childhoods and searches for redemption. But the genre itself has ancient roots, writes University of Delaware journalism professor Ben Yagoda in *Memoir: A History*. First-person accounts reach back at least as far as 50 BC, when Julius Caesar recounted his war campaigns in his self-flattering *Commentaries*. Much of the autobiographical writing from that time does not survive, and Yagoda points to *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (AD 397–98) as the first autobiography.

To avoid muddying the waters, Yagoda uses the words “memoir” and “autobiography” somewhat interchangeably, to mean “a book understood by its author, its publisher, and its readers to be a factual account of the author’s life.” Recently, the genre’s very identity as “factual” has come into question. When in 2005 Oprah Winfrey confronted James Frey about the fabrications and exaggerations of his addiction tale *A Million Little Pieces*—a book she had touted from her powerful book-club pulpit—the backlash was unprecedented. Feeling emotionally defrauded, readers, critics, and journalists began to question the veracity of other memoirists, including Burroughs (who has written about his childhood living in the dysfunctional household of his mother’s psy-

chiatrist) and Ishmael Beah, author of the best-selling book *A Long Way Gone*, which describes his experience as a child soldier in Sierra Leone. Burroughs's foster family disputes his account; reporters questioned details and the chronology of Beah's war years.

The genre's appeal persists, however, and Yagoda examines its development with a journalist's thoroughness, beginning with a few modern milestones: the *Million Little Pieces* fiasco; the record \$10 million advance paid to Bill Clinton for *My Life* (2004); the bizarre sagas surrounding both O. J. Simpson's *If I Did It* (2007), his supposedly hypothetical confession of how he murdered his ex-wife, and Peter Golenbock's "inventive memoir" detailing the sexual exploits of Mickey Mantle.

Yagoda tends to lean on extended excerpts, and some readers may skim the longer quotations. But the narrative accelerates as he chronicles the first half of the 19th century, when the "most original and remarkable American autobiographical subgenre . . . drew on narratives of conversion, repentance, captivity, and adventure," as in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845). The mid-1800s were dominated by works from P. T. Barnum, Ulysses S. Grant, and Mark Twain, all accomplished storytellers and showmen. Barnum, "perhaps the greatest self-promoter of all time," eagerly and candidly described many of the hoaxes he perpetrated during his performances, including the Feejee Mermaid, "likely the result of someone surgically connecting a fish tail with a monkey's torso and head."

The 20th century saw the birth of the "as told to" memoir, as well as the modernist tradition of transforming autobiography into fiction, exemplified by such classics as Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1922–31) and Sylvia Plath's *Bell Jar* (1963). In the last several decades, Yagoda observes, memoir has become more open, even

graphic, and authorship has been "democratized"—no longer confined to celebrities and politicians. Today, nearly anyone with a hard-luck story can foist it upon an often eager public.

And what of truth in memoir? In closing, Yagoda excavates the cases of Burroughs, Frey, and numerous others whose integrity was challenged—on the grounds of mere exaggeration for effect, the restructuring or shuffling of chronology, or, in Frey's book, outright lies. Ultimately, Yagoda concludes, "once you begin to write the true story of your life in a form that anyone would possibly want to read, you start to make compromises with the truth."

ERIC LIEBETRAU was the managing editor and nonfiction editor of *Kirkus Reviews* until it closed at the end of last year.

Card Studs

Reviewed by Aaron Mesh

NOT LONG AFTER GRADUATING from college, I, like millions of other enthusiasts infected by the millennial poker craze, developed a slightly unhealthy interest in no-limit Texas hold 'em. Nearly every Friday night, I bellied up to a basement card table or, if a home game couldn't be found, ventured out to an East Tennessee bar called Mayo's, where tournaments of dubious legality and \$50 buy-ins started every half-hour. Sometimes I won. More often I watched my weekend pocket money go out the door in somebody else's pocket. After bad nights, I would brood over the suspicion that my inability to bet aggressively signaled a deficiency of character.

I wasn't alone in drawing this parallel. Among James McManus's many insights in *Cowboys Full* is the observation that Americans have long used their homegrown game—a modified French bluffing contest—to define the kind of people they want to be:

COWBOYS FULL:
The Story of Poker.

By James McManus.
Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
516 pp. \$30



The game of poker may be as American as apple pie, but its image has never been as wholesome.

shrewd, bold, unflappable, and streetwise. In tracing poker's lineage from Mississippi riverboats to televised tournaments, McManus argues that gambling strategies influenced national history from the fresh-start aspirations of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal (named after the shuffling and distribution of cards) to the deployment of the insuperable atom bomb (described by a Manhattan Project scientist as "a royal straight flush"). Devised in polyglot 1800s New Orleans and honed on riverboats, poker developed as a uniquely American recreation: a contest played by free-market people, each individual convinced he was a little more equal than everyone else.

In his last book, *Positively Fifth Street* (2003), McManus wryly recounted his improbable fifth-place finish in the 2000 World Series of Poker while on a reporting assignment; as a historian, he is no less lively and nimble. Not a page of *Cowboys Full* goes by without a crackerjack yarn, as McManus

shows how the game, like the country, grew in respectability even as its nature remained fundamentally freewheeling. He compares steamboat cardsharps of the 1830s to the bling-sporting rappers of today and makes a case for poker as the true national pastime, capable of righting baseball's wrongs: Arnold Rothstein, the mobster who fixed the 1919 "Black Sox" World Series, was shot dead after refusing to pay his losses in a stud game he thought was rigged. McManus revives the legends of high-stakes gunslingers Wild Bill Hickok and Doc Holliday, but he also shows how friendly games became a staple of the FDR and Truman Oval Offices. Poker even hewed the destiny of Richard Nixon, who as a World War II Navy lieutenant used his "iron butt" to endure marathon sessions of five-card draw; the \$8,000 in winnings he brought home helped stake him to a political career.

In its second half, *Cowboys Full* shifts focus to the late-20th-century rise of poker

as a global spectator sport, with an emphasis on epic Las Vegas tournaments at Binion's Horseshoe casino and emergent World Series of Poker celebrities such as the laconic Texan Doyle Brunson and cocaine-addicted whiz kid Stu Ungar. The game's "grittiness and peril might help to explain why its outlaw cachet continues to linger," McManus writes, "even when today's live games are played mostly by well-scrubbed folks sipping mineral water in state-sanctioned card rooms." Cheating may have diminished—though it continues to crop up in online games—but players still feel that they're getting away with something.

McManus suggests a more philosophical side of the game in the person of Herbert O. Yardley, a code breaker, spy, and poker instructor whose nonchalant resilience over three wars and countless careers becomes the book's running joke. Yardley's own book, *The Education of a Poker Player* (1957), counseled honesty and patience as the virtues of the poker table. "In the end," McManus writes, quoting the journalist Al Alvarez, "what he is describing is not so much a game of cards as a style of life." The game that began as a haven for scofflaws, layabouts, and swindlers can build character, too.

AARON MESH is a film critic and general assignment reporter for *Willamette Week*, an alternative newspaper in Portland, Oregon.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The City's Limits

Reviewed by Catherine Tumber

FROM THE MOMENT HENRY David Thoreau drove a post into the shores of Walden Pond, the American environmental movement declared its hostility toward cities—those sooted handmaidens of industrial despoliation into which, by 1920, half the American population was

GREEN METROPOLIS:
Why Living Smaller,
Living Closer,
and Driving Less
Are the Keys to
Sustainability.

By David Owen.
Riverhead.
357 pp. \$25.95

smooshed. The argument against urban congestion was moral, aesthetic, and increasingly grounded in science. Yet in spite of the hygienic improvements of Progressive-era municipal reforms, the birth of the federal Environmental Protection Agency, and the more recent recognition that auto-dependent suburban sprawl poses grave environmental hazards, cities remain the bane of environmentalists. Today's movement to "green" cities with more open parkland, urban agriculture, and ecologically minded building design belongs to a long tradition.

Contrary to environmentalism's anti-urban bias, David Owen argues, New York City—the *ur*-metropolis itself—is among the greenest human settlements on the planet, measured in terms of its carbon footprint. "The average New Yorker," he points out, "annually generates 7.1 tons of greenhouse gases, a lower rate than that of any other American city, and less than 30 percent of the national average." And the beauty of it is that New Yorkers don't even have to try—or to care. Simply by not driving, and by living on top of one another in small apartments stacked in tall buildings, the denizens of Gotham do more for the environment than the most strenuously eco-friendly composter can imagine.

For those unfamiliar with the environmental argument for urban density, *Green Metropolis* (which developed from a 2004 article Owen wrote for *The New Yorker*) is a fair place to start. Owen devotes a good part of his book to showing that high-tech green fixes—developing an electric-car industry, constructing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified buildings, and going off the grid with residential solar panels and other technologies—offer false comfort, as long as they perpetuate our dependence on automobile transportation. Such measures do little more than flatter the vanity of architects, engineers, and high-end, conspicuously green consumers, while providing a convenient

marketing edge for a host of new products and real estate ventures. Michael Pollan-inspired locavores also come in for a drubbing. In reducing their “food miles,” Owen argues, they ignore agricultural efficiencies of scale while turning over precious urban real estate to plants rather than people.

The other prong of Owen’s argument is that, absent politically infeasible federal fuel taxes, only the market will get us to environmental El Dorado. As long as the price of oil remains low, Americans will continue down the auto-dependent highway to Helldorado, where each suburban dwelling consumes far more energy than its vertical-living counterpart: If all eight million New Yorkers were made to live at the sparse density of the classic New England town in which Owen himself resides, “they would require a space equivalent to the land area of the six New England states plus Delaware and New Jersey.”

Owen is right about the environmental efficacy of higher residential density, yet he’s wrong—deeply wrong—about how better to concentrate population. Let’s begin with his model: Focusing on New York City certainly carries rhetorical force. But, as Owen explains at the outset, the causes of New York’s density levels are historically and geographically unique. Where does that leave the rest of the country? How might his argument apply to a smaller city, such as Akron, Ohio? Or to Detroit, which has lost half its population over the past 50 years, and must repurpose vast areas of vacant land? In these places, urban food production and ecological restoration make a great deal of sense. And if these cities must in-fill their urban cores anyway, to achieve density, why not do it with green buildings?

Owen is quick to dismiss “planners,” even though his ideas are indebted to the Smart Growth and New Urbanism movements, which he mentions only in passing. Long-

term design, the development of land-use policy, and transportation planning are precisely what far-flung cities in the hinterland need in order to prepare for a low-carbon future. New York may be contributing more than its fair share to reducing carbon emissions, and Owen is right to question the wisdom of “greening” such places. But clearly he has never been to Cleveland.

CATHERINE TUMBER is a research affiliate with the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning’s Community Innovators Lab. She is writing a book about the promise of small-to-midsized older industrial American cities in a low-carbon future.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Know Thy Neighbor

Reviewed by Peter Skerry

ON NOVEMBER 5, A MUSLIM U.S. Army psychiatrist, Major Nidal M. Hasan, opened fire in a facility at Fort Hood, Texas, killing one civilian and 12 fellow

soldiers and wounding many more. This horrific incident is one that many Americans now associate with Muslims, but the book *Muslims in America* presents a strikingly different image. On the frontispiece is a photo of an attractive woman hugging a young boy, her black hair flowing from underneath a hardhat bearing the emblem of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and her green fatigues emblazoned with an American flag and her last name: Khan.

As this image suggests, Muslims today are adapting to life in America and integrating into American institutions. Muslim women are getting educated and joining the workforce, and while they tend to dress modestly, many do not wear a headscarf. And as Americans are now suddenly aware, a few thousand Muslim Americans serve in the armed forces, including personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. This assimilation is one facet of the story that Edward Curtis, a professor of religious studies

MUSLIMS IN AMERICA:
A Short History.

By Edward E. Curtis IV.
Oxford Univ. Press.
144 pp. \$12.95

at Indiana University–Purdue University, wants to relate. Curtis, who never explicitly says that he is a Muslim, opens the book by describing his friendly but awkward relations with his neighbor, a Baptist preacher whose son died in Iraq. He wrote this book so that Americans who aren't Muslim “may come to understand Muslim Americans just a little bit better.”

By and large, Curtis achieves his objective. He describes how Muslim slaves brought to America centuries ago from West Africa held on to their religious practices and managed to pass some of them to succeeding generations. Highlighting the diverse origins and other differences among Muslims in America, Curtis tells of one 19th-century convert, a white middle-class Protestant named Alexander Russell Webb. He saw Islam as embodying American principles of rationality and religious pluralism, yet refused to associate with working-class Muslim immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia.

These newcomers, scattered across the country as merchants and peddlers, adapted their faith to their new country—adulterating it at times and reinvigorating it at others. For example, in Quincy, Massachusetts, in 1961, the Arab American Banner Society raised money for a new mosque by holding fundraising picnics where alcohol was served, then took out a mortgage to sustain the mosque. On occasion, the society allowed the mosque to be used for Halloween parties and sock hops. All of these actions violated some aspect of Islamic teaching, and, as Curtis relates, the members were reminded of this when, in the late 1960s, a new wave of immigrants arrived bringing a more orthodox version of the faith.

Today that pattern is being reenacted, as Muslim newcomers sustained by the revival of Islam overseas seek to shore up the faith of their coreligionists. Yet in the United States the integration of Muslim Americans continues in numerous ways. National fast-food franchises, some owned by Muslims, feature *halal* dishes

(food permitted under Islamic law). Young Muslims born and raised in the United States identify with their faith but also describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious.”

To his credit, Curtis also looks at the less benign side of Islam in America. For example, he traces the rise of the African-American Nation of Islam, whose leader, Elijah Muhammad, preached anti-white racism, discouraged followers from voting or serving in the military, and refused to display the American flag. Yet, as Curtis also shows, Muhammad's son and successor, Warith Deen Mohammed, renounced his father's racist ideology, embraced orthodox Sunni Islam, and made sure the flag was flown at every member mosque.

More troubling is Curtis's account of how, since the 1960s, many Muslim immigrants have brought with them the view that Islam can and should transform America. Some, like the missionary Shamin Siddiqui (who came from Pakistan in 1976) have called on fellow Muslim Americans to exercise their rights as citizens “to transform the country into an Islamic state.”

Curtis is a model of clarity on the details of the Muslim experience in America, but much weaker when it comes to shaping those details into a coherent portrait. And while it's not unreasonable for him to begin by stating that this is not a book about Muslim terrorists, his failure to reckon with the uncomfortable questions their existence raises further detracts from this portrait. Muslim terrorists act in the name of a religion whose nonextremist mainstream runs against the grain of American society's liberal values. Americans—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—are sorting out whether and how the battle against such terrorists is to be distinguished from the debate over our cultural and religious differences. Curtis's goal of explaining Islam to his non-Muslim neighbor is laudable, but his book falls short of addressing, or even articulating, such challenges.

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PORTRAIT



The '60s Turn 50

As the New Year arrived, oldies deejays joined balding flower children in whooping it up (with age-appropriate moderation) over the silver anniversary of the 1960s. If the 2000s were the decade with no name, the very phrase “the ‘60s” speaks volumes, and even emits an odor—the pungent aroma of burning marijuana. The old controversies over the decade are themselves like an olfactory contest: Were the ‘60s a sweet and hopeful time that gave the nation new dreams to live for, or a decade that reeked of self-indulgence and planted the seeds of social decay? The answers are blowing in the wind.



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