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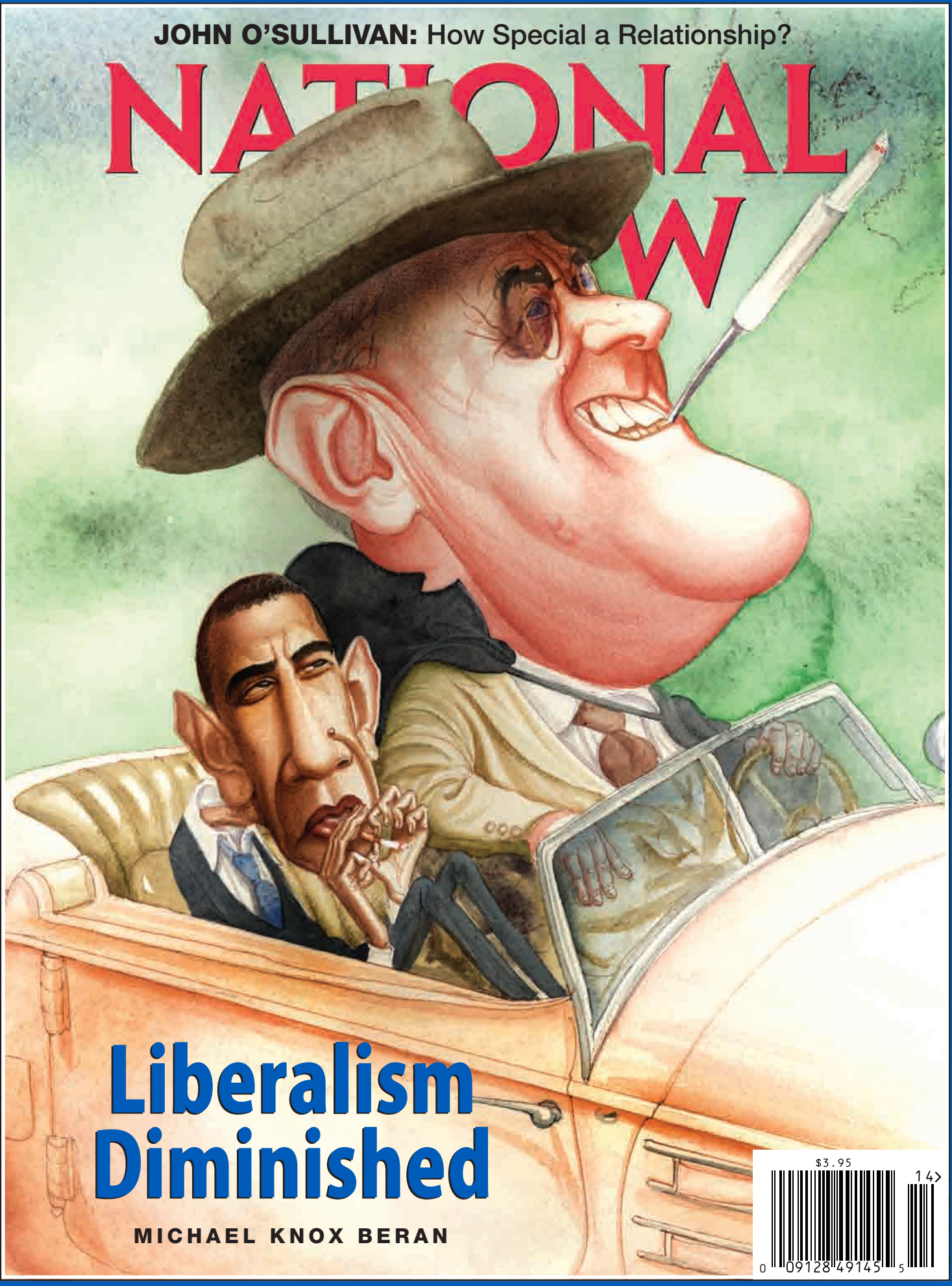
JOHN O'SULLIVAN: How Special a Relationship?

NATIONAL REVIEW



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NATIONAL REVIEW

APRIL 5 ISSUE; PRINTED MARCH 18

Letters

Monkeying with the Facts

I don't want to belabor Matthew Scully's critical review of my book *A Rat Is a Pig Is a Dog Is a Boy*, but he continues to mislead readers about a particular experiment described in its pages. Scully initially claimed I supported an experiment that broke the limbs of chimps. When I wrote in reply ("Animal Welfare vs. Animal Rights," March 22) that I had never heard of such an experiment, Scully referenced pages 74–75 of my book.

I did indeed write about an animal experiment in those pages—the "Silver Spring Monkey Case," infamous because of animal-rights activists' nearly successful attempts to stop it. The experiment did not, however, involve the breaking of limbs, but rather a surgical procedure performed under anesthesia. It was NIH-approved research, and led to a tremendous breakthrough in the rehabilitation of stroke patients—Constrained Induced Movement Therapy—that now benefits tens of thousands of stroke patients around the world, and, most recently, children with cerebral palsy.

It seems to me that any discussion of such research should accurately describe the animals used and what was done, and address the tremendous human benefit thereby derived.

Wesley J. Smith
Castro Valley, Calif.

On Thin Ice

I have been a subscriber to NATIONAL REVIEW since at least 1971. Your publication not only was the first, but continues to be what I consider the finest, source of conservative thoughts and ideals.

That said, it concerned me—as I eagerly leafed through the March 8 issue to read one of my favorite columns, Mark Steyn's "Happy Warrior"—to discover that with a flick of his deft pen Mr. Steyn had seemed to relieve our family company, which makes ice-resurfacing machines, of a long-held trademark by declaring its name, "Zamboni," a generic noun.

For more than 60 years, the Zamboni brand name has been a valuable trademark, and we diligently protect it. Like "Coke," "Kleenex," and "Jeep," "Zamboni" has a close identity in the public mind with a particular type of commodity—but please remember: A trademark is always an adjective, never a generic noun. "Zamboni" is the brand, and "ice-resurfacing machine" is the generic product name.

Richard F. Zamboni
President, Frank J. Zamboni & Co., Inc.

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Petition for Redress of Grievances

to

US Attorney General Eric Holder

FDA Food Czar Michael R. Taylor

The World Health Organization (WHO) has just recommended that drinking water contain 25-50 mg of magnesium per liter to prevent deaths from heart attack and stroke. www.MgWater.com/download American bottled water averages <5 mg of magnesium (Mg) per liter, while bottled water in the rest of the world averages about 20 mg of magnesium per liter.

The FDA and DOJ caused the Mg-deficient-water problem by destroying the American mineral water industry in the 1930's, in the mistaken belief that "pure" water was good, and that mineral water was just impure water. **Now, it is up to the FDA and DOJ to correct their blunder, requiring the Mg content of bottled or canned beverages to be put in labels' nutrition panels, and requiring that all bottled or canned beverages contain at least 25 mg of Mg per liter.**

Epidemiological studies indicate that millions of Americans may have died due to the FDA's and DOJ's destruction of the American mineral water industry. See:

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Foods no longer contain as much magnesium as they did a century ago, due to increased food processing and possible soil depletion. Consumers have generally rejected magnesium-rich whole grain foods like brown rice and brown bread, in favor of magnesium-stripped white rice and white bread. Bottled beverages are the most practical way of delivering magnesium to consumers. Recent studies clearly confirm that water-borne Mg is far, far better in preventing cardiovascular pathologies than food-borne Mg.

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The Week

■ "Rum, tickling, and the lash" just doesn't have the same ring.

■ Chief Justice John Roberts, belatedly responding to the president's State of the Union address, said it was "troubling" for the justices to be surrounded by hooting and hollering critics of their campaign-finance decision without being able to respond. White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said it was the Court's decision that was troubling. (Translation: Democrats think they have found a winning issue.) Roberts was right. Next year, the justices should stay home.

■ Last month, we commented on Wisconsin Republican congressman Paul Ryan's ambitious free-market "roadmap" for the future of American tax, health-care, and entitlement policy. We find much to admire but have reservations: Ryan's tax plan undervalues investment in children, and we generally prefer incremental to comprehensive plans. Needless to say, the liberal reaction to Representative Ryan has been less mixed. The prevailing line is that Ryan's plan would savage the poor while still failing to balance the budget. The studies purporting to analyze the roadmap have not been notably competent: One widely quoted paper, from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, used an old version of the roadmap rather than the one Ryan proposed to reach its negative conclusions. The liberal critics also ignore that Ryan would make Social Security and the big tax break for health care more rather than less progressive. It would not be accurate to say that the liberals have scored no points in this debate. Have they shown that their plans to bring the government's books into long-term balance are superior to Ryan's? To do that, they would first have to have such plans.

■ A dinner was held in Kentucky to honor retiring Republican senator Jim Bunning, at which he received praise, deservedly, for holding up a $10 billion extension in benefits to the unemployed. The media storm over Bunning's hold was full of righteous fury at his supposed heartlessness, but these knee-jerk condemnations ignored the fact that Bunning supported the extension, insisting only that Congress offset the spending. Why not take $10 billion in unspent stimulus funds and redirect it? he suggested. Bunning released his hold after Senate majority leader Harry Reid agreed to allow a vote on a funding amendment, which was narrowly defeated along partisan lines. After all, to the Democrats, it's just another $10 billion, a rounding error on this year's deficit of $1.4 trillion. "Many people asked me, 'Why now?'" Bunning wrote in an op-ed defending his hold. "My answer is, 'Why *not* now?' . . . If the Senate cannot find $10 billion to pay for a measure we all support, we will never pay for anything." A toast to a rare outbreak of good sense in the Senate.

See page 13.

ROMAN GENN

■ When the House Ethics Committee started investigating charges that Rep. Eric Massa (D., N.Y.) had harassed male staffers, he claimed it was payback for his opposition to Obamacare (he supported a single-payer plan). He soon became a former Rep. but continues to deny the allegations: He had tickle fights with his male staff, he said, because "I never translated from my days in the Navy to being a congressman." The Navy, well-known hotbed of tickle fights. "I have not yet begun to tickle." "We have tickled the enemy, and they are ours." "You may tickle when ready, Gridley." Your sail is done; dismissed.

■ The Senate can pass only one reconciliation bill per year, which is why the Democrats—who seem to intuit that they won't be so numerous next year—want to combine the health-care reconciliation bill with legislation that would make the government the direct provider of most student loans. The combination is poetic: American college-loan policy offers an illustration of how the government can absorb an activity incrementally, claiming to cherish the benefits the private sector provides until the bait has worked and it's time for the switch. Government support for student loans began in the form of subsidies for private loans, much as the Democrats' health-care bill would succor the insurance industry by subsidizing its product while forcing people to buy it. In the 1990s,

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Democrats added a "public option"—making government the direct provider of some student loans—with the Clinton administration claiming that "students and schools are served by healthy competition" between the private sector and the government. This is the same rhetoric Obama used when he tried to sell us a public option for health care. And now we see how quickly Democrats dispense with the rhetoric of competition when a government takeover seems viable: The new student-loan bill would make the public option the only option, thus completing the absorption of the activity. In a similar way, the current health-care legislation isn't the endgame.

■ The Securities and Exchange Commission has once again shown itself the prisoner of Big Business, adopting rules restricting "short" sales. Under the new rules, short sales would be banned when a firm's shares have dropped more than 10 percent in a single trading day. In other words, the regulators are insisting on an upside bias in the marketplace (cf. bubbles, inflation of). Short-sellers are the misunderstood watchdogs of Wall Street who bet that the price of a stock is going to go down. Successful shorts are the ones who root out incompetence, laziness, and complacency. And they are subsequently hated by the incompetent, the lazy, and the complacent, who are to be found in corporate boardrooms just as they are found in Washington bureaucracies.

■ The Obama administration released its proposal to change federal K–12 education policy. It is seeking tighter standards

Liberty Abhors a Cultural Vacuum

Ask a Frenchman how to "act French" and he will know exactly what to do (and, no, this isn't a setup for the punch line "surrender to the Germans"). The French have all sorts of phrases that prove my point: "Plus Français que les Français," which means "More French than the French." These days it's used to describe non-French folks who are trying too hard to be authentic. There's also "Plus royaliste que le roi"—"More royalist than the king," which nicely evokes people who are more committed to a cause than the symbol of the cause, and also literally describes several of my reactionary friends. The French also talk of "la France profonde," which refers to deep and profound Frenchness, particularly as found in rural areas.

Something similar is true of nearly every advanced nation in the world. Britain, Japan, and Russia: Each has a core conception of its national essence. One obvious exception is Germany, for reasons either too complex or too obvious to get into here. But the old joke gets at it well enough: How do you tell if someone's a German? If he says he's a "European."

Another seeming exception is America. Ask someone how to "act American" and he'll most likely be perplexed. There is no one way to act American, he might say; in America the individual is king. Or, if he's of a certain leftist bent, he will likely make fun of cowboys, cheeseburgers, John Wayne, or cowboy John Wayne eating a cheeseburger. One can imagine how obnoxious Bill Maher or Michael Moore would be if asked to "act American."

But Americans are wrong about this. America has a culture. It may not be as old as Japan's or have as many pretty brands of furniture as France's, but American culture is there, and it is obviously there to immigrants and visitors. Indeed, it is a major reason why people immigrate here, and why they visit, too.

Vast swaths of the American Left do not like this fact, or at least they do not like it when you say something like, "I like American culture the way it is," or "That program sounds fine for Belgium, but it really doesn't fit American culture."

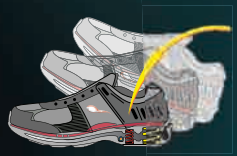
A perfect case in point has been the reaction to Rich Lowry and Ramesh Ponnuru's recent National Review cover essay on American exceptionalism. The response from liberal writers has been almost entirely incoherent. That's not to say that none of their criticisms have weight. But at the end of the day, their fundamental objection is to the notion that "American way" means anything beyond the constellation of platitudes and special pleadings represented by groups like the ironically named "People for the American Way."

Amusingly, the people most outraged by the notion that there is an American culture are often—not always—the people most eager to lecture their fellow Americans about the richness, delicacy, and permanence of nearly every other culture in the world. We must understand that there is an Arab culture or a Vietnamese culture. We need to grasp that the Chinese way of doing things is different from ours and deserves our respect. And, truth be told, at the level of platitudes, I don't know a conservative who disagrees with such statements. But turn things around and talk about how American culture should constrain the actions of our government at home even a little bit, and their hackles rise.

And I think that gets to the core of things. The notion that there is an American culture is an impediment to the schemes and will to power of progressive domestic imperialists. The more you subscribe to the idea that there is a cultural vacuum here at home, the more empowered you feel to fill it with whatever you see fit.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

TODD GIPSTEIN



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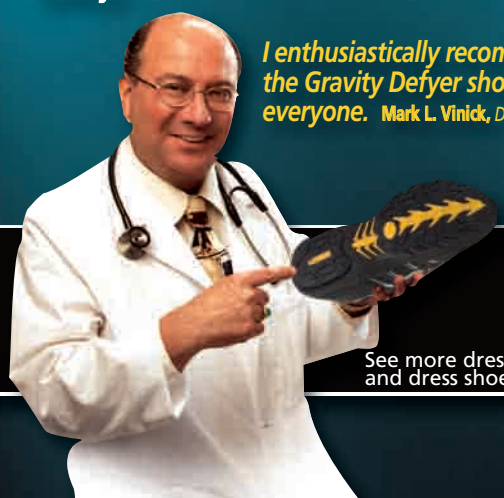

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for the worst schools while easing up on most of them—a defensible approach. There is plenty of continuity with the Bush administration, especially rhetorically: The utopian goal of "universal proficiency by 2014" has been replaced by the utopian goal of "universal college readiness by 2020." This new goal will be pursued with the same seriousness as the last, i.e. none. Many experts and pundits have high hopes for the Obama administration's education policy; many of the same ones had high hopes for Bush's. What none of them allow themselves to learn is that education cannot be reformed from Washington.

■ It's not the federal government's job to set state and local education policy, but if it's going to do so, it should at least put its muscle to good use. Initially, it appeared that this was what the Obama administration was doing with Race to the Top: In the scramble for federal funds, education secretary Arne Duncan promised, states that capped the number of charter schools would be at a disadvantage, and states that banned the use of student test-score progress in teacher evaluations wouldn't even be eligible. But the finalists for the first round of funding have been announced, and results aren't promising: New York, which both caps charter schools and bans the use of student test-score data in tenure decisions, is on the list; so is Kentucky, which doesn't allow charter schools at all. Meanwhile, the process has been shrouded in secrecy: Neither the judges' names nor the states' actual scores on the 500-point scale will be released for another month. We're awaiting announcement of the winners, but so far, Race to the Top is stumbling out of the gates.

■ We must leave al-Qaeda terrorists at liberty unless there is enough admissible evidence to convict in civilian court: That was Eric Holder's argument in two briefs submitted as a private lawyer in the case of "dirty bomber" (and, now, convicted terrorist) Jose Padilla. We must accept the risk of catastrophic attack, Holder told the Supreme Court, in order to avoid the true evil, an overly powerful president (translation: George W. Bush). These views should have sparked aggressive questioning when Holder was nominated to be attorney general, but they were not asked, because Holder did not disclose the relevant briefs, and others, to the Senate. As Sen. Jon Kyl (R., Ariz.) observed, Holder's claim of an accidental oversight "strains credulity." Holder submitted only a handful of Supreme Court briefs as a private lawyer. Moreover, in February he defended his handling of the "Christmas bomber" case in a letter that tracked the argument in his briefs. Perhaps DOJ can offer Holder a refresher course in legal ethics.

TOYOTA

■ In our last issue, we commented on transportation secretary Ray LaHood's heavy-handed testimony at congressional hearings investigating sudden acceleration in Toyotas. A guardian of the nation's motor safety invites doubt when the nation bankrolls two competing car companies. Is the underlying story itself dubious? James Sikes, owner of the Toyota Prius that he says zoomed up to 94 m.p.h. all by itself, filed for bankruptcy in 2008; one of his creditors is Toyota Financial Services, from which he leased the allegedly errant car. Sikes says he is not interested in suing, though he would like another car. Meanwhile bloggers Theodore Frank and Megan McArdle looked at the ages of drivers in fatal accidents allegedly caused by accelerating Toyotas. The median age, when it could be determined, was 60. A sign that the problem, in at least some cases, was driver error? More study needs to be done before we can say yes or no—but to do that we need to avoid the sudden acceleration of a rush to judgment.

■ The latest polls have Marco Rubio far ahead of Gov. Charlie Crist in Florida's Republican Senate primary. Crist started the race with liabilities, notably his support for Obama's stimulus, and has since only compounded them. (First Crist denied having supported the stimulus; then he suggested that all the Republican governors who opposed the bill but took their state's share of the money were hypocrites.) Perhaps the governor should drop out. We're all in favor of primary competition, but at this point Crist is not even providing that.

■ Counterintuitiveness has long been blogger Mickey Kaus's stock-in-trade, but he has surpassed himself with the announcement of a primary challenge to Sen. Barbara Boxer of California. Kaus says he intends not to defeat Boxer but to raise issues—namely, the Democratic party's ill-advised support for illegal immigration, labor unions, and affirmative action. We wish Kaus had as much zeal for fiscal restraint as he does for iconoclasm—he says, "I believe in affirmative government and spending gobs of money," alas—but he is an independent voice and a real mind; if he would like our endorsement in the Democratic primary, he may have it.

■ Republican moderates are always on the lookout for a chance to throw social conservatives under the bus. But sometimes the so-cons jump, as in the recent fight over Texas's history curriculum and textbook standards. A faction on the state board of education led by Don McLeroy—a young-Earth, Adam-rode-a-brontosaurus type straight out of liberal caricature—has been on a jihad against academic liberals, Charles Darwin, and . . . Thomas Jefferson. (T. J. will no longer have a place in a lesson about Enlightenment writers' effects on revolutions.) Texas's curriculum practices are clumsy, with officeholders in Austin micromanaging mentions of particular individuals and groups: not William Travis and the Rangers, but Phyllis Schlafly and the Heritage Foundation. (Love 'em both, but jeez.) The conservatives protest that they're just beating the liberals at their own game—"I'll see your MALDEF and raise you an NRA!"—but they are not covering themselves in glory. In the battle over education, victory for conservatives should mean depoliticizing the textbooks, not politicizing them along conservative lines. Some sensible conservatives in Texas agreed, and Republican Thomas Ratliff defeated McLeroy in the March election.

■ *Forbes* magazine has published a list of America's 25 richest counties, as measured by median household income. The

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NR210

first, second, and third are all suburbs of Washington, D.C. Altogether eleven of the top 25 are in close proximity to the federal capital. Note that what is being measured here is not wealth at its billionaire extremes, but solid middle-class prosperity, the foundation of any stable modern society. The gushing fount of that prosperity in today's United States is the federal government. Political employment, not commercial employment, is now the guarantee of a good life. Within living memory the District of Columbia was a sleepy southern town with scores of working farms within its boundaries; now it is a great imperial hive of bureaucracy, and of the lawyers, lobbyists, and consultants who leech off the federal mandarinate.

Iyad Allawi

■ Iraq held parliamentary elections of great promise. They were clean and inclusive, put - ting to shame Afghanistan, not to mention Iran. The Sunnis, who had disastrously boycotted the 2005 elections, voted in droves and for a secular Shiite, former prime minister Iyad Allawi. Iran's preferred candidates did not do particularly well. And the split result will mean a divided parliament requiring deal-making and coalition-building. All to the good. Sorting out what happens from here will be the byzantine work of months, but it wouldn't be surprising if prime minister Nouri al-Maliki were forced to relinquish his office. Such a peaceful, democratic transition of power would be another notable event. Yet on the cusp of a sustainable success in Iraq, when it should be working to cement a strategic partnership, the Obama administration has signaled a lack of interest. Our ambassador there, Christopher Hill, is passive and unengaged, and Obama cannot even muster statements commensurate with Iraq's achievement in holding the fairest elections in the Middle East outside of Israel, so soon after emerging from a vicious civil war. He should swallow his pride and consolidate the gains made possible by his maligned predecessor.

■ The Israelis humiliated the vice president of the United States by announcing the next stage in planning for housing construction in Jerusalem just as he arrived in Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu rightly apologized, explaining that he didn't know of the announcement in advance. That should have been the end of it, but Secretary of State Clinton called to bawl him out a few days later, in a calculated move by the Obama administration to blow up the episode into a diplomatic crisis. If the administration wants to try to bring down Netanyahu, it is misreading the effects of its actions on Israeli politics. Regardless, the diplomatic escalation is a mistake. No Israeli government is going to forswear new housing in undisputed areas in and around Jerusalem, and it's folly to make such a cessation a goal of U.S. policy. Besides, the more critical the U.S. is of Israel, the greater incentive the Palestinians have to make more demands. This accounts for the seeming paradox that the most "evenhanded" American administration in at least a decade is failing to get the Palestinians to agree even to sit down and negotiate with the Israelis directly. There's only one way for this spat to end: badly.

■ Anyone trying to understand Middle East developments should study the behavior of Walid Jumblatt. He is the leader of the Druze in Lebanon, a small minority that long ago learned to take care of themselves by the simple method of being useful fighters and always making sure to fight for the winning side. Occasional miscalculations have had dire consequences. In 1977 Kamal Jumblatt, Walid's father and then the Druze leader, opposed Syria's designs on Lebanon. The then-dictator of Syria, Hafez Assad, had him murdered. Since then, Walid has lived in a castle on a mountaintop protected by his Druze militia. Succeeding his father as Syrian dictator, Bashar Assad has also used murder as a political tactic. But his assassination of Rafik Hariri, the Lebanese prime minister, was too blatant. With the backing of the United States, a coalition of Lebanese communities formed a democratic bloc that has governed the country until now. Walid Jumblatt was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of this embryo democracy, and he made a point of criticizing Bashar outspokenly. Cozying up to Bashar in a totally unpredictable switch of policy, the Obama administration has placed Walid in sudden danger of his life. So on television he has been apologizing to Bashar. "Forgive and forget," he pleads, and in public too. Imagine what it means to be the son of a murdered man appealing for mercy to the son of the murderer. This is the stuff of high tragedy. It's also evidence that Lebanon is again slipping away.

■ Brazil claims that U.S. farm subsidies artificially depress world commodity prices and injure developing-world farmers. The World Trade Organization has cleared the way for Brazil to impose retaliatory countermeasures, which would depress demand for U.S. products in Brazil and harm a broad swath of export-oriented businesses. Reuters columnist James Pethokoukis astutely noted that Obama's reliance on pro-labor Democrats to pull his health-care mess across the finish line has impeded his ability to act on the advice of his own economic team, which wants to halt our backsliding on trade. Reduced growth from increased protectionism can be added to the growing list of Obamacare's liabilities.

■ On February 23, Orlando Zapata Tamayo, a Cuban prisoner of conscience, died after an 83-day hunger strike. President Lula da Silva of Brazil happened to be in Havana, visiting with the Castros. Democracy activists pleaded with him to say something about human rights. He refused. And he has refused to do so since. Instead, he has defended the Castros' dictatorship. He said, "We have to respect the decisions of the Cuban legal system and the government to arrest people depending on the laws of Cuba." He further said, "I don't think a hunger strike can be used as a pretext for human rights to free people. Imagine if all the criminals in São Paulo entered into hunger strikes to demand freedom." Thus did he compare prisoners of conscience to drug dealers, rapists, and murderers. Silva himself was a hunger striker, back when he was a prisoner of his country's military dictatorship. But now he has changed his tune: "I would never do it again. I think it's insane to mistreat your own body." In January, the World Economic Forum (famous for its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland) gave

YAHYA AHMED/AP

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Building Great Sentences: Exploring the Writer's Craft

Taught by Professor Brooks Landon, The University of Iowa

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5. Adjectival Steps
6. The Rhythm of Cumulative Syntax
7. Direction of Modification
8. Coordinate, Subordinate, and Mixed Patterns
9. Coordinate Cumulative Sentences
10. Subordinate and Mixed Cumulatives
11. Prompts of Comparison
12. Prompts of Explanation
13. The Riddle of Prose Rhythm
14. Cumulative Syntax to Create Suspense
15. Degrees of Suspensiveness
16. The Mechanics of Delay
17. Prefab Patterns for Suspense
18. Balanced Sentences and Balanced Forms
19. The Rhythm of Twos
20. The Rhythm of Threes
21. Balanced Series and Serial Balances
22. Master Sentences
23. Sentences in Sequence
24. Sentences and Prose Style

Silva its first-ever Global Statesmanship Award. Perhaps a Nobel is in the offing.

■ The Dalai Lama, one of the world's great men, was born in 1935, and Tibetans are beginning to worry about his successor. Whoever holds the office is the national as well as the spiritual leader of Tibet. Doctrine has it that, upon death, the Dalai Lama is reincarnated as a newborn child, and Tibetans attach supreme importance to the careful process of discovering this child. But already top Chinese officials are saying that they will have first to endorse the candidate before they recognize him as the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. There is a precedent. Second only to the Dalai Lama is the Panchen Lama, who is selected by the same process. When last this happened, the young new lama and his family were disappeared into "protective custody," and a Communist-chosen alternative, to be educated by the Chinese and groomed as an apparatchik, was installed in his place. In March 2008, nationalist and anti-Chinese riots confirmed how the Tibetans really feel about their forced incorporation into China. Hundreds of people are thought to have been killed in the crackdown. Should the succession of the Dalai Lama be similarly rigged, Tibet is certain to explode with yet more violence.

■ The PVV, Geert Wilders's anti-Islamic party, won local elections in Almere, Holland's eighth-largest city, and finished second in The Hague. The PVV already holds four (out of 25) Dutch seats in the European parliament, and nine (out of 150) seats in the Dutch parliament. Some polls show it finishing first in Holland's parliamentary elections in June. It would be interesting to see how Wilders governed, since he lives under 24-hour guard, thanks to Muslim death threats. (Which are not empty: Filmmaker Theo Van Gogh was murdered, and former MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali forced to leave the country.) Wilders wants to ban the burqa, the Koran, and the construction of mosques, as well as immigration from Muslim countries. "I want to defend freedom," he says, "which I think will disappear into thin air the moment the Islamic ideology gains a stronger foothold." A paradoxical program. Yet free men must defend themselves when attacked. The Dutch establishment's failure to do so leaves the field to Geert Wilders.

■ Moammar Qaddafi, doing what comes naturally, called for a holy war against Switzerland: a "jihad," he said. This was in retaliation for the decision of Swiss voters to ban the construction of minarets on mosques. At the State Department, spokesman P. J. Crowley was asked about Qaddafi's call for jihad. He said he was reminded of the dictator's speech at the United Nations last September, during which the speaker ripped pages from the U.N. Charter. Said Crowley, "Lots of words and lots of papers flying all over the place, not necessarily a lot of sense." Qaddafi was aggrieved. He threatened retaliation against U.S. interests, including oil companies. Crowley apologized: "I understand that my personal comments were perceived as a personal attack. . . . These comments do not reflect U.S. policy and were not intended to offend. I apologize if they were taken that way. I regret that my comments have become an obstacle to further progress in our bilateral relationship." There is a line between diplomacy and groveling, and Crowley has crossed it.

■ The BBC reports that the 1985 Live Aid concerts, which were meant to raise money for starving Ethiopians, ended up killing many of them instead. A good-sized chunk of the concert's receipts, perhaps as much as $100 million, went to militias fighting the government of Mengistu Haile Mariam—who is known to have diverted aid money for his own forces. Officials from the 1980s rebel army of Meles Zenawi (who today is Ethiopia's prime minister) have told how they dressed as merchants, set up fake food-distribution networks, and substituted sacks of sand for grain in order to siphon off money for guns and ammunition. The Ethiopian famine was a genuine emergency, though one greatly exacerbated by human venality, and Live Aid money did save many lives. Yet the case is a reminder that a large part of any aid project in an area without conscientious and effective government will end up arming and lining the pockets of vicious thugs.

■ It has been going on for as long as anyone can remember: the effort to get Congress to pass a resolution declaring that the Turkish massacres of Armenians in 1915 were genocide. This effort has always been defeated, in the name of U.S.-Turkish relations, among other things. In 2007, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed a resolution saying, "Genocide." Turkey recalled its ambassador. The resolution went no further. In early March, the committee passed the resolution again, on a 23–22 vote. Turkey again recalled its ambassador. And so it goes. Before the vote this year, Rep. Gary Ackerman (D., N.Y.) pointed to three elderly—very elderly—survivors of the massacres. "They're here for justice," he said. "How long can they wait?" Justice is, alas, beyond the power of Congress.

CHRIS PIZZELLO/AP

■ Oscar liked *The Hurt Locker*, Kathryn Bigelow's low-budget film about an Army explosive-ordnance disposal team in Iraq. It won Best Picture, she won Best Director. After a string of anti-American agitpix, *Hurt Locker* gave American troops their due, and Miss Bigelow dedicated her Best Director award "to the women and men who risk their lives on a daily basis in Iraq and Afghanistan." Well done, ma'am. The following week *Green Zone*, starring Matt Damon, opened and went back to the same-old same-old: Bush lied (about WMD), thousands died. It tanked, opening to just $25 million ($9.7 million of that overseas), after costing $100 million to make. The larger story is the shrinkage of Hollywood as a human storyteller. Stars are known for their antics rather than their work; all the genres—not just history or recent history—limp along, except for new-tech fantasy twaddle (*Avatar*, *Alice in Wonderland*), and video games purvey that just as lucratively. Will the last Oscar winner turn out the lights?

■ Ronan Tynan is an Irish tenor who has been a fixture in New York City for about a decade. His signature tune is "God Bless America" (once the signature tune of Kate Smith). He sang it for rescuers at Ground Zero, while serving food as a volunteer. He sang it at 9/11-related funerals and memorial events. He sang it at Yankees games, during the seventh-inning stretch. He was an inspiring figure to many, standing on his two artificial legs. (Owing to a childhood disability, he had to undergo amputation in his twenties.) But then something happened: He was accused by a lady of making an anti-Semitic remark. And that was that. The Yankees ditched him and he became a tarnished man in the city. He pleads his innocence, and his plea sounds reasonable: He was not, in fact, making an anti-Semitic remark; the woman who accused him misconstrued his reference to "two Jewish ladies." But he could not remove the tarnish. He has now decamped to Boston, where he's singing "God Bless America" in a Red Sox jersey. There is much anti-Semitism in the world, some of it murderous and even genocidal. But at least we're doing something about Ronan Tynan.

■ Appearing on Bill Maher's television show, actor Sean Penn said that anyone who calls Chávez a dictator should go to jail. In Venezuela, Chávez is way ahead of him.

■ Movie actor Tom Hanks has a new production out, a TV docudrama series about the Pacific theater in WWII. In a gushing interview with Hanks for *Time* magazine, historian Douglas Brinkley tells us that the diffident star has become "American history's highest-profile professor." What does Professor Hanks have to tell us about the motivations of the Japanese in the Pacific war? "They were out to kill us because our way of living was different. We, in turn, wanted to annihilate them because they were different." Really? Name "Pearl Harbor" mean anything, Tom? And weren't the Chinese, with whom we were allied, equally different? Why didn't we want to annihilate *them*? In best professorial get-the-students-thinking mode, Hanks followed up with: "Does that sound familiar, by any chance, to what's going on today?" We've been on campus, so yes, it sounds familiar.

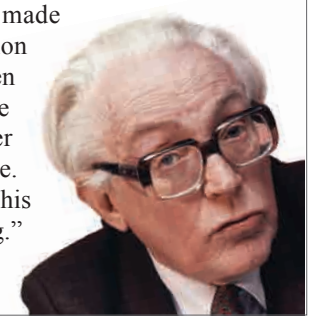
■ Before the Bolshevik Revolution, the theater in St. Petersburg—with its opera and ballet—was the Mariinsky. When the Bolsheviks took over, the theater underwent some name changes. After 1935, it was the Kirov, named after Sergei Kirov, the brutal Bolshevik who, in grand Soviet tradition, was killed by other brutal Bolsheviks. When Communism fell in 1991, the theater became the Mariinsky again. But the opera, ballet, and orchestra continued to travel in the West under the name "Kirov"—because the West had gotten used to that name. The relevant authorities, understandably, were reluctant to harm a brand. Then they took an intermediate step—billing the orchestra, for example, as the "Kirov Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theater." Now, at long last, after almost 20 years, they are the Mariinsky, plain and simple. "Kirov" is consigned to the ash heap of history—where the name and the man belong.

■ If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? Well, you could ask New York State assemblyman Felix Ortiz of Brooklyn. Mr. Ortiz wants to ban salt entirely from food preparation in the restaurants of his state. A chef caught salting his dishes could be fined up to $1,000 under the Ortiz bill. Is there any connection here to current national political obsessions? You bet: Mr. Ortiz tells us that his salt ban will save $32 billion in health-care costs. Imagine what prodigies of rigorous data analysis must have gone into generating that number! Heaven forbid we should take it with a grain of salt. "We need to keep our country healthy," says the assemblyman. Collectively, of course.

■ "Stepping" is a form of dance that involves lots of foot stomping, singing and chanting, hand-clapping, and so forth. It is practiced almost exclusively by blacks, yet at a recent "step off" championship sponsored by Sprite, an all-white group of sorority girls from the University of Arkansas won the top prize. *Shared* the top prize, we should say, because nearly a week after their victory, Sprite posted a cryptic statement on its website saying: "After the competition, we conducted a post-competition review and discovered a scoring discrepancy. There is no conclusive interpretation, nor definitive resolution for the discrepancy." A black sorority from Indiana University was belatedly named co-winner, and both groups received the full amount of prize money. If only *Bush v. Gore* could have been settled that easily . . .

■ When the Germans overran France in 1940, Andrée Virot took immense risks on behalf of the Resistance. Code name Agent Rose, she was active in clandestine publishing, and in passing on to the Allies information about the naval base, with its U-boats, at Brest, her hometown. Her network rescued more than 100 pilots and airmen who had been shot down and smuggled them back to England. Arrested by the Gestapo in 1944, she was sent to Ravensbrück and Buchenwald, tortured, and saved from execution at the very last moment. Afterwards she lived in England with her English husband. "You don't know what freedom is if you have never lost it": These words from an interview she gave are a fitting epitaph for this heroine, who died aged 105. R.I.P.

■ Michael Foot belonged to a privileged family from the south of England but nevertheless, or perhaps therefore, was a man of the hard Left. A journalist by profession, he wrote in the mode of prosecuting counsel. As an orator, he seemed to be acting permanent outrage. A pacifist who himself had not served in the war, he insisted on unilateral nuclear disarmament, every inch one of Lenin's useful idiots. Once he became a member of Parliament, the Labour party took him to its heart and made him its leader. The general election of 1983 was a turning point, when Mrs. Thatcher proved that the country thought more highly of her than of Foot's Socialist alternative. He was 96 when he died, and at his funeral they sang "The Red Flag." R.I.P.



JOHN REDMAN/AP

AT WAR

The Legal Front

In one corner, Attorney General Holder. In the other corner, members of Congress and Keep America Safe, a national-security advocacy group run by Elizabeth Cheney, William Kristol, and Debra Burlingame (sister of Charles Burlingame, pilot of American Airlines flight 77, which crashed into the Pentagon on 9/11). The latter wanted to know how many lawyers who offered pro bono services to Gitmo detainees are now working in the Justice Department. After much hemming and hawing, the attorney general released their names.

Many in the legal guild, on the right as well as the left, were made as uncomfortable as Holder by this process. Former attorney general Michael Mukasey, whose record on counter-terrorism is stellar, called the search for Gitmo lawyers "shoddy and dangerous." Lawyers who represent odious clients—he mentioned drug dealers as well as terrorists—should not "automatically . . . be identified with their former clients and regarded as a fifth column within the Justice Department."

Yet Mukasey acknowledged that there are limits to his defense of his profession. "It is plainly prudent for us to assure that no government lawyers are bringing to their public jobs any agenda driven by views other than those that would permit full-hearted enforcement of laws that fall within their responsibility." Why would one think that of the Gitmo bar?

Gitmo lawyers are allowed to transmit legal documents confidentially to their clients. Yet Gitmo lawyers themselves have admitted sending their clients anti-American polemics (e.g., a comparison of military physicians to Joseph Mengele), maps of the detention camp, and interview questions from news outlets. Some of this is rationalized as building "rapport and trust with our clients." All of it suggests that they view the Gitmo crowd as defendants in an ordinary American court, not irregulars captured on a battlefield. Congress and the public should know whether the Gitmo lawyers now in Justice have engaged in such behavior, what they think of it, and what responsibilities they now have.

GERALD HERBERT/AP

Some of the Gitmo lawyers call themselves the John Adams Project, after Adams's successful defense of the British troops who perpetrated the Boston Massacre of 1770. Be careful of this comparison. John Adams was part of the revolutionary strategy of his older cousin Sam, who devoutly believed that British rule was unjust. With one hand, he encouraged confrontation, and made hay out of the violence that ensued. With the other, he sought to show that Americans were capable of running their own institutions. John played the second gambit.

If the DOJ lawyers acted out of the patriotic sentiments of the Adamses, why so much effort to conceal their identities?

PUBLIC POLICY

Political Poison

At press time, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Pres. Barack Obama seem absolutely determined to get House Democrats to pass the Senate health-care bill. Arms aren't all they're twisting: They are also bending the rules of Congress. The latest gambit is to have the House "deem" the Senate bill to have passed without actually voting on it. Like so much about the Democrats' health-care initiative, this tactic is both outrageous and senseless: Everyone will know that a vote for this procedure is a vote for the bill, and congressmen will be held to account accordingly.

Pro-life Democrats are coming under particularly heavy pressure. They have long been isolated within their party, but until now they have been allowed to vote with their consciences and their districts. Now, for the first time, party discipline is being imposed on an abortion-related vote. The Senate health-care bill facilitates government funding of abortion; it is the most pro-abortion legislation ever to come close to passage in Congress. Those congressmen who succumb to the pressure to vote for it should know that they are forfeiting the pro-life label.

Democrats hope that Obamacare will become more popular once it is enacted and the debate dies down. But the debate will not die down: Republicans have at least two election cycles to go before the legislation goes into effect, and in the interim Democrats will have ownership over every aspect of the health-care system. Do Democrats really believe that their bill will cause public satisfaction with that system to undergo a large increase?

The Democrats might well succeed in getting this legislation passed on a mixture of will, procedural tricks, and deception. (Obama is still insisting that the bill does not cut Medicare.) If so, Republicans should call for the repeal of the legislation's major elements and their replacement by sensible, modest, free-market health-care reforms. And they should challenge those Democrats who balked at Obamacare to do the same. Pelosi's troops want nothing more than for this war to be over. Conservatives have to make it clear that it will merely have moved on to a new front—and that the Left's fortifications will be no sturdier.

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The Dead End of Liberalism

Why progressives can't govern

BY RAMESH PONNURU

THE chief obstacles to new liberal policy victories these days are past liberal policy victories. As a matter of political philosophy, contemporary liberalism may exalt government, but in practice, it enfeebles it.

No group of voters has resisted the president's project of transforming American health care more than senior citizens. Their health care was already transformed, by Medicare. That program is one of Lyndon Johnson's great liberal achievements, but also a major source of funding for Obama's health-care initiative. The old beneficiaries, in both senses of "old," don't want to give new beneficiaries a cut.

The very recent beneficiaries don't, either. When Massachusetts elected Republican senator Scott Brown in January, liberal commentators pointed out that he had argued that the state's voters already had universal health coverage and thus had no incentive to sacrifice to cover people in the rest of the country. Some Brown backers, they said, were not so much voting against liberal health-care reform in principle as voting for the one they already had. They were voting, in other words, like Medicare recipients.

Brown's election threw Congress into turmoil. Senate Democrats had passed a health-care bill that sought to raise funds and control costs in part by taxing expensive insurance plans. A large bloc of House Democrats who favor the legislation in general were unwilling to vote for it because unions had negotiated those plans and wanted them left alone. Their unhappiness is the principal reason that Democrats spent February and early March trying to figure out how the Senate could pass a second bill amending the first before the House voted.

The pattern goes beyond health care. The unpopularity of the stimulus bill has been a major headache for Democrats, dragging down support for all of their other plans. One reason the stimulus is widely seen as ineffective is that it has taken a long time for projects it funds to get under way. And one reason for that slowness is the burden of compliance with environmental and labor regulations. In 2009, only 9,100 homes were weatherized under the $5 billion program that the stimulus devoted to the purpose. Weatherization grants are subject to the government's Davis-Bacon rules, which require that federal projects pay the "prevailing wage." The Department of Labor had to figure out the prevailing wage for weatherization work in each of the country's 3,000-plus counties.

During the Bush presidency, liberals were taken with the argument that conservatives, because they oppose much of modern government, cannot run it properly, and then use its mismanagement to justify their ideological predilections. But the fact that California is increasingly described as a "failed state" cannot plausibly be attributed to mere defects in administration, or even to underfunding caused by conservative anti-tax activism. The state's revenues per capita are among the highest in the nation, notes William Voegeli.

Writing in *City Journal*, Voegeli has argued that California came to grief because its government offers high spending, high taxes, and lousy services. What makes up the gap are compensation for state employees and transfer payments. For example: "California government workers retiring at age 55 received larger pensions than their counterparts in any other state (leaving aside the many states where retirement as early as 55 isn't even possible)." The state's bloated government is incapable of doing a good job of the many tasks liberalism has given it; its incompetence then reduces public support for handing it more responsibilities.

Contemporary liberalism both presupposes and desires a government that is flexible, competent, energetic. It wants and needs a government that can mobilize society's resources to accomplish a long list of difficult tasks, including the reduction of economic inequality, the education of children, the protection of the environment, the elimination of unjust discrimination, and the safeguarding of consumers—to name just a few. Yet in operation, it weighs down the government with interest groups that first make it inefficient and inflexible and then make it impossible to reform.

Another example. Liberalism is as committed to fighting global warming as it is to any other cause. It believes that the fate of the earth—literally—rests on changing our patterns of energy consumption. Some liberals, notably including the president,

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have gone so far as to abandon earlier liberal leeriness of nuclear power in the name of this urgent cause. But liberal laws enable environmental activists to file suits against, and otherwise impede, the spread of wind farms, let alone nuclear plants; and for all the urgency of the liberal crusade on climate change, nobody is proposing to change that.

It may be that liberalism's political weakness, especially in the United States, forces it into these traps. It cannot survive without strong public-sector unions; the alternative to them is not a large, liberal government with less sand in its gears. One reason our society is so much more litigious than those of Western Europe is that, across the Atlantic, politicians can openly advocate social democracy. Here we have empowered the trial bar to serve as a force for piecemeal redistribution and regulation—a force that is often turned against governments as well as private-sector actors. Entitlement spending may crowd out the discretionary spending that liberals prefer, but the former does more than the latter to keep liberal politicians in power.

Social Security is an instructive case. In terms of redistributing wealth from rich to poor, the program is only very modestly progressive if it is so at all. The overwhelming majority of funds that go into the system from upper-middle-class people go right back out to upper-middle-class people. (Ditto for other economic groups.) The program's goals could be much more efficiently served by splitting it into two programs. A mandatory savings program in which people had to make conservative investments could prevent most people from retiring in penury, while a small transfer program could help those who can't amass enough savings. That efficiency would not just enlarge the private economy; by saving money, it would make it possible to increase types of government spending attractive to liberals.

Social Security's seeming irrationality has a rational basis. That basis is political. It was designed so as to hide its redistributive elements, on the theory that a purely and visibly redistributive program would not have the necessary popular support. FDR called it an "insurance policy" that kept "individual accounts" for each contributing worker. If a program for poor people were funded out of income taxes, that program would be under threat at budget time. Instead, everyone gets benefits, and everyone feels that they have paid for their benefits with their contributions and are thus entitled to them. The program's resultant popularity has benefited liberal politicians for decades.

Now that we have had those decades to watch the politics of Social Security play out, do liberals regret the bargain they made? Not really. In 2005, President Bush offered them a chance to move toward the safety-net-plus-forced-savings model for the program, and they vehemently and uniformly turned him down. Many of them said that he was attacking the program and thus a crown jewel of liberalism. Some of them openly warned that trimming the growth of benefits for high-wage workers, as Bush proposed to do, would reduce public support for the program.

If liberalism in operation subverts liberal aspirations, this tendency also undercuts some conservative critiques of liberalism. In the first issue of *National Affairs*, William Schambra wrote an influential essay on the limits of President Obama's "policy approach," in which disinterested experts seek comprehensive solutions to rationalize complex, interconnected systems. He cautions that "as Obama's proposals begin their journeys through the requisite institutional hoops, they will inevitably begin to lose their coherence and uniformity." He also notes that this model of policymaking, inherited from the progressives, both underestimates the fallibility of reason and imposes strains on democracy.

Contemporary liberals, including Obama, do indeed have excessive confidence in the power of their intellects to order society. But Schambra underestimates the extent to which the liberal dream of technocracy is a self-delusion. The policies that liberals propose do not become incoherent only upon contact with the political process. They start out that way because of preemptive concessions made by the would-be technocrats themselves.

The reason the Obama administration favors cap-and-trade legislation rather than a tax on the emission of greenhouse gases is not that the former is more elegant, simple, or efficient. It is that an explicit tax on energy would be less popular than a disguised one. The greater susceptibility of cap-and-trade to horse-trading exemptions makes it costlier as well as politically more attractive.

Nor does the administration's health-care policy make any sense at a basic level. There is a reason that its most persuasive advocates, to a man, would actually prefer "single payer": the abolition of private health insurance in favor of a government monopoly. Instead, the administration favors making the insurance companies behave in ways no free-market industry would, forcing everyone to buy their products, and subsidizing those who cannot afford the new, higher prices. The advantages of such an approach over single payer are purely political. Under this system, the profits of the industry serve little social purpose; they're nearly pure waste. (The profits will still provide an incentive to classify and manage risk, but acting on that incentive will generally be illegal.)

"No menace of socialism threatens the United States," conservative scholar Michael Greve has grimly written. "Socialism implies a seriousness of purpose and a willingness and ability to impose order, none of which is in evidence." Again, the health-care overhaul has shown the pattern. What began as an effort to reorder important parts of American society became a series of bargains and shakedowns in which progressives could not tell which groups would be their clients and which their targets from week to week. The progressive project remains obnoxious to liberty, and it retains, in some sense, its ideals. But it lacks a coherent and determined purpose. More and more, liberalism has become a grift. **NR**

The progressive project remains obnoxious to liberty, and it retains, in some sense, its ideals. But it lacks a coherent and determined purpose.

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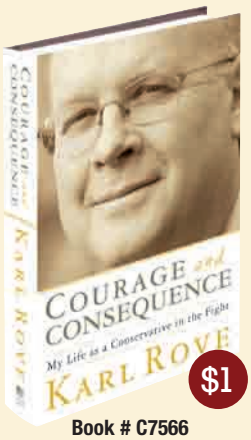

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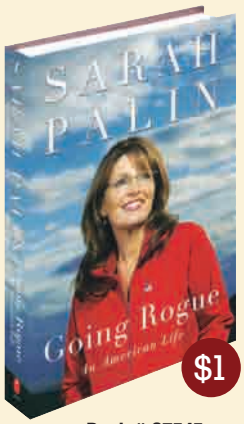

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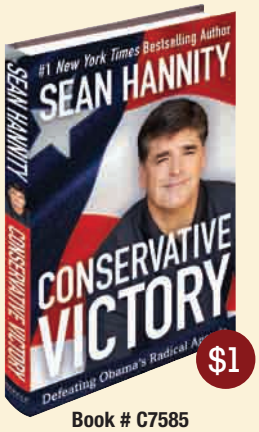

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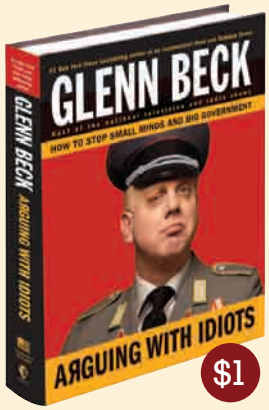

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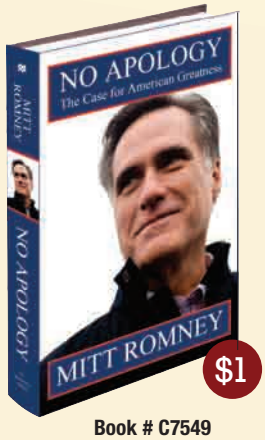

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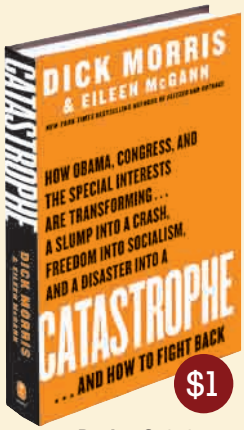

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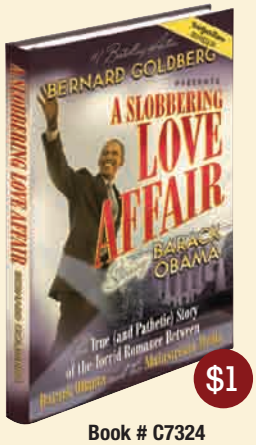

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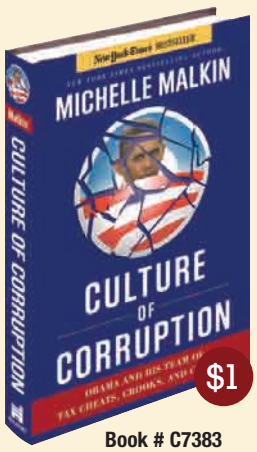

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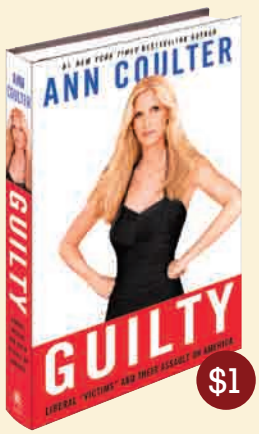

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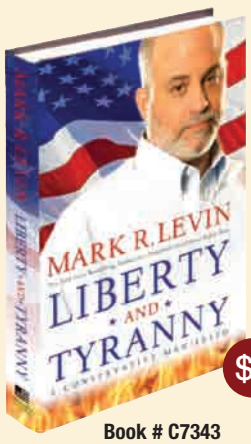

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Divided by An Ocean

The Obama administration is undermining the Anglo-American special relationship

BY JOHN O'SULLIVAN

ONCE again—the fifth time in recent years, by my count—the so-called Anglo-American special relationship is being dismissed as a self-destructive illusion (self-destructive for Britain, that is) by the usual geostrategic experts. Mostly it is Brits who go in for this hand-wringing, generally those who want their country to submerge itself constitutionally in a European federal state and who see a close friendship with America as an irritating obstacle to that end. Occasionally, however, the odd American confirms British fears that the relationship is one in which London makes all the sacrifices and Washington gets all the gains.

In March of last year, for instance, the *Daily Telegraph* confirmed its readers' most masochistic fears when it reported that an anonymous State Department official had dismissed not just the relationship but Britain along with it: "There's nothing special about Britain," he fulminated. "You're just the same as the other 190 countries in the world. You shouldn't expect special treatment."

Naturally I wondered if this diplomat was the same State Department official who, in 2006, had publicly dismissed the special relationship as a "myth" and "one-sided," complaining that President Bush had given Prime Minister Blair very little in return for British support over Iraq. This was one Kendall Myers, who, in June 2009, was revealed to have a special relationship of his very own: He was "Agent 202" of the Cuban intelligence service, and had, for 30 years, spied for Castro because he strongly disapproved of America. So there's a kind of logic in his contempt for a close American ally and his wish to fracture the link with Britain.

This time around, however, the critics of the special relationship are more numerous and more varied. Also, they seemingly have more to chew on. Stories have filtered out of Washington that President Obama has no particular affection for the Brits, who, as colonists, once oppressed his family in Kenya. A sinister significance is placed upon his returning a bust of Churchill that George W. Bush had placed in the Oval Office. And in recent days the U.S. has somewhat ostentatiously declared its neutrality between Britain and Argentina over the disputed Falkland Islands. It all adds up.

Or does it? These offenses are of very different orders of magnitude. Frankly, as a loyal subject of Her Majesty, I find the concerns expressed by some Brits (including good friends) over such matters as the return of the Churchill bust to be silly and demeaning. Even if it really was to reflect a disdain for Churchill and his countrymen—and I can think of ten other reasons why Obama might want to return the bust—what of it? That disdain would reflect badly on the president rather than on Churchill. And whatever happened to the stiff upper lip? Unless the islanders have turned into a pack of huffy adolescent girls, they could simply shrug their shoulders at his folly and determine not to trust his judgment on matters of greater importance.

As for Britain's colonial history, it's nothing new that sheltered Ivy League graduates tend to be as reflexively anti-imperialist as . . . well, as Cuban intelligence agents. If the president shares this elite prejudice (and he may not), he should reflect on the fact—very fairly recounted in his autobiography—that his grandfather, who served the British colonists as a cook in their army, actually admired them. He was one example among millions (two and a half million Indians who volunteered to fight for Britain in World War II among them) who knew that, with all its flaws, British rule was infinitely better for its subjects than the slavery, endemic war, and oppressive misrule that preceded it. The problem for Britain is not that Obama regards its imperial history as shameful but that too many Brits take the same misguided and disabling view.

Washington's intervention in the Falklands dispute, however, is really serious and even ominous. Britain is a close ally; its troops are fighting alongside G.I.s in Afghanistan; and it has both international law and the Falkland Islanders on its side in the dispute with Argentina. A still greater consideration is that almost 300 British servicemen lost their lives recovering the islands in recent memory. Supporting London or, if that is too bold a stance, simply remaining silent ought to be a no-brainer. Instead, the secretary of state has declared U.S. neutrality and mediation in ringing tones: "Now, we cannot make either one do so [i.e., negotiate], but we think it is the right way to proceed. So we will be saying this publicly, as I have been, and we will continue to encourage exactly the kind of discussion across the table that needs to take place."

Since the British have no intention of negotiating away their own territory, this is support for Argentina posing as neutrality. But since the Falklands are armed to the teeth, it offers no real help to Buenos Aires. So it may annoy the Brits today, but it will irritate the Argentinians even more tomorrow. It is hard to make sense of such diplomacy except as a form of gesture politics. It has the faint flavor of anti-colonial disapproval (though one British wag noted that the distance between Britain and the Falklands was almost identical to that between Obama's birthplace in Hawaii and the U.S. mainland). It signals a preference for Argentina and Latin America over a traditional Western ally. And it is likely rooted in the cynical calculation that the Brits will get over it when American mediation quietly fails.

All these gestures, however, point in the same direction: a wish to distance the U.S. from Britain in international politics and a willingness to take risks in doing so. Several ideological currents feed this tendency. If you are a left-liberal averse to U.S. intervention abroad, you probably won't look kindly on a country that is America's most dependable ally in such ventures. State Department analysts (even those not in the pay of Cuba) have long shared the belief of Euro-federalists that the special relationship is an obstacle to Britain's inevitable (and desirable) absorption by a unified Europe. Foreign-policy "realists" have a visceral dislike of the Anglophile nostalgia that in their view explains the special relationship and distorts hard-headed calculations of national interest. (Some realists can get very emotional about this.) And then there are the anti-imperialists, both modern academic and traditional Yankee.

Earlier administrations have succumbed to these ideological temptations. The first President Bush started by "signaling" that Germany had replaced the U.K. as America's closest European ally because geo-economics had replaced geopolitics as the organizing principle of U.S. policy. Then

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Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait; Germany and geo-economics both took a back seat. In a dangerous and unstable world, a dependable ally with military forces can come in very handy.

A superficial (but not wrong) view of the special relationship explains its perennial usefulness as follows: Born in World War II and strengthened during the Cold War, the Anglo-American alliance is a unique example of military, diplomatic, and intelligence cooperation that goes very deep in the governing institutions of both countries. Administrations come and go, but there is a degree of inter-operability between the British and American armed forces and intelligence agencies far greater than that between those of the U.S. and any other nation—except, significantly, Australia. The example usually given is that the London representative of the CIA sits in at meetings of Britain's Joint Intelligence Committee (well, most of the meeting). But there are many such arrangements. This intimate cooperation is underpinned by the habit of working together over a long period—and by the close social connections that grow from that. But all these links depend on something more significant than habit or politics or affection. For realists are right to mock the idea that national policies should or even can rest on such straws. In reality all these things rest on the fact that the two countries are part of the same cultural-political sphere. They tend to see the world in the same ways—and accordingly to act in the world in the same ways.

James C. Bennett has popularized this wider cultural concept in his books and articles on "the Anglosphere" (which includes other English-speaking countries as well as America and Britain). He explains the different ways in which "Anglosphere exceptionalism" has flowered in different climes when transplanted from its original cultural soil of English individualism—but also how it has retained common features that facilitate an easy cooperation between Anglosphere countries. The Chilean-Australian scholar Claudio Véliz, in his book *The New World of the Gothic Fox*, similarly contrasts sterile Spanish order with the English liberty that in his view has shaped the modern world. And this concept also has more cautious adherents, if not necessarily admirers, on the left. In his book *Between Europe and America: The Future of British Politics*, Andrew Gamble, professor of politics at Cambridge University, sees what he calls "Anglo-America" as the hegemonic world civilization for the last 200 years. Its constituent elements include "the idea of a global economy governed by free trade and sound finance and respect for property rights, and the idea of a global polity governed by the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law."

In other words, the special relationship is merely one conscious expression in diplomacy, politics, and military affairs of a wider and deeper set of cultural understandings. Nor is this an exercise in nostalgia, as the critics tend to assume. Gamble notes with reluctant awe that "by the end of the 20th century the whole world was once more being governed by the Anglo-American conception of a liberal world order."

That order was shaken, at least temporarily, by the financial crash. As the title of Gamble's book suggests, moreover, it is now threatened with replacement—both internationally and in British politics—by more regulatory, interventionist, and centralizing conceptions deriving from continental Europe. Emboldened by the financial crisis, France and Germany seek to regulate the investment flows of hedge funds and "Anglo-Saxon speculators"—over the united opposition of the U.S. and U.K. treasuries. But how long will that unity last? Under the Lisbon treaty, the City of London—approximately one-fifth of the U.K. economy—will come under the increasing sway of Brussels.

As Britain's election campaign gets under way, no major party promises to roll back these regulatory interventions. Indeed, all the talk is in the other direction, notably about greater defense cooperation between Britain and France. That would inevitably come at the expense of Anglo-American defense and intelligence collaboration. Yet the strongest natural supporters of Anglosphere collaboration, the opposition Tories, are (with a few exceptions) oddly quiet on such topics. They want to avoid a row with "Europe," even though "Europe" is shorthand for the gradual dissolution of their main national political tradition. That, in turn, compels them to avoid any rhetoric that might awaken patriotic memories. So Britain drifts towards an illiberal European future and away from the U.S. and the Anglosphere on a great sea of ignorance about its own history and boredom with its own identity.

Unless that changes, Americans will soon have to discover Australia—if only to distance themselves from it. **NR**

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The President's New Sex Ed

So long, love, abstinence, and marriage

BY ROBERT RECTOR

A FEW weeks back, the mainstream media were scandalized by a new study showing that abstinence education works. The study found that an eight-hour abstinence course dropped sexual-activity rates among teens by a third, and that the decrease continued two years after the course. By contrast, a "safe sex" program and a third program combining abstinence and contraceptive messages had no effect in reducing sexual activity or increasing contraceptive use.

Abstinence experts weren't surprised. Eleven prior studies, which the media chose not to report, have shown similar results. The latest study, however, using the most rigorous methods, and published in the prestigious *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* of the American Medical Association, was too prominent to be ignored.

The claim that abstinence programs don't work is one of several myths used to attack abstinence funding. In addition, opponents have claimed that the federal government funds *only* abstinence—but a recent study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that, even during the Bush presidency, the federal government spent $4 on programs proselytizing for condoms and distributing them to teens for every $1 it spent on abstinence.

Opponents have also charged, falsely, that abstinence education leaves youth ignorant of contraception. While it's true that abstinence programs as such, allotted little classroom time, do not teach about contraception, in most cases students learn basic information about contraception in other venues, such as a biology or health class.

The rap on abstinence education in the mainstream media has been a smokescreen to obscure the real issue: a clash of values.

Mr. Rector is a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

This clash has been going on for quite a while. Supported by small amounts of federal funding, abstinence programs gained a toehold in classrooms in the mid-1990s, particularly in middle schools. This outraged the Left, which worried about losing its monopoly over sex ed. At the federal level, Planned Parenthood and Kinsey-inspired groups such as Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States and Advocates for Youth strove to abolish the modest federal funding for abstinence and replace it with revved-up safe-sex programs. These alternative programs were camouflaged with such misleading names as "abstinence-plus," "comprehensive sex ed," and, most recently, "evidence-based programs."

The problem these advocacy groups have is that parents overwhelmingly support the messages in abstinence education, and oppose those in "safe sex." For example, abstinence teaches that teens should abstain from sex at least until they have finished high school. Over 90 percent of parents agree. By contrast, comprehensive sex-ed programs teach that it is okay for teens to have sex as long as they use a condom. Only 9 percent of parents agree.

Abstinence curricula teach that sex should be linked to "love, intimacy, and commitment" and that these qualities are most likely to be found in marriage. Again, 90 percent of parents agree. But the sex-ed lobby is appalled at "privileging" marriage over casual relationships, cohabitation, or "hooking up."

The contrast between the two approaches grows out of a fundamental difference of philosophy. When I speak to parents about sex ed, I often ask: "Suppose we invented a pill that offered 100 percent protection against pregnancy and all STDs. Would you then be happy to see your 16-year-old sexually active or to have your kid at college hooking up with random partners?" Nearly all parents answer no, but many have difficulty articulating why.

A good abstinence program explains why. Abstinence teaches that human sexuality is predominantly psychological, emotional, and moral rather than physical. While physical pleasure from sex is very important, it's not an end in itself. The proper function of this pleasure is to strengthen a long-term bond of love and commitment. Sex that does not promote long-term emotional bonding is to be avoided.

This old-fashioned perspective is validated in the oddest place: Hollywood. In films, sex usually happens, steamily, between attractive unmarried couples who have just met. But at the end, the loving couple heads off together, in a vague but presumably long-lasting union. A film that ended with the protagonists cavalierly going their separate ways would offend or disappoint most of the audience. This script-writing habit shows that the human mind (even if only subconsciously) regards casual sex as unrewarding, and believes that sex should, optimally, lead to love and bonding. It is this commonsense view, implicitly embraced by nearly all adults, that abstinence education strives to reinforce.

Not so comprehensive sex ed. These curricula read as if they were written jointly by Hugh Hefner and a school nurse. Sex is all about transitory physical pleasure: The goal is to attain it while avoiding serious disease and unwanted pregnancy. They offer a present-oriented view of sex without commitment, entanglement, or consequence—a world designed for 17-year-old males.

Their main message: Hook up, have fun, but wear that condom. Condom rhapsody is pervasive, with teachers telling students to "eroticize condom use with partner . . . use condoms as a method of foreplay . . . act sexy/sensual when putting the condom on . . . hide them on your body and ask your partner to find it . . . wrap them as a present and give them to your partner before a romantic dinner."

Aware that not all parents will be thrilled with programs that teach students to "tease each other manually while putting on the condom," comprehensive-sex-ed writers usually "balance" their permissive texts with token statements about abstinence. They may comment briefly that "abstinence is the safest choice." Since the text has just spent 50 pages explaining that sex with condoms is fun and really safe, however, such comments simply make abstinence seem pointless. Students are never given a reason to abstain. No surprise, since comprehensive-sex-ed experts believe no such reason exists: In their world, protected teen sex has no downside.

A final difference between the competing sex-ed models involves the collapse of marriage in lower-income communities. Federal abstinence funding began as part of welfare reform in the mid-1990s with

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the goal of slowing the growth of illegitimacy. Nearly 40 percent of American children are born outside marriage, most of them to less-educated women who will have a tough time going it alone. In many lower-income communities, the rate reaches 80 percent. The decline of marriage and the growth of single parenthood are the predominant causes of child poverty in the U.S. The cost to taxpayers is some $300 billion in welfare each year. In low-income neighborhoods, abstinence programs were designed to be a small first step in confronting this disaster.

To comprehensive sex ed, on the other hand, the collapse of marriage is irrelevant. True, these programs talk about "teen pregnancy," but only about 7 percent of non-marital pregnancies happen to girls under 18. About the vastly larger problem of non-marital pregnancy and births among young adults, sex ed is conspicuously silent.

Moreover, the Left's omnipresent solution (ever more condoms) is irrelevant to the real cause of non-marital pregnancy among low-income adults *and* teens. Harvard sociologist Kathryn Edin recently studied non-marital pregnancies among low-income girls and women and found that none were caused by lack of access to birth control. Rather, the pregnancies were deliberate, or at least not specifically avoided.

Abstinence education seeks to address the complex motivations underlying non-marital pregnancies and births. It attempts to deter them by explaining the value of marriage to adults and, especially, to children. But teaching low-income youth about the benefits of marriage treads heavily on the bunions of political correctness. To the Left, the pro-marriage information in abstinence programs is a compelling reason to eject them from the schools.

Thus President Obama and Speaker Pelosi have abolished federal abstinence programs and provided new funding for comprehensive sex ed. A thick smoke screen still blankets the issue. Congressional liberals would like everyone to believe that sex-ed programs share the same goals; the only question is which program is most effective—as it were, which makes the trains run on time. But the real issue is not the trains' timeliness, but where the trains are going. Abstinence and comprehensive sex ed proceed from opposing values—and are bound for very different destinations. **NR**

Bawd and Man at Yale

Involving lux, veritas, and plenty of adult toys

BY NATHAN HARDEN

It sounds like the opening of a pornographic movie: An attractive young teacher saunters up to the blackboard. Next, she ducks behind the podium to slip off her tights. Before you know it, she's standing topless and bare-chested in front of the entire class, calling for a few student "volunteers." But this story isn't fiction.

The teacher, in this case, was a porn actress named Madison Young. Young was invited to speak at Yale University in February as part of a nine-day series of lectures, panels, and special events known as "Sex Week at Yale."

Introduced in 2002, Sex Week at Yale has courted controversy from the beginning. Held every other year, it brings to campus everyone from porn stars to sex-toy manufacturers, and has grown bigger with each installment, this year topping 30 events. They included, to name a few, a presentation on "kink" and fetishism, a lingerie show that used Yale students as models, two presentations in defense of non-monogamous relationships, an instructional presentation on masturbation, a female-condom giveaway, and a graphic presentation on erotic genital piercing.

I first experienced Sex Week as an undergraduate. This year, I returned to cover the event as a journalist.

The biggest event of Sex Week 2010, in both promotion and turnout, was surely the instructional presentation on oral sex called "Babeland's Lip Tricks," which was sponsored by a sex-toy company. The event's planners were wise to book one of Yale's larger lecture halls: When I arrived, every seat in the house was full, including those in the balcony, and hundreds of extra students had flooded the floors and aisles, with scores more huddled around the back doors. Some sat on the stage itself. I estimate there were 2,000 students present—more than a third of the undergraduate student body.

The instructor was a burlesque performer from New York called, simply, "Darlinda." Using a projector screen and various rubber props, she demonstrated oral-sex techniques in front of the rapt audience for an hour and a half.

Pornography has always been a part of Sex Week—more so every time, it seems. Of the 34 events on this year's Sex Week schedule, eleven featured porn stars or adult-film producers as primary speakers or performers. That's about one event in three.

Of the 34 events on this year's Sex Week schedule, eleven featured porn stars or adult-film producers as primary speakers or performers. That's about one event in three.

In 2008, a screening of pornography was shut down mid-reel after organizers became alarmed by the film's depictions of sexual violence against women. This year, however, sadomasochistic pornography was back on the program. On the afternoon of February 13, Madison Young was scheduled to give a lecture on sadomasochism entitled "BDSM 101," a presentation billed as an opportunity for students to learn how to "build new levels of intimacy, trust and connection with your partner/s."

Her talk was held in William Harkness Hall, the building on Yale's central quad where, as a student, I attended a class on international relations. I returned to Room 208 for a lecture on relations of a very different kind.

Near the classroom door, bras, panties, and briefs were laid out across a chair,

Mr. Harden graduated from Yale in 2009. He is currently writing a memoir of his experiences as a conservative student at Yale.

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By June Fleming

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along with dozens of condoms. These items were free for the taking, courtesy of Sex Week's corporate sponsors. (Merchandise is promoted or given away at nearly every one of Sex Week's events.)

I passed on the latex and took a seat in the back row. At the front of the classroom, Young's manner was breezy and casual. She encouraged students to shed their coats and extra layers. "I want you to be comfortable."

She began by explaining the basics of BDSM. "The 'B' stands for 'bondage,'" Young said. "It can be handcuffs. It can be zip ties. It can be rope—anything that's restraining you. It can be neckties.

"The 'D' is for 'discipline' and 'dominance.' . . . Dominance is more about power. The 'S' stands for 'submissive,' often associated with 'service'—a dominant and slave, a teacher and a schoolboy.

"'S & M' stands for 'sadism and masochism.' Sadists give sensation, or what might be referred to as pain."

Young paused for a moment. "Is everyone in here 18 and over?" She had to make sure before playing a clip from one of her films, because in it she is bound by all four limbs, and a man is lashing her with a whip. Large red welts appear across her torso. I averted my gaze but could still hear the sound of blows as well as the man's taunts, which are too obscene to print. He orders her to repeat the insults as he beats her, which she does.

After the clip ended, Young began a series of demonstrations. She took a young female student from the front row and bound her hands with a zip tie, then led her around the room so everyone could get a closer look. Students applauded. Young asked the next volunteer, a young man this time, to pin clothespins along her inner thighs. (At first, he was too delicate. "Put it on with an intention," she critiqued.) He and another student, on the count of three, tore the clothespins away with an attached string. Young exhaled deeply. "That was wonderful," she said.

Young's next demonstration began with her stripping to the waist, but I cannot say what happened after she started attaching pinching devices to her naked breasts, because I left the room.

I went next door to Room 207, where a very different presentation was under way. The speaker, David Schaengold, had been invited by the Anscombe Society at Yale, a small campus group devoted to the cause of premarital abstinence. The event drew about 14 students.

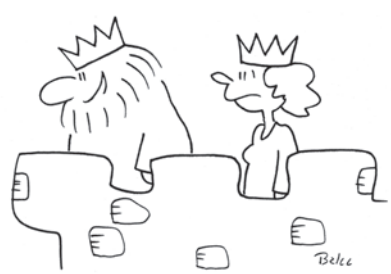
Schaengold explained that, with the sexual revolution, traditional ideas about sex gave way and "consent" became the only moral test. The modern view ignores the possibility that "some sexual acts are incompatible with human dignity." He asked the audience, "Can we move from saying what is permissible to asking what is right and what is good?"

At that moment, on the other side of the wall, a porn star was standing half-naked before a crowd of students while volunteers inflicted pain upon her for the instructive benefit of the class.

Margaret Blume, a Yale senior, resents the hypersexualized atmosphere that Sex Week promotes. "It's pretty degrading," she said to me. "It just seems to rob many things of dignity. Obviously, as a woman in particular, objectification is more prevalent this week. The whole week seems to just demystify everything and de-reverence everything."

As people like Blume see it, Yale is not simply being permissive; it is pushing a specific sexual agenda. Or, as a female friend of mine put it, "It's not Sex Week, it's Have Sex Week."

For the last eight years, university administrators have played willing host to the biennial pornification of Yale—not just the screening of pornography but its promotion and distribution, and not in the dorm room but in the classroom. In both 2008, as a student, and 2010, as a journalist, I witnessed volunteers, guest lecturers, and, in a few cases, even Yale professors passing out to students paraphernalia such as vibrators and pornographic DVDs. Sixty years ago, William F. Buckley Jr. faulted Yale for an "extraordinarily irresponsible educational attitude" on the basis of much less. **NR**



"Quiet desperation—that's the best kind."

A Little Work

By rights, Nancy Pelosi should resemble Tip O'Neill

BY ROB LONG

In Hollywood, when we say that someone has had "some good work done," we're talking about eye lifts.

And lip implants, tummy tucks, cheek pulls, lipo, chemical peels, rhinoplasties, breast augmentations, upper-arm trims, and neck reductions.

There's "good work" and "bad work." Good work is work that you can barely notice. It's restrained. Youthful but not young. The neck is smooth but not tight. The bosom ample but not cartoonish. The eyes and the surrounding tissue are open and clear of sagging pockets of eyebrow fat.

The actor or actress who has had good work looks younger, and what people in the plastic-surgery business call "refreshed."

The actor or actress who has had bad work done looks like a burn victim: skin blasted smooth; permanently startled eyes, finger-in-an-electric-socket wide; and fat lips surrounding a mouth pulled into a ghastly rictus that suggests, more than anything, some kind of amphibious sea creature walking the earth in Juicy Couture.

In bad work, the pieces don't fit together, as in a clumsy Photoshop experiment. The worst part about bad work is, despite the line-less face and the elastic bosoms, it somehow makes the subject look older and more decrepit.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi has had, in my opinion as someone who has worked in Hollywood for over 20 years, good work done. Mostly, I think (and I'm no doctor), some judicious Botox injections around the hairline and forehead. Maybe an eye tuck. Almost certainly some work around the mouth. But honestly, she looks pretty good for a powerful and unpopular multi-millionairess.

Sure, she's got that wide-eyed, startled look that people get when the surgeon tugs too hard on that final suture, but my guess is that she comes by that look honestly. Who, in her position, wouldn't be startled by the torrent of opposition to Obama's health-care legislation? How could she

not be shocked—and how could her face not show it?—to discover that she and her party are in free fall, from back-to-back smashing victories in 2006 and 2008, from sweeping majorities in both houses of Congress and a popular president in the White House, to this? To procedural tricks and outright bribery? To the speaker of the House begging and threatening members of her own team in a desperate, rat-in-a-coffee-can, crazy-making effort to pass the single most unpopular piece of federal legislation since . . . since ever? And in an election year?

All in all, I'd say she looks pretty good, considering. No, wait, that's too stingy: She looks *amazing*.

The last speaker of the House whose physical appearance seemed to symbolize the exhausted and tapped-out energy of his party was corpulent, red-faced Tip O'Neill, who, as far as I know (and I'm no doctor), didn't have any work done, ever.

O'Neill was a streetfighter, of course, and a political gangster back when that really mattered—back when politics was really all about ward heeling and steak frys and buying the votes you needed when you needed them. O'Neill punished his enemies and rewarded his friends, and he had the face to prove it—a pocked, veiny red face that showed a thousand late-night benders spent arm-twisting committee chairmen, jowls that drooped under the weight of big union pancake breakfasts, and a belly bursting with pork-barrel spending and special amendments and last-minute earmarks.

Tip O'Neill lumbered around D.C. like the old Democratic party itself—powerful, huge, blue-collar, a little soused. And then along came Reagan and a reenergized Republican party, and suddenly Tip O'Neill wasn't such a great physical symbol anymore. Suddenly, he was the butt of Johnny Carson's jokes; the punchline to a hundred Republican fundraisers; a liability, in other words.

It's impossible to imagine what a "re-freshed" Tip O'Neill might have looked like—I'm thinking a little Joe Biden crossed with Barney Frank—but it's safe to say that cosmetics weren't the problem. And as with speaker of the House and unpopular millionairess Nancy Pelosi, a little work wasn't the solution.

Which is the problem. Because in Hollywood, when we say that someone has had a little work done, we're acknowledging that work, in fact, has been done. What we're saying, essentially, is that an actor or actress is a lot older than he or she looks—and probably deserves to look a lot worse than he or she does—and that we as insiders can identify the work and where on the body it took place; but we're also assuming that out there in America, the ordinary folk will buy it.

Looks great

The real thing

In Hollywood, we imagine a vast nation of easily duped proles who really and truly believe that an actress in her late 40s has grapefruit-firm breasts and a neck as smooth as PVC pipe. When an actor comes in to read for a role with saucer eyes and teeth so white they're actually blue, we don't think, "Eek! A monster!" We think: "He looks pretty good for 63," and we give him the part, because in Hollywood there's no better choice for a role than a pro, than someone who knows the job and has played a million versions of it but still looks okay. A little weird, maybe (especially around the eyes), but okay.

Say this for gin-blossomed old Tip O'Neill—he was the real thing. He looked the part. In a true-to-life movie about American politics, he would have been the perfect star: charming, working-class, corrupt, emotional, persuasive. If you were trying to pass an enormous new federal entitlement package that required massive new spending and crippling tax hikes, he's the guy you'd cast to do it, and he'd do it over dozens of lunchtime porterhouse steaks. A brittle and Botoxed unpopular millionairess, tone-deaf to the wider country and besotted with perks, just isn't the right fit for the job. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi will be 70 years old at the end of March. And she looks great.

She shouldn't. She should look a little more like Old School Tip—a little heavier and redder and jowlier. What she's trying to pass, ultimately, is a signature piece of legislation from the lost Walter Mondale administration: a big-government boondoggle, a massive new entitlement—exactly the kind of thing that administration would have passed with O'Neill's guidance.

(If you're too young to know who Walter Mondale is, I'll pause briefly while you consult Wikipedia. But the nutshell version is: Old Time Big Government Democrat, lost big to Reagan in 1984. Pledged in his convention address to raise taxes. And no, that last sentence does not contain a typo.)

If you could somehow "refresh" Walter Mondale, it would be hard to do better than turning him into Barack Obama. Obama's all sleekness and lean lines; he's dashing and looks great in a suit. As a piece of casting, there's no better choice. But no matter how hard they try, politics still isn't Hollywood.

Old School legislation requires some Old School politics; even good work looks like work. The American people might forgive some judicious tummy suctioning and neck darts on their favorite stars, but they're not as crazy about that kind of thing on gigantic new federal expenditures, hence the ferocious opposition to Obamacare. And because the Democratic party is made up, like Hollywood, of people who believe that you can sell anybody anything if you get the optics right, they're just not hearing it.

But everyone else is hearing it, loud and clear. And the sound they're hearing from Washington, D.C., is the sound of a hundred sutures bursting; a thousand brows re-furrowing themselves; the crackle and roar of a million wrinkles re-etching their lines along the eyes, mouth, ears, and nose; the noise of jowls and bellies reinflating and bursting out—in other words, the sound of a lot of work going horribly wrong, a greasy federal boondoggle bursting into life, and the Democratic party returning to its roots.

I'm no doctor, but I think that is going to be a hard one to fix. **NR**

PELOSI: LAUREN VICTORIA BURKE/AP O'NEILL: KARL SCHUMACHER/GETTY

The Descent of Liberalism

Having repudiated classical liberty, which once counterbalanced their politics of social reform, the Left today confronts the abyss

BY MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

In his 1950 book *The Liberal Imagination*, Lionel Trilling said that "in the United States at this time liberalism is not only the dominant but even the sole intellectual tradition." Liberalism was no less the dominant political tradition; a coherent conservative opposition had yet to emerge. Over the next 60 years, however, the liberal imagination lost its hold on the American mind. In October 2009 Gallup found that just 20 percent of Americans described themselves as liberals; twice as many called themselves conservatives.

What happened? Part of the answer lies in liberalism's loss of an element that was essential both to its intellectual vitality and to its popular appeal. Liberalism in the middle of the 20th century maintained an equilibrium between the antagonistic principles within it. The classical liberalism that descended from Jefferson and Jackson survived in the movement; the social liberalism that derived from the theories of 19th-century social philosophers, though it was steadily gaining ground, had not yet obtained a complete ascendancy. Liberalism today has lost this equipoise; the progress of the social imagination, with its faith in the power of social science to improve people's lives, has forced liberals to relinquish the principles and even the language of the classical conception of liberty.

The two philosophies that animated liberalism in its prime were widely different in both origin and aspiration. Classical liberty is founded on the belief that all men are created equal; that they should be treated equally under the law; and that they should be permitted the widest liberty of action consistent with public tranquility and the safety of the state. The classical vision traces its pedigree to Protestant dissenters who in the 17th century struggled to obtain freedom of conscience. Their critique of religious favoritism was later expanded into a critique of state-sponsored privilege in general.

The American patriots who took up arms against George III thought it wrong that some Englishmen were represented in Parliament while others were not. This sort of privilege, in the Old Whig language of liberty from which classical liberalism descends, was known as "corruption." The revolutionary patriots, it is true, countenanced their own forms of corruption; when they came to write a Constitution for their new republic, the charter tacitly recognized slavery and other forms of

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DARREN GYGI

discrimination. The country, in Lincoln's words, was "conceived in liberty," but not until it experienced various "new" births of freedom was the promise of its founding ideal extended to all of its citizens.

Unlike classical liberty, social liberty is formed on the conviction that if a truly equitable society is to emerge, the state must treat certain groups of people differently from other groups. Only through a more or less comprehensive adjustment of the interests of various classes will a really democratic polity emerge. The social vision traces its origins to thinkers who in the 19th century argued that the close study of social facts would reveal the laws that govern human behavior, much as physics and biology reveal the laws that govern nature. Auguste Comte, for example, believed it possible to elaborate a "social physics" (*physique sociale*); Karl Marx purported to discover the dialectical laws of human history.

Rulers skilled in the social sciences would translate the new knowledge into codes of behavior that would organize man's activities in a more efficient and coordinated way than had hitherto been possible. (The classical liberal believes that however much the lawgiver knows of the innumerable factors that create desirable patterns of social order, he never knows enough to undertake an extensive renovation of society with any hope of success.) The new social technic, it was thought, would produce more equitable forms of social order than those created by the "invisible hand" of voluntary, spontaneous cooperation. A new communal life would overcome what Comte called the "perennial Western malady, the revolt of the individual against the species." Man would be liberated from the biological or class-inspired rapacity that too often made him an "asocial" being. Yet although they dreamt of a more perfect human union, the social reformers made a fetish of the very distinctions they sought to overcome. The wolf will eventually lie down with the lamb, but in the meantime there is enmity between the rich man and the poor man, the white-collar worker and the blue-collar worker, the bourgeois and the proletarian.

The American liberals who in the last century embraced the social imagination looked, not to its most extreme forms, but to the more modest permutations associated with the Fabian socialists of England and the adherents of Otto von Bismarck in Germany. Yet mild as the social idealism of the liberal reformers was, it was, like the more rigorous theories of Comte and Marx, premised on the efficacy of discrimination between groups and classes of men, and on the need for extensive codes of commands that would realize the reformers' vision of fairness—what in Europe is called *dirigisme* or *droit administratif*.

Theodore Roosevelt, who in his 1910 "New Nationalism" manifesto lamented the "absence of effective State and, especially, national restraint upon unfair money-getting" in America, called for a paternal form of government that would "control the mighty commercial forces" of the Republic. Under the system of social administration proposed by liberals, experts trained in the social sciences would determine the needs of particular groups and oversee the allocation of resources. George F. Kennan, in his memoirs, sketched the social dream of a powerful administrative magistracy that "would not demean or deceive [the people], would permit them to express freely their feelings and opinions, and would take decent account of the feelings and opinions thus expressed, and yet would assure a sufficient concentration of governmental authority, sufficient stability in its exercise, and sufficient selectivity in the recruitment of those privileged to exert it, to permit the formulation and implementation of hopeful long-term programs of social and environmental change." A similar administrative ideal is found in the 1912 novel *Philip Dru: Administrator*, written by Woodrow Wilson's éminence grise, Col. Edward House.

The privileged class of experts favored by liberals like Kennan was itself grounded in discrimination. It had something of the complexion, Milton and Rose Friedman observed, of an aristocratic caste:

> Believers in aristocracy and socialism share a faith in centralized rule, in rule by command rather than by voluntary cooperation. They differ in who should rule: whether an elite determined by birth or experts supposedly chosen on merit. Both proclaim, no doubt sincerely, that they wish to promote the well-being of the "general public," that they know what is in the "public interest" and how to obtain it better than the ordinary person. Both, therefore, profess a paternalistic philosophy.

If the object of American liberals who embraced the social imagination was to promote the well-being of the commonwealth, they could do this, they believed, only if they first promoted the well-being of particular groups within it. The result was a preference state. Although the reformers justified the new regime with various technical arguments, it was in many ways a rationalization of the informal preference politics and group sensibility of the old Democratic machine. In *The Age of Reform* (1955), Richard Hofstadter showed that "it was the boss who saw the needs of the immigrant and made him the political instrument of the urban machine. The machine provided quick naturalization, jobs, social services, personal access to authority, release from the surveillance of the courts, deference to ethnic pride." The "boss, particularly the Irish boss," Hofstadter wrote, ". . . became a specialist in personal relations and personal loyalties."

Social liberals, both Republicans and Democrats, sought to make the machine more accountable by transferring its operations from the party to the government. Favored groups were given special deals fitted to their needs. Labor unions were endowed with new privileges under the Norris–La Guardia Act of 1932, which placed them, the Harvard scholar Roscoe Pound noted, in a protected legal category. Farmers were subsidized under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933; the New Deal's Federal Theatre Project, Federal Arts Project, and Federal Writers' Project assisted struggling thespians, painters, and literatuses.

In establishing new systems of privileges and immunities for particular groups, the social reformers believed that they were mitigating the unjust privileges and immunities of market capitalism. And it is true that when E. L. Godkin or Louis Brandeis opposed protective tariffs, or when Woodrow Wilson opposed combinations in restraint of trade, each was fingering a genuine instance of unfair privilege. The struggle against monopoly, Wilson said, was "a second struggle for emancipation. . . . If America is not to have free enterprise, then she can have freedom of no sort whatsoever."

Others in the social-preference school went further and asserted that the free market was itself an unfair bulwark of class privilege and corruption. Hofstadter, for example, argued that the Founders' rhetoric of liberty and private property concealed a desire to preserve their own economic power. Their status as members of the rich, propertied classes determined their politics and explains what Hofstadter called their "rigid adherence to property rights."

Whatever one thinks of these arguments, they were a departure from the classical theory of liberty. Andrew Jackson condemned the second Bank of the United States not because he believed that private property or money made in the market was objectionable, but because he believed that money made with special help from the government was objectionable. He portrayed his attack on the bank (a private corporation with proprietary access to public funds) not as an attempt to regulate a corrupt private sector but as an attempt to abolish the "exclusive privileges" the bank had been granted by the state. In the "full enjoyment of the gifts of Heaven and the fruits of superior industry, economy, and virtue," Jackson said, "every man is equally entitled to protection by law." The "gifts of Heaven," for the classical liberal, were legitimate; the gifts of the state were suspect.

In spite of the challenge posed by the social imagination, the classical element survived in mid-20th-century American liberalism. A political movement, unlike a political theory, does not necessarily suffer from its internal contradictions; the lack of doctrinal purity that degrades a paper philosophy often strengthens a program that aims at practical results. Even as liberals in the last century promoted social policies, the classical countercurrent within liberalism mitigated the hubris that the new social ideal might otherwise have bred in its disciples.

Bliss there was in that social dawn, and the temptation to overreach was strong. "American socialists and liberals," Edmund Wilson wrote in the 1971 edition of *To the Finland Station*, believed that it was possible "to get rid of an oppressive past, to scrap a commercial civilization and to found, as Trotsky prophesied, the first really human society. We were very naïve about this." Liberalism's leaders were less naïve. Classical liberalism formed part of their standard intellectual equipment, and it acted as a corrective to utopian arrogance. Woodrow Wilson, although he presided over an expansion of the powers of the federal government, counted such classical liberals as John Bright and Richard Cobden among his heroes. In 1924 John W. Davis, an unreconstructed Jeffersonian, headed the Democratic ticket. In *The Liberal Tradition in America* Louis Hartz argued that even such "Comtian" social planners as Lester Ward and Herbert Croly could not bring themselves to "transcend" America's classical-liberal or "Lockian" consensus.

FDR himself, observing that government spending had risen dramatically under Hoover, campaigned in 1932 on a balanced-budget platform. Hofstadter argued that Roosevelt afterwards broke with the Jefferson-Jackson tradition of classical liberalism: The New Deal, he wrote in *The Age of Reform*, represented a "drastic" departure from the older tradition. It would be more accurate to say that FDR adjusted the balance between liberalism's competing elements. In *The End of Reform* (1995), Alan Brinkley showed that the New Dealers' faith in "statist planning" waned during the course of the Roosevelt presidency. Hartz believed that even the most radical New Deal reforms were made "on the basis of a submerged and absolute [classical] liberal faith." If Roosevelt embraced the public-assistance measures of the Social Security Act of 1935, he also warned that the dole advocated by champions of the *Sozialstaat* was "a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit."

Even as liberals in the last century promoted social policies, the classical countercurrent within liberalism mitigated the hubris that the new social ideal might otherwise have bred in its disciples.

Federal spending under the New Deal tells a story of what in our day would be called fiscal restraint. Spending rose to just over 8 percent of the gross domestic product in 1933, the first year of Roosevelt's presidency, an increase of slightly more than one percentage point from Hoover's last year; it reached a pre–World War II high of 10.7 percent in 1934. (By comparison, federal spending in 2009 accounted for 24.7 percent of GDP, and is expected to exceed 25 percent in 2010.) *Total* government spending—federal, state, and local—in 1934 did not exceed 20 percent of GDP; in 2010 it is expected to approach 45 percent.

If the social element in liberalism spoke to the electorate's hopes and its generous idealism, the classical-liberal element spoke to its desire for continuity and its attachment to America's founding inspirations. Maintaining a balance between the two contending philosophies required considerable statesmanship on the part of liberal leaders. The social doctrines held the promise of a brave new world, yet the classical-liberal element, though it had less intrinsic appeal for visionaries, survived the New Deal and contributed to liberalism's post–World War II appeal. The old antipathy to state-sanctioned privilege led Truman to desegregate the military and Lyndon Johnson to sponsor civil-rights legislation. If Roosevelt had, until Yalta at any rate, made it his policy to vindicate the liberties of Europe, Truman laid the foundation for the Cold War struggle against the socialism of the USSR.

John F. Kennedy not only filled a number of posts in his administration with Republicans—among them C. Douglas Dillon, Robert McNamara, and McGeorge Bundy—he was willing to be guided by the advice of classical liberals. In 1962 he overruled economist Paul Samuelson and proposed tax cuts. Rejecting Keynesian spending models that are closely tied to

the preference regime and enable politicians to distribute money to favored groups, Kennedy resolved instead to promote growth through private investment in the marketplace. He brushed aside those in his administration, such as Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., who wanted to enlarge the preference architecture of the social state. Schlesinger, Kennedy said, "couldn't get it through his head" that this was "1963, not 1933." The president was quoted in *Newsweek* as saying, "Boy, when those liberals start mixing into policy, it's murder." To the dismay of his critics on the left, the balancing act Kennedy performed made him popular. When his approval rating rose in April 1962, he told *Newsweek*'s Benjamin C. Bradlee, "What really breaks their [the Left's] ass is that 78 percent. That really gets them."

Kennedy was the last liberal president to make classical liberalism an important part of both his policy and his rhetoric. In the half-century since he entered the White House, the social imagination has become, if not the sole element in liberalism, certainly the dominant one. Lincoln argued that the state should eschew the group politics of "classification" and "caste," yet liberalism's signature initiatives over the last 40 years require us constantly to classify people according to the particular social and even racial and sexual groups to which they belong: Both affirmative action and hate-crime legislation grow out of a faith in the discriminating power of classification.

"Today it is the Right that speaks a language of commonalities," the sociologist Todd Gitlin has written. "To be on the Left, meanwhile, is to doubt that one can speak of humanity at all." Schlesinger himself, in one of his last books, *The Disuniting of America* (1991), lamented the effect of social, racial, and sexual preference politics on liberalism, and he condemned the spread, in the Democratic party, of a "plague of institutionalized 'caucuses' representing minorities concerned more with ventilating their own grievances than with strengthening the party" as a whole.

The liberal who is committed to social classification counters that his preference criteria are a reaction against an unofficial culture of preference, the bigotry that has led to discrimination against blacks and gays and women. Yet if this really were the crux of the matter, surely the solution would be to insist even more passionately on the principle that all people are created equal and that the laws of the state ought to apply equally to all. Instead the liberal's vivisectionist politics exalt, not the common humanity of the species, but the various social and genetic barriers that separate its specimens.

It is true that some of the groups the modern liberal seeks to protect constitute fluid classes rather than fixed ones, and therefore do not in a strict sense violate the equal-protection principles of classical liberalism. The 20th-century welfare state, for example, was designed to help the poor, and any citizen might fall into poverty. But even here the liberal's social policy tends to exacerbate divisions within the body politic, or so the classical liberal argues. By subsidizing poverty, welfare-state policies perpetuated it. The public-assistance measures of the Social Security Act made barriers that are permeable in a healthy society harder to penetrate for those bred up in the culture of the dole. The policies widened the chasms they were intended to bridge and checked the upward mobility that Lincoln thought characteristic of a free society.

The classical liberal argues, too, that social-welfare codes—which give current beliefs about social problems the force of law—tend to forestall innovation. The pressing problems of earlier generations have often been simply outgrown, and the obstacles they confronted have been surmounted (with little or no government intervention), through the spontaneous progress of society, and through the emergence of new and unanticipated ways of doing things. The social reformer, far from embracing this voluntary, unplanned species of social regeneration, too often compels people to stand still: He institutionalizes problems that might otherwise be transcended. This is seen most clearly in societies where the social imagination has been carried the farthest. There one finds, not growth and change, but morbidity and stasis, the petrification of the social organism.

PREFERENCE politics is nothing new. It underlay the master-slave distinctions of the ancient world and the feudal distinctions of the medieval one. No political movement, it is true, can entirely escape such politics: Every party has its under-texture of tribalism and its cherished constituencies. But the preference politics of social liberalism transforms what ought to be a matter of embarrassment into an instance of virtue; there is no longer even an aspiration to purity. The damage has by no means been limited to Democrats; Republicans, too, trade in the pander-politics of group favoritism. The tax code is swollen with giveaways to favored groups. One instinctively applauds when a group that one happens to like, or to which one happens to belong, obtains grace and favor. But each extension of privilege erodes a little more the idea that all men are created equal and should be treated equally under the law.

The preference state is now so closely associated with the politics of group favoritism that the classical ideal of equal treatment has become untenable for liberals. To tout the classical vision in the teeth of such exercises as the "Cornhusker Kickback"—the provision of the Senate health-care bill subsidizing Nebraska's Medicaid costs on terms given no other state—would be too palpable an imposture. In December, 13 states' attorneys general threatened a legal challenge to the Cornhusker provision precisely because, if enacted, it would violate the equal-protection and privileges-and-immunities

The preference politics of social liberalism transforms what ought to be a matter of embarrassment into an instance of virtue; there is no longer even an aspiration to purity.

clauses of the Constitution. Whatever the constitutional status of such preference legislation, there is no doubt that it is incompatible with the classical ideal. Liberals themselves sense this. The classical motifs have ceased to form even a merely verbal element in liberal discourse; the note of freedom that President Kennedy sounded so often in his oratory is scarcely heard at all in President Obama's.

Americans are alive to the change; their suspicion of state-sponsored privilege and their apprehension of the corruption it fosters have led to the revival of the "tea party" language of the Revolutionary patriots. A CNN poll conducted in February found that 56 percent of those questioned think the federal government has "become so large and powerful that it poses an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens." The social reformer inspires in many Americans today the same dread he once inspired in John Stuart Mill, who in 1855 wrote that almost "all the projects of the social reformers in these days are really *liberticide*—Comte particularly so." Such projects, Mill predicted, would lead to "a despotism of society over the individual, surpassing anything contemplated in the political ideal of the most rigid disciplinarian among the ancient philosophers," and stood "as a monumental warning to thinkers on society and politics, of what happens when once men lose sight in their speculations, of the value of Liberty and Individuality."

Liberals dismiss such fears as mere right-wing hysteria. They have left the work of maintaining the integrity of the "Lockian" safeguards of freedom in America to Republicans and conservatives; it is no longer their responsibility or their shtick. Rather than try to revive the classical-liberal strain in their politics, they have devised new justifications of the managerial authority of the social expert, the master planner of public privilege. In their book *Nudge*, Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein "show that by knowing how people think, we [i.e., the social experts] can design choice environments that make it easier for people to choose what is best for themselves, their families, and their society." Thaler and Sunstein do not propose to push people into doing what is good for them, as the social managers of old did; they propose only to manipulate their "choice environments." It is nonetheless a departure from the liberalism of Mill, who believed that people must be free to choose badly. The cover of *Nudge* is revealing: It shows a mommy elephant nudging a baby elephant. The citizen is a child. The social expert, armed with the power of the state, is his benevolent mother.

Why, after kindred social movements have been discredited abroad and faith in the social school of political economy has waned at home, do liberals persist in their romance with the social imagination? A number of liberal leaders have attempted a reformation; Bill Clinton, after his party's defeats in the 1994 elections, sought to establish a middle or "third" way between the social imagination and the classical-liberal one. But his attempt to find a *via media* was rejected by the protected classes that liberalism's preference politics has created, and was repudiated still more vehemently by the social managers and public-sector workers whose prosperity is intimately bound up in the preference state.

These groups exert a disproportionate influence in Democratic-party councils. Champions of public-sector workers commend their commitment to public service in the language of republican virtue. But in offering their political support to sympathetic candidates in exchange for lucrative compensation packages, a number of the public-sector organizations have engaged in a politics that savors of corruption. Their allegiance, like that of the Praetorian Guard in Gibbon's Rome, can be purchased only by those contenders for power who are willing to bestow what Gibbon called a "liberal donative" out of the public purse.

Liberal the donatives certainly are. The average salary of federal workers rose in 2009 to $71,206, a figure that does not include bonuses, overtime, fringe benefits, pension accruals, and the priceless gift of all-but-absolute job security. Some 19 percent of the civil service received salaries of more than $100,000. (The average private-sector wage in the same year was $40,331.) The federal government, Cato Institute scholar Chris Edwards observes, has become an "elite island of highly paid workers." Liberalism is being devoured by the monster it created.

Rather than try to revive the classical-liberal strain in their politics, liberals have devised new justifications of the managerial authority of the social expert, the master planner of public privilege.

There is something else to be feared now that the dreams of the social imagination alone seem to inspire enthusiasm in those who identify themselves as liberals. The social philosophy that has become the essence of one of the great political movements of our age is, even in its mildest forms, tainted by a subtle tincture of compulsion, one that mocks the idea of freedom. The deepest thinkers in the social line suppose that man's actions are determined by matter, or nature, or history; they claim that their own proposed commands are merely expressions of an overpowering necessity. The social realm is preeminently the realm of *physis*, of nature: it has no place for *meta-physis*, or that which is beyond nature. "Necessity is the kingdom of nature," Schopenhauer says, "freedom is the kingdom of grace." By "grace" he means the state of having got over nature. In *The Human Condition* (1958) Hannah Arendt contended that the idolatry of nature and necessity that is characteristic of the social dispensation might yet, if unchecked, "reduce man as a whole, in all his activities, to the level of a conditioned and behaving animal." In sacrificing the classical imagination of liberty on the altar of social necessity, liberals have brought us a little closer to the realization of that dark prophecy. **NR**

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We *Didn't* Deregulate

And more regulation won't prevent another financial crisis

BY VERONIQUE DE RUGY

When Barack Obama was running for president, he made no secret of his plan to "restore commonsense regulation" by closing up regulatory "loopholes" he blamed Republicans for opening. Deregulation of the financial industry, he argued, was a main cause of the financial crisis.

Much like Franklin Delano Roosevelt during the Great Depression, President Obama offered a sweeping, ambitious regulatory agenda: a total revamp of the financial industry, including reform of the process by which loans are converted into securities; more robust federal regulation of credit-rating agencies; the creation of a systemic-risk regulator; stricter government oversight of the hedge-fund industry; new regulation of credit-default swaps; and the consolidation of several financial regulatory agencies.

But unlike FDR, Obama won't have to create a new regulatory system from scratch: For all the lamentation of our allegedly scanty policing of Wall Street, the financial industry already answers to a host of regulators, including the Federal Housing Finance Agency, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Federal Reserve, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the Office of Thrift Supervision, and, not least, the Securities and Exchange Commission.

In fact, as Peter J. Wallison of the American Enterprise Institute explained in 2008, "almost all financial legislation, such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. Improvement Act of 1991, adopted after the savings and loan collapse in the late 1980s, significantly tightened the regulation of banks." In other words, we've had regulation, not deregulation.

The great villain in the deregulation myth is the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, signed into law by Bill Clinton in 1999, which repealed some restrictions of the Depression-era Glass-Steagall Act, namely those preventing bank holding companies from owning other kinds of financial firms. Critics charge that Gramm-Leach-Bliley broke down the walls between banks and other kinds of financial institutions, thereby allowing enormous systemic risk to percolate through the financial world. This critique is the keystone of the "blame deregulation" case, but it doesn't hold up: While Gramm-Leach-Bliley did facilitate a number of mergers and the general consolidation of the financial-services industry, it did not eliminate restrictions on traditional depository banks' securities activities. In any case, it was investment banks, such as Lehman Brothers, that were at the center of the crisis, and they would have been able to make the same bad investments if Gramm-Leach-Bliley had never been passed.

Another common claim, that credit-default swaps and other derivatives left unregulated by the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000 were a cause of the financial crisis, doesn't stand up to scrutiny, either. Research by Houman Shadab of the Mercatus Center has shown that this argument is undermined by its failure to distinguish between credit-default swaps, which are simply insurance against loan defaults, and the actual bad loans and mortgage-backed securities at the root of the crisis. Stricter regulation of credit-default swaps wasn't going to make those subprime mortgages any less likely to go bad.

And it's not as though our regulators have been hamstrung by a lack of resources. Government budget figures show that inflation-adjusted spending on finance-and-banking regulation has gone up significantly over the last 50 years, from $190 million in 1960 to $2.3 billion in fiscal 2010. Total real expenditures for finance-and-banking regulation rose 45.5 percent from 1990 to 2010, with a 20 percent increase in the last ten years. That spending rose by 26 percent during the Bush years, and by 7.1 percent in 2009. While these data do not say anything about the regulators' effectiveness, it is reasonable to assume that a dramatic increase in their budgets is not a sign of radical deregulation.

To be sure, there has been a great deal of deregulation in some sectors of our economy over the last 30 years or so—the airlines, telecom, and trucking, just to name a few—but practically none of it has been in the financial sector or has had anything to do with the current crisis. Which is to say, the Obama administration's regulatory proposals rest on imaginary foundations. And while the president's populist criticism of greedy executives and unbridled capitalism may make for good headlines, it has nothing to do with the actual problem. This was that the FDIC, the Treasury Department, and the Federal Reserve created a housing bubble by encouraging a decade of careless lending. When the federal government guarantees bank loans or assets, banks have a weaker incentive to evaluate loan applicants thoroughly, and a stronger one to engage in risky behavior. When things are good, they make high profits; in the case of a catastrophic downturn, it is the taxpayers, not the banks, who foot the bill.

The financial-reform legislation currently under consideration in Congress does nothing to address the Fed's cheap-money policy or the unsustainable subsidies that government still provides to homeowners and mortgage lenders—the main causes of the housing bubble. Instead, our would-be reformers assume that increased federal control of the economy, the appointment of a new federal czar with the power to curtail the pay of executives in businesses the government now controls, or the creation of a Bureau of Consumer Protection (the zombie version of Senator Dodd's Consumer Financial Protection Agency) will set things right. The proposed regulations don't attack the problem of excessive leverage. They don't reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. They don't guarantee that taxpayers won't have to pay for the future errors of bank executives who, cheered on by their government enablers, take on excessive risk. The "reformers" simply wish away the root

Veronique de Rugy is an economist at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

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causes of this crisis: the "too big to fail" mentality and crony capitalism.

Crony capitalism means that not everybody plays by the same rules. Allowing financial institutions such as Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, and investment banks to maintain significantly smaller capital reserves than commercial banks, while implicitly guaranteeing their obligations, was a critical part of the financial problem. Capital-ratio rules require that firms value all their

Crony capitalism at its worst

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tradable assets at market prices and maintain a cash balance equal to a certain percentage of that price, weighted for the risk of each asset. In 2004, the SEC decided to allow five firms—Lehman Brothers, Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley—to reduce their capital ratios, letting them keep more assets on their balance sheets while subjecting them to less-stringent reporting requirements. Special favors like that—favors from the regulators themselves—are representative of the unhealthy marriage between government and its friends on Wall Street.

And nowhere has that relationship been more toxic than in the case of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The only reason those government-sponsored enterprises were able to guarantee nearly $5 trillion in home loans with a mere $100 billion in net equity was that both their management and other market operators knew that the government would step in if things took a turn for the worse.

Rather than ending the explicit and implicit guarantees, the administration is calling for limits on the size of financial institutions. Under the Treasury Department's proposal, no one firm's holdings could amount to more than 10 percent of the entire financial industry's liabilities. While those limits would likely reduce the system-wide repercussions of bank failures, they would do nothing to curtail the bad lending at the heart of the problem. Similarly, the administration's proposal to prohibit commercial banks from carrying out some kinds of "high risk" trades is another sign of how little has been learned from this crisis. The perverse incentives in the financial industry will remain, as will the political manipulation of housing prices and lending standards.

Not only will these regulatory initiatives not address our biggest problems, they threaten to make things worse. The massive government intervention in the economy in the 1930s made the Depression an even bigger disaster than it had to be and significantly delayed the eventual recovery. President Obama's invasive agenda—and the great uncertainty it has injected into the system—probably has already had a similar effect, distorting the market mechanisms that otherwise would allow investors to price securities accurately and help get us out of this crisis quickly and efficiently.

With all that in mind, it is hard to argue that deregulation of the financial-services industry was the problem, and that more regulation is the answer. Yet, like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, the Obama administration insists on fighting imaginary enemies. The president's war on Wall Street windmills will come at a tremendous cost to taxpayers—and to everyone in the private sector who will remain unemployed or financially insecure while the recovery is delayed. **NR**

Break Up The Banks

It's politics, not economics, that made them behemoths

BY ARNOLD KLING

BIG banks are bad for free markets. Far from being engines of free enterprise, they are conducive to what might be called "crony capitalism," "corporatism," or, in Jonah Goldberg's provocative phrase, "liberal fascism." There is a free-market case for breaking up large financial institutions: that our big banks are the product, not of economics, but of politics.

There's a long debate to be had about the maximum size to which a bank should be allowed to grow, and about how to go about breaking up banks that become too large. But I want to focus instead on the general objections to large banks.

The question can be examined from three perspectives. First, how much economic efficiency would be sacrificed by limiting the size of financial institutions? Second, how would such a policy affect systemic risk? Third, what would be the political economy of limiting banks' size?

It is the political economy that most concerns me. Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae represent everything that is wrong with the politics of big banks. They acquired lobbying prowess, their decisions were distorted by political concerns, and they were bailed out at taxpayer expense. All of these developments seem to be inevitable with large financial institutions, and all are deeply troubling to those who value economic freedom. Unless there are tremendous advantages of efficiency or systemic stability from having large banks, their adverse effect on the political economy justifies breaking them up.

If we had a free market in banking, very large banks would constitute evidence that

Mr. Kling is an adjunct scholar with the Cato Institute and a member of the Financial Markets Working Group of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. He is the author of Unchecked and Unbalanced: How the Discrepancy Between Knowledge and Power Caused the Financial Crisis and Threatens Democracy.

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there are commensurate economies of scale in the industry. But the reality is that our present large financial institutions probably owe their scale more to government policy than to economic advantages associated with their vast size. Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae were created by the government, and they always benefited from the perception that Washington would not permit them to fail—a perception that proved accurate. Similarly, large banks were viewed as "too big to fail," which gave them important advantages in credit markets and allowed them to grow bigger than they otherwise would have. In 2007 and 2008, Lehman Brothers was able to obtain substantial short-term credit from what otherwise would have been risk-averse money-market funds, notably the Reserve Primary Fund, which "broke the buck" after Lehman's collapse, greatly intensifying the subsequent financial panic. It is difficult to view Reserve Primary's large position in Lehman debt as anything other than a bet that the government would engineer a bailout. It probably would have parked its funds elsewhere had Lehman been considered small enough to fail.

Other policies in recent decades have subtly favored big banks. The government encouraged the boom in securitization, for instance, which helped swell the size of financial firms and was stimulated by banks' desire to skirt capital-requirement rules. And the credit-rating agencies' outsized role in financial markets—indeed, the very existence of a small, powerful cabal of federally approved rating agencies—was the work of regulators. Such policies fostered large financial institutions such as AIG, which built its huge portfolio of credit-default swaps on the basis of Triple-A grades from the credit-rating cartel.

The Royal Bank of Canada: a fraction of the size of America's largest banks

ZUMA

Turn now to the question of efficiency: Is bigger better for consumers? Bankers speak mystically about the "financial supermarket" and claim that there are tremendous economies of scope in financial services, meaning that a consumer benefits from being able to have a checking account and a stock portfolio at the same large firm. But in practice, whatever benefits might be derived from such a supermarket are probably more than offset by the diseconomies of managing such a complex entity.

Another unsound argument is that large banks are needed to finance large multinational firms. If large international firms require big capital investments, these can be obtained by issuing securities or by loan syndication, in which the risk of borrowing is spread across several banks. The existence of large non-bank firms does not imply the need for similarly gigantic banks.

There are economies of scale, but small banks can take advantage of them, too. For instance, a small bank can join an ATM network or contract with a third party to develop Internet services. It does not have to build such systems from scratch, and we do not need big banks to make them possible.

Which brings us to the question of systemic risk. Regulation can, of course, make systemic risk worse: The U.S. banking crisis of the 1930s was exacerbated by the fact that banks could not start new branches across state lines or, in many cases, even within the same state. This led to poor diversification of regional risk. The regulation in question was admittedly poor, but we need not return to the banking system of the 1930s to achieve a reduction in the size of America's largest banks.

Some point out that the Canadian banking system performed relatively well during the financial crisis, noting that Canada's assets are concentrated in just five large banks. This is offered as evidence that large banks are conducive to financial stability. But while Canada's big banks have a big share of the country's assets, they still are much smaller than America's largest banks: Bank of America and JP Morgan Chase are three or four times the size of the Royal Bank of Canada, Canada's largest. And while its banking marketplace is dominated by five big players, Canada's population is less than one-seventh that of the United States; even if we concede that Canada is served well by five large banks, the equivalent in the United States would be 35 large banks. In 2008, total assets of the U.S. banking system were about $10 trillion, with the top five bank holding companies in possession of $6 trillion. If the entire $10 trillion had been divided evenly among 35 banks, none would have accounted for more than $300 billion in assets; all of our banks would have been smaller than the fifth-largest Canadian bank.

Overall, there is little evidence that really big banks are necessary to a sound financial system. The financial crisis demonstrated that they are not *sufficient* for a sound financial system. And it is possible that without very large banks the system actually would be more robust. Certainly, the failure of any one bank would be less traumatic if the size of that bank were small relative to the overall market.

I am not optimistic that there is an easy cure for financial fragility even if we break up the banks. To the extent that they share exposure to the same risk factors, a system with many small banks could be just as vulnerable as a system with a few large ones. The fundamental sources of financial risk—including leverage, interest-rate risk, exchange-rate risk, and speculative bubbles—have a way of insinuating themselves regardless of the banking industry's structure and in spite of the best intentions of regulators. But while no one can promise that breaking up large banks would make the financial system safer, it would without question make it less corporatist. Which returns us to the question of political economy.

In the United States, big banks provide an invitation to mix politics and finance. Large financial firms get caught between

public purposes imposed on them by Congress and the interests of private stakeholders. If they do not maintain good relations with legislators, they risk adverse regulation. Therefore, it behooves them to shape their regulatory environment.

And they have done so. In recent decades, the blend of politics and banking created a Washington–Wall Street financial complex in the mortgage market. This development, and its consequences, have been well documented. Michael Lewis's 1989 book *Liar's Poker* includes a portrayal of the political exertions of investment bankers to enable mortgage securitization to take off. "The Quiet Coup," an article by Simon Johnson that appeared in the May 2009 issue of *The Atlantic*, chronicles the rapid accrual of profits and power by large financial institutions over the past 30 years; during this period, Wall Street firms were able to shape the basic beliefs of political figures and regulators, a phenomenon that Brookings Institution scholar Daniel Kaufmann has dubbed "cognitive capture." Andrew Ross Sorkin's *Too Big to Fail*, which describes the response of the Federal Reserve and Treasury to the financial crisis, leaves the distinct impression that senior bankers had much more access to and influence over Washington's decision makers than did career bureaucrats.

Notwithstanding the good intentions of policymakers, who no doubt plan to create a stronger regulatory apparatus going forward, large banks will inevitably have too much power for the apparatus to govern them. They will shield themselves from its attentions by making political concessions on lending practices. So long as big banking is conjoined to big government, that is, we risk a return to the regime of private profits and socialized risk.

I would prefer a completely hands-off policy when it comes to financial markets, but the political reality is that deposit insurance and regulation are not going away. Given that they are not, the worst possible outcome is that the marriage of politics and finance evolves into outright corporatism, as it did with Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, and the rest of the nation's largest financial institutions. And that evolution is directly attributable to the influence that comes from banks' being big enough to achieve real political power. To expand free enterprise, shrink the banks. **NR**

Resolve to Reform

How to get un-TARPed and police the shadow banking system

BY STEPHEN SPRUIELL & KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

WHAT was so bad about the bailouts? Everything, except that they sort of worked, at least as a short-term patch-up and a bid for time. But that time is running out, and we should now start thinking about the next crisis, and the next—and how to mitigate what cannot be avoided in the post-TARP era.

The really offensive thing about the bailouts was the prevailing sense of adhocracy—that Congress and the White House and the Treasury and the Fed were more or less making things up as they went along. This bank got rescued, that one didn't. This firm got a bailout on generous terms, that one got the pillory. Dick Fuld got vilified, Tim Geithner got made Treasury secretary.

It didn't have to be that way: We have a pretty good system for regulating traditional banks and, when necessary, for taking over failed banks and "resolving" them—taking care of depositors and sorting out losses among creditors and shareholders. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation is one of the few players in the recent crisis that have acquitted themselves reasonably well. No American depositor lost a dime from his savings account, checks cleared, and everyone's ATM card kept working. The FDIC works as well as it does because there is not much adhocracy in its approach—terms and practices are defined in advance, and its operations are prefunded through insurance premiums charged to the banks whose deposits it insures.

But we also have a shadow banking system: a menagerie of hedge funds, structured-investment vehicles, non-depository investment banks, and other intermediaries that shuffle money between borrowers, lenders, and investors outside of traditional banks. Before we can get our economy fully un-TARPed, un-Fannied, and un-Freddied, we need an FDIC-style resolution authority that can do for the shadow banking system what the FDIC does for banks: police safety and soundness and, when necessary, take troubled institutions into custody and disassemble them in an orderly manner.

Some free-marketers will protest that such a resolution authority promises to be just another failed federal regulator, that we should "let markets work." But the bailouts have proved beyond any doubt that "too big to fail" is a durable feature of Washington's thinking about finance—the reality is that an immaculate free-market solution is not in the works. It's rather a question of what sort of regulation we are going to have and who is going to be doing it. We don't expect the new resolution authority to be perfect, but if its powers are well defined and reasonably insulated from electoral politics, it could prove as useful as the FDIC at stemming panic and containing spillovers into the real economy.

The new authority probably should be under the jurisdiction of the Federal Reserve, though its activities and the Fed's traditional monetary-policy functions should be walled off from each other. Why the Fed? It has a great deal of financial expertise and knowledge at its disposal, and it is not headed by a cabinet secretary with an eye on the next election. The Fed's haughty independence, for many a source of irritation and suspicion, is in fact its great virtue. It has made its mistakes—keeping interest rates too low for too long, and thereby helping to inflate the housing bubble—but an obsession with short-term politics is not one of them. The FDIC has enough to do, and neither Treasury nor Commerce nor any other cabinet agency should be trusted with the broad powers that any effective resolution authority would have to command.

The institutions that make up the shadow banking system are a diverse and complicated lot: If traditional banking is a game of checkers, this is 3-D chess on dozens of boards at the same time. It is therefore likely that the regulators will lack the expertise to establish appropriate, timely resolution programs for the complex institutions they are expected to govern. The solution to that problem is found in Columbia finance professor Charles Calomiris's proposal that every TBTFI—Too Big to Fail Institution—

coming under the new agency's jurisdiction be required to establish and maintain, in advance, its own resolution plan, which would be subject to regulatory approval.

Such a plan—basically, a pre-packaged bankruptcy—would make public detailed information about the distribution of losses in the event of an institutional failure—in other words, who would take how much of a haircut if the bank or fund were to find itself in dire straits. This would be a substantial improvement on the political favor-jockeying that marked the government's intervention in General Motors, for instance, or the political limbo that saw Lehman doing nothing to save itself while waiting to be rescued by a Washington bailout that never came. The authority's main job would be to keep up with the resolution plans and, when necessary, to execute them.

Like the FDIC, the new resolution authority should be prefunded, its day-to-day operations and its trust fund underwritten by insurance premiums charged to the institutions it oversees. This in itself might have a useful dampening effect: Institutions not wishing to fall under the resolution authority's jurisdiction, and thereby becoming subject to the expenses and inconvenience associated with it, would have an incentive to moderate the size and complexity of their operations, which would be a good thing in many cases. Unlike TARP, the authority's trust fund should be treated as what it is—capital backing an insurance program—and restricted by statute from being used as a political slush fund. Being funded by the financial institutions themselves, it would not be subject to the whims of congressional appropriators.

Taking a fresh regulatory approach would give us the opportunity to enact some useful reforms at the same time. At present, capital requirements—the amount of equity and other assets financial firms are required to hold in proportion to their lending—are static: X cents in capital for every $1 in, for example, regular mortgage loans. This makes them "pro-cyclical," meaning that, during booms, banks suddenly find themselves awash in capital as their share prices and the value of their assets climb, with the effect that they can secure a lot more loans with the assets they already have on the books. But the requirements are pro-cyclical on the downside, too: During recessions, declining share and asset prices erode banks' capital base, hamstringing their operations and making financial contractions even worse. Instead, we should use counter-cyclical capital requirements: During booms, the amount of capital required to back each dollar in lending should increase on a pre-defined schedule, helping to put the brake on financial bubbles and to tamp down irrational exuberance. During downturns, capital requirements should be loosened on a pre-defined schedule, to facilitate lending and to keep banks from going into capital crises for mere accounting reasons. But these counter-cyclical capital requirements should begin from a higher baseline: The shadow banking system exists, in no small part, to skirt traditional capital requirements, and its scanty capital cushions helped make the recent crisis much worse than it had to be.

One other aspect of the FDIC that should be incorporated into the new resolution authority: automatic triggers. The FDIC Improvement Act ensures that the agency has relatively little regulatory discretion: If a bank fails to satisfy certain standards, the FDIC is not only empowered to move in and resolve it, but required to do so. Likewise, the resolution authority should have relatively little leeway in its operations. More than the FDIC, perhaps, due to the variety and complexity of the institutions it will be expected to oversee—but not much more. What is most important is that its rules, processes, and standards be well defined in advance—before the next crisis, and the next opportunity for the ad hoc shenanigans that made TARP the hate totem it is.

Only after the new resolution authority is set up can we really untangle ourselves from TARP and the rest of the bailout regime. That is because many of the institutions still being propped up under bailout protocols are weak, and some of them probably are going to fail. Nobody knows which ones, though the amalgamation of corporate blight that is GMAC is an excellent candidate for extinction.

A special situation, one that probably would exceed the new authority's resources, is the sorry case of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. The government-sponsored (now government-owned) enterprises present a real obstacle to returning to a more normal economy. But the first step is relatively straightforward: The government should start by admitting that it is on the hook for all of Fannie and Freddie's losses, not just the $100 billion it has already loaned the companies. The White House still is not accounting for Fannie and Freddie the way it accounts for other federal entities. According to one estimate, Fannie and Freddie's liabilities total $6.3 trillion, every dollar of which is now the taxpayers' potential problem.

Policymakers are understandably reluctant to add such an enormous sum to the national balance sheet, but they could start by accounting for the $300 billion the Congressional Budget Office says it costs to insure the agencies' liabilities against the possibility of default over the next ten years. Adding Fannie and Freddie to budget calculations would, we hope, pressure policymakers to reduce taxpayer exposure to the GSEs by winding down their large portfolios and breaking them up—instead of doing what they are currently doing, which is close to the opposite of that.

Of course, these are our ideal reforms, and they bear only a coincidental resemblance to those that Chris Dodd and other congressional panjandrums are bandying about. Dodd's resolution authority would leave too much discretion to politicians to offer insolvent firms permanent life support, Fannie- and Freddie-style, rather than force them into orderly liquidation.

Other proposals we've seen emerge from Congress look more like reorganization than reform, reminding us of the man who wrote, "We tend as a nation to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization." It is one thing when this reorganizing involves the renaming of some unimportant bureaucracy, but when it comes to financial reform, the illusion of progress is dangerous. Already it can be argued that investors' appetite for risk has returned to pre-crisis levels as government support of the banking system has bolstered the impression that there is no such thing as a bad credit risk on Wall Street. A resolution authority, properly structured, could mitigate this moral hazard by reacquainting the bankers with the prospect of failure and their creditors with the prospect of losses. Whether we will get one is another question entirely. **NR**

The Bent Pin

BY FLORENCE KING

Thuggery with a Smile

TORMENTED people are said to be "pursued by the Furies." I am eminently qualified for membership in what, in today's parlance, probably would be called the tormented community, but the Furies just aren't that into me. Instead, for as long as I can remember, I have been pursued by the Pixies.

The classic Pixie is the cheery thug who gambols up to a perfect stranger sitting quietly in a public place, minding her own business, and brays, "Whatcha so sad about? It can't be that bad—smile!" The Pixie's glass is so half-full that it runneth all over you, as happened with a boy I dated in college, who put his arm around me, gave me a reassuring pat, and said, "You'd be a great gal if only you'd develop a sense of humor." He gave me a how-to book called something like "Three Weeks to a Funnier You!" with worksheets in the back. He saw nothing funny about the worksheets, but he roared at the author's stories, e.g.: "When my son said he was reading *David Copperfield* in English class, I said 'What the dickens!' and we all had a good laugh." When I remarked that the son probably went around in a perpetual cringe, saying, "Jeez, Dad, cut it out, will ya?" he said I didn't get it because I was too bitter.

Pixies never get anything, which is why they never stop trying to simplify the complex and complicate the simple. Now that the subject of health insurance rivals the quantum theory, they are raising their half-full glasses to Pixiecare.

The monthly bulletin put out by my local hospital just came in the mail. These publications regularly show people wreathed in smiles in unlikely situations—in the shade of their IV trees or while being sucked into the giant maw of a CT scan—but the latest issue has a lead article on women and heart attacks illustrated by a big Valentine-candy-box heart superimposed over a female chest. Hey, it was February.

Pixiecare's thought for the day is headlined "Something to Laugh About" and illustrated with a politically correct assortment of people all convulsed in mirth. The text reads:

"The next time you find yourself sweating the small stuff, laugh it off. Laughter increases the release of endorphins, compounds in your brain that give you a sense of well-being. Research also shows that laughter and joy can boost immune functions, and produce natural cells that help defend the body from illness. So read your favorite comics, watch your favorite silly movie, and laugh to good health!"

Arm-twisting optimism became the mainstay of Pixiedom back when *Reader's Digest* started running its "Laughter, the Best Medicine" feature, but it was the jogging craze that got them started on endorphins. "Gotta get those endorphins goin'," the panting joggers explained, until the word captured the Pixie imagination and spread through the land, compliments of the media anchors who make up Pixiedom's priestly class.

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The actual definition and value of endorphins was scientifically as well as hilariously explained by Dr. Ronald W. Dworkin in *Artificial Happiness: The Dark Side of the New Happy Class*, but that wasn't the end of it. Now we have Barbara Ehrenreich's latest, *Bright-Sided: How the Relentless Promotion of Positive Thinking Has Undermined America.* Ehrenreich witnessed an attack of the giant endorphins at a breast-cancer clinic whose patients refused to say they "had" cancer; no, they were "battling" it, and they expected to defeat it because they were convinced that a positive attitude could make a cancer give up and go away. She soon discovered that "dissent [is] a kind of treason" when she posted hers online and was told she needed counseling.

Another venue of Pixiedom are the high-tech troubleshooting manuals in the "Idiot's Guide to . . ." and ". . . for Dummies" series whose authors try so hard to be funny that they skimp on thoroughness. They will say something like "If you need more space on your hard disk, get your hand out of that jar and delete your cookies!" How? They don't say because they are too intent on making the desperate feel insouciant.

Even worse is AOL's Live Help. In theory you sign on and type out your questions and a rep types out his answers, but in reality it turns into an Alphonse-Gaston gavotte. The rep types, "I will do everything I can to help you," which leads the customer to type, "I'm sure you will." It being impossible to describe in logical fashion the freezes and crazy dialogue boxes you keep getting, the rep types, "I hope I'm helping you resolve your problem," and you, still hopeful, type, "Yes, you are." You try to say what's wrong without saying, "It's doing something funny!" but you can't. Finally, your time is up and the rep types, "Have I helped you resolve your problem?" and the wrung-out customer, who just wants to end it and get drunk, e-babbles, "Yes, you've been so helpful." Congratulations, you have turned into a motivational speaker. The next day they send you an e-survey that goes on forever, every question phrased in such a way as to ask: "How do you rate the way your problem was resolved?" Afraid to ignore the first survey for fear they will send another, you go through and check every "Excellent" just to get rid of them.

Observe that by now you too are a Pixie. It's contagious, and Barbara Ehrenreich explains why: "We have become the emotional wallpaper in other people's lives, less individuals with our own quirks and needs than dependable sources of smiles and optimism . . . [urged to] see the glass half full, even when it lies shattered on the floor."

I may weaken now and then, but I refuse to become a great gal. I stand or fall on the paradox of the clown identified by Carol Burnett in her memoir, *One More Time.* Taken to the circus as a child, she was repelled and terrified by the clowns because their obvious striving for humor—bulbous red noses, silly wigs, flappy shoes—translated as menace. NR

The Long View

BY ROB LONG

The (Lost) Federalist Papers
Special Obamacare™ Edition

Dear Publius:

Got a hypothetical question for you. Would love your insight into this. Just say, hypothetically, that Congre*ff* is trying to enact legislation that would benefitte pretty much everyone except for the big insurance companies (al - though they'll benefitte too, actually, but let that go for now) and it's totally hard to do because the people—who, as you have mentioned and I totally totally agree with you, are super good at loads of stuff—but the people don't like this legislation so much, and are energized against it with lots of pub- lick demonstrations and unruly mobs &c.

So, here's the question: Why can't Congre*ff* just pa*ff* that legislation by, in a sense, not pa*ff*ing it? By way of recon- ciliation or even pa*ff*ing amendments to it and "deeming" it pa*ff*ed? Can we do that?

Again: hypothetical only. But would love your insight.

A Member of the
(Thinkinge) Publicke

P.S.: Please do something about your font!

To the People of the State of New York:

Although we have always eschewed to principles of the hypothetical, I would have to add that such an acktion on behalf of any Congre*ff* would be at least distre*ff*ing and at most a breach of the most elemental form of governance. Also, he who orchestrated such an acktion would be a royale a*ff*.

PUBLIUS

Dear Publius:

Right. I get it. Forget I mentioned it. Still, a question:

What do you do when the American citizen is so clearly wrong about what's good for himme? Isn't there some way in your vaunted "constitution" to sort of get something done super quick when nobody is really looking and maybe they're all too busy with tax-time *tsuris* and what not? My point here is, you guys have constructed a whole big thing here that really requires consent of the governed, which sounds awesome but, you know, I mean, really? Really?

My thinking here is, you guys need to get out more and meet some real Americans, who, let's be honest, aren't the brightest people around. Fat, too. Which is another thing you guys don't talk about.

Also: Is this Madison or Hamilton? And please don't be all "It's Publius, it's Publius" because we all know it's one of you guys.

A Member of the
(Thinkinge) Publicke

To the People of the State of New York:

In the fyrst place, we're not saying who is who. It's Publius. That's who it is writing these things. Google us if you wysh, but we've been awfully goode about covering those tracks. You can find us on Facebooke and Twytter and that's about the size of that.

In the seconde place, it has never been our contention that the citizenry are uniformly knowledgeable about elements of governance and taxation. Which is why we have advocated here and elsewhere a republic—delegat- ing to such citizens as their neighbors choose the rights and responsibilities to legislate and decide on matters as they see fytte. And to appear before those cit- izens on a timely fashion for reapproval and elecktion. I don't see what's so hard about that. Seems pretty basick, really. Would rather debate the thornier stuff, to be frank, about inter-state stuff and taxes and what have ye.

PUBLIUS

Dear Publius:

Ryght, ryght. I get it. The people get to eleckt representatives who are beholden to their interests, no, I get that.

But here's what I'm saying: Suppose for instance that a lot of guys in Con - gre*ff* are facing the citizens in, like, six months, and that's too soone to both pa*ff* a HUGE piece of legislation and also convince the greyt unwashed that it's a good thing to do—I mean, it's going to be a bloodbath when the vot- ers check into this—but still, it's a greyt piece of legislation—a little expensive, but, hey, so was the War of Independence, ryght??—and so what they need is politickal cover. In that scenario it'd be okay, right?

A Member of the
(Thinkinge) Publicke

To the People of the State of New York:

Your hypothetickals have grown tiresome. Speak plainly, sir. Owne up to your designs and stratagems. What is the acktual coste of this "legislative programme" of which you write? And bear in mynde that I'm really quite busy.

PUBLIUS

Dear Publius:

Okay: brasse tackes. The whole she- bang is going to run about a trillion dol- lars. For now. More later, obviously, but one tryll gets us started.

A Member of the
(Thinkinge) Publicke

To the People of the State of New York:

Truly wonderfulle! You really had me going! I was into the exchange hooke, lyne, and sinkerre! One trillion of dol- lars! Marvelous!

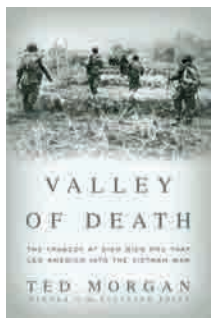
Thank you, sir, for providing a won- derful jape for my amusement. I shall pa*ff* this along to my colleagues!

The government of the United States! Spending a trillion dollars! Without a vote in Congre*ff*!

PUBLIUS

Searing Defeat

ALISTAIR HORNE



Valley of Death: The Tragedy at Dien Bien Phu That Led America Into the Vietnam War, by Ted Morgan (Random House, 752 pp., $35)

May I declare an interest, or two? While France was losing the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 I was a young foreign correspondent, for the British *Daily Telegraph*, in Germany. I watched the course of the battle with mounting fear and dread. We were painfully conscious that between that "Valley of Death" and us there stood nothing but the apparently invincible forces of Stalinism. At the east end of the Rhine bridges at Bonn there was a sign in three languages: "No member of the Soviet Occupation Forces permitted across the bridge." With the French still rejecting German rearmament, that was virtually it. And there, in far-off Vietnam, one of the West's best-equipped armies was surrendering to a ragbag of oriental guerrillas in the most abject humiliation.

How had this come to pass?

Ted Morgan is superbly qualified to revisit the awful scene and reexamine the story. As an American who had the bad luck to be born in France, he found himself conscripted into the French army, so had to do his time as a "grunt" in the grim Algerian War. There he experienced at first hand the impact that defeat at Dien Bien Phu had on the French psyche. He has now returned to study, in great depth, the events surrounding that decisive battle—as well as the repercussions in the outside world. He is particularly skilful in counterpointing the grim struggle for strong points like "Eliane 2" with the epoch-making negotiations that were occurring simultaneously in Geneva, Washington, London, and Paris.

Following the terrible defeat of 1940, post-war France had a problem; to be accurate, it had many. In what de Gaulle dubbed "this absurd ballet," governments of the Fourth Republic trooped on and off the stage with depressing regularity. In 1950, Queuille was followed by Pleven; then Queuille returned, to be followed by Pleven again. In 1953 came Laniel, who was followed by Pierre Mendès-France, the courageous little Sephardic Jew who took the brave, but inevitable, course of getting France out of Indochina, thus ending what most Frenchmen called the *sale guerre*, or dirty war, unwinnable as it was to prove for four successive U.S. presidents from the 1960s to the final disaster of April 1975.

Those poor French leaders of 1945 were weak men, presiding over a broken, divided, and bankrupt country—and plagued perpetually by the cancer-like presence of the most powerful Communist party in Europe, which commanded roughly one-third of the seats in the National Assembly. If Richard Nixon thought he had a problem, he should have looked at France in those years. There was also a dichotomy not unfamiliar to the U.S. in the 1970s—or indeed today, over Afghanistan: The majority of Frenchmen wanted "out," and successive French governments wanted to win a military victory convincing enough for them to negotiate an "honorable" exit strategy. But the military remained convinced they could win a decisive victory.

In 1950s France, there was this difference: After the sore humiliations of the 1940s, the army *had* to win. There was an element of machismo involved, harking back to that old slogan that so haunts French history: *la gloire*.

In 1945, France had two military giants, Leclerc and de Lattre de Tassigny. Both were sent to try their hand in Indochina. The problem was that the French colony there, truly the jewel in France's imperial crown, had been occupied by the Japanese from Pearl Harbor onwards, and under their presence a powerful independence movement, the Vietminh, had sprung up unchecked—under the aegis of two most remarkable men, Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap, respectively political boss and military genius.

Tragically for France—and maybe the West as a whole—Leclerc, who might have aimed for a sensible, negotiated withdrawal while France was still relatively strong vis-à-vis the Vietminh, was killed, in a 1947 plane crash over the Sahara. De Lattre, vainglorious and one of the most arrogant Frenchmen ever, came to Hanoi claiming that his presence was worth a division of French troops (which, of course, the Fourth Republic didn't have). Nevertheless, a brilliant soldier, he saved Hanoi in 1951—and might well have produced a solution. But de Lattre was already a burnt-out case, his son had just been killed in the *sale guerre*, and he would be struck down by cancer in January 1952. (He was posthumously nominated maréchal de France.)

De Lattre was followed by one of the most disastrous figures in French military history, Gen. Raoul Salan, the quintessence of the "political general," an old opium-smoking Indochina hand, nicknamed "the Mandarin," who thought he knew everything. (I got to know him well, in his Algerian War context—a slimy figure with mauve-tinted hair. He was to end his career in disgrace, running the terrorist OAS organization in Algeria, and sentenced to death in absentia by the de Gaulle government—but amnestied in 1968.)

In Hanoi Salan was followed by two commanders, Navarre and Cogny, who argued with each other incessantly. As Morgan puts it, the French were left "rudderless." To try to preserve the crucial Hanoi delta, and at the same time defend inland Laos from the Vietminh threat, Navarre decided to establish an impregnable fortress in the middle of enemy territory at Dien Bien Phu, 500 kilometers northwest of Hanoi, and a safe 300 kilometers from the Chinese frontier.

Sir Alistair Horne's Kissinger: 1973, The Crucial Year *is published by Simon & Schuster.*

With occidental arrogance, Navarre assumed that because the French couldn't access it by road, through what they deemed "impassable" jungle, the enemy couldn't either. He forgot about the reinforced bicycle frame, and the limitless supply of commandeered coolie labor available to General Giap. With total command of the skies, Navarre would supply the fortress by air.

By the early 1950s, Giap had created a powerful force of 250,000 men. Released from commitment in Korea, the Chinese could supply them with quantities of U.S. 105mm artillery, captured from the defeated Chiang Kai-shek. Without the French noticing, the war in Indochina had been transformed by China. Rather like the U.S. and British in Afghanistan, unhappily, the French with all their sophisticated mobility were reduced to fighting a kind of *Beau Geste* war, defensively based on fortresses. It was the primitive foe who proved to have the mobility. Giap decided to commit all on winning a decisive, pitched battle—something guerrilla forces had never done before—with far-reaching political aims. He won.

By January 1954, Dien Bien Phu had been surrounded, invested like a fortress in a medieval siege, with all its attendant horrors—an extraordinary anachronism in the midst of the nuclear age. Foolishly the French allowed Giap to occupy the high ground ringing the fort, so he was able to dig tunnels through from the safe dead-ground behind. Thus those captured 105mms would command every inch of the defenders' positions—and eventually the vital airstrip. Realizing what lay ahead, the French artillery commander, Col. Charles Piroth, blew himself up with a hand grenade.

Morgan rightly rates the two-month assault on Dien Bien Phu as "one of the great epics of military endurance." With the advantage of all the documentation available since Bernard Fall's 1967 classic, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, he describes the course of the battle day by day with most minute detail—perhaps almost to excess. To regain their reputation, tarnished by World War II, the French fought with a kind of World War I heroism. (Indeed, trotted out at various moments was the totemic word "Verdun"—that great Pyrrhic victory of 1916.) After desperate hand-to-hand fighting, one by one the French outposts (all, characteristically, named after women) were whittled away by Giap's suicidal assaults.

Under the relentless bombardment of the Vietminh guns, the fate of the French wounded in their makeshift field hospitals was unimaginable; worse still was the death march of the POWs once Dien Bien Phu finally fell in May 1954—comparable to America's Calvary in Bataan in 1942. Out of 15,090 defenders, 1,142 were killed; plus 429 who died of wounds, and 1,606 unaccounted for, but presumed dead. Over 10,000 were taken prisoner, of whom 70 percent died (Morgan tellingly compares this to Dachau's 80 percent).

Yet only 25 percent of the defenders were actually French; many were ex-Wehrmacht veterans from World War II; others were Algerian. The survivors would take home lessons of a French army defeated by Third World guerrillas. Revolt in Algeria would begin six months later; by 1962 France would lose that last jewel in its colonial crown.

Dien Bien Phu was unquestionably one of the stupidest battles of the 20th century, but it was also one of its most important, with consequences that reverberate even today. The Geneva Conference for a solution on Indochina began during Dien Bien Phu. That sealed its fate, says Morgan. Moral for today: Don't begin political negotiations while a military campaign is still under way.

Worse than the military defeat at Dien

THE LOCAL HARVARD MAN

A character you never meet, only hear of,
A music student in *The Sun Also Rises*
Helping a negro boxer in Vienna after

The crowd went crazy when he floored the home-town
Boy, knocked him cold after two fouls—
Is called *the local Harvard man* by Bill

Who saw the fight, remembers being drunk
And drunkenly recalls the riot, the rescue,
The boxer escaping without his street clothes.

The drunken Osterreichers staggered home;
And Bill tells of loaning the fighter money
To travel back to his family in Cologne.

Why the fight at all, to give Bill a boxing tale,
A realistic recent past, but as remote as
The Eastern Kingdom at its worst could be?

How the Austrians loved their local boy
And hated the American, whose darkness
Did nothing to repress the other Vienna's rage?

We never meet student or fighter, just Bill
Telling their story, with the storyteller's sense
Of the recent past, now in Paris, speaking

Of them; and Jake telling us what he says,
Hemingway redacting the grand drama,
The shouting mob, the punch below the belt . . .

I think we called him the local Harvard man
Bill remembers, and like Nick Carraway's Finnish maid
Whom we also never meet, we can't forget.

—LAWRENCE DUGAN

Bien Phu, however, were the splits revealed in the Western Alliance. They mimicked France's "absurd ballet." Secretary of State John Foster Dulles—in Churchill's memorable comment, "the only bull I know who carries his own china shop around with him"—raged ineffectually, while Ike, as was his wont, was indecisive. British foreign secretary Anthony Eden, vanity personified, was determined to prevent America's Adm. Arthur W. Radford from unleashing a nuke in support of the French, or indeed any other kind of intervention over Dien Bien Phu. French foreign minister Georges Bidault was, perhaps understandably, drunk much of the time—and, when sober, he did not tell the U.S. (which was funding 80 percent of France's war) what was going on.

When you read Ted Morgan's account of this Allied disunity, you wonder how we ever won World War II. The divisions he so skillfully, and ominously, delineates led in a direct line to Suez, two years later. That was to mark the final collapse of Franco-British empire, which began in that hellhole at Dien Bien Phu.

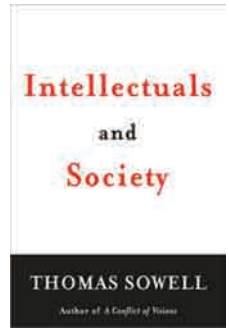
In Hanoi, in 1998, I interviewed the victor of Dien Bien Phu, General Giap—a tiny walnut of a man. It was somewhat disappointing that, now in what Prime Minister Harold Macmillan once described as his "anecdotage," Giap treated me to a thousand-year treatise on Vietnamese history. It was nevertheless exciting to meet the man who, never losing a battle, had vanquished successively the armies of France, the U.S.—and China. Of significance in today's struggle with Islamic terrorism was his reminder that he and his ragtag guerrillas would, if necessary, have gone on fighting for another 100 years until victory was finally achieved.

How long can any Western democracy manage? President Obama, please answer.

So what did Giap glean from Dien Bien Phu? Plenty. But what did the Kennedy/Johnson/Nixon administrations learn from that one battle—which cost the equivalent of nearly one-fifth of all the 58,000 U.S. fatalities in the whole of their Vietnam War two decades later? Nil. What do the intelligent baboons who run our countries learn from history? Nil. It's depressing. But let us hope the White House and the Pentagon will be reading Ted Morgan's excellent, but depressing, book. **NR**

The Anointed

JOHN DERBYSHIRE



Intellectuals and Society, by Thomas Sowell (Basic, 416 pp., $29.95)

It is a commonplace observation that very smart people often have no sense. Writers since Aristophanes have been making sport of their intellectual superiors. Jonathan Swift had the academicians of Lagado striving to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. Twenty years ago Paul Johnson wrote a fine book called *Intellectuals*, in which he tossed and gored such luminaries of 19th- and 20th-century deep-browdom as Emerson, Sartre, and Bertrand Russell. Roger Kimball covered some of the same ground more thoughtfully in *Lives of the Mind*. It is useful and necessary work to point out how silly and clueless the most brilliant people often are. It is also fun, and a salve to our envy of those who have attained eminence just by thinking hard.

Why *are* intellectuals often so daft, though? Thomas Sowell has been ruminating on the matter for a quarter of a century. In *A Conflict of Visions* (1987), he posited two different approaches to human affairs: the constrained vision, which acknowledges our limitations, and the unconstrained, which believes us to be perfectible. It is adherence to the second view, he thinks, that leads intellectuals into folly. In 1995, Sowell enlarged on this theme in *The Vision of the Anointed*, memorably subtitled "Self-Congratulation as a Basis for Social Policy." There he settled on the terms "tragic vision" and "vision of the anointed" to describe the two contrasting outlooks, and showed the dire consequences of the latter when applied to public affairs.

Intellectuals and Society continues the theme. (I wonder whether Sowell's publisher has considered issuing the three books in a boxed set.) There is some repetition of arguments from the earlier books. I see no harm in that: We more often need reminding than instructing. Each of the particular ways in which intellectuals have their effect on society is given a chapter to itself: "Intellectuals and Economics," "Intellectuals and War," and so on.

What *is* an intellectual, though? Plenty of people—engineers, architects, surgeons, lawyers, generals—make a living by applying their intelligence to learned knowledge, but are not considered intellectuals on that account. Even academics are not necessarily intellectuals: We would hesitate to pin the tag on, for example, a professor of biochemistry. Contrariwise, some non-academics *have* been counted as intellectuals: a few jurists (including, surely, Sowell's favorite, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.), a poet or two, the founder of this magazine.

Sowell defines an intellectual as one whose work begins and ends with ideas. "Work" refers here to one's primary occupation, though the occupation need not be a paying one. The ideas should be big, general ideas about human nature, life, and society. Ideas in, ideas out, for most of one's working day: If that's your life, you're an intellectual. There are quibbles one can raise against this definition (historians? economists?), but for a book-length discussion, it is quite good enough.

Anyone can come up with an idea, of course. The ideas that matter are the ones that possess staying power by virtue of having survived some agreed validation process. In mathematics, the validation is by logical proof; in the sciences, by confirming observations. Sowell, whose training was in economics, would like to see that kind of empirical rigor applied to the utopian schemes of those intellectuals he calls "the anointed." What he sees instead is self-congratulation, the blithe ignoring of unwelcome facts, the pathologizing of disagreement, herd behavior, and "the fatal talent of verbal virtuosity."

The only validation process the anointed will submit their ideas to is "the approval of peers." When rigorous *empirical* validation is applied, as it often is by conscientious social scientists, the results usually contradict the utopian vision. Then they are ignored and forgotten. A recent study of Head Start, for example, showed that this

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venerable Great Society program, now in its 46th year of lavish funding (currently $7.1 billion a year), accomplishes nothing measurable. Every previous study, all the way back to 1969, said the same thing; they were all shoved down the memory hole, as no doubt this latest one will be.

Similarly with the "root causes" theory of crime, which, says Sowell, has remained impervious to evidence on both sides of the Atlantic. "In both the United States and England, crime rates soared during years when the supposed 'root causes of crime'—poverty and barriers to opportunity—were visibly declining." Gun control, a great favorite with the anointed, has likewise been a bust, gun crime rising steadily in Britain through the later 20th century as laws against gun ownership became more severe. That other criminological favorite, "alternatives to incarceration," has been so thoroughly internalized by liberal intellectuals as to give us the famous 1997 *New York Times* headline "Crime Keeps on Falling, but Prisons Keep on Filling."

The follies of the anointed in matters of war and peace are so abundant Sowell spreads them over two chapters. The first covers the 20th century to 1945; the second, the Cold War, Vietnam, and the two Iraq wars. This gives the author an opportunity to note parallels across the decades, the "peace movements" of the 1960s and 2000s echoing the sentiments, and often the actual slogans, of pacifists in the 1920s and 1930s.

Here Sowell points up a change in the methods and targets to which intellectuals of the anointed type address themselves. Before the age of mass media, intellectuals sought to influence power-holders by offering advice on statecraft. From Daniel and Confucius to Machiavelli and Locke, an intellectual wanted to be the "voice behind the curtain," whispering advice in the ruler's ear. Once public opinion came into its own, however, an alternative form of influence offered itself—one that removed the intellectual farther from the results of his advice. This distancing from real power and real consequences has allowed modern intellectuals to be irresponsible, leading to the displays of silliness recorded by Paul Johnson. Of the 1960s anti-war movement Sowell says: "The intellectuals' effect on the course of events did not depend on their convincing or influencing the holders of power."

The sentence following that one is: "President Nixon had no regard for intellectuals." That is not quite right. While it is true that Nixon preferred to spend his leisure hours with practical men like Bob Abplanalp and "Bebe" Rebozo, he was nonetheless an intelligent and well-read man—something of a closet intellectual, in fact. It is worth recalling John O'Sullivan's very perceptive observation here: that while John F. Kennedy made a great show of patronizing the arts, it was Nixon who actually *knew how to play the piano*.

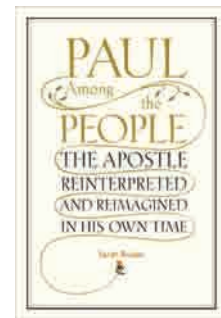
The intersection of politics with the anointed intelligentsia is an area I wish Sowell had explored in more depth. (A fourth book, perhaps?) Politics is properly the domain of Big Players: men or women skilled in persuasion and the judging of others, single-minded in pursuit of dominance, deft at hiding ruthlessness behind idealism. Intellectuals do not perform well in this hyper-worldly zone. Politicians of course have no objection to being presented as intellectuals, but the façade rarely survives close scrutiny. Sowell offers Adlai Stevenson as an illustration. "No politician in the past two generations was regarded by intellectuals as more of an intellectual," he reminds us. Stevenson's loss of the 1952 presidential election was taken by Russell Jacoby to illustrate "the endemic anti-intellectualism of American society." Harry Truman, by contrast, was looked down on as a provincial hick. Yet of the two men, Truman was much the better read. He once corrected Chief Justice Fred Vinson's Latin, Sowell tells us. Stevenson could happily go for months on end without picking up a book.

Stevenson had the intellectual demeanor, though, as does our current president; and that proved quite sufficient to make the Left intelligentsia bond to both men. Having little contact with reality, the anointed do not see deeper than the surface of things. Addicted to that "verbal virtuosity," they are easily swept off their feet by high-sounding rhetoric.

Of the Republican victory in the 1920 presidential election, Calvin Coolidge remarked that "it means the end of a period which has seemed to substitute words for things." Alas, that period soon came back with a vengeance. The substitution of words for things is now a mighty industry. Thomas Sowell is the chronicler and analyst of that industry. *Intellectuals and Society* is a fine addition to his work. I hope he will give us more books like it. **NR**

Paul, To the Life

JOHN WILSON



Paul Among the People: The Apostle Reinterpreted and Reimagined in His Own Time, by Sarah Ruden (Pantheon, 214 pp., $25)

SARAH RUDEN is a poet and translator steeped in the literature of classical Greece and Rome. Her superb translation of *The Aeneid* was published in 2008 by Yale University Press; she's also translated the Homeric Hymns, Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, and the *Satyricon* of Petronius. Her new book, *Paul Among the People*, is a sustained rebuke to lazy projections of modern sensibilities onto the ancient world. And yet Ruden is an effective apologist for Paul precisely because she well understands his cultured despisers, whose prejudices she shared not so long ago:

> The last thing I expected my Greek and Latin to be of any use for was a better understanding of Paul. The very idea, had anyone proposed it, would have annoyed me. I am a Christian, but like many, I kept Paul in a pen out back, with the louder and more sexist Old Testament prophets. Jesus was my teacher; Paul was an embarrassment.

Ruden acknowledges Paul's faults at the outset—"his bad temper, his self-righteousness, his anxiety"—but she goes on to note that "we tend not to feel inspired that such a painfully human personality was able to achieve so much in the name of God," a theme that Paul

Mr. Wilson is the editor of Books & Culture, *a bimonthly review.*

himself repeatedly underscores, emphasizing his own unworthiness. Point by point, Ruden takes up the indictment against Paul: He was a killjoy, a misogynist, and virulently homophobic to boot; he counseled deference to unjust authority, even urging slaves to obey their masters and make the best of their condition. Interpreting Paul in the context of his time, Ruden shows how the charges against the apostle can't withstand scrutiny. She does so by toggling between passages from Paul's New Testament letters and quotations from classical writers: This is the first book about Paul I have ever read that treats him alongside Homer, Aristophanes, Plautus, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Petronius, Juvenal, and Apuleius, among others—not as their literary equal (Ruden speaks teasingly of Paul's "rough art") but to convey a sense of attitudes and assumptions that were pervasive in the classical world, against which Paul's message stands out in stark contrast.

So, for example, after noting the widespread prevalence of pedophilia in Paul's day—celebrated shamelessly in stomach-turning texts—Ruden writes: "No wonder parents guarded their young sons doggedly. It was, for example, normal for a family of any standing to dedicate one slave to a son's protection, especially on the otherwise unsupervised walk to and from school: This was the pedagogue, or 'child leader.'" It was a culture in which virile manhood was the measure of all things. Routine sex with slave boys, seduction of a free-born prepubescent youth, violent rape of an adult male: All were manly acts with no opprobrium attached. Only the victims were mocked and scorned. Little wonder that Paul's revolutionary denunciation of such behavior (Romans 1:24–27) struck a chord with many of his contemporaries.

Or consider the much-abused passage from I Corinthians 7, in which Paul talks about the marriage relationship. Is this the testament of a killjoy, a hater of women? Hardly. This misreading makes sense only if we assume (falsely) that "erotic, mutually fulfilling marriage was a ready option for Paul's followers, when actually he was calling them away from either the tyranny of traditional arranged unions or the cruelty of sexual exploitation, or (in the case of married men exploiting the double standard) both." Here and in many other passages, we find a forthright rejection of the "unmitigated chauvinistic attitudes Paul would have found in Greco-Roman households, both in his boyhood Tarsus and anywhere he would have traveled in the Roman Empire later."

Paul created an honored place for celibacy as well as "putting brand-new limits on male desire" and "licensing female desire, which had been under a regime of zero tolerance" (women, you see, "were supposed to stop at nothing once they got started," but Paul regarded male and female desire as equal and reciprocal). And in so doing, Ruden observes,

> Paul changed people's experience of their emotions and their bodies in ways that inevitably changed marriage, though the new kind did not send down deep roots until the modern age and the end of the authoritarianism that began to blight the church in the generations after Paul. But real marriage is as secure a part of the Christian charter, and as different as from anything before or since, as the command to turn the other cheek.

Notice what Ruden is doing here by mentioning one of the hard sayings of Jesus ("the command to turn the other cheek") in conjunction with Paul's teaching on marriage. As a Quaker, Ruden has probably spent more time digesting this injunction from Jesus than most of her fellow Christians have—but that doesn't mean she finds it easy to follow. Indeed, in her concluding chapter, devoted to Paul's famous passage on love, Ruden asks, "How could anyone manage to follow I Corinthians 13 and not go insane?"

Fortunately she doesn't stop there. She goes on to answer her own question:

> It might be possible if love is not an ethereal, abstract standard, an impossible assignment written in lightning on a rock, but a living God. Suppose the love people need to carry out loves them and helps them, sometimes through the other people it loves, and sometimes merely as itself. Suppose it reaches out, calls, never gives up on failure. Suppose that, though human beings fail most of the time, love never does.

It would be splendid to end on this note. Here, finally, is the conviction on which Ruden's argument rests, the source of hope for all who share her faith. And yet for now, as Paul himself acknowledged, we see through a glass darkly. We muddle along, bickering, divided, as fractious as the early church described in the Acts of the Apostles and in Paul's own letters.

Interpreting Paul in the context of his time, Sarah Ruden shows how the charges against the apostle can't withstand scrutiny.

Still, in "reimagining" Paul with the aid of her intimate knowledge of classical literature, Ruden hasn't only helped us to better understand him and his message in the context of his time (as indispensable as that service is). She has also brought Paul to *us*, to *our* time. "The critic who forms his style on that of his author," Hugh Kenner once said, "not only does mimetic homage, he avails himself intelligently of the author's principal research: how to write about the pertinent world. For 18 months, wanting all the time to commence a book on Samuel Beckett . . . I delayed until I could command a style sufficiently like his for the purpose. Like, not identical; Beckett couldn't write a book on Beckett."

Nor could Paul write a book on Paul. But Sarah Ruden could and did. In an uncanny way, her book is animated by the apostle's style: his urgency, his argumentative agility, his bluntness, his exasperation, his vision of great felicity ("though he almost needed to reinvent Greek to express it"). Turning the pages, I half expected the man from Tarsus to come striding impatiently through the door. This is an act of literary sorcery: white magic, of which not even Paul himself could disapprove. **NR**

Music

A Nose, A Scot, and A Hun

JAY NORDLINGER

New York has offered some interesting musical evenings of late, as it usually does. In fact, that is one of its jobs. The Metropolitan Opera staged two little-known works by very well-known composers. Carnegie Hall had a concert featuring a new chamber piece by an amazing, iconoclastic Scotsman. Shall we go to the opera first?

For the first time, the Met staged *The Nose*, an opera by Shostakovich. The composer wrote it in 1928, when he was 22. His source is the short story by Gogol, written in the 1830s. A minor official, Kovalyov, wakes up one morning to find his nose missing. Then he encounters that nose all around town—St. Petersburg—before getting it back. This is the kind of story, and opera, known as "absurdist."

The music is tart, brash, sarcastic, nuts—you perhaps know Shostakovich in that mood. There is some lyricism, some relief, in this score, but very little. What comes at you, unrelentingly, is musical talking—"sung speech," to use a familiar phrase.

In my view, the opera soon becomes tedious and monotonous—and I say this as a deep admirer of the composer. Think of a joke or a point that goes on too long. "I got it, I got it," you want to say. *The Nose* is one of the shortest operas in the repertory, at an hour and 45 minutes. To me, it felt as long as *Les Troyens*. And did Shostakovich intend this quirky, absurdist jaunt to be performed in a grand house such as the Met?

What cannot be faulted is the performance—not the one I caught, early in the show's run. It was led by Valery Gergiev, the famed Russian conductor. He has introduced the West to a great variety of operas from his home country. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, we got Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and *Queen of Spades*, and Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* and maybe *Khovanshchina*—but not much else. Gergiev is the type to give you Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa* or Mussorgsky's *Fair at Sorochyntsi*. Or *The Nose*. And he brought to Shostakovich's opera the energy and smarts we expect from him.

In the leading role of Kovalyov was the baritone Paulo Szot, a Brazilian of Polish parentage. He is best known for what he has been doing next door to the Met, at the Lincoln Center Theater: singing Emile de Becque in *South Pacific*. In 2008, he won a Tony award for it. Of course, there is a long tradition of opera singers in this role, as those who remember Pinza and Tozzi will attest. Kovalyov is a starkly different role, and Szot measured up in that one, too.

Perhaps the star of the Met's *Nose* is the production, fashioned by William Kentridge, a South African artist. It is busy and farcical, filled with video clips, cartoons, poster art, and other devices. The production matches the score and the libretto to a T—which should be the aim of a production, though that is a very old-school notion.

Soviet authorities did not care for *The Nose*, and they were critics with bite: After its unveiling, the opera was not staged again in the Soviet Union until 1974, a year before Shostakovich's death. He wrote just one more opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (1932). That one almost cost him his life. It is hard for us, slurping our lattes, to imagine the pressures under which such as Shostakovich worked.

He was our last great composer—which is to say, our most recent composer to be great, our most recent composer to enter the pantheon. But he will not be our last, right? There will surely be another, and many others . . . right?

James MacMillan may not be a great composer, in the pantheonic sense, but he is unquestionably a composer worth knowing, and it was his String Quartet No. 3 that had a hearing in Carnegie Hall. Actually, that hearing was in Zankel Hall, which is the venue downstairs in the building known as "Carnegie Hall." There is an upstairs venue too, the Weill Recital Hall. The space we ordinarily think of as "Carnegie Hall" is, technically, the Isaac Stern Auditorium. The very stage has a name, too: the Ronald O. Perelman Stage. Pretty soon, they'll be naming each urinal. Whatever it takes to keep music afloat.

MacMillan—not to be confused with the late Canadian composer, Sir Ernest MacMillan—comes from Ayrshire. He was born in 1959. Probably his two most popular works are *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* and *Veni, Veni, Emmanuel*. The former is an orchestral "requiem" for a Scotswoman burned as a witch in the 17th century; the latter is a percussion concerto (not many of those). MacMillan is a religious person, a Catholic, and many of his compositions have religious or spiritual themes. His second string quartet is called *Why Is This Night Different?* and concerns the Passover rite. Two years ago, he wrote a St. John passion, commissioned for the 80th birthday of Sir Colin Davis, the conductor.

This is a subject for another day, but it is simply true that many of the best composers now working are religious, writing religious music. I think, just for starters, of the Estonian Arvo Pärt.

MacMillan is what is known as "controversial" and "outspoken." At the 1999 Edinburgh Festival, he gave a speech called "Scotland's Shame" in which he said that anti-Catholic bigotry was rife in his country, and covered up by the media and the rest of the establishment. More recently, he issued a long, magnificent blast against the grip that dogmatic modernists—Pierre Boulez and his crowd—have long had on the world of composition. It was published in *Standpoint* magazine, the conservative journal in Britain edited by Daniel Johnson, son of the historian Paul.

MacMillan inveighed against secularists, Marxists, ideologues, anti-Americans, and other menaces and nuisances. Here is one sample statement: "The liberal elites who control the commanding heights of culture and criticism have an instinctive anxiety about religion." Here is another one: "The modernist hierarchy is still so powerful in places such as German radio stations and German and French New Music festivals that it acts like a politburo." MacMillan's essay was a plea for open-mindedness, tolerance, and genuine art.

I know from experience that many composers and other musicians whisper opinions such as MacMillan's in the shadows. For a guy to shout them for all the world to hear is wonderfully shocking. MacMillan has given heart to many who are more circumspect.

Fortunately for those who admire his views and outspokenness, MacMillan is a good composer, too. Consider his String Quartet No. 3. (It carries no title, unlike the second one.) The work is in three movements, and these have unusual markings: "Molto rubato," "Largo," and "Patiently and painfully slow." The music is spare,

searching, intense. An agitation is ongoing, occasionally relieved by some whimsy: for example, a take on a Viennese waltz. MacMillan has his players do some strange things, such as tap on their instruments (making these players percussionists, temporarily). A lot of composers go in for tapping and the like. These moves usually sound like gimmicks; not in this quartet, however.

There is a huge amount of passion—anger, outstandingly—packed into the work. The composer grabs your attention at the outset, and holds it. Along the way, he may well unnerve you. At the end, the music dissolves spookily into nothingness.

We hear in this quartet a composer who obviously takes his craft very seriously—a disciple of music, you might say—and who has important ideas to express. You can tell real music from the fake sort, the contrived sort: This belongs to the real. I give MacMillan's quartet practically my highest accolade for a new work: I'd like to hear it again.

It was well played by the Takács Quartet, but they insisted on giving a lecture about the piece before they performed it. This will deflate the atmosphere in a hurry. Talking, lecturing, from the stage is epidemic in the music world. Performers and administrators seem to think that new music in particular needs special pleading and hand holding. When will composers rise up against this? When will audiences?

Return now to the Met—no lecturing!—and the other little-known work by a great composer: *Attila* by Verdi. The Met had never staged this one, either. Verdi composed *Attila* in 1846, when he was 32. In Verdi's operatic catalogue, this work comes just after *Alzira* (even more of a rarity than *Attila*) and just before *Macbeth* (a hit). Verdi, lucky guy, would be given many more years—he lived to 87—and go on to write such ditties as *Otello*.

Attila may be early Verdi, with a foot in the old bel canto world, but it is very much Verdian: Most of the composer's stylistic traits are in place. The story involves Attila's invasion of Italy in the 5th century. We see a kinder, gentler Hun: Attila is the Scourge of God, sure, but he is a fairly reasonable scourge. And he is dangerously clement toward his enemies. I dare say that Attila and his barbarians come off as more sympathetic than the Italians, who should be the victims.

Making his Met debut along with the opera was the conductor in the pit, Riccardo Muti. The Italian Stallion is almost 70 now; this was a late debut. When he was a relative kid (colt?), presiding over the Philadelphia Orchestra, one criticism of him was, "He makes everything sound like Verdi." There is no gainsaying his Verdi: He has long been a superb champion of this composer, and his conducting of *Attila* was masterly in every respect.

KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

Samuel Ramey, bass, bishop, and critic

The title role was taken by the Russian bass Ildar Abdrazakov, who is always an imposing presence, certainly in the physical sense. He is married to Olga Borodina, the mezzo-soprano who is one of the greatest singers of our time. Abdrazakov is all right himself. There have been more potent Attilas, vocally—Samuel Ramey, for example—but Abdrazakov conveyed the necessary. His love interest was Violeta Urmana, the Lithuanian soprano who used to be a mezzo: Sometimes they make the switch upward. The night I attended, she was suffering from a cold, but she still acquitted herself well. She has the kind of technique that can be relied on. I recall something Marilyn Horne once told students in a master class: "If you get your technique, the world's your oyster."

Scheduled for the role of Foresto, an Italian knight, was Ramón Vargas, the well-known Mexican tenor. Indisposed, he was replaced by Russell Thomas, a young American. I first heard him several seasons ago as the First Prisoner in *Fidelio*. The prisoner has just a few lines, but they are sublime ones, and Thomas made the most of them, using what I called a "melting trumpet." He was impressive as Foresto, too: not endowed with true Verdian heft, but lyrical, ringing, and pleasing.

The Attila of old, Ramey, made an appearance as Leone, the Roman bishop (otherwise known as Pope Leo the Great). The kid from Colby, Kansas, is just one year younger than his friend Muti: but he can still sing with tremendous authority. The voice may have gone wobbly, but the thinking and the overall artistry stay true.

And the production? The Met engaged Pierre Audi, the Beirut-born director who has been with the Netherlands Opera for more than two decades. I will yield the floor to my fellow critic Sam Ramey—who, amazingly, posted a comment on a website:

> It is unfortunate that for the Met's first production of *Attila* they could not do a more "conventional" production. The sets and the costumes had nothing to do with the period of the opera or the characters. I know from having been at rehearsals that the director gave the singers nothing and the set prevented them from doing anything dramatically. The production is a fiasco!

That's tellin' 'em. I am softer on the production than Ramey is, seeing some merit in the "fiasco," but his denunciation is more than valid. Very rare is the singer who will speak out against a production. They grouse in private, constantly (believe me)—but they do not risk professional repercussions. They grin and bear idiocy after idiocy. A famous bass at the end of his career is a free man indeed.

Here is a question: If *Attila* were not by a great composer, would we see and hear it? I think the answer is yes, definitely. *Attila* may not be *Otello*, *Traviata*, or *Falstaff*, but it is a substantial and compelling work. How about *The Nose*? Would we see and hear that? Probably, although the question is debatable. As for MacMillan, may he have at least as many years as Verdi and compose bravely and well. **NR**

Film

Fugitive Pleasures

ROSS DOUTHAT

THERE were many choice sentences in the disgraceful petition that circulated among the movie industry's elite following Roman Polanski's long-overdue arrest, demanding the confessed sex offender's release and pledging him the "support and friendship" of "everyone involved in international filmmaking." But the one that jarred the most, perhaps, was a passing reference to Polanski as "one of the greatest contemporary filmmakers."

Now I know what they meant: The longtime fugitive from American justice made great movies in his time, and so long as he's alive and behind a camera (or behind bars, with any luck) I suppose he counts as a "contemporary." But it's still a strange turn of phrase, given how long it's been since any of Polanski's movies deserved the appelation "great"—rather like referring to Jimmy Carter as one of our most important contemporary politicians, or Ann-Margret as one of our most beautiful contemporary actresses.

During his brief time in Hollywood, Polanski made *Rosemary's Baby* and *Chinatown*, guaranteeing his place in the cinematic pantheon. But across the 30-odd years since his arrest, trial, and flight to Europe, he's made a succession of misfires, duds, and not-that-interesting failures. (*The Pianist*, his most acclaimed post-exile work, was distant, stagey, and overpraised.) Indeed, if they really care about the cult of art so much, maybe all his rape-excusing friends should be rooting for his extradition to the United States: It will cost Polanski his liberty, but it might restore his artistic touch.

At the very least, the shadow of jail time seems to have concentrated his mind, and spurred his creativity. His latest film, *The Ghost Writer*, which slunk into American theaters this month (how would you like to be the publicist responsible for promoting it?) and which Polanski edited while under house arrest in Gstaad, turns out to be very much worth seeing. Sleek, chilly, and Hitchcockian, it's by far his finest work in years.

Ewan McGregor plays the nameless "ghost" of the title, a talented hack hired to assist Pierce Brosnan's Adam Lang, a Tony Blair–esque British prime minister, with his post-resignation memoirs. The ex-PM has repaired to a grimly modernist beach house on Martha's Vineyard (though of course Polanski had to use a European coastline as a stand-in), where the huge windows expose an expanse of sand dunes and the sea beyond—the same sea, as it happens, that claimed Lang's first ghost writer, who washed up on the beach after drinking too much and tipping himself over the side of the island-bound ferry.

The Ghost Writer*'s Pierce Brosnan and Ewan McGregor*

© ROMAN POLANSKI

His replacement is quickly enveloped by a mood that's tense, claustrophobic, and besieged. Lang stands accused of turning British citizens over to the CIA for waterboarding, and the case has been referred to the International Criminal Court; if the PM recrosses the Atlantic, he may face trial for war crimes. (Perhaps you can see why Polanski was attracted to the material.) There are protesters outside the gates of the oceanfront estate that Lang is borrowing, and a media swarm gathering in the island's inns. His inner circle is divided against itself, with his long-suffering spouse (Olivia Williams) staring daggers at his aide-de-camp and paramour (a wildly miscast Kim Cattrall, layering a bad British accent atop her man-eating *Sex and the City* persona). And as if this weren't enough intrigue for a simple scribbler to reckon with, McGregor's character gradually realizes that the last ghost writer was on his way to uncovering a dark secret from Lang's past—one that certain people might be willing to kill to keep hushed up.

It will not surprise you to learn that this secret rewrites the history of the Bush-Blair relationship along the most paranoid lines imaginable. But the sub–Gore Vidal conspiracy theorizing didn't really bother me. Unlike, say, Paul Greengrass's Iraq War thriller *Green Zone*, which I caught a few days before I saw *The Ghost Writer*, Polanski's movie doesn't pretend to be a hyper-realistic commentary on contemporary events. Lang's secret is just the MacGuffin, as Hitchcock would say, that keeps the plot's gears clicking into place. The conspiracy theory is entirely in the service of the deft plotting, rather than the other way around.

It's also in the service of a slew of fine performances. McGregor takes an underwritten, undermotivated part and infuses it with the kind of ferocious charisma that I briefly worried he'd lost during his grim slog through the *Star Wars* prequels. Brosnan, who was too handsome to be taken seriously as a younger actor, is perfect as a faded, battered lion—charming and evasive, bitter and entitled, flashing a politician's grin one moment and blowing up in rage the next.

But it's Olivia Williams, as his seemingly disillusioned wife, who walks away with the movie. Beautiful and brittle, with a cutting putdown for everyone and an alluring vulnerability underneath, she's the keeper of *The Ghost Writer*'s deepest secret, and the character who makes the implausible story seem worth taking seriously.

Williams enjoyed what seemed like her breakout role more than a decade ago, in Wes Anderson's *Rushmore*, but she hasn't done much that's worth seeing since: She's too caustic and intelligent, perhaps, for the kind of work that Hollywood usually assigns its younger actresses. With any luck, her turn in *The Ghost Writer* is a foretaste of the roles that await her in middle age. If so, then Roman Polanski will deserve credit, in what may prove his final effort as a filmmaker, for reviving what ought to be a fine career—and for doing so in a movie that reminded me of his talent, and almost (but not quite, not quite) made me forget about his crimes. **NR**

Country Life

Can I Help You?

RICHARD BROOKHISER

We have a service economy, in part, because we no longer have servants. Carriage maintenance happened in the stables, amongst the grooms. Perhaps you even retained/owned a smith and a carpenter, so that if a wheel came off, Ben or Fetka would fix it right up. (We project ourselves onto the heroes and heroines of what we read, yet our ancestors are more likely to have been Ben and Fetka than Elizabeth Bennett or Pierre Bezukhov.) Now that we drive hybrids, and every man is the impresario of his own life, we require service. Our refractory items have to be taken to a service center, or a service man or woman must come to us, in person, by phone, or as an invisible, inaudible online manifestation.

The service economy begets the non-service economy—not agriculture or manufacturing or extraction, but those who offer service, yet do not provide it. They come in a uniform with a name stitched on the shirt pocket, or in distant Bangalore they ask our names, after the recording that tells us this conversation may be recorded for quality control, yet they do not serve us. The false servers cause a seepage of time, money, and equilibrium that looms large in our lives, though I do not know how it is scored in the GDP.

I am thinking of the servicing, not primarily of my computers—since I myself have mastered the solution to half of all computer problems (unplug it, wait a minute, then plug it back in), I seldom deal with computer geeks—but of the industrial-age artifacts, modernized, that still fill our kitchens, boiler rooms, and desktops.

Our land line in the country was on the fritz. We have a land line because cellphone service is spotty, and we depend on it because our country computer can access the Internet only via dial-up (relying on 1995 technology turns you into Daniel Boone). But one fine day service became very not fine. Everyone seemed to be talking through steel pads. I could not read the Corner. The phone company sent a repairman, who examined the pole box down the driveway. His explanation was smooth, plausible, and incomprehensible. But the problem persisted. The second repairman had a different theory, and a ponytail. That is not relevant to his theory, but it made me think of eternal youth in American life. Some men (and women) can pull it off, but why should all of us try to look like the bands we liked in high school? The phone still didn't work. Third time was the charm. The fault was the contractor's, who at our request had run an underground line to the pole box, but used a line that was meant to be used only indoors, not in the dirt contending with deluges and frost heaves. (He used it, I have no doubt, because he had some lying around—a frequent recourse in the non-service economy.)

Sometimes the problem is far upstream. I have written about the broken valve on the back of my country stove, whose function is being performed by an old television antenna. I was about to say, "temporarily performed," except our friend the antenna has been at work since before Christmas. Why has a new valve been as elusive as the health-care bill? We know that stagnant inventory lowers a company's productivity (the dusty warehouse is the sign of death), so maybe no inventory at all means your business is super-productive. So, until the wretches in Hubei Province can fill another container ship with valves, I will go without.

So accustomed can we become to non-service that when service happens we feel blessed. My oven and stove top in the city were almost as old as I am. The oven had the size and appearance of a wall safe, the stove top was set in a linoleum frame. Finally they went to the great kitchen in the sky and had to be replaced. Twice during this process the gas leaked. A call to the local utility—I can see its Beaux Arts office tower out my window—brought repairmen. There was no nonsense about these guys; they were quick, knowledgeable, effective, and confident. "Don't run until you see me running," one of them assured us. "I'm not going to blow myself up." If everything were potentially lethal, would we all be efficient?

But that is not the answer to the problem of the non-service economy either, as my boiler in the country showed. This piece of equipment is only as old as the millennium, and it kept the house going the winter the temperature went down to –27. So when it failed twice last month, we were even more surprised than we were incommoded. The fuel company sent two young men; one drove from as far as Pennsylvania. Their primary tool kits were pouches, fatter than laptops but smaller than briefcases. They found the problems (a broken circulator pump, a chewed wire), fixed them, and were gone in each case in less than half an hour. They bantered politely; one texted his wife, though he said later that they were to be married this summer (these days the ceremony follows the commitment). So Americans can still put things right without the threat of death.

So accustomed can we become to non-service that when service happens we feel blessed.

There is a third, much rarer class of service, which is closer to art. My friend Doug is also an artist, and his skill at diagnosis and problem solving is creative. It was he who put the D handle on the antenna and made a valve. The artistry arises from focus and calm (if one thing does not work, try another). Given his ability to make almost anything happen, he has a degree of scorn for those who professionally make only one thing happen. Of the boiler repairmen, for instance, he said, "That's all they do."

But I had an answer for that. "David Paterson has been in politics all his life." **NR**

Happy Warrior

BY MARK STEYN

Adolescent Thinking

"I SEE some young people in the audience," said President Obama in Ohio the other day. Not *that* young. For he assured them that, under Obamacare, they'd be eligible to remain on their parents' health coverage until they were 26.

The audience applauded.

Why?

Because, as the politicians say, "it's about the future of all our children." And in the future we'll all be children. For most of human history, across all societies, a 26-year-old has been considered an adult, and not starting out but well into adulthood. Not someone who remains a dependent of his parents, but someone who might well have parental responsibilities himself. But, if we're going to remain dependents at 26, why stop there? Why not 36? An Italian court ruled recently that Signor Giancarlo Casagrande of Bergamo is obligated to pay his daughter Marina a monthly allowance of 350 euros—or approximately 500 bucks. Marina is 32, and has been working on her college thesis ("about the Holy Grail") for over eight years.

America is not yet as "progressive" as Italy, so let us take President Obama at his word—that, for the moment, the 27th birthday marks the point at which a boy becomes a man and moves out of his parents' health-insurance agency. At what point then does an adult reenter dependency?

MICHELLE PEDONE/GETTY

Well, in Greece, a woman working in a "hazardous" job can retire with a full government pension at 50. "Hazardous" used to mean bomb disposal and mining. But, as is the way of government entitlements, the category growed like Topsy. Five hundred and eighty professions now qualify as "hazardous," among them hairdressing. "I use a hundred different chemicals every day—dyes, ammonia, you name it," 28-year-old Vasia Veremi told the *New York Times*. "You think there's no risk in that?" Not to mention all those scissors. TV and radio hosts can retire at 50 because they use microphones, which could increase their exposure to bacteria. Is column-writing also "hazardous"? It used to be, what with the significant risk of paper cuts. Takes its toll over the years.

So working life is now an ever-shrinking window of opportunity between adolescence and retirement. These two happy conditions are the contribution of the advanced social-democratic state to the traditional life cycle. In the old days, you were a child until 13 or so. Then you worked. Then you died. And that's it. Now the interludes between childhood and adulthood and between adulthood and death consume more time than the main acts.

If adolescence ends somewhere between 27 and 32 in advanced Western nations, when does it begin? We turn for guidance to the *Daily Mail* in London: "Girls as young as 11 are to be offered pregnancy tests at school. They will also have access to contraception, the morning-after pill and advice on sexually transmitted infections."

Whatever it takes to get you through recess. So a sixth-grader can be taught oral sex—"outercourse," as British teachers call it—and given the abortion-helpline number without parental consent. Because, as everyone knows, our bodies "mature" earlier, so it would be unreasonable not to expect our grade-schoolers to be rogering anything that moves, and the most we can hope to do is ensure there's a government-funded condom dispenser nearby. But, evidently, our minds mature later and later, pushing into what less evolved societies regarded as early middle age, so it would be unreasonable to expect people who've been fully expert in "sexually transmitted infections" for the best part of two decades to assume responsibility for their broader health-care arrangements.

And if retirement begins at 50, when does it end? Life expectancy in most advanced nations is nudging 80. When Bismarck introduced the old-age pension in 1889, you had to be 70 to get it at a time when life expectancy was 45. We haven't precisely inverted that equation, but we're getting there. So the "death panel" has a certain rationale. The Dutch, pioneers in medically assisted suicide, are now debating whether to let non-medical personnel assist in dispatching people who don't have anything wrong with them: If you've reached the age of 70 and "consider your life complete," well, don't let us stop you.

The economic impact of an aging populace has been well aired, even if not much has been done about it. But European politicians are frantically trying to wean their citizens off unsustainably early retirement on lavish public pensions that, in Greece and elsewhere, will swallow the state if not rolled back. The impact of an ever-extended adolescence is also economic—and demographic: The longer you stay in school, the longer you delay forming a family, and the fewer children you'll have to pay taxes to fund your third-of-a-century-long "retirement." When American politicians promise airily a future in which every child can go to college, they presumably haven't thought through all the ramifications.

Yet the impact of an endlessly deferred adulthood is, I'd say, primarily psychological. What kind of adults emerge from the two-decade cocoon of modern adolescence? Even as the Western world atrophies, not merely its pop culture but its entire societal aesthetic seems mired in arrested development. In *Men to Boys: The Making of Modern Immaturity*, Gary Cross asks simply: "Where have all the men gone?" Like George Will, Victor Davis Hanson, and others who've posed that question, Professor Cross is no doubt aware that he sounds old and square. But in a land of middle-aged teenagers somebody has to be. NR

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With gold at over $1200 an oz., there are several ways to revalue the dollar and make it hard money once again, a 100% gold-backed dollar. Congress must regain the confidence of the dollar by ending the habitual and reckless devaluation of the dollar. There is about $1.6 trillion in paper money that would be backed by about 260,000,000 million ounces of gold held by the Federal Reserve. Then the real price of gold or, more accurately, the value of the dollar would be 1/6,153 of an ounce of gold. **In other words, the price of gold would be $6,153 per ounce. This is simple math. Call now-- you are running out of time.**

What we need to understand is the lessons of the last 4,500 years of governments acting irresponsibly when given control of a fiat currency with which they could create and print as much money as they wished. As is the fundamental, basic and unavoidable consequences we now face. **We now have 15% real inflation which will lead to chaos, misery, starvation and revolution. History is the map of the future.**

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*Source: *The Economic Impacts of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry on the U.S. Economy: Employment, Labor Income and Value Added*, PricewaterhouseCoopers, September 2009 (Sponsored by API)