the weekly
Standard

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DICTIONARY WARS

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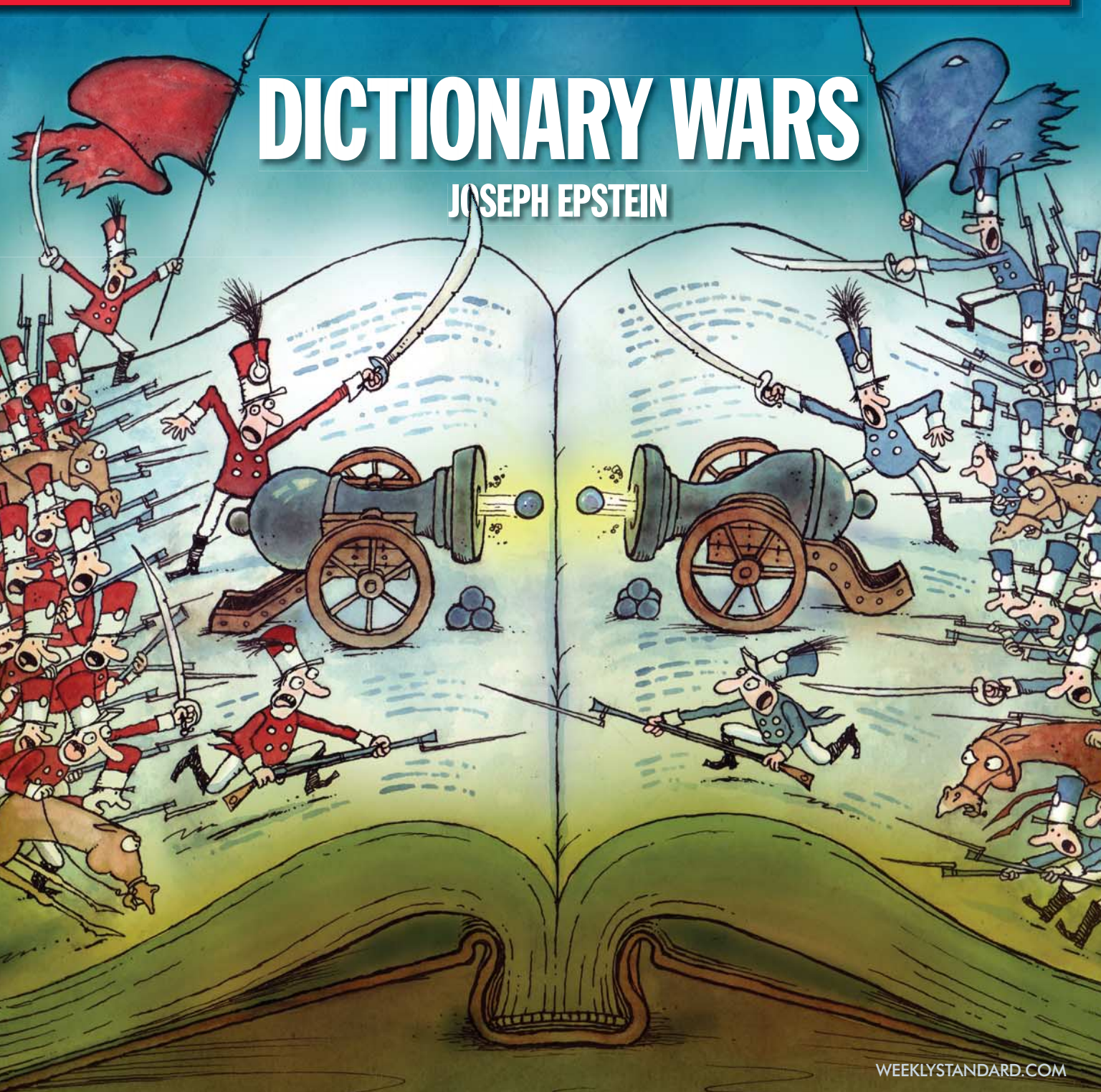

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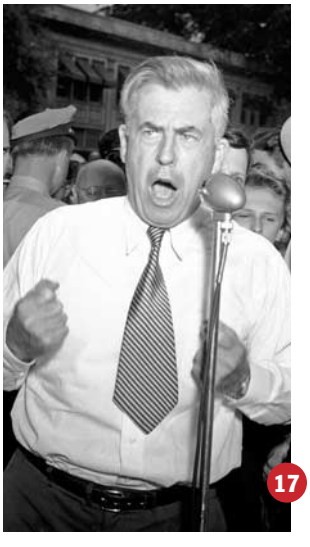

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Phantom Maecenas

The Scrapbook notes, with some amusement, that George Lucas, creator of the *Star Wars* franchise, sold his lucrative Lucasfilm enterprise last week to the Disney Company, which announced in turn that it intends to revive and extend the *Star Wars* saga. We leave it to the experts to judge whether this cinematic/economic event is a cultural landmark, or a sign that the Disney empire (like Lucasfilm) has finally run out of fresh ideas.

What attracted our attention was Lucas's announcement that he will devote a substantial portion of his $4 billion windfall to philanthropy, for which he is being showered with praise, and which is described by Lucas in the usual string of phrases that often accompanies such gestures:

> I am dedicating the majority of my wealth to improve education. It is the key to the survival of the human race. We have to plan for our collective future—and the first step begins with the social, emotional, and intellectual tools we provide to our children. As humans, our greatest tool for survival is our ability to think and adapt—as educators, storytellers, and communicators our responsibility is to continue to do so.

To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, it would take a heart of stone to read George Lucas's pronouncement without laughing. Not that The Scrapbook is cynical, to be sure. Far be it from us to imagine how Lucas's accountants might have explained to him the advantages of creating this colossus of virtue before the end of the year, when Barack Obama's tax hikes kick in.

No, from The Scrapbook's standpoint, what strikes us is the sheer nonsense and futility of Lucas's vision. Four billion dollars is a lot of money to most Weekly Standard readers—perhaps even to George Lucas—but the annual budget of the U.S. Department of Education, created by Jimmy Carter in 1979, is approximately $68 billion. Given the size of federal (not state and local) expenditures in the field, and the current condition of public education in America, it is difficult to imagine what the addition of 1/17th of the annual federal education budget—stretched out over who-knows-how-many years by the Lucas foundation—can hope to accomplish. Even when "the survival of the human race" depends on it.

Indeed, The Scrapbook is reminded of another philanthropist's equally famous bequest. In 1993, the press baron (and longtime Republican contributor) Walter Annenberg announced that he would donate $500 million of his private fortune to reform public education, described in the press at the time as the "largest education gift in the nation's history." And like George Lucas, Walter Annenberg was extolled—"It could not have come at a better time," said President Bill Clinton—for his generosity and selfless vision.

A half-billion bucks was a lot of money two decades ago, and Annenberg's gift was divided among three "education reform" think tanks: the New American Schools Development Corporation, the Education Commission of the States, and (our personal favorite) the National Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Quick! Here's a quiz for Scrapbook readers: Can anyone identify anything—anything at all—that came of Annenberg's bequest, and contributed to the present splendid condition of American public education? Anything, that is, beyond pronouncements similar to Lucas's inspiring prose—"As humans, our greatest tool for survival is our ability to think and adapt . . . "—and some very comfortable and congenial conferences (with dinner and speeches) at Brown's renamed Annenberg Institute for School Reform.

No? Neither could we. ♦

Profiles in Courage?

In case you were wondering who the "Brave Thinkers" of 2012 are, the *Atlantic* has helpfully compiled a list of 21 people who are "risking their reputations, fortunes, and lives in the pursuit of big ideas." There are a few people on the list worthy of commendation, such as Chinese human rights activist Chen Guangcheng, who had to flee his native land after defending women forced to undergo abortions and sterilization procedures by their Communist government. But most of the people listed have risked little or nothing beyond terminal boredom at one of the *Atlantic*'s "Ideas" festivals.

Billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg is a "champion of big ideas" only if you think that the sale of large soft drinks is the preeminent public health issue of our era. Director and actress Lena Dunham has really put her reputation on the line with a critically acclaimed HBO show and her much-noted YouTube video urging girls to lose their voting virginity to that rake Obama. Then there's the token conservative on the list: Supreme Court Justice John Roberts, whose bravery begins and ends with upholding the president's health care law on a technicality. All he risked was a chilly reception at the next Federalist Society confab.

However, the *Atlantic*'s agenda runs a bit deeper than politics. Perhaps the most curious entry on the list is "American nuns." It seems that "this year, doctrinal disputes over issues such as abortion and gay marriage finally came to a head. And the nuns haven't exactly been timid." It's true that some liberal orders of nuns have

been on a publicity tour thumbing their nose at the Vatican, with their expenses covered by George Soros, culminating in a "much-lauded speech at the Democratic National Convention," where delegates ignited controversy by arguing about whether to take "God" out of the party platform and embracing abortion on demand. Courage, sisters! It's worth noting that liberal orders of nuns are dwindling in membership and their political crusade hasn't exactly been embraced by mainstream Catholics. Meanwhile, the ranks of nuns who support the Vatican and the bishops' teachings on the sanctity of life are vibrant and growing.

Also on the list is John DeGioia, president of Georgetown University, for "court[ing] controversy in defending views running counter to the [Catholic] church." And let's not forget Reverend Oliver White of Grace Community United Church of Christ. White's church was foreclosed on when his predominantly black congregants up and left after he started supporting gay marriage. Are we sensing a trend?

The inclusion of imprisoned feminist Russian punk band Pussy Riot also had us scratching our heads. The Scrapbook will be the first to stand and say that locking someone up for public expression is a monstrous human rights violation. However, here's how the *Atlantic* justified their inclusion:

> Indeed, the three arrested women—then 22, 23, and 29 years old—turned out to be more articulate than their lawyers, better educated than their critics, and more dignified than anyone who has spoken up in Russia since the dissident Nobel Laureate Andrei Sakharov. All that, and a well-designed peaceful protest, and where did they end up? In jail, where conditions could constitute torture. As their punk prayer went, "Sh-t, sh-t, holy sh-t / Sh-t, sh-t, holy sh-t."

We're all for a thumb in Vladimir Putin's eye, but contrary to the *Atlantic*'s estimation, these were not Russia's most "dignified" dissidents since Sakharov. Then again, this feature is full of curious adjectives. It's almost like the editors of the *Atlantic* wrote "brave" when the word they were looking for was "liberal." ♦

Speed Demons

A few issues back, The Scrapbook noted that the proliferation of traffic cameras in this country is getting out of hand. Local municipalities are increasingly turning to speed cameras as a source of revenue, and nowhere is the plague further advanced than in the nation's capital.

Last year, Washington, D.C., generated $55 million in revenue from traffic cameras. But there are more reasons than the eye-popping dollar amounts to believe that Mayor Vincent Gray—still under federal investigation for his corrupt campaign—is not being honest when he says the purpose of the cameras is to "protect people."

The $55 million is no surprise to anyone who has received a traffic camera ticket in D.C. The fines at the moment are $75 for exceeding the speed limit at all, $125 for exceeding it by more than 10 miles per hour, and $250 should you be traveling in excess of 20 miles per hour over the limit. Public outcry is such that D.C. council member Tommy Wells convened a task force, which recently recommended dropping the fines to just $50. This, as you might imagine, is a very popular idea with constituents.

Sensing he's on the losing end of this argument, Gray is proposing to lower the fines more modestly to $50 and $100, down from $75 and $125. (In excess of 20 miles per hour, the fine will actually go up to $300.) But Gray is also proposing that $3.5 million of speed camera revenue be used to hire 100 more police officers. Anyone opposing Gray's proposal will thus be disingenuously labeled as someone opposed to public safety. Not surprisingly, D.C.'s chief of police Cathy Lanier is on board with Gray's proposal—in fact, she says with fines of $50 or less, speed cameras would be "absolutely no deterrent."

D.C.'s chief of police makes in excess of $250,000 a year, so we don't expect her to appreciate the deterrent effect as perceived by the nearly one in five District of Columbia residents at or below the poverty level. By way of comparison, speed camera tickets in Montgomery County, Maryland—adjacent to Washington, D.C.—are capped at $40, and the local government there conducted a study concluding that this was an effective deterrent. Wells's task force reached the same conclusion. The *Washington City Paper*'s local reporter Alan Suderman was much more to the point. "Also backing up those findings: common sense," he wrote.

And just so we're crystal clear what this is really about, Gray had his budget director point out at a news conference that lowering the traffic camera fines would leave the city budget $30 million short. Given D.C.'s perennial corruption and bloated city government, The Scrapbook figures that, with a red pen and a 10-minute wait for the Metro, any honest member of the D.C. government would have no problem filling that fiscal hole. But that's not what this is about. Welcome to the endgame for Blue State America—monitoring your every move so as to extract as much money from you as possible. ♦

Election News Online

This issue of The Weekly Standard went to press the Friday before Election Day. But you don't have to wait a whole week for our analysis of the election results. Read us all this week online. Visit weeklystandard.com early and often! ♦

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Chains of Love

Hurricane Sandy showed Vermont some mercy, where Irene did not. The storm passed to the west, and we got a lot of rain and enough wind to knock out power to a few thousand people, including, to my absolute nonastonishment . . . me. The pine trees in our neighborhood fall over in a faint if the weatherman so much as mentions strong winds.

A couple of hours before the storm reached peak strength and before we lost power, my wife left for a business appointment, then shortly returned and reported that there was a tree down, blocking the road. She was about to call and cancel, but I said, "Not so fast there."

My pre-storm checklist includes—along with stocking up on double-A's and filling bathtubs—making sure there is some 50:1 premix (i.e., fuel) in the toolshed and that the chain saw will start. I was ready for that tree and delighted to leave my work and attend to it. It feels good to handle your own problems and *not* call (and pay) some expert or specialist for help. For me, the pleasure increases dramatically when I can use a chain saw to fix the problem.

I have owned—still own—many other tools powered by a two-cycle engine. Lawnmowers, leaf blowers, weed whackers, snow blowers, and so on. They give good service so long as I play by the rules and don't force-feed them ethanol. But I don't love my snow blower, and I don't know anyone who does.

But the chain saw . . . now, that is a different thing. I view the chain saw as the finest, most sublime use to which the two-stroke engine has ever been put. I suspect that a lot of other modern housebroken males share the feeling. It is our version of what gentlemen of another age felt for their prized edged weapons or dueling pistols.

I know men who depend on chain saws for their livelihoods, and I'm sure they don't feel this way. Which gets at part of the reason why those of us with soft hands do. When using a chain saw to buck up a few logs for firewood, you can easily imagine yourself as a lumberjack. And, *pace* Monty Python, what man didn't always want to be a lumberjack?

TOM LABAFF

But you don't want to get too dreamy when you are running a chain saw. It is a powerful and dangerous tool. Even some professionals I know have been so careless as to nick themselves, usually in the leg, with a chain that is still turning fast enough to do damage even though the engine is idling. You can buy chaps that are made of some kind of tough composite that will crab a chain and stop it. But hardly anyone wears them.

The more serious injuries result from what is known as "kickback," which is what it sounds like. The nose of the chain gets into something that won't yield quickly, and the saw comes back at the operator, hard and fast. If it catches you in the neck, it can open an artery. The injuries that are less severe and more survivable are still pretty awful. I remember making small talk with an emergency room doctor who was sewing me up after a different sort of injury and asking him if he had repaired any chain saw wounds.

"The worst," he said. "Chews up the flesh, and all that oil in the wound . . . just the worst."

Modern saws have all been engineered to reduce the danger of kickback. But it can still happen if you get careless. One of the precautions against kickback is to keep your chain saw sharp. The old rule about dull knives cutting more people than sharp ones applies. And the ability to sharpen a chain saw is what amateurs rank themselves by. If you have to take yours in to the place where you bought it and get someone there to do the job, then you are still a suburbanite.

The next stage involves kits with tools that will line your file up at just the right angle. These tools work, but using them makes sharpening the saw time-consuming and laborious. The analogy would be to a 20-handicap golfer.

You have reached elite status when you can sit on the machine's power head and eyeball the angle. Or, better, with the nose of the saw, cut a vertical slot through a small tree, at chest level, and let the saw hang there while you do your sharpening, just like a real lumberjack.

The satisfactions of a saw you have kept sharp and running smoothly are undeniable. You feel like you are handy with machinery, capable with dangerous tools, and prepared for an emergency. You can also be a hero with the ladies. My wife made her appointment with time to spare.

So what, as they say, is not to love?

Geoffrey Norman

the weekly Standard

Mysteries of Benghazi

Tuesday, November 6, is an important date. Yes, there's an election. By the time most WEEKLY STANDARD subscribers read this, we'll know whether the country has elected a new president or chosen to keep the one we've had for the last four years.

But November 6 also marks the eight-week anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya. Regardless of which candidate wins, the American people deserve answers to the many unanswered questions about the attack—and the events that preceded and followed it. The Benghazi debacle is a drama in three parts: the lack of security before the attacks, the flaccid response during the attacks, and the misleading narrative after the attacks. There are unanswered questions about each part. Here are some of the most important.

Where was the cavalry?

NEWSCOM

PART ONE

Before the attack, a wide array of U.S. officials provided stark warnings about inadequate security in Benghazi. They include Eric Nordstrom, former regional security officer for the State Department in Libya; Lt. Col. Andrew Wood, a site security commander in Libya from February to August 2012; the unknown author of letters dated the day of the attack and found on the consulate floor; and, of course, the late Ambassador Christopher Stevens himself. Why didn't they receive the assistance they requested?

During the vice presidential debate, Joe Biden claimed: "We weren't told they wanted more security there." National Security Council spokesman Tommy Vietor later clarified that Biden was speaking "for himself and the president." In fact, an August 16 State Department cable summarizing an emergency meeting at the U.S. mission in Benghazi was circulated to White House and NSC officials just three weeks before the attack. It reported that the regional security officer "expressed concerns with the ability to defend Post in the event of a coordinated attack due to limited manpower, security measures, weapons capabilities, host nation support and the overall size of the compound." Does the administration maintain that no one at the White House or NSC was aware of these urgent requests?

Several officials with responsibility for security in Benghazi spoke of a "normalization" directive that included a conscious effort to reduce the security posture at the consulate. Who proposed "normalization" and who issued the directive to reduce security?

PART TWO

Citing sources on the ground in Benghazi, Fox News reported that Tyrone Woods was "painting" mortar sites with a laser from his rooftop position shortly before he was killed. A subsequent CIA timeline provided to *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius contradicts this, saying that "the rooftop defenders never 'laser the mortars,' as has been reported." Can the CIA make this claim with certainty? If Woods was painting the mortar sites as eyewitnesses claim, presumably at considerable personal risk, why was he doing so? Did he have reason to believe that reinforcements were coming?

President Obama says that he gave "three very clear directives." They were: "Number one, make sure that we are securing our personnel and doing whatever we need to. Number two, we're going to investigate exactly what happened so that it doesn't happen again. Number three, find out who did this so we can bring them to justice." To whom was the first of those directives transmitted and when?

A CIA statement claims that no one in the CIA chain of command denied requests for help. A statement from NSC spokesman Tommy Vietor claims no one at the White House denied requests for assistance. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said that the military did not have "real-time information" to act on. Did military officials not communicate with top State Department officials such as Charlene Lamb, who testified under oath that she and others were following the attack in real time from their post at the State Department? Was President Obama aware of requests for assistance from the men under attack in Benghazi? Panetta also said: "You don't deploy forces into harm's way without

knowing what's going on." Does this statement imply that there were requests for help from the field that senior defense officials judged it imprudent to act on? In any case, isn't going into harm's way without complete information precisely the job of our most highly trained military personnel? Does the president agree with Panetta? Doesn't announcing that the U.S. military needs perfect intelligence before engaging an enemy encourage similar attacks in the future?

PART THREE

State Department officials in Washington followed the attacks as they happened and knew instantly, in the words of Undersecretary of State Patrick Kennedy, that the assault in Benghazi was "an unprecedented attack by dozens of heavily armed men." A CIA timeline provided to reporters late last week notes that at 1:15 A.M. on the night of the attack, less than five hours after it began, CIA officials attempting to rescue Ambassador Stevens reported that terrorists from Ansar al Sharia had surrounded the hospital in Benghazi. On September 12, the day after the attack, the CIA station chief in Libya cabled Washington to report that the assault had been a terrorist attack. By September 13, the FBI was interviewing CIA officials who were on the ground in Benghazi, several of whom described a sophisticated terrorist attack on the compound.

Yet when CIA director David Petraeus briefed members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence on September 14, he suggested that the attack was triggered by a YouTube video. Two days later, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice made the same claim about the video on political talk shows. Two days after that, President Obama blamed the video in an interview with David Letterman. And a week after that, the president cited the video six times in his speech at the U.N. General Assembly. Why all the misleading information from senior administration officials?

While President Obama and other administration officials misleadingly tied the attack in Benghazi to an anti-Islam film, they have been reluctant to discuss al Qaeda's very real ties to the assault. We know that Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), a terrorist organization that has sworn loyalty to al Qaeda's senior leadership, was involved. So was Ansar al Sharia, which has al Qaeda ties. CNN has reported that members of Al Qaeda in Iraq, another terrorist organization that has sworn loyalty to Ayman al Zawahiri, are suspected of taking part in the attack. And then there is a terrorist named Mohammed Jamal, an Egyptian with longstanding ties to Zawahiri, whose fighters, according to multiple reports, assaulted the compound. Instead of a "spontaneous" attack that grew out of a protest, the assault on the U.S. consulate was carried out by a consortium of al Qaeda allies. To date, the administration has not identified the terrorists responsible for killing four Americans. When will the administration present the American people with an accurate description of the terrorists responsible, including their al Qaeda ties?

Whether Barack Obama remains president or not, he owes the American people a full accounting of the Benghazi fiasco.

—Stephen F. Hayes

FEMA—Too Big to Succeed

As people in New York were suffering and hospitals were being evacuated, the *New York Times* editorial page seized the occasion to score political points: "Disaster coordination is one of the most vital functions of 'big government,' which is why Mitt Romney wants to eliminate it." This was dishonest partisan spin. In a GOP primary debate last year, Romney had been asked by CNN's John King about the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and whether the "states should take on more of this role." Romney replied, "Every time you have an occasion to take something from the federal government and send it back to the states—that's the right direction."

The idea that anyone on the political spectrum this side of a doctrinaire libertarian believes the federal government has no role in coordinating disaster relief is a fantasy of the *Times*. Conservatives believe in a strong but limited central government, not no federal government. If there's anything that would pass a conservative litmus test for the legitimate exercise of federal power, coordinating the response to a super-storm that wreaks havoc across the Eastern seaboard has to be near the top of the list.

As for the contention that some of FEMA's responsibilities should be returned to the states, anyone who believes this to be a radical notion knows nothing about the history of FEMA. Created in 1979, FEMA was originally intended to help citizens in the event of a nuclear attack. In 1988, the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act clarified that federal emergency declarations—and the FEMA money accompanying such requests—should be based on a finding that events are "of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments." Since then, Congress has never given specific guidance for what qualifies as a federal emergency.

For all the Bill Clinton nostalgia this election season, discussing FEMA is a sobering reminder that one of his real gifts was convincing people he was a good president rather than being one. As chronicled in *Feeling Your Pain*, James Bovard's book on federal bureaucracy in the Clinton years, the former president exploited FEMA's lack of a clear mis-

sion to transform the agency into a vehicle for patronage and pork. Clinton ballooned the agency to the point where it had 10 times as many political appointees as comparable federal agencies. (Clinton even appointed former Arkansas state trooper Raymond "Buddy" Young southwest regional FEMA director; Young would later be deposed in the Paula Jones lawsuit.) By the end of his presidency, Clinton was declaring a federal disaster somewhere in the country every week on average. Naturally, this resulted in defining disaster relief down. Following a California earthquake in 1994, FEMA sent out 47,000 unsolicited checks—a total of $142 million—to homeowners for no other reason than they lived in supposedly affected ZIP codes.

New York, post-Sandy

Bush and Obama did little if anything to rein in FEMA. Last year, over 200 disaster declarations were made. Some FEMA emergencies, such as the response to Hurricane Sandy, are clearly warranted, but the vast majority are pork dressed up as compassion. States and municipalities have powerful incentives to beg for FEMA money at every opportunity—they let Uncle Sam pick up the tab and profit off of eventual insurance settlements. FEMA now routinely pays for costs associated with snow removal, even in places such as upstate New York, where these "disasters" are anticipated every winter. If you want a really pungent metaphor for how far afield the agency has strayed, President George W. Bush in early 2009 had his successor's inauguration declared an emergency, thereby allowing FEMA funds to help cover the costs of the festivities to local governments. You might say he presciently anticipated the catastrophe Barack Obama's presidency would become.

Despite the media's effort to make FEMA's budget a sacred cow, reining in the agency is long overdue. Should Romney become president, the backbone he displayed in standing by his FEMA comments last week bodes well for his commitment to restoring fiscal sanity. Should Romney lose, last week's unwarranted defense of FEMA suggests the media will continue to aid and abet President Obama's ongoing fiscal calamity by refusing to have an honest debate about the size and scope of the federal government.

—Mark Hemingway

Too Charitable

North Korea's favorite philanthropists.

BY ETHAN EPSTEIN

DAVE MALAN

North Koreans have been starving for nearly two decades. The worst period of famine, from 1994 to 1998, killed some three and a half million people, and chronic food shortages have persisted since then, with untold lives lost. Death tolls can understate human suffering, too: The millions who manage to survive chronic hunger still bear scars for life. One North Korean defector that I interviewed in Seoul several years ago, who had been a child in the mid-1990s, stood no taller than five feet—though judging by the size of his hands and his head, he should have been a much bigger man.

What to do about this catastrophe has vexed governments and NGOs since the onset of the famine. One thing is clear: Simply giving food to North Korea doesn't work. The Kim regime controls the country's food supply and dispenses it as it sees fit, feeding favored classes (the military, Pyongyang residents), while leaving others (particularly inhabitants of the country's mountainous northeast, which it perceives as hostile) to starve. Perversely, food aid can thus serve to strengthen the regime, as it helps turn food into a weapon of social control. And all of this is further complicated by the fact that while the North Korean government is quick to tell the world that its population is hungry and to demand foreign aid, somehow the military, the network of gulags, and the nuclear weapons program always remain fully funded.

For these reasons, when a conservative party takes control of the government in Washington or Seoul, you'll often see it limiting food aid programs. The vast majority of private aid agencies and NGOs also stay away from North Korea, determining that their hard work there will be ineffectual at best, and at worst, actively helpful to an evil regime.

With one prominent exception, that is: Mercy Corps, a well-regarded Portland, Oregon-based aid agency, has the closest relationship with the North Korean government this side of Beijing.

Founded in 1979 as the Save the Refugees Fund, Mercy Corps focuses, in its own words, on "disaster response, sustainable economic development, health services, and emergency and natural disaster relief." Since its modest start as a charity devoted to helping refugees fleeing the Cambodian killing fields, it has grown into a major NGO with an annual budget surpassing $250 million. Mercy Corps operates in a host of troubled countries, including Afghanistan, Haiti, and Mali. In many respects, the organization's integrity is unimpeachable: Charity Navigator gives it four stars out of four, recognizing Mercy Corps's low overhead and high transparency.

Mercy Corps has been active in North Korea since 1996, when, according to David Austin, the group's program director for the country, "a North Korean diplomat to the U.N. began reaching out to aid agencies requesting help with agricultural production, as there was a famine occurring in the country." Since then, Mercy Corps has

Ethan Epstein is an editorial assistant at The Weekly Standard.

been deeply involved in North Korea, sending regular shipments of food, medicine, and plants. Earlier this year, it dispatched a large delivery of antibiotics and oral rehydration salts.

In a phone interview with The Weekly Standard, Austin described how Mercy Corps delivers its aid to North Korea. Actually, in point of fact, Austin described how Mercy Corps *doesn't* deliver its aid to North Korea: Along with four smaller organizations it leads, it simply ships the goods to a port in the country, where the Korean American Private Exchange Society, an arm of the North Korean foreign ministry, takes delivery and distributes them. Mercy Corps workers are not involved in the distribution. Instead, they are allowed periodic visits to the country to monitor the dispersal and use of the donated goods. But the itinerary is set long before the workers arrive in the country, with no deviations allowed. What's more, the Mercy Corps workers are chaperoned by members of the North Korean foreign ministry and other officials the entire time they are in the country.

Austin concedes that North Korea is the only country in which Mercy Corps is not allowed to implement its own aid programs—only in North Korea does it simply trust the local regime to do what it says it will do. In every other country that it operates in, no matter how troubled—from Pakistan to Niger, from Burma to Colombia—Mercy Corps has permanent employees who oversee its aid programs. But not in North Korea—the regime won't allow it. With the exception of infrequent, closely monitored visits, the Kim government has carte blanche to do what it sees fit with the aid. When asked about this stunning lack of oversight, Austin avers, "The [North Korean] government doesn't take food away, to the best of our knowledge," before quickly adding, "there's no evidence of that."

But Mercy Corps doesn't stop at sending aid. It also periodically invites officials from the North Korean foreign ministry to the United States for junkets, shepherding them to Oregon State University, various national forests, and other sites. One such visit, of four North Korean officials, happened in March 2009, just as North Korea had outraged our allies in Seoul by announcing that it was going to test a long-range missile. A 2007 junket saw North Korean officials attending a Portland Trail Blazers game and touring Nike's headquarters. According to Austin, these junkets are a "cultural courtesy," extended to North Koreans because "we send Americans there." In an interview posted on Mercy Corps's website, Austin said that these tours show North Korean officials that "there are many similarities between our country and theirs."

Mercy Corps is also not above delving into the muck of politics and lobbying—oftentimes, in ways that actively undermine American and South Korean foreign policy. Earlier this year, for example, when President Obama (to his credit) suspended food aid in response to yet another North Korean long-range missile test, who was there to criticize the decision in the international media but the aforementioned David Austin? (In our phone interview, Austin also lamented U.S. sanctions on North Korea.) Last fall, while South Korean president Lee Myung-bak was making a state visit to Washington, an official for Mercy Corps urged the Obama administration to expedite aid shipments, which had been delayed on account of another North Korean provocation. Acting almost like a spokesman for the regime, the Mercy Corps official told Reuters, "All signs that we have gotten from the North Korean side are that they are willing to negotiate that if something is on the table." So close is the Kim government to Mercy Corps that in 2005, the regime gave its "Friendship medal" to the cofounder of Mercy Corps—the only time an American citizen has been awarded that particular "honor." (Han Songryol, who for years did Kim Jong Il's nuclear bidding at the U.N. as North Korea's ambassador to Turtle Bay, traveled to Oregon to bestow the award, which was bestowed posthumously.)

The question of whether to negotiate with a barbaric regime in order to deliver aid is one that NGOs have struggled with from Burma to Ethiopia to Sudan. There's often a compelling case for striking a devil's bargain with a grotesque government, so long as it actually helps the country's citizens.

But the thing about making a deal with the devil is that the devil has to hold up his end of the agreement. That doesn't happen in North Korea. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, Doctors without Borders), a venerable NGO that prides itself on delivering aid regardless of political considerations, pulled out of North Korea more than a decade ago. As Fiona Terry, a relief worker then employed with the organization, said at the time, "[MSF] endeavoured to . . . create the minimum conditions necessary to work decently in North Korea, but was unsuccessful." She explained:

> The teams realized that the government fabricated whatever they wanted aid workers to see: malnourished children in nurseries when more food aid was desired, and well-fed children when donors needed reassurance that food aid was doing good. Refugee testimonies corroborate this concern: Some report having carried food from military storage facilities to nurseries before a U.N. visit, and others speak of being mobilized to dig up areas to exacerbate flood damage in preparation for a U.N. inspection. When driving through some towns MSF personnel saw filthy, malnourished children dressed in rags, scavenging for grains along the railway track. But when asked about these children and the possibility of assisting them, the authorities denied that they even existed. MSF began to understand that the North Korean government categorizes its population according to perceived loyalty and usefulness to the regime, and those deemed "hostile" or useless were expendable. In fact, in 1996, Kim Jong-il publicly declared that only 30 percent of the population needed to survive to reconstruct a victorious society. With no possibility of directing humanitarian assistance to those most in need, MSF withdrew from North Korea.

Mercy Corps would do well to make the same deliberation and consider who—and what—its aid is really serving. ♦

Goodbye and Good Riddance . . .

To the 2012 campaign.

BY FRED BARNES

Aside from who won or lost, there was a lot not to like in the 2012 campaign. I say this as one who has followed campaigns from the local to the presidential level since I was a teenager and mostly enjoyed every moment of it. But not this year.

True, the presidential race gave us something to be thankful for: a clear choice. One candidate wanted more government, higher tax rates, as much redistribution of wealth as feasible, and a bigger welfare state. The other favored less government, lower tax rates, no increase in redistribution, and what once was called a conservative welfare state.

Booooooooooooo

Some would consider this poisonous polarization. In truth, it's where politics ought to be, with two parties on opposite sides ideologically. The disappearance of liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats was long overdue. They only confused voters about what a candidate might do once elected. Now, more often than not, the voters know what to expect, thus who to vote for.

What was so bad this year? Let's start with polls. (I'll leave the issue of media bias to others.) That there were too many polls and that they often contradicted each other are beyond dispute. If voters were mystified about the state of a particular race—that is, who was ahead and by how much—they can be forgiven. I was frequently mystified.

Most voters are unlikely to dig into how a poll's questions were phrased or what its sample of respondents looked like. What they notice are the topline numbers, which may be the least revealing finding in a survey. And not all polls are equal. My advice is to look to polling organizations with good track records, like Gallup, Hart-McInturff, and Rasmussen, and newer outfits such as Public Policy Polling (PPP) and Resurgent Republic.

Polls have increasingly had a corrupting effect on political coverage. Reporters start with a poll, work backwards from it, and operate on the assumption a candidate who's trailing must be doing something terribly wrong. Yet often they aren't, and later reporters are embarrassed as that very candidate surges to victory.

Next, nationally televised debates. There were more than 20 in the yearlong campaign for the GOP presidential nomination. They gave peripheral candidates with minimal prospects an incentive to announce for president, if only to get on TV before dropping out to run for reelection to whatever office they already held. Or encouraged them to run purely for vanity reasons. The Republican debates were too crowded with eight candidates. But they had one lasting impact: They taught Mitt Romney to be a skillful debater.

The four general election debates also taught a lesson. The two with single moderators who interrupted the candidates infrequently were scintillating. The other two with officious and intrusive moderators were irritating. In 2016, moderators are likely to be noninterventionist.

Then there were the fact checkers. THE WEEKLY STANDARD's Mark Hemingway is an expert on fact checking by the media, and he's no fan. The troubles with this genre of journalism are many. Partisan bias sometimes intrudes. Checkers flyspeck campaign rhetoric that may be exaggerated but isn't true or false.

The low point of fact checking in 2012 involved Paul Ryan's speech to the Republican convention accepting the vice presidential nomination. The *New York Times* cited "a litany of falsehoods." But the checker brigade could point to no lies or erroneous facts. In Ryan's case, they faulted him for things he hadn't said, rather than what he did say. Is there such a thing as a lie of omission or an unspoken falsehood? I don't think so.

Finally, the overdose. I love campaigns. One of my regrets is not having played a role in my father's campaign for the Virginia House of Delegates in 1963 (I was in college). A Republican, he lost in what was then a Democratic state. Covering campaigns is one of the joys of journalism. And watching the best political reporters in action—guys like Jack Germond and Robert Novak—was a rare treat.

My complaint is not that there's too much coverage. Perish the thought. What's worrisome, perhaps only to me, is that too many people take politics too seriously. More than a few folks I've run into in recent years are obsessed. They're political junkies in the nonmetaphorical sense. They're addicted. It's fine to be concerned about this year's presidential race. It's enormously important. And it's smart to keep up with the news. But there's a limit.

Politics isn't life. Like baseball, it's a pastime. There are surefire ways to keep politics in perspective, especially for sports fans. Always boo politicians who show up for some ceremony before a game, at halftime, or between periods. And be prepared to rebuke politicians who pretend to be enthusiastic fans but don't know the names of players. Sports buffs know intuitively that this works. If you're not one, give it a try, and politics might just find its proper place in your life. ♦

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Brotherly Love

The wrong way to influence Egypt's new leaders.

BY ERIC TRAGER

There is one curious beneficiary of the September 11 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi that cost four American lives: Egypt's new Muslim Brotherhood government. The attack in Libya and subsequent controversy has almost entirely obscured the siege that same day of the American embassy in Cairo, and President Mohamed Morsi's irresponsible handling of a very dangerous situation. It was only when President Obama phoned Morsi two days after the protests started and read him the riot act that Morsi denounced the attack and vowed to secure the embassy.

The Brotherhood's first response to the attack—to praise it and schedule its own protests—was not surprising. The Obama administration's pursuit of friendly engagement with the party has led it to believe that it can get away with just about anything. The Brotherhood's emergence as Egypt's new ruling party has substantially altered the U.S. policy debate over dealing with Islamists. Given Egypt's cultural and strategic centrality within the Arab world, the question is no longer whether we should deal with Islamists, but how. The White House's answers leave much to be desired.

Rather than put conditions on America's generous package of economic and military aid, the administration has often appeared to believe that through deeper engagement, the United States can build richer, friendlier relations with the organization and convince it to soften its hostile, intolerant views.

For instance, in early September, the White House arranged for a U.S. business delegation to visit Egypt and meet with top Brotherhood businessmen. Unfortunately, just as the delegation made a point at a Cairo press conference to praise Egypt's stable business climate, across town an angry mob was laying siege to the U.S. embassy, while the Brotherhood hardly played the role of stabilizer.

A supporter of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, right, engages a critic.

Nonetheless, the effort to engage the Brotherhood on its own terms instead of ours continues. A new RAND report, "The Muslim Brotherhood, Its Youth, and Implications for U.S. Engagement," calls on Washington to engage Muslim Brotherhood youth figures, who may be the organization's—and Egypt's—future leaders.

"Engagement offers both sides an opportunity to dispel misunderstandings," the report states. Engaging "up-and-coming youth within the organization who are not used to engaging the West" will make long-term U.S.-Brotherhood relations more sustainable.

The report recommends a variety of ways in which U.S. policymakers can use engagement to encourage the Brotherhood to act more cooperatively, such as coordinating American speakers for Brotherhood student events; inviting Brotherhood youth leaders to speak at American universities; and offering Brotherhood youth opportunities to study in the United States.

"Over time," the RAND report asserts, "such people-to-people exchanges could have more impact on U.S.-Egyptian relations than official meetings between high-level politicians." In other words, the more the Brotherhood gets to know us, the more they'll learn to like us.

However, the argument for engaging Muslim Brotherhood youth ignores some important facts. For one, the Brotherhood is a deeply ideological outfit, with a historically anti-Western outlook. It seeks to establish an Islamic state in Egypt, has long opposed Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, and holds deeply intolerant views towards religious minorities. Moreover, the very process through which one becomes a Muslim Brother is designed to exclude those who might be inclined towards ideological moderation.

After being recruited—typically at their mosques or universities—young candidates for the Brotherhood are subjected to a rigorous five-to-eight-year process of internal promotion. Throughout this period, rising Muslim Brothers are repeatedly tested on their completion of the Brotherhood's educational curriculum, vetted for their commitment to the Brotherhood's theocratic principles, and monitored for their willingness to take orders from the Brotherhood's senior leadership. Those who don't win their elders' approval are banished from the organization. Indeed, as RAND's report notes on multiple occasions, Brotherhood youth participation in the organization is "modeled on the principle of 'listen and obey.'"

That is, Brotherhood youth are not, for the most part, open-minded people whose worldview can be reshaped through chummy exchanges with American policymakers. They are purpose-driven, deeply ideological individuals, willing to commit five to eight years of their young lives to serve as mere foot soldiers in service

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of the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda.

Its rigid hierarchy presents a second obstacle hindering American policymakers from successfully engaging with its youth members—namely, the Brotherhood's senior leadership. RAND's report acknowledges that Brotherhood leaders prevented a young member from attending a conference at a U.S. think tank, and that Brotherhood youth typically decline to meet with U.S. officials without explicit permission. RAND tries to work around this inconvenient fact by advising that "direct contacts with [Brotherhood] leaders can help build the necessary trust and address leadership concerns about American attempts to include [Brotherhood] youth in civil society programming."

Yet despite RAND's optimism, it is unrealistic to believe that a deeply hierarchical organization will demand anything less than full control over which members can interact with U.S. officials. Indeed, when the Brotherhood sent its first youth delegation to Washington in April, it dispatched its most organizationally committed pitchmen to present a genial face to Western audiences without conceding anything ideologically.

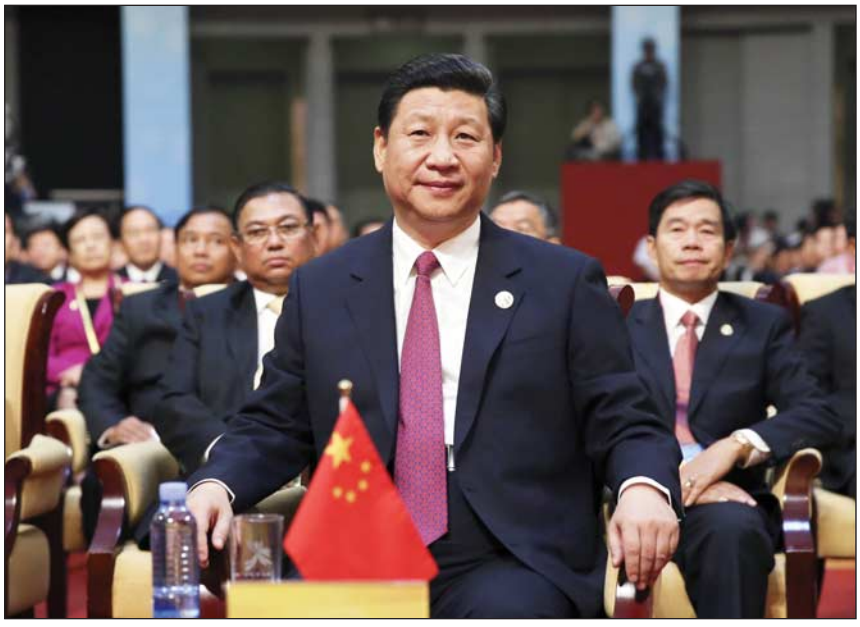
Proponents of engagement rarely note that the Brotherhood's closed organizational features constitute real, perhaps insurmountable, problems. Rather, from their perspective, one of the most daunting hurdles is U.S. public opinion—or Americans' well-founded distrust of Islamists. Accordingly, RAND advises that "engagement" needs to be "insulated from domestic political attacks by having more members of Congress" meet with Brotherhood leaders.

However, the point should not be to alter how Americans and their elected officials perceive the Brotherhood, but rather to change how the Brotherhood acts. The lesson for advocates of engagement in the Obama administration and elsewhere is that closed, theocratic organizations do not become moderate when they are embraced unconditionally. They moderate when they are being squeezed and find themselves without other options. ♦

No Vote in China

A billion people disenfranchised.

BY ROSS TERRILL



Next in the illegitimate line: Xi Jinping

China and the United States both launch leadership transitions this week. Earnest persons, in fear or hope, turn a raindrop of coincidence into a storm of meaning. In fact, November 6 here and November 8 in Beijing, when the Chinese Communist party (CCP) opens its 18th congress, have nothing in common except dual fascination to a jumpy world.

The CCP faces numerous challenges, including economic slowdown, Japan's rediscovered backbone, unhappy Tibetans and Muslims within the borders of the People's Republic of China, quarrels with Southeast Asian neighbors over islands, Europe's thin wallets, disaster in Syria and loss of a friendly dictator in Libya, constraints from the WTO, not to speak of Washington's gyrations. But over six decades Beijing has never had to face judgment by a vote of the Chinese people.

Teaching last year at Shandong University in Jinan, I asked one bright student named Wu why he joined the Communist party. "Useful in finding a job after graduation and to realize my dream of social progress." Might he later teach or work for the government? "No, when China becomes a democracy I want to be a senator for my [Shaanxi] province."

"Won't your critics in the Senate hold it against you that you joined the CCP as a student?"

Reasoned Wu: "Putin worked for the KGB for a long time. That hasn't

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become an obstacle for his political career." Whether he's right or wrong in that calculation, Wu won't soon become Senator Wu of Shaanxi.

The CCP gives lip service to democracy as an aim and says Hong Kong may elect its leader eventually. When Premier Wen Jiabao came to Harvard in 2003 he told students to be patient as China is "big" and "underdeveloped." But eight years under President Hu Jintao and Wen have not brought national elections one inch nearer.

Unknown as I write is who will occupy the White House on January 21, 2013. But both our candidates appeal to the single court of popular sentiment, and both will accept the verdict of November 6. This process is mysterious to most Chinese.

Visiting China in November 1988, I voted at the U.S. consulate in Chengdu and spent election night in a ballroom at the Great Wall Sheraton Hotel in Beijing, where the U.S. embassy invited the public to watch ABC News, with simultaneous Chinese translation, tally the totals for "Bu Shi" and "Duka Jisi." The huge, youthful crowd, intermingling with scores of foreigners, was variously absorbed, gazing in silence, taking notes on small pads, chatting animatedly, and gasping as the result became clear.

"Who did you vote for?" a Chinese acquaintance inquired. Strangers unblushingly pressed the same question. To them an election was wondrous, nothing to be coy about, and naturally one would boast of a preference. None of these politically hungry souls had ever cast a vote on their leader. The 18th CCP Congress will seek no opinion from them; neither will the rubber stamp parliament that ratifies party policy in the spring.

Beijing in 2012 is night and day from 1988 and prior years. In the Mao era (until 1976) and early Deng Xiaoping years (1980s), American elections were followed only by a Communist party elite through privileged information and nonpublic Chinese newsletters. The Obama-Romney tussle has been reported by Chinese government TV, and "netizens" discuss it raucously. People are free to complain about certain grievances in ways not available in 1988. But they are as bereft of choice in their leaders as they were 24 years ago watching ABC News at the Great Wall Sheraton.

China's government has become a meritocracy rather than a band of Communist brothers, the succession struggle for the top job of party chairman and state president has been smoothed over, domestic policies are often deftly calibrated between stability and freedom. But having no say in who governs bugs young Chinese like Wu.

The 18th CCP Congress will be a "flower vase," as the Chinese call a decorative institution, not unlike our party conventions these days. Promises will be made but few decisions. Most Chinese will not be excited by speeches extolling Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Thought. It is an improvement that people can ignore politics if they wish. Unchanged is the total absence of popular participation as Xi Jinping, now vice president, is elevated to replace Hu, and half a dozen others rise to join the enigmatic Xi in the all-powerful Standing Committee of the Politburo.

To my Chinese acquaintances an election was wondrous, nothing to be coy about, and naturally one would boast of a preference. None of these politically hungry souls had ever cast a vote on their leader.

That all this is done in the name of democracy and socialism seems weird, as we behold Wen's relatives storing up billions and skullduggery surrounding the fallen Bo Xilai and his wife from Chongqing. In the Mao era a slogan was promulgated, "Only Socialism Can Save China." Cynics now quip, "Only China Can Save Socialism"—not that many beyond Cuba and North Korea care very much.

The party-state's preference in a U.S. election has long reflected a calculation of China's national interest. In 1971 while accompanying Gough Whitlam, soon to be prime minister of Australia, in talks with Zhou Enlai and others, I wrote a front-page story in the *Washington Post* about CCP views of American political parties. Henry Kissinger, not long back from his secret trip to Beijing for President Richard Nixon, phoned me. "That was the most interesting article I have read from China." What the national security adviser liked was that the Chinese leaders said they preferred dealing with Republicans over Democrats, because Democrats (Truman and Acheson) had backed Chiang Kai-shek to the end and fought China in Korea, and because Democrats were ready for "collusion with Moscow" (then an evil stance in Beijing's eyes). A specialized view, but such is Beijing's habit. Sometimes—perhaps this week—the CCP simply prefers the devil it knows to a fresh devil.

New today is the Chinese public's concern with the United States because of trade fluctuations and currency rates, the desire to study on a U.S. campus, and enjoyment of U.S. popular culture and sports. All this has no necessary relation to Hu's berating Obama for seeing the Dalai Lama or selling planes to Taiwan. Only on one major current issue does popular sentiment about the United States seem in sync with government policy: suspicion that Washington is "conspiring" with Tokyo over the disputed Senkaku islands, which lie near China, Japan, and Taiwan.

A presidential election cleanses dross from public life. Any remaining doubts about Obama's birth certificate will be forgotten if he's reelected, as will Romney's record at Bain if he wins. Without such purging through a vote, Chinese politics remains maneuver above and rumor below. We fight like cats during a campaign then calm down after the vote. Political tension never subsides in China. Freedom defines itself best when absent. Tired of the long electoral grind? Be grateful; Chinese would jump at the chance to choose their leader. ♦

A Story Told Before

Oliver Stone's recycled leftist history of the United States

By Ronald Radosh

Two years ago, Oliver Stone announced that he was preparing to make a documentary about recent American history. It premieres on the CBS-owned cable network Showtime on November 12. Titled *Oliver Stone's Untold History of the United States*, it is written by Stone and historian Peter Kuznick and narrated and directed by Stone. The series reflects the view Stone expressed in 2010 that the Soviet Union's leader in the 1930s and '40s, Joseph Stalin, has "been vilified pretty thoroughly by history," so what is needed is a program allowing viewers to walk in both his and Hitler's shoes "to understand their point of view."

An examination of the first four episodes and the accompanying 750-page book—*The Untold History of the United States* (Gallery Books), obviously written by Kuznick, although Stone's name appears first—reveals them to offer not an untold story, but the all-too-familiar Communist and Soviet line on America's past as it developed in the early years of the Cold War.

Interviewed in 2010, Kuznick said candidly that his goal was not to offer nuance, but rather to show that after World War II the United States moved "to the dark side," so that by the time the country was engaged in the Vietnam war, "We were not on the wrong side. We were the wrong side."

At the beginning of the first episode, Stone appears on-screen, explaining that Americans learned in school that "we were the good guys." But he wants his children and America's young generally to learn the real truth, the neglected and forgotten story of our country's true heroes, and that has led him to tell the American story "in a way that it has never been told before."

But half a century ago, when I was in high school, the late Carl Marzani told this very story in *We Can Be Friends*. A secret member of the American Communist party who had worked during the war in the OSS, Marzani later was proved by evidence from Soviet archives and Venona decryptions to have been a KGB (then the NKVD) operative. His book was published privately by his own Soviet-subsidized firm. It was the first example of what came to be called "Cold War revisionism." Quoting the memoirs of figures from the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, as well as newspaper stories and magazine articles, Marzani aimed to show that the Cold War had been started by the Truman administration with the intent of destroying a peaceful alliance with the Soviet Union and gaining American hegemony throughout the world.

Days after his last reelection, President Roosevelt rides with Vice President-elect Truman and Vice President Wallace.

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As it happens, Marzani could have provided Stone's interpretation of how the Cold War began. Over and over, Stone uses the same quotations, the same arrangements of material, and the same arguments as Marzani. This is not to accuse Stone of plagiarism, only to point out that the case he now offers as new was argued in exactly the same terms by an American Communist and Soviet agent in 1952.

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Viewers are told that World War II ended with the world sharing the hopes and dreams of progressives everywhere, led by Stalin, whose desire for continued Allied unity and peace was rebuffed by Winston Churchill and rejected by President Roosevelt's accidental successor, Harry Truman. The viewer is never told of Soviet goals or practices, like the brutal occupation of Eastern Europe by the Red Army and the overthrow of its governments and installation of Soviet puppet regimes, except when the narrative justifies this as necessary for Soviet security. Indeed, even the earlier Nazi-Soviet Pact is justified with the Soviet propaganda line that Stalin was forced into it in order to buy time to rearm, since the Western powers refused to face up to the threat of fascism.

Stone's hero, Henry Wallace, opposed the creation of NATO, advocated abandoning Berlin in response to the Soviet blockade, denounced the Marshall Plan, and justified the 1948 Communist coup in Czechoslovakia.

The main hero of the first four episodes is FDR's secretary of agriculture, then vice president, Henry A. Wallace, whom the book describes as a New Deal "visionary" on domestic policy and a farsighted, anti-imperialist representative of the "common man" on foreign policy.

Hosannas to Wallace are nothing new. In the past decade, scores of books have celebrated his life and record, all in the same mold. They include leftist journalist Richard J. Walton's *Henry Wallace, Harry Truman and the Cold War*, Communist historian Norman D. Markowitz's *The Rise and Fall of the People's Century: Henry A. Wallace and American Liberalism, 1941-1948*, a biography by Edward and Frederick Schapsmeier, *Prophet in Politics: Henry A. Wallace and the War Years*, Allen Yarnell's *Democrats and Progressives: The 1948 Presidential Election as a Test of Postwar Liberalism*, and John C. Culver and John Hyde's *American Dreamer: A Life of Henry A. Wallace*.

All these books have something in common: They are hagiographic treatments of Wallace as the man who could have brought the United States into permanent peace with the USSR, avoided the Cold War, and created a social democracy at home. For Stone, Wallace was the "nerve center of the New Deal." At the Department of Agriculture, he used his power to develop new methods of plant fertilization. He opposed racist theories and stood up to party bosses. He was also a great athlete, a reader, and a "spiritual" man. In reality, Wallace was a disciple of the Russian émigré theosophist Nicholas Roerich, whom he addressed as "Dear Guru" in letters published after Roerich's death, revealing him to be a cheap hustler and a phony who conned a gullible Wallace.

Viewers do not learn that, at the Agriculture Department, Wallace supported what historians call "the purge of the liberals." Nor was he a radical as Roosevelt's vice president. Stone omits facts that interfere with his depiction of Wallace as the embodiment of the left wing of the New Deal.

If Wallace was no radical on domestic issues, he did prove to be Stalin's dupe in foreign affairs. The liberalism he came to espouse was that of the Popular Front, the call for an alliance between Democrats and American Communists and Socialists as the vehicle through which to advance the agenda of FDR's expanding welfare state. As early as 1943, Wallace warned of "fascist interests motivated largely by anti-Russian bias" who were trying to "get control of our government." These views are what endear Wallace to Stone.

So enamored of the Soviet Union was the vice president that in May 1944 he traveled to 22 cities in Soviet Siberia. There, the NKVD played Wallace for a fool. He described the slave labor colony of Magadan, which the Soviet secret police had transformed into a Potemkin village staffed by actors and NKVD personnel, as a "combination TVA and Hudson's Bay Company."

According to his own testimony, if he had become president, Wallace would have made Harry Dexter White his secretary of the Treasury and given a position in government to Laurence Duggan. Both men were Soviet agents. As a KGB cable found in the Venona archives shows, the Soviets hoped that Duggan would aid them "by using his friendship" with Wallace for "extracting . . . interesting information."

Instead, of course, Roosevelt replaced Wallace with Harry Truman on the Democratic ticket in 1944, and named Wallace secretary of commerce. FDR died on April 12, 1945, and in September 1946, President Truman fired Wallace. The provocation was a speech Wallace gave at a Madison Square Garden rally in which, contrary to administration policy, he called for recognizing Soviet spheres of influence—in effect, occupation zones—as just and necessary. Stone endorses Wallace's support for turning the nations of Eastern Europe into Soviet pawns, arguing that what Wallace favored was no different from the Russians' recognition of American influence in the Western hemisphere. Failing to distinguish between democracies and totalitarian regimes, Stone consistently portrays the Soviet Union as the victim of American

imperialism, while regarding the monster Stalin as a peaceful leader who sought only to gain valid security guarantees on his borders.

Wallace not only opposed Truman's decision to block Stalin's expansionist ambitions, he also spoke of Stalin as a man of peace and Truman as a dangerous militarist. This is the view Stone endorses. But as Notre Dame historian Wilson D. Miscamble demonstrated in *From Roosevelt to Truman: Potsdam, Hiroshima and the Cold War*, Truman opted for a changed policy only after Stalin showed that his grip on Eastern Europe was nonnegotiable. Historian Fraser Harbutt of Emory University concurred, writing: "Truman genuinely tried to follow Roosevelt's seemingly conciliatory line toward a Soviet Union whose policies, in the end, left him little alternative but a turn to resistance and thus to the Cold War."

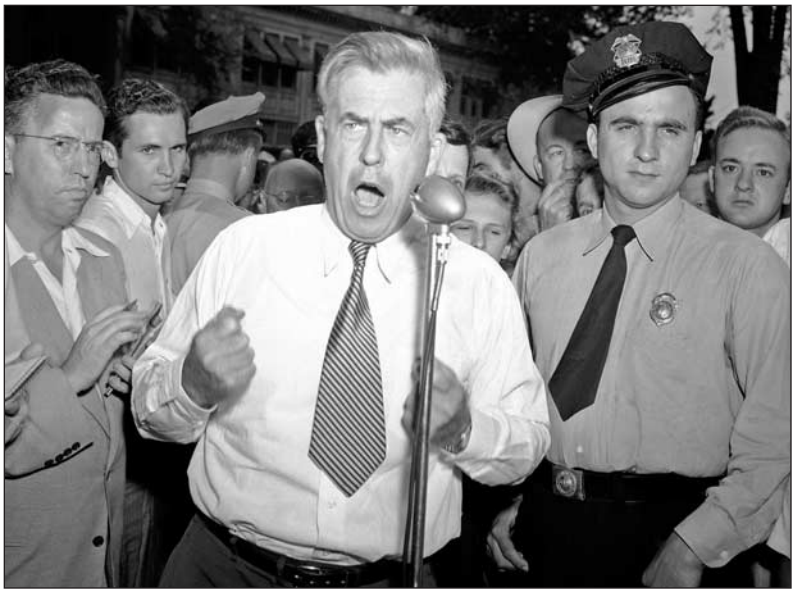
Two early Cold War episodes illustrate the mendacious method of Stone's film. Stone asserts that Poland was meant to be in Stalin's hands since Russia had been invaded twice by armies crossing the Polish border, and that after Yalta, Stalin never betrayed his agreement to allow free elections. This was the Kremlin line at the time to a tee. It is Truman who is portrayed as untrustworthy and feckless by resisting what was supposed to have been a done deal.

The truth is that Truman made concessions to the Russians on the border issue between Poland and Germany, even winning the praise of another of Stone's favorites, former ambassador Joseph Davies, known for his pro-Soviet views. Truman left his meeting with Stalin at Potsdam hopeful that FDR's grand bargain with the Soviets was continuing. As time passed, however, Secretary of State James Byrnes—a villain in the Stone series—soon saw the grave dangers that the expansion of Soviet power in Europe and northeast Asia posed to the United States. Stalin was set to exert pressure on the western part of Germany, hoping to move the entire country into the Soviet orbit. Again, it was Stalin's expansionist ambitions that led Truman to change American policy and abandon hope that the wartime alliance could continue in the postwar world.

Stone allows no critical opinions by scholars who have studied the Soviet archives to disturb his rehash of Communist propaganda themes. His sainted Henry Wallace opposed the creation of NATO, advocated abandoning Berlin in response to the Soviet blockade, denounced the Marshall Plan for European reconstruction as "the martial plan," and justified the 1948 Communist coup in Czechoslovakia as a measure to thwart a plot by fascist forces. Precisely the Kremlin line.

The film's narrative mockingly presents viewers with Truman's diary entry in which he said that Wallace "wants to disband our armed forces, give Russia our atomic secrets, and trust a bunch of adventurers in the Kremlin Politburo. I do not understand a 'dreamer' like that." But many viewers, hearing these words, will deem them far more accurate than Stone's attempt to discredit them.

There is one original aspect to what would otherwise be Stone's mindless regurgitation of Stalin's propaganda. Stone plays pop psychologist along the way, explaining that Truman talked tough to Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov because as a young boy, Truman had been ridiculed by his own father as a sissy, and now he had the chance to turn the tables.



AP / BILL CHAPLIS

Henry Wallace, the Progressive candidate for president, faces down hecklers, August 1948.

Another event whose treatment reveals the shabby methods of Stone and his partner is Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs. Stone claims that Japan had already lost the war, that the Japanese military leaders were ready to accept a peace agreement, that major military figures including Dwight Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur opposed the bombs' use, that Truman reached the decision after ignoring the pleas of Nobel scientists, and that he did so to intimidate Russia and end the war against Japan before Russia could join it, as Stalin had agreed to do.

This is the thesis that Soviet agents and apologists like Carl Marzani, P.M.S. Blackett, and Dana F. Fleming

laid out in the first years of the Cold War and which was revived (and lent legitimacy) 40 years ago by left-wing historian Gar Alperovitz. In the interim, however, major books and academic articles based on archival research in Japan and the United States—by Wilson D. Miscamble, Richard B. Frank, Robert James Maddox, Sadao Asada, and many others—have discredited the argument. But for Oliver Stone, there is only one truth, the "truth" that discredits the United States.

According to Stone, the dropping of the atomic bombs was criminal because the war was over, Japan defeated, and its leaders wanted peace. According to Stone, Truman lied when he said that American lives would have been lost in the invasion that would have been necessary if the bombs had not been dropped. His purpose in dropping the bombs was to show Stalin "that the United States would stop at nothing to impose its will."

But as Richard B. Frank, author of the magisterial *Downfall: The End of the Imperial Japanese Empire*, wrote in these pages in 2005:

> All three of the critics' central premises are wrong: The Japanese did not see their situation as catastrophically hopeless. They were not seeking to surrender, but pursuing a negotiated end to the war that preserved the old order in Japan, not just a figurehead emperor. Finally, . . . American leaders . . . understood . . . that "until the Japanese leaders realize that an invasion cannot be repelled, there is little likelihood that they will accept any peace terms satisfactory to the Allies."

In those last lines, Frank quotes from a July 1945 U.S. analysis of military and diplomatic intercepts. He adds, "This cannot be improved upon as a succinct and accurate summary of the military and diplomatic realities of the summer of 1945." As for Stone, having dispensed with the facts, he is pleased to depict Truman as a moral monster and "war criminal."

In the last segment of the fourth episode of his film, Stone waxes ecstatic over what might have been had Henry Wallace's third-party bid for the presidency in 1948 succeeded. The Cold War might have been halted; the United States and the Soviet Union might have cooperated to usher in a world at peace; and America might have fulfilled FDR's dream of a second Bill of Rights guaranteeing to all freedom from want, moving America to join postwar Britain in building a social-democratic future.

But as Stone tells it, anti-Communist paranoia directed at Wallace and his Progressive army doomed that wonderful prospect. "The Red-baiting, the dismissive treatment of Wallace by the major newspapers, Truman's move to the left on domestic issues, and a last-minute rush to Truman by Democratic voters" who feared a Republican victory "resulted in an electoral disaster for the Wallace campaign. American voters backed the candidate who had driven the nation down the path of empire, nuclear arms race, and global confrontation."

In concluding with these words, Stone reveals how little he understands this period of our recent past. Wallace's Progressive party was created and run by the American Communist party, and all of its leaders were secret members, including Wallace's friend, chief adviser, and campaign manager C. B. "Beanie" Baldwin. Even the leftist journalist I. F. Stone understood this. He wrote, "The Communists have been the dominant influence in the Progressive party. . . . If it had not been for the Communists, there would have been no Progressive party." Indeed, the PP's chief counsel was another secret Communist, John Abt. When Wallace asked Baldwin about Abt, not suspecting that Baldwin himself was a Communist, Baldwin simply lied and told Wallace that Abt "was not a Communist."

John Gates was the editor of the *Worker* in 1948 and a member of the Communist party's Central Committee. He left the party in 1956. In 1972, he wrote that "the Communists did not merely endorse the decision of Wallace to form a third party. They were also most instrumental in influencing Wallace to make such a decision." He added that Baldwin worked day and night to convince Wallace to run, doing so on the instructions of party leaders Eugene Dennis, Al Blumberg, and William Z. Foster. Wallace caved to the pressure.

There was only one reason the Communists created the Progressive party: Stalin had instructed Western parties to ready themselves for war with the United States, and he demanded that old coalitions be split—including alliances with the left-wing CIO unions—unless those in them favored and supported Stalin's adventurist foreign policy and opposed the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Stone tells his viewers that Wallace had the support of true New Dealers like Eleanor Roosevelt. Stone never mentions that, as Wallace revealed himself to be a dupe of the Communists, Mrs. Roosevelt publicly rebuked him, correctly pointing out, "The American Communists will be the nucleus of Mr. Wallace's third party." Other anti-Communist liberal Democrats issued a public statement charging that Wallace had "lined up unashamedly with the forces of Soviet totalitarianism."

No one put the truth about Wallace better than Dwight Macdonald, who wrote in his delightfully wicked 1948 exegesis *Henry Wallace: The Man and the Myth* that Wallaceland was "a region of perpetual fogs, caused by the warm winds of the liberal Gulf Stream coming in contact with the Soviet glacier." In the 21st century, Oliver Stone still lives in that perpetual fog. ♦

Where Have All the Children Gone?

Vanishing Korea

By Jonathan V. Last

South Korea has a baby problem. It's not alone, of course. Fertility rates have been falling in nearly every country in the world for years, and no industrialized nation today (save Israel) has a fertility rate at the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman. Yet even against this backdrop, the Republic of Korea stands out: Its fertility rate in 2012 was 1.23, not just one of the lowest numbers in the world but one of the lowest numbers ever recorded. To pick only one of the strange effects resulting from this relative barrenness, many of the country's obstetrics practices have been converted to skin care or obesity clinics.

Koreans are having so few babies that the country is about to grow very old, very quickly. By 2050, there will be 10 million more Koreans over the age of 65 than between the ages of 15 and 65. By 2100, the country's population, now 50 million, will fall to 21.5 million. And 9.5 million of those left will be over the age of 65. No economy can function in such conditions, and it is an open question as to whether a society can either.

But a lack of children isn't Korea's only baby problem. It also has a shortage of baby girls. In nature, 105 boys are born for every 100 girls. From 1990 to 2002 in Korea, the ratio ranged between 110 and 117 boys born for every 100 girls. Which means that even as Koreans turned away from parenthood, they were positively shunning baby girls. The practice of sex-selective abortion—aborting a child because an ultrasound reveals her to be female—ran rampant in Korea, creating one of the most imbalanced sex ratios in the world.

This second problem—sex-selective abortion—now seems to be abating in Korea. Since 2003, Korea's sex ratio has moved back toward the norm, falling to a nearly natural 107 in this past year. This change is important because while nations from China to India to Armenia have struggled with abortion-induced sex-ratio imbalances, Korea is the only such country to have succeeded in restoring balance.

Understanding this success is important, not just for moral and practical reasons—as Mara Hvistendahl makes clear in her landmark work on the subject, *Unnatural Selection*, sex-selective abortion is both evil and a cause of large-scale social problems. But the curious case of Korea is important for political reasons as well.

Sex-selective abortion has become the abortion movement's most glaring vulnerability. An abortion regime that systematically results in the culling of girls is antithetical to feminism and an indictment of the logic of "choice." It amounts to saying that you must be willing to accept the systematic killing of baby girls in order to protect their rights.

Americans on both sides of the abortion wars already understand this. Last spring Republicans in Congress proposed a bill outlawing sex-selective abortion, which is already observable among certain ethnic minorities in this country. The bill forced the abortion-rights lobby to take a side. They opposed it and actively campaigned against it on the grounds that "choice" must be sacrosanct. Even if it meant allowing parents to choose to abort baby girls.

It was a small skirmish, and the bill eventually failed. But the subject of sex-selective abortion could return as more Americans learn about it, and might one day make a dent in the U.S. abortion regime, which is among the least regulated in the world. This makes Korea's situation of particular interest: If the sex-selection tide can recede on its own, then defenders of unrestricted abortion rights might be able to avoid this fight.

Korea's demographics have shifted at a fantastically rapid pace. In the early 1960s, the average Korean woman bore six children over the course of her life. Both the Korean and the U.S. governments viewed this as problematic, albeit for different reasons. The Korean

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regime thought that high fertility and population growth would blunt their attempts to modernize and establish an advanced economy. American planners were, in those years, obsessed with population growth in Asia, which they saw as a threat to global stability.

So in 1961, the Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea was established as a joint effort between Koreans and the United States. The new group worked closely with the government to launch a National Family Planning Program, the goal of which was to stop Koreans from having so many babies. It was a multipronged push. There was propaganda, with the government warning citizens, "Unplanned parenthood traps you in poverty" and "Sons or daughters, stop at two and raise them well." Efforts were made to increase women's enrollment in high school. Contraceptives were handed out freely to anyone who would take them. Men were exempted from mandatory military service if they submitted to vasectomies.

Too few like her

The plan succeeded wildly. In a single generation Korea's fertility rate dropped by more than half, from 6.0 to 2.8. In 1981, the government set its goal as a fertility rate of 2.0. It offered economic incentives for parents who were sterilized after a second birth and, for a brief period, even encouraged a one-child policy. (The public service announcements proclaimed, "Even two children per family are too many for our crowded country.") In just two years, Korea achieved its mark.

But this success was fleeting. The fertility rate kept falling—so fast and so far that it quickly became clear that the government had lost control of its program. By 2000, the rate had bottomed out at 1.2, causing the government to scramble to undo its prior work. It offered early retirement for parents with multiple children. It provided financial support for the education of third children and offered special mortgages for families with three children. It created a government agency to deal with shrinking populations and encourage procreation. None of it worked.

And in the midst of all this clamor, the Koreans realized they suddenly had another problem. The monster of sex-selective abortion had been unleashed.

Abortion has never been a particularly controversial part of Korean life. When it was written, the 1953 Korean Criminal Code expressly outlawed abortion in most cases and established substantial penalties for both mothers (up to a year in jail and a $1,700 fine) and doctors (up to five years in jail and the loss of medical license) involved in abortions. There were explicit exemptions—in cases of rape and incest, for pregnancies resulting in serious genetic disorders, and for the health of the mother. But these mattered very little because the laws were rarely enforced.

In fact, beginning in 1960 the Korean government actively encouraged abortion as part of its family planning program. Every year there are somewhere between 350,000 and 2 million abortions in South Korea, depending on where you shop for your data. No one knows the real number because, since almost all abortions are illegal, nearly the entire industry is a gray market. Suffice it to say that Korea has either the third-highest abortion rate in the world, or the highest. Two other numbers lend perspective: There are just 450,000 births per year in Korea. And between 2005 and 2009 a total of 17 doctors were indicted for violating abortion law.

In the 1970s, as ultrasound technology became widely available, Koreans began aborting baby girls at a disproportionately high rate. By 1975, there were 108.1 boys being born for every 100 girls, slightly above the 105 norm. By 1990 the ratio was 112.5, and climbing. It peaked for a number of years at an obscenely unnatural 117 boys being born for every 100 girls. The government was so unsettled by this development that in 1987 it passed a law making it illegal for doctors to reveal the sex of a baby in utero to the parents. Nearly 20 years later the law was struck down by Korea's high court, but that decision was a technicality. Like the abortion laws, the gender-revelation law was rarely enforced. Between 2004 and 2008, only two doctors were convicted of violating it.

Nonetheless, in 2003 Korea's sex ratio began dropping and by 2008 it had reverted to a nearly normal 106.4. It was the first good demographic news for Korea in a generation—and the first reversal of sex-selective abortion anywhere in modern times. This has led to an urgent search to understand what went right.

The first explanation, put forth by academics, is that the Korean people changed their attitudes toward baby girls owing to a combination of governmental cajoling and the enlightenment that results from modernization.

The government has undertaken various measures to stymie sex-selective abortion in recent years. In addition to the anti-ultrasound law, a moral case was made against abortion itself. (Posters for one such campaign warned, "With abortion, you are aborting the future.") Even the medical community took part; gynecologists and obstetricians formed a lobby to pressure abortion providers to cease offering the procedure.

The government also made efforts to change Korea's blatantly patriarchal society, in which either the father or

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the eldest son was legally recognized as the family head, inheritance passed through the male line, and children were awarded to fathers by default in cases of divorce. In 2005 Korea's courts and legislature began reforming family law to make it much more equitable. The result of all of this is that surveys of Korean women showed a marked decline in the percentages who strongly prefer sons to daughters. Other research showed that as women's education and employment status increased, their preference for sons decreased. So score one for government intervention and modern enlightenment.

This academic explanation was comforting because it suggested that the path out of the valley of sex-selective abortion is an easy one: feminism, modernity, education, and government guidance. If societies would just become more liberal, they could escape the trap. No difficult choices need be made. And the abortion-rights framework of "choice" could endure.

But the true story is more complicated and, for defenders of abortion, more troublesome. For starters, one of the bedrock shifts in Korea over the last 30 years has been the country's religious composition. Since 1985 the percentage of Koreans calling themselves Christians has risen by half, from 20 percent to 30 percent of the population, making Christians the country's largest religious group. (Interestingly, the converts haven't come from the ranks of Buddhists and Confucians—they're almost all former atheists. Since 1985, the percentage of other religions remained constant, while Christians increased, and the number of unbelievers dropped.) With the rise of Christian culture has come a greater willingness to view abortion as an evil. President Lee Myung-bak's campaign against abortion was one of his most popular programs. And when a court in 2010 held that the unborn were human beings due the same slate of legal protections as the born, the ruling wasn't seen as scandalous or abnormal. The influence of Christianity, however, is difficult to quantify. Because Korea doesn't have accurate numbers on abortion, we have no way of knowing whether Korean Christians have changed the aggregate outcomes through their own behavior.

What we can say with more certainty is that the rate of sex-selective abortion seems to have decreased as the *overall fertility rate has collapsed*. In other words, Koreans aren't aborting girls as much as they used to because they aren't bothering to get pregnant as much in the first place. Which means that the "cure" for sex-selective abortion in Korea may be just another symptom of their larger demographic disease.

Just before the old Korean fertility regime finally collapsed in the 1980s, most women had two babies. In those days the sex-ratio for first births was reasonably normal; the big deviation came from higher-order births. In 1989, for example, the sex ratio for first births was 104. For second births it was 113. For third births it was 185. And for fourth births it was 209, at which point the rate can be seen as almost a fanatical demand for a son.

Today that pattern is truncated. In 2011 the number of boys was skewed (109), while the number at second births was exactly average (105). What seems likely is that the marginal sex-selective abortions of the past have been converted not to births, but rather to nonpregnancies. The people who once had a strong preference for sons no longer want any child badly enough to have a second, and certainly not a third or fourth. With those people dropping out of the pool, the only folks willing to have a second child are the ones who don't care whether they get a boy or a girl.

You can see the entire shift in Korean childbearing in the numbers of women who remain childless for their whole lives. In the mid-1970s, when Korea's fertility rate was still quite high (5.42), the percentage of women who completed their childbearing years childless was very low—1.5 percent. As late as the 1990s, the rate of childlessness for Korean women remained in the neighborhood of 4 percent, while only 9 percent finished with 1 child, 50 percent finished with 2 children, and 27 percent finished with 3 children.

What's happened since then is nothing short of astounding. Demographer Minja Kim Choe of the East-West Center has run the numbers and concluded that by 2005 Korean women were completing their childbearing years with the following result: Nearly 25 percent were childless, 21 percent had 1 child, 48 percent had 2 children, and just 8 percent had 3 children.

Correlation is not causation, of course. But these numbers leave us with only two plausible scenarios to explain the remission of sex-selective abortion: (1) that the government, which has spent the last 20 years trying to influence the fertility behavior of its people by attempting to coax them into having more babies—to no discernible effect—was suddenly able to persuade Koreans to abandon their preference for sons, or (2) that the decline of fertility to historic lows—the single most salient fact about Korean life—has led to a people so indifferent to parenthood that they don't much care whether they have a son or a daughter or neither.

The answer is probably some of each. The good news is that modern enlightenment almost certainly does have something to do with causing people to rethink their ideas of family life. But the bad news is that it is almost certainly insufficient to curb the scourge of sex-selective abortion.

For abortion-rights advocates there will be no easy way out. Either "choice" is sacrosanct—even if it means targeting baby girls for abortion. Or it isn't. ♦

Last Rights

You can have the 'right to die'—once you surrender all the others

By Sam Schulman

In 1990, as I was nursing a mortally ill magazine, I got a call from a literary agent. "I have a great idea for a book. Your dad [a neurologist at the University of Chicago] could do the medical part, and you could write it. The book is called *How We Die*. Let me explain it."

I told him not to bother with the explanation—I got it instantly. I saw the book in my mind and understood why it was such a brilliant idea. I phoned my father with the good news about our new family project. An unworldly man, Dad would surely be puzzled by the notion that a book about the physiology of dying would be a bestseller.

Dad surprised me—he was outraged, not puzzled. "Do you *know* 'how we die'? Do you have any *idea* of 'how we die'?"

"Of course not," I said, "but that's why—"

"Well, let me tell you, you're lucky," he interrupted. "It's just . . . awful." And after a brusque, ironic inquiry about my own health, he got off the phone.

Four years later, *How We Die*, by Sherwin B. Nuland, M.D., hit the bestseller lists. Dr. Nuland wrote it, he says in the book, for the same reason my father wouldn't: because he knew dying was awful. But he hoped that by describing exactly the unlovely processes by which disease and euthanasia actually kill us, he would persuade the public that the ideal of "dying with dignity" was an illusion. If readers understood him, they would understand that while "there is often a serenity—even a dignity—in the act of death," dignity comes "rarely in the process of dying."

Nuland failed even to slow the frenetic progress of "death with dignity" through our institutions and opinion-makers. As the memory of the Nazi death-experiments wore off, euthanasia became the preoccupation of those understandably gloomy souls who happen to live in a few rain-drenched regions at the northwestern edges of continental land masses (Belgium, the Netherlands, Oregon). Now there is a euthanasia lobby, with distinguished advocates in the great medical journals, departments of bioethics, university departments of philosophy, the Department of Health and Human Services, the media. In his Human Exceptionalism blog, Weekly Standard contributor Wesley J. Smith assiduously chronicles the promotion of euthanasia by CBS News, *Time* magazine, the BBC, and the *New York Times*. Yes, as an editorial in the *New England Journal of Medicine* rejoiced this July, "momentum is building for assisted dying."

The fact that its proponents are selling it in a misleading way to the elderly, the disabled, and the depressed doesn't prove that physician-assisted suicide is despicable or repugnant. But it is clear that its proponents hope to achieve for euthanasia the status of gay marriage—until recently a novel and provocative idea, with many attractive arguments in its favor, opposition to which has suddenly been transformed into a career-destroying, dinner-party-silencing scandal. Among voters, euthanasia has even more legitimacy than same-sex marriage, which has lost every referendum that put the question to voters. The citizens of Oregon and Washington have made assisted suicide legal in their states, and Massachusetts voters are deciding whether to do so this week.

What is novel about the recent enthusiasts for euthanasia is that they have abandoned the idea of mercy killing: Euthanasia is no longer a humane way to alleviate pain, but a right. They're prudent in making this change. Euthanasia was once the only alternative to unbearable pain. This is no longer the case, thanks to science and the generosity of taxpayers. Medicine can increasingly deliver mercy without death, with drugs and other therapies. We pay armies of social workers and build armadas of programs to alleviate loneliness and despair. Of course, neither science nor social science is perfect or perfectly deployed, but the tools are there. So it was inevitable that promoters of death-with-dignity would need to find another way to express the nobility of their desire to persuade others (not themselves, usually) to die a few hours, days, weeks, or years sooner than they would in the course of nature.

There is a libertarian case to be argued that free people in a free state should have the freedom to kill themselves—perhaps even to hire others to kill them as a private enterprise. Legislation need be necessary only to protect their "assistants" from liability suits (and good luck getting that one past the trial lawyers). At another frequency of the political spectrum, members of the human rights community might come to promote the right to die as the crowning glory of a whole pyramid of other rights. But the right to

Sam Schulman, a frequent contributor to The Weekly Standard*, last wrote on the liberal betrayal of Afghanistan.*

die, as it exists today in several states and European countries, has not come about because citizens demanded the right to die, or demanded complete personal autonomy. Citizens of the Benelux countries, Oregon, and Washington have been granted the right to die only within a euthanasia regime which efficiently strips from patients every other right they already possess. Doctors, hospitals, and even family members may euthanize a patient with fewer restrictions than the most modest municipality places on a landlord who wants to evict a nonpaying tenant.

A new book by the political scientist Howard Ball, *At Liberty to Die*, makes very plain the Pickwickian nature of the "right to die." For him, any law in the United States that prohibits assisted suicide or euthanasia is unconstitutional. The liberties we have now under the two Due Process amendments extend to every American the right to choose "to die with dignity—with the passive assistance of a physician—rather than live in great pain or live a quality-less life." But making euthanasia and assisted suicide legal, as they are in Oregon and Washington, involves the complete abrogation of due process for the patient, whether he has given an indication that he wishes to die or is no longer in a position to manifest his objection. There is no impartial authority who will consider whether an elderly patient really wants to die, apart from the assurances of his caretakers and heirs.

Or just feeling a little low? Whatever.

In Oregon and Washington, very few are killed by their personal physicians. And even the best doctors are not perhaps good judges of a patient's desire to die. Consider the testimony of Dr. Joris Slaets, professor of geriatric medicine at the University Medical Center Groningen, who declared in an op-ed in a major Dutch newspaper that he thinks people nowadays die too late in life. Dr. Slaets likes to discuss end-of-life issues with his patients, and he asks them about their "goals" for their remaining years. He estimates his patients' vitality and life expectancy before he decides whether they are worthy of further therapy. Dr. Slaets and his Dutch colleagues are judge, jury, and often executioner—something short of due process. Aleid Truijens, a columnist for the newspaper *de Volkskrant*, which published Slaet's op-ed, noted his aggravation at failing to dissuade an 80-year-old woman from heart surgery (which was successful). "Was the woman in his example not vital enough for him? Did her plans for the rest of her life not satisfy him?"

When it comes to matters like property and money, the law is far more protective of the interests of the elderly than "right to die" laws are of their life. According to Seattle attorney Margaret K. Dore, her state's probate law frowns when a witness to a will receives a gift from the estate. The statute presumes that the heir has used "duress, menace, fraud, or undue influence," and requires the heir to rebut this presumption. Yet when someone signs the papers requesting a fatal dose to end his life, Oregon and Washington welcome an heir as one of the two necessary witnesses. An heir may represent the patient throughout the process, pick up the dose from the pharmacy, and, without any requirement for suspervision, administer it at a time of his convenience (sometimes a year later) to his or her loved one. If anyone objects, well, doctors, family members, and others are protected by a good faith clause in the Oregon and Washington euthanasia statutes.

In the Netherlands, the law is written in such a way that 23 percent of Dutch doctors feel they needn't even report euthanasias they have undertaken, according to a major new study in the *Lancet*—and of course no Dutch doctor has ever been prosecuted for death without request or consent. In Flemish Belgium, 32 percent of euthanasias take place without request or consent or notice to relatives. Whether or not it's true that it's difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, the *New York Times* was horrified to find that those Oregonians richly endowed with worldly goods turn out to be the most attractive candidates for euthanasia. Why do so many people support the "right to die" for rich parents and relatives? Perhaps it's because that's where the money is.

What would due process involve? A day in court before an impartial judge in which the evidence on both sides—in this case, life and death—could be examined and weighed. The gold standard is the due process enjoyed by those accused of a capital crime in a death-penalty state. I'm not arguing that the dying patient is entitled to a process as thorough, fair, or lengthy. But the protections accorded to those accused of capital crimes—however imperfect—are completely out of reach for a patient that doctors, health care facility, insurer, and family have decided would be better off dead.

It's not just in capital cases that due process benefits the party with the most at stake. In investigating and trying criminal cases, we are alert to the testimony of people who may have had a motive to harm or kill the victim. In civil cases, the law refuses to assume good faith by any party. When it comes to the case of an elderly or disabled patient who asserts he wants to die, imposing these safeguards has

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never been thought necessary. Oregon and Washington have no meaningful precautions against wrongful euthanasia, no procedure for discipline or hearings, no board of review. Doctors are responsible for reporting their own cases, and there is no penalty for not doing so. Should anyone wish to undertake a review of past euthanasias, they are out of luck; the state of Oregon destroys prior years' records annually. And the enabling laws understate or ignore entirely the prejudice and degree of self-interest of virtually every agent in the process of assisted suicide or euthanasia. The legal protections available to anyone who signs a will or conveys property disappear when it comes to signing end-of-life papers.

Once the proper document has been signed, the interviews obtained, the patient becomes an unperson. What if she changes her mind? To whom does she protest? How can she recall the document? A testamentary can change a will. But those who promote the right to die have made sure that there is no "safe word" for a patient. There is no process that weighs the interests lined up against the patient's freedom to die naturally. There is no one to weight the interest of the doctor whose patient he can no longer help; the medical or nursing institution which is piling up actual and opportunity costs in service to a patient who cannot be made to pay; the family and heirs who have very little to gain in terms of company or affection from a relative, difficult or irritatingly saintly, but everything to gain—both financially and personally simply by being relieved of a drain on their emotional lives and their time.

But let's not be gloomy about euthanasia. Do the benefits to the person who has signed out of life outweigh the risks to him? A patient has been told that he has weeks, not months, to live. He is persuaded (on the basis of no evidence at all) that death next week will be more dignified than playing out the string. Let's grant the patient the advantage of nonexistence for a few weeks more in a universe that has already, let's face it, been more than generous with his nonexistence during the 14.5 billion years before his birth. But for the patient's family, the busy hospital staff attending him, the medical specialist who has done what he can to fight off his disease, for Social Security and Medicare, there will be a blessed sense of relief and, for his heirs, a measurable increase in well-being, after probate and attorneys' fees.

The benefits to everyone else except the patient outweigh any possible gain to the central character in the drama. Moreover, to persuade someone his life isn't worth living, or that his death will be pleasanter this way than that way, is infectious. When one patient, weak, despairing, worrying that his life is merely a nuisance to everyone else, does away with himself to the evident satisfaction of all who survive him—others follow. Suicide was once the privilege of the rich and wellborn. Goethe made it fashionable among the burgeoning middle class with his 1774 young-adults novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Werther's glamorous death for love inspired a torrent of teen-aged suicides which has never really abated—a century afterwards, Goethe's home state of Saxony still led the European league tables, with suicides 40 percent more frequent than the runner-up, gloomy Denmark. Durkheim, suicide's first great theorizer, noted its contagiousness, and in 1974 an American sociologist invented the term "Werther effect." Study after study has demonstrated that suicide, enthusiastically publicized and given an altruistic, moral cast, inspires others. In 2008, the World Health Organization published "Preventing Suicide: A Resource to Media Professionals," which documents the Werther effect, but also an "anti-Werther effect": When the media refrain from publicizing and glamorizing suicide, the result is double-digit drops in suicide rates—even in Vienna.

The Werther effect may already have taken hold among the elderly, at least in the Netherlands, where euthanasia has become part of everyday gerontological practice and where doctors, not disease, end the lives of some 14 percent of patients (and perhaps as many as 25 percent of all patients who do not die suddenly, from accidents, heart attacks, and the like, according to Wesley Smith's calculations). Official statistics show over 4,050 Dutch deaths from euthanasia or assisted suicide in 2010, an impressive jump of 73 percent in just eight years. We are asked to believe that virtually every one of these deaths resulted from a verified expression of a sincere desire to die. Why has the desire to end one's life become so popular among the Dutch Geritol set? Encouraged by the medical establishment, euthanasia has become ever more likely to be a part of the lives of more Dutch families. In a culture that values consensus, asking for euthanasia has become more normal, and resistance to it is increasingly seen as a bit eccentric. Tulipmania lives again, as lily-mania.

One longs for the hypocrites on the other side of the debate. Where is the Bill Clinton proclaiming that he wants to make access to euthanasia safe, legal—and rare? Instead, the advocates for the dying—the friends of those who pay for their treatment and are named in their wills—encourage as many people as possible to try it. In Oregon, if you find yourself turned down for therapeutic cancer treatment, the state offers a consolation prize: It reminds you that a $39 death kit will be made available to you instead of chemotherapy. In Europe, the medical establishment in Belgium and the Netherlands is seeking to extend the right to die to those with curable illnesses or even social problems like

loneliness or genuine unlikability—even to their physicians.

The increase of dignity that all this ingenuity affords to the dying is hard to measure. In her unequaled manual on the care of the sick, *Notes on Nursing: What It Is, and What It Is Not*, Florence Nightingale wrote, "To nurses I say these are the visitors who do your patient harm. . . . When you hear him told . . . that he ought to be called to a sense of duty, and is flying in the face of Providence—then know that your patient is receiving all the injury that he can receive from a visitor." Just because a 21st-century visitor is more likely to have a fatal syringe or drip or a paper to sign, not a bad memory of Sunday School, doesn't make it less harmful.

Consider the opposite course. What would happen if we simply said no, not ever, both to the dying who sincerely want to hasten their demise, and to the sincerely inconvenienced who surround the patient? If you are ill, you may not burden a friend, doctor, or relative to help you die without making her into a criminal. Your death will take place at the pleasure of nature, but not because you have a right to die. How cruel would we be to deny the request for death?

It should mitigate whatever guilt we feel to remember this: Wishing for death is a fallback. Everyone who is dying has asked for something he wants much more than he wants death, and has been denied it with far more cruelty. He has asked for health and life. He has asked not to be separated from his children or his parents. He has asked relief from a terrifying, perhaps mutilating disease. To deny a genuine request for death is not nothing, but it is nothing compared with what has already been taken from us.

Certainly more people are killed against their will by euthanasia than are unjustly executed. And yet where are the voices raised against the former injustice? The craze for euthanasia waxes and wanes, and the current wave is not a new development. Perhaps the taste for euthanasia is like anti-Semitism—a built-in defect in modernity that seemed to have been suppressed, but was only temporarily embarrassed, by the flamboyant experiments the Nazi regime indulged among the sick and disabled. The reasons for its current surge in popularity, whatever they are, make no difference to its rights, wrongs, and illusory benefits. But I had an experience recently that affected the way I think about it, which may be of interest to others.

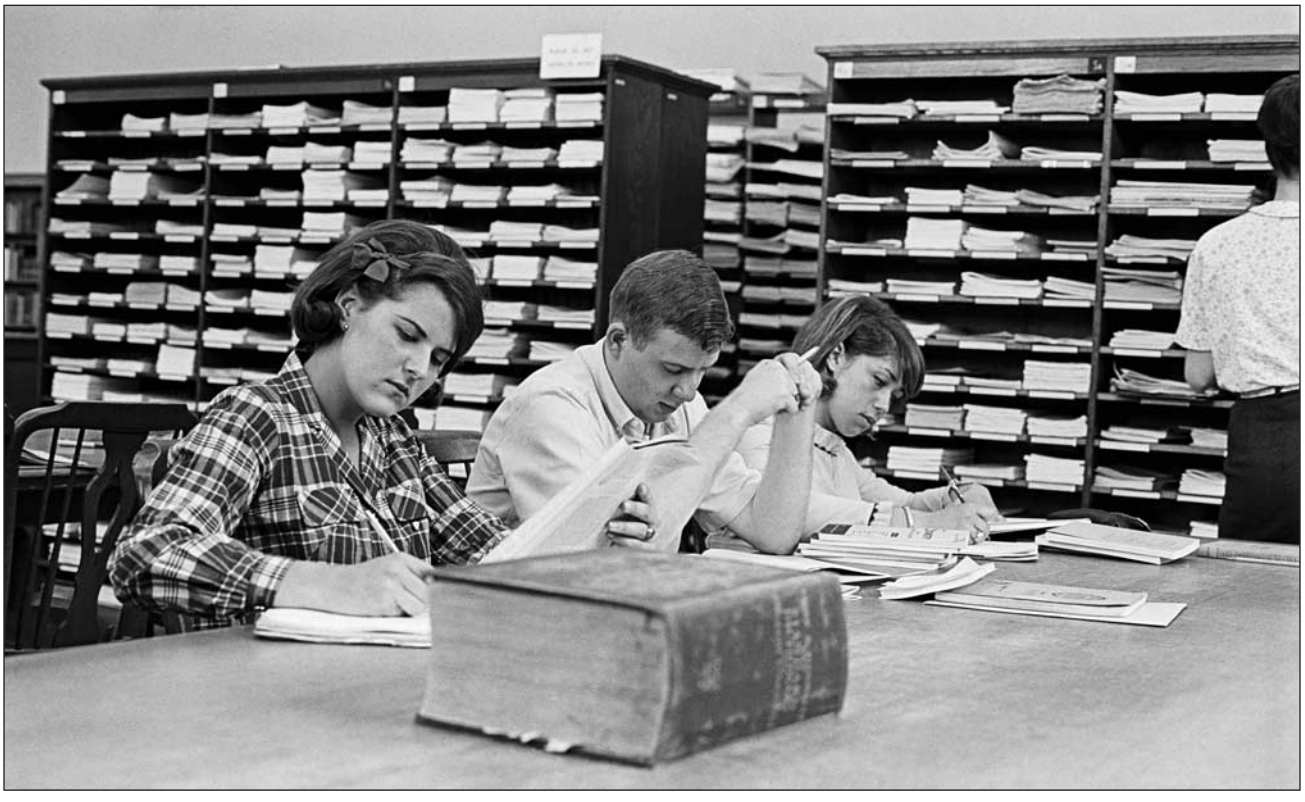
I watched my mother die last year at the age of 86. I was 61, a fact which is unremarkable except when I add the fact that until then I had not seen anyone die. That someone could live so long without having this experience would be rare in my parents' generation, and unthinkable before them. Has a widespread unfamiliarity with death made dying more fearsome for the boomer generation of which I am proud to be a member? Despite the advance of scientific knowledge, the declining belief in eternal punishment, and the invention of Lexapro, it might be so. In that spirit, I offer my aged beginner's encounter with death—which I dreaded for itself, quite apart from dreading the loss of my mother.

"Why does everyone want to tell me how long I have to live? Why do they assume I'd want to know?" This was the first thing my mother told me when I saw her in person after she had received the diagnosis. In one way, my mother would have made a tempting target for the euthanist: She didn't want to be in the hospital, she didn't want to be bedridden, she knew her illness was fatal. But throughout the course of her dying, whether she slept, lost consciousness, roused herself, wanted to rest or wanted contact or to be left alone, she lived. In her last three days, she was frighteningly still, or joked, or mimed that yes, her bank checks badly needed to be reordered, struggled to breathe, stopped struggling to breathe—she remained entirely herself. If I could edit what I saw of her death as if it were a film, taking a marker and drawing a line just—there—to there—I wouldn't know what to cut. I would have destroyed a part of her life. And she? She wouldn't have been spared anything at all.

Would my experience have been alleviated by taking her life from her? I might have thought so before I watched her die. I certainly feared that dying would transform her into something different—perhaps more sublime, probably more horrible—than herself. I discovered that in dying, she remained completely, almost ordinarily, who she always had been. I also feared that to watch the indignity of the physical process of death would produce in me an impression so strong that it would displace all my other images of her. Again, I was wrong. It didn't. It was only—and inescapably—still Mom, only dying.

I can't speak for her, of course—but how much could it have added to my mother's happiness to have been killed 8 or 24 hours before she died, or 2 weeks or a year? She suffered far more pain from the deaths that affected her life when she was a girl. Three-quarters of a century before her death, mobsters killed her mobster uncle and destroyed her family's security. Carelessness killed her older sister and destroyed her family's integrity and her mother's wits. The impact of these deaths haunted her to the moment she died. Yet until that moment, those injuries—and many more—were healing by being dissolved in more life.

Perhaps we can't avoid feeling that there is never enough life without the quality-lessness, to which Howard Ball believes the Constitution entitles us. But as much life as nature can spare you and your aged parents, even without benefit of due process of law, is a pretty good offer. I'd advise you to take it. ♦



Students with dictionary, Chubb Library, Ohio University, ca. 1961

Wars of Words

The story behind the stories about Webster's Third. BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

Of the making of books, Ecclesiastes informs us, there is no end. But of some books, perhaps, there should never have been a beginning. One such book, or so many believed when it first appeared, was *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged*. When published in 1961, it was mocked by the *New York Times*, mauled by *Life*, dismantled by the *Atlantic*, and (in the Mafia sense) whacked by the *New Yorker*, which turned loose Dwight Macdonald, a famous hit man of the day, to do the job. Other, lesser media piled on, agreeing that the new dictionary was a grave mistake.

Joseph Epstein, a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard, *is the author, most recently, of* Essays in Biography.

The Story of Ain't
America, Its Language, and the Most Controversial Dictionary Ever Published
by David Skinner
Harper, 368 pp., $26.99

Not all the criticism was negative. Positive reviews appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Publishers' Weekly*, and *Editor & Publisher*. Further support arrived, rather like a belated cavalry unit, in scholarly journals. But such was the vehemence of the attacks that they tended to drown out the praise for *Webster's Third* (henceforth *W3*). The new dictionary was charged with betraying tradition through extreme verbal promiscuity and egregiously lapsed standards, and thereby, not to put too fine a point on it, aiding and abetting the decline of the West on its by-no-means-leisurely slide into barbarity.

The first mistake the Merriam-Webster Company, publisher of *W3*, made was in its initial publicity release, which suggested that the new dictionary approved the use of the word "ain't"—which it didn't, not entirely, not really. The press release failed to note that, in the dictionary itself, "ain't" was declared "substandard" English and was "disapproved by many and [was] more common in less educated speech." The putative respectability of "ain't" under the aegis of *W3* was a point that headline writers glommed onto with much glee. Mario Pei's review of the dictionary in the *New York Times Book Review* of October 22, 1961, carried the title "'Ain't' Is In, Raviolis Ain't."

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This faux pas obscured the immense effort that had gone into *W3*. Produced at vast expense, the new dictionary was the work of a full-time editorial staff of more than a hundred people, along with the contributions of hundreds of outside consultants. The dictionary included more than 450,000 rewritten entries; 100,000 or so were words not in *Webster's Second International Dictionary* (*W2*) or any other Merriam-Webster publication. *W3* contained a vast number of new illustrations, synonym articles, etymologies, tables of special information, a pronunciation guide, and more.

Promotion of *W3* emphasized its contemporaneity, noting its more than 200,000 usage citations employed to show not only what words mean, but how they are used by ordinary people—not just important writers and statesmen. "In this way," the editor in chief of *W3* wrote, "the language comes alive for the reader, and presents a fascinating mirror of our life and times. Word meanings become clearer and easier to understand." Whereas the more literary *W2* tended to avail itself of citations from great figures in English and American literature, *W3* was more likely to use citations from Betty Grable or Walter Winchell or Polly Adler, the bordello madam and author of *A House Is Not a Home*.

The deliberate—one might almost say militant—contemporaneity of *W3* was, for many of its critics, another part of the problem. Fewer anachronisms were included—the cutoff date was 1755, the publication year of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*—though such words were not eliminated if they retained a place in literature. The line between slang and standard English seemed often to be blurred in *W3*. To accommodate space—the new dictionary weighed in at nearly 14 pounds—the pronouncing gazetteer was removed, as were proper-name and place-name entries, and other information contained in *W2* but thought by the editors of *W3* to be essentially encyclopedic.

What especially set critical tempers aflame was the elimination of the traditional labels of derogation used in *W2*: *colloquial*, *erroneous*, *incorrect*, and *illiterate*. These were replaced in *W3* by *substandard* and *nonstandard*. The first, *substandard*, in the words of the editors, "indicates status conforming to a pattern of linguistic usage that exists throughout the American language community," while *nonstandard* was "used for a very small number of words that can hardly stand without some status label but are too widely current in reputable context to be labeled *substandard*." The wobbliness of these definitions suggested that something was up. It was thought to be the influence on *W3*'s editor and staff of structural linguistics, also known as the new science of linguistics, then having its effect on the loosening standards of the teaching of English in schools.

"Sorry. Dr. Gove ain't in."

Under the leadership of such academics as Leonard Bloomfield and Charles C. Fries, linguistics in the United States had all but replaced the older discipline of philology, which dealt with the structure, historical development, and relationships of language parts between and amongst different languages. The new linguistics was primarily concerned with recording how language changes, and how it is used in quotidian life. For the linguists there is no such thing as a bad word; there are just words—all of them, in their own right, interesting. *W2* and the older dictionaries had pretensions to being authoritative, and tended to be predominately prescriptive, informing readers which words were used by educated people and which not. *W3* was more egalitarian and descriptive.

The publication of *W3* was, in fact, a major skirmish in the war between the presciptivists and the descriptivists. A full history of that war is provided in Henry Hitchings's *The Language Wars* (2011), previously reviewed in these pages ("Ain't Necessarily So: Who Speaks for the English Language?" by Jack Lynch, February 6, 2012). In formulating the essential difference between the two sides, Hitchings writes that the prescriptivists "believed that language could be remodeled, or at least regularized; they claimed that reason and logic would enable them to achieve this." The descriptivists, on the other hand, "saw language as a complicated jungle of habits that it would be impossible to trim into shape," and thus it was best neither arranged hierarchically nor judged for value, but recorded and understood. The prescriptivists sought to be definitive; the descriptivists were content to be reportorial.

"Prescriptivist" and "descriptivist" are labels for positions on the restraints that ought (or ought not) to be placed upon language, but they do not account for actual practice. No one talks or writes along purely prescriptive or descriptive lines. Some prefer correctness and understated formality over let-'er-rip informality, and many others, perhaps today the majority, do not much care. I, myself, find a certain elegance in English correctly deployed, and a pleasure in getting the

little distinctions (between *compose* and *comprise*, *imply* and *infer*, *lay* and *lie*, *each other* and *one another*) right, and I enjoy the small ping of precision that sounds when I have been able to find the perfect word to complete a sentence.

The war between the prescriptivists and the descriptivists, though it rages on, may have all along been a false war. The conflict, such as it is, is between science and art. The descriptivists claim to have a scientific interest in language and how it is used, while the interest of the prescriptivists is largely artistic. The descriptivists wish to study and understand language—the prescriptivists want to use it well.

In *The Story of Ain't*, David Skinner, a former assistant managing editor at The Weekly Standard and current editor of *Humanities*, the quarterly magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities, has chronicled the making of *W3* and the rocky reception that greeted it upon its entrance into the world. His account of what he calls "the most controversial dictionary ever published" is comprehensive and evenhanded, and written in a clear and jaunty style.

Skinner begins with the publication of *Webster's Second New International Dictionary* in 1934, and takes his readers through the 1930s and past World War II, onward to the appointment in 1950 of Philip Gove as editor of *W3*. He recounts the jarring reception of the new dictionary, and ends with the extended and ultimately abortive attempt of the American Heritage Company to acquire the Merriam-Webster Company—an attempt largely based on the assumption that *W3* had greatly weakened it. Skinner provides portraits of the leading players—lexicographers, linguists, critics, publishing executives—and their radically differing points of view on the controversy stirred by *W3*. What in less skilled hands might have been arid and parochial in David Skinner's becomes a lively account of a subject of interest to anyone concerned about the English language in America.

Serious dictionary-making in the United States began with Noah Webster (1758-1843). A fierce nationalist, Webster held that a new nation deserved a new language, and his first contribution to that endeavor was to Americanize English spelling. He disliked the English, especially Samuel Johnson, England's leading lexicographer. Webster's *American Spelling Book* (1786), later changed to *The Elementary Spelling Book* (1829), went through many editions. In 1806, he brought out *A Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*; in 1825, a much-enlarged edition was published entitled *An American Dictionary of the English Language* which added many specifically American words and sought to standardize American pronunciation.

The first mistake the Merriam-Webster Company made was in its initial publicity release, which suggested that the new dictionary approved the use of the word 'ain't'—which it didn't, not entirely, not really.

An estimable autodidact, Webster is said to have learned the rudiments of 26 languages in order to supply etymologies for the entries to his dictionary. He lost money on the dictionary and, because of it, spent much of his life in debt. When Webster died, his copyrights were taken over by the G. & C. Merriam Company of Springfield, Massachusetts.

G. & C. Merriam, later Merriam-Webster, brought out many expanded versions of Webster's original dictionary, calling its 1890 edition *Webster's International*. Various volumes spun off this original work, perhaps the most financially successful among them the *Webster's Collegiate* series, begun in 1898 and now in its 11th edition (and said still to sell roughly a million copies annually). Easily its most impressive work was *Webster's New International Dictionary*, published in 1909 and then as an expanded (to 600,000 entries) version in 1934. This dictionary, *W2*, was the stick most critics used to beat *W3*. At the close of his attack on *W3*, for example, the *Life* editorialist wrote that he planned to hang on to *W2* "awhile for little matters of style, good English, winning at Scrabble and suchwise."

Earlier dictionaries sought to delimit and to discriminate, and, above all, to be definitive. *W3* set out, instead, to show not only how language *should* be used, but how it actually *is* used. The decisive difference here is between the *ought* and the *is*. What made for most of *W3*'s problems is that most people go to dictionaries to learn the *ought*: for knowledge of how a word ought to be spelled, and what it ought to mean. The *W3* emphasized, instead, how the meanings of words change and how wide has been the variation of their everyday use.

W3, as David Skinner writes, was

> not an encyclopedia, not an atlas, not an international directory of history's big shots, not a dramatis personae of every character in Western literature, not an index of epithets and literary allusions, not a class system that could be counted on to disdain certain kinds of words used by certain kinds of people, not a record of all those misinformed rules of grammar that have no basis in actual usage, not some pompous, overreaching, editorializing, know-it-all windbag of a dictionary that takes its direction from the prejudices of the day while giving short shrift to words, the one thing it should be intensely serious about.

This passage makes Skinner seem an advocate of *W3* and its organizing principles. He is not—at least not uncritically so. In fact, he doesn't really tip his mitt about his own position, which makes his book less an argument than the account of an amused observer. This account features lots of intellectual snobbery, pedantry, bullying, and priggishness.

Neither a prescriptivist nor a descriptivist, Skinner, in *The Story of Ain't*, is perhaps best described as a meteorologist of storms in teacups.

Once Merriam-Webster decided upon a third edition of its great dictionary, the first thought was to hire a man of established and well-known intellectual attainment: J. Robert Oppenheimer was one name under consideration; H.L. Mencken was another; Jacques Barzun, who would later attack *W3* (and who died last month at 104), a third. They settled instead on a man with the W.C. Fieldsian name of W. Freeman Twaddell, a professor of German at Brown who didn't last long in the job. Before he departed, Twaddell wrote a memo saying that no great name was needed to edit *W3*, for the staff on hand "is a force of the first order—anonymous and somewhat awe-inspiring." Not a celebrity-intellectual, in other words, but a true lexicographer was Twaddell's recommendation for the editorship of *W3*.

The man they chose, Philip Gove, was a hire, as we should now say, blithely turning a verb into a noun, from within the company. He had a Ph.D., but a less-than-successful career teaching English at NYU. Claiming to be neither a linguist nor a lexicographer, he applied for a job at Merriam-Webster and was taken on as an assistant editor. He climbed the masthead to associate and then managing editor, and ended as editor in chief for *W3* in 1952. In an odd combination of the casual and the formal, his children (as Skinner reports) called him by his first name, but he was never known as anything other than Mr. Gove in the office.

The mission of *W3* was to supply, in Gove's words, "the widest possible coverage of standard language," as well as to "keep step with linguistic advance." As Skinner nicely puts it, for Gove, "a dictionary was not the language; a dictionary, even an unabridged dictionary, was only a selective inventory of language." A dictionary, Gove held, "should have no traffic with guesswork, prejudice, or bias, or with artificial notions of correctness and superiority. It must be descriptive and not prescriptive." For Gove, a dictionary was "a faithful recorder" of language, and "cannot expect to be any longer appealed to as an authority."

The question was whether Gove's ideal dictionary was also the dictionary the ordinary reader wanted. According to research, people used dictionaries to find out (in order of frequency): the meanings of strange words, the secondary meanings of familiar words, the correct spelling of words, and, finally, guidance on how to pronounce words. Did *W3* answer these needs? Given the utilitarian and conservative tendencies of people who purchase dictionaries, the management at Merriam-Webster was worried that *W3* was less a useful dictionary than a work of scholarship.

Skinner also describes the intellectual drudgery that went into the making of *W3*. "It was," he writes, "intellectual work that could rarely be done without a large amount of formal education, but more than a few highly educated people of vaguely literary bent found the work too boring to accept." For "the saboteurs of Springfield," as Wilson Follett, one of *W3*'s attackers, called the editors, the hours were long and dreary. A fair amount of time was spent searching for contemporary citations to illustrate new usages for old words. "Readers," Skinner writes, "were expected to scan, more than any other literature, contemporary nonfiction: newspapers, magazines, learned journals, popular science titles, house organs, annual reports, mail-order catalogs, college catalogs, transportation schedules, bulletin boards, menus, food containers, and owner's manuals."

Then there was the writing of definitions, which had to be done with a comprehensive sweep and a careful dialectical neutrality. *W3* eschewed the generalizing definitions of *W2* in favor of what Skinner called "contextual defining," which featured "illustrations and quotations to illuminate a word's actual range of meaning and usage." All definitions had to be impartial, with no implicit editorializing, such as *W2* permitted. Apaches could no longer be defined as "Nomads, of warlike disposition and relatively low culture," nor Aleuts as "a peaceable, semi-civilized people."

The attacks on *W3* didn't seem to slow its sales. Herbert Morton, in *The Story of Webster's Third* (1994), reported that by mid-1993, *W3*'s "total sales—domestic and international—had exceeded 2.5 million copies, far greater than the sales of any other unabridged dictionary of the English language." *W3* had in its favor the vast increase in the number of people going to college, and hence in need of a dictionary. Today, *W3* has serious rivals in the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* and *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*; the latter, according to Amazon.com, appears at present to be outselling *W3*.

As long ago as 1993, according to Herbert Morton, there were no plans to create a *Webster's Fourth New International Dictionary*. If serious work on the creation of a *W4* is now underway, it is not being much ballyhooed. Perhaps this is not the best time for producing a grand new dictionary. Many computers now supply dictionaries at no extra cost. *W3* is itself available as an iPod, iPad, and Android app, and Google will look up any word about which one is uncertain. Besides, precision in the use of language, of the kind an excellent dictionary is supposed to help provide, is not a notable feature of our age.

A contemporary dictionary would have to deal with political correctness, which means that many words could scarcely be defined at all, since the assumption behind much political correctness is that these words shouldn't be permitted to exist in the first place. Obscenity in spoken language, even in such public domains as television, is now so common as scarcely to qualify as slang. Any attempt to be magisterial would, in our day, be scoffed at. Steven Pinker, the chairman of the usage panel for the fifth edition of *The American Heritage Dictionary*, writes in its introduction: "If you are using this dictionary as the official rulebook of English meaning and pronunciation, prepare for a disappointment." Webster's *Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*, for all its flaws, may be the last great general dictionary we shall ever see. ♦

B&A

Their Fair Lady

The making of a postwar/Broadway/Hollywood musical blockbuster. **BY GINA DALFONZO**

In 1956, Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe accomplished what had widely been seen as an impossible task: adapting George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* into a highly successful musical, *My Fair Lady*. When the script of *My Fair Lady* was published, Lerner wrote in a cheeky epigram: "Shaw explains how Eliza ends not with Higgins but with Freddy and—Shaw and Heaven forgive me!—I am not certain he was right."

Lerner's simultaneous gesture of respect for Shaw's play and his effort to distance his own work from it is typical of the show as a whole. Similarly, Dominic McHugh shows great appreciation for the source material, but approaches Lerner and Loewe's musical as very much a work of art in its own right. While it is occasionally bogged down by details, McHugh's analysis is, on the whole, a fascinating one.

One of the book's great strengths is McHugh's use of hundreds of unpublished letters and other documents related to the show, many of which have been overlooked. Previous explorations of *My Fair Lady* tended to depend overmuch on Lerner's amusing but unreliable autobiography, *The Street Where I Live*—a book that proved Lerner to be a far better lyricist than memoirist. Unfortunately, this reliance on the original documents is also one of *Loverly*'s weaknesses: At times, McHugh gets so caught up in recounting the minutiae of the show's development that he forgets to craft a larger narrative. In chapter two, for example, we learn who flew to which cities on what date, who got embroiled in contract negotiations with whose agent, who brought which costumes over from England, and how much the extra baggage fees were ($450).

Loverly
The Life and Times of My Fair Lady
by Dominic McHugh
Oxford, 288 pp., $29.95

Audrey Hepburn, Rex Harrison

Some interesting revelations and reminders *do* come out of these pages. McHugh confirms that Lerner, in his own words, was "ready to do anything short of homicide" to get Mary Martin to play Eliza Doolittle. (The mind boggles at how different the show would have been, in terms of Eliza's vocal range alone.) But by the time we get to the rehearsal period in January 1956, and the author notes that "with the cast and crew in the same place for most of the time … there was little need for written correspondence," the reader is inclined to thank God for small favors.

Things pick up considerably, however, when McHugh moves from studying letters to examining scores. He's at his best when analyzing the creation of the various songs and their roles and placements in the show. For those of us used to seeing *My Fair Lady* as a brilliantly polished work, it's intriguing to learn how it slowly evolved—and to realize how much weaker it would have been had its creators not discarded much of what they had once considered their most important material. McHugh is correct in interpreting the show "as the result of rigorous self-criticism and discerning revision, rather than an organic act of creation from one end of the show to the other."

The book describes an entire sequence between the Ascot scene and the ball scene, consisting of a ballet and two additional songs, that was considered central to the show from the beginning. But it had to be cut for time during out-of-town tryouts. From some of the descriptions here—one version of the ballet had the kindly Colonel Pickering entering "with Bullwhip + gun + revolver" to help Higgins supervise Eliza's training—it's hard to see its deletion as anything but a good thing.

In a similar vein, McHugh includes snippets of unused music and lyrics that demonstrate that, for all of Lerner and Loewe's greatness as a songwriting team, they could turn out the occasional dud. There *was* good material here, portions of which were used elsewhere in the show or salvaged for later shows, such as *Gigi* and *Camelot*. But several of these original songs were conventional to the point of being dull. The beloved "I Could Have Danced All Night" didn't appear until relatively late in the process; two other love songs for Eliza had previously been written and then tossed out.

It's said that Lerner was bothered all his life by what he considered an unforgivably clichéd line ("My heart took flight") in "I Could Have Danced All Night." But considering that he had almost gone with lyrics such as, *Where are the words I long to hear? / And where are the words I long to say? / Why can't I open my heart* … and so forth, he had little reason to reproach himself for one slightly stale piece of imagery in the finished product. However, there was more to these cuts than simply saving time or getting rid of substandard material. McHugh points out that most of the show's overtly romantic lyrics were removed in order to maintain the "ambiguous" tone of the relationship

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Gina Dalfonzo is editor of BreakPoint.org and Dickensblog.

between Higgins and Eliza. He has a valid and important point—but not, perhaps, a definitive one.

One of the most entertaining parts here deals with the way in which Shaw originally fought to keep *Pygmalion* from turning into a love story between the fiery Eliza and the hardheaded Higgins—and how his efforts were repeatedly, almost comically, thwarted. McHugh leaves out the famous anecdote about how Shaw's original Eliza, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, defied the playwright by going off-script and coming back to Higgins at the end. But her rebellion was only one of many by those who have worked on various stage and screen versions of *Pygmalion* and have insisted that the characters belong together.

Thus, while McHugh fights valiantly on Shaw's side, arguing that Eliza and Higgins should never be anything but friends, history suggests that he's fighting a losing battle. The genius of *My Fair Lady* may indeed lie partly in the very ambiguity that McHugh celebrates: Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle, as Lerner and Loewe quickly became aware, are not conventionally romantic characters, and they defy conventional attempts at portraying romance. But they are nonetheless uniquely suited to each other. (It's worth recalling in this context that Shaw's own source material, the story of Pygmalion and Galatea from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was unabashedly a love story.) To many of those who first came to the story through the musical version—and even to many of those who didn't—for Eliza to end up with her drippy suitor Freddy, and for Higgins to end up alone, sounds like the most terrible of fates.

Perhaps even McHugh has some faint recognition that his cause is a lost one. He dryly remarks at one point that it seems meaningless to argue over a potential marriage between two fictional characters who, after the curtain falls, have no life of their own. But the strength and vitality of this story in its various incarnations, and the tie between those two characters that no one has yet been able to break convincingly, holds out the teasing possibility that, just maybe, they do. ♦

B&A

Voice of America

How Professor Kirkpatrick became Ronald Reagan's woman at the U.N. BY MARY EBERSTADT

A solipsistic, brooding president fights for reelection. A bold attack by terrorists on a U.S. embassy takes the administration by surprise. National malaise increases. Most people are not better off than they were four years before, and many worry that their best days are behind them. Gas prices are high. Political frustration is even higher.

Political Woman
The Big Little Life of Jeane Kirkpatrick
by Peter Collier
Encounter, 272 pp., $25.99

Sound familiar? As a one-size-fits-both summary of the Carter and Obama administrations at the end of their first terms, this is dreary if unfortunately accurate stuff. But consider the bright side: It was just such a crucible in 1979 that turned out to launch the Reagan revolution—in the process buffing many a Reaganite to high gloss. And of all those Reaganites inadvertently created by those years, none was more personally impressive or publicly commanding than the late Jeane Jordan Kirkpatrick.

A Georgetown professor who served as ambassador to the United Nations for four years (1981-85), she was a political and intellectual phenomenon like no other. Her legacy has been overdue for a serious look at least since her death in 2006, at age 80. That fact, taken together with this unwanted moment of political *déjà vu*, makes Peter Collier's sprightly and entertaining new biography timely food for thought.

A veteran author and publisher, Collier is genially suited to the task. Engaging and nicely persnickety about language, he also delivers on understanding the subtleties of his subject—beginning with the ironies of this particular political woman's rise to fame.

In retrospect, as *Political Woman* observes, it is hard to imagine a less likely Republican powerhouse than this one. Born to avid heartland Democrats—Jeane's father once told her that she "better by God not bring home a Republican"—she clung to that party label till the eleventh minute of the eleventh hour of her political conversion. (In fact, "Dictatorships and Double Standards"—the 1979 *Commentary* essay that catapulted her to Ronald Reagan's attention—coincided with the publication of another piece by her in *Common Sense* explaining of herself, and the rest of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, "Why We Don't Become Republicans.") She did not officially become a Republican until 1985, after leaving the U.N.—meaning that she was almost certainly the most beloved Democrat in Republican history. And this was just one irony, among several more, about what her biographer rightly calls her "improbable odyssey."

There are others. Wife to a distinguished and influential political scientist, Evron "Kirk" Kirkpatrick, and mother to three sons, she insisted all her life that family came first—yet ended up one of the most visible public women of her time. A true political and intellectual pioneer in various worlds dominated by men, she was scorned rather than embraced by the feminists of her era—Gloria Steinem called her a "female impersonator" and Naomi Wolf maundered that Jeane was "uninflected by the experiences of the female body"—even as the boys' clubs

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of politics and diplomacy tried to lock her out. Perhaps most improbable of all was her uncanny channeling of things that millions felt but that no one could articulate quite like Jeane Kirkpatrick. A professor of political science with all the scholarly baggage implied by that title, she nonetheless connected viscerally with the pounding popular pulse, from her electrifying speech to the 1984 Republican Convention about "blaming America first" to her riveting addresses to the U.N. General Assembly, and beyond.

Many people simply adored her, as those crossing her orbit soon learned. (I was an editorial assistant during her last months at the United Nations.) Reading this biography reminds me why. Jeane had ardent fans not only in the United States, where she spent her later years reading, writing, and giving speeches, but also in places where the ideas she battled were written in blood. Collier relates, for example, a visit she made to the Soviet Union during *glasnost*. Andrei Sakharov, who had spent years in prison, "came up to her delegation saying, 'Kirkpatski, Kirkpatski, which of you is Kirkpatski?' When Jeane was pointed out to him, he seized her hands emotionally and said, 'Your name is known in every cell of the gulag.'"

How did an at-home wife and mother (albeit one with a Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University) go on to become a moral heroine, a political superstar known around the world? Her rare combination of gifts didn't hurt. She was an academic as adroit with a sound bite as with a lectern and pointer, and she was further graced with a voice so musically deep and unforgettable that it could have made reading a menu an act of profundity. "Dictatorships and Double Standards," probably the most influential document ever penned by a Georgetown professor on summer vacation, is a case in point of how disparate strengths spelled unique synergy in Jeane Kirkpatrick. A lengthy and at times excruciatingly detailed analysis of the Carter administration's foreign policy, the essay still makes for heavy lifting here and there. But it is also leavened by sly wit (e.g., "liberal idealism should not be synonymous with masochism"). In a similar vein, Collier relates that when a U.N. diplomat offered the boilerplate that the United Nations is a microcosm of the world, Jeane was heard to crack, "In my worst moments, I fear that this is true." One thing that helped to make her a sensation was that she was something even rarer than a political woman: a political woman with a genuine sense of humor.

Collier also nicely conveys the spirit of the Reagan years, especially the bonhomie shared by those who saw themselves as the president's revolutionaries. The conviction that they were on the right side of morality *and* history led the Reaganites to defend American interests with a confidence and vitality not seen since. As Collier relates, the chairman of the National Security Council, Richard Allen, once asked Reagan about his vision for the outcome of the Cold War.

"We win, they lose," Reagan replied. "What do you think about that?"

The absent-minded yet ferociously focused professor whom Reagan sent to New York thought "that" was just ducky, as the U.N. and the rest of the world soon found out. Faced with the refrain within diplomatic circles that what was said at the United Nations didn't matter because it was a place where Third World countries could "blow off steam," Jeane countered that it was "not a Turkish bath" and let everyone know that the days of "preemptive capitulation" were over. In an early address to the General Assembly, she charged that the U.N. was a place where "moral outrage [has been] distributed like violence in a protection racket." When the Ethiopian foreign minister accused the United States of racism and genocide, the U.S. ambassador responded by reading from an Amnesty International report—about Ethiopia.

Jeane Kirkpatrick simply did not believe that acquiescence was the better part of valor, and even allies were not spared the sometimes-scorching blasts from the ambassador's office. The Europeans, she charged in frustration at their passivity, have "grown accustomed to being 'it' in a global game of dunk-the-clown." The United States, she said famously and often, had taken off the "Kick Me" sign. None of this is to suggest, as her enemies often would, that fighting back against the anti-Americanism of the times amounted to mere rhetoric. To the contrary: The Kirkpatrick team meant business. And an extraordinary team it was, including, over the years, her legal adviser Allan Gerson, Kenneth Adelman, Jose Sorzano, Alan Keyes, Carl Gershman, and other intellectual warriors, as well as fiercely loyal assistants, including Jackie Tillman, Shannon Sorzano, Louise Brunsdale, and Timothy Roybal. And of course, the irrepressible Charles Lichenstein, who would go down in populist history for telling the Soviets that if they ever succeeded in moving the United Nations out of the United States, the American delegation would "be down at the dockside waving you a fond farewell as you sail off into the sunset."

For all their brio, however, the Jeane Team ended up taking "the glass house where everyone throws stones" (as she dubbed the U.N.) more seriously than anyone would have guessed. The United States, she promised, would treat that political institution *as* a political institution—meaning that votes against American interests would no longer be rationalized as unfortunate, if understandable, political fillips. Rather, they would now be fought for by way of "good precinct work, canvassing, persuading, [and] getting out the vote."

They also took the fight beyond Turtle Bay. The U.S. team tracked anti-American votes, and sent the tallies to members of Congress. When another anti-American gambit—the threatened expulsion of Israel—turned serious, Jeane worked with her allies in Congress on a resolution stating that if Israel were, indeed, expelled, the United States would withhold its contributions and withdraw itself from the U.N. In 1983, when the Soviet Union shot down a South Korean civilian airliner and brazenly lied about it, Jeane riveted the world when she presented the Security Council with a recording of Soviet

communications proving the sickening reality: The Evil Empire had, in fact, just killed 269 people in cold blood.

It was one of her finest moments, an almost preternaturally perfect emblem of her lifelong mission: to tell the world exactly what totalitarian governments were doing, and to stop them wherever they could be stopped.

Of course none of this sat well with apologists for such governments, whether foreign or domestic. Jeane had enemies in low places—though not only there. Words like "temperamental" and worse were used behind her back by rivals within the administration, where the struggles for Reagan's ear and favor were practically blood sports. But Jeane did not acquiesce in these domestic competitions either, and often used the media to counterattack. "A woman in high office is intrinsically controversial," she once observed in an interview.

> Many people think a woman shouldn't be in high office. Kissinger is described as a "professor." I am described as "schoolmarmish." Brzezinski is called "Doctor." I am called "Mrs." I am depicted as a witch or scold in editorial cartoons and the speed with which these stereotypes are used shows how close those feelings are to the surface.

And what of the "real" woman beneath the famously arched eyebrows? Peter Collier does a good job of adding details to the portrait: her love of France, her pride in her cooking, her constant concern for her family. Anyone who knew her could add more. Her favorite painter, unexpectedly, was Amedeo Modigliani; an original of his, loaned from the Met, hung in the ambassador's residence in New York. She had an inimitable way of ducking into subordinates' offices when the line outside her own was longest—a practice as delightful to those treated to her company as it was irritating to those deprived of it. She delighted in good language, good music, and, above all, good friends of similar intellectual weight.

Seldom has the distance between a forbidding public persona and a warm, playful private one stretched quite so far. And as anyone who knew her personally was also aware, her talk of putting "family first" was no mere rhetoric. In one especially poignant story, Collier reports that she once confided in a friend, during a moment of family tragedy, that she would trade all her public success for peace in the hearth.

Jeane's later years were spent as a columnist, speaker, and scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, where she enjoyed the company of friends such as Michael Novak, Irving Kristol, and others of serious mien. Her *Making War to Keep Peace* (2007) certainly rewards reading, as does the rest of her writing over the years. But it was not the "big book" she once thought to write, as she herself said, and as Collier notes, she was by then "seemingly without the urgent desire to put a fingerprint on events that she'd felt a quarter century earlier."

This withdrawal from the spotlight reflected domestic preoccupations, among them her husband's struggles with ill health. But it was due as well to the fact that certain fundamental convictions had put her on a collision course with a new strain of neoconservative thinking after the Cold War. Having cut her scholarly teeth on totalitarianism in Germany, Russia, and China, she was allergic to utopianism and anything that smacked of it. (She once wrote that she was "convinced that a diabolical vision of the public good is the greatest horror and the source of the greatest evil in modern times.") A moralist Jeane Kirkpatrick may have been, but about the morality of the use of force she was more skeptical than others in the conservative camp. And so she publicly criticized the Clinton administration for acting as if "the U.S. was responsible for protecting and restoring democracy around the world, regardless of the costs or whether American interests are at stake"—a judgment that could be applied equally to her own side. She also privately resisted the war in Iraq.

Amb. Jeane Kirkpatrick in the Security Council, 1985

As with any biography, *Political Woman* relies on some inside sources more than others, and as such, might be criticized by some who knew Jeane personally. A few may feel Collier tells too much, including details about her most personal preoccupations. For the rest of us, though, this winning biography is a welcome opportunity to introduce a new generation of political thinkers and doers to a remarkable subject, and to reflect on the larger meaning of Jeane Kirkpatrick's life's work. At the least, her fierce and resolutely unapologetic defense of American interests reminds the world that words always count, that rhetoric is never just rhetoric, and that ignoring what adversaries actually say is a perilous indulgence that the free world could not, and cannot, afford. ♦

ASSOCIATED PRESS

B&A

‘Tempest’ for Moderns

Sandy was not the only storm to arrive in Manhattan.

BY KELLY JANE TORRANCE

Audrey Luna as Ariel

KEN HOWARD / THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

A *New York* premiere at the country’s foremost opera company always meets with a certain level of excitement. But the man in the orchestra section two seats past me became positively giddy as he scanned the program notes before the curtain rose on *The Tempest* late last month at the Metropolitan Opera.

He first nudged his wife, informing her that the work they were about to witness was of recent vintage. Then he discovered that its composer was still alive. Finally, to his utter astonishment, he exclaimed, “The composer was born in 1971!” His wife noted that this made him a contemporary of theirs.

Kelly Jane Torrance is assistant managing editor at The Weekly Standard.

It’s hard to imagine settling into the Met’s plush (and pricey) seats without an idea even to which century the next three hours of music belongs. But it seems a not insignificant number of people hadn’t realized what they were getting themselves into when they purchased tickets for Thomas Adès’s *The Tempest*. Expecting, perhaps, something along the lines of the tender arias of Mozart, the moving duets of Verdi, or the light comedy of Rossini, they got a little of each—a suggestion of a long tradition within a new idiom that at once honored it and insinuated that it was no longer enough. There was a noticeable number of empty seats when the third act began, after intermission. A pair of young women fled in the four-minute break between the first and second acts. I suspect that many of the deserters weren’t aware how new *The Tempest* was, and felt that modern opera was not for them. Which is a shame, for *The Tempest* is a work of great beauty, something missing from much of the musical scene today. Contemporary opera doesn’t get much better than this.

Thomas Adès is the former Britten professor of composition at the Royal Academy of Music, and it’s hard to think of a title that would be more apt. Like his fellow Englishman Benjamin Britten, Adès could have made a career as either a conductor or a pianist. Like Britten, Adès is a versatile composer who’s written orchestral, chamber, choral, and solo music, as well as opera. The two were almost the same age when their first real operas premiered, 60 years apart: Britten was 31 when *Peter Grimes* opened at Sadler’s Wells in 1945; Adès was 32 when he conducted *The Tempest* at the Royal Opera House (which commissioned it) in 2004. Even these operas have similarities: The passacaglia in *Peter Grimes* is often heard on its own, while the penultimate scene of *The Tempest*, the final reconciliation, is in the 17th-century form. *Peter Grimes* was the first in a series of successes that made Britten the most important opera composer born in the 20th century. *The Tempest* attests that Adès might one day compete for the title.

With this single work—very different from his jarring 1995 chamber opera, the deft *Powder Her Face*—the 41-year-old Adès has already surpassed the celebrated (and overrated) Carlisle Floyd, an American. Both Britten and Adès, quite naturally, found inspiration for dramas in their nation’s—indeed, the world’s—greatest dramatist. Britten set Shakespeare’s words to music in his 1960 *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. But Adès’s *The Tempest* is missing the play’s most memorable lines.

The librettist, Australian-born London playwright Meredith Oakes, has transformed the text. Ariel’s rich line *Full fathom five thy father lies* is now the decidedly more pedestrian *Five fathoms deep / Your father lies*. And *We are such stuff / As dreams are made on* doesn’t appear at all. The plot has changed, too. Shakespeare’s Prospero

finds satisfaction in restoring the proper order of things—and, of course, the play is about much else besides. Oakes's Prospero has revenge as his only goal; the central theme is freedom versus slavery. Oakes does add some felicitous phrases here and there, as when the shipwrecked court feasts their eyes on a mirage Prospero has created and cries, *Bizarre beyond belief*! But it's rarely wise to tamper with a master, and Oakes has produced a particularly plodding book. Shakespeare's verse is carefully enjambed; Oakes's lines usually end at a full stop.

Yet this isn't *William Shakespeare's Tempest*, as a modern moviemaker might title it. It's very much *Thomas Adès's Tempest*. Though Prospero mourns losing both his library and his liberty (which we understand are intimately connected), words are not the focus here. In fact, although sung in English, Adès's most spectacular creation can barely be understood. What's primary, throughout the opera and at its end, is a surprising consonance: sometimes earthy, sometimes otherworldly, but always elevating the total work above its newer, blander source.

The Tempest returned to Covent Garden three years after its 2004 premiere and has also been staged in Strasbourg, Copenhagen, and Santa Fe. Adès conducts his own work in New York, making his Met debut in a white T-shirt under a black blazer. For its Metropolitan premiere, Robert Lepage's production should find the Canadian director some forgiveness for his recent staging of Wagner's "Ring" cycle at the opera house.

A huge chandelier in the center of the stage serves not just as set decoration, but also as transport, mood-setter, and plot device. In the first act, its sparkling magnificence is the prime example of how Prospero, the usurped Duke of Milan, has tried to re-create the refined glories of home, including its La Scala opera house. In the third act, the chandelier reappears in a terrible guise, helping spectators onstage and off to register that the civilized look of Prospero's new court was only a veneer.

A figure in white spins gracefully on the chandelier, then rises along with it. This acrobat is a body double for Ariel, who is creating the tempest that will bring Prospero's enemies to the island where they've exiled him. Visually, the storm is a bit lame: People pop up from underneath a blue sheet. But Adès's music certainly suggests a storm.

Most important, this isn't a cacophony without form, as you might expect in a post-tonal opera. And the first solo sound we hear is also unexpectedly traditional: Miranda (mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard) asks her father if he's responsible for the deadly gale with sounds of overwhelming loveliness. Prospero finally reveals to her how they came to be on the island—and his plan for revenge. *They must suffer as I did before*, baritone Simon Keenlyside's Prospero declares, as the brass hints at the trials to which he refers. Keenlyside, who created the role, is a mesmerizing performer: His voice turns tender when he talks of Miranda. But it doesn't stay that way for long.

Prospero, of course, is the protagonist of the production; but Ariel—and Audrey Luna, the coloratura soprano who plays the sprite—is the real star. As soon as the character speaks, Adès's masterful writing makes clear that this wraith is fully formed. The role requires much movement, even with the help of the body double, and Luna steals the show. Adès has written a creation whose words are as difficult to sing as those of the Queen of the Night, and Luna made her Met debut playing that role in Mozart's *Magic Flute* in 2010. She scores a bigger triumph here. Toby Spence, the tenor who created the role of Ferdinand (the prince of Naples who falls in love with Miranda), and who here plays Prospero's murderous brother Antonio, has said that many members of the first cast had doubts that Adès's new work could be sung. So Luna must be guarding her voice fiercely for the rest of the run. Most of her lines are in the very upper range that a coloratura is capable of singing.

Some critics have complained that Ariel's words, though sung in English, mostly cannot be distinguished without the help of surtitles. But as Charles T. Downey reported after a symposium in Santa Fe, "Adès explained that he viewed the character not as a human but as a spirit of the air, and that her language, magical as it is, would probably be understood only by Prospero anyway."

The real magic in *The Tempest* comes in the brief, but repeated, duets between Prospero and Ariel. The contrast between the gloomy, grim baritone and the sprightly soprano is striking. But these strange duets owe their power not to that obvious contraposition, but to Adès's contrapuntal writing. His maturity also reveals itself in the music of the only other singer of pure beauty, the Neapolitan king (nicely rendered by tenor William Burden). His laments for his lost son—*What fish has made its meal on you?*—give some much-needed sympathy to a decayed court.

The third act is something of a weak link in an otherwise sturdy show—although the jokes wear thin at the end of the second act, which has as many false endings as a *Lord of the Rings* movie. Indeed, it seems as if the work might completely fall apart until Adès bids farewell to the story and focuses, again, on making virtuosos of his singers. The well-choreographed chorus of Neapolitans in their finery finds redemption through the madness to which Prospero has subjected them, and from which he finally releases them. The always-dramatic Caliban (hardworking tenor Alan Oke) gets the last word. This low beast tries to sing in an upper register, but it doesn't come off. Ariel echoes his confused cries—ending the opera, finally, on a high note.

The Tempest continues in New York until the middle of this month, and, thanks to the marriage of an old art form with new technology, Thomas Adès might finally enjoy the same renown here that he has in his native land. *The Tempest* will be part of the Met's "Live in HD" series, transmitted live in high-definition to movie theaters across North America on November 10 (and shown again on November 28), before it makes its way to television and to DVD. ♦

"NYU terrorism class asks students to plot terrorist attack"
—New York Post, October 29, 2012

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FBI TEAM FOILS TERROR PLOT BY HIPSTER FUNDAMENTALISTS

Finds Massive Cache of Death Cab for Cutie Records

By PETER BAKER

After an exhaustive, deep-cover investigation spanning several months, the FBI has arrested four suspected hipster fundamentalists in lower Manhattan who, according to documents found on one of their iPads, had specific plans to "blow up capitalism, or whatever." While the FBI is not releasing specific details of when or where this group was going to strike, they did release transcripts of several g-chat conversations containing evidence of the plot. "[W]eve got too stop thse stupid corprte f---ers. we should f----- blow them the f--- up :O," wrote one of the suspects. "[T]otes," replied another, "those stupid oil corporate Bain Geoerge Bush F—Face IDIOTS!!! btw, did you hear that new Bon Iver song? Sucks :(so lame."

Mark Berman, an American Studies major at New York University, was apprehended in an early morning raid on his girlfriend Gina's dorm room on the NYU campus. "She's not my girlfriend," Berman said as he was taken away in handcuffs. "It's complicated," Gina agreed before referring the agents to her Facebook relationship status. The other three suspects, David Glazer, Dan Bowden, and Chuck Kroll, all third year sociology majors also at New York University, were captured later in the morning at their East Village apartment.

Jack Newton

NYU student and accused terror conspirator Dan Bowden awaits his police transport while chilling to the new album from The Hives.

That apartment, which costs the trio's parents roughly $5,000 a month, provides a rare glimpse into the extreme lifestyle to which the suspects had sworn fealty. The loft's shared living space had in it only two shabby couches, several empty tins of mustache wax, and, piled up in one corner, several fixed-gear bikes, known on the street as "Fixies." The room also featured an old CRT television, a Betamax player, and the complete filmography of John Hughes on Beta tapes. Furthermore, agents were confused when they searched each bedroom and found only what appeared to be women's clothing. "I didn't think a man could wear pants that tight," admitted Special Agent Martin Crane

Continued on Page A5

Obama Denies Existence of Libya

Stares Blankly at Wall for Most of Press Conference

the weekly Standard
NOVEMBER 12, 2012