WQ
THE WILSON QUARTERLY
SURVEYING THE WORLD OF IDEAS

FOUR DECADES OF CLASSIC ESSAYS

WINTER 2014

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SURVEYING THE WORLD OF IDEAS
WINTER 2014
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CONTINUES

PREVIOUS PAGE: In London during the Blitz, readers peruse the selections at the Holland House library.
Photograph: Harrison/Getty Images

ON THE COVER: *The Salute* (1944), by Jean Helion
Photograph: Banque d'Images, ADAGP/Art Resource, N.Y.

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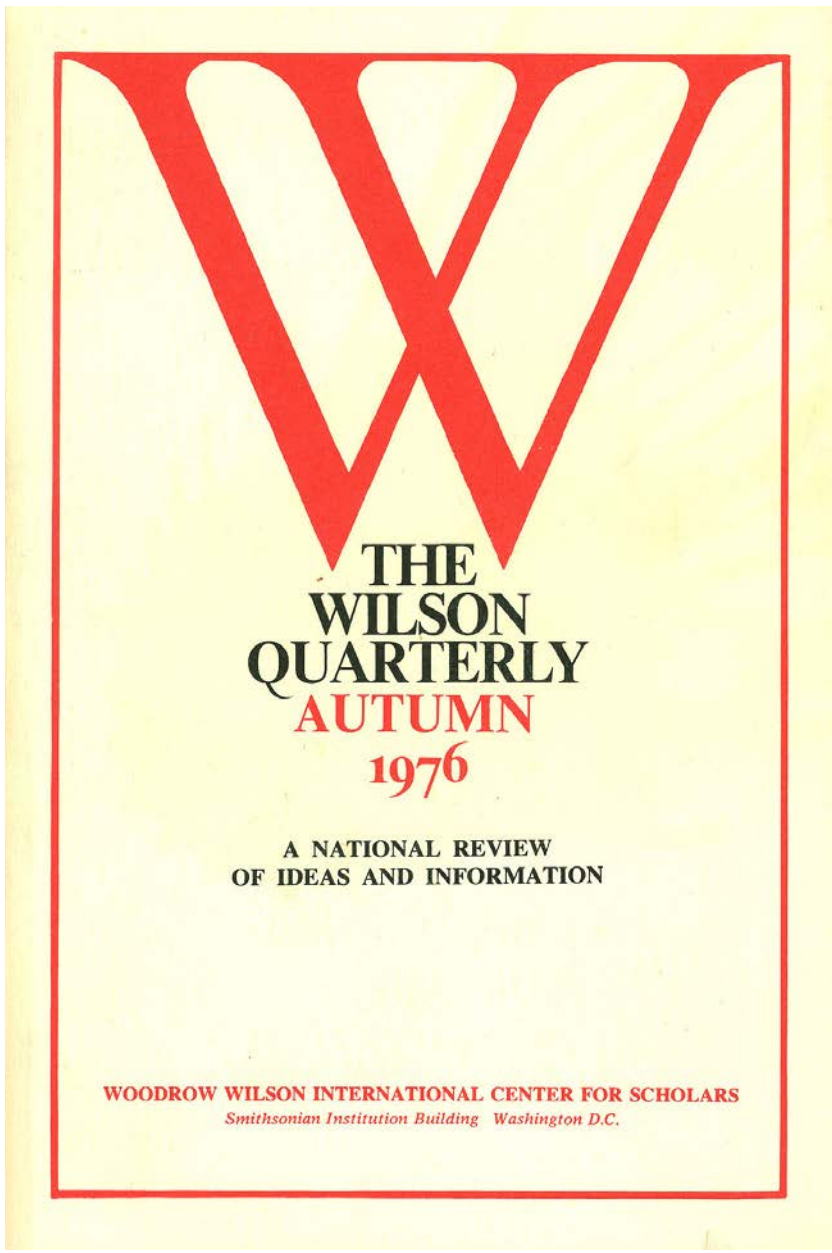
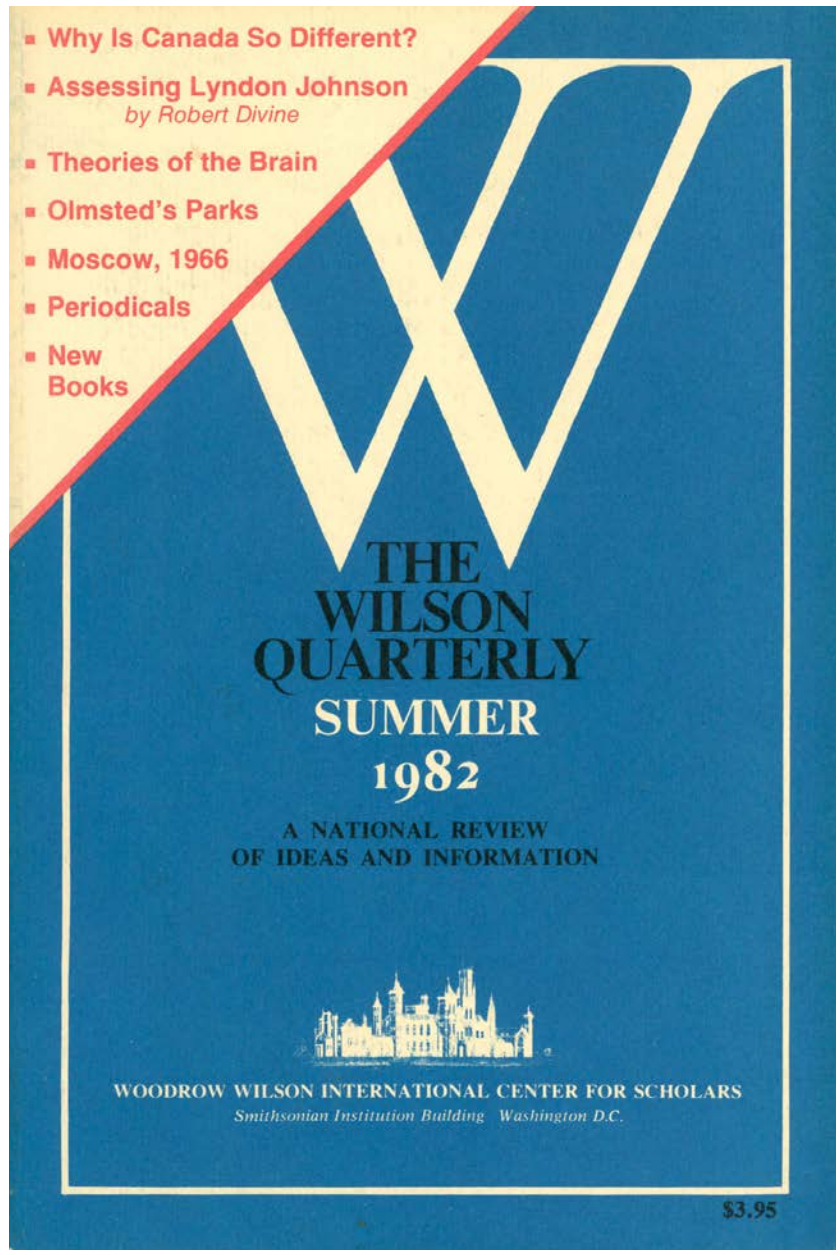
EDITOR'S COMMENT

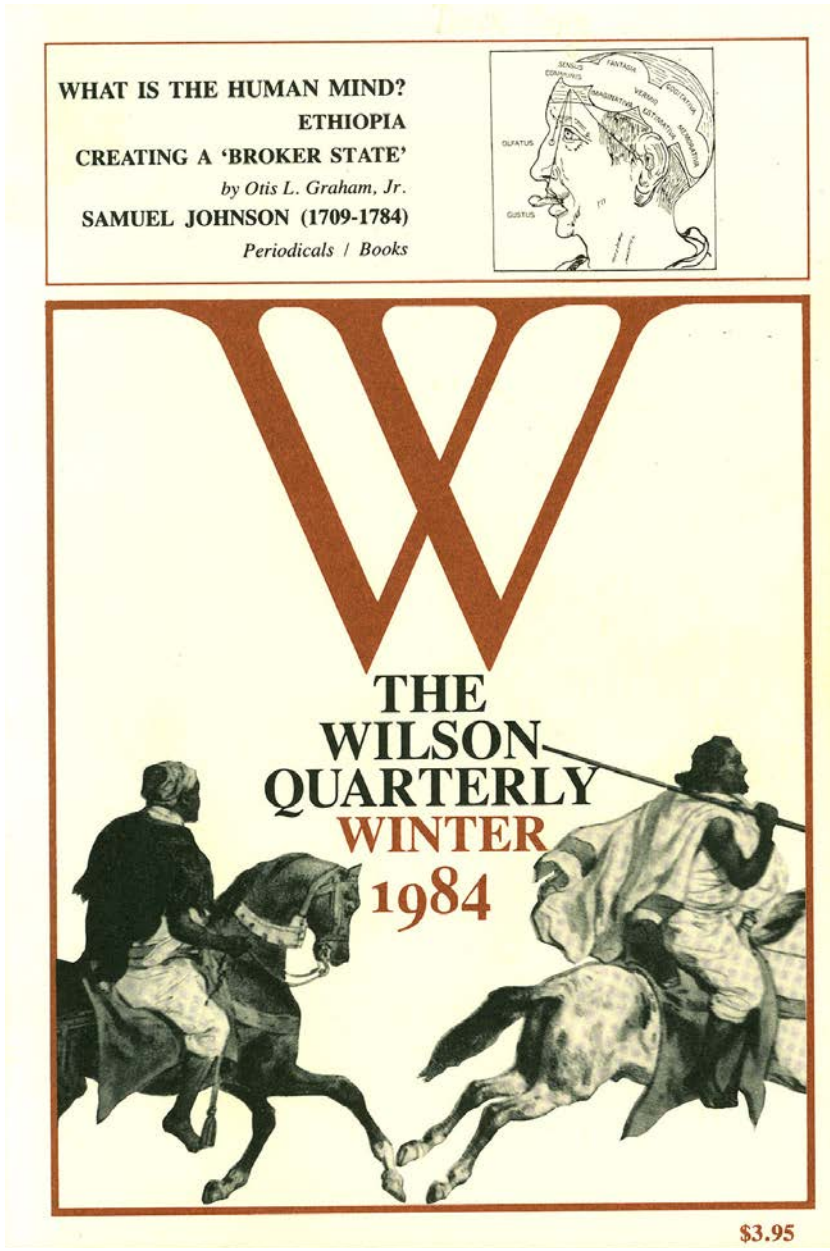
WITH GRATITUDE

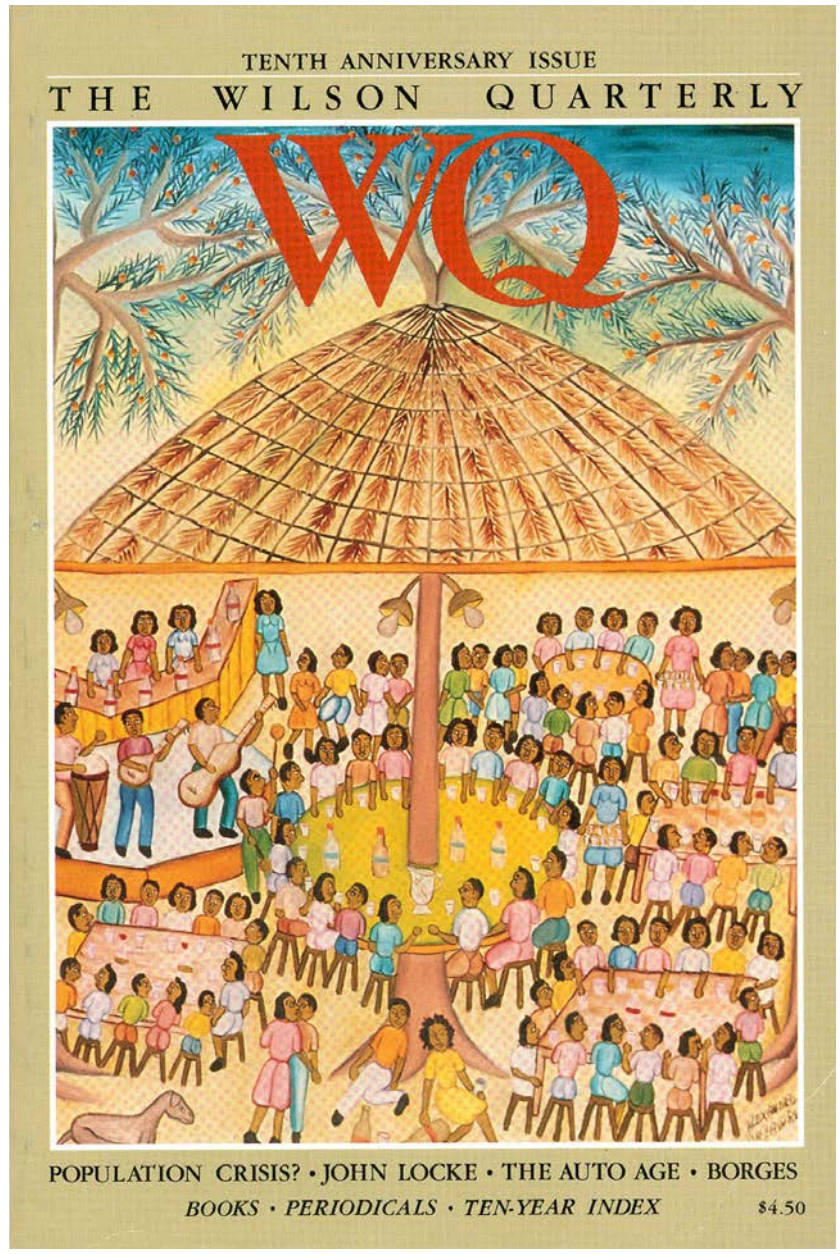
The Wilson Quarterly, my predecessor, Jay Tolson, once wrote in this space, is a magazine that moves forward by looking backward, like a rower in a scull. It is especially appropriate to look back now because following this issue, after 36 years in print and two as a tablet magazine, the *WQ* will assume a new form with different leadership. (See our Web site, *www.wilsonquarterly.com*.)

In this issue we have reached back to present some of the classic essays we have published since the magazine's founding by Peter Braestrup in 1976, touching on many of the themes that have animated the *WQ*, from American civic life to global affairs. This has always been a magazine for intellectually curious readers, and reading one past issue after another, I have been struck by the enormous range and depth of our offerings, covering an array of subjects that would







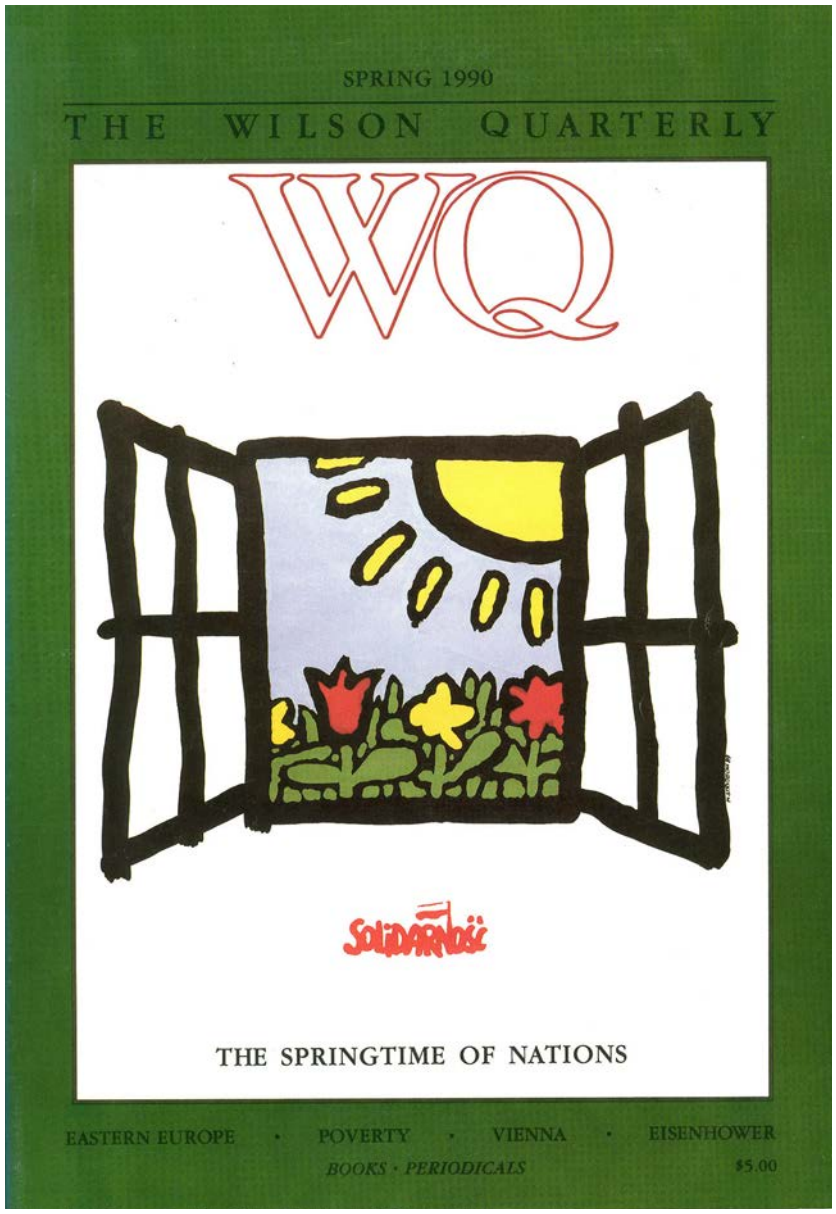


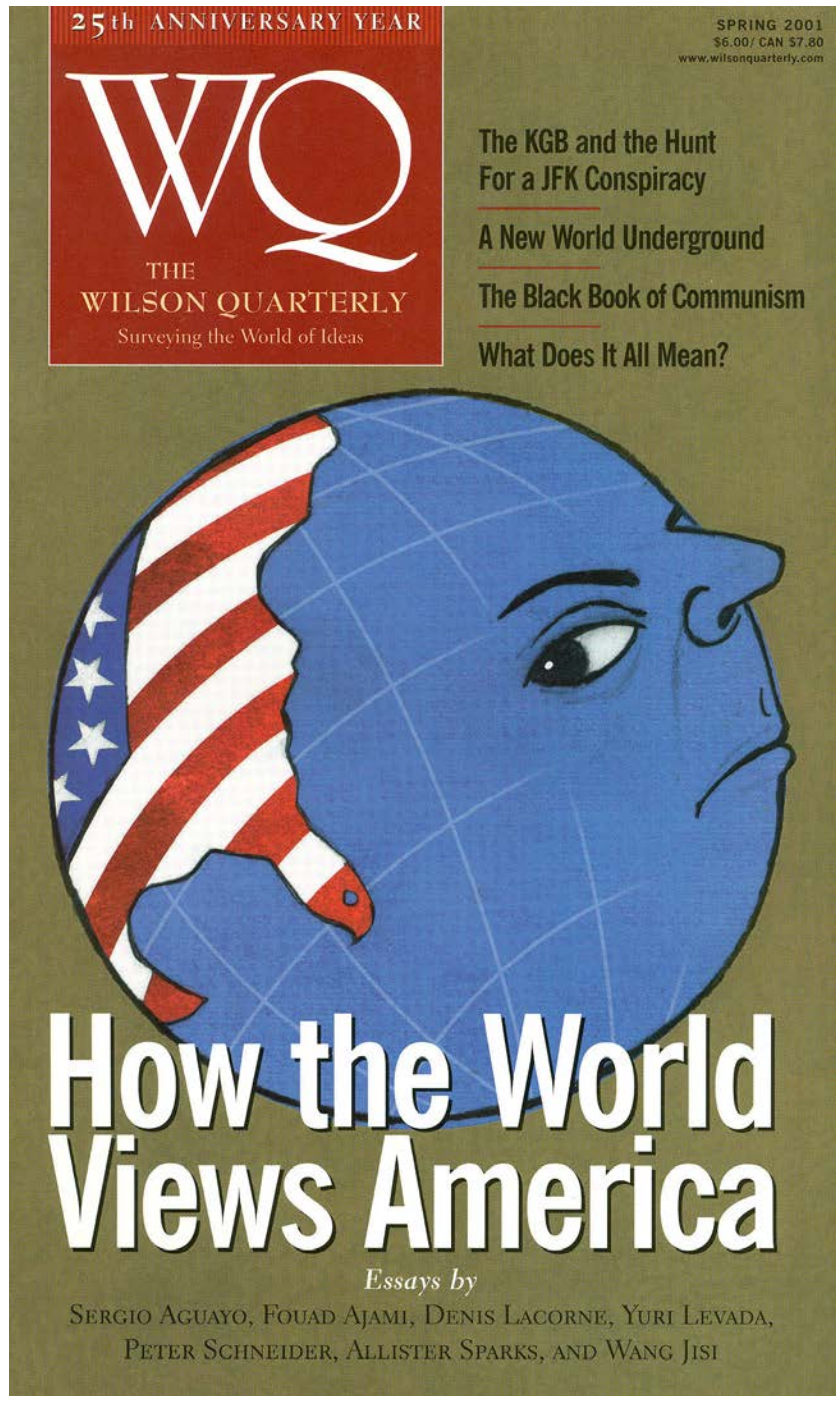
have impressed even the great encyclopedist Denis Diderot. I am also struck by the enormous effort required by our small, dedicated staff to produce each quarter a volume of superior writing equivalent to a book.

We have been fortunate to present the work of some of the leading writers and thinkers of our time—including Daniel Bell, Carlos Fuentes, Richard Rorty, and E.O. Wilson—and to have brought to readers' attention a number of rising intellectuals, such as Andrew Bacevich and Amy Chua. In "The Second Coming of the American Small Town" (Winter 1992) by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, we introduced New Urbanist ideas about the making of neighborhoods and cities—ideas that have since reshaped the American landscape and become conventional wisdom. That essay could not be included in this issue, but as part of the *WQ*'s transition the magazine's complete archives are now open to all through the Web site.

For all its concern with the big questions of our time, the *WQ* has taken a practical, even workmanlike

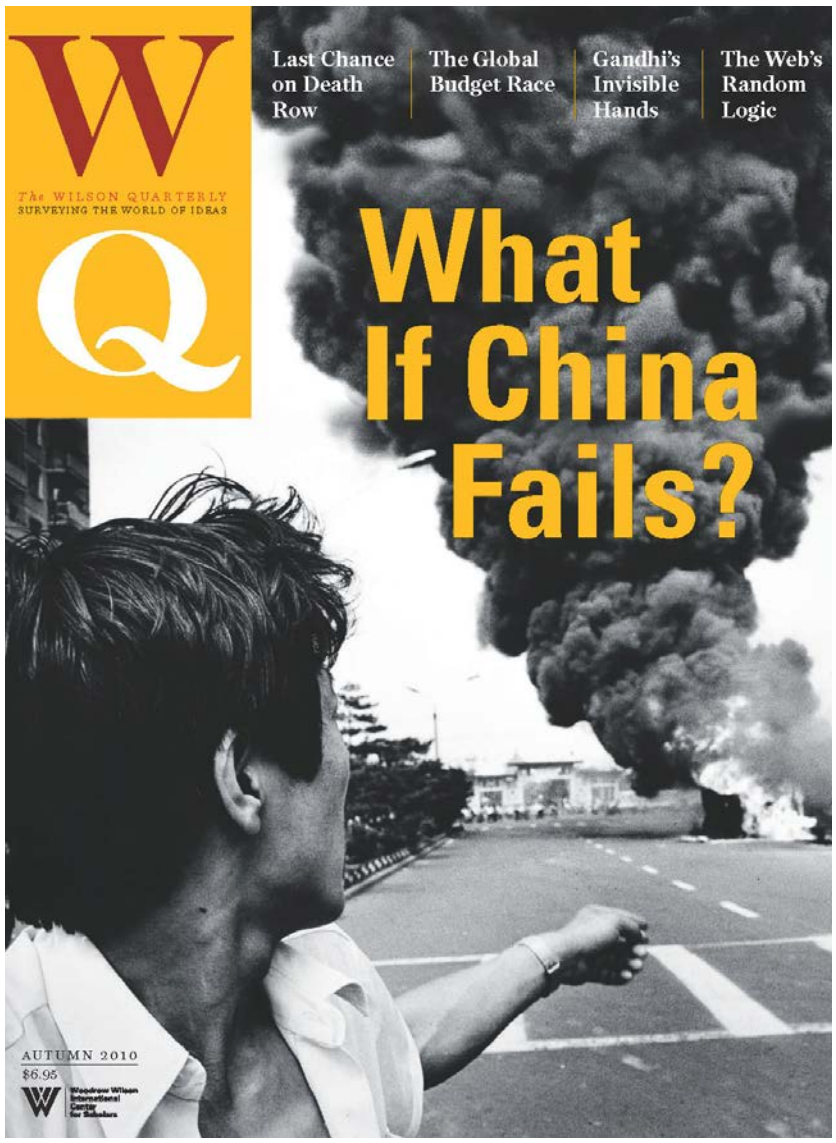
approach to ideas. Like a teenager obsessed with computers or cars, we have always wanted to know: How does this thing work? In our case, the thing is the world. Our question leads down many roads and has yielded many shimmering bits of illumination. "Darwin's Worms," Amy Stewart's essay in the Winter 2004 issue on the great scientist's lifelong fascination with earthworms, revealed his conclusion that the fine dust that mysteriously falls on ships at sea is the product of earthworm castings. How remarkable that he even asked, and then published a paper on the subject. In the

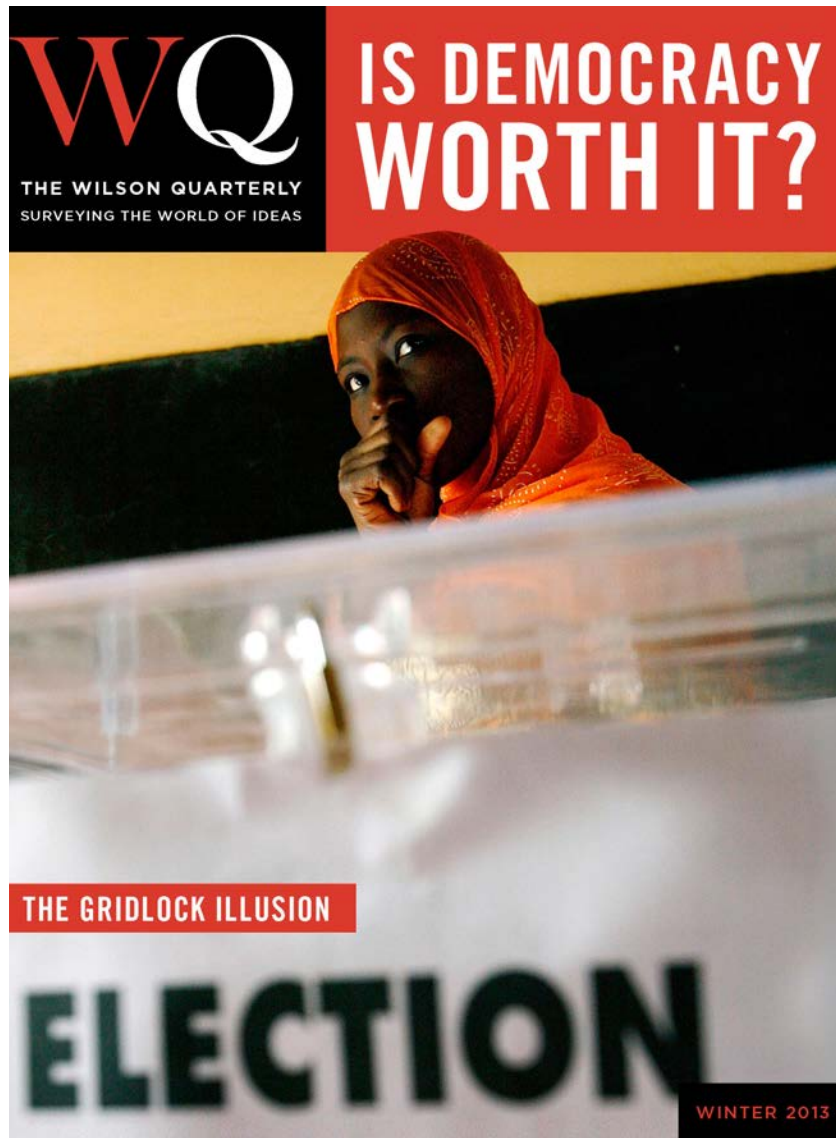




same issue's In Essence section (then called The Periodical Observer), we reported on a scholar's argument that the Enlightenment was partly stimulated by the introduction of coffee and tea in Europe. It opened with Samuel Johnson's thundering peroration against sleep, "Short, O short then be thy reign/ And give us to the world again!"

Curiosity has been the great driver of the *WQ* and the uniting spirit of its readers. Curiosity inspires the constant questioning of received ideas, and we





have been particularly proud over the years of publishing views with which we disagree—and of baffling those who have tried to pin a political label on the magazine. This is not a matter of mere vanity. From its beginning in 1976, the *WQ* has proceeded—even crusaded—in the classic liberal spirit of open inquiry and debate. If we have been even a minor beacon of the liberal idea it is our proudest accomplishment.

It has been a great privilege for me to have been part of the *WQ*'s journey for 33 years, serving as editor since 1999. Gratitude is the word that describes my feeling—and, I can say with confidence, the feelings of my many *WQ* colleagues over the years—for the opportunity to have been part of this great enterprise. With them, I deeply thank the writers and readers who have made everything possible.

— STEVEN LAGERFELD

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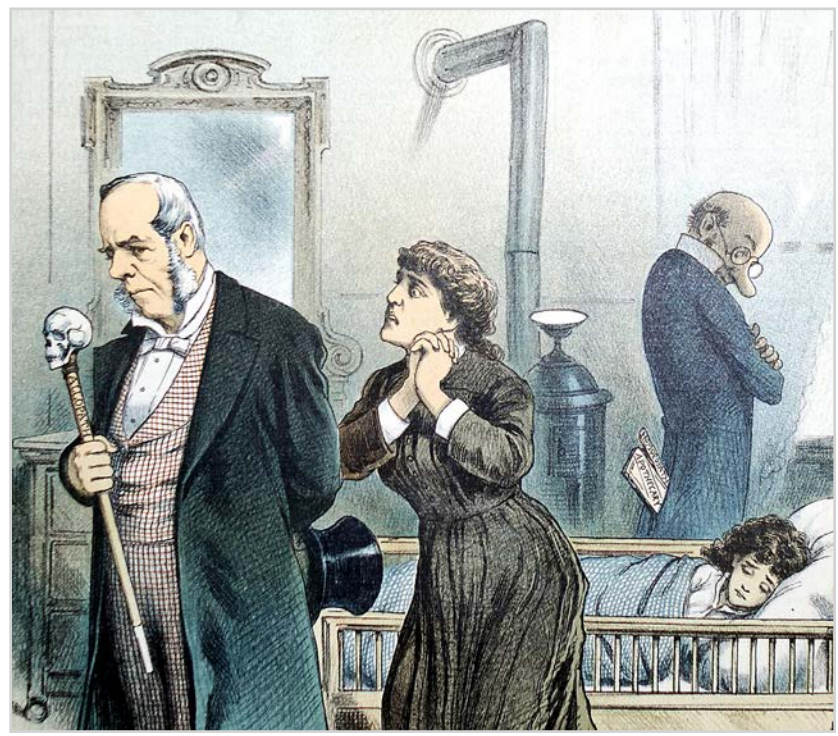

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In the United States, democratic theory suffers from an ineluctable . . .

EXORCISE MACHINES

Undiplomatic nostalgia

George F. Kennan was not merely an author, diplomat, geopolitical analyst, and one of the so-called Wise Men who shaped American foreign policy during the Cold War. Throughout his long life—he died in 2005, at 101—he was also an unrepentant Luddite. Excerpts of his journals have now been published in *The Kennan Diaries*, edited by Frank Costigliola (Norton).

TODD MCLELLAN / BARCROFT USA / GETTY IMAGES

An infernal machine?

Kennan privately bemoaned one technology after another. In 1933, he complained that the "pantomime genius" of silent films had been replaced by "sentimentality of incredible crudeness"; the arrival of talkies was nothing short of "tragic." Automobiles, he wrote in 1937, "drugged and debilitated" the American public. He deemed mankind "a skin disease of the earth." In 1954, he deplored the "utter loneliness" of the "cold and gleaming push-button world," exemplified by the self-serve baggage carts that were replacing porters at Grand Central Station.

A development in 1955 particularly irked him. "What, one wonders, do people want?" he wrote. "How far do they wish to carry the process of automation? Are they yearning for [the] day when all the processes of life will be automatic, and there will be nothing left for human hands to do, and we will all sit, in a hushed, perpetual stillness before our television sets, let the span of life pass by us, hardly noticed, and wonder sometimes, vaguely and briefly and without too much curiosity, how it used to be when people were alive?" This diatribe was provoked by the news that his neighborhood in Princeton, New Jersey, would soon be getting dial telephones.

Kennan realized that most people embraced dial phones and the other new technologies, but he was unmoved. "The 'people' haven't the faintest idea what is good for them," he declared in 1984. "Have I? An imperfect idea—yes; but better than theirs."

CURATING GETS GRATING

Forced retirement?

Like stale madeleines, forbidden words can evoke forgotten times. In 1972, E. B. White proscribed "uptight," "vibes," "copout," and "groovy." Four years later, Lake Superior State University in Michigan began issuing an annual hit list of trendy-turned-hackneyed words, including "détente" (1976), "yuppie" (1986), "multitasking" (1997), and "metrosexual" (2004). John Shibley and Thomas Pink of LSSU curate the "List of Words Banished From the Queen's English for Misuse, Overuse, and General Uselessness."

The verb "curate," as it happens, is a candidate for the list. "I have grown to detest this innocent word," lexicographer Sara Hawker recently told *More*

BRIAN HARKIN / THE NEW YORK TIMES / REDUX

In the hands of a *New York Times* restaurant critic, this nice little appetizer became a "flight" of "curated" meats and cheeses.

Intelligent Life (Nov.–Dec. 2013). "It's a form of self-inflation, used to convey the idea that the person concerned has some expert knowledge. . . . It's now so widely used that it's become just a way of saying 'select.'"

Originally, curating took place only in museums. It seeped into performance spaces in 1982, when *The New York Times* credited a dancer with curating an evening program in the East Village. In the digital context, it has now gone viral (a word on the LSSU list of 2011). Curating, the *Journal of Interactive Media in Education* explained last year, is "what we are all doing online."

We don't curate Etruscan pottery; we curate Twitter feeds. Let's hope "curate" soon resumes its proper place—as a museum piece.

GETTYSBURG REDRESS

Second thoughts about second thoughts

In November, *The Patriot-News*, a daily newspaper published in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, marked the sesquicentennial of the Gettysburg Address with a correction. The newspaper's ancestor, *The Patriot & Union*, had declared

in 1863 that Abraham Lincoln's "silly remarks" at the dedication of the Gettysburg military cemetery deserved "a veil of oblivion." Now, the paper's editors announced in an editorial, "we have come to a different conclusion." Their Civil War–era predecessors had failed to recognize the speech's "momentous importance, timeless eloquence, and lasting significance," they said, adding that "*The Patriot-News* regrets the error."

Time, NPR, the Associated Press, and dozens of other news organizations ran lighthearted stories about the belated mea culpa, and it inspired a sketch on *Saturday Night Live*. An article on *The Patriot-News*' Web site quoted deputy opinion editor Matthew Zencey, who had written the correction: "This must be what it feels like when a baseball player hits a grand slam." Zencey also explained the correction's subtext: "Gee, can you believe what rock-heads ran this outfit 150 years ago?"

But *Patriot-News* reporter Donald Gilliland reviewed the paper's 1863 articles, interviewed scholars, and discovered that the tale of the "silly remarks" editorial is, like many episodes in the Civil War, more nuanced and complicated than it seems.

LOC

The sole photograph of Abraham Lincoln delivering the Gettysburg Address shows a much less exalted occasion than posterity imagines.

To start with, the paper didn't treat President Lincoln's remarks as inconsequential. The "silly remarks" editorial was just a small part of the coverage. The newspaper also published the president's speech in full.

In addition, one article called Lincoln's speech "brief and calculated to arouse deep feeling"—a rather generous appraisal, considering the source. Not only was *The Patriot & Union* a Democratic newspaper, reflexively opposed to Lincoln; it also had had a run-in with the administration the previous year. For publishing a handbill it considered seditious, the Union Army had jailed the paper's owners and editors for 16 days. Accordingly, as Gilliland explained, "for *The Patriot & Union* it was more than just politics—it was personal."

Moreover, the "silly remarks" putdown appeared in an editorial decrying the politicization of the cemetery program. Lincoln and the other "heartless" speakers, the editorial said, were "coldly calculating the political advantages which might be derived" from this "panorama" staged "more for [Lincoln's] benefit and the benefit of his party than for the glory of the nation and the honor of the dead."

That's harsh but not groundless. The Gettysburg appearance marked the beginning of Lincoln's reelection campaign, according to scholars. It brought him together with leading political figures from three crucial states, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York.

Finally, *The Patriot & Union* editorial applied the "silly remarks" characterization to Lincoln's "little speeches"—plural. The judgment seems to encompass not just the Gettysburg Address but also the president's earlier remarks to supporters.

Responding to cheers the night before the dedication of the cemetery, Lincoln emerged from the Gettysburg house where he was staying, thanked the crowd, and half-apologetically said he had no speech prepared and didn't think it prudent to speak off the cuff. "In my position it is somewhat important that I should not say any foolish things," he observed.

Someone in the crowd shouted, "If you can help it!"

Lincoln continued, "It very often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing at all. Believing that it is my present condition this evening, I must beg of you to excuse me from addressing you further."

Perhaps "silly" was excessive, but the remarks weren't exactly magisterial.

Much of the commentary on the "silly

remarks" editorial, including the paper's own tongue-in-cheek correction, seems animated by what the historian E. P. Thompson called "the enormous condescension of posterity." The rock-heads of 1863 had their reasons.

SPOOKED

When lawyers get wired

During three decades on the CIA's legal staff, John Rizzo faced a modest but recurrent frustration: the agency's requirement that newly hired attorneys pass a lie detector test. In *Company Man: Thirty Years of Controversy and Crisis in the CIA* (Scribner), Rizzo writes that "lawyers are generally lousy at taking polygraph exams."

Law school teaches students to hunt for subtleties and nuances in judicial opinions, contracts, and elsewhere. "Lawyers instinctively pause to ponder and mentally parse the most basic, black-and-white questions before answering," Rizzo writes, "and when that happens during the polygraph exam, the needle on the polygraph machine tends to jump."

One apprehensive lawyer who kept failing would start off by refusing to answer one of the baseline questions: his place of birth. "He says he can't be sure," the examiner told Rizzo, "because he doesn't remember being there at the time."

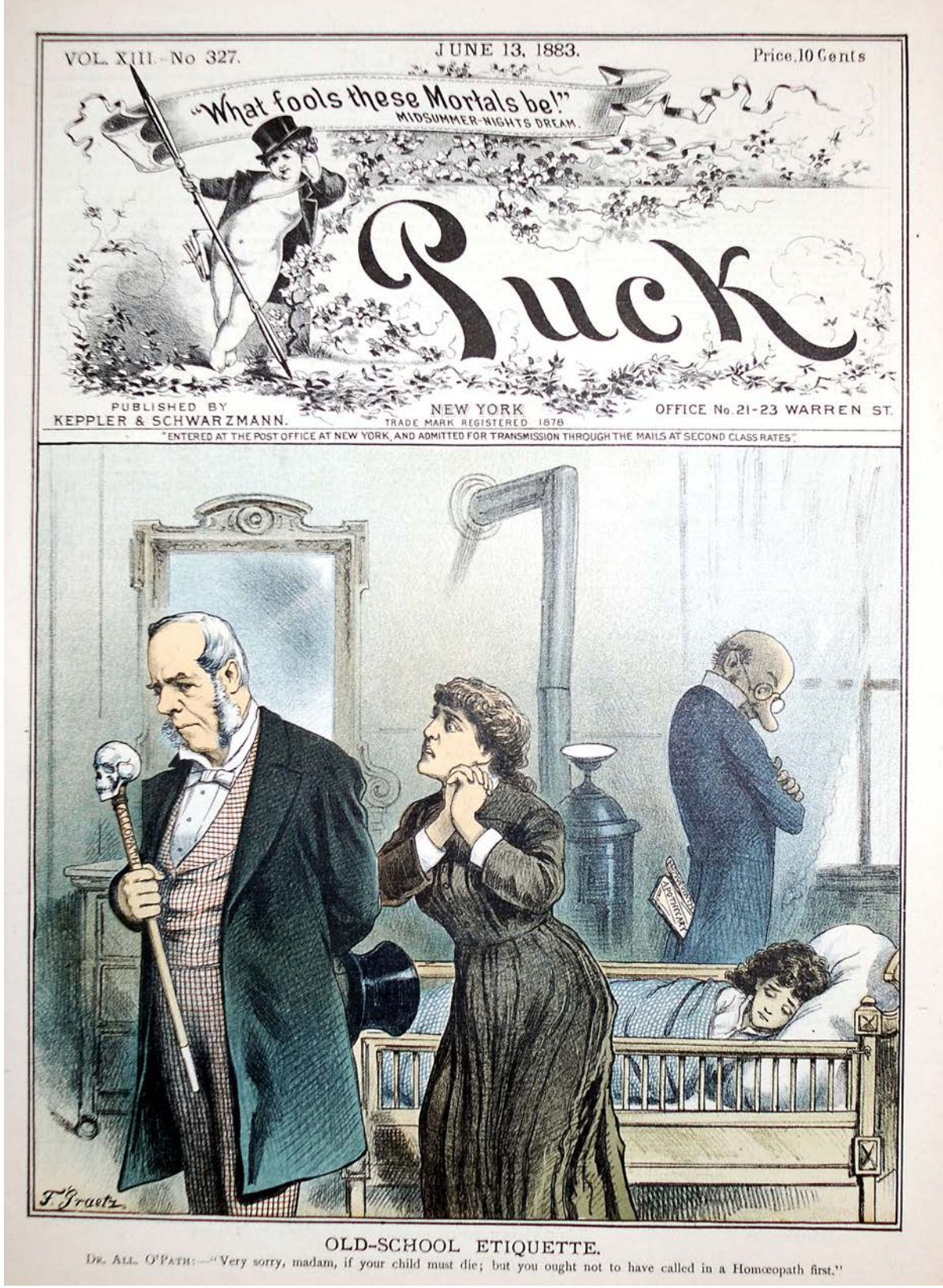
After several tries, the hypercautious new hire passed his polygraph exam. "The CIA Office of Security," Rizzo reports, "has always shown understanding in navigating the unique psyches of attorneys."

SMALL FAVORS

Lessons from quacks

"Sugar pill, sugar pill, never cured and never will!" Philadelphia medical students chanted this gibe at homeopaths in training in the 1890s. But according to Erika Janik, homeopathy—the theory that sickness can be treated by ingesting infinitesimal doses of substances diluted in liquid—may deserve an infinitesimal measure of credit for advancing mainstream medicine.

Homeopathy's founder, the German physician Samuel Hahnemann, rose to prominence during the 1831 cholera epidemic in Europe. He prescribed homeopathic doses of copper, camphor, and a flowering plant called veratrum. He also ordered the sick to be quarantined and the healthy to take frequent baths.


VOL. XIII.—No 327. JUNE 13, 1883. Price, 10 Cents

"What fools these Mortals be!" MIDSUMMER-NIGHTS DREAM.

Puck

PUBLISHED BY KEPPLER & SCHWARZMANN. NEW YORK TRADE MARK REGISTERED 1878 OFFICE No. 21-23 WARREN ST.

"ENTERED AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, AND ADMITTED FOR TRANSMISSION THROUGH THE MAILS AT SECOND CLASS RATES."

OLD-SCHOOL ETIQUETTE.

DR. ALL. O'PATH:—"Very sorry, madam, if your child must die; but you ought not to have called in a Homœopath first."

THE ART ARCHIVE AT ART RESOURCE, NY

Homeopathy once presented a healthy challenge to traditional medicine, as illustrated in this 1883 *Puck Magazine* cartoon. Homeopaths encouraged good nutrition and exercise as well as dialogue between patient and practitioner at a time when most doctors did not.

In *Marketplace of the Marvelous: The Strange Origins of Modern Medicine* (Beacon Press), Janik explains that Hahnemann's quarantine and hygiene directives slowed the spread of the disease. The copper, camphor, and veratrum did nothing, but the solution in which they were administered saved some patients from fatal dehydration. Regular doctors, meanwhile, were bleeding and purging their patients, which exacerbated dehydration and often hastened death.

Homeopathy didn't cure cholera, but, as Janik notes, it was more faithful to the ancient directive, "First, do no harm," than the mainstream medicine of the era. Some traditional doctors even conceded that they had learned from the pseudoscience. Even as he dismissed homeopathy as an "ineffable delusion," the New York physician Dan King credited it with demonstrating that patients are sometimes better off with little or no treatment. "Henceforth," King predicted in his 1858 book *Quackery Unmasked*, "the physician will lay a gentler hand upon his patient."

Homeopaths were ahead of their time in other respects too, according to Janik. They led the way in stressing the importance of diet, exercise, and hygiene.

They established a professional association in 1844, three years before the launch of the American Medical Association. Homeopathic schools admitted women decades before regular medical schools began doing so.

Women accounted for nearly two-thirds of homeopathic patients, too. Homeopaths wanted a full catalog of symptoms, emotional as well as physical. "For many women," Janik writes, "this attention during exam was the first time medicine validated their feelings and experiences of their own bodies." The pioneering feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the writer Louisa May Alcott relied on homeopathic remedies, and homeopathy makes an appearance in Alcott's *Little Women*.

Nineteenth-century homeopathy, it seems, worked better in practice than in theory.

CITIZEN BANE

The Know-Nothings always win

In the United States, democratic theory suffers from an ineluctable weakness: the voter. Most Americans can't name the three branches of their government. Just four percent of them can identify two candidates for their district's congressional seat. And about a third believe that Karl Marx's injunction "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" appears in the Constitution.

As those unwitting Marxists might put it, what is to be done?

Don't expect miracles, Ilya Somin writes in *Democracy and Political Ignorance: Why Smaller Government Is Smarter* (Stanford Univ. Press). Education levels have risen, but political knowledge has remained about the same. Indeed, some evidence indicates that high school graduates of the 1940s knew as much about politics as college graduates of the 1990s.

Moreover, political ignorance has endured despite plummeting information costs. Cable TV brings Congress into the home, and anybody with a smartphone has more data at hand than the best-educated American of the 1940s. But the voters who watch C-Span and read *Politico* tend to be well informed to start with. When it comes to political information, the bottleneck is demand, not supply.

Even if a panacea did exist, Somin, a law professor at George Mason University, is skeptical about whether it would

be adopted. Elected officials may "lack strong incentives to enact measures that will increase knowledge levels and potentially make their own reelection less likely." For their part, uninformed voters are unlikely to rise up and demand change. "Political ignorance," he writes, "could turn out to be a major obstacle to its own alleviation."

After one of Adlai Stevenson's failed campaigns for the presidency in the 1950s, a supporter tried to console him. He may have lost the election, she said, but he had succeeded in educating the country.

"Yes," replied Stevenson, "but a lot of people flunked the exam."

—Stephen Bates

HOOVER INSTITUTION ARCHIVES, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Samizdat, the practice of secretly publishing banned manuscripts in the Soviet Union, produced this easily concealed copy of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*, a three-volume work circulated in the early 1970s that described the extent and horror of the Soviet concentration camp system.

BOOKS, GADGETS, AND FREEDOM

Mario Vargas Llosa was one of several Latin American and Soviet novelists who came to the Wilson Center as visiting scholars during the politically tumultuous decades at the end of the 20th century. In 2010 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for "his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat." In this essay from the *WQ*'s Spring 1987 issue, Vargas Llosa reflected on freedom's intimate connection to literary imagination.

BY **MARIO VARGAS LLOSA**

By MARIO VARGAS LLOSA

BOOKS MEAN IDEAS, WORDS, FANTASY, the practice of intelligence. Nothing has pushed forward cultural life as much as the invention of printing, nor has anything contributed more to its democratization. From Gutenberg's times until today, the book has been the best propeller and depositor of knowledge, as well as an irreplaceable source of pleasure.

However, to many its future is uncertain. I recall with anguish a lecture I heard at Cambridge a few years ago. It was entitled "Literacy Is Doomed," and its thesis was that the alphabetic culture, the one based on writing and books, is perishing. According to the lecturer, audio-visual culture will soon replace it. The written word, and whatever it represents, is already an anachronism since the more avant-garde and urgent knowledge required for the experience of our time is transmitted and stored not in books but in machines and has signals and not letters as its tools.

The lecturer had spent two weeks in Mexico, where he had traveled everywhere, and even in the underground he had no difficulty, though he spoke no Spanish, because the entire system of instructions in the Mexican underground consists of nothing but arrows, lights, and figures. This way of communication is more universal, he explained, for it overcomes, for instance, language barriers, a problem congenital to the alphabetic system.

The lecturer maintained that all Third World countries, instead of persisting in those costly campaigns aimed at teaching their illiterate masses how to read and write, should introduce them to what will be the primary source of knowledge: the handling of machines.

The formula that the proud speaker used with a defying wink still rings in my ears: "not books but gadgets." And, as a consolation to all those who might be saddened by the prospect of an illiterate world, he reminded us that the alphabetic period in human history had in any case been short-lived. The lecturer did not think the alphabetic culture would totally vanish; nor did he wish it to do so. He forecast that the culture of the book would survive in certain university and social enclaves for the entertainment and benefit of the marginal group interested in producing and consuming it. The exponent of this thesis—which I have outlined very roughly—was not Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian prophet

who said that the book would "die" by 1980. (In fact, in 1980 it was McLuhan and his now forgotten Center for Culture and Technology that died.) The speaker was Sir Edmund Leach, eminent British social anthropologist, then provost of King's College. Coming from a distinguished mandarin of the alphabetic culture of our time, such statements should not be taken lightly. It is true that for many people the written word is becoming more and more dispensable. Books are less important even to the literate people of today (considering the time they devote to them and the effect books have on their lives) than they were to the literate people of the past.

We must be appalled at this, because although I doubt the prophecy of Professor Leach will come true, if it does it will be a disaster for humanity. Together with the books, and their writers and readers, something else will vanish: the culture of freedom.

MY PESSIMISM IS BASED ON TWO certainties. First, audio-visual culture is infinitely more easily controlled, manipulated, and degraded by power than is the written word. Because of the solitude in which it is born, the speed at which it can be reproduced and circulated, and its lasting mark on people's conscience, the written word has put up a stubborn resistance against being enslaved. With its demise, the submission of minds to power—to the powers—could be total.

Audio-visual culture is infinitely more easily controlled, manipulated, and degraded by power than is the written word.

Second, the audio-visual product tends to limit imagination, to dull sensibility, and to create passive minds. I am not a retrograde, allergic to audio-visual culture. On the contrary. After literature I love nothing more than the cinema, and I deeply enjoy a good TV program. But even in the few countries such as England where TV has reached a high level of artistic creativity, the average TV program, that which sets the pattern, attempts to embrace the widest possible audience by appealing to the lowest common denominator.

The nature of culture—either literate or audio-visual, free or enslaved—does not stem from historical determination, from the blind evolution of science.

The decisive factor will always be man's choice. If books and gadgets are caught in a deadly fight and the latter defeat the former, the responsibility will lie with those who chose to allow it to happen. And that may be their last choice.

In the specific field in which Homer and Shakespeare operated, that of artistic creation, what we would call "permissibility" was almost absolute.

But I do not think this Orwellian nightmare will really occur. Fortunately for us writers and readers, our fate is linked to that of freedom, that illness or vice caught by humanity rather late in history that affects a good part of mankind in an incurable way.

Even the earliest stirrings of the literary imagination are intimately bound up with freedom, and, in fact, the existence of such a connection is a necessary precondition for the timelessness of a literary work. Consider the *peripeteia* of the gods and the men of Ancient Greece, which a blind poet recited 3,000 years ago and which still dazzles us today. Just like those ancestors of our culture who heard them for the first time sung out by the rhapsodies, we too are vicariously made to experience those ceremonies of passion and adventure that are eagerly desired by the human soul of every civilization.

The fire that Shakespeare lit when he recreated in his tragedies and comedies the Elizabethan universe, from the plebeian street gossip with its fresco of picturesque types and its rich vulgarity to the refined astuteness of the struggle for power of rulers and warriors or the delicacies and torments of love and the feast of desire, still burns every time those stories materialize before us on a stage.

This miracle would not have been possible if the old poets from the beginnings of Greek civilization and the English playwright had not enjoyed, apart from their marvelous command of language and an incandescent imagination, the possibility of giving free rein to their private phantoms, letting them move around as they wished and submitting to their dictates when confronted with the papyrus or a piece of paper.

The civilizations to which both of them belonged were repressive ones that managed to maintain themselves thanks to discrimination and the exploitation of the poor and the weak. But in the specific

field in which Homer and Shakespeare operated, that of artistic creation, what we, making use of a modem concept, would call "permissibility" was almost absolute.

To the Greek, the poet was a spokesman of the gods, an intermediary from the other world in whom the artistic and religious values entwined in an indissoluble manner. How could a culture that, unlike ours, did not separate literature and art from morality and religion, the spirit from the body, have hindered the work of a man whose function was that of a priest and a seer as well as that of an illusionist? To that unconditional freedom that the poet enjoyed the Greek culture owes its particular development, that evolution that allowed it both to attain a prodigious richness of invention and knowledge in the field of ideas, art, and literature and to fix a certain pattern of beauty and thought that changed the history of the world, imposing upon it a rationality from which the entire technical and scientific progress of the West as well as the gradual humanization of society were to derive.

The triumph of reason followed the triumph of liberty. Perhaps for the first time in the course of human history the poet was not a man simply in charge of putting rhythm and music to that which already existed—the legends and collective myths, the enthroned religion—and of illustrating in fables the established morality, but an independent individual, left to his own devices, authorized to explore the unknown using imagination, introspection, desire, and reason to open the doors of the city to his private ghosts.

Shakespeare's genius could not have flourished without the unlimited freedom he had to show human passions (as Dr. Johnson wrote). The Tudor era, far from tolerant, was despotic and brutal. A close eye was kept on people's religious behavior, and any sign of heterodoxy on the part of Catholics or Puritans was punished with prison, torture, or death. But drama was considered a vulgar and plebeian amusement, too far below the world of salons, academies, and libraries where the prevailing culture was produced and preserved, to be worthy of the punctilious control that was exerted over religious or political texts, for example.

Power, in the age of Elizabeth I, prohibited English historical works and also shut down theaters on several occasions. But, fortunately, the dramatists were disdained and left in peace, so that the theater of London was the only place where the common man could hear direct and honest commentaries about life.

No one, not even his contemporary Ben Jonson, who did get himself into trouble with the authorities because of his writings, made better use than Shakespeare of this accidental privilege—the freedom to create—granted to dramatists in Elizabethan England.

The result is that fresco of man and his demons—political, social, religious, or sexual—that dazzles and enlightens us because of its variety, subtlety, and insight into the complexity of human nature. In the 37 theatrical works of Shakespeare, the stiff symmetry that had served since the beginning of the Christian era to catalogue man and the human actions—whether good or bad, saint or sinner, dissolute or chaste, generous or greedy—was pulverized.

AS IN LITERATURE, AS IN ALMOST ALL fields of human affairs, freedom awakens in an unforeseen way, by accident or through the negligence of the dominant culture that fails to legislate or organize certain areas of activity. Thanks to this exceptional privilege, individual initiative can copiously manifest itself there. The result is always, sooner or later, the same as we have seen incarnated in the works of Homer or Shakespeare: creative impetus, winds of change.

Does this mean that once a political, moral, or religious censorship vanishes, genius immediately flourishes? Of course not. It only means that when freedom does not exist or is faint, human creativity shrinks and literature and art become poor.

Freedom awakens in an unforeseen way, by accident or through the negligence of the dominant culture that fails to legislate or organize certain areas of activity.

Freedom of creation does not guarantee genius: It is merely the propitious ground in which it can germinate. In activities so distant from literature as industry and commerce, the eruptions of liberty, unleashed by circumstances foreign to the will of power, also produced such transcendental changes in social life as those that derived, in the world of intellect and sensibility, from the great artistic creations. A remarkable study by Professor Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism* (1967–79), devoted to the history of the Western world between the 15th and

18th centuries through the production of objects, tools, techniques, and exchange, instructs us on the astonishing mutation that the apparition of free trade and its stage, the market, brought about in society.

The notion of the sovereign individual is in fact very exotic and recent, limited to one civilization, in the course of a history in which a collectivist vision always prevailed.

The consequences are similar to those produced by freedom in art or science: energy, creativity, development of new techniques, proliferation of industries, gradual collapse of religious culture and growth of rationality, increase of communication between people and countries, weakening of the old social hierarchies established by name, title, or military function, and their replacement by new hierarchies determined by ownership and economic function. The blossoming of the city, the replacement of rural civilization by an urban one, is one result of this opening and multiplication of markets. But the most decisive consequence of the acceleration of history provoked by free production and exchange is the rise of the individual.

We tend to forget that this notion of the sovereign individual is in fact very exotic and recent, limited to one civilization, in the course of a history in which a collectivist vision always prevailed, albeit in different forms. Man had previously been not an individual but part of a herd, an undifferentiated mass, an anonymous group stamped with the feature of servitude.

It is only in modern times that man has emancipated himself from the gregarious placenta to which he had been tied since prehistoric times. This happened when the proliferation of uncontrolled economic, social, and artistic activities, in which the spontaneity and fantasy of the individual could flow with no barriers, encouraged the evolution of philosophical and political thinking all the way to that notion that breaks with the entire historical tradition of humanity: that of individual sovereignty. The ideas of social justice, egalitarian utopias, the rights of man, and, of course, the theories and practice of democracy, are the most fertile seeds of that doctrine that made the individual the center of the universe.

Reaching that point—the vision of the individual as an entity entitled to rights and duties around whom communal life must be organized—is without doubt the ethical peak of human history, which Benedetto Croce defined as the great achievement of liberty.

All civilizations and cultures have something to be proud of; they can all boast of having enriched—some less, some more, others a lot—the arts, technology, and the sciences. It is also possible to trace, in each one of them, here or there, in limited or abundant doses, the practice of freedom. But those enclaves in which individual initiative and whim could be exercised without restraint were never as numerous and constant as in the West.

This probably accounts for the West's might, its growth, and the strength with which it imposed itself, overcame or transubstantiated other cultures with its own customs, beliefs, institutions, and values, and the fact that, little by little, sometimes through force, sometimes through commerce, sometimes through both combined, it managed to destroy, assimilate, or impregnate these other cultures.

Of course, the fact that freedom has been the motor of social and material progress must not make us forget the tribute of misfortunes that it has imposed on man. Liberty meant, if not abolition of injustice and political abuse, at least its radical reduction and the awareness of the need to fight such abuses. But we must bear in mind the high cost we have to pay in order to preserve it.

Those enclaves in which individual initiative and whim could be exercised without restraint were never as numerous and constant as in the West.

In the economic field, the same liberty that has impelled progress is also the source of inequalities and can open up huge chasms between those who have a lot and those who have nothing. The curiosity and inventiveness that it fuels have allowed man to tame illness; explore the abyss of the sea, of matter, and of the body; and, transgressing the law of gravity, to sail the skies. But it has also allowed him to devise weapons that make any modern state a potential trigger for the kind of devastation and holocaust that makes the efforts of Nero or Genghis Khan seem like playground amusements.

It is not only the sleep of reason that can engender monsters, as Goya wrote in one of his etchings. Lucid, vigilant reason, when it flows freely, is just as capable of formulating impeccable theories on the inequality of human races; justifying slavery; proving the inferiority of women, the black, or the yellow, the innate evil of the Jew; legitimizing the extermination of the heretic; and supporting conquest, colonialism, and war between nations or classes. In spite of all its dangers, of all the catastrophes that its use and abuse can produce, there is no doubt that most individuals and peoples choose liberty whenever they have the chance. When they do not, they seem ready to face the worst sacrifices to achieve it.

There are, obviously, exceptions. Its enemies tend to be transitory, enemies only until they realize that when freedom vanishes, the poverty and grayness of life are such that they became too high a price for the supposed benefits of suppressing it: law and order, in the case of authoritarian dictatorships; the abolition of classes and the establishment of collectivist equality in the case of totalitarian ones; or the imposition of a dogma, in the case of religious dictatorships. Are the people of Iran satisfied with the theocratic despotism of the imams that has already caused in that country more death and suffering than the corrupted autocracy of the shah? Apparently, yes. There is no other way to explain the apparent stability of the regime, nor can one conceive otherwise of the burning zeal with which children, men, and elderly people of ancient Persia run into that nonsensical slaughter of the war against Iraq. Religious faith, if fanatically followed, can make of liberty something worthless and even give emotional fulfillment, an illusion of happiness that freedom can hardly match. If we define happiness as a state of harmony between man's feelings and the reality in which he lives, yes, no doubt a people under chains can be happier—or less unhappy—than a free people.

Intellectuals, too, have demonstrated their impatience with freedom. It is the intellectual, after all, who gave birth to those theories that attempt to show that freedom is relative, a formal privilege linked to power and fortune, a mirage that the dominant minorities use to disguise the exploitation of the masses. Curiously enough, once that liberty they call fictitious and fallacious is suppressed, either by a right-wing military dictatorship or by a Marxist revolution, and once they discover that they are the first victims when it fades away, that without this mirage their own work becomes

a frustration, and that the cause of true justice does not move forward an inch without it, the artists and intellectuals turn into its most zealous defenders.

The Latin American people in their political choices have generally shown greater foresight than a goodly number of our intellectuals.

This is a phenomenon of our time that should make us stop and think: In free countries, intellectuals and artists committed to totalitarianism abound, while in societies under repression, either from the Left or the Right, intellectuals and artists are at the forefront of the struggle for freedom. (Chile and Poland are good examples.)

In Europe, the magnetism with which the Marxist-Leninist utopia attracted so many intellectuals after World War II has faded under the corrosive effect of the testimonies by Soviet dissidents about the reality of the Gulag and the nomenklatura. Instructive, too, is the rebellion of East European workers against regimes that have established dictatorships in the name of a future classless society and have improved thought censorship and control of the individual to levels of artistic perfection. The European intellectual is today, on the whole, a lucid critic of totalitarianism and has resigned himself to admitting that the mediocre liberal democracies—so boring and lacking in sex appeal compared to the splendid revolutionary apocalypse—provide, despite their handicaps, more humane ways of life, and make societies not only freer but also more prosperous.

This admission, nonetheless, is often contradicted by the solidarity of the European intellectual with the totalitarian cause in Third World countries—as if what is bad for the English or Hungarians, or the French or the Dutch—could be good for Cubans or Peruvians. Or as if their misery and exploitation made men in underdeveloped countries ineligible for political freedom. The truth is that the Latin American people in their political choices have generally shown greater foresight than a goodly number of our intellectuals.

Yes, there are monstrous inequalities; in our countries poverty is a recurrent nightmare, all the way from the Rio Grande to the Straits of Magellan; and as far as education, health, employment, and justice go, there is much to

accomplish. But, at the same time, Latin Americans say that, unlike what happened only a few decades ago in Europe, or what happens today in the Middle or Far East and in Africa, our people have seldom succumbed to the fascination of despotism. Whenever asked, they have resolutely chosen freedom.

THE LESSON IS ALL TOO CLEAR. THE first to learn it should be those who pretend to write in the name of the masses. Despite hunger, economic injustice, and misfortune, our people have not lost their appetite for liberty and are not prepared to follow those who would so rashly do away with it.

But what part, specifically, can books play in the continuing struggle for freedom, particularly today, when that struggle involves nothing less than the potential destruction of all civilized life? The facts are grim, however we weigh them. Consider one example. On one side of the border that separates Western from Eastern Europe, 300 Soviet SS-20 missiles lie in underground shelters. Each one contains three independent nuclear warheads and has an impact precision of 200 to 300 meters over a range of 3,000 kilometers. On the other side of the frontier, in the NATO bases, 108 Pershing II and 464 cruise missiles have been set up, capable of hitting any target seven or eight minutes after being launched.

This somber perspective should make us consider the different ways in which science and literature have evolved. It is only in science, after all, that the notion of "progress" has a distinct chronological sense: the progressive discovery of knowledge that made previous discoveries obsolete and brought better living conditions for man and increased his domination of nature. The advance of science, however, while it was pushing away illness, ignorance, and scarcity, accentuated the vulnerability of human existence through the perfection of weaponry.

There is a law here that admits of no exceptions. Each period of scientific apogee has been preceded by the development of military technology and has seen wars in which the slaughter also progressed in terms of the number of victims and in the efficiency of destruction. From the skull smashed by the primitive anthropoid to the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, there is a long history in which scientific development seems unable to achieve an equivalent progress in moral behavior.

Any notion of "progress" is questionable in literature. *The Divine Comedy* may be better or worse than *The Odyssey*, and a reader may prefer Joyce's *Ulysses* to

Don Quixote. But no great literary work erases one that appeared 10 centuries before. This, however, is exactly what happens in the field of science, where chemistry abolished alchemy (or turned it into literature). The spirit of destruction, seemingly inherent in the creative ability of human beings, is not absent in literature. On the contrary, physical and moral violence is a permanent presence in poems, plays, and novels in all ages.

There is a difference, of course. If the SS-20s and Pershing IIs are launched, the human game as we know it is over. On the other hand, all the literary devastations and bloody orgies have produced only shakes, thrills, yawns, and a few orgasms among readers.

What I am trying to say is that since there is no way of eradicating man's destructive drive—which is the price he pays for the faculty of invention—we should try to direct it toward books instead of gadgets. Literature can mitigate this drive without much risk. We should reconsider the impulse that turned science into the tool of progress, relegating poetry, stories, drama, and the novel to the secondary role of mere entertainment.

Literature is more than this. It is a reality where man can happily empty the obscure recesses of his spirit, giving

Physical and moral violence are a permanent presence in poems, plays, and novels in all ages.

free rein to his worst appetites, dreams, and obsessions, to those demons that go hand in hand with the angels inside him and that, if they were materialized, would make life impossible. In the ambiguous mist of literature, the spirit of destruction can operate with impunity. Unlike the scientific civilization that has made us more fragile than our ancestors were before they learned to fight the tiger, under a literary civilization more impractical, passive, and dreamy men would be born. But at least these men would be less dangerous to their fellows than we have grown to be since we voted for the gadgets and against the book. Let us bear this in mind if we ever get a second choice. ■

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA, the 2010 Nobel laureate in literature, is the author of novels, plays, and other writings, including *Conversation in the Cathedral* (1975), *The War of the End of the World* (1984), and *The Feast of the Goat* (2001). He was a Wilson Center fellow in 1980.

CHOO YOUN-KONG / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

Looting was the least of the injuries suffered by Indonesia's ethnic Chinese minority in the riots that followed the 1998 collapse of the Suharto regime. Indonesia was left reeling from the subsequent capital flight of $40-to-$100 billion.

A WORLD ON THE EDGE

With the debate about globalization focused on economics and politics, Amy Chua raised an alarm in our Autumn 2002 issue about the dangerous escalation of ethnic tensions in many countries caused by the triumph of free-market democracy. Chua later wrote *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (2011).

BY **AMY CHUA**

By AMY CHUA

ONE BEAUTIFUL BLUE MORNING IN September 1994, I received a call from my mother in California. In a hushed voice, she told me that my Aunt Leona, my father's twin sister, had been murdered in her home in the Philippines, her throat slit by her chauffeur. My mother broke the news to me in our native Hokkien Chinese dialect. But "murder" she said in English, as if to wall off the act from the family through language.

The murder of a relative is horrible for anyone, anywhere. My father's grief was impenetrable; to this day, he has not broken his silence on the subject. For the rest of the family, though, there was an added element of disgrace. For the Chinese, luck is a moral attribute, and a lucky person would never be murdered. Like having a birth defect, or marrying a Filipino, being murdered is shameful.

My three younger sisters and I were very fond of my Aunt Leona, who was petite and quirky and had never married. Like many wealthy Filipino Chinese, she had all kinds of bank accounts in Honolulu, San Francisco, and Chicago. She visited us in the United States regularly. She and my father—Leona and Leon—were close, as only twins can be. Having no children of her own, she doted on her nieces and showered us with trinkets. As we grew older, the trinkets became treasures. On my 10th birthday she gave me 10 small diamonds, wrapped up in toilet paper. My aunt loved diamonds and bought them up by the dozen, concealing them in empty Elizabeth Arden face moisturizer jars, some right on her bathroom shelf. She liked accumulating things. When we ate at McDonald's, she stuffed her Gucci purse with free ketchups.

On my 10th birthday she gave me 10 small diamonds, wrapped up in toilet paper.

According to the police report, my Aunt Leona, "a 58-year-old single woman," was killed in her living room with "a butcher's knife" at approximately 8 p.m. on September 12, 1994. Two of her maids were questioned, and they confessed that Nilo Abique, my aunt's chauffeur, had planned and executed the murder with their knowledge and

assistance. "A few hours before the actual killing, respondent [Abique] was seen sharpening the knife allegedly used in the crime." After the killing, "respondent joined the two witnesses and told them that their employer was dead. At that time, he was wearing a pair of bloodied white gloves and was still holding a knife, also with traces of blood." But Abique, the report went on to say, had "disappeared," with the warrant for his arrest outstanding. The two maids were released.

Why were they not more shocked that my aunt had been killed in cold blood?

Meanwhile, my relatives arranged a private funeral for my aunt in the prestigious Chinese cemetery in Manila where many of my ancestors are buried in a great, white-marble family tomb. According to the feng shui monks who were consulted, my aunt could not be buried with the rest of the family because of the violent nature of her death, lest more bad luck strike her surviving kin. So she was placed in her own smaller vault, next to—but not touching—the main family tomb.

After the funeral, I asked one of my uncles whether there had been any further developments in the murder investigation. He replied tersely that the killer had not been found. His wife explained that the Manila police had essentially closed the case.

I could not understand my relatives' almost indifferent attitude. Why were they not more shocked that my aunt had been killed in cold blood, by people who worked for her, lived with her, saw her every day? Why were they not outraged that the maids had been released? When I pressed my uncle, he was short with me. "That's the way things are here," he said. "This is the Philippines—not America."

My uncle was not simply being callous. As it turns out, my aunt's death was part of a common pattern. Hundreds of Chinese in the Philippines are kidnapped every year, almost invariably by ethnic Filipinos. Many victims, often children, are brutally murdered, even after ransom is paid. Other Chinese, like my aunt, are killed without a kidnapping, usually in connection with a robbery. Nor is it unusual that my aunt's killer was never apprehended. The police in the Philippines, all poor ethnic Filipinos themselves, are notoriously unmotivated in these cases. When asked by a Western journalist why it is so frequently the

Chinese who are targeted, one grinning Filipino policeman explained that it was because "they have more money."

MY FAMILY IS PART OF THE PHILIPpines' tiny but entrepreneurial and economically powerful Chinese minority. Although they constitute just one percent of the population, Chinese Filipinos control as much as 60 percent of the private economy, including the country's four major airlines and almost all of the country's banks, hotels, shopping malls, and big conglomerates. My own family in Manila runs a plastics conglomerate. Unlike taipans Lucio Tan, Henry Sy, or John Gokongwei, my relatives are only "third-tier" Chinese tycoons. Still, they own swaths of prime real estate and several vacation homes. They also have safe deposit boxes full of gold bars, each one roughly the size of a Snickers bar, but strangely heavy. I myself have such a gold bar. My Aunt Leona express-mailed it to me as a law school graduation present a few years before she died.

Since my aunt's murder, one childhood memory keeps haunting me. I was eight, staying at my family's splendid hacienda-style house in Manila. It was before dawn, still dark. Wide awake, I decided to get a drink from the kitchen. I must have gone down an extra flight of stairs, because I literally stumbled onto six male bodies. I had found the male servants' quarters, where my family's houseboys, gardeners, and chauffeurs—I sometimes imagine that Nilo Abique was among them—were sleeping on mats on a dirt floor. The place stank of sweat and urine. I was horrified.

Although they constitute just one percent of the population, Chinese Filipinos control as much as 60 percent of the private economy.

Later that day I mentioned the incident to my Aunt Leona, who laughed affectionately and explained that the servants—there were perhaps 20 living on the premises, all ethnic Filipinos—were fortunate to be working for our family. If not for their positions, they would be living among rats and open sewers, without a roof over their heads. A Filipino maid then walked in; I remember that she had a bowl of food for my aunt's Pekingese. My aunt took the bowl but kept talking as if the maid were

not there. The Filipinos, she continued—in Chinese, but plainly not caring whether the maid understood or not—were lazy and unintelligent and didn't really want to do much. If they didn't like working for us, they were free to leave at any time. After all, my aunt said, they were employees, not slaves.

Nearly two-thirds of the roughly 80 million ethnic Filipinos in the Philippines live on less than $2 a day. Forty percent spend their entire lives in temporary shelters. Seventy percent of all rural Filipinos own no land. Almost a third have no access to sanitation. But that's not the worst of it. Poverty alone never is. Poverty by itself does not make people kill. To poverty must be added indignity, hopelessness, and grievance. In the Philippines, millions of Filipinos work for Chinese; almost no Chinese work for Filipinos. The Chinese dominate industry and commerce at every level of society. Global markets intensify this dominance: When foreign investors do business in the Philippines, they deal almost exclusively with Chinese. Apart from a handful of corrupt politicians and a few aristocratic Spanish mestizo families, all of the Philippines' billionaires are of Chinese descent. By contrast, all menial jobs in the Philippines are filled by Filipinos. All peasants are Filipinos. All domestic servants and squatters are Filipinos. My relatives live literally walled off from the Filipino masses, in a posh, all-Chinese residential enclave, on streets named Harvard, Yale, Stanford, and Princeton. The entry points are guarded by armed private-security forces.

Each time I think of Nilo Abique—he was six-feet-two and my aunt was four-feet-eleven—I find myself welling up with a hatred and revulsion so intense it is actually consoling. But over time I have also had glimpses of how the vast majority of Filipinos, especially someone like Abique, must see the Chinese: as exploiters, foreign intruders, their wealth inexplicable, their superiority intolerable. I will never forget the entry in the police report for Abique's "motive for murder." The motive given was not robbery, despite the jewels and money the chauffeur was said to have taken. Instead, for motive, there was just one word—"revenge."

MY AUNT'S KILLING WAS JUST A pinprick in a world more violent than most of us have ever imagined. In America, we read about acts of mass slaughter and savagery—at first in faraway places, now coming closer home. We do not understand what connects

JEAN-MARC BOUJU / AP IMAGES

Rwandan refugees scramble to climb aboard a humanitarian agency's truck in 1995. Tens of thousands of majority Hutu died in Rwanda's 16-month ethnic conflagration; some 800,000 minority Tutsi were killed.

these acts. Nor do we understand the role we have played in bringing them about.

In the Serbian concentration camps of the early 1990s, the women prisoners were raped over and over, many times a day, often with broken bottles, often together with their daughters. The men, if they were lucky, were beaten to death as their Serbian guards sang national anthems; if they were not so fortunate, they were castrated or, at gunpoint, forced to castrate their fellow prisoners, sometimes with their own teeth. In all, thousands were tortured and executed.

My aunt's killing was just a pinprick in a world more violent than most of us have ever imagined.

In Rwanda in 1994, ordinary Hutus killed 800,000 Tutsis over a period of three months, typically hacking them to death with machetes. Bill Berkeley

writes in *The Graves Are Not Yet Full* (2001) that young children would come home to find their mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers on the living room floor, in piles of severed heads and limbs.

In Jakarta in 1998, screaming Indonesian mobs torched, smashed, and looted hundreds of Chinese shops and homes, leaving more than 2,000 dead. One who survived—a 14-year-old Chinese girl—later committed suicide by taking rat poison. She had been gang-raped and genitally mutilated in front of her parents.

In Israel in 1998, a suicide bomber driving a car packed with explosives rammed into a school bus filled with 34 Jewish children between the ages of six and eight. Over the next few years such incidents intensified, becoming daily occurrences and a powerful collective expression of Palestinian hatred. "We hate you," a senior aide to Yasir Arafat elaborated in April 2002. "The air hates you, the land hates you, the trees hate you, there is no purpose in your staying on this land."

On September 11, 2001, Middle Eastern terrorists hijacked four American airliners, intent on using them as piloted missiles. They destroyed the World Trade Center and the southwest side of the Pentagon, crushing or incinerating more than 3,000 people. "Americans, think! Why you are hated all over the world," proclaimed a banner held by Arab demonstrators.

There is a connection among these episodes apart from their violence. It lies in the relationship—increasingly, the explosive collision—among the three most powerful forces operating in the world today: markets, democracy, and ethnic hatred. There exists today a phenomenon—pervasive outside the West yet rarely acknowledged, indeed often viewed as taboo—that turns free market democracy into an engine of ethnic conflagration. I'm speaking of the phenomenon of market-dominant minorities: ethnic minorities who, for widely varying reasons, tend under market conditions to dominate economically, often to a startling extent, the "indigenous" majorities around them.

Market-dominant minorities can be found in every corner of the world. The Chinese are a market-dominant minority not just in the Philippines but throughout Southeast Asia. In 1998 Chinese Indonesians, only three percent of the population, controlled roughly 70 percent of Indonesia's private economy, including all of the country's largest conglomerates. In Myanmar (formerly Burma), entrepreneurial Chinese recently have taken over the economies of Mandalay and

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Open ethnic conflict is rare in "mixed blood" Latin America. But light-skinned minorities dominate many economies, and new leaders are rallying the discontented around their Indian roots.

Market-dominant minorities are the Achilles' heel of free-market democracy.

Yangon. Whites are a market-dominant minority in South Africa—and, in a more complicated sense, in Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, and much of Latin America. Lebanese are a market-dominant minority in West Africa, as are the Ibo in Nigeria. Croats were a market-dominant minority in the former Yugoslavia, as Jews almost certainly are in postcommunist Russia.

Market-dominant minorities are the Achilles' heel of free-market democracy. In societies with such a minority, markets and democracy favor not just different people or different classes but different ethnic groups. Markets concentrate wealth, often spectacular wealth, in the hands of the market-dominant minority, while democracy increases the political power

of the impoverished majority. In these circumstances, the pursuit of free-market democracy becomes an engine of potentially catastrophic ethnonationalism, pitting a frustrated "indigenous" majority, easily aroused by opportunistic, vote-seeking politicians, against a resented, wealthy ethnic minority. This conflict is playing out in country after country today, from Indonesia to Sierra Leone, from Zimbabwe to Venezuela, from Russia to the Middle East.

Since September 11, the conflict has been brought home to the United States. Americans are not an ethnic minority (although we are a national-origin minority, a close cousin). Nor is there democracy at the global level. Nevertheless, Americans today are everywhere perceived as the world's market-dominant minority, wielding outrageously disproportionate economic power relative to our numbers. As a result, we have become the object of the same kind of mass popular resentment that afflicts the Chinese of Southeast Asia, the whites of Zimbabwe, and other groups.

Global anti-Americanism has many causes. One of them, ironically, is the global spread of free markets and democracy. Throughout the world, global markets are bitterly perceived as reinforcing American wealth and dominance. At the same time, global populist and democratic movements give strength, legitimacy, and voice to the impoverished, frustrated, excluded masses of the world—in other words, precisely the people most susceptible to anti-American demagoguery. In more non-Western countries than Americans would care to admit, free and fair elections would bring to power antimarket, anti-American leaders. For the past 20 years, Americans have been grandly promoting both marketization and democratization throughout the world. In the process, we have directed at ourselves what the Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk calls "the anger of the damned."

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FREE-MARKET democracy and ethnic violence around the world is inextricably bound up with globalization. But the phenomenon of market-dominant minorities introduces complications that have escaped the view of both globalization's enthusiasts and its critics.

To a great extent, globalization consists of, and is fueled by, the unprecedented worldwide spread of markets and democracy. For more than two decades now, the American government, along with American consultants and business interests, has been vigorously promoting

free-market democracy throughout the developing and postcommunist worlds. Both directly and through powerful international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and World Trade Organization (WTO), it has helped bring capitalism and democratic elections to literally billions of people. At the same time, American multinationals, foundations, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have touched every corner of the world, bringing with them ballot boxes and Burger Kings, hip-hop and Hollywood, banking codes and American-drafted constitutions.

The prevailing view among globalization's supporters is that markets and democracy are a kind of universal elixir for the multiple ills of underdevelopment. Market capitalism is the most efficient economic system the world has ever known. Democracy is the fairest political system the world has ever known, and the one most respectful of individual liberty. Together, markets and democracy will gradually transform the world into a community of prosperous, war-shunning nations, and individuals into liberal, civic-minded citizens and consumers. Ethnic hatred, religious zealotry, and other "backward" aspects of underdevelopment will be swept away.

Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times* has been a brilliant proponent of this dominant view. In his best-selling book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (1999), he reproduced a Merrill Lynch ad that said "the spread of free markets and democracy around the world is permitting more people everywhere to turn their aspirations into achievements," erasing "not just geographical borders but also human ones." Globalization, Friedman elaborated, "tends to turn all friends and enemies into 'competitors.'" Friedman also proposed his "Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention," which claims that "no two countries that both have McDonald's have ever fought a war against each other." (Unfortunately, notes Yale University historian John Lewis Gaddis, "the United States and its NATO allies chose just that inauspicious moment to begin bombing Belgrade, where there was an embarrassing number of golden arches.")

For globalization's enthusiasts, the cure for group hatred and ethnic violence around the world is straightforward: more markets and more democracy. Thus, after the September 11 attacks, Friedman published an op-ed piece pointing to India and Bangladesh as good "role models" for the Middle East and citing their experience as a

solution to the challenges of terrorism and militant Islam: "Hello? Hello? There's a message here. It's democracy, stupid!"—". . . multiethnic, pluralistic, free-market democracy."

I believe, rather, that the global spread of markets and democracy is a principal aggravating cause of group hatred and ethnic violence throughout the non-Western world. In the numerous societies around the world that have a market-dominant minority, markets and democracy are not mutually reinforcing.

Because markets and democracy benefit different ethnic groups in such societies, the pursuit of free-market democracy produces highly unstable and combustible conditions. Markets concentrate enormous wealth in the hands of an "outsider" minority, thereby fomenting ethnic envy and hatred among often chronically poor majorities. In absolute terms, the majority may or may not be better off—a dispute that much of the globalization debate revolves around—but any sense of improvement is overwhelmed by its continuing poverty and the hated minority's extraordinary economic success. More humiliating still, market-dominant minorities, along with their foreign-investor partners, invariably come to control the crown jewels of the economy, often symbolic of the nation's patrimony and identity—oil in Russia and Venezuela, diamonds in South Africa, silver and tin in Bolivia, jade, teak, and rubies in Myanmar.

Introducing democracy under such circumstances does not transform voters into open-minded co-citizens in a national community. Rather, the competition for votes fosters the emergence of demagogues who scapegoat the resented minority and foment active ethnonationalist movements demanding that the country's wealth and identity be reclaimed by the "true owners of the nation." Even as America celebrated the global spread of democracy in the 1990s, the world's new political slogans told of more ominous developments: "Georgia for the Georgians," "Eritreans out of Ethiopia," "Kenya for Kenyans," "Venezuela for Pardos," "Kazakhstan for Kazakhs," "Serbia for Serbs," "Hutu Power," "Jews out of Russia." Vadim Tudor, a candidate in Romania's 2001 presidential election, was not quite so pithy. "I'm Vlad the Impaler," he declared, and referring to the historically dominant Hungarian minority, he promised, "We will hang them directly by their Hungarian tongue!"

When free-market democracy is pursued in the presence of a market-dominant minority, the result,

almost invariably, is backlash. Typically, it takes one of three forms. The first is a backlash against markets that targets the market-dominant minority's wealth. The second is an attack against democracy by forces favorable to the market-dominant minority. And the third is violence, sometimes genocidal, directed against the market-dominant minority itself.

Zimbabwe today is a vivid illustration of the first kind of backlash—an ethnically targeted antimarket reaction. For several years now, President Robert Mugabe has encouraged the violent seizure of 10 million acres of white-owned commercial farmland. As one Zimbabwean explained, "The land belongs to us. The foreigners should not own land here. There is no black Zimbabwean who owns land in England. Why should any European own land here?" Mugabe has been more explicit: "Strike fear in the heart of the white man, our real enemy." Most of the country's white "foreigners" are third-generation Zimbabweans. They are just one percent of the population, but they have for generations controlled 70 percent of the country's best land, largely in the form of highly productive 3,000-acre tobacco and sugar farms.

Watching Zimbabwe's economy take a free fall as a result of the mass land grab, the United States and United Kingdom, together with dozens of human rights groups, urged President Mugabe to step down and called resoundingly for "free and fair elections." But the idea that democracy is the answer to Zimbabwe's problems is breathtakingly naive. Perhaps Mugabe would have lost the 2002 elections in the absence of foul play. But even if that's so, it's important to remember that Mugabe himself is a product of democracy. The hero of Zimbabwe's black liberation movement and a master manipulator of the masses, he swept to victory in the closely monitored elections of 1980 by promising to expropriate "stolen" white land. Repeating that promise has helped him win every election since. Moreover, Mugabe's land-seizure campaign was another product of the democratic process. It was deftly timed in anticipation of the 2000 and 2002 elections, and deliberately calculated to mobilize popular support for Mugabe's teetering regime. According to *The Economist*, 95 percent of Zimbabwe's largely white-owned commercial farms are now earmarked for confiscation without compensation, and many farmers have been ordered off the land.

IN THE CONTEST BETWEEN AN ECONOMICALLY powerful ethnic minority and a numerically powerful impoverished majority, the majority does not always prevail. Rather than a backlash against the market, another possible outcome is a backlash against democracy that favors the market-dominant minority. Examples of this dynamic are extremely common. The world's most notorious cases of "crony capitalism" have all involved partnerships between a market-dominant ethnic minority and a cooperative autocrat. Ferdinand Marcos's dictatorship in the Philippines, for example, sheltered and profited from the country's wealthy Chinese before he was driven from office in 1986. In Kenya, President Daniel arap Moi, who had once warned Africans to "beware of bad Asians," is sustained by a series of "business arrangements" with a handful of local Indian tycoons. And the bloody tragedy of Sierra Leone's recent history can be traced in significant part to the regime of President Siaka Stevens, who converted his elective office into a dictatorship during the early 1970s and promptly formed a shadow alliance with five of the country's Lebanese diamond dealers.

In Sierra Leone, as in many other countries, independence (which came in 1961) had been followed by a series of antimarket measures and policies that took direct aim at market-dominant minorities. People of "European or Asiatic origin," including the Lebanese, were denied citizenship. Stevens's approach thus represented a complete about-face—a pattern that's been repeated in country after country. Stevens protected the economically powerful Lebanese, and in exchange, they—with their business networks in Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States—worked economic wonders, generating enormous profits and kicking back handsome portions to Stevens and other officials. (It is just such webs of preexisting relationships with the outside world that have given economically dominant minorities their extraordinary advantages in the current era of globalization.) Stevens was succeeded by other autocrats, who struck essentially the same deal while also successfully courting foreign investment and aid. In 1989 and 1990, the International Monetary Fund championed a "bold and decisive" free-market reform package that included a phase-out of public subsidies for rice and other commodities. Already living in indescribable poverty, Sierra Leoneans watched the cost of rice nearly double, and many blamed the Lebanese. In any event, the rebel

leader Foday Sankoh had little trouble finding recruits for his insurgency. Some 75,000 died in the ensuing chaos.

The third and most ferocious kind of backlash is majority-supported violence aimed at eliminating a market-dominant minority. Two recent examples are the "ethnic cleansing" of Croats in the former Yugoslavia and the mass slaughter of Tutsi in Rwanda. In both cases, sudden, unmediated democratization encouraged the rise of megalomaniacal ethnic demagogues and released long-suppressed hatreds against a disproportionately prosperous ethnic minority.

Of course, markets and democracy were not the only causes of these acts of genocide, but they were neglected factors. In the former Yugoslavia, for example, the Croats, along with the Slovenes, have long enjoyed a strikingly higher standard of living than the Serbs and other ethnic groups. Croatia and Slovenia are largely Catholic, with geographical proximity and historical links to Western Europe, while the Eastern Orthodox Serbs inhabit the rugged south and lived for centuries under the thumb of the Ottoman Empire. By the 1990s, per capita income in northern Yugoslavia had risen to three times that in the south. The sudden coming of Balkan electoral democracy helped stir ancient enmities and resentments. In Serbia, the demagogue and future "ethnic cleanser" Slobodan Milosevic swept to power in 1990 as supporters declared to hysterical crowds, "We will kill Croats with rusty spoons because it will hurt more!" (In the same year, Franjo Tudjman won a landslide victory in Croatia preaching anti-Serb hatred; the subsequent mass killing of Croatia's Serbs shows that market-dominant minorities aren't always the *victims* of persecution.) In a now-famous speech delivered in March 1991—which contains a telling allusion to Croat and Slovene market dominance—Milosevic declared: "If we must fight, then my God we will fight. And I hope they will not be so crazy as to fight against us. *Because if we don't know how to work well or to do business*, at least we know how to fight well!" (Emphasis added.)

To their credit, critics of globalization have called attention to the grotesque imbalances that free markets produce. In the 1990s, writes Thomas Frank in *One Market Under God* (2000), global markets made "the corporation the most powerful institution on earth," transformed "CEOs as a class into one of the wealthiest elites of all time," and, from America to Indonesia, "forgot

about the poor with a decisiveness we hadn't seen since the 1920s." A host of strange bedfellows have joined Frank in his criticism of "the almighty market": American farmers and factory workers opposed to the North American Free Trade Agreement, environmentalists, the American Federation of Labor–Congress of Industrial Organizations, human rights activists, Third World advocates, and sundry other groups that protested in Seattle, Davos, Genoa, and New York City. Defenders of globalization respond, with some justification, that the world's poor would be even worse off without global marketization, and recent World Bank studies show that, with some important exceptions, including most of Africa, globalization's "trickle down" has benefited the poor as well as the rich in developing countries.

More fundamentally, however, Western critics of globalization, like their pro-globalization counterparts, have overlooked the ethnic dimension of market disparities. They tend to see wealth and poverty in terms of class conflict, not ethnic conflict. This perspective might make sense in the advanced Western societies, but the ethnic realities of the developing world are completely different from those of the West. Essentially, the anti-globalization movement asks for one thing: more democracy. At the 2002 World Social Forum in Brazil, Lori Wallach of Public Citizen rejected the label "anti-globalization" and explained that "our movement, really, is globally for democracy, equality, diversity, justice, and quality of life." Wallach has also warned that the WTO must "either bend to the will of the people worldwide or it will break." Echoing these voices are literally dozens of NGOs that call for "democratically empowering the poor majorities of the world." But unless democratization means something more than unrestrained majority rule, calling for democracy in the developing world can be shortsighted and even dangerous. Empowering the Hutu majority in Rwanda did not produce desirable consequences. Nor did empowering the Serbian majority in Serbia.

Critics of globalization are right to demand that more attention be paid to the enormous disparities of wealth created by global markets. But just as it is dangerous to view markets as the panacea for the world's poverty and strife, so too it is dangerous to see democracy as a panacea. Markets and democracy may well offer the best long-run economic and political hope for developing and postcommunist societies. In the short run, however, they're part of the problem.

IN THE WEST, TERMS SUCH AS "MARKET economy" and "market system" refer to a broad spectrum of economic systems based primarily on private property and competition, with government regulation and redistribution ranging from substantial (as in the United States) to extensive (as in the Scandinavian countries). Yet for the past 20 years the United States has been promoting throughout the non-Western world raw, laissez-faire capitalism—a form of markets that the West abandoned long ago. The procapitalism measures being implemented today outside the West include privatization, the elimination of state subsidies and controls, and free-trade and foreign investment initiatives. As a practical matter they rarely, if ever, include any substantial redistribution measures.

"Democracy," too, can take many forms. I use the term "democratization" to refer to the political reforms that are actually being promoted in the non-Western world today—the concerted efforts, for example, largely driven by the United States, to implement immediate elections with universal suffrage. It's striking to note that at no point in history did any Western nation ever implement laissez-faire capitalism and overnight universal suffrage simultaneously—though that's the precise formula for free-market democracy currently being pressed on developing countries around the world. In the United States, the poor were totally disenfranchised by formal property qualifications in virtually every state for many decades after the Constitution was ratified, and economic barriers to participation remained well into the 20th century.

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It is ethnicity, however, that gives the combination of markets and democracy its special combustibility. Ethnic identity is not a static, scientifically determinable status but shifting and highly malleable. In Rwanda, for example, the 14 percent Tutsi minority dominated the Hutu majority economically and politically for four centuries, as a kind of cattle-owning aristocracy. But for most of this period, the lines between Hutus and Tutsi were permeable. The two groups spoke the

same language, intermarriage occurred, and successful Hutus could "become Tutsi." That was no longer true after the Belgians arrived and, steeped in specious theories of racial superiority, issued ethnic identity cards on the basis of nose length and cranial circumference. The resulting sharp ethnic divisions were later exploited by the leaders of Hutu Power. Along similar lines, all over Latin America today—where it is often said that there are no "ethnic divisions" because everyone has "mixed" blood—large numbers of impoverished Bolivians, Chileans, and Peruvians are suddenly being told that they are Aymaras, Incas, or just *indios*, whatever identity best resonates and mobilizes. These indigenization movements are not necessarily good or bad, but they are potent and contagious.

At the same time, ethnic identity is rarely constructed out of thin air. Subjective perceptions of identity often depend on more "objective" traits assigned to individuals based on, for example, perceived morphological characteristics, language differences, or ancestry. Try telling black and white Zimbabweans that they are only imagining their ethnic differences—that "ethnicity is a social construct"—and they'll at least agree on one thing: You're not being helpful. Much more concretely relevant is the reality that there is roughly zero intermarriage between blacks and whites in Zimbabwe, just as there is virtually no intermarriage between Chinese and Malays in Malaysia or between Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East. That ethnicity can be at once an artifact of human imagination and rooted in the darkest recesses of history—fluid and manipulable, yet important enough to kill for—is what makes ethnic conflict so terrifyingly difficult to understand and contain.

The argument I am making is frequently misunderstood. I do not propose a universal theory applicable to every developing country. There are certainly developing countries without market-dominant minorities: China and Argentina are two major examples. Nor do I argue that ethnic conflict arises only in the presence of a market-dominant minority. There are countless instances of ethnic hatred directed at economically oppressed groups. And, last, I emphatically do not mean to pin the blame for any particular case of ethnic violence—whether the mass killings perpetuated by all sides in the former Yugoslavia or the attack on America—on economic resentment, on markets, on democracy, on globalization, or on any other single cause.

Many overlapping factors and complex dynamics—religion, historical enmities, territorial disputes, or a particular nation's foreign policy—are always in play.

The point, rather, is this: In the numerous countries around the world that have pervasive poverty and a market-dominant minority, democracy and markets—at least in the raw, unrestrained forms in which they are currently being promoted—can proceed only in deep tension with each other. In such conditions, the combined pursuit of free markets and democratization has repeatedly catalyzed ethnic conflict in highly predictable ways, with catastrophic consequences, including genocidal violence and the subversion of markets and democracy themselves. That has been the sobering lesson of globalization over the past 20 years.

WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US? What are the implications of market-dominant minorities for national and international policymaking? Influential commentator Robert D. Kaplan offers one answer: Hold off on democracy until free markets produce enough economic and social development to make democracy sustainable. In *The Coming Anarchy* (2000), Kaplan argues that a middle class and civil institutions—both of which he implicitly assumes would be generated by market capitalism—are preconditions for democracy. Contrasting Lee Kuan Yew's prosperous authoritarian Singapore with the murderous, "bloodletting" democratic states of Colombia, Rwanda, and South Africa, Kaplan roundly condemns America's post–Cold War campaign to export democracy to "places where it can't succeed."

This is a refreshingly unromantic view, but ultimately unsatisfactory. As one writer has observed, "If authoritarianism were the key to prosperity, then Africa would be the richest continent in the world." Ask (as some do) for an Augusto Pinochet or an Alberto Fujimori, and you may get an Idi Amin or a Papa Doc Duvalier. More fundamentally, Kaplan overlooks the global problem of market-dominant minorities. He stresses the ethnic biases of elections but neglects the ethnic biases of capitalism. He is overly optimistic about the ability of markets alone to lift the great indigenous masses out of poverty, and he fails to see that markets favor not just some people over others but, often, hated ethnic minorities over indigenous majorities. Overlooking this reality, Kaplan blames too much of the world's violence and anarchy on democracy.

The best economic hope for developing and postcommunist countries does lie in some form of market-generated growth. Their best political hope lies in some form of democracy, with constitutional constraints, tailored to local realities. But if global free-market democracy is to succeed, the problem of market-dominant minorities must be confronted head-on. If we stop peddling unrestrained markets and overnight elections as cure-alls—both to ourselves and others—and instead candidly address the perils inherent in both markets and democracy, there is in many cases room for optimism.

The first and most obvious step is to isolate, where possible, and address, where appropriate, the causes of the market dominance of certain groups. In South Africa, expanding educational opportunities for the black majority—restricted for more than 70 years to inferior Bantu schooling—is properly a national priority and should be vigorously supported by the international community. Throughout Latin America, educational reform and equalization of opportunities for the region's poor indigenous-blooded majorities are imperative if global markets are to benefit more than just a handful of cosmopolitan elites.

Yet we must be realistic. The underlying causes of market dominance are poorly understood, difficult to reduce to tangible factors, and in any event highly intractable. Research suggests, for example, that additional spending on education, if not accompanied by major socioeconomic reforms, produces depressingly few benefits. Political favoritism, though often a sore point with the majority in many societies with a market-dominant minority, tends to be more the consequence than the cause of market dominance. Most market-dominant minorities, whether the Bamiléké in Cameroon or Indians in Fiji, enjoy disproportionate economic success at every level of society down to the smallest shopkeepers, who can rarely boast of useful political connections. Indeed, many of these minorities succeed despite official discrimination against them. Any explanation of their success will likely include a host of intangibles such

To "level the playing field" in developing societies will thus be a painfully slow process, taking generations if it is possible at all.

as the influence of religion and culture.

To "level the playing field" in developing societies will thus be a painfully slow process, taking generations if it is possible at all. More immediate measures will be needed to address the potentially explosive problems of ethnic resentment and ethnonationalist hatred that threaten these countries.

A crucial challenge is to find ways to spread the benefits of global markets beyond a handful of market-dominant minorities and their foreign investor partners. Western-style redistributive programs—progressive taxation, social security, unemployment insurance—should be encouraged, but, at least in the short run, they have limited potential. There simply is not enough to tax, and nearly no one who can be trusted to transfer revenues. Other possibilities are somewhat more encouraging. The Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto makes a powerful case in *The Mystery of Capital* (2000) for the benefits of giving the poor in the developing world formal, legally defensible property rights to the land they occupy but to which, because of underdeveloped legal systems and the tangles of history, they very often lack legal title.

A more controversial strategy consists of direct government intervention in the market designed to "correct" ethnic wealth imbalances. The leading example of such an effort is Malaysia's New Economic Policy (NEP), a program established after violent riots in 1969 by indigenous Malays angry over the economic dominance of foreign investors and the country's ethnic Chinese minority. The Malaysian government adopted sweeping ethnic quotas on corporate equity ownership, university admissions, government licensing, and commercial employment. It also initiated large-scale purchases of corporate assets on behalf of the *bumiputra* (Malay) majority.

In many respects, the results have been impressive. While the NEP has not lifted the great majority of Malays (particularly in the rural areas) out of poverty, it has helped to create a substantial Malay middle class. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who frankly concedes that the NEP has tended to favor elite, well-connected Malays, nevertheless contends that it serves an important symbolic function: "With the existence of the few rich Malays at least the poor can say their fate is not entirely to serve rich non-Malays. From the point of view of racial ego, and this ego is still strong, the unseemly existence of Malay tycoons is essential."

Efforts like the NEP, however, are far from a universal solution. Few countries enjoy the degree of prosperity that makes them feasible, and even Malaysia has not achieved its goal of eradicating poverty. Moreover, such programs may well exacerbate ethnic tensions rather than relieve them, especially when government leaders are themselves ethnic partisans. In his own mind, Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic was conducting a form of affirmative action on behalf of long-exploited majorities, as Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe doubtless feels he is doing now.

For better or worse, the best hope for global free-market democracy lies with market-dominant minorities themselves. This is adamantly not to blame these groups for the ethnonationalist eruptions against them. But it is to suggest that they may be in the best position to address today's most pressing challenges. To begin with, it must be recognized that market-dominant minorities often engage in objectionable practices—bribery, discriminatory lending, labor exploitation—that reinforce ethnic stereotypes and besmirch the image of free-market democracy. In Indonesia, the notorious "crony capitalism" of President Suharto depended on a handful of Chinese magnates and fueled massive resentment of the Chinese community generally.

More affirmatively, if free-market democracy is to prosper, the world's market-dominant minorities must begin making significant and visible contributions to the local economies in which they are thriving. Although such efforts have been relatively few and by no means always successful in promoting goodwill, some valuable models can be found. The University of Nairobi, for example, owes its existence to wealthy Indians in Kenya. The Madhvani family, owners of the largest industrial, commercial, and agricultural complex in East Africa, not only provide educational, health, housing, and recreational opportunities for their African employees, but also employ Africans in top management and offer a number of wealth-sharing schemes. In Russia, there is the unusual case of the Jewish billionaire Roman Abramovich, whose generous philanthropy and ambitious proposals won him election as governor of the poverty-stricken Chukotka region in the Russian Far East. More typically, however, building ethnic goodwill would require collective action. Fortunately, most economically successful minorities do have the resources for such action, in the form of local ethnic chambers of commerce, clan associations, and other organizations.

What of the world's largest economically dominant minority? What are Americans to do? It's obviously true that anti-Americanism, including the virulent Islamicist strain, doesn't stem from economic deprivation alone. As others have pointed out, the Islamicists themselves rarely even speak of a desire for prosperity. And it is fantasy to think that U.S. economic aid can do anything more than make a small dent in world poverty, at least in the near future. Yet those who call for increases in U.S. aid to the world's poor do seem to have wisdom on their side. The United States now devotes only 0.1 percent of its gross domestic product to foreign aid, a smaller share than any other advanced country. Rightly or wrongly, for millions around the world the World Trade Center symbolized greed, exploitation, indifference, and cultural humiliation. By extending themselves to the world's poor, Americans could begin to send a different sort of message. Retreating into isolationism or glorifying American chauvinism holds no long-term promise. It is difficult to see, in any event, how a little generosity and humility could possibly hurt. ■

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SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM

In George Bingham's *Stump Speaking* (1853–54), a common code of civility enables people of many different kinds to meet for political discussion.

THE GENTEEL REPUBLIC

The decline of civility was beginning to reappear as a public concern when we published this historical perspective on the phenomenon in the Autumn 1996 issue. The introduction we wrote then is perhaps even more apt today: "A democracy, more than any other society, is built on mutual trust and cooperation among strangers, on the street as well as in the meeting hall. Creating and sustaining such trust was an important public commitment of America's early years—one that we seem increasingly unable to make."

BY **RICHARD L. BUSHMAN**

By RICHARD L. BUSHMAN

OURS IS NOT THE FIRST AGE TO FEEL pangs of anxiety about the decline of civility, refinement, and manners. Two centuries ago, the currents of revolution stirred similar fears among many of America's Founding Fathers. To these creatures of the Enlightenment, living in their Virginia plantation houses and Philadelphia mansions, manners and refinement ranked with the rule of law, the development of science, and the practice of the arts as the greatest of civilization's achievements. In their darker moments in the years after the Revolution, as a continuing democratic revolution shook the traditional social order, many of the Founders worried that the United States was sliding into barbarism. Benjamin Rush, a Philadelphia physician and signer of the Declaration of Independence, complained that "the principles and morals" of the people had declined and that government everywhere had fallen "into the hands of the young and ignorant and needy part of the community." Rush went so far as to say that he regretted all he had done to advance the revolutionary cause. Thomas Jefferson, John Jay, and Samuel Adams were among the many others who voiced deep disappointment with the state of postrevolutionary America.

The Founders' consternation grew out of an anxiety foreign to us: They feared that refinement and democracy were contradictory. Gentility, after all, was the product of an elite culture, a way of distinguishing ladies and gentlemen from common people, and thus hardly suited to a republican society.

The Founders feared that refinement and democracy were contradictory.

These fears, of course, were not borne out. The old social order of prerevolutionary America did pass out of existence. Gentility, however, not only survived but prevailed, becoming an essential element in the success of America's democratic experiment. After 1776, the middle-class people who were empowered by democracy—middling farmers, well-to-do artisans, clerks, and schoolteachers—laid claim to their own version of gentility. Encouraged by entrepreneurs eager to sell them the trappings of respectable existence, Americans installed parlors in simple houses, purchased carpets for

the floors, drank tea from inexpensive creamware, planted shrubs and grass in front yards where there had been weeds and packed earth, and bought books instructing them in comportment and etiquette. From this peculiar amalgam of republican conviction, capitalist enterprise, and genteel practice there emerged an anomalous society: a middle-class democracy with the remains of an aristocratic culture embedded in its core. It was a society uniquely equipped to reconcile the promise of equality with the unpleasant realities of economic inequality and social division.

GENTILITY WAS NOT MUCH ON THE minds of the first English settlers in North America. Their lives generally were governed by more austere religious codes, not to mention the austere material conditions of early colonial life. Then, at the end of the 17th century, a handful of merchants recently migrated from Britain built city houses in Boston and Philadelphia, houses that we would now call mansions. Soon substantial new dwellings in the fashionable Georgian style were going up in these cities and across the Virginia Tidewater, in Portsmouth, in the Connecticut River Valley, along the Hudson, and near Charleston. By the time of the Revolution, barely 90 years after Colonel John Foster built one of the first Boston mansions, every member of the colonial gentry felt he must reside in a mansion furnished with polished walnut furniture, creamwares, and plate—all ornaments of the genteel life.

These new houses were dramatically different from their predecessors. The homes of even the wealthiest people of the earlier era were cramped, low ceilinged, and dark. The new mansions tended to be taller, sometimes rising to three stories, with much higher ceilings inside. They were also more colorful. Earlier colonial houses were never painted, except occasionally for the door and window frames, and were rarely built of brick. The new houses often were red brick or, if frame, were painted bright hues of yellow, blue, and other colors. (Only much later did the white we associate with the era come into wide use.) The windows were large and numerous. The floor plan distinguished the great houses most of all. Where once the main rooms of even the finest house were used for working, eating, sleeping, and entertaining, now certain rooms were set aside strictly for a public purpose, the gathering of polite society.

The essence of gentility was a compulsion to make the world beautiful, beginning with the individual person

Etiquette of Calling.

THE morning call should be very brief. This formal call is mainly one of ceremony, and from ten to twenty minutes is a sufficient length of time to prolong it. It should never exceed half an hour.

In making a formal call, a lady does not remove her bonnet or wraps.

Unless there be a certain evening set apart for receiving, the formal call should be made in the morning.

It is customary, according to the code of etiquette, to call all the hours of daylight morning, and after nightfall evening.

Calls may be made in the morning or in the evening. The call in the morning should not be made before 12 M., nor later than 5 P. M.

A gentleman, making a formal call in the morning, must retain his hat in his hand. He may leave umbrella and cane in the hall, but not his hat and gloves. The fact of retaining hat indicates a formal call.

When a gentleman accompanies a lady at a morning call (which is seldom), he assists her up the steps, rings the bell, and follows her into the reception-room. It is for the lady to determine when they should leave.

All uncouth and ungraceful positions are especially unbecoming among ladies and gentlemen in the parlor. Thus (Fig. 6), standing with the arms akimbo, sitting astride a chair, wearing the hat, and smoking in the presence of ladies, leaning back in the chair, standing with legs crossed and feet on the chairs—all those acts evince lack of polished manners.

If possible, avoid calling at the lunch or dinner hour. Among society people the most fashionable hours for calling are from 12 M. to 3 P. M. At homes where dinner or lunch is taken at noon, calls may be made from 2 to 5 P. M.

Should other callers be announced, it is well, as soon as the bustle attending the new arrival is over, to arise quietly, take leave of the hostess, bow to the visitors, and retire, without apparently doing so because of the new arrivals. This saves the hostess the trouble of entertaining two sets of callers.

FIG. 6. UNGRACEFUL POSITIONS.

No. 1. Stands with arms akimbo.
" 2. Sits with elbows on the knees.
" 3. Sits astride the chair, and wears his hat in the parlor.
" 4. Stains the wall paper by pressing against it with his hand; eats an apple alone, and stands with his legs crossed.
No. 5. Rests his foot upon the chair-cushion.
" 6. Tips back his chair, soils the wall by resting his head against it, and smokes in the presence of ladies.

To say bright and witty things during the call of ceremony, and go so soon that the hostess will desire the caller to come again, is much the more pleasant. No topic of a political or religious character should be admitted to the conversation, nor any subject of absorbing interest likely to lead to discussion.

A lady engaged upon fancy sewing of any kind, or needlework, need not necessarily lay aside the same during the call of intimate acquaintances. Conversation can flow just as freely while the visit continues. During the visits of ceremony, however, strict attention should be given to entertaining the callers.

Gentlemen may make morning calls on the following occasions: To convey congratulations or sympathy and condolence, to meet a friend who has just returned from abroad, to inquire after the health of a lady who may have accepted his escort on the previous day. (He should not delay the latter more than a day.) He may call upon those to whom letters of introduction are given, to express thanks for any favor which may have been rendered him, or to return a call. A great variety of circumstances will also determine when at other times he should make calls.

Evening Calls.

Evening calls should never be made later than 9 P. M., and never prolonged later than 10 P. M.

In making a formal call in the evening, the gentleman must hold hat and gloves, unless invited to lay them aside and spend the evening.

In making an informal call in the evening, a gentleman may leave hat, cane, overshoes, etc., in the hall, provided he is invited to do so, and the lady may remove her wraps.

The evening call should not generally be prolonged over an hour. With very intimate friends, however, it may be made a little longer; but the caller should be very careful that the visit be not made tiresome.

General Suggestions.

Calls from people living in the country are expected to be longer and less ceremonious than from those in the city.

When it has been impossible to attend a dinner or a social gathering, a call should be made soon afterwards, to express regret at the inability to be present.

A gentleman, though a stranger, may with propriety escort an unattended lady to the carriage, and afterwards return and make his farewell bow to the hostess.

Should a guest arrive to remain for some time with the friend, those who are intimate with the family should call as soon as possible, and these calls should be returned at the earliest opportunity.

Unless invited to do so, it is a violation of etiquette to draw near the fire for the purpose of warming one's self. Should you, while waiting the appearance of the hostess, have done so, you will arise upon her arrival, and then take the seat she may assign you.

When a lady has set apart a certain evening for receiving calls, it is not usual to call at other times, except the excuse be business reasons.

HILL'S MANUAL OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS FORM

Etiquette manuals proliferated during the 19th century. Here, readers are warned against "ungraceful positions" in the parlor and instructed in practical details of social life.

The essence of gentility was a compulsion to make the world beautiful, beginning with the individual person and reaching out to the environment.

and reaching out to the environment—houses, gardens, parks, even streets. Thus, even as they built grander, more refined houses, the gentry built new selves to inhabit them. As a boy of 10 or 12 in the 1740s, for example, George Washington was required by his tutor to copy "110 Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour In Company and Conversation." It was one of hundreds of "courtesy books" in circulation during this era. The rules covered a multitude of trivial behaviors: "In the Presence of Others Sing not to yourself with a humming Noise, nor Drum with your Fingers or Feet." Many were regulations required in a deferential society: "In Company of those of Higher Quality than yourself Speak not ti[ll] you are asked a Question then Stand upright put of your Hat and Answer in few words."

Even among the European aristocracy, the practice of bathing regularly and wearing clean clothes, much less attending to manners, was a relatively recent innovation. Now everything associated with the body was subject to genteel discipline. Rule after rule told the young man to keep his mouth closed, not to let his tongue hang out or his jaw go slack. The firm, composed mouth, so indelibly associated with Washington, was the facial posture of a gentleman, a model for the treatment of the genteel person's entire body.

Washington's manual was one of literally hundreds of such books that circulated through Europe and its colonies from the 16th century onward.* Indeed, most of Washington's 110 rules were derived from an Italian manual, *Il Galateo*, first published in 1558. In Europe, the courtesy books were used to instruct young gentlemen preparing for life at court or in the households of noblemen. The books facilitated a crucial transition

*The word *genteel* itself derives from the French *gentil*, which entered English usage twice, first in the 13th century when it turned into the English *gentle*, and again in the late 16th century when, traveling to England along with the new ideas about behavior at court, it retained more of its French pronunciation and became *genteel*. The word was linked to a number of kindred terms: polite, polished, refined, tasteful, well-bred, urbane, fashionable, gay, civil.

in the organization of power in Europe, from the feudal system of weak kings to a system which, by the end of the Renaissance, made kings the focal point of military, political, and social power. Nobles who had once ruled with nearly unchecked sovereignty over their own domains were now compelled to attend the monarch at court, where polished manners and beautiful appearances were needed to win favors and privileges.

Gentility was more than a decorative flourish adorning life at court. It was a form of power, a means of gaining favor and of asserting cultural superiority. Lawrence Stone, the great analyst of the English aristocracy on the eve of the Civil War, concluded that the 17th-century aristocracy nearly spent itself to extinction in an effort to keep up appearances under King Charles I (1625–49). They had to refine themselves, their houses, and their entire style of life to maintain their positions at court and in society. Gentility thus arrived in the colonies with an honored pedigree and a mission. It was the culture of the court, of all that was considered high and noble, of the finest and best; it was also an instrument of power available to all who wished to claim it. No group needed such an instrument more than the colonial gentry, whose authority was built on the unstable foundation of wealth rather than inherited rank.

The genteel idea cut hard against the grain of many of the ideas and forces that pulsed through America in the years around 1776.

But the power of gentility cut two ways. To claim it, the gentry first had to submit to an exacting discipline. Gentility required the construction of mansions, demanded that parlors be furnished with walnut furniture, insisted on the best manners. It was not, moreover, a discipline undertaken merely for personal aggrandizement. Genteel conduct had a public as well as a private purpose. The purchase of beautifully decorated objects was not the whim of wealth or simpleminded mimicry. These objects and the forms of behavior that accompanied them were instruments for achieving a higher mode of living, a way of being polished, refined, civilized.

The genteel idea cut hard against the grain of many of the ideas and forces that pulsed through America in the years around 1776. Nothing could have been

more alien to the spirit of gentility than capitalism, with its demand for disciplined work, frugality, and self-denial. "A Cottage may keep a Man as warm as a Palace; and there is no absolute Necessity of covering our Bodies with Silk," declared a writer in the *New York Weekly Journal* in 1735. "Is there no quenching of our Thirst, but in Chrystal? No cutting of our Bread, unless the Knife has an Agate Handle?" This is the voice of capitalist rationality elevated into moral injunction. Protestant ministers at times added their own critical voices. But republican politicians were probably the loudest critics. Gentility was an affront to the basic egalitarian impulse of republican culture. "Pray Madam," John Adams asked his neighbor Mercy Warren in January 1776, on the eve of American independence, "are you for an American Monarchy or Republic? Monarchy is the genteelest and most fashionable Government, and I dont know why the Ladies ought not to consult Elegance and the Fashion as well in Government, as Gowns, Bureaus or Chariots."

Adams went on to say that an American monarchy "would produce so much Taste and Politeness, so much Elegance in Dress, Furniture, Equipage, so much Musick and Dancing, so much Fencing and Skaiting, so much Cards and Backgammon; so much Horse Racing and Cockfighting, so many Balls and Assemblies, so many Plays and Concerts that the very Imagination of them makes me feel vain, light, frivolous and insignificant." A republic favored other qualities, Adams said. It would "produce Strength, Hardiness Activity, Courage, Fortitude and Enterprise; the manly noble and Sublime Qualities in human Nature."

A REVOLUTIONARY OPPOSITION CAN either destroy the culture of the preceding ruling class or appropriate it. In the American Revolution, the choice was appropriation. While many of the elite despaired at the prospect of vulgarity coming to power, others worked at polishing society. In the years after the Revolution, for example, museums were founded to elevate the public taste and reformers pushed for the creation of public schools, where manners were taught along with the three R's. Instead of obliterating genteel culture, American democracy allowed ordinary people to make gentility their own.

Once appropriated, gentility was turned to democratic purposes. In the colonies, gentility had set apart a small elite of wealthy, educated ladies and gentlemen who lived in the great houses, dominated society, and occupied high

government offices. Now everyone could possess gentility. Everyone who could adopt genteel manners and exhibit a few of the outward signs of refined life—perhaps a parlor carpet and a cloth on the dining table—could be respectable. In the 18th century, "ladies and gentlemen" designated a distinct class of people who stood apart from the rest. Before long, farmers, minor artisans, clerks, and schoolteachers all answered to that name. By the middle of the 19th century, it included everyone who attended a circus.

Capitalism democratized gentility by promoting affordable versions of the goods that genteel living required.

What drove this transformation was a popular desire to emulate those who stood at the peak of society and government, to dignify one's life with a portion of the glory that radiated from the highest and best circles. But the extraordinary growth of gentility in the United States would not have been possible without the unlikely alliance that was forged between gentility and capitalism.

Gentility gave Americans a reason to buy the goods that capitalism produced, and capitalism in turn democratized gentility by turning out and energetically promoting affordable versions of the goods that genteel living required. The growth of the gentry during the 18th century by itself fueled startling economic gains. In the 19th century, the spread of refinement to a much larger segment of the population vastly enlarged the market for manufactured goods. Thousands of Americans now needed damask, silk, and fine woolens to replace the rough homespun once deemed quite adequate for dresses and suits. They required curtains for their windows, carpets for their floors, chairs for their parlors, paint for their clapboards, plantings for their gardens. Gentility, in short, established a style of consumption.

The volume of this increased consumption is not a matter of guesswork. In rural Kent County, Delaware, for example, less than 10 percent of those of middling means who died shortly before the Revolution left mahogany, walnut, or cherry furniture—the fancy kind used in parlors and dining rooms. Of those who died 70 years later, between 1842 and 1850, more than two-thirds owned such furniture. There were similar sevenfold increases

in virtually every other kind of genteel household good. No one who died in Kent County on the eve of the Revolution owned a carpet; 70 years later, everyone in the top quarter of the population did, and more than half of the two middle quarters. Similar growth was seen in ceramic dinnerware, bed linens, looking glasses, clocks, and carriages. After the Revolution, Kent County's story was repeated all over the new United States, as striving families amassed the essential tokens of genteel living, creating a vast new market for consumer goods.

JUST AS GENTILITY CREATED A MARKET for the goods produced in the industrialists' factories, so it facilitated a peculiar kind of equality. The greatest threat to democratic equality was capitalism itself, with its vast payoffs for successful businessmen and its relatively meager rewards for most others. Indeed, industrial growth under capitalism depended on great inequalities of wealth to facilitate the accumulation of capital that made large-scale investment possible. From the Revolution to the Civil War, economic inequality in the United States grew increasingly severe, until by the end of the period, the upper 10 percent of property holders controlled more than 60 percent of the wealth. If wealth alone were the measure of success, as unadulterated capitalist culture implied, then the United States was a profoundly unequal and undemocratic society.

The novelist Catherine Marie Sedgwick wrote that "there is nothing that tends more to the separation into classes than difference of manners."

But moderating this view of human achievement were genteel cultural values that measured human worth differently. One might not be able to live in the same neighborhood as an Astor or a Biddle, but it was nevertheless possible through diligent effort to lay claim to an equal place in "respectable" society. This view was actively promoted by writers, preachers, and other reformers who worried about class divisions in the 19th century. Catherine Marie Sedgwick, a popular New England novelist, wrote that "there is nothing that tends more to the separation into classes than difference of manners. This is a badge that all can see."

Sedgwick told uplifting stories of poor men who managed to live genteel lives despite their poverty. Mr. Barclay, the manager of a New York print shop in *Home* (1835), lives frugally in his modest tenement but spends some of his meager pay on good books, music, and drawing lessons, and sends his children to dancing school. When an acquaintance questions the dancing lessons, Barclay replies, "There is nothing that conduces more to ease and grace, than learning to dance."

Like Sedgwick, Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of New York City's Central Park, thought culture was the solution to the problem of inequality. "We need institutions that shall more directly *assist* the poor and degraded to elevate themselves," he declared. People like himself had to "get up parks, gardens, music, dancing schools, reunions, which will be so attractive as to force into contact the good and bad, the gentleman and the rowdy," in hope of uplifting the latter. Olmsted's inspiration was the landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing, whose ringing 1851 manifesto "The New York Park" set Olmsted's course when he laid out Central Park later in the decade: "The higher social and artistic elements of every man's nature lie dormant within him, and every laborer is a possible gentleman, not by the possession of money or fine clothes—but through the refining influence of intellectual and moral culture. Open wide, therefore, the doors of your libraries and picture galleries, all ye true republicans! . . . Plant spacious parks in your cities, and unloose their gates as wide as the gates of morning to the whole people."

Many 19th-century Americans took up the challenge and sought to add elements of refinement to their lives. Sedgwick's publisher said her three volumes were "one of the most popular series of works ever published." They were successful because hundreds of others were propagating genteel values through etiquette books, magazines, and novels. The tidal wave of print flooding the country bore images of genteel life into every corner of the land. All literate persons were exposed to good manners, and even more were exposed to the ornaments of

The spread of genteel culture muted the class question in the United States, softening divisions between rich and poor.

genteel existence by shopkeepers, peddlers, and, later, mail-order catalogues.

The spread of genteel culture muted the class question in the United States, softening divisions between rich and poor and between employers and employees. Any household whose members could learn to wash their hands and to blow their noses with a handkerchief, who could boast even a small parlor and an appreciation of flowers, could claim membership in the middle class. The adoption of the culture of the upper classes, even in rudimentary form, made it possible to claim membership in the same cultural order.

Many were left out to be sure, but many found their way in. Large numbers of working-class people by the late 19th century had parlors, and some even had pianos in them. Their incomes might have been miniscule compared to what those in the better areas of town enjoyed, and their opportunities might have been limited, but they were not of a different order of life. Income differentials in the United States to this day are vast, and yet a huge proportion of Americans identify themselves as middle-class.

There was much in the republican vision of Sedgwick, Olmsted, and other reformers that was unrealistic. The notion that farmers would learn to draw beautiful pictures and write verses was naive. There was also much that was unforgiving. Their vision, generous though it was, excluded all those who failed to embrace their standards. Olmsted set strict rules of behavior for his new park in Manhattan. It was not to be a beer garden, he warned, and parkgoers were to act like ladies and gentlemen—or else stay home. He asked a lot from a poor, rudely educated population, constantly augmented by immigrants. A large portion of the American populace still looked on gentility with scorn or indifference as an alien culture. Many lacked the means or the understanding to emulate their betters. African Americans fared worst of all. In Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, many of the black urban elite—schoolteachers, barbers, ministers, and artisans—embraced the genteel promise only to find that it brought them no closer to equality.

Yet the middle-class idea—the belief that proper conduct could lift a person into the ranks of the respectable—exerted a powerful influence in the United States. It was transmitted through virtually every channel of society to every corner of society, reaching down to the ghetto schools where immigrant children were tutored in the ways of the new country. As the population of the

country's cities swelled from about 10 million in 1870 to some 54 million in 1920, the premium on simply getting along in public grew. Poor and working-class people had their own ways, but there was no question where the weight of public opinion lay. Around the turn of the century, writes historian John F. Kasson, in the new movie and vaudeville theaters that brought together people from many different walks of life, uniformed ushers patrolled the aisles to maintain decorum, sometimes handing out printed cards admonishing offenders not to talk or laugh too loudly. "Gentlemen will kindly avoid the stamping of feet and pounding of canes on the floor, and greatly oblige the Management," one said. "All applause is best shown by clapping of hands."

GENTILITY'S HOLD WAS NOT ETERNALLY assured, of course. Even as gentility reached its zenith as a cultural force around the turn of the century, its foundations were being undermined. From Freud on, we have been made to believe that the dark passions—lust, greed, fear—are the realities of human life, and that civilized refinement is a thin veneer covering raw forces below the surface. At best, gentility could be seen as a tragic necessity. The assertion that it is a measure of human progress, along with the rule of law, art, and science, long ago ceased to command assent. After Freud, it was also possible to insist—and many have—that gentility is a mask disguising our true nature, best ripped away to allow a more authentic self to emerge. Although hardly the belief of everyone, this conception of human life prepared the way for the counterculture's celebration of "authenticity" during the 1960s, with all of its continuing fallout for American society.

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The genteel idea was moored not only in ideas. Throughout the 19th century, it was continuously reinvigorated by the presence of an aristocracy in Europe that was still considered the embodiment of elevated life. The writers of courtesy books cited the manners of the "best people" as their authority, meaning the European aristocracy and the American social elite that tried to imitate it.

American captains of industry in the 19th century could imagine no greater glory for their daughters than for them to marry lords. But bit by bit the aristocrats forfeited their illustrious standing, and today even the royals are more notable for their scandalous escapades than their social graces.

Since the retreat of aristocracy, no cultural authority has emerged to take command of conduct and consumption. Instead of buying goods to emulate an imagined superior society, people consume for pleasure, sensation, efficiency, therapy, comfort—a host of desirables—following the whims of magazine writers, admen, pundits, preachers, and pop psychologists. No unified authority presides over culture as it did in Washington's day. Pleas for a return to civility grow out of a vague sense that social life deteriorates without good manners, not out of a serious commitment to submit the sovereign self to "society." The word genteel itself is now a stain rather than a mark of distinction, signifying an excessive concern with nicety, a preoccupation with mere appearances, a refusal to face the hard realities.

With its intellectual and social foundations weakened, gentility may seem doomed to extinction. But it is premature to conclude that courtesy will lose its hold on our conduct altogether. Because it is held in place mainly by habit, there is no telling its fate in the long run, but an early death seems unlikely.

Although we lament the decline of manners—and observers were issuing such laments even in the Victorian era—gentility has been transmuted rather than obliterated. More than ever, social life is a performance in which, like the gentry of colonial America, we pay heed to appearance, albeit with dress-for-success apparel or fashions from the Gap. All over the country, people expend endless effort on manicured lawns to show their beautiful houses to best advantage and spend significant sums on exotic olive oils and other goods that advertise their cultural sophistication and refinement. Every respectable house must have a room where guests can be entertained and where the good china and silver can be put into play. And while we no longer admire the aristocracy, we still have superior societies that inspire emulation and striving. Part of the magnetic attraction of Ivy League universities is the aura they project of a higher and better society. Obtaining an Ivy League degree is the modern-day equivalent of marrying a title. The Ivies house the new aristocracy.

Powerful cultural forces such as gentility gather momentum over the centuries and roll on through inertia alone. This is as true of malign forces, such as racism, as it is of benign ones. Good cultural habits as well as bad ones are not easily broken, especially when they are taught in childhood. Middle-class children are still made to endure dancing schools, piano lessons, and endless instructions in behavior. Their parents know that at crucial points—applying for a job, interviewing for college, meeting a fiancé's parents, impressing the boss, persuading a customer—manners count. Civil behavior, an effort to please, regard for others' feelings, and virtually all the other principles in George Washington's courtesy book still give an advantage. Our belief in civility may be too often honored in the breach, but until it no longer influences the way children are raised, gentility will endure, bruised and wounded perhaps, but very much alive. ■

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JOSEPH SOHM / VISIONS OF AMERICA / CORBIS

A blizzard of confetti and balloons greeted American troops during New York City's Persian Gulf War victory parade in 1991.

A LESS THAN SPLENDID LITTLE WAR

On the 10th anniversary of the triumphant end of the Persian Gulf War, and only months before 9/11, Andrew J. Bacevich wrote this prophetic critique of the new conception of America's role in the world he said had emerged from the victory. Bacevich wrote a number of articles for the *WQ* after he retired as a colonel from the Army in the 1990s. This essay is from the Winter 2001 issue.

BY **ANDREW J. BACEVICH**

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"NEARLY A DECADE AFTER ITS CONCLUsion," observes Frank Rich of *The New York Times*, "the Persian Gulf War is already looking like a footnote to American history." Rich's appraisal of Operation Desert Storm and the events surrounding it manages to be, at once, accurate and massively wrong.

Rich is correct in the sense that, 10 years on, the war no longer appears as it did in 1990 and 1991: a colossal feat of arms, a courageous and adeptly executed stroke of statesmanship, and a decisive response to aggression that laid the basis for a new international order. The "official" view of the war, energetically promoted by senior U.S. government figures and military officers and, at least for a time, echoed and amplified by an exultant national media, has become obsolete.

In outline, that official version was simplicity itself: unprovoked and dastardly aggression; a small, peace-loving nation snuffed out of existence; a line drawn in the sand; a swift and certain response by the United States that mobilizes the international community to put things right. The outcome, too, was unambiguous. Speaking from the Oval Office on February 28, 1991, to announce the suspension of combat operations, President George H.W. Bush left no room for doubt that the United States had achieved precisely the outcome it had sought: "Kuwait is liberated. Iraq's army is defeated. Our military objectives are met." Characterizing his confrontation with Saddam Hussein's army, General Norman Schwarzkopf used more colorful language to make the same point: "We'd kicked this guy's butt, leaving no doubt in anybody's mind that we'd won decisively."

In the war's immediate aftermath, America's desert victory seemed not only decisive but without precedent in the annals of military history. So stunning an achievement fueled expectations that Desert Storm would pay dividends extending far beyond the military sphere. Those expectations—even more than the action on the battlefield—persuaded Americans that the war marked a turning point. In a stunning riposte to critics who had argued throughout the 1980s that the United States had slipped into a period of irreversible decline, the Persian Gulf War announced emphatically that America was back on top.

IN A SINGLE STROKE, THEN, THE WAR appeared to heal wounds that had festered for a generation. Reflecting the views of many professional officers, General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, expressed his belief that the demons of the Vietnam War had at long last been exorcised. Thanks to Operation Desert Storm, he wrote, "the American people fell in love again with their armed forces." Indeed, references to "the troops"—a phrase to which politicians, pundits, and network anchors all took a sudden liking—conveyed a not-so-subtle shift in attitude toward soldiers and suggested a level of empathy, respect, and affection that had been absent, and even unimaginable, since the late 1960s.

Bush himself famously proclaimed that, with its victory in the Persian Gulf, the United States had at long last kicked the so-called Vietnam syndrome. That did not mean the president welcomed the prospect of more such military adventures. If anything, the reverse was true: Its military power unshackled, the United States would henceforth find itself employing force *less* frequently. "I think because of what has happened, we won't have to use U.S. forces around the world," Bush predicted during his first postwar press conference. "I think when we say something that is objectively correct, . . . people are going to listen."

The war appeared to heal wounds that had festered for a generation.

To the president and his advisers, the vivid demonstration of U.S. military prowess in the Gulf had put paid to lingering doubts about American credibility. Its newly minted credibility endowed the United States with a unique opportunity: not only to prevent the recurrence of aggression but to lay the foundation for what Bush called a new world order. American power would shape that order, and American power would guarantee the United States a preeminent place in it. America would "reach out to the rest of the world," Bush and his national security adviser Brent Scowcroft wrote, but, in doing so, America would "keep the strings of control tightly in [U.S.] hands."

That view accorded precisely with the Pentagon's own preferences. Cherishing their newly restored prestige, American military leaders were by no means eager to put it at risk. They touted the Gulf War not simply as a singular victory but as a paradigmatic event, a conflict

that revealed the future of war and outlined the proper role of U.S. military power. Powell and his fellow generals rushed to codify the war's key "lessons." Clearly stated objectives related to vital national interests, the employment of overwhelming force and superior technology, commanders insulated from political meddling, a predesignated "exit strategy"—the convergence of all these factors had produced a brief, decisive campaign, fought according to the norms of conventional warfare and concluded at modest cost and without moral complications. If the generals got their way, standing ready to conduct future Desert Storms would henceforth define the U.S. military's central purpose.

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Finally, the war seemed to have large implications for domestic politics, although whether those implications were cause of celebration or despondency depended on one's partisan affiliation. In the war's immediate aftermath, Bush's approval ratings rocketed above 90 percent. Most experts believed that the president's adept handling of the Persian Gulf crisis all but guaranteed his election to a second term.

Subsequent events have not dealt kindly with those initial postwar expectations. Indeed, the 1992 presidential election—in which Americans handed the architect of victory in the Gulf his walking papers—hinted that the war's actual legacy would be different than originally advertised, and the fruits of victory other than expected. Bill Clinton's elevation to the office of commander in chief was only one among several surprises.

For starters, America's love affair with the troops turned out to be more an infatuation than a lasting commitment. A series of scandals—beginning just months after Desert Storm with the U.S. Navy's infamous Tailhook convention in 1991—thrust the military into the center of the ongoing Kulturkampf. Instead of basking contentedly in the glow of victory, military institutions found themselves pilloried for being out of step with enlightened attitudes on such matters as gender and sexual orientation. In early 1993, the generals embroiled themselves in a nasty public

confrontation with their new commander in chief over the question of whether gays should serve openly in the military. The top brass prevailed. But "don't ask, don't tell" would prove to be a Pyrrhic victory.

The real story of military policy in the 1990s was the transformation of the armed services from bastions of masculinity (an increasingly suspect quality) into institutions that were accommodating to women and "family friendly." The result was a major advance in the crusade for absolute gender equality, secured by watering down, or simply discarding, traditional notions of military culture and unit cohesion. By decade's end, Americans took it as a matter of course that female fighter pilots were flying strike missions over Iraq, and that a terrorist attack on an American warship left female sailors among the dead and wounded.

As the military became increasingly feminized, young American men evinced a dwindling inclination to serve. The Pentagon insisted that the two developments were unrelated. Although the active military shrank by a third in overall size during the decade following the Gulf War, the services were increasingly hard-pressed to keep the ranks full by the end of the 1990s. Military leaders attributed the problem to a booming economy: The private sector offered a better deal. Their solution was to improve pay and benefits, to deploy additional platoons of recruiters, and to redouble their efforts to market their "product." To burnish its drab image, the U.S. Army, the most straitened of the services, even adopted new headgear: a beret. With less fanfare, each service also began to relax its enlistment standards.

The decade following victory in the Gulf became a period of unprecedented American military activism.

Bush's expectation (and Powell's hope) that the United States would rarely employ force failed to materialize. The outcome of the Persian Gulf War—and, more significantly, the outcome of the Cold War—created conditions more conducive to disorder than to order, and confronted both Bush and his successor with situations that each would view as intolerable. Because inaction would undermine U.S. claims to global leadership and threaten to revive isolationist habits, it was imperative that the United States remain engaged. As a result, the decade following victory in the Gulf became

a period of unprecedented American military activism.

The motives for intervention varied as widely as the particular circumstances on the ground. In 1991, Bush sent U.S. troops into northern Iraq to protect Kurdish refugees fleeing from Saddam Hussein. Following his electoral defeat in 1992, he tasked the military with a major humanitarian effort in Somalia: to bring order to a failed state and aid to a people facing mass starvation. Not to be outdone, President Bill Clinton ordered the military occupation of Haiti, to remove a military junta from power and to "restore" democracy. Moved by the horrors of ethnic cleansing, Clinton bombed and occupied Bosnia. In Rwanda he intervened after the genocide there had largely run its course. Determined to prevent the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) from being discredited, he fought a substantial war for Kosovo and provided Slobodan Milosevic with a pretext for renewed ethnic cleansing, which NATO's military action did little to arrest. In lesser actions, Clinton employed cruise missiles to retaliate (ineffectually) against Saddam Hussein, for allegedly plotting to assassinate former President Bush and against Osama Bin Landen, for terrorist attacks on two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998. As the impeachment crisis loomed at the end of 1998, the president renewed hostilities against Iraq; the brief December 1998 air offensive known as Operation Desert Fox gave way to a persistent but desultory bombing campaign that sputtered on to the very end of his presidency.

All those operations had one common feature: Each violated the terms of the so-called Powell Doctrine regarding the use of force. The "end state" sought by military action was seldom defined clearly and was often modified at midcourse. (In Somalia, the mission changed from feeding the starving to waging war against Somali warlords.) More often than not, intervention led not to a prompt and decisive outcome but to open-ended commitments. (President Clinton sent U.S. peacekeepers into Bosnia in 1995 promising to withdraw them in a year; more than five years later, when he left office, GIs were still garrisoning the Balkans.) In contrast to Powell's preference for using overwhelming force, the norm became to expend military power in discrete increments—to punish, to signal resolve, or to influence behavior. (Operation Allied Force, the American-led war for Kosovo in 1999, proceeded on the illusory assumption that a three- or four-day demonstration of airpower would persuade Slobodan Milosevic

THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NYC

A noisy magazine-cover Uncle Sam celebrates the nation's swift victory in the Spanish-American War in 1898.

to submit to NATO's will.) Nor were American soldiers able to steer clear of the moral complications that went hand in hand with these untidy conflicts. (The United States and NATO won in Kosovo by bringing the war home to the Serbian population—an uncomfortable reality from which some sought escape by proposing to waive the principle of noncombatant immunity.)

In short, the events that dashed President Bush's dreams of a new world order also rendered the Powell Doctrine obsolete and demolished expectations that the Persian Gulf War might provide a template for the planning and execution of future U.S. military operations. By the fall of 2000, when a bomb-laden rubber boat rendered a billion-dollar U.S. Navy destroyer hors de combat and killed 17 Americans, the notion that the mere possession of superior military technology and know-how gave the United States the ultimate trump card rang hollow.

JUDGED IN TERMS OF THE PREDICTIONS and expectations voiced in its immediate aftermath, the Persian Gulf War does seem destined to end up as little more than a historical afterthought. But unburdening the war of those inflated expectations yields an altogether different perspective on the actual legacy of Desert Storm.

Though it lacks the resplendence that in 1991 seemed the war's proper birthright, the legacy promises to be both important and enduring.

To reach a fair evaluation of the war's significance, Americans must, first of all, situate it properly in the grand narrative of U.S. military history. Desert Storm clearly does not rank with military enterprises such as the Civil War or World War II. Nor does the abbreviated campaign in the desert bear comparison with other 20th-century conflicts such as World War I, Korea, and Vietnam. Rather, the most appropriate comparison is with that other "splendid little war," the Spanish-American War of 1898. Norman Schwarzkopf's triumph over the obsolete army of Saddam Hussein is on a par with Admiral George Dewey's fabled triumph over an antiquated Spanish naval squadron at Manila Bay. Both qualify as genuine military victories. But the true measure of each is not the economy and dispatch with which U.S. forces vanquished their adversary but the entirely unforeseen, and largely problematic, consequences to which each victory gave rise.

In retrospect, the Spanish-American War—not just Dewey at Manila Bay, but Teddy Roosevelt leading the charge up San Juan Hill and General Nelson Miles "liberating" Puerto Rico—was a trivial military episode. And yet, the war marked a turning point in U.S. history. The brief conflict with Spain ended any compunction that Americans may have felt about the feasibility or propriety of imposing their own norms and values on others. With that war, the nation enthusiastically shouldered its share of the "white man's burden," to preside thereafter over colonies and client states in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The war saddled the American military with new responsibilities to govern that empire, and with one large, nearly insoluble strategic problem: how to defend the Philippines, the largest of the Spanish possessions to which the United States had laid claim.

The Spanish-American War propelled the United States into the ranks of great powers. Notable events of the century that followed—including an ugly campaign to pacify the Philippines, a pattern of repetitive military intervention in the Caribbean, America's tortured relationship with Cuba, and three bloody Asian wars fought in three decades—all derive, to a greater or lesser extent, from what occurred in 1898. And not one of those events was even remotely visible when President William McKinley set out to free Cubans from the yoke of Spanish oppression.

A similar case can be made with regard to the Persian Gulf War. However trivial the war was in a strictly military sense, it is giving birth to a legacy as significant and ambiguous as that of the Spanish-American War. And, for that reason, to consign the war to footnote status is to shoot wide of the mark.

THE LEGACY OF THE GULF WAR CONSISTS of at least four distinct elements. First, the war transformed Americans' views about armed conflict: about the nature of war, the determinants of success, and the expectations of when and how U.S. forces should intervene.

Operation Desert Storm seemingly reversed one of the principal lessons of Vietnam—namely, that excessive reliance on technology in war is a recipe for disaster. In the showdown with Iraq, technology proved crucial to success. Technology meant *American* technology; other members of the coalition (with the partial exception of Great Britain) lagged far behind U.S. forces in technological capacity. Above all, technology meant American airpower; it was the effects of the bombing campaign preceding the brief ground offensive that provided the real "story" of the Gulf War. After coalition fighter and bomber forces had isolated, weakened, and demoralized Saddam Hussein's army, the actual liberation of Kuwait seemed hardly more than an afterthought.

However trivial the war was in a strictly military sense, it is giving birth to a legacy as significant and ambiguous as that of the Spanish-American War.

With Operation Desert Storm, a century or more of industrial age warfare came to an end and a new era of information age warfare beckoned—a style of warfare, it went without saying, to which the United States was uniquely attuned. In the information age, airpower promised to be to warfare what acupuncture was to medicine: a clean, economical, and nearly painless remedy for an array of complaints.

Gone, apparently, were the days of slugfests, stalemates, and bloodbaths. Gone, too, were the days when battlefield mishaps—a building erroneously bombed, an American soldier's life lost to friendly fire—could be ascribed to war's inherent fog and friction. Such occurrences now

became inexplicable errors, which nonetheless required an explanation and an accounting. The nostrums of the information age equate information to power. They dictate that the greater availability of information should eliminate uncertainty and enhance the ability to anticipate and control events. Even if the key piece of information becomes apparent only after the fact, someone—commander or pilot or analyst—"should have known."

Thus did the Persian Gulf War feed expectations of no-fault operations. The Pentagon itself encouraged such expectations by engaging in its own flights of fancy. Doctrine developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the 1990s publicly committed U.S. forces to harnessing technology to achieve what it called "full spectrum dominance": the capability to prevail, quickly and cheaply, in any and all forms of conflict.

This technological utopianism has, in turn, had two perverse effects. The first has been to persuade political elites that war can be—and ought to be—virtually bloodless. As with an idea so stupid only an intellectual can believe it, the imperative of bloodless war will strike some as so bizarre that only a bona fide Washington insider (or technogeek soldier) could take it seriously. But as the war for Kosovo demonstrated in 1999, such considerations now have a decisive effect on the shape of U.S. military operations. How else to explain a war, allegedly fought for humanitarian purposes, in which the commander in chief publicly renounced the use of ground troops and restricted combat aircraft to altitudes at which their efforts to protect the victims of persecution were necessarily ineffective?

Technological utopianism has also altered fundamentally the moral debate about war and the use of force. During the decades following Hiroshima, that debate centered on assessing the moral implications of nuclear war and nuclear deterrence—an agenda that put moral reasoning at the service of averting Armageddon. Since the Persian Gulf War, theologians and ethicists, once openly skeptical of using force in all but the direst circumstances, have evolved a far more expansive and accommodating view: They now find that the United States has a positive obligation to intervene in places remote from any tangible American interests (the Balkans and sub-Saharan Africa, for example). More than a few doves have developed markedly hawkish tendencies.

The second element of the Gulf War's legacy is a new consensus on the relationship between military power and America's national identity. In the aftermath

of Desert Storm, military preeminence has become, as never before, an integral part of that identity. The idea that the United States presides as the world's only superpower—an idea that the Persian Gulf War more than any other single event made manifest—has found such favor with the great majority of Americans that most can no longer conceive of an alternative.

The new consensus on the military role of the United States—a consensus forged at a time when the actual threats to the nation's well-being are fewer than in any period since the 1920s—turns traditional American thinking about military power on its head.

That the U.S. military spending now exceeds the *combined* military spending of all the other leading powers, whether long-standing friends or potential foes, is a fact so often noted that it has lost all power to astonish. It has become non-controversial, an expression of the way things are meant to be, and, by common consent, of the way they ought to remain. Yet in the presidential campaign of 2000, both the Democratic and the Republican candidates agreed that the current level of defense spending—approaching $300 billion per year—is entirely inadequate. Tellingly, it was the nominee of the Democratic Party, the supposed seat of antimilitary sentiment, who offered the more generous plan for boosting the Pentagon's budget. The campaign included no credible voices suggesting that the United States might already be spending *too much* on defense.

The new consensus on the military role of the United States—a consensus forged at a time when the actual threats to the nation's well-being are fewer than in any period since the 1920s—turns traditional American thinking about military power on its head. Although the Republic came into existence through a campaign of violence, the Founders did not view the experiment upon which they had embarked as an exercise in accruing military might. If anything, the reverse was true. By insulating America (politically but not commercially) from the Old World's preoccupations with wars and militarism, they hoped to create in the New World something quite different.

Even during the Cold War, the notion lingered that, when it came to military matters, America was indeed intended to be different. The U.S. government classified the Cold War as an "emergency," as if to imply that the level of mobilization it entailed was only a temporary expedient. Even so, cold warriors with impeccable credentials—Dwight D. Eisenhower prominent among them—could be heard cautioning their fellow citizens to be wary of inadvertent militarism. The fall of the Berlin Wall might have offered an opportunity to reflect on Eisenhower's Farewell Address. But victory in the Gulf, which seemed to demonstrate that military power was ineffably good, nipped any such inclination in the bud. When it came to Desert Storm, what was not to like?

Indeed, in some quarters, America's easy win over Saddam Hussein inspired the belief that the armed forces could do much more henceforth than simply "fight and win the nation's wars." To demonstrate its continuing relevance in the absence of any plausible adversary, the Pentagon in the 1990s embraced an activist agenda and implemented a new "strategy of engagement" whereby U.S. forces devote their energies to "shaping the international environment." The idea, according to Secretary of Defense William Cohen, is "to shape people's opinions about us in ways that are favorable to us. To shape events that will affect our livelihood and our security. And we can do that when people see us, they see our power, they see our professionalism, they see our patriotism, and they say that's a country that we want to be with."

American paratroopers jumping in Kazakhstan, U.S. Special Forces training peacekeepers in Nigeria and counternarcotic battalions in Colombia, and U.S. warships stopping for fuel at the port of Aden are all part of an elaborate and ambitious effort to persuade others to "be with" the world's preeminent power. Conceived in the Pentagon and directed by senior U.S. military commanders, that effort proceeds quite openly, the particulars duly reported in the press. Few Americans pay it much attention. Their lack of interest suggests that the general public has at least tacitly endorsed the Pentagon's strategy, and is one measure of how comfortable Americans have become, a decade after the Persian Gulf War, with wielding U.S. military power.

THE THIRD ELEMENT OF THE GULF War's legacy falls into the largely misunderstood and almost completely neglected province of civil-military relations. To the bulk of the officer corps, Desert Storm served to

validate the Powell Doctrine. It affirmed the military nostalgia that had taken root in the aftermath of Vietnamthe yearning to restore the concept of self-contained, decisive conventional war, conducted by autonomous, self-governing military elites. And yet, paradoxically, the result of Desert Storm has been to seal the demise of that concept. In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, the boundaries between war and peace, soldiers and civilians, combatants and noncombatants, and the military and political spheres have become more difficult than ever to discern. In some instances, those boundaries have all but disappeared.

Operation Allied Force in the Balkans in 1999 was the fullest expression to date of that blurring phenomenon. During the entire 11-week campaign, the Clinton administration never budged from its insistence that the military action in progress did not really constitute a war. As the bombing of Serbia intensified, it became unmistakably clear that the United States and its NATO partners had given greater priority to protecting the lives of their own professional soldiers than to aiding the victims of ethnic cleansing or to avoiding noncombatant casualties. When NATO ultimately prevailed, it did so by making war not on the Yugoslavian army but on the Serbian people.

The consequences of this erosion of civil-military distinctions extend well beyond the operational sphere. One effect has been to undermine the military profession's traditional insistence on having wide latitude to frame the policies that govern the armed forces. At the same time, in areas quite unrelated to the planning and conduct of combat operations, policymakers have conferred ever greater authority on soldiers. Thus, although the Persian Gulf War elevated military credibility to its highest point in memory, when it comes to policy matters even remotely touching on gender, senior officers have no choice but to embrace the politically correct position—which is that in war, as in all other human endeavors, gender is irrelevant. To express a contrary conviction is to imperil one's career, something few generals and admirals are disposed to do.

Yet even as civilians dismiss the military's accumulated wisdom on matters relating to combat and unit cohesion, they thrust upon soldiers a wider responsibility for the formulation of foreign policy. The four-star officers presiding over commands in Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and the Pacific have displaced the State Department as the ultimate arbiters of policy in those regions.

The ill-fated visit of the USS *Cole* to Aden last October, for example, came not at the behest of some diplomatic functionary but on the order of General Anthony Zinni, the highly regarded Marine then serving as commander in chief (CINC) of U.S. Central Command, responsible for the Persian Gulf. Had Zinni expressed reservations about having a mixed-gender warship in his area of operations, he would, of course, have been denounced for commenting on matters beyond his purview. But no one would presume to say that Zinni was venturing into areas beyond his professional competence by dispatching the *Cole* in pursuit of (in his words) "more engagement"—part of a larger, misguided effort to befriend the Yemeni government.

Before his retirement, Zinni openly, and aptly, referred to the regional CINCs as "proconsuls." It's a boundary-blurring term: Proconsuls fill an imperial mandate, though Americans assure themselves that they neither possess nor wish to acquire an empire. Zinni is honest enough to acknowledge that, in the post-Cold War world, the CINC's function is quasi-imperial—like the role of General Douglas MacArthur presiding over occupied Japan. The CINC/proconsul projects American power, maintains order, enforces norms of behavior, and guards American interests. He has plainly become something more than a mere soldier. He straddles the worlds of politics, diplomacy, and military affairs, and moves easily among them. In so doing, he has freed himself from the strictures that once defined the limits of soldierly prerogatives.

Thus, when he stepped down as CINC near the end of the 2000 presidential campaign, Zinni felt no compunction about immediately entering the partisan fray. He announced that the policies of the administration he had served had all along been defective. With a clutch of other recently retired senior officers, he threw his support behind George W. Bush, an action intended to convey the impression that Bush was the military's preferred candidate.

Some critics have warned that no good can come of soldiers' engaging in partisan politics. Nonsense, is the response: When General Zinni endorses Bush, and when General Schwarzkopf stumps the state of Florida and denounces Democrats for allegedly disallowing military absentee ballots, they are merely exercising their constitutionally protected rights as citizens. The erosion of civil-military boundaries since the Persian Gulf War has emboldened

officers to engage in such activities, and the change reflects an increasingly overt politicization of the officer corps. According to a time-honored tradition, to be an American military professional was to be apolitical. If, in the past, the occasional general tossed his hat into the ring—as Dwight D. Eisenhower did in 1952—his party affiliation came as a surprise, and almost an afterthought. In the 1990s, with agenda-driven civilians intruding into military affairs and soldiers assuming the mantle of imperial proconsuls, the earlier tradition went by the board. And that, too, is part of the Gulf War's legacy.

But perhaps the most important aspect of the legacy is the war's powerful influence on how Americans now view both the immediate past and the immediate future. When it occurred near the tail end of the 20th century, just as the Cold War's final chapter was unfolding, the victory in the desert seemed to confirm that the years since the United States bounded on to the world stage in 1898 *had* been the "American Century" after all. Operation Desert Storm was interpreted as an indisputable demonstration of American superiority and made it plausible to believe once again that the rise of the United States to global dominance and the triumph of American

Before his retirement, General Zinni openly referred to the regional CINCs as "proconsuls."

values were the central themes of the century then at its close. In the collective public consciousness, the Persian Gulf War and the favorable conclusion of the Cold War were evidence that, despite two world wars, multiple episodes of genocide, and the mind-boggling criminality of totalitarianism, the 20th century had turned out basically all right. The war let Americans see contemporary history not as a chronicle of hubris, miscalculation, and tragedy, but as a march of progress, its arc ever upward. And that perspective—however much at odds with the postmodernism that pervades fashionable intellectual circles—fuels the grand expectations that Americans have carried into the new millennium.

Bill Clinton has declared the United States "the indispensable nation." According to Madeleine Albright, America has become the "organizing principal" of the global order. "If we have to use force," said Albright, "it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation.

We stand tall. We see further than other countries into the future." Such sentiments invite derision in sophisticated precincts. But they play well in Peoria, and accord precisely with what most Americans want to believe.

In 1898, a brief, one-sided war with Spain persuaded Americans, who knew their intentions were benign, that it was their destiny to shoulder a unique responsibility and uplift "little brown brother." Large complications ensued. In 1991, a brief, one-sided war with Iraq persuaded Americans, who thought they had deciphered the secrets of history, that the rising tide of globalization will bring the final triumph of American values. A decade after the fact, events in the Persian Gulf and its environs—the resurgence of Iraqi power under Saddam Hussein and the never-ending conflict between Israelis and Arabs—suggest that large complications will ensue once again.

As Operation Desert Storm recedes into the distance, its splendor fades. But its true significance comes into view. ■

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Albert Camus was an exemplary public intellectual, one of the relatively few who eschewed ideological certainties and embraced debate and compromise in politics. He is shown here in 1946.

WHY PUBLIC INTELLECTUALS?

In an age of ceaseless technological change, the need for historical and ethical perspective on public questions is greater than ever.

BY **JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN**

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SOME TIME AGO I SPENT A YEAR AT the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, where one of the pleasures is the opportunity to exchange ideas with scholars from other countries. One evening, a particularly animated member of an informal discussion group I had joined began to lament the sorry state of public intellectualism in the United States—this by contrast to her native France, and particularly Paris, with its dizzying clash of opinions. I remember being somewhat stung by her comments, and joined the others in shaking my head at the lackluster state of our public intellectual life. Why couldn't Americans be more like Parisians?

The moment passed rather quickly, at least in my case. I recalled just how thoroughly the French intellectual class—except for the rare dissenters, such as the estimable, brave, and lonely Albert Camus (1913-60)—had capitulated to the seductions of totalitarian logic, opposing fascism only to become apologists for what Camus called "the socialism of the gallows."

French political life would have been much healthier had France embraced Camus and his few compatriots rather than Jean-Paul Sartre and the many others of his kind who wore the mantle of the public intellectual. When Camus spoke in a political voice, he spoke as a citizen who understood politics to be a process that involves debate and compromise, not as an ideologue seeking to make politics conform to an overarching vision. In the end, Camus insisted, the ideologue's vision effectively destroys politics.

Perhaps, I reflected, America's peculiar blend of rough-and-ready pragmatism and a tendency to fret about the moral dimensions of public life—unsystematic and, from the viewpoint of lofty ideology, unsophisticated as this combination might be—was a better guarantor of constitutionalism and a healthy civil society than were intellectuals of the sort my French interlocutor favored. Historically, public intellectuals in America were, in fact, members of a wider public. They shared with other Americans access to religious and civic idioms that pressed the moral questions embedded in political debate; they were prepared to live, at least most of the time, with the give-and-take of political life, and they favored practical results over systems.

The American temperament invites wariness toward intellectuals. Because they are generally better at living in their heads than at keeping their feet on the ground, intellectuals are more vulnerable than others to the seductions of power that come with possessing a worldview whose logic promises to explain everything, and perhaps, in some glorious future, control and manage everything. The 20th century is littered with the disastrous consequences of such seductions, many of them spearheaded and defined by intellectuals

The American temperament invites wariness toward intellectuals.

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Anarchist, writer, and agitator Emma Goldman, shown here in New York in 1916, was one of the figures who created a new image of the public intellectual as antibourgeois radical.

who found themselves superseded, or even destroyed, by ruthless men of action once they were no longer needed as apologists, provocateurs, and publicists. The definitive crackup since 1989 of the political utopianism that enthralled so many 20th-century public intellectuals in the West prompts several important questions: Who, exactly, are the public intellectuals in contemporary America? Do we need them? And if we do, what should be their job description?

LET US NOT UNDERSTAND THESE QUESTIONS too narrowly. Every country's history is different. Many critics who bemoan the paucity of public intellectuals in America today have a constricted view of them—as a group of independent thinkers who, nonetheless, seem to think remarkably alike. In most accounts, they are left-wing, seek the overthrow of bourgeois convention, and spend endless hours (or at least did so once-upon-a-time) talking late into the night in smoke-filled cafés and Greenwich Village lofts. We owe this vision not only to the self-promotion of members of the group but to films such as Warren Beatty's *Reds*. But such accounts distort our understanding of American intellectual life. There was a life of the mind west of the Hudson River, too, as Louis Menand shows in his recent book, *The Metaphysical Club*. American intellectuals have come in a number of modes and have embraced a variety of approaches.

American public intellectual life is unintelligible if one ignores the extraordinary role once played by the Protestant clergy and similar thinkers.

But even Menand pays too little attention to an important part of the American ferment. American public intellectual life is unintelligible if one ignores the extraordinary role once played by the Protestant clergy and similar thinkers, from Jonathan Edwards in the 18th century through Reinhold Niebuhr in the 20th. The entire Social Gospel movement, from its late-19th-century origins through its heyday about the time of World War I, was an attempt by the intellectuals in America's clergy and seminaries to define an American civil religion and to bring a vision of something akin to the Peaceable Kingdom to fruition on earth, or at least in North America.

WALLACE KIRKLAND PAPERS (JAMC NEG. 613), UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO LIBRARY

A rooted intellectual: Jane Addams reads to children at Hull-House in the 1930s.

As universities became prominent homes for intellectual life, university-based intellectuals entered this already-established public discourse. They did so as generalists rather than as spokesmen for a discipline. In the minds of thinkers such as William James, George Herbert Mead, and John Dewey, there was no way to separate intellectual and political issues from larger moral concerns. Outside the university proper during the last decades of the 19th century and early decades of the 20th, there arose extraordinary figures such as Jane Addams and Randolph Bourne. These thinkers and social activists combined moral urgency and political engagement in their work. None trafficked in a totalizing ideology on the Marxist model of so many European intellectuals.

Addams, for example, insisted that the settlement house movement she pioneered in Chicago remain open, flexible,

An ardent socialist proclaimed that "socialism will cure the toothache."

and experimental—a communal home for what might be called organic intellectual life. Responding to the clash of the social classes that dominated the public life of her day, she spoke of the need for the classes to engage in "mutual interpretation," and for this to be done person to person. Addams stoutly resisted the lure of ideology—she told droll stories about the utopianism that was sometimes voiced in the Working Man's Social Science Club at Hull-House.

Addams saw in Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "Ethan Brand" an object lesson for intellectuals. Ethan Brand is a lime burner who leaves his village to search for the "Unpardonable Sin." And he finds it: an "intellect that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrificed everything to its mighty claims!" This pride of intellect, operating in public life, tries to force life to conform to an abstract model. Addams used the lesson of Ethan Brand in replying to the socialists who claimed that she refused to convert to their point of view because she was "caught in the coils of capitalism." In responding to her critics, Addams once described an exchange in one of the weekly Hull-House drawing room discussions. An ardent socialist proclaimed that "socialism will cure the toothache." A second fellow upped the ante by insisting that when every child's teeth were systematically cared for from birth, toothaches would disappear from the face of the earth. Addams, of course, knew that we would always have toothaches.

Addams, James, Dewey, and, later, Niebuhr shared a strong sense of living in a distinctly Protestant civic culture. That culture was assumed, whether one was a religious believer or not, and from the days of abolitionism through the struggle for women's suffrage and down to the civil rights movement of the 1960s, public intellectuals could appeal to its values. But Protestant civic culture thinned out with the rise of groups that had been excluded from the consensus (Catholics, Jews, Evangelical Christians), with the triumph of a generally secular, consumerist worldview, and with mainline Protestantism's abandonment of much of its own intellectual tradition in favor of a therapeutic ethos.

The consequence, for better and for worse, is that there is no longer a unified

intellectual culture to address—or to rebel against. Pundits of one sort or another often attempt to recreate such a culture rhetorically and to stoke old fears, as if we were fighting theocrats in the Massachusetts Bay Colony all over again. Raising the stakes in this way promotes a sense of self-importance by exaggerating what one is ostensibly up against. During the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, for example, those who were critical of the president's dubious use of the Oval Office were often accused of trying to resurrect the morality of Old Salem. A simple click of your television remote gives the lie to all such talk of a Puritan restoration: The screen is crowded with popular soft-core pornography packaged as confessional talk shows or self-help programs.

The specter of Old Salem is invoked in part because it provides, at least temporarily, a clear target for counterargument and gives television's talking heads an issue that seems to justify their existence. But the truth is that there are no grand, clear-cut issues around which public intellectuals, whether self-described media hounds or scholars yearning to break out of university-defined disciplinary boundaries, now rally. The overriding issues of three or four decades ago on which an unambiguous position was possible—above all, segregation and war—have given way to matters that are complex and murky. We now see in shades of gray rather than black and white. It is difficult to build a grand intellectual argument around how best to reform welfare, structure a tax cut, or protect the environment. Even many of our broader civic problems do not lend themselves to the sorts of thematic and cultural generalizations that have historically been the stuff of most public intellectual discourse.

MY POINT IS NOT THAT THE ISSUES Americans now face raise no major ethical or conceptual concerns; rather, these concerns are so complex, and the arguments from all sides often so compelling, that each side seems to have some part of the truth. That is why those who treat every issue as if it fit within the narrative of moral goodness on one side and venality and inequity on the other become so wearying. Most of us, whether or not we are part of what one wag rather uncharitably dubbed "the chattering classes," realize that matters are not so simple. That is one reason we often turn to expert researchers, who do not fit the historical profile of the public intellectual as omnicompetent generalist.

For example, well before today's mountains of empirical evidence came in, a number of intellectuals were writing about what appeared to be Americans' powerful disaffection from public life and from the work of civil society. Political theorists like me could speak to widespread discontents, but it was finally the empirical evidence presented by, among others, political scientist Robert Putman in his famous 1995 "Bowling Alone" essay that won these concerns a broad public hearing. In this instance, one finds disciplinary expertise put to the service of a public intellectual enterprise. That cuts against the grain of the culturally enshrined view of the public intellectual as a bold, lone intellect. Empirical researchers work in teams. They often have hordes of assistants. Their data are complex and must be translated for public consumption. Their work is very much the task of universities and think tanks, not of the public intellectual as heroic dissenter.

Yet it would be a mistake simply to let the experts take over. A case in point is the current debate over stem cell research and embryonic cloning for the purpose of "harvesting" stem cells. Anyone aware of the history of technological advance and the power of an insatiable desire for profit understands that such harvesting is a first step toward cloning, and that irresponsible individuals and companies are already moving in that direction. But because the debate is conducted in highly technical terms, it is very difficult for the generalist, or any nonspecialist, to find a point of entry. If you are not prepared to state an authoritative view on whether adult stem cells have the "pluripotent" potential of embryonic stem cells, you may as well keep your mouth shut. The technical debate excludes most citizens and limits the involvement of nonscientists who think about the long-range political implications of projects that bear a distinct eugenics cast.

It would be a mistake simply to let the experts take over.

Genetic "enhancement," as it is euphemistically called, will eventually become a eugenics project, meant to perfect the genetic composition of the human race. But our public life is so dominated by short-term considerations that someone who brings to the current genetic debate such a *historical* understanding sounds merely alarmist.

This kind of understanding does not sit well with the can-do, upbeat American temperament. Americans are generally relieved to have moral and political urgency swamped by technicalities. This is hardly new. During the Cold War, debators who had at their fingertips the latest data on missile throw-weights could trump the person who was not *that* sort of expert—but who wasn't a naif either, who had read her Thucydides, and who thought there were alternatives to mutually assured destruction.

AMERICANS PREFER CHEERLEADERS to naysayers. We tend to concentrate on the positive side of the ledger and refuse to conjure with the negative features—whether actual or potential—of social reform or technological innovation. Americans notoriously lack a sense of tragedy, or even, as Reinhold Niebuhr insisted, a recognition of the ironies of our own history. By naysayers I do not refer to those who, at the drop of a hat, issue a pre-fabricated condemnation of more-or-less anything going on in American politics and popular culture. I mean those who recognize that there are always losers when there are winners, and that it has never been the case in the history of any society that the benefits of a change or innovation fall evenly on all groups.

It has never been the case in the history of any society that the benefits of a change or innovation fall evenly on all groups.

Whenever I heard the wonders of the "information superhighway" extolled during America's years of high-tech infatuation, my mind turned to the people who would inevitably be found sitting in antiquated jalopies in the breakdown lane. It isn't easy to get Americans to think about such things. One evening, on a nightly news show, I debated a dot.com millionaire who proclaimed that the enormous wealth and expertise being amassed by rich techno-whiz kids would soon allow us to realize a cure for cancer, the end of urban gridlock, and world peace. World peace would follow naturally from market globalization. Having the right designer label on your jeans would be the glue that held people together, from here to Beijing. When I suggested that this was pretty thin civic glue, the gentleman in question looked at me as if I were a member of some

extinct species. It was clear that he found such opinions not only retrograde but nearly unintelligible.

The dot.com millionaire's attitude exemplified a larger American problem: the dangers of an excess of pride, not just for individuals but for the culture as a whole. It isn't easy in our public intellectual life, or in our church life, for that matter, to get Americans to think about anything to do with sin, the focus of much public intellectual discourse in America from Edwards to Niebuhr. We are comfortable with "syndromes." The word has a soothing, therapeutic sound. But the sin of pride, in the form of a triumphalist stance that recognizes no limits to human striving, is another matter.

The moral voices—the Jane Addamses and Reinhold Niebuhrs—that once had real public clout and that warned us against our tendency toward cultural pride and triumphalism seem no longer to exist, or at least to claim an audience anywhere near the size they once did. There are a few such voices in our era, but they tend not to be American. I think of President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic, who has written unabashedly against what happens when human beings, in his words, forget that they are not God or godlike. Here is Havel, in a lecture reprinted in the journal *First Things* (March 1995):

> The relativization of all moral norms, the crisis of authority, the reduction of life to the pursuit of immediate material gain without regard for its general consequences—the very things Western democracy is most criticized for—do not originate in democracy but in that which modern man has lost: his transcendental anchor, and along with it the only genuine source of his responsibility and self-respect. Given its fatal incorrigibility, humanity probably will have to go through many more Rwandas and Chernobyls before it understands how unbelievably short-sighted a human being can be who has forgotten that he is not God.

Our era is one of forgetting. If there is a role for the public intellectual, it is to insist that we *remember*, and that remembering is a moral act requiring the greatest intellectual and moral clarity. In learning to remember the Holocaust, we have achieved a significant (and lonely) success. Yet to the extent that we now see genocide as a historical anomaly unique to a particular regime or people, or,

If there is a role for the public intellectual, it is to insist that we *remember*, and that remembering is a moral act requiring the greatest intellectual and moral clarity.

alternatively, as a historical commonplace that allows us to brand every instance of political killing a holocaust, we have failed to achieve clarity. The truth lies somewhere between.

Where techno-enthusiasm and utopia are concerned, we are far gone on the path of forgetting. One already sees newspaper ads offering huge financial rewards to young egg donors *if* they have SAT scores of at least 1400 or above, stand at least 5'10" tall, and are athletic. The "designer genes" of the future are talked about in matter-of-fact tones. Runaway technological utopianism, because it presents itself to us with the imprimatur of science, has an automatic authority in American culture that ethical thinkers, intellectual generalists, the clergy, and those with a sense of historic irony and tragedy no longer enjoy. The lay Catholic magazine *Commonwealth* may editorialize against our newfangled modes of trading in human flesh—against what amounts to a "world where persons carry a price tag, and where the cash value of some persons is far greater than that of others." But the arguments seem to reach only those who are already persuaded. Critics on the environmental left and the social-conservative right who question techno-triumphalism fare no better. Instead of being seen as an early warning system—speaking unwelcome truths and reminding us what happens when people are equated with their genetic potential—the doubters are dismissed as a rear guard standing in the way of progress.

SO THIS IS OUR SITUATION. MANY OF our pressing contemporary issues—issues that are not often construed as intrinsically political but on which politics has great bearing—raise daunting moral concerns. The concerns cannot be dealt with adequately without a strong ethical framework, a historical sensibility, and an awareness of human limits and tragedies. But such qualities are in short supply in an era of specialization and technological triumphalism. Those who seize the microphone and can bring the almost automatic authority

of science to their side are mostly apologists for the coming new order. Those who warn about this new order's possible baneful effects and consequences can be marginalized as people who refuse, stubbornly, to march in time, or who illegitimately seek to import to the public arena concerns that derive from religion.

We are so easily dazzled. We are so proud. If we *can* do it, we *must* do it. We must be first in all things—and if we become serious about bringing ethical restraint to bear on certain technologies, we may fall behind country X or country Y. And that seems un-American. The role for public intellectuals under such circumstances is to step back and issue thoughtful warnings. But where is the venue for this kind of discourse? Where is the training ground for what political theorist Michael Walzer calls "connected critics," thinkers who identify strongly with their culture, who do not traffic in facile denunciations of the sort we hear every night on television (along with equally facile cheerleading), but who speak to politics in a moral voice that is not narrowly moralizing? That question underlies much of the debate about the state of civil society that occurred during the past decade. The writers and thinkers who warned about the decline of American civil society were concerned about finding not just more effective ways to reach desirable ends in public policy but about finding ways to stem the rushing tide of consumerism, of privatization and civic withdrawal, of public apathy and disengagement. We will not stem that tide without social structures and institutions that promote a fuller public conversation about the questions that confront us.

Whenever I speak about the quality of our public life before civic groups, I find a real hunger for public places like Hull-House. Americans yearn for forums where they can engage and interpret the public questions of our time, and where a life of the mind can emerge and grow communally, free of the fetters of overspecialization. Without an engaged public, there can be no true public conversations, and no true public intellectuals. At Hull-House, Jane Addams spoke in a civic and ethical idiom shaped and shared by her fellow citizens. The voices of the Hull-House public served as a check on narrow, specialized, and monolithic points of view. It was from this rich venue that Addams launched herself into the public debates of her time. Where are the institutions for

such discussion today? How might we create them? It is one of the many ironies of their vocation that contemporary public intellectuals can no longer presume a public.

Intellectuals and others who speak in a public moral voice do not carry a card that says "Have Ideology, Will Talk." Instead, they embrace Hannah Arendt's description of the task of the political theorist as one who helps us to *think* about what we are doing. In a culture that is always doing, the responsibility to think is too often evaded. Things move much too fast. The role for public intellectuals today is to bestir the quiet voice of ethically engaged reason. ■

JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN (1941–2013) was the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago. She was the author of many books, including *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy* (2001).

Joseph Brodsky

GIORGIA FIORIO / CONTRASTO / REDUX

THE POETRY OF JOSEPH BRODSKY

During the 1990s, the *WQ* published a regular poetry feature edited by a series of distinguished poets, who selected and introduced the works of other writers past and present. After the death of our first poetry editor, the Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky, Anthony Hecht, one of his successors, published this tribute in our Summer 1996 issue. Brodsky's own appreciation of Zbigniew Herbert, the inaugural piece in the poetry series, can be seen here.

BY **ANTHONY HECHT**

By ANTHONY HECHT

IN AN ELOQUENT TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH Brodsky, published almost exactly a month after his premature and widely lamented death, Tatyana Tolstaya, in *The New York Review of Books*, quotes some lines from the poet's early work:

> In the dark I won't find your deep blue façade
> I'll fall on the asphalt between the crossed lines

She goes on to conjecture: "I think that the reason he didn't want to return to Russia even for a day was so that this incautious prophecy would not come to be. A student of—among others—Akhmatova and Tsvetaeva (he knew their poetic superstitiousness), he knew the conversation they had during their one and only meeting. 'How could you write that. . . . Don't you know that a poet's words always come true?' one of them reproached. 'And how could you write that . . . ?' the other was amazed. And what they foretold did indeed come to pass."

Without any desire to sound mystical, I do think something prophetic can be claimed for Brodsky's poetry, or at least for two details, one of them small, the other large and visionary. The first is from a poem actually titled "A Prophecy," addressed to an unnamed beloved, and containing these lines:

> —And if
> we make a child, we'll call the boy Andrei,
> Anna the girl, so that our Russian speech,
> imprinted on its wrinkled little face,
> shall never be forgot.

Joseph (as everyone who ever knew him was allowed affectionately to call him) was the father of two children, a boy born in Russia, still there, from whom he was separated by involuntary exile, and a daughter, born in America to his Russian-Italian wife, Maria. The children are named Andrei and Anna.

The larger, more spacious and important prophecy is embodied in a major poem, "The Hawk's Cry in Autumn" (printed here in full), of which Tolstaya remarks in the same tribute: "He has a poem about a hawk . . . in the hills of Massachusetts who flies so high that the rush of rising air won't let him descend back to earth, and the hawk perishes there, at those heights where there are

neither birds nor people, nor any air to breathe."

To this brief comment I would like to add some of my own. The wind with which the poem begins is the wind of the spirit (John 3:8) as well as of inspiration, the necessary (and destructive) element in which the poet tries to dwell. The bird, at the pinnacle of his flight, *guesses the truth of it: it's the end*. The Erínyes (Furies) themselves are invoked, as though the aspiration to great heights must necessarily entail retributive punishment, as exemplified in Greek tragedy. And, echoing another ancient tradition, the agony and sacrifice of the bird/poet precipitates a thing of beauty, the first snowflakes of winter, the poems of a soul that has sustained the punishing climate of Archangelic Russia. The brilliance that delights earthbound children has been purchased at the price of unendurable suffering and death. Whether Brodsky's wind owes anything to Percy Bysshe Shelley's annihilating "West wind," whether the Russian poet's hawk is any kin to Gerard Manley Hopkins's falcon, Thomas Hardy's darkling thrush or his blinded bird, each reader must determine for himself. And can it be that this assertion of Rainer Maria Rilke's played some part in Brodsky's thought?: "Whoever does not consecrate himself wholly to art with all his wishes and values can never reach the highest goal."

In his collection of essays, *Less Than One*, Brodsky has written so movingly about his early life that I will present here only the most meager biographical details. He was born Iosif Alexandrovich Brodsky on May 24, 1940, in Leningrad, the only child of adoring and adored parents so straitened of circumstances that the boy quit school after ninth grade to help support the family. He held more than a dozen jobs, including milling-machine operator, helper in a morgue (he once thought he might wish to become a doctor), photographer (his father's work at one time), and participant in geological expeditions. Despite his limited formal schooling, his love of poetry led him to learn Polish, English, German, Spanish, Italian, and French, as well as Latin, in a determination to acquaint himself with all the world's great poetry. He began writing his own poems in his teens, and earned money by translating Serbo-Croatian and Spanish poetry into Russian. He also translated the poems of John Donne and other Metaphysical poets, and two plays, *The Quare Fellow and Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern Are Dead*. In 1964 he was forced into a "psychiatric hospital" and then arraigned at a show trial, charged

with "parasitism" and with writing "anti-Soviet poetry that would corrupt the young." What this actually meant was absolute state disapproval of a poetic credo Brodsky expressed in his Nobel Lecture: "A work of art, of literature especially, and a poem in particular, addresses a man tête-à-tête, entering with him into direct—free of any go-betweens—relations." What Brodsky means, of course, is not only the necessary absence of censors but also the need for a literature disburdened of ulterior (which is to say, political) motives. He was sentenced to five years of degrading hard labor, but after the sentence provoked unambiguously condemnatory outcries from all over the world as well as within Soviet intellectual circles, it was "commuted" to exile. He left behind everything he loved: parents, language, son, home, and, with the help of W. H. Auden and the Academy of American Poets, made his way to his first teaching job in America, at the University of Michigan, under the watchful care of Carl and Ellendea Proffer.

The condition of exile is rarely easy, but Brodsky, fortified by a temperament both cheerful and mordantly sardonic, taking now as his domain the global landscape, the cold galactic emptinesses, the whole range of human history, set about his poetic task with fierce and undiscourageable industry. In the course of only a few years, he acquired an international audience of admiring readers, among them the members of the Swedish Academy. This recognition was accompanied by a blissful marriage to a beautiful woman, half-Russian, half-Italian, and the birth of a daughter, named Anna, probably in homage to Brodsky's "discoverer" and poetic heroine, Akhmatova, and in fulfillment of a pledge. But these blessings were of the briefest duration, cut short by his death at the age of 55.

His poems are not easy; nor are they difficult in the familiar manner of, say, John Donne or William Empson. In their original Russian, they observe demanding formal patterns combined at times with an informality of diction that can be witty and irreverent, and are usually filled with unexpected, almost balletic leaps of the imagination. The Russian also evokes a playfulness that no English version can quite as gracefully convey. So richly furnished are the rueful and the comedic aspects of his work, his irony and bravado, that a willing reader will find enormous delights, enviable gifts, large spans of imaginative life that have

not been lost in translation. In the time allotted to him, cut short by addictive smoking that endangered a heart already badly damaged by penal servitude (and for which he had undergone two by-pass operations and was scheduled for a third), he managed somehow to acquaint himself as an intimate with the greatest poets of all periods, to feel at home (if, as an exile, nowhere else) at least in their demanding company, and able to sustain companionship with their best work in what must be thought of as a widely comprehensive multilingual anthology that he was apt to have almost exactly by heart.

LETTER TO AN ARCHAEOLOGIST

Citizen, enemy, mama's boy, sucker, utter
garbage, panhandler, swine, *refujew*, *verrucht*;
a scalp so often scalded with boiling water
that the puny brain feels completely cooked.
Yes, we have dwelt here: in this concrete, brick, wooden
rubble which you now arrive to sift.
All our wires were crossed, barbed, tangled, or interwoven.
Also: we didn't love our women, but they conceived.
Sharp is the sound of the pickax that hurts dead iron;
still, it's gentler than what we've been told or have said ourselves.
Stranger! move carefully through our carrion:
what seems carrion to you is freedom to our cells.
Leave our names alone. Don't reconstruct those vowels,
consonants, and so forth: they won't resemble larks
but a demented bloodhound whose maw devours
its own traces, feces, and barks, and barks.

ON LOVE

Twice I woke up tonight and wandered to
the window. And the lights down on the street,
like pale omission points, tried to complete
the fragment of a sentence spoken through
sleep, but diminished into darkness, too.

I'd dreamt that you were pregnant, and in spite
of having lived so many years apart
I still felt guilty and my heartened palm
caressed your belly as, by the bedside,
it fumbled for my trousers and the light-

switch on the wall. And with the bulb turned on
I knew that I was leaving you alone
there, in the darkness, in the dream, where calmly
you waited till I might return,
not trying to reproach or scold me

for the unnatural hiatus. For
darkness restores what light cannot repair.
There we are married, blest, we make once more
the two-backed beast and children are the fair
excuse of what we're naked for.

Some future night you will appear again.
You'll come to me, worn out and thin now, after
things in between, and I'll see son or daughter
not named as yet. This time I will restrain
my hand from groping for the switch, afraid

and feeling that I have no right
to leave you both like shadows by that sever-
ing fence of days that bar your sight,
voiceless, negated by the real light
that keeps me unattainable forever.

ODYSSEUS TO TELEMACHUS

My dear Telemachus,
The Trojan War
is over now; I don't recall who won it.
The Greeks, no doubt, for only they would leave
so many dead so far from their own homeland.
But still, my homeward way has proved too long.
While we were wasting time there, old Poseidon,
it almost seems, stretched and extended space.

I don't know where I am or what this place
can be. It would appear some filthy island,
with bushes, buildings, and great grunting pigs.
A garden choked with weeds; some queen or other.
Grass and huge stones . . . Telemachus, my son!
To a wanderer the faces of all islands
resemble one another. And the mind
trips, numbering waves; eyes, sore from sea horizons,
run; and the flesh of water stuffs the ears.
I can't remember how the war came out;
even how old you are—I can't remember.

Grow up, then, my Telemachus, grow strong.
Only the gods know if we'll see each other
again. You've long since ceased to be that babe
before whom I reined in the plowing bullocks.
Had it not been for Palamedes' trick
we two would still be living in one household.
But maybe he was right; away from me
you are quite safe from all Oedipal passions,
and your dreams, my Telemachus, are blameless.

THE HAWK'S CRY IN AUTUMN

Wind from the northwestern quarter is lifting him high above
the dove-gray, crimson, umber, brown
Connecticut Valley. Far beneath,
chickens daintily pause and move
unseen in the yard of the tumbledown
farmstead; chipmunks blend with the heath.

Now adrift on the airflow, unfurled, alone,
all that he glimpses—the hills' lofty, ragged
ridges, the silver stream that threads
quivering like a living bone
of steel, badly notched with rapids,
the townships like strings of beads

strewn across New England. Having slid down to nil
thermometers—those household gods in niches—
freeze, inhibiting thus the fire
of leaves and churches' spires. Still,

no churches for him. In the windy reaches,
undreamt of by the most righteous choir,

he soars in a cobalt-blue ocean, his beak clamped shut,
his talons clutched tight into his belly
—claws balled up like a sunken fist—
sensing in each wisp of down the thrust
from below, glinting back the berry
of his eyeball, heading south-southeast

to the Rio Grande, the Delta, the beech groves and farther still:
to a nest hidden in the mighty groundswell
of grass whose edges no fingers trust,
sunk amid forest's odors, filled
with splinters of red-speckled eggshell,
with a brother or a sister's ghost.

The heart overgrown with flesh, down, feather, wing,
pulsing at feverish rate, nonstopping,
propelled by internal heat and sense,
the bird goes slashing and scissoring
the autumnal blue, yet by the same swift token,
enlarging it at the expense

of its brownish speck, barely registering on the eye,
a dot, sliding far above the lofty
pine tree; at the expense of the empty look
of that child, arching up at the sky,
that couple that left the car and lifted
their heads, that woman on the stoop.

But the uprush of air is still lifting him
higher and higher. His belly feathers
feel the nibbling cold. Casting a downward gaze,
he sees the horizon growing dim,
he sees, as it were, the features
of the first thirteen colonies whose

chimneys all puff out smoke. Yet it's their total within his sight
that tells the bird of his elevation,
of what altitude he's reached this trip.
What am I doing at such a height?
He senses a mixture of trepidation
and pride. Heeling over a tip

of wing, he plummets down. But the resilient air
bounces him back, winging up to glory,
to the colorless icy plane.
His yellow pupil darts a sudden glare
of rage, that is, a mix of fury
and terror. So once again

he turns and plunges down. But as walls return
rubber balls, as sins send a sinner to faith, or near,
he's driven upward this time as well!
He! whose innards are still so warm!
Still higher! Into some blasted ionosphere!
That astronomically objective hell

of birds that lacks oxygen, and where the milling stars
play millet served from a plate or a crescent.
What, for the bipeds, has always meant
height, for the feathered is the reverse.
Not with his puny brain but with shriveled air sacs
he guesses the truth of it: it's the end.

And at this point he screams. From the hooklike beak
there tears free of him and flies *ad luminem*
the sound Erínyes make to rend
souls: a mechanical, intolerable shriek,
the shriek of steel that devours aluminum;
"mechanical," for it's meant

for nobody, for no living ears:
not man's, not yelping foxes',
not squirrels' hurrying to the ground
from branches; not for tiny field mice whose tears
can't be avenged this way, which forces
them into their burrows. And only hounds

lift up their muzzles. A piercing, high-pitched squeal,
more nightmarish than the D-sharp grinding
of the diamond cutting glass,
slashes the whole sky across. And the world seems to reel
for an instant, shuddering from this rending.
For the warmth burns space in the highest as

badly as some iron fence down here
brands incautious gloveless fingers.
We, standing where we are, exclaim
"There!" and see far above the tear
that is a hawk, and hear the sound that lingers
in wavelets, a spider skein

swelling notes in ripples across the blue vault of space
whose lack of echo spells, especially in October,
an apotheosis of pure sound.
And caught in this heavenly patterned lace,
starlike, spangled with hoarfrost powder,
silver-clad, crystal-bound,

the bird sails to the zenith, to the dark-blue high
of azure. Through binoculars we foretoken
him, a glittering dot, a pearl.
We hear something ring out in the sky,
like some family crockery being broken,
slowly falling aswirl,

yet its shards, as they reach our palms, don't hurt
but melt when handled. And in a twinkling,
once more one makes out curls, eyelets, strings,
rainbowlike, multicolored, blurred
commas, ellipses, spirals, linking
heads of barley, concentric rings—

the bright doodling pattern the feather once possessed,
a map, now a mere heap of flying
pale flakes that make a green slope appear
white. And the children, laughing and brightly dressed,
swarm out of doors to catch them, crying
with a loud shout in English, "Winter's here!" ■

ANTHONY HECHT (1923-2004) was a poet, critic, and university professor. The author of many books of prose and poetry, he won numerous honors, including a Pulitzer Prize, and served as Poet Laureate Consultant to the Library of Congress from 1982 to 1984. He was a poetry editor of *The Wilson Quarterly* from 1994 to 1999.

The Wedding Dance (1566), by Pieter Brueghel the Elder

DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

A HISTORY OF THE PAST: LIFE REEKED WITH JOY

One of the most popular *WQ* essays ever (and by far the funniest) was Anders Henriksson's brief history of Europe as told through the peculiar observations he had culled from papers written by college freshmen he had taught in Canada. As we wrote in introducing the piece in the Spring 1983 issue, paraphrasing George Santayana, "Those who forget history are condemned to mangle it."

COMPILED BY **ANDERS HENRIKSSON**

Compiled by ANDERS HENRIKSSON

HISTORY, AS WE KNOW, IS ALWAYS bias, because human beings have to be studied by other human beings, not by independent observers of another species.

During the Middle Ages, everbody was middle aged. Church and state were co-operatic. Middle Evil society was made up of monks, lords, and surfs. It is unfortunate that we do not have a medivel European laid out on a table before us, ready for dissection. After a revival of infantile commerce slowly creeped into Europe, merchants appeared. Some were sitters and some were drifters. They roamed from town to town exposing themselves and organized big fairies in the countryside. Mideval people were violent. Murder during this period was nothing. Everybody killed someone. England fought numerously for land in France and ended up wining and losing. The Crusades were a series of military expaditions made by Christians seeking to free the holy land (the "Home Town" of Christ) from the Islams.

In the 1400 hundreds most Englishmen were perpendicular. A class of yeowls arose. Finally, Europe caught the Black Death. The bubonic plague is a social disease in the sense that it can be transmitted by intercourse and other etceteras. It was spread from port to port by inflected rats. Victims of the Black Death grew boobs on their necks. The plague also helped the emergance of the English language as the national language of England, France and Italy.

Middle Evil society was made up of monks, lords, and surfs.

The Middle Ages slimpared to a halt. The renasence bolted in from the blue. Life reeked with joy. Italy became robust, and more individuals felt the value of their human being. Italy, of course, was much closer to the rest of the world, thanks to northern Europe. Man was determined to civilise himself and his brothers, even if heads had to roll! It became sheik to be educated. Art was on a more associated level. Europe was full of incredable churches with great art bulging out their doors. Renaissance merchants were beautiful and almost lifelike.

The Reformnation happened when German nobles resented the idea that tithes were going to Papal France or the Pope thus enriching Catholic coiffures. Traditions had become oppressive so they too were crushed in the wake of man's quest for ressurection above the not-just-social beast he had become. An angry Martin Luther nailed 95 theocrats to a church door. Theologically, Luthar was into reorientation mutation. Calvinism was the most convenient religion since the days of the ancients. Anabaptist services tended to be migratory. The Popes, of course, were usually Catholic. Monks went right on seeing themselves as worms. The last Jesuit priest died in the 19th century.

The German Emperor's lower passage was blocked by the French for years and years.

After the refirmation were wars both foreign and infernal. If the Spanish could gain the Netherlands they would have a stronghold throughout northern Europe which would include their posetions in Italy, Burgangy, central Europe and India thus serrounding France. The German Emperor's lower passage was blocked by the French for years and years.

Louis XIV became King of the Sun. He gave the people food and artillery. If he didn't like someone, he sent them to the gallows to row for the rest of their lives. Vauban was the royal minister of flirtation. In Russia the 17th century was known as the time of the bounding of the serfs. Russian nobles wore clothes only to humour Peter the Great. Peter filled his government with accidental people and built a new capital near the European boarder. Orthodox priests became government antennae.

The enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltare wrote a book called *Candy* that got him into trouble with Frederick the Great. Philosophers were unknown yet, and the fundamental stake was one of religious toleration slightly confused with defeatism. France was in a very serious state. Taxation was a great drain on the state budget. The French revolution was accomplished before it happened. The revolution evolved through monarchial, republican and tolarian phases until it catapulted into Napolean. Napoleon was ill with bladder problems and was very tense and unrestrained.

History, a record of things left behind by past generations, started in 1815. Throughout the comparatively radical years 1815–1870 the western European continent was undergoing a Rampant period of economic modification. Industrialization was precipitating in England. Problems were so complexicated that in Paris, out of a city population of one million people, two million able bodies were on the loose.

Great Brittian, the USA and other European countrys had demicratic leanings. The middle class was tired and needed a rest. The old order could see the lid holding down new ideas beginning to shake. Among the goals of the chartists were universal suferage and an anal parliment. Voting was to be done by ballad.

A new time zone of national unification roared over the horizon. Founder of the new Italy was Cavour, an intelligent Sardine from the north. Nationalism aided Itally because nationalism is the growth of an army. We can see that nationalism succeeded for Itally because of France's big army. Napoleon III-IV mounted the French thrown. One thinks of Napoleon III as a live extension of the late, but great, Napoleon. Here too was the new Germany: loud, bold, vulgar and full of reality.

Culture fomented from Europe's tip to its top. Richard Strauss, who was violent but methodical like his wife made him, plunged into vicious and perverse plays. Dramatized were adventures in seduction and abortion. Music reeked with reality. Wagner was master of music, and people did not forget his contribution. When he died they labeled his seat "historical." Other countries had their own artists. France had Chekhov.

Founder of the new Italy was Cavour, an intelligent Sardine from the north.

World War I broke out around 1912–1914. Germany was on one side of France and Russia was on the other. At war people get killed, and then they aren't people any more, but friends. Peace was proclaimed at Versigh, which was attended by George Loid, Primal Minister of England. President Wilson arrived with 14 pointers. In 1937 Lenin revolted Russia. Communism raged among the peasants, and the civil war "team colours" were red and white.

Germany was displaced after WWI. This gave rise to Hitler. Germany was morbidly overexcited and unbalanced.

Berlin became the decadent capital, where all forms of sexual deprivations were practised. A huge anti-semantic movement arose. Attractive slogans like "death to all Jews" were used by governmental groups. Hitler remilitarized the Rineland over a squirmish between Germany and France. The appeasers were blinded by the great red of the Soviets. Moosealini rested his foundations on eight million bayonets and invaded Hi Lee Salasy. Germany invaded Poland, France invaded Belgium, and Russia invaded everybody. War screeched to an end when a nukuleer explosion was dropped on Heroshima. A whole generation had been wipe out in two world wars, and their forlorne families were left to pick up the peaces.

According to Fromm, individuation began historically in medieval times. This was a period of small childhood. There is increasing experience as adolescence experiences its life development. The last stage is us. ■

ANDERS HENRIKSSON is a professor of history at Shepherd University, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. In addition to scholarly works such as *The Tsar's Loyal Germans* (1983), he is the author of *Non Campus Mentis: World History According to College Students* (2001) and *College in a Nutskull* (2010).

IN ESSENCE

OUR SURVEY OF NOTABLE ARTICLES FROM OTHER JOURNALS AND MAGAZINES




FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

SAVE THE NUKES!
From *Foreign Policy*

DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY
From *Foreign Affairs*

THE CONSERVATIVE CASE AGAINST WAR
From *The Independent Review*

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

A RUBE GOLDBERG GOVERNMENT
From *National Affairs*

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?
From *Journal of Economic Perspectives*

ARTS & LETTERS

ART IMITATES ART
From *Raritan*

SOCIETY

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN
From *The Hedgehog Review*

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

TOURING AUSCHWITZ
From *History & Memory*

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

TECH'S BLIND SPOTS
From *Democracy*

OTHER NATIONS

MISSING SIGNAL
From *The Middle East Journal*

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

SAVE THE NUKES!

THE SOURCE: "Think Again: American Nuclear Disarmament" by Matthew Kroenig, in ***Foreign Policy***, Sept.–Oct. 2013.

NOW THAT THE COLD WAR IS OVER, IT MAY BE hard to see why the United States needs a large nuclear arsenal. It's excessive; it's provocative; it's irresponsible; and it's expensive, critics say—especially at a time when the country enjoys unparalleled conventional military superiority. Disarmament is no longer an exclusively left-wing cause. In 2007, a bipartisan group of foreign-policy establishment figures, including former secretary of state Henry Kissinger, called for a push toward "a world free of nuclear weapons." President Barack Obama has proposed reducing the U.S. nuclear arsenal to 1,000 warheads, the smallest number since 1953.

Bad idea, argues Matthew Kroenig, a political scientist at Georgetown University. Writing in *Foreign Policy*, he says that the illusion that nuclear weapons no longer matter has been fostered by the

KARPOV SERGEI ITAR-TASS PHOTOS / NEWSCOM

Last May, Topol-M missile launchers rumbled through Moscow's Red Square in preparation for a military parade. Russia still has 1,800 deployed nuclear weapons and another 2,700 in storage, a total that exceeds the U.S. arsenal by 800. The number of deployed weapons on each side is slated to decline to 1,550 by 2017. Seven other nations together possess an estimated 1,125 nuclear weapons.

muting of great-power rivalry since the collapse of the Soviet Union. But other nations don't see things that way: "Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea are modernizing or expanding their nuclear arsenals, and Iran is vigorously pursuing its own nuclear capability," Kroenig says. And China, which now has only an estimated 50 warheads capable of reaching the United States, looks likely to revive the great-power struggle.

Yale political scientist Paul Bracken argues that the world is on the verge of a "second nuclear age" and that nuclear weapons are re-emerging as "a vital element of statecraft and power politics."

Some critics maintain that it would require only a small nuclear arsenal to deter these rising powers, but Kroenig's research supports the opposite view. "In a statistical analysis of all nuclear-armed countries from 1945 to 2001 . . . the state with more warheads was only one-third as likely to be challenged militarily by other countries and more than 10 times more likely to prevail in a crisis."

History repeats this lesson. When the United States could demonstrate clear nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union, it enjoyed more favorable foreign-policy outcomes. Not only did Washington prevent Moscow from building submarine bases in Cuba, but in 1967 and again in 1973, Washington's nuclear advantage kept Soviet forces from supporting Arab allies in their wars against Israel. However, in 1979, when the nuclear gap narrowed, the United States failed to roll back the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea are modernizing or expanding their nuclear arsenals.

Some strategists argue that a large arsenal is provocative, increasing the likelihood of a preemptive attack from another nuclear power. The Obama administration has embraced this view, identifying "strategic stability" as a goal and proposing a new agreement with Russia further reducing the current treaty limit of 1,550 warheads in 2017. Kroenig sees tortured logic behind the notion that arsenals are provocative: "After all, the United States possesses a first-strike advantage against the world's 184 nonnuclear states, and it doesn't wring its hands about that." Why fret about nuclear superiority over Russia and China? Beijing might even regard any U.S. arms reduction less as a reassuring gesture than as a prime opportunity to catch up.

Still another argument for reducing the American nuclear arsenal is that in leading by example, Washington would promote global nonproliferation. Kroenig's short answer: "Keep dreaming." The United States has been cutting its nuclear forces since the 1960s, and there's no evidence that these efforts have reduced worldwide proliferation. Indeed, Kroenig notes, the pathbreaking 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was ratified at a peak moment of U.S. nuclear capacity.

Shrinking the arsenal isn't even cost effective, Kroenig contends. Most of the cost is in the infrastructure, not the weapons themselves, and nuclear programs make up only four percent of the U.S. defense budget. Demilitarizing bombs and weapon-building facilities would cost billions. It's true that the United States could save approximately $3.9 billion annually by delaying the modernization of missiles and other delivery vehicles, but that's "nothing short of trivial" compared to the $600 billion spent on defense each year. And the compelling rationale that fostered the U.S. nuclear buildup in the 1950s still applies today: Nuclear weapons are a much cheaper form of deterrence than conventional armies.

There is a simple principle at the bottom of Kroenig's argument: "The more devastating that adversaries find the prospect of nuclear war, the less likely they will be to start trouble." He thinks the Obama administration ought to abandon its talk of further reducing the nuclear weapons count and "follow through on its promise to fully modernize U.S. nuclear infrastructure." ■

DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

THE SOURCE: "Defense on a Diet" by Melvyn P. Leffler, in ***Foreign Affairs***, Nov.–Dec. 2013.

A LOOMING NEW AGE OF AUSTERITY IN defense is causing great anxiety in Washington. "We have to remember the lessons of history," President Barack Obama declared in 2012. "We can't afford to repeat the mistakes that have been made in the past—after World War II, after Vietnam—when our military policy was left ill prepared for the future."

What mistakes? asks Melvyn P. Leffler, a University of Virginia historian. "History shows us that austerity can help, rather than hurt," he writes in *Foreign Affairs*. Reduced defense spending usually concentrates the minds of decision makers, forcing them to think more creatively and realistically about strategy. For the most part, the consequences of past cuts

Nixon's opening to China was a product of austerity in defense.

in Pentagon spending were good.

The classic cautionary tale about austerity is America's deep defense cutbacks after World War I, when military spending suddenly dropped from 17 percent of gross domestic product to two percent, and the Army shrank by 96 percent. But "generations of dispassionate scholarship" since Pearl Harbor, Leffler writes, have shown that austerity "neither compromised U.S. security nor thwarted significant technological innovation." Rather, "what left the United States unprepared for the gathering storm was a flawed threat perception and inept diplomacy."

As the likelihood of war rose in 1940, U.S. policymakers scrambled to devise a strategy suited to their scant resources until America could fully mobilize. They came up with a good one: prevent Germany from invading Britain, dominating the Atlantic sea lanes, and incorporating northwestern Europe's resources into the Nazi war machine. Everything else was secondary.

After the war, President Harry S. Truman and his Republican opponents were united in their eagerness to balance the budget and fight inflation; this rare confluence of interests ensured another round of deep defense cuts. Truman and his top advisers reckoned that the Soviets were too weak to fight a war but could make inroads by other means in many war-ravaged countries around the world. Foreign assistance, they decided, "was more important than rearmament." Their strategy led to the Marshall Plan and the reconstruction of Europe.

The emphasis shifted again after North Korea's surprise 1950 invasion of South Korea, and U.S. defense outlays tripled in only three years. But "only a tiny percentage" of that money was needed for the war in South Korea, according to Leffler. Most of it was devoted to preparing the U.S. military for confrontation with the Soviets around the world.

Leffler concedes that austerity hasn't always led to the best outcomes. President Dwight D. Eisenhower was determined to restrain Pentagon spending but also embraced a wide range of U.S. alliances and commitments around the world. During Eisenhower's second term (1957–61), the gap between means and ends grew wider, and as a result, U.S. military spending increased rapidly.

That was not the only period in which America's commitments and ambitions

abroad outweighed the resources it was willing to devote to them, but even such imbalances can produce favorable results. After the Vietnam War, President Richard M. Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger were faced with a Congress insistent upon reduced military spending, so they devised creative responses to check Soviet expansion, including détente with Moscow, the initiation of relations with China, and a welter of covert actions and regional alliances. After the Gulf War of 1990–91, however, the administration of George H. W. Bush called for retrenchment but also insisted on ambitious foreign-policy goals, with the result that the level of military spending remained high.

Overall, Leffler concludes, "the negative consequences of defense austerity have been exaggerated." The significant problems that did arise under tighter budgets "were rarely, or only partly, the result of austerity itself. . . . The country's worst military problems of the post–World War II era—China's intervention in the Korean War, the quagmire in Vietnam, the morass in Iraq—had nothing to do with tight budgets."

The key to prospering in a time of defense austerity is "an artful combination of initiatives to reassure allies and engage adversaries." And the challenge, Leffler notes, is not all that great. U.S. defense spending will not be slashed but only reduced slightly, or it might simply grow more slowly than before. In any case, the United States will still spend "more on its military than all its geopolitical competitors combined." ■

THE CONSERVATIVE CASE AGAINST WAR

THE SOURCE: "Warfare State to Welfare State" by Ivan Eland, in ***The Independent Review***, Fall 2013.

AN ISOLATIONIST, ANTIWAR STREAK RUNS through U.S. political history, and its standard-bearers have often been conservatives. Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, for example, Republicans frequently criticized President Franklin D. Roosevelt's support for Britain's war effort.

But the Cold War, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower's commitment to "contain" the Soviet Union, transformed the Right. Combating the communist menace in the international arena became a bipartisan affair, and most conservatives, led by *National Review* founder William F. Buckley, championed an aggressive foreign policy even as they advocated smaller government.

Ivan Eland, director of the Center on Peace and Liberty at the Independent

Institute, in Oakland, Calif., believes that these goals are at odds, and that "conservatives should be more leery of jumping into wars." War, he argues in *The Independent Review*, inevitably leads to a larger government, requiring new taxes and vastly expanded powers that are only partially rolled back in peacetime.

The Founding Fathers were wary of foreign entanglements, and many bridled at even the notion of a standing army. "War is the parent of armies," said James Madison. "From these proceed debts and taxes." Yet pensions offered as an inducement to soldiers during the Revolutionary War were the proverbial camel's nose under the tent and eventually led to the 20th century's massive federal retirement programs. The Civil War pension system bred a newly expanded Bureau of Pensions, along with powerful interest groups and widespread corruption. "Many people who derived pensions from the Civil War didn't suffer from war wounds or poverty. By 1910, forty-five years after the end of the war, about 28 percent of American men 65 years of age and older were receiving federal benefits," Eland writes.

Such lavish spending, as well as the industrial demands of America's first modern war, necessitated a new source of revenue: the income tax. Instituted as an emergency measure during the Civil War, when federal spending went from two percent of gross national product to 15 percent, the income tax was discontinued seven years after the war. President Grover Cleveland briefly resurrected it two dozen years later, when an economic depression lessened U.S. imports and tariff revenues, but the Supreme Court quickly struck it down. "The U.S. Constitution clearly required any direct tax to be allocated across the states according to population," Eland explains, "and taxing people according to their incomes did not meet that requirement."

In 1913, the Sixteenth Amendment made the income tax constitutional, and by 1917, when President Woodrow Wilson led the United States into World War I, the tax had supplanted tariffs and excises as the federal government's largest source of revenue. After the war, rates dropped but the tax remained, and, in Eland's view, the federal government began to crawl further into the private lives of citizens.

"World War I was transformational in bringing about permanent 'big government,'" he says. There was a dramatic upswing in American manufacturing, for instance, but there wasn't enough housing for factory workers—until three separate federal agencies stepped in with the government's first public-housing programs.

The largest of these, the Department of Labor's U.S. Housing Corporation, ended up building homes for almost 170,000 individuals.

The Wilson administration also established the first federal bureaucracy designed to find jobs for people, the U.S. Employment Service. It fell apart after the war, but the idea reappeared even before the New Deal in many federal efforts to put the unemployed to work.

Washington also used the Great War to intrude into Americans' bedrooms. The U.S. armed forces once had a permissive attitude toward servicemembers' off-duty pursuits. "During the guerilla war in the Philippines," according to Eland, "[the U.S. Army] ran the biggest licensed house of ill repute in the world." But more troops prompted more regulation, and morality crusaders won an order putting certain American cities off limits to military personnel and initiation of a public campaign warning of the dangers of venereal disease. The ultimate result was the closing of every red-light district in America. Not satisfied with fighting prostitution, the War Department protested against burlesque theaters and began sending "purifiers" to military bases to badger soldiers and their girlfriends who went off to "secluded spots."

Decades later, the Vietnam War directly contributed to the expansion of Medicaid. In the war's early years, half of all draftees failed medical or mental aptitude tests. A Johnson administration report pinned the problem on "mental, physical, and developmental conditions, many of which could have been diagnosed and treated in childhood and adolescence." The report was a major factor in President Lyndon Johnson's legislation expanding Medicaid to cover the early diagnosis and treatment of disease in poor children.

Eland has a long list of other war-related expansions of government, including bank bailouts (the War of 1812); price controls; government takeovers of industry; Daylight Savings Time (World War I); and subsidized child care (World War II).

Washington used the Great War to intrude into Americans' bedrooms.

The lesson, Eland argues, is plain. "Traditional conservatives recognized in the past that war is the primary cause of big government in human history, so they promoted peace. . . . That important lesson needs to be relearned." ■

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

A RUBE GOLDBERG GOVERNMENT

THE SOURCE: "Kludgeocracy in America" by Steven M. Teles, in ***National Affairs***, Fall 2013.

EVERYBODY TALKS ABOUT THE SIZE OF government, but the real issue is its complexity. Steven Teles, a political scientist at Johns Hopkins University, argues that "with that complexity has also come incoherence," undermining the policy objectives of both liberals and conservatives—and, ultimately, democracy itself. Together, complexity and incoherence "often make it difficult for us to understand just what . . . government is doing, and among the practices it most frequently hides from view is the growing tendency of public policy to redistribute resources upward."

Teles has a name for the problem: "kludgeocracy," derived from the computer programming term "kludge,"

ANTHONY BEHAR / SIPA USA / NEWSCOM

Call it Kludge Day. American businesses and individuals spend six billion hours a year ensnarled in tax-related paperwork.

defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary* as "an ill-assorted collection of parts assembled to fulfill a particular purpose . . . a clumsy but temporarily effective solution." (Users of Microsoft Windows, Teles quips, "will immediately grasp the concept.")

"The most insidious feature of kludgeocracy is the hidden, indirect, and frequently corrupt distribution of its costs," he says. Some of these costs fall on individuals, most painfully in the form of tax compliance requirements, which cost the economy $163 billion each year and create a staggering six billion hours of paperwork for businesses and individuals. Or take the maze of incentivized-savings programs such as 401(k) plans, IRAs, and state-run 529 college savings plans. Unlike Social Security—a system of simple payroll deductions and pension payments—these programs force participants to pour their time and energy into managing their investments, something few are willing or able to do.

Kludgeocracy also ties the government in knots. Hurricane Katrina, for example, overwhelmed New Orleans's flood protection system thanks in part to administrative tangles. Senator Susan Collins (R.–Maine) found that there was "confusion about the basic question of who is in charge of the levees," which left crucial inspections and maintenance undone. Federal aid to education is also a classic case of kludgeocracy. "Instead of just handing over big checks to school districts," Teles says, "the federal government showers the states with dozens of small programs." Each program breeds its own interest groups, creating powerful coalitions determined to keep the federal gravy flowing—even though that money has done little to improve the schools.

The most insidious feature of kludgeocracy is the hidden, indirect, and frequently corrupt distribution of its costs.

Because it obscures who is getting what, complexity is ultimately "a significant threat to the quality of our democracy." It allows special interests and the affluent to quietly "profit from the state's largesse." Corporate interests, for instance, benefit from innumerable tax loopholes, tax credits, and other forms of corporate welfare that are concealed in the nooks and crannies of government.

"That is why business invests so much money in politics," Teles explains. "To keep issues *off* the agenda."

Well-off households likewise reap massive stealth dividends. They derive almost all the benefits of the biggest products of kludgeocracy: tax-favored retirement and college savings programs and the "housing-welfare state" created by government-sponsored organizations such as Fannie Mae and the massive mortgage interest deduction on federal income taxes. Yet even most beneficiaries are unaware that they are receiving government benefits.

Both political parties are eager creators of kludgeocracy, Teles believes, though both pay a heavy price for it. Republicans like it because it conceals from citizens the fact that they are benefiting from public programs that might increase support for government action. That's one reason why the GOP insisted that the Medicare prescription drug benefit created in 2003 be administered by the private sector. But such stratagems only conceal the true size of government. Democrats, fatigued by public opposition to additional spending programs, have resorted to kludgeocracy as a backdoor method of implementing new initiatives. But that often feeds the public perception of government as corrupt and ineffective and deprives liberals of clear policy successes that would build momentum for active government. "The willingness of citizens to contribute to public goods rests on the perception that others are doing their share," Teles writes.

"The complexity of government is not good for our politics," he says. The vast, distributed machinery of the state makes it hard for citizens to know who's at fault when something goes wrong. The result is a vague cynicism toward the state—"an attitude certain to undermine good citizenship."

Teles is not optimistic about unkludging America. The sheer complexity of government has given rise to a "kludge industry" of lobbyists, consultants, and private contractors whose job it is to work the system and, often, recommend more of the same. Congress's byzantine legislative process is full of "veto points," each a kind of tollbooth that extracts its share of kludge as the price of passing a bill. But the fight against the incoherence and inefficiency of the American political system has to start somewhere, and there's no better place than naming the enemy. ■

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

THE SOURCE: "Market Reasoning as Moral Reasoning: Why Economists Should Re-engage with Political Philosophy" by Michael J. Sandel, in ***Journal of Economic Perspectives***, Fall 2013.

JOEL WALDFOGEL PROBABLY KNEW BETTER in his heart when he published an article on "the deadweight loss of Christmas" in 1993. An economist at Yale University at the time, Waldfogel argued that it defies economic rationality for people to give each other presents that may wind up stuffed in a closet or guiltily returned to the store. It would make more sense, he said, to hand your friends and loved ones some cash.

That would be a pretty funny idea, writes Harvard political scientist Michael J. Sandel in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, if Waldfogel's kind of economic thinking weren't penetrating more and more areas of personal and civic life. Economists and others now make the case for such market-based policies as establishing markets in human kidneys and other organs, creating tradable "procreation permits" to control population growth, and allowing consenting adults to swap money for sex.

DIANA MARKOSIAN / REDUX

In Ukraine, Renat Abduliu displays the scar left after he sold one of his kidneys on the international black market in 2011 for $10,000.

Some of these proposals may have theoretical merit as utility-maximizing measures, Sandel allows, but in the name of "value-free" social science, their authors often try to ignore the moral and ethical implications of their designs.

Consider the case of kidneys. There's no question that some kind of market in kidneys would save many lives, but before regulating traffic in these organs we must first agree on how we view the human body. Is it simply our property, which we are free to do with as we wish? Is it sanctified, rendering any transplant a violation? Or is only the buying and selling of body parts the problem? If so, would gifts or in-kind exchanges be permissible?

Economists sometimes don't acknowledge that buying and selling things can diminish the value of what is being traded.

Then there is the question of inequality. A free market in body parts would clearly favor the rich, and there are many other cases, large and small, in which inequality is an issue. In Washington, D.C., for example, a company called LineStanding.com charges customers $50 an hour for surrogates to queue up to obtain (free) tickets to important congressional and Supreme Court sessions. A hot ticket can require days of waiting and cost thousands of dollars, and the chief customers are lobbyists. On efficiency grounds, this is perfectly reasonable; on equity grounds, it obviously isn't.

The problem doesn't end there, Sandel points out. Congress could solve the inequality problem by providing subsidies to all those who wanted to pay somebody for a seat, but that idea only points to a subtler and more profound issue: "Turning access to Congress into a product for sale demeans and degrades" the institution. There's a broader principle at work: "Some of the most corrosive effects of markets on moral and civic practices are neither failures of efficiency in the economist's sense, nor matters of inequality. Instead, they involve the degradation that can occur when we turn all human relationships into transactions and treat all good things in life as if they were commodities."

Economists sometimes don't acknowledge that buying and selling things can diminish the value of what is being traded. Suppose there were a market in children: It would degrade

and objectify children and violate all notions of parental love. But that's obviously an extreme example; the effects of commercialization can reach into many mundane or unexpected corners. In one famous study, a group of Israeli child-care centers tried to discourage parents from arriving late to pick up their children by imposing a fine for tardiness. Late pickups promptly increased. Why? "Before, parents who came late felt guilty; they were imposing an inconvenience on the teachers," Sandel explains. "Now, parents considered a late pickup as a service for which they were willing to pay."

The same principle can be seen at work in Switzerland, where 51 percent of the residents of the village of Wolfenschiessen agreed in a survey to accept a nuclear waste facility in their community if the Swiss parliament found it to be the safest location in the country. What if, in addition, the residents were offered an annual payment? Only 25 percent agreed. The public-spirited villagers were willing to sacrifice for the greater good, but once money entered the equation, their calculus changed.

None of this means that market mechanisms should never be used, Sandel writes. But it's important to fully understand the ends when designing the means. The best solution to the Capitol Hill ticket crush, for example, might be a lottery that awarded nontransferable tickets, making access open and fair while preserving the majesty of governmental institutions.

Beneath many economists' calculations is a "strange" hidden assumption that qualities such as civic spirit, love, and generosity "are scarce resources that are depleted with use." In 2003, while he was president of Harvard University, Lawrence Summers declared, "We all have only so much altruism in us. Economists like me think of altruism as a valuable and rare good that needs conserving. Far better to conserve it by designing a system in which people's wants will be satisfied by individuals being selfish, and saving that altruism for our families, our friends, and the many social problems in this world that markets cannot solve."

That kind of thinking "ignores the possibility that our capacity for love and benevolence is not depleted with use but enlarged with practice," Sandel concludes. Indeed, civic virtue and public spirit may "atrophy with disuse." ■

ARTS & LETTERS

ART IMITATES ART

THE SOURCE: "The Moment of the Novel and the Rise of Film Culture" by Morris Dickstein, in ***Raritan***, Summer 2013.

IN TODAY'S POPULAR IMAGINATION, POST–World War II America was conservative and consumerist, repressed and isolationist. Yet it gave rise to a slew of literary greats, an intellectually fractious bunch who nonetheless managed to agree on the importance of the novel. They also wondered if it would survive, and they weren't the only ones. "Critics and sociologists of the fifties were preoccupied with the effects of mass culture and commercial entertainment on traditional culture," writes Morris Dickstein, professor of English and theater at the City University of New York Graduate Center, "and this concern parallels the current alarm about the impact of new media on literary culture."

According to critic Lionel Trilling, literature, particularly the novel, provided a much-needed foil to the social engineering ethos of the 1930s, which took an oversimplified,

BETTMANN / CORBIS

Director Federico Fellaini, who helped usher in the golden age of modern film, with the actress Magali Noel during the shooting of *Amarcord* in 1973.

abstract, and mechanistic approach to meeting human needs. The novel, in contrast, faithfully reflected the complexity of experience. For other intellectuals, such as Norman Mailer, the novel was an answer to the anonymous mass death of World War II—the Nazi concentration camps, the atomic bomb. The form celebrated the individual while also examining, as Dickstein puts it in *Raritan*, "the irrational depths of the psyche, which the war had luridly exposed."

The novel had not always enjoyed such lofty status. "With its catchall content, serviceable prose, piquant characters, and relentless emphasis on what happens next, it was the upstart of the arts, the wild child, rowdy, undisciplined, and crowd pleasing," Dickstein writes. Daniel Defoe's Moll Flanders unrepentantly misbehaved. Charles Dickens' page-turners were too entertaining to be considered high art.

With their insistence on fidelity to lived experience, the works of 19th-century realists Gustave Flaubert and Henry James pushed critics to concede that novels could indeed be art. Postwar writers looked to these and other forebears for direction. James Baldwin turned to James, Ralph Ellison to James Joyce, Mailer to Ernest Hemingway and John Steinbeck, among others. "Is there another literary generation that struggled more openly with its predecessors?" Dickstein asks. While English writers simply strove to publish, "Americans dreamed of some definitive work that would light up the national consciousness."

Novelists struggled under the weight of this "grail-like pursuit" of the Great American Novel. Ellison never produced a second novel after his acclaimed *Invisible Man* (1952), and Mailer's planned eight-volume opus splintered into shorter works and autobiographical miscellany.

Writers were also anxious to resist mass culture's demand for easy consumption. Some of the modernist aesthetic stems from this worry. Practitioners such as Joyce and William Faulkner produced famously inscrutable novels—ones only the strongest readers had the endurance to read to the end. ("While all art is in some sense demanding," Dickstein drolly observes, "only the legacy of modernism makes this degree of engagement the precondition for major art, which, after all, can be ingratiating as well as exacting.")

When readers turned away from literature, some authors blamed the distractions offered by mass media—particularly radio. "Reading skills," Gore Vidal sniffed in 1967, "continue to decline with each new generation."

Meanwhile, movie audiences were finding the pleasures they'd once enjoyed in film's parent, the novel—the two forms sharing much in terms of storytelling and "the rich elaboration of individual characters." By the 1950s, film was the crowd pleaser of the arts, and film and fiction became both allies and rivals. Fiction was easily—and often wonderfully, as in *The Grapes of Wrath*—adapted to the silver screen. Movies influenced writers to focus on action and dialog, and away from psychological analysis. Baldwin and Philip Roth sold more books when they wrote about sex—going toe to toe with directors who had also learned to push the envelope.

Modernist directors such as Ingmar Bergman, Federico Fellini, and Luis Buñuel ushered in a golden age of art cinema. They, in turn, inspired a subsequent generation of gritty filmmakers, among them Robert Altman and Martin Scorsese. Perhaps inevitably, movies were following the trajectory of the novel, going from lowbrow to high—and losing audience in the process.

The overvaluation of art is the beginning of the end of art.

"The contraction of both fiction and film, the decline of their popular appeal, was in part an outgrowth of the extravagant hopes that had been invested in them," Dickstein writes, citing Trilling again, who noted that "the overvaluation of art is the beginning of the end of art."

But Dickstein isn't writing a eulogy for either novels or films. Anxieties about the distractions of the digital age notwithstanding, "we still need stories to illuminate our condition, however they may come our way." ■

SOCIETY

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN

THE SOURCE: "Holding Them Closer" by Carl Desportes Bowman, in ***The Hedgehog Review***, Fall 2013.

THE NOTION NOW SEEMS AS ANTIQUE AS A one-room schoolhouse, but there was a time when American parents fervently hoped their children would grow up, leave home, and establish independent, self-reliant lives. "However painful the process of leaving home, for parents and for children," a team of sociologists observed in that distant time, "the really frightening thing for both would be the prospect of the child *never* leaving home."

Actually, the time was only 1985, and the book was the now classic *Habits of the Heart*, by Robert Bellah and others. Today's parents, writes Carl Desportes Bowman in *The Hedgehog Review*, have very different feelings, reflecting deep changes in American culture, not some temporary response to the exigencies of today's job market.

NADINE DILLY / CORBIS

Will they still be playing the same game 20 years from now?

According to Bowman, who is director of survey research at the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, almost three-quarters of parents of school-age children in an institute survey said they hoped they would be best friends with their children after they grew up. Two-thirds of the respondents said they would gladly support a 25-year-old child financially if necessary, and would encourage their offspring to move back home if affordable digs were hard to find. The word "home" itself has evolved; it's now common for people in their twenties and thirties to use it to describe the place where their parents live.

The race to leave home has become a "leisurely stroll."

Such changes reflect the fact that "adulthood has become a subjective category," Bowman writes. No longer do classic life landmarks such as a landing a job, setting up a household, and starting a family mark the entry into adulthood; now, it's one's "*self-perception* of autonomy and freedom that matters." And it's easy for young people to develop that self-perception in an age when children are equipped with cell phones, charge cards, and Internet connections. Bowman says that adolescents "grow up in a peer-dominated bubble," immersed in "gadgets, studies, and peer-centered activities." But these bubble-bred children are poorly equipped to deal with such adult tasks as ironing clothes and applying for a job; the race to leave home has become a "leisurely stroll."

That's not to say that parents have become total softies. Seventy percent of the parents in the institute's survey said it was their job to "direct" their children rather than "negotiate" with them. Those who considered themselves strict outnumbered self-identified permissive parents two to one, and 81 percent said they had spanked a child at least once (though few considered this a standard practice).

To understand what's changed, Bowman goes back to sociologist David Riesman's 1950 classic *The Lonely Crowd*, in which the Harvard professor famously described an affluent, industrialized America whose populace was in transition from being "inner-directed" to "other-directed." In the old world of fixed values and social roles, people were generally guided by an internal "gyroscope" set in their youth. But Riesman argued that consumer society, with its

many entertainments and shifting social roles, was breeding a new kind of person, one who tended to take behavioral cues from others. Today's parents are, in effect, the first full other-directed generation.

Nothing is more unsettled in the new world Riesman described than human relationships, from friendship to marriage, which tend to be based less on fixed commitments defined by social roles and other forces, and more on personal choice. The British sociologist Anthony Giddens calls modern relationships "free-floating," surrounded by anxiety. Another sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, observes that parenting, in Bowman's words, "is not just an activity of loving care for a dependent being, but of meeting one's own emotional and identity needs in a world where larger institutional commitments, projects, and sources of identity, for many, have lost their luster."

The parent-child relationship is forever a work in progress, like a transaction in which "the eventual value of the purchase remains uncertain and the full costs are unknown." Having cast aside the old certainties, parents are left to chart their own course in defining values during child rearing—and are often left looking to their own children "for feedback on how they are doing."

Ultimately, Bowman writes, the return parents seek is "an emotional anchor of connection, assurance they are not being set aside or rendered irrelevant by their children in the same way they might be at work or in other socially limited relationships. In an age when 'Father' and 'Mother' no longer carry the intrinsic authority and respect accorded in a bygone age, 'best friends' may be parents' best attempt at sustaining something meaningful and enduring." ■

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

TOURING AUSCHWITZ

THE SOURCE: "Crematoria, Barracks, Gateway" by Tim Cole, in ***History & Memory***, Fall/Winter 2013.

RENA CHERNOFF SURVIVED AUSCHWITZ, and she dreaded returning to the concentration camp even in its present incarnation as a museum. Her adult children wanted to see it, however, so in 1992 she went with them. She decided to go not as a victim or even as a Jew, writes Tim Cole, professor of social history at the University of Bristol, England, but simply as an American sightseer checking off one more destination on a European tour. She imagined her American sneakers, she said in an interview, would be like the ruby-encrusted shoes Dorothy donned in *The Wizard of Oz*, "those slippers that save you."

Once Chernoff arrived in Poland, her plan to remain aloof fell apart. She found

REUTERS / PETER ANDREWS / CORBIS

For concentration camp survivors, freely leaving the museum at Auschwitz, a place that once had no exit for Jews, can be an enormously symbolic experience.

herself shifting between the roles of a woman mourning family who had died there, a guide for her husband and children, and an "American Jew concerned about the contemporary politics of memory" after she was dismayed to find that a cross had been erected on the grounds to commemorate Christian victims. Cole is working on a book about survivors' returns to "holocaust landscapes," and he notes in *History & Memory* that Chernoff's visit was similar to that of many other survivors. As they make their way through various "micro-sites" in the compound—notably the crematoria, barracks, and gateway—their roles change.

While returning survivors are already horribly familiar with some areas of Auschwitz, most encounter the gas chambers and crematoria for the first time. These sites, along with a nearby lake where ashes of the dead were dumped, serve as a "cemetery in lieu of the family graves that simply do not exist." They are places where one can symbolically lay to rest the family and friends murdered in the camp, places where "the act of mourning can be . . . interpreted as a posthumous victory of sorts." Survivors often say Kaddish, the Jewish prayer of mourning. Some light candles. One woman took stones from the crematoria; a man who visited in 1946, a year after the liberation of the camps, collected ashes, secretly keeping a flask of them for 50 years.

"Look, we are back," one survivor imagined saying to the Nazis.

As mourners, the survivors who visit tend to seek solitude in the crematoria, but moving to the barracks, they often find themselves becoming expert witnesses, telling family members, fellow tourgoers, and even tour guides what the experience was *really* like. "Conflict between official museum guides and returning survivors" is a recurring theme of visitors' accounts, Cole observes. This was the case "particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, when the stories told at Auschwitz emphasized Polish victimhood" despite the predominance of Jews among those imprisoned and murdered there. Walking among the bunks they'd actually slept in, survivors who had previously determined to silently take in the tour felt compelled to set the record straight or to implore others to envision the place filled with people. "I showed them everything in Auschwitz," one

said. "We find my name scraped in . . . in the wall, in the wall."

There are good arguments against using Holocaust tourism to achieve closure. Art historian Griselda Pollock has cautioned that doing so denies that the concentration camp was anything but a "factory of death, a place from which none was intended to return," and that "to go, to tour *and to leave*, is to defy that demonic logic, to put 'Auschwitz' back in a place with an entrance *and an exit*." But the fact remains that for survivors, being able to walk freely in and out of the gateway is hugely symbolic. The Nazis' victims at Auschwitz were dragged into the camp through its gateway, and those who survived were marched out by American troops in 1945, passive participants in their own liberation. Touching barbed wire that once pulsed with electricity, standing in watchtowers where Nazi guards stood, is a way to confront past tormentors. "Look, we are back," one survivor imagined saying to the Nazis. "We've got our own families."

For many visitors, however, the visit is not as satisfying as they had hoped, for the very reason that Auschwitz has been transformed—or, as some see it, sanitized. Summer grass grows over places once covered in mud. "Believe you me, if there was one blade of grass you know what would have happened, you would have eaten it," one woman explained to her son. In wintertime, bitter cold and biting wind restore a measure of verisimilitude, but the air is silent, scrubbed of the cries of children and the stench of smoke. Some visitors conjure this other geography, sensing blood and bones in the grass and burning flesh in the air, finding the landscape of memory truer, even more viscerally felt, than the material one before them.

Others refuse to make the journey to Auschwitz. "I will never go back to any camp, and I can't," survivor William Lowenberg insisted. "I'm afraid to wake up, really wake up. And since I'm having a very good normal life, and I think I can function quite well, I believe, maybe not everyone agrees with me, but I agree with me on that issue, I don't want potential interference. . . . It's very deeply buried, it's very deeply buried, and let's leave it that way for the time being at least." ■

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

TECH'S BLIND SPOTS

THE SOURCE: "The Tech Intellectuals" by Henry Farrell, in ***Democracy***, Fall 2013.

LIKE MARTINIS, EAMES CHAIRS, AND OTHER icons of midcentury America, public intellectuals are back. In the days when the characters portrayed in *Mad Men* strode the streets of New York, freelance thinkers such as Edmund Wilson and Mary McCarthy loomed large in public debates, drawing on the world of ideas to illuminate everything from the Cold War to sex. But eventually their kind was absorbed into the expanding universities and smothered in campus insularity and obscurantism.

Today's public intellectuals are animated by one big issue, writes Henry Farrell, a political scientist at George Washington University: the reshaping of society by new communication technologies. For example, in *Here Comes Everybody* (2009), Clay Shirky explores how digital communications give us new freedom to organize everything from flash mobs to businesses. In *Where Good Ideas Come From* (2011), Steve Johnson

EPA / JEON HEON-KYUN / CORBIS

The new tech intellectuals thrive on speakers' fees at business conferences. Nicholas Carr, a critic of some technology trends, spoke at the Seoul Technology Forum in 2011.

celebrates what he sees as the collective, tech-enabled future of creativity. Other "technology intellectuals" include Rebecca MacKinnon, Ethan Zuckerman, and Nicholas Carr.

Farrell finds much to applaud in the writing of such thinkers, but much to criticize as well. Theirs is an ideologically narrow world, with a spectrum running from "hard libertarianism [to] moderate liberalism." There are "few radical left-wingers, and fewer conservatives." The tech intellectuals share "an open and friendly pragmatism," but are prone to a kind of digital unreality, a "flavorless celebration of superficial diversity." They faithfully reflect Silicon Valley's skepticism toward government. Their work often "depicts a world of possibilities that seems starkly at odds with the American reality of skyrocketing political and economic inequality."

The narrowness of the tech intellectuals' vision isn't an accident, Farrell believes. As their midcentury forebears were, they are able to sustain themselves outside the universities, but their world has its own limits. The vital currency of their realm is public attention. While earlier public intellectuals such as Dwight Macdonald and Daniel Bell held forth on the big issues of the day in little magazines such as *Partisan Review* and *Dissent*, for their successors the brass ring is an invitation to give a TED talk, which pays nothing but provides an audience potentially in the millions. The tech intellectuals convert attention into dollars by writing books, winning fellowships and research grants, and, most lucratively, speaking on the business conference circuit, where fees can range from $5,000 to $45,000 or more. And it's the tech industry and its employees who write many of the checks that make all these things possible.

Few writers question Silicon Valley's comfortable assumptions about the connection between technology and economic inequality.

This insular ecosystem encourages tech intellectuals to "buff the rough patches from [their] presentation again and again, sanding it down to a beautifully polished surface, which all too often does no more than reflect [their] audience's preconceptions back at them." Farrell is particularly critical of Jeff Jarvis, author most recently of *What Would Google Do?* (2011), and cyberpessimist

Evgeny Morozov, both of whom he regards as cynical attention seekers. Jarvis's Google book, for example, is a name-dropping paean to the wonders wrought by the Internet giant, "not meant to introduce new insight so much as certify that the author occupies the role of the published guru."

There are "smart and wonderful" thinkers among the tech intellectuals—Farrell singles out Canadian programmer and writer Tom Slee as a serious thinker who punctures some of the tech world's fondest illusions—but there is not much intellectual diversity. For one thing, few writers question Silicon Valley's comfortable assumptions about the connection between technology and economic inequality. While the Valley's denizens see their world as an egalitarian paradise for achievers and their products as tools of empowerment for the masses, their lavish stock options and capital gains are making the world a measurably more unequal place. Farrell adds that he sees a crying need to take a hard look at the "burgeoning relationship between technology companies and the U.S. government." That's not likely to happen until the debate is joined by thinkers who don't look to the tech industry for their daily bread. ■

OTHER NATIONS

MISSING SIGNAL

THE SOURCE: "The 'Special Means of Collection'" by Uri Bar-Joseph, in ***The Middle East Journal***, Autumn 2013.

ON OCTOBER 6, 1973—YOM KIPPUR, THE Jewish "Day of Atonement"—Egyptian and Syrian forces launched surprise attacks on Israeli positions in the Sinai Peninsula and along the Golan Heights, on Israel's contested border with Syria. With many Israeli soldiers observing the holy day away from their posts, the invaders made quick gains. The vaunted Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were sent reeling. Though they eventually beat back the offensive, success came at the cost of more than 8,000 Israeli casualties, as well as the confident assumption that the still-young country was prepared for anything.

Since its victory in the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel had been waiting for such an attack, and military and political leaders, including Prime Minister Golda Meir, were sure they could anticipate such a strike at least 48 hours ahead of time. After the war, citizens and politicians alike were left wondering, *what happened?*

MANUEL LITRAN / PARIS MATCH VIA GETTY IMAGES

A battle-smudged Syrian soldier pauses during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Syria and Egypt made great gains at first because Israeli leaders ignored warnings that an attack was imminent.

The military intelligence chief never informed his superiors that he failed to activate "the special means."

"Forty years after it was first asked, the question still haunts the Israeli public," says Uri Bar-Joseph, a professor of international relations at Haifa University, Israel. Writing in *The Middle East Journal*, he argues that Israel's leaders were betrayed by their faith in technology, in the form of a still-secret tool called the "special means of collection."

The Agranat Commission, convened after the war to investigate the failure, placed most of the blame at the feet of Aman, Israel's military intelligence department, which was then the nation's only source of intelligence analysis. According to the commission, Aman analysts and higher-ups clung with a "persistent adherence" to their assumption that Egypt wouldn't go to war until it gained long-range fighter planes capable of destroying the Israeli Air Force, and Scud missiles to deter an Israeli strike deep into Egypt. The Agranat Commission's conclusions led to the dismissal of the IDF's chief of staff, David Elazar, and the head of Aman, Major General Eli Zeira.

In 1993, Zeira published his own account, blaming the Mossad, the Israeli agency in charge of foreign espionage. He claimed the agency was duped by its top spy in Egypt—a close adviser to Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, Ashraf Marwan, who was actually a double agent.

But most intelligence officers dismiss this account, saying Marwan *did* warn the Mossad. Bar-Joseph writes that "the wealth of information that has become available in recent years" makes it plain that Prime Minister Meir and other top leaders had "ample warnings" of a strike, but chose to disregard evidence from the Mossad and other sources.

Why? Bar-Joseph contends that they had a false sense of security based on possession of a top-secret technological trump card: the "special means of collection." According to a source cited by Bar-Joseph, the "special means of collection," which remains classified, was a "series of battery-operated devices attached to phone and cable connections buried deep in the sand outside Cairo." They reportedly allowed Israel not only

to eavesdrop on telephone and cable traffic, but to listen in on conversations occurring in rooms "where the telephones and telex consoles were located." Meir and Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan were certain the "special means of collection" would alert them to any Arab moves.

Unbeknownst to Meir and Dayan, however, the eavesdropping devices were turned off. "A few months before the outbreak of the war," Bar-Joseph explains, "one of the 'special means' accidentally fell into Egypt's hands." Worried about exposing the other "means," officials decided to limit their use and placed the sole authorization to activate them in the hands of military intelligence chief Zeira. When the Egyptian army began a military exercise on October 1, many in the Israeli military and intelligence agencies began to worry—the Egyptians' Soviet backers had used the same cover to launch their 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Though these officers repeatedly begged Zeira to activate the "special means," he refused, until the morning of October 6. But by then it was too late.

Zeira never informed his superiors that he failed to activate "the special means," and may even have deceived them. Dayan and IDF chief of staff Elazar believed they had been switched on and had merely produced no actionable intelligence. It wasn't until the Agranat Commission's investigation that the truth came out, but much of the testimony has only recently been released.

"Why Zeira acted the way he did is a mystery which is not likely to be fully solved," writes Bar-Joseph. A psychological study suggests that the intelligence head had little tolerance for ambiguity and a very high degree of confidence in Israel's military superiority, which may have convinced him not to activate the "special means." But neither the study nor the new material from the Agranat Commission can offer anything but incomplete explanations for Zeira's remarkable failure to play the ace up Israel's sleeve—and his failure to prepare a nation for war. ■

Saturday Morning—Georgina 1999 **by Gillian Furlong**

PRIVATE COLLECTION / THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

THE OBSESSIONS OF A MAGPIE

BY **SARAH L. COURTEAU**

By SARAH L. COURTEAU

"WILL PEOPLE FIND THIS INTERESTING?" This has been the question central to my existence (well, at least to my job) during my years as the *WQ*'s literary editor. Coincidentally, the ideas I've thought would grab others have been those I've found intriguing myself. Yes, knowledge of cultural and intellectual currents has played a big role as I've sifted through the relentless stream of books coming into our offices, on every conceivable subject and from popular presses and academic publishers big and small. But so has personal taste—shorthand for the collection of prejudices, half-remembered facts, and idiosyncratic obsessions that prompt a literary editor to pluck a book from one of the stacks that threaten to topple onto the floor.

My next question typically has been, "Which potential reviewer will find this book fascinating or useful or amusing or aggravating?" Book review editors often characterize assigning a review as a matchmaking process, and extol the pleasures of engineering an ideal pairing. While it's wonderful when the perfect match for a book is an accomplished critic, I've found particular joy in working with scholars and other specialists who know their material inside and out but have rarely, or even never, written for a general audience.

The process of helping these amateur critics translate their thicket of knowledge into something others can appreciate and learn from is tremendously satisfying. The result can be a piece with more depth and insight than a professional critic might be able to bring to the subject. Often, my own ignorance has actually proved an advantage, since sometimes a few dumb questions help pin a rarefied mind to the clods of earth the rest of us must tread in the pursuit of meaning. For both writer and editor, the glow of accomplishment at the end of this back-and-forth is generally preceded by frustration—and perhaps a dash of irritation. It's all part of the messy, glorious process.

A final important factor in selecting books for review is more particular to the *WQ*. We've proudly adopted an "eat your spinach" ethos: There are some ideas people *should* know about, even if these ideas may not make for a headline that will spur someone to grab the magazine off a shelf or coffee table. Some may detect a whiff of paternalism, even elitism, in our spirit of standard-bearing.

But it incorporates a sense of duty to present not what is popular but what is valuable or surprising to people who might lack the time or academic expertise to explore those ideas on their own.

While the books section was my baby, I didn't undertake its care and feeding alone. Everyone on staff contributed book and reviewer suggestions, but in particular I spent many hours discussing the choices to be made with the *WQ*'s editor, Steve Lagerfeld. That we didn't always agree only strengthened the magazine. It forced us, and our readers, to grapple with viewpoints with which we were unfamiliar, or sometimes plain didn't like. Plus, batting around those ideas, testing books and reviewers on each other and arguing over which one of us had the poorer memory when we couldn't dredge up the name of some scholar who specialized in medieval mapmaking or some such, was a lot of fun. I'll miss those sessions very much.

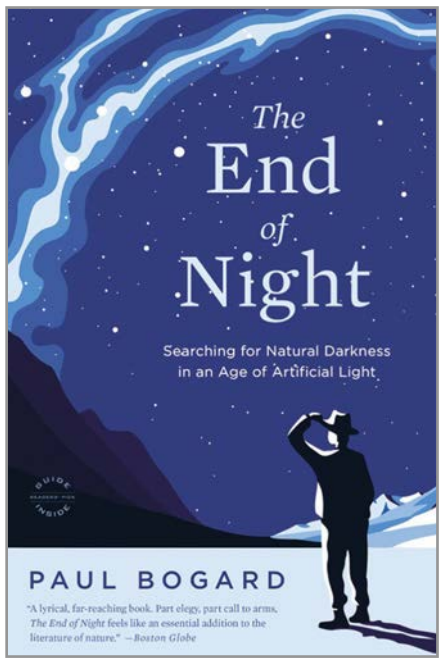
To judge from the number of people who've told me that the magazine turned them on to a book they never would have known about otherwise, our magpie mission has succeeded. The world of letters will be poorer without the *WQ*'s dedication to highlighting books like these. The lives of the magazine's editors will be poorer, too.

When I got my first job straight out of college, at a Saint Louis paper that covered local legal news and announcements, my dad told me, "Any time you're making your living with words, you've got it made." He was right, up to a point. But words alone don't create the joy we feel in them; it's the ideas they describe. And a chief source of that joy is communicating those ideas to others.

In his recent novel *All That Is*, James Salter describes his protagonist, a World War II veteran who becomes a debonair book editor, as having "a life superior to its tasks, with a view of history, architecture, and human behavior." Perhaps the life of a *WQ* editor has lacked the Olympic bouts of drinking, the globetrotting, and (I suppose I must speak for myself here) the numerous sexual escapades of Salter's character. But I'm struck by how perfectly that passage describes my own years at the *WQ*. There are plenty of unglamorous tasks involved in putting out a magazine, but even on the days I spent physically moving several hundred pounds of books, I was conscious of the privilege of working in the world of ideas.

Below is a collection of books of the kind that, for me, have embodied the spirit of the *WQ*, one for each year I edited the magazine's reviews.

2013



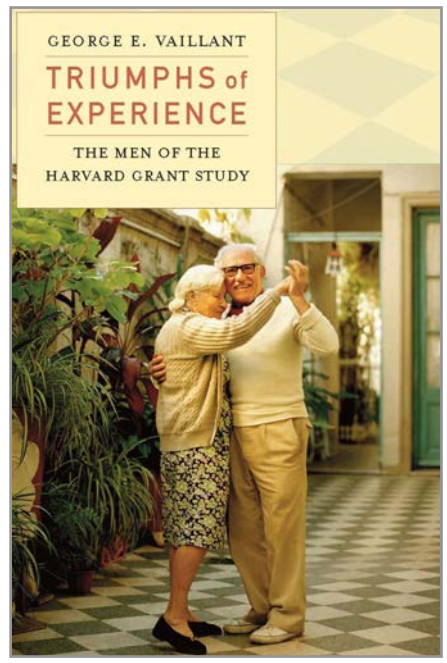
THE END OF NIGHT:

SEARCHING FOR NATURAL DARKNESS IN AN AGE OF ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

By Paul Bogard
Little, Brown
325 pp. $27

This search for dark skies in a world of 24/7 illumination shows how difficult it is to motivate people to dim the lights when many don't even remember a time when they could see the stars at night.

2012



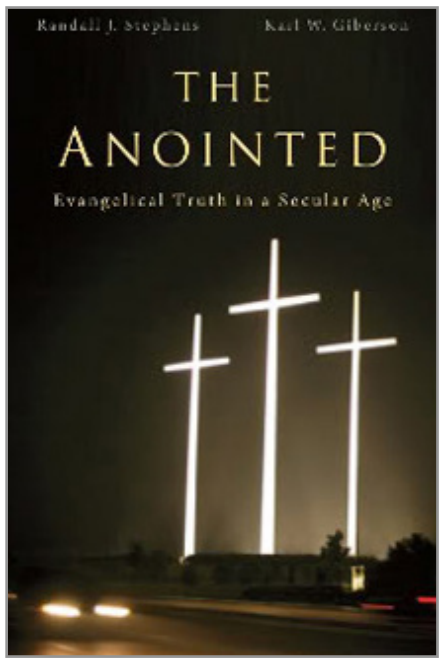
TRIUMPHS OF EXPERIENCE:

THE MEN OF THE HARVARD GRANT STUDY

By George E. Vaillant
Harvard Univ. Press
457 pp. $27.95

The last of three books chronicling the lives and fates of Harvard men who were tracked from the time they were students in the late 1930s and early '40s. Overwhelmingly, the evidence is that the secret to a happy life is our relationships with others, not wealth, health, or intelligence.

2011



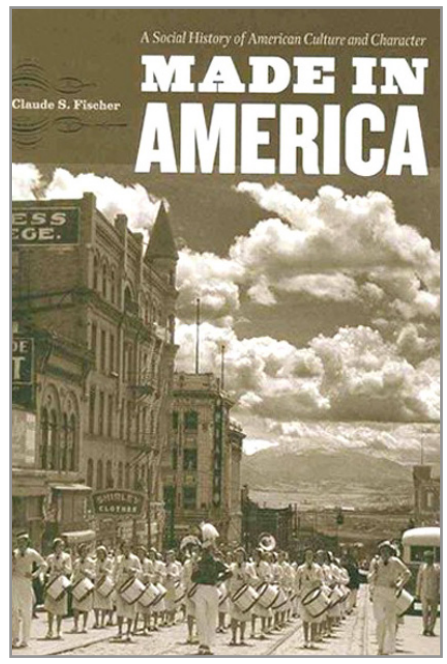
THE ANOINTED:

EVANGELICAL TRUTH IN A SECULAR AGE

By Randall J. Stephens and Karl W. Giberson
Belknap/Harvard
356 pp. $29.95

The authors of this group profile of popular evangelical leaders who claim to be experts on history and science conclude that conviction and a glib "you're either with us or against us" message often sway churchgoers more than academic credentials. What distinguishes this book is that the authors' argument that faith and intellectual rigor don't have to be inconsistent is made from within the fold—they're both evangelical Christians.

2010



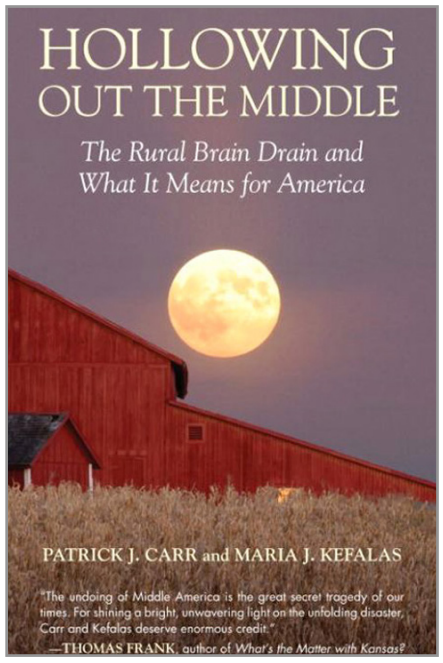
MADE IN AMERICA:

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND CHARACTER

By Claude S. Fischer
Univ. of Chicago Press
511 pp. $35

A sociologist finds that despite 400 years of enormous social, cultural, and political change, the American national character has remained surprisingly consistent.

2009



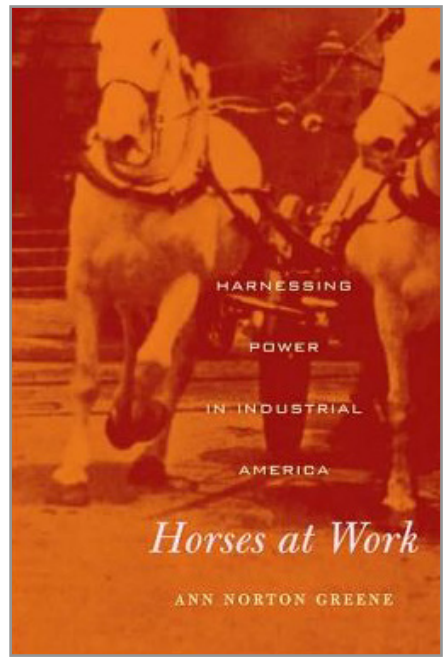
HOLLOWING OUT THE MIDDLE:

THE RURAL BRAIN DRAIN AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR AMERICA

By Patrick J. Carr and Maria J. Kefalas
Beacon
239 pp. $26.95

Husband-and-wife sociologists move to a small Iowa town to interview hundreds of its residents, in an attempt to understand why so many young people in "flyover country" are leaving, never to return. Their portrait of unequal opportunities and the allure of far-off urban centers offers a snapshot of a vanishing way of life.

2008



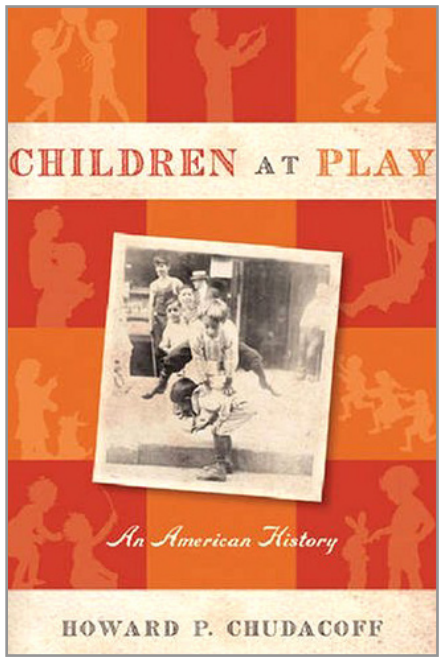
HORSES AT WORK:

HARNESSING POWER IN INDUSTRIAL AMERICA

By Ann Norton Greene
Harvard Univ. Press
322 pp. $29.95

This account of humans and horses in the 19th century evokes a lost world that's not nearly as distant as it feels. As late as 1900, New York and Chicago each averaged nearly 500 horses *per square mile*.

2007



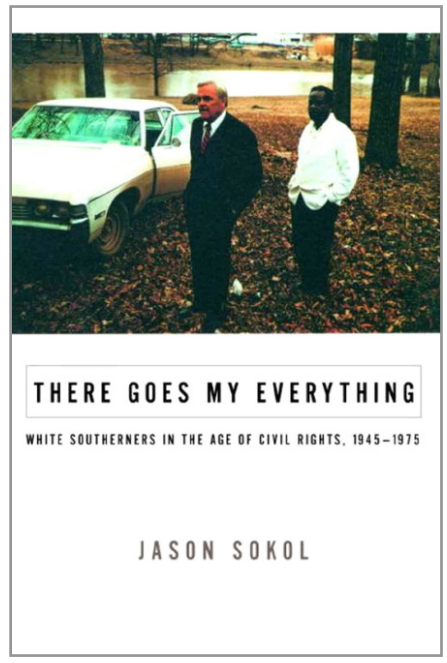
CHILDREN AT PLAY:

AN AMERICAN HISTORY

By Howard P. Chudacoff
New York Univ. Press
269 pp. $27.95

Attention, helicopter parents: A history professor argues that children's play has been colonized by adults for the last several decades, to the detriment of kids' independence and imagination.

2006



THERE GOES MY EVERYTHING:

WHITE SOUTHERNERS IN THE AGE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, 1945–1975

By Jason Sokol
Knopf
433 pp. $27.95

A young historian at Cornell University illustrates the internal battles many white Southerners experienced during the civil rights struggle as a new reality was forcibly imposed on long-cherished beliefs. Relying on impressive research, he tells this story eloquently, often using the words of his subjects themselves. ■

SARAH L. COURTEAU is literary editor of *The Wilson Quarterly*.

WQ

THE WILSON QUARTERLY

CONTINUES ›

THE WILSON QUARTERLY is a window on the world of ideas for general readers. Historical perspective and a commitment to consider all sides are the hallmarks of its articles on foreign affairs, politics, culture, science, and other subjects. By making new knowledge accessible to all, it aims to foster more informed public debate.

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