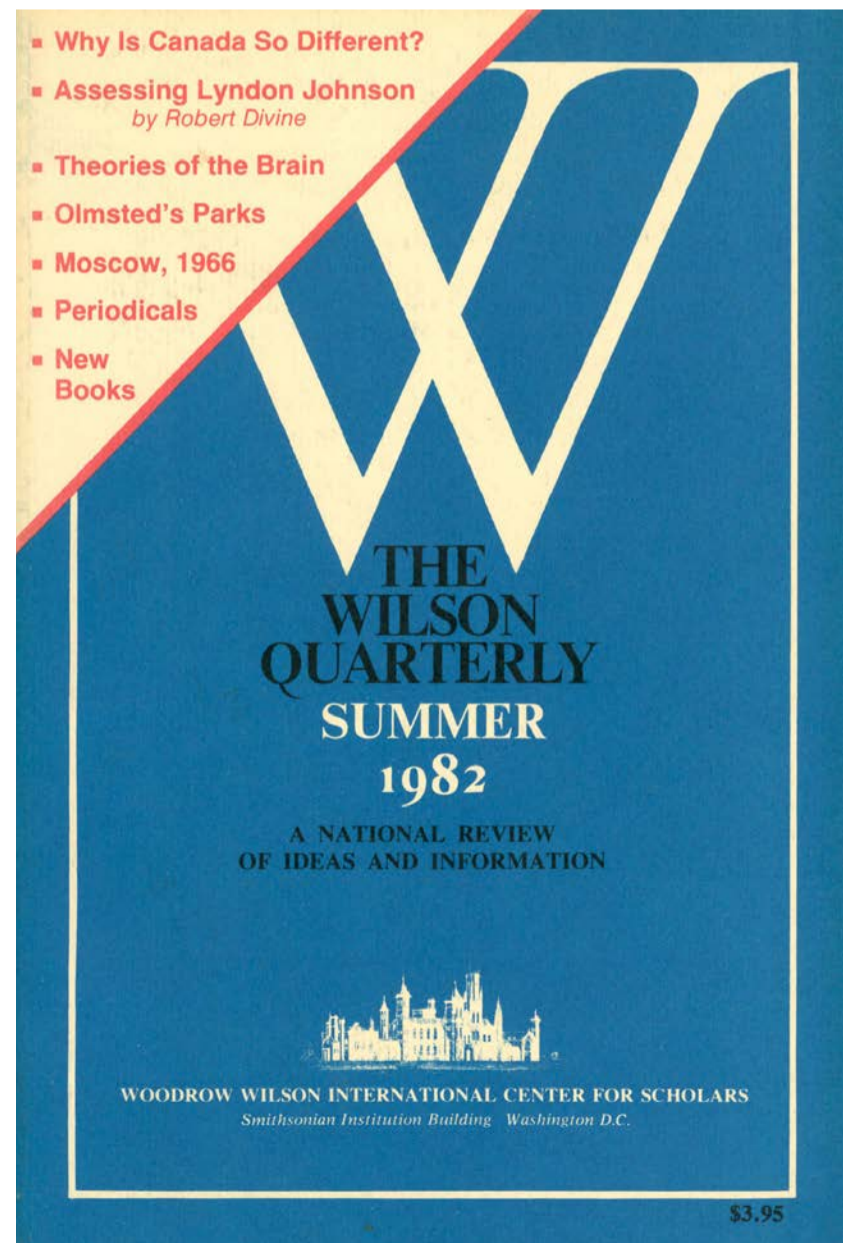
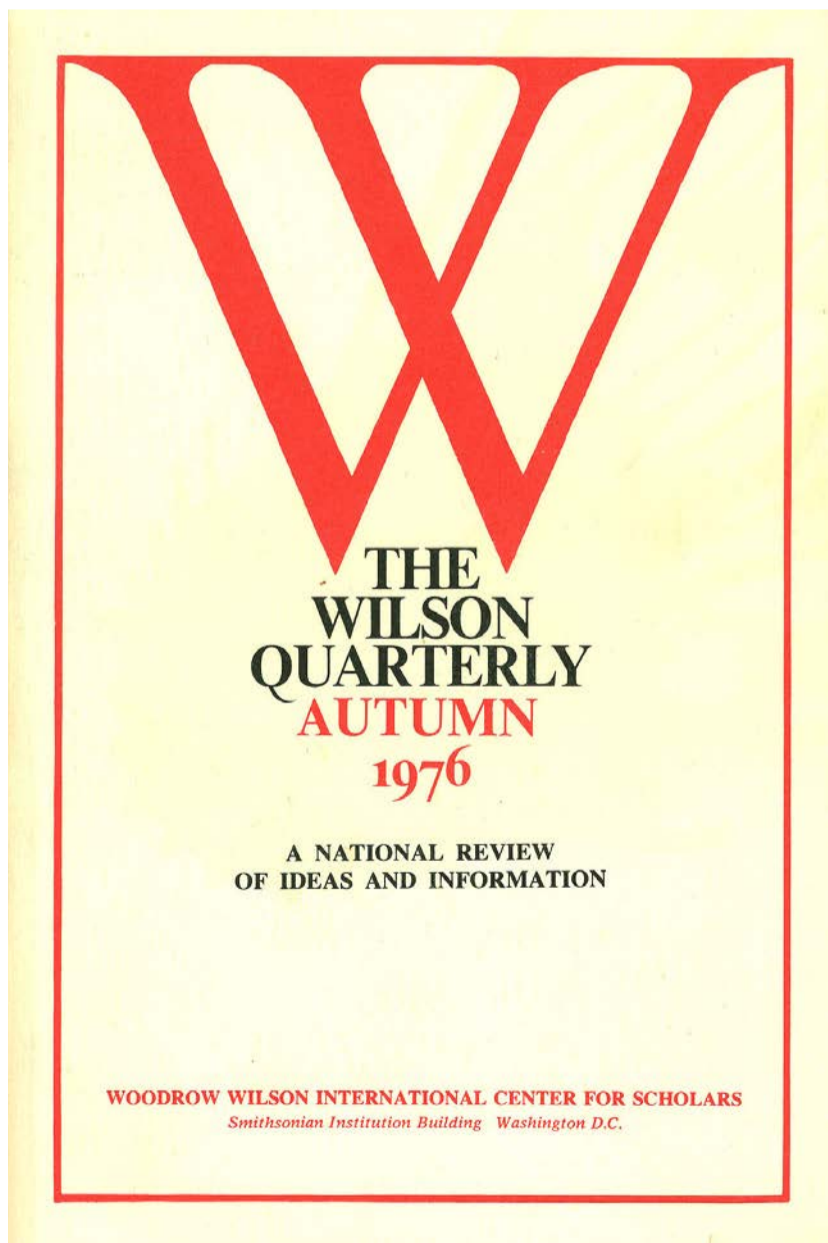


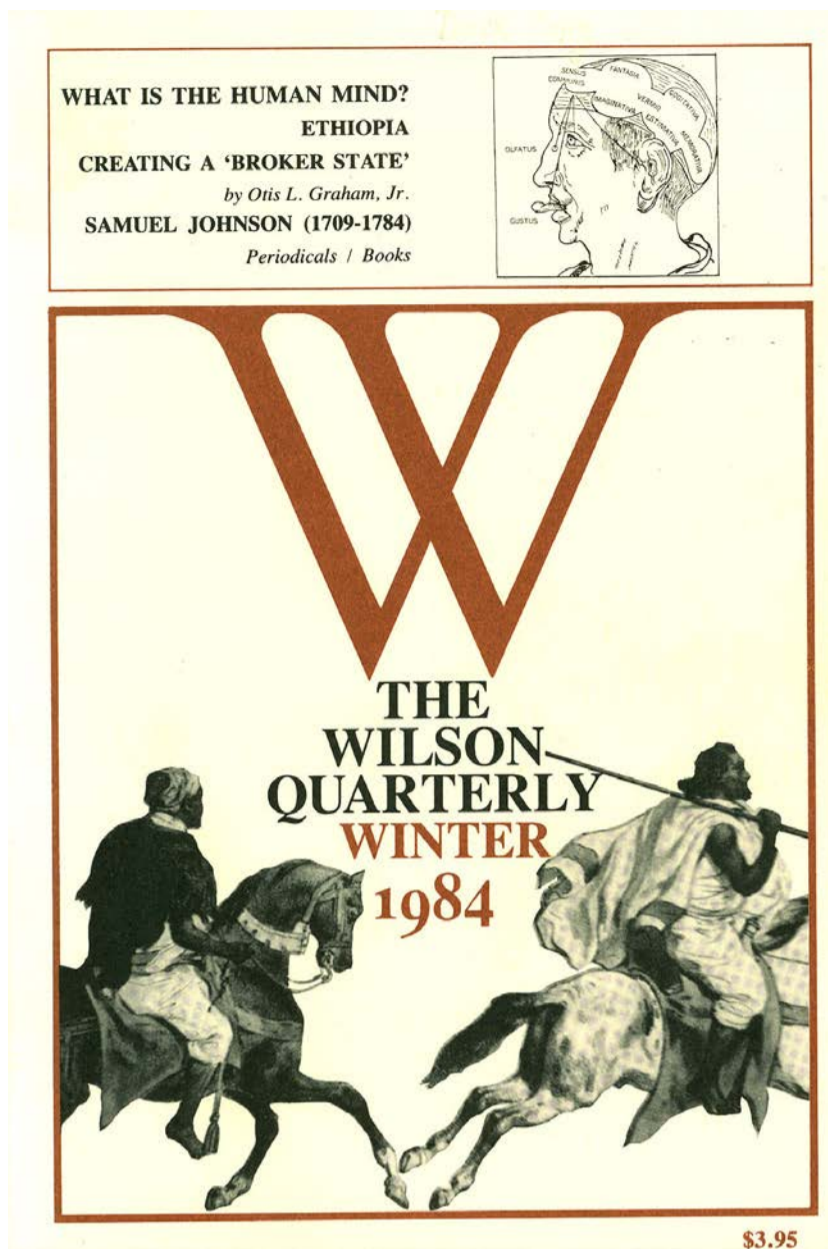
EDITOR'S COMMENT

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 Website, www.wilsonquarterly.com.)

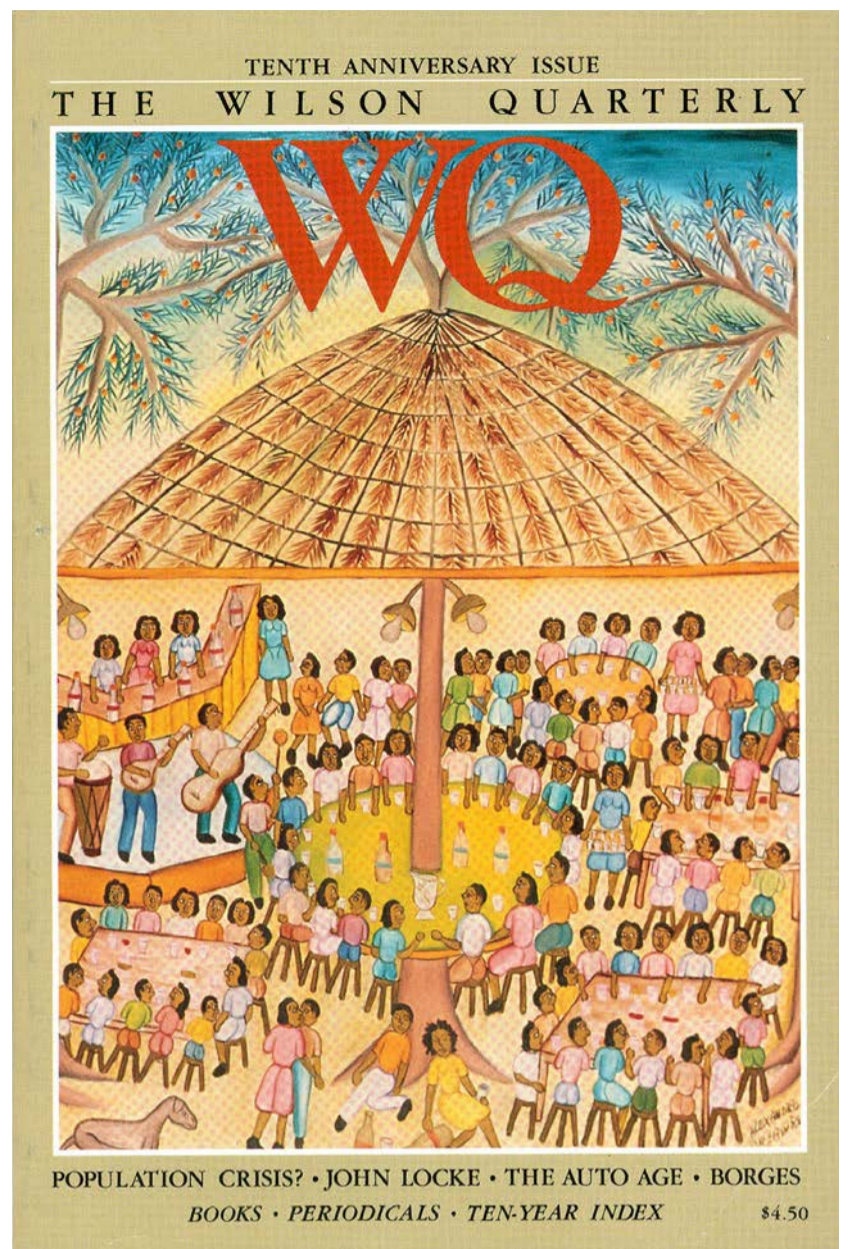
In this issue we have reached back to present some of the classic essays we have published since the magazine's founding by Peter Braestrup in 1976, touching on many of the themes that have animated the *WQ*, from American civic life to global affairs. This has always been a magazine for intellectually 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.

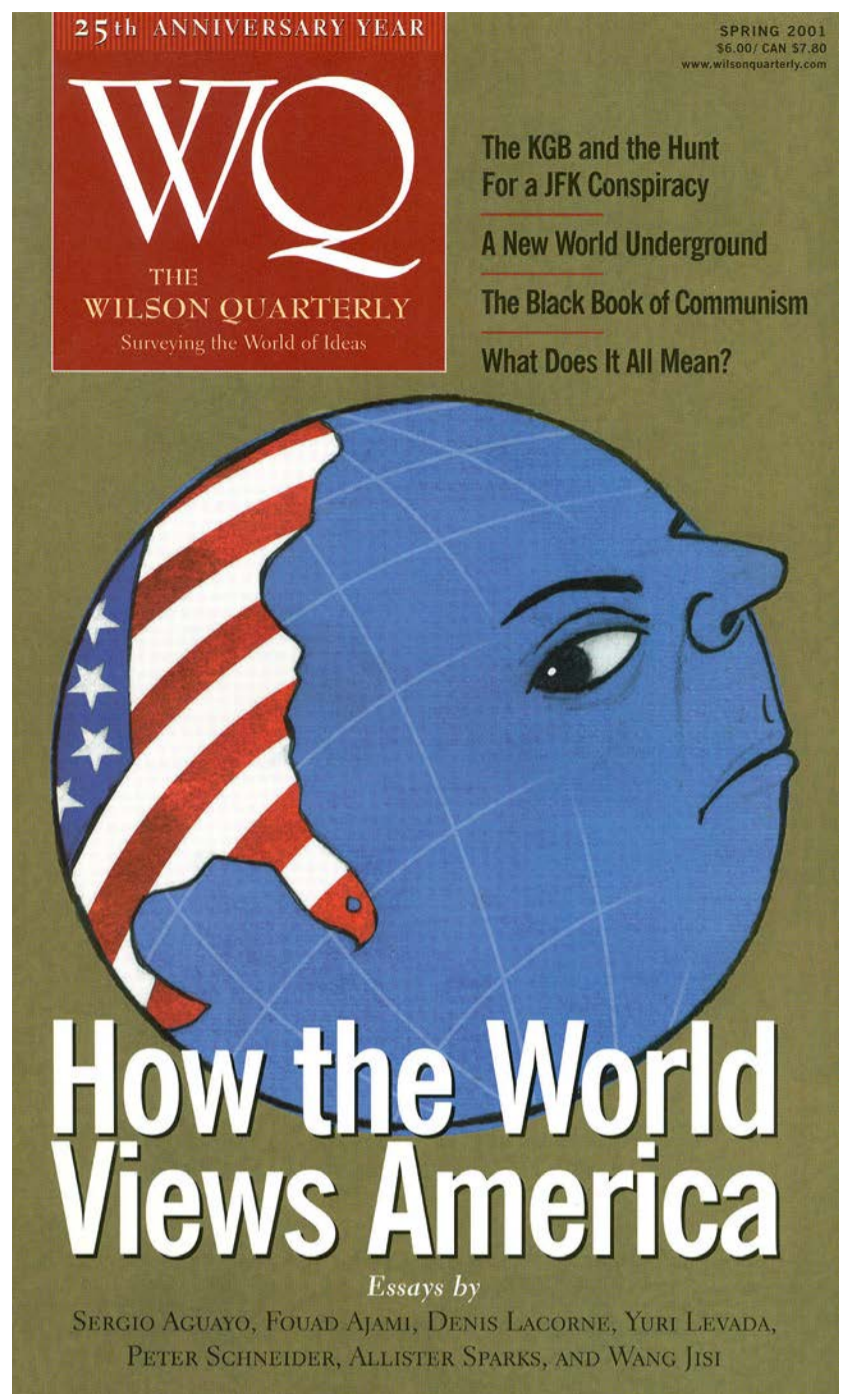
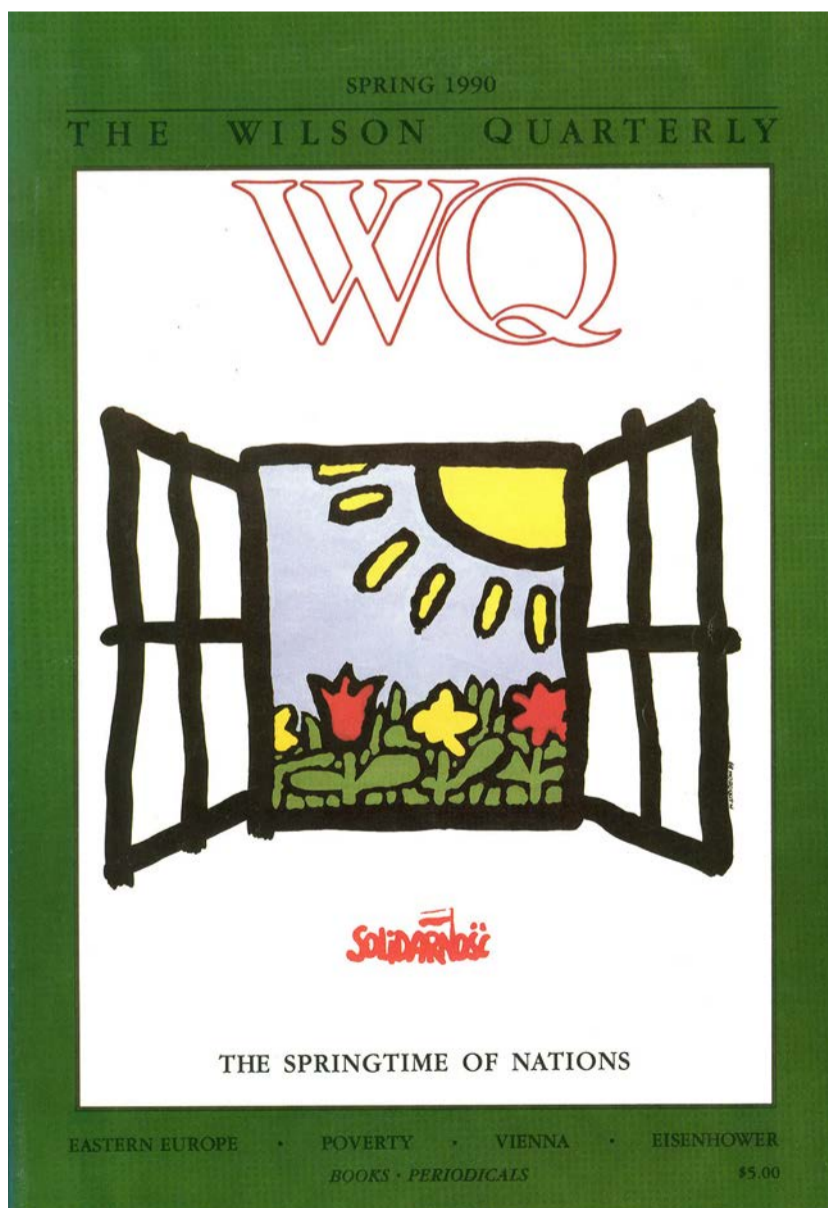
We have been fortunate to present the work of some of the leading writers and thinkers of our time—including Daniel Bell, Carlos Fuentes, Richard Rorty, and E.O. Wilson—and to have brought to readers' attention a number of rising intellectuals, such as Andrew Bacevich and Amy Chua. In “The Second Coming 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.

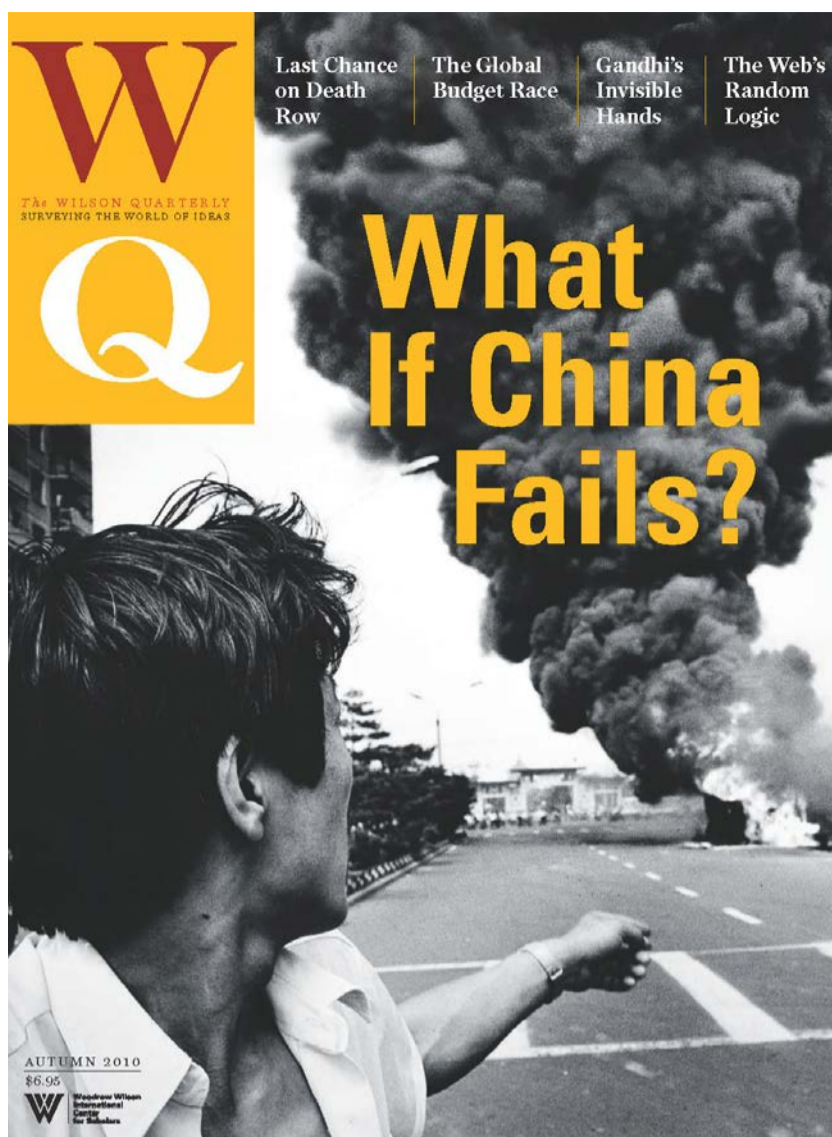
For all its concern with the big questions of our time, the *WQ* has taken a practical, even workmanlike

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



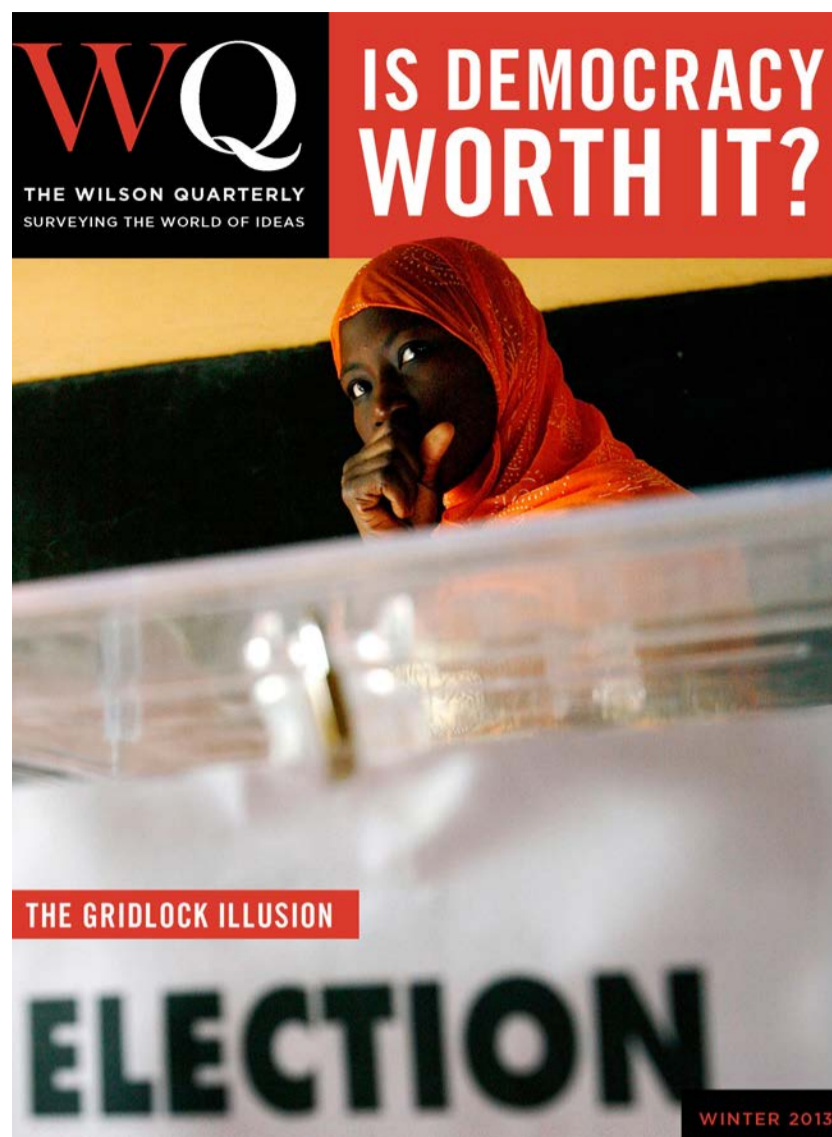
same issue’s In Essence section (then called The Periodical Observer), we reported on a scholar’s argument that the Enlightenment was partly stimulated by the introduction of coffee and tea in Europe. It opened with Samuel Johnson’s thundering peroration against sleep, “Short, O short then be thy reign/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