

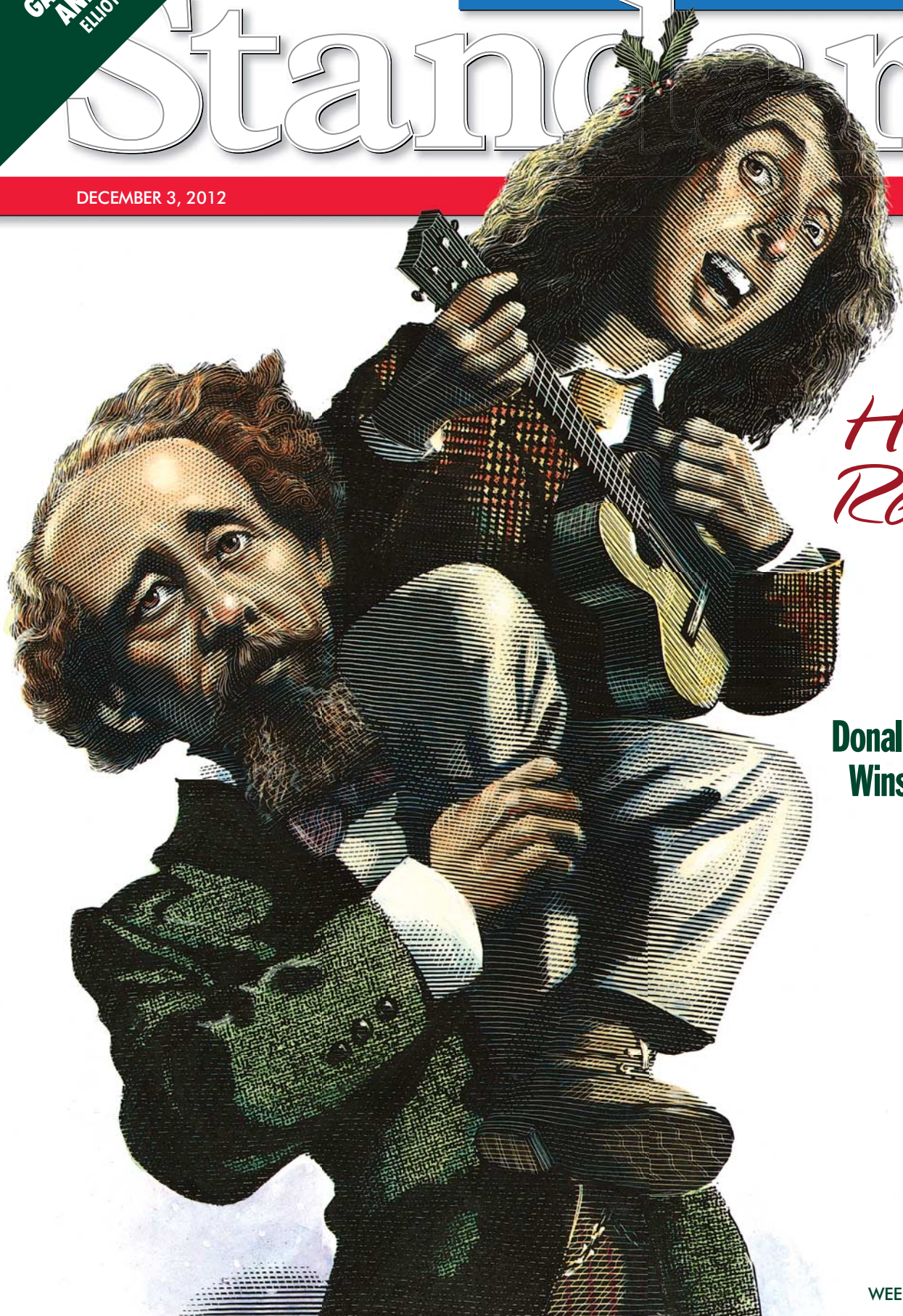
**GAZA WINNERS
AND LOSERS**
ELLIOTT ABRAMS

the weekly

Standard

DECEMBER 3, 2012

\$4.95



*Holiday
Reading*

**Tom Wolfe
Donald E. Westlake
Winston Churchill
St. Nicholas
& more!**

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Hostess with the Mostest

THE SCRAPBOOK admits it has not paid too much attention to Twinkies in recent years. Our taste in—what shall we call them?—recreational foodstuffs tends to run in other directions; and to be honest, we were never all that enamored of Twinkies in the first place.

On the other hand, Twinkies have suffered something of a bad rap. Yes, they're full of sugar and not especially nutritious; but they are made and marketed as a snack, not a balanced meal. And then there's the "Twinkie defense." Three decades ago the man who assassinated San Francisco mayor George Moscone and supervisor Harvey Milk explained his actions at trial by claiming that his judgment had been clouded by deep depression. The defendant did not

blame Twinkies, per se, for his diminished capacity, but chose to illustrate the depth of his personal despair by describing how, prior to shooting his ex-colleagues, he had subsisted largely on a diet of Twinkies. Indeed, the Twinkie defense worked—Dan White was convicted of voluntary manslaughter, not murder—but that was hardly the fault of Twinkies.

Which brings us to their current ambiguous status: The company that produces Twinkies—Hostess Brands Inc., makers also of cream-filled CupCakes, Wonder Bread, and Ding Dongs—announced last week that it would shut down operations and liquidate its assets. Between changing public tastes and skyrocketing labor costs, Hostess has been in more or less continuous financial crisis for

the past decade, and its management has sought protection by declaring bankruptcy.

The path to solvency, however, involved concessions from the two main unions—the Teamsters and the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union—on wages, pensions, and work rules. The Teamsters were willing to make some sacrifices, but the Bakers were not, and voted to strike. Hostess responded that the company couldn't survive a strike, or even emerge from Chapter 11 bankruptcy, and so shut down operations, throwing 18,500 people out of work.

How all this will end is a matter of conjecture. The Bakers claim that Hostess management is exclusively at fault, but the Teamsters argue that the greed and intransigence of the Bakers (who represent just one-third of Hostess workers) have cost everyone their jobs. The current assumption is that competitors will purchase the Hostess brands and assets, and that Twinkies, as well as cream-filled CupCakes and Wonder Bread, will survive.

And they might. What intrigues THE SCRAPBOOK, however, is the extent to which this standoff between Hostess and its union unleashed a mammoth wave of public sentiment, an untapped source of deep public nostalgia for a product that has usually been the butt of late-night jokes.

If you don't believe THE SCRAPBOOK, go immediately to eBay, type "Twinkies" into the search box—and there you will find some 15,000 offers of Twinkies for sale in various quantities. Who says unions don't stimulate economic activity? ♦

Laurels and Hardy

Against its better judgment, THE SCRAPBOOK recently found itself combing through the online archives of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. *CJR* has a feature where it awards "darts" and "laurels" to media outlets

What They Were Thinking



AP / CAROLYN KASTER

Barack Obama waves as he embraces Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi after addressing the media at her residence in Yangon, Burma, on November 19, 2012.

for bad and good coverage respectively. Despite being a feature in a magazine published by Columbia University's journalism school, Darts & Laurels has the feel of a column from a clubby small-town newspaper, and it reveals a great deal about the priorities of the nation's most high-profile publication ostensibly dedicated to media criticism.

For starters, not very many darts get tossed. *CJR* compiled a list of all its darts and laurels election coverage. The final tally? Thirteen laurels were awarded and just three darts. Gallup reported in late September that 60 percent of Americans "have little or no trust in the mass media to report the news fully, accurately, and fairly," but as far as *CJR* is concerned the media are doing a bang-up job. It's Oprah-esque self-esteem building for the media: "You get a laurel! And you get a laurel! And you get . . . a laurel!"

However, *CJR*'s laddling on of the praise over these last several months has not been without a larger agenda. PolitiFact Florida got a laurel for "push[ing] back against misinformation about Obamacare and small business." *New York Times* reporters were commended for citing "the work of FactCheck.org." The *Las Vegas Sun*'s Anjeanette Damon got her laurel for a "short, to-the-point factcheck item" that criticized Mitt Romney for taking Obama's "you didn't build that" comment out of its harmless, not-at-all-upsetting context. *Atlantic* editor Garance Franke-Ruta got a laurel for a column on how "dedicated factchecking sites are insufficient" and editors need to start inserting boilerplate in stories calling out politicians for the use of arguments editors deem unfactual. The Associated Press got a laurel for "fact-checking speeches." Another laurel went to "FlackCheck.org, which recently released a guide for video factchecking on air and online." Investment site Motley Fool got the nod from *CJR* for "5 Huge Myths About Social Security" (the program's doing just fine, no problems, in case you were wondering). *New Yorker* writer Jill Lepore got a



laurel for a piece on political consulting called "The Lie Factory." And so on.

You can go ahead and hazard a guess as to what side of the political fence the overwhelming majority of these "fact checks" being lauded by *CJR* came down on. The sudden obsession with the veracity of political rhetoric—and this is hardly a problem unique to the last few election cycles—again coincides with the mainstream media's desperate attempts to keep a stranglehold on political discourse. Rather than do any sort of meaningful introspection about why the media are loathed by so many Americans, the premier journal of media criticism seems to

suggest the answer is to tear apart politicians and hope the media look good by comparison.

Of course, the brazenly partisan nature of media fact checking makes this strategy likely to accelerate the distaste for the mainstream media felt by an increasing number of news consumers. Unless the media establishment improbably regains some perspective on its own blind spots, "fact checking" will mainly serve to help it avoid facing the facts about its own failings. ♦

Flush with Success?

Anybody who's ever used a bathroom in Japan, where the commodes have more flashing buttons

than the space shuttle, knows that East Asian nations take their toilets seriously. So *THE SCRAPBOOK* wasn't hugely surprised in 2009 when a restaurant called Modern Toilet opened in Taipei. According to *Time*, at Modern Toilet, "The servers bring your meal atop a mini toilet bowl . . . you sip drinks from your own plastic urinal (a souvenir), and soft-swirl ice cream arrives for dessert atop a dish shaped like a squat toilet." This was likely a ~~highly sophisticated commentary on the relationship between man and food in an urbanized society~~ gimmick.

Now, it turns out, the South Koreans are vying to outdo their neighbors in their love of all things toilet. The "world's first toilet theme park" has opened in Suwon, South Korea. The "Restroom Cultural Park" is reported to house a toilet-shaped house, an exhibition featuring toilet-themed art, and a collection of

WC signs from around the world. There's no word yet on how the Taiwanese—or the Chinese or Japanese, for that matter—will respond to this act of toilet-appreciation one-upmanship. In the meantime, we'll leave the crappy jokes about this state of affairs to other wags. ♦

Correction

In his piece on the changing of the guard at the *Washington Post* last week ("Declining Kingdom, Waning Power"), Philip Terzian wrote, "If this . . . vacancy had occurred two decades ago, it would have been filled by such usual suspects as Gene Roberts, Geneva Overholser, or the late Michael Gartner." Mr. Terzian is pleased (but professionally chastened) to report that Michael Gartner, former editor of the *Des Moines Register*, and president of NBC News, is very much alive and reportedly in excellent health. ♦

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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$4.95. Back issues, \$4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2012, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



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Heap Big Irony

I have what might be called a philosophical attitude toward the defeat of Senator Scott Brown of Massachusetts. Brown, it seems to me, played his part in history by delivering “Teddy Kennedy’s seat” (in the immortal phrase of David Gergen) to the Republicans for three years—a brief but pleasant rebuke to the Kennedy myth, and a shock to the Massachusetts vision of the universe.

But of course, with the election of Elizabeth Warren to the Senate, things are once again back to normal in the Commonwealth. What interests me about Warren, however, is not so much her politics as her status as the first Native-American woman in the Senate. Here again, I choose a postmodern point of view. I doubt that Senator-elect Warren has Cherokee blood in her veins; but she seems to think she does—“My papaw had high cheekbones just like all the Indians do”—and if her faith persuaded the great chiefs at Harvard Law School to grant her tenure, or even just to advertise her “minority” status, what difference did her actual DNA make?

In fact, quite a lot. And for that we must go back 20 years in political history, to 1992 and the election of Ben Nighthorse Campbell to the U.S. Senate.

Campbell had a tiny smattering of Indian blood—his predominant ethnic background was Portuguese—but running for office in Colorado, he was shrewd enough always to wear the right genes. He sported a gray ponytail, bolo ties, and he had adopted a native-sounding middle name, “Nighthorse.” It tells us something about the trajectory of modern American life that the former Benny Campbell felt obliged to play Indian in order to practice old-fashioned ethnic politics in Colorado. But by the time Elizabeth Warren

was seeking to upgrade her not-very-distinguished teaching career back East, ethnic identity was no longer a tribal emblem but a bureaucratic cudgel. Warren might well have used her “Indian” status to leap over other aspiring palefaces at Harvard, and thanks to her, Harvard Law School could boast of its “diverse” faculty.

This explains, to some degree, why the election of Ben Nighthorse Campbell was such a big deal at the time. For



Curtis sits for his official portrait, October 1931.

it was widely assumed in the press that Campbell was the first Native American in the Senate, and that a pioneering Indian was inevitably a boost to progressive ranks. Unfortunately, neither was true. And therein lies a tale.

In May 1929 my late mother’s graduating high school class traveled to Washington from the Philadelphia suburbs and, in the fashion of the day, descended on the White House to shake hands with the president. (My father had done the same a few years earlier and always remembered Calvin Coolidge’s nasal/New England greeting to each student: “Pleased t’ meetcha.”) My mother’s class was scheduled to stand in line for Herbert Hoover, but Hoover was suddenly called away, and Vice President Charles Curtis was the last-minute substitute.

Charles Curtis (1860-1936) of Kan-

sas may be deeply obscured in the vice presidential ranks, but for sentimental reasons, he retained a certain favored status in our household. Moreover, he was (and remains) our country’s only Native American president or vice president, having been partly raised on a Kaw reservation with his maternal grandparents, who were Osage, Potawatomi, and Kaw. Indeed, the West was still wild in Curtis’s childhood: There was armed conflict between the Kaw and the Cheyenne in and around his reservation, and as an adolescent Curtis lived with his (non-Indian) father in Topeka.

In a long and successful career, Curtis was a horseman, lawyer, prosecuting attorney, congressman, and senator, serving as Senate whip and majority leader during the 1920s. He took an interest in Indian affairs, of course, and was the first senator to propose an equal rights amendment for women. But he also had a reputation as an effective legislator, and was once described by his fellow western senator William Borah as “a great reconciler, a walking political encyclopedia, and one of the best political poker players in America.”

Curtis was also deeply conservative, and an orthodox Republican—which was precisely why he had been added to the national ticket in 1928. Hoover, the Great Humanitarian of World War I, and peripatetic cabinet member during the Harding and Coolidge years, was regarded in GOP ranks as what we would now call a moderate, a party loyalist but not necessarily by strong conviction. The selection of Charles Curtis was explicitly designed to appease conservative Republicans.

Which is what I have always cherished about his memory: Not only was this pioneering Native American a Republican, but in the modern media parlance, a Republican of the wingnut/extremist/right-wing school. Senator-elect Warren has big moccasins to fill.

PHILIP TERZIAN

In Praise of Half Measures

As soon as the presidential election was over and the exit polling results began to pour in, some on the right (and many outside it) started arguing that the Republican party needed to change its tune on immigration. To avoid being left behind by the country's changing demographics, the argument goes, the GOP must vastly improve its appeal to Hispanic voters, and the way to do this is to hop on the bandwagon of "comprehensive immigration reform," which means a path to citizenship for the estimated 11 million immigrants now in our country illegally, greater openness to more legal immigration, and the promise of better border security in the future, all in one grand bill.

Advocates of this approach insist that it is what Hispanic voters want, and therefore what must be done to win them. But Republicans should be careful to avoid the lure of that argument. It is based on an overreading of exit polls, it proposes a cynical transactional relationship between policy and politics that is unbecoming of a serious political party, and like most "comprehensive" policy programs it manages simultaneously to offer too much and too little. America certainly needs immigration reform, but it doesn't need another comprehensive liberal makeover.

To begin with, Mitt Romney did not lose this election because he failed to win enough Hispanic voters. He did perform inadequately with that group, earning only 27 percent of their vote—a modest decline from the 31 percent won by John McCain. But this election did not suggest that demographic trends are overtaking the Republican party. The electorate was slightly more Hispanic (10 percent as opposed to 9 percent in 2008 and 8 percent in 2004), but far more significant was a decline in voter participation among working-class white voters, to whom Romney clearly had trouble appealing. It appears to have been Romney's economic message, not his immigration views, that accounted for his margin of loss.

And this appears to have been the case with voters of all races. Hispanic voters told exit pollsters that the economy

mattered to them most of all—60 percent of them put it first, essentially identical to the 59 percent of all voters who did. And their views on economic issues suggest they are a liberal voting bloc at this point, quite apart from immigration.

Republicans should certainly strive to address Hispanic voters with open arms and a welcoming tone, as any party should address all voters. But what they offer them should be the same thing they offer to voters of any other back-

ground: a conservative message of economic growth and social mobility, traditional moral values, and a strong national defense.

A political party is not just a vehicle for getting elected but a vehicle for enacting a certain vision of the common good. The Republican party will stand or fall on the strength of its vision, and on the appeal of that vision to voters. It could never compete with the Democrats on the

field of transactional politics—delivering favors to interest groups who then deliver voters in return. It can only win by translating conservative principles into policy ideas that address public problems and reinforce America's strengths.

Such ideas are certainly much needed in the arena of immigration. Our legal immigration system has grown aimless and counterproductive and is increasingly disconnected from both America's economic interests and its ideals. And although illegal immigration has slowed significantly in recent years (thanks to both a weaker economy and greater enforcement), truly stemming the flow and deciding how to address the 11 million who are here without legal permission is a daunting challenge.

If they approach the immigration question not as an electoral emergency demanding swift capitulation to the Democrats' agenda but as a national challenge requiring an application of conservative principles to reform a set of critical public institutions, Republicans will find their way to a far superior set of immigration reforms—reforms that are each rather modest and discrete, that need not be pursued all at once in a single huge package, and that are therefore also better suited to providing real solutions



On the bridge to El Paso

than yet another “comprehensive” policy adventure.

Our approach to immigration must be grounded in an idea of citizenship. After all, our immigration system is how we elevate foreign newcomers into Americans. Yet civic formation and assimilation are entirely missing from the left’s “comprehensive” immigration program. They should be central to any conservative immigration reform.

The security of national borders is an essential component of modern sovereignty, and all the more important in the age of terrorism. Getting the southern border under control should not be a bargaining chip but rather an end in itself—and a crucial one.

Our immigration system must also serve rather than undermine our economic interests, which means we cannot ignore the fact that a glut of low-skill immigrants is hurting the economic chances of the most hardpressed Americans while a shortage of high-skill immigrants leaves our most productive sectors understaffed. A basic reordering of legal immigration in light of economic priorities is necessary for our future prosperity, quite apart from any political implications.

The challenge of handling the 11 million immigrants present here without authorization is an immense legal, social, and moral dilemma. It, too, cannot simply be treated as a bargaining chip but must be considered on its own terms. Mass deportation is neither desirable nor possible, but a ready path to citizenship without consequences is not appropriate either. We will need to find a series of middling options that mix compassion with prudence, humanitarianism with a respect for the law, in a variety of ways suited to the varying circumstances of this enormous population. It would certainly be much easier to begin that work once the border is under control, rather than holding America’s sovereignty and security hostage to the progressive desire for a comprehensive transformation of American immigration.

Skepticism about comprehensive transformations should apply well beyond immigration. Indeed, it is one of the great contributions of conservatism to American political thought, and its wisdom is well demonstrated by the assorted comprehensive transformations already wrought in the Obama years—most notably the transformations of health care and financial regulation. In each case, a gargantuan new statute seeks to do far too many things at once and yet (or rather, therefore) manages to leave the most basic problems unaddressed. Hidden in the greasy creases of these corpulent bills are loads of imperious and often contradictory directives, comically specific injunctions and rules alongside appallingly vague grants of executive discretion, unprecedented expansions of government power, and unavoidable technical errors magnified into fiascos—but no means for slowing the growth of health costs and no end to the “too big to fail” regime.

These comprehensive laws aim to transform American government, rather than address discrete problems. They are the epitome of progressive policy-making. And

a similar approach to immigration would be no less harmful or misguided. What our immigration system requires is not a transformation in the mold of the welfare state but an application of American constitutional principles to address specific problems through targeted reforms. It requires an approach that builds on what is best to improve what is worst.

In other words, it requires an applied conservatism. If the Republican party offered that to the public, it would surely find itself in better stead with voters, whatever their race, creed, or color.

—Yuval Levin

Win the Winnable

First, the problem. In 2010, Republicans failed to capture winnable Democratic Senate seats in Delaware, Nevada, and Colorado. The reason: bad candidates. In 2012, Republicans pulled a repeat, losing two, perhaps three, Democratic seats that were poised to switch parties. The reason: bad candidates.

Now, the solution (or part of it anyway). In 2012, Republicans in North Carolina used redistricting to make Democrat Larry Kissell’s House seat highly winnable. But not if Scott Keadle, a two-time loser of House races, was the candidate. So Young Guns Action Fund, an independent GOP group, spent nearly \$1 million in TV/radio ads and direct mail to boost Richard Hudson, a former congressional aide. Hudson beat Keadle in the primary, then defeated Kissell, 54-46 percent, to win the seat.

The lesson here is not simply that Republicans need better Senate candidates. That’s a given. The important lesson is that yearning for top-notch candidates isn’t enough. It will take aggressive intervention in the selection process to make sure Republicans pick candidates who can win. Young Guns showed the way.

But not the only way. Once a campaign begins, the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) can’t “coordinate” with super-PACs like the Club for Growth and American Crossroads to reach agreement on the best candidate. Beforehand, however, they can legally collaborate, along with others in the GOP orbit. With Senate races in 2014 in mind, they ought to start doing so right about now.

Their goal should be to apply the rule promoted by the late *National Review* editor, William F. Buckley Jr.—that is, support the most conservative Republican candidate who can win. And to avoid brutal primary fights, they should weed out the candidates with the least chance of winning.

Yes, this is a tricky business. It's often not obvious who is the most electable conservative. And it won't always be possible to clear the path for a single, agreed-upon candidate and avert a destructive primary campaign that weakens the winner and aids the Democratic candidate.

But it would surely have been worth the effort to try to single out a Republican candidate for the Senate in Wisconsin this year. What actually happened was a textbook example of how to lose an election. Former governor Tommy Thompson won a bitter primary that depleted his campaign funds. He lost to Democrat Tammy Baldwin, a lavishly funded archliberal who had run unopposed in her primary.

Another example of Republican self-destructiveness occurred in Missouri. Democrats spent more than \$2 million in the GOP primary to boost Todd Akin. He was the easiest candidate for embattled Democratic senator Claire McCaskill to beat even before he uttered the infamous words "legitimate rape."

The Club for Growth preferred Sarah Steelman, while Republicans in Washington felt businessman John Brunner would be the strongest candidate. By not uniting behind one or the other—and running weeks of ads, both negative and positive—Republicans allowed Akin to emerge. They let Democrats decide the Republican primary and reelect McCaskill.

In 2010, the primaries in Nevada and Delaware cried out for intervention. The NRSC wasn't about to take them

on, after its blunder in endorsing Charlie Crist over Marco Rubio in the Florida Senate primary. But what if conservative PACs had lined up behind Sue Lowden, the ex-state GOP chair? She might have ousted Majority Leader Harry Reid. The nominee, Sharron Angle, never had a prayer.

As luck would have it, Republicans have yet another opportunity to capture the Senate in 2014, or at least come close. But they'll blow it again unless cooler Republican heads decide to intervene and deliver conservative candidates who can be elected.

Backing a moderate might make sense in a few states, but not in the five red states with Democratic senators up in 2014. All five are vulnerable: Mark Pryor in Arkansas, Tim Johnson in South Dakota, Mary Landrieu in Louisiana, Mark Begich in Alaska, and Kay Hagan in North Carolina. And if 2014 turns out to be a prosperous year for Republicans, Democrat Jeanne Shaheen will be beatable in New Hampshire (red in 2010, blue in 2012).

When one looks at the condition of the Democratic party in these red states, there are all the more grounds for optimism. With the Clintons gone, the party in Arkansas is disintegrating. In North Carolina, Republicans just won the governorship, a veto-proof legislature, and three House seats (with a fourth possibly headed to a recount). In Louisiana, every statewide elected official is a Republican—except Landrieu.

But even in red states, having an "R" by a candidate's

NAFTA: A Foundation for North American Progress

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

In the 20 years since the North American Free Trade Agreement cemented the commercial relationship between the United States, Canada, and Mexico, NAFTA has propelled an explosion in trade, jobs, and growth and enhanced the competitiveness of all three countries. Twenty years of facts, experiences, and benefits have proven conclusively that the NAFTA critics were wrong.

Last week the U.S. Chamber released *NAFTA Triumphant*, a report that details the agreement's many benefits. Since NAFTA entered into force in 1994, trade with Canada and Mexico has more than tripled, reaching \$1.2 trillion in 2011. Each day the United States conducts more than \$3.2 billion in trade with its two closest neighbors.

Our study found that North American trade supports a net total of nearly 14 million U.S. jobs, and trade unleashed by NAFTA

supports tens of thousands of jobs in every single state. NAFTA has also been a bonanza for U.S. farmers and ranchers, substantially expanding U.S. agricultural exports to Canada and Mexico. One in every 10 acres on American farms is planted to feed hungry Canadians and Mexicans.

NAFTA has raised the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers, which added more than 800,000 jobs in the four years after NAFTA entered into force. Canadians and Mexicans purchased \$428 billion of U.S. manufactured goods in 2011, generating \$36,000 in export revenue for every American factory worker.

These findings soundly debunk the myth that NAFTA has contributed to unemployment. In fact, the U.S. unemployment rate was sharply lower in the years following NAFTA implementation. The jobless rate averaged 5.1% from 1994 to 2007—compared with 7.1% from 1982 to 1993, the years leading up to NAFTA.

In short, NAFTA has supported millions of good jobs, raised standards of living, and made businesses more efficient, productive,

and competitive.

So what's next for this extraordinary partnership?

Our greatest opportunity is establishing North America as a 21st century energy hub. When you add up the potential of all three countries, North America's energy resources are staggering. We need to tear down barriers to production and facilitate the smooth flow of energy across borders so that it gets to where it is needed in the most cost-efficient manner possible. Capitalizing on this opportunity will strengthen our economies, add jobs, and enhance North American energy security and global competitiveness.

Our nations sometimes compete and sometimes disagree, but we are bound together by an extraordinary opportunity to generate even more prosperity across North America.



100 Years Standing Up for American Enterprise
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

name on the ballot won't guarantee election. Good candidates are required. The NRSC knows this, but has to work mainly behind the scenes. Super-PACs don't, and they may be ready to step forward in 2014.

Steven Law, the president of the most influential of the super-PACs, American Crossroads, is considering how to get involved in choosing candidates. Law says he favors a "holistic" approach, starting with vetting potential candidates to find the one who best meets the Buckley rule, then talking to other independent-expenditure PACs and Republicans about supporting the candidate jointly in the primary.

This won't work everywhere. More than one Republican officeholder with conservative credentials is likely to run in North Carolina. The Club for Growth may insist on backing candidates whose electability is questioned by other Republicans. In that event, American Crossroads—or a subsidiary with less of an establishment tinge—might fund primary candidates of their own liking. Though primary fights can be invigorating, they usually aren't. But they are sometimes necessary

Republicans should never forget 2010 and 2012. Had they acted wisely, they might control the Senate today. Harry Reid would be gone and President Obama contained. Now there's a way to expunge the memory of two bad Senate outcomes. Prevent a third.

—Fred Barnes

The West Fights Back

There are some facts so obvious that only a liberal could deny them. One of them is that, from Benghazi to Be'er Sheva, the West is under attack. By the West I mean those nations—wherever on the globe they are—that hold aloft and carry the torch of liberal civilization, that seek to build on the achievements of modern liberalism and the older traditions of Athens and Jerusalem. The United States stands at the head of the West, having had leadership thrust upon us several decades ago—at about the same time the state of Israel came into existence after the collapse of Western civilization in Europe. The West was saved, primarily by Britain and the United States, and its revival after the war was somehow exemplified by the founding of the state of Israel, which, as the philosopher Leo Strauss put it in 1956, "is a Western country, which educates its many immigrants from the East in the ways of the West: Israel is the only country which as a country is an outpost of the West in the East."

To be an outpost is to be under the threat of attack.

To be a leader is to be subject to attack. And so Israel and the United States bear the brunt of the attacks on Western civilization.



An Israeli Iron Dome battery launches an interceptor missile.

George W. Bush was ridiculed by the left, and criticized by some on the right, for speaking of the Global War on Terror. The left hated the notion of a global war of any sort, and the right disliked the imprecision of "terror." But the term "war on terror" has always struck me as good enough for government work. For what the West stands against is terror—whether the terror of modern secular totalitarianism or the terror of an older, and now revitalized, religious fanaticism. From the Great Terrors of Stalin and Hitler to the attacks on New York and Tel Aviv, and on Madrid, Bali, and Mumbai, terrorists of all stripes know who their enemies are. They attack across the world and kill Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike—but they grasp that the centers of resistance, the nations that stand most squarely in their path, are the United States and Israel.

And so these two very different nations—Christian and Jewish, large and small, new world and old (though the new world nation is older than its newly reborn old world counterpart)—find themselves allied. More than allied: They find themselves joined at the hip in a brotherhood that is more than a diplomatic or political or military alliance. Everyone senses that the ties are deeper than those of mere allies. Israelis know that if the United States fails, so shall Israel. Americans sense, in the words of Eric Hoffer, "as it goes with Israel so will it go with all of us. Should Israel perish the holocaust will be upon us."

I write this on the eve of Thanksgiving, the most Old Testament, the most Hebraic, of our national holidays. On Thanksgiving we don't celebrate our rights or our achievements, or honor our soldiers or great men. Rather, we thank the Almighty for our blessings here in America. We might also thank Him for restoring the homeland of the Jewish people, as Israelis might thank Him for the existence, side by side with Israel, of a loyal and steadfast America.

—William Kristol

Why Romney Lost the 'Asian Vote'

Drill down into the numbers, and it's not a surprise.

BY MICHAEL WARREN



Turning off U.S. 50 at a chaotic six-way intersection onto Wilson Boulevard, you can just see the red roof of the clock tower at Eden Center. A replica of the Ben Thanh market in old Saigon, the clock tower peeks out above the shops of this Asian shopping mall seven miles west of Washington, D.C. Buildings here go by names like “Saigon East,” “Saigon West,” and “Saigon Gardens.”

The colorful and ornate Imperial-style gate entrance into the parking lot is impressive. Two stone lions maintain sentry posts beneath the pagoda-like tiled roofs of the entryway. Flanking the lions are two flags, American and South Vietnamese. A few weeks ago, I pulled into Eden Center for a banh mi sandwich and noticed about 20 Romney-Ryan yard signs lining the driveway just past the gate. Minh Duong, 57 and a proud Republican, says she put the signs there.

“Everybody loved it,” Minh says, adding that most in the Vietnamese

community in Northern Virginia supported Mitt Romney. “I asked an old [person] that retired already,” she reports. “And she just said, ‘I have to vote for Romney.’ She can’t even speak ‘Romney!’”

Minh owns a cosmetics store, Eden Skin Care, inside Eden Center’s original pedestrian mall. It doesn’t take much prompting to get her to talk about why she’s a Republican.

“We work hard,” she says. “The first time, we got help from government. But later on, we have to go step by step. We’ve got to work! But some people, sometimes, they’re just lazy. It’s easy money. Go on welfare or whatever. They get money from us. We work hard. We pay tax. I work seven days a week. I don’t take off. Sometimes, I want to take off, but I can’t because if I take off, we lose [money]. I can’t afford it.”

Most days, Minh’s American-born 21-year-old son, Jonathan, works in the store, too. Jonathan, who like his mother votes Republican, agrees with her assessment of heavy Romney support in the community. “Everybody around here, in this area, is a small-business owner,” Jonathan says. “And lately, the past four

years, business has been pretty slow. It’s affecting everybody, so we just wanted to see a difference.”

That goes for 48-year-old Hung Hoang, who owns two barbershops at Eden Center with his family. He says he votes GOP because he believes lower taxes will help his businesses. “We think about the economy,” Hung says.

Any support for Romney in liberal Northern Virginia is notable—Barack Obama won Fairfax County by just under 20 points. But among Asian Americans specifically? That’s unusual. According to the 2012 national exit polls, Obama won 73 percent of U.S. Asians, an 11-point improvement from his performance in 2008. That was the largest swing in any direction among any racial group. Obama won a higher proportion of Asian Americans than he did Hispanics, 71 percent of whom voted to reelect the president. The swing was pronounced enough to garner media attention in the wake of the election.

“Asian-American voters show growing clout, leftward turn,” read one headline in the *San Jose Mercury News*. “The GOP’s Asian erosion,” read another at *Politico*. “Erosion”

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GARY LOCKE

has it about right. In 1992, George H.W. Bush actually won a majority of Asian Americans at 55 percent, and as recently as 1996, Republicans were pulling a plurality of the Asian vote (48 percent for Bob Dole to 43 percent for Bill Clinton). But that reversed sharply in 2000, when Al Gore won 54 percent of the Asian vote to George W. Bush's 41 percent. The Democratic share of the Asian vote has increased since then: 56 percent in 2004, 62 percent in 2008, to 73 percent this year. It's true U.S. Asians are a small portion of the electorate, accounting for only 3 percent of the overall voting population in 2012. But Asians are now the fastest-growing immigrant group, after supplanting Hispanics in 2009. All that has Republicans wondering exactly what happened.

The Pew Research Center's June study, titled "The Rise of Asian Americans," may contain some answers. According to Pew, 50 percent of U.S. Asians either identify as or lean Democratic, compared with only 28 percent who identify as or lean Republican. Asian Americans are more liberal than the general public (31 percent to 24 percent conservative) and say they prefer a bigger government with more services to a small government with fewer services (55 percent to 36 percent). On social issues, U.S. Asians are more or less aligned with their fellow Americans: 53 percent believe homosexuality "should be accepted" by society (compared with 58 percent of the general public), and 54 percent believe abortion should be "legal in all or most cases" (compared with 53 percent of the general public).

The National Asian American Survey, released in September, shows U.S. Asian voters identified more with Obama than Romney on several issues, including women's rights, health care, education, immigration, jobs, and foreign policy. Romney's only advantage was a small one on the budget deficit. The NAAS also found that the "economy in general" was the most important problem for likely Asian-American voters (54.5 percent), with unemployment coming in at a long second (13 percent).

As it turns out, the Vietnamese are one of the more Republican-leaning Asian subgroups, along with Filipinos. But poll data show most other Asian groups vote differently. Here's Pew's Democrat-to-Republican breakdown: Vietnamese, 36 percent to 35 percent; Filipinos, 43 percent to 40 percent; Koreans, 48 percent to 32 percent; Chinese, 49 percent to 26 percent; Japanese, 54 percent to 29 percent; and Indians, 65 percent to 18 percent. (The rest were unaffiliated or third party.)

The U.S. census provides the other half of the picture. In 1990, there were 6.9 million Asian Americans, most of whom were Chinese and Filipino. The Japanese, Korean, and Indian populations were roughly even at around 12 percent of the Asian population each, while Vietnamese were only 8.9 percent. But those relative percentages changed drastically over the next 20 years. By 2010, the share of Japanese dropped by more than half. The share for more Republican-friendly Filipinos and Koreans fell, too, though by much less. The Democratic-leaning Chinese remained stable at around 23 percent, while the Vietnamese increased their share to 10.6 percent. But Indians (by far the most liberal and most Democratic bloc of Asian Americans) upped their share by nearly two-thirds between 1990 and 2010, so that they now make up over 19 percent of the U.S. Asian population—just about 2.8 million people.

What's more interesting, a separate Pew study on religion shows that Asians who are evangelical Protestants or Roman Catholics lean more Republican than their coreligionists among all Americans. But as Razib Khan of *Discover* magazine points out, in 1990, 60 percent of Asian Americans were Christian, but two decades later, only 40 percent are. Looking at all these numbers, it's no wonder Asian Americans went so strongly for Obama in 2012.

Still, like most things demographic, the concept of the "Asian-American vote" is complex and messy. The NAAS found that Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Japanese Americans are more likely to vote, while Indian

Americans are less likely. Consider, too, the cultural diversity among what we call "Asian Americans." Japanese and Filipino Americans intermarry with non-Asians at high levels, while Indian and Vietnamese Americans don't. Sixty percent of Korean and Vietnamese Americans say it is very important that future generations speak their native language; only 29 percent of Indian Americans and 25 percent of Japanese Americans say the same thing. Japanese and Filipinos are more concentrated in the western part of the country, while only about a quarter of Indian Americans live on the West Coast.

None of this even considers the expanding ranks of immigrants from the Middle East and Central Asia. The truth is, trying to understand the overarching political attitudes of a group that lumps together Koreans, Indians, and Arabs is counterproductive.

So how can we make sense of the pro-Romney outliers of Northern Virginia Vietnamese? The Census Bureau reports there are about 41,000 Vietnamese Americans in the region, and almost 70 percent live in Fairfax County, which borders Falls Church. That's 2 percent of the more than 1.8 million Vietnamese Americans in the United States, most of whom live in the western half of the country. One poll of California voters suggests the Vietnamese community in that pervasively liberal environment is much more Democratic.

Back in Northern Virginia, Jonathan Duong says the key lies in understanding his community's culture. Hard work, individualism, family—that's what attracts his people to the GOP. "From our culture in Vietnam, that's what it's about. You go to work, you make whatever amount per hour, enough to take care of everybody. That's what matters," he says.

But for the Vietnamese Republicans here, the reason may just as likely be historical. Hung Hoang, the barbershop owner, immigrated to the United States in 1989, where he already had family. He says the older generation that first came to the U.S. in 1975, after the Vietnam

war, influenced the politics of the next generations. “The first time we came here, the old people . . . said the Republican party was for human rights in Vietnam,” Hoang says.

One of those “old people” is Bich Nguyen. At 75, Bich is a popular leader in the D.C.-area Vietnamese community. He helped develop Radio Free Asia, which combats propaganda in Asian countries with grants from the federal government, and was its first director. A Fulbright scholar who attended Princeton and Columbia, Bich began working for the South Vietnamese government’s news service. As the North Vietnamese crept toward Saigon in April 1975, he was sent to the United States in a last-ditch effort to convince the American government to continue providing support to the South Vietnamese. Bich says he knew the mission was futile when he spoke with South Carolina senator Strom Thurmond, who for some reason started talking about Korea. “Uh, no, Vietnam,” Bich recalls himself thinking as he spoke to Thurmond, then already in his seventies.

So he returned home, taking the last commercial flight into Saigon on April 26, to collect his wife and escape—he was one of the “vulnerables” whose life was about to get much worse once the Communists were in charge. Bich and his wife fled to the small island of Phu Quy and on April 30, the day Saigon fell, they were picked up by an American barge, the *American Challenger*. He remembers American helicopters dropping food onto the crowded ship as it made its way across the Pacific.

Almost all Vietnamese Americans have some connection to 1975. Some fled as Bich did or soon after, often on crudely constructed boats. Others came over the years as families reunited in the United States. The younger generations, those born in America, have parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles who remember the persecution in Communist Vietnam. Bich is a Republican, like many of his generation, because of his experiences opposing communism in his home country.

“Issues of national security and defense tend to be quite important to us,” he says. “Eventually, over two million Vietnamese fled the Communists and those, you know, were unhappy because they had their property confiscated, they were sent to very inhospitable land to remake their lives. Several hundred thousand were put in concentration camps and all this kind of thing. So that was the kind of background that makes us open to the Republican ideology.”

The downturn in the economy and its effect on a relatively recent immigrant group, Bich says, has also affected the Vietnamese way of life and, in turn, their politics.

“People lost jobs, and therefore instead of going to work for the big American companies, that’s no longer available. So you turn back from being an engineer, Ph.D. and all of that, you go and open a restaurant. So in a way, the Vietnamese economically tend to think very independently. You

don’t try to rely on welfare or something like that,” Bich says.

All these characteristics of Vietnamese-American culture are on display at Eden Center. The community doesn’t just work and shop at the nearly 120 Vietnamese-owned businesses here. There are restaurants and delis, karaoke bars and billiard rooms, tax preparation centers and a gym. Business owners sponsor local school sports teams. Children work at their parents’ stores, and business is a family affair. Throughout the year, the community holds traditional festivals and cultural events at the center, such as the annual Miss Vietnam D.C. pageant and the mid-autumn Moon Festival. The center’s parking lot has street signs honoring fallen heroes of South Vietnam like Tran Van Hai and Le Nguyen Vy.

In this little pocket of Northern Virginia, small-town, middle-class values—with a Vietnamese flair—thrive. And not unrelatedly, so does the Republican party. ♦

Winners & Losers

The Gaza war and its fallout.

BY ELLIOTT ABRAMS

If the truce announced in Cairo last Wednesday truly brings the Gaza war to a close, it is not too soon to assess who gained and who lost from this conflict.

HAMAS

Hamas provoked the war and chose the timing, so it is not surprising that they thought they would gain—and they have gained. The PLO initiative in the United Nations (to be classified as a “non-member observer

state”) was shifting energy to the West Bank leadership, and by these attacks on Israel Hamas shifted it back. President Mahmoud Abbas and his cronies in Ramallah barely made the papers, despite Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s visit there. They were marginalized while Arab leaders and Turkish officials visited Gaza, and Hamas leaders traveled to Cairo for high-publicity meetings. The PLO leadership in Ramallah is one of the big losers of the last few weeks.

The effect of this will play out in the coming months. Given Hamas’s control of Gaza, any peace negotiations in 2013 with the “Ramallah leadership” under President Abbas are clearly going to be limited to increasing Palestinian autonomy in the West

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Bank rather than creating a Palestinian state. It is ironic that Palestinians may achieve U.N. recognition of a unified and sovereign Palestinian state at almost exactly the moment when such a state seems further away than ever.

The danger is that Hamas will increasingly be seen as a potential negotiating partner by governments around the world. No doubt many think tanks and “experts” will be repeating that we must reach out, be realistic, and understand that Hamas must be “engaged” if peace is to be attained. If Hamas begins to be treated not as a terrorist group but as an entity equal in legitimacy to the PLO—and for that matter to Israel—it will be the first terrorist group to achieve such status without disarming and while maintaining its loathsome charter and revanchist goals.

What remains to be seen is whether those Hamas gains came at too high a cost for the group. Hamas is a terrorist organization that was able to fire at Tel Aviv and Jerusalem only because Iran supplied it with the Fajr longer-range missiles. But during this conflict Egypt’s new Muslim Brotherhood president, Mohamed Morsi, consistently separated Egypt’s interests from those of Hamas. He did not go to Gaza during the war, did not break relations with Israel, and did not threaten to cancel the peace treaty. It was clear that he did not want the tail to wag the dog—did not want the leaders of 1.5 million Gazans to harm the interests of 85 million Egyptians. He did not want a ground war that might have forced his hand on relations with Israel, and he does not want to see acts of terrorism against Israel launched from Egyptian territory.

Significantly, Morsi’s position appears to be that of the MB as an institution. During the war, Khairat al-Shater, perhaps the single strongest leader in the Brotherhood (and its initial candidate for president), sharply criticized Hamas in a meeting of the

MB leadership reported in the newspaper *Al-Ahram*. Al-Shater denounced Hamas for entangling Egypt in a potential conflict with Israel, and said the army must do a better job of stopping the smuggling of arms into Gaza. People who create crises between Egypt and the West and threaten the vital foreign aid Egypt needs are working against Egypt’s interests, he said.

If this separation of Hamas’s interests from Egypt’s means Egyptian soldiers will now police the Gaza-Sinai border and prevent Iran from shipping replacement missiles into Gaza, Hamas will have paid a heavy price for the



The destroyed house of a Hamas official in Gaza

week of conflict. Getting Egypt to close the smuggling tunnels and police the border should be a main goal of U.S. diplomacy. After the last Gaza war, in December 2008-January 2009, Egypt under President Mubarak failed completely in this task. It will be ironic if the new Muslim Brotherhood government does a better job (and one hopes a by-product will be an end to Israeli mourning for Mubarak’s departure).

EGYPT

It must be said that Egypt is a winner in the conflict. It served as the capital of the Arab world and the center of Middle Eastern diplomacy during the war, with Secretary Clinton, U.N. secretary general Ban Ki-Moon, and officials from the Arab world, Turkey, and Europe shuttling in and out. Turkey and Qatar could not negotiate an

agreement to end the fighting; Egypt did, because of its weight as the largest Arab nation, the legitimacy of its newly elected MB government, and its continuing ties with Israel. The last two weeks restored some of Egypt’s lost luster as the diplomatic center of the Arab world. The truce was announced in Cairo—not Doha or Ankara.

ISRAEL

Both Israel and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu emerge as winners. Polls last week showed that Netanyahu’s support in Israel (which will hold elections on January 22)

had risen, and conversations with Israeli leaders confirm the poll numbers. A large majority of Israelis supported the airstrikes on Gaza but also supported the decision not to go in on the ground. Netanyahu is widely viewed as having shown the proper combination of strength and caution, and none of his rivals broke into double digits in polls asking “who is fit to handle Israel’s security challenges” or “who should lead.” For this reason former prime minister Ehud Olmert will not (and perhaps by the time this article is published

will have announced that he will not) try for a comeback by running against Netanyahu. Israelis have appreciated that Netanyahu avoided bombastic statements, and used the days of conflict to reach out to President Obama and restore a working relationship with him. Israelis realize this conflict did not “solve” the problem of Hamas control of Gaza and that in a few years there may be another round. But they did not expect Netanyahu to pull off a magic act; they wanted sensible, competent leadership, and they got it.

Israel was a winner for two reasons. First, the countries about which Israelis care—the United States, Canada, and European nations—understood Hamas made this war happen and Israel had no choice but to defend its population. These governments did not want to see a ground war and now

credit the government of Israel with prudent management of the conflict. Netanyahu may not be personally popular, and of course most EU leaders favor Israel's left-of-center parties, but Israel will have gained a reputation for moderation. Much of the European media may echo Hamas propaganda and dwell on injuries to civilians in Gaza, but the prime ministers and foreign ministers know better.

Second, it is a real gain for Israel that the supply of Fajr missiles by Iran to Hamas may remind European leaders and our own—as does the presence of Iranian Revolutionary Guards and Hezbollah soldiers in Syria—that Iran lies at the heart of the region's troubles. Once the Israeli election is over and Netanyahu forms a new coalition, roughly around March 1, he will no doubt travel to Washington to discuss the central issue facing the Middle East and his own country: the Islamic Republic. The nuclear program is the top problem, but it is not the only one. Netanyahu will be able to remind the president of something that Gulf Arab leaders have insistently been saying: that the Iranian regime, and not just its nuclear program, is the problem. A nuclear deal that leaves Iran free to engage in subversion throughout the region, sending soldiers to Syria or missiles to Gaza, eliminates only one form of danger—though the greatest and most pressing one.

Rerun the Gaza war in your mind, only this time with Iran rolling out nuclear-tipped missiles and threatening that “an Israeli ground assault in Gaza would be viewed as an attack on all Muslims,” “the Zionist entity must be wiped off the map,” and similar threats. Just words today, but how does Israel handle them if Iran actually has a nuclear bomb and a workable delivery system? This war is likely to lead Israel's leaders to press ahead with all their missile defense programs, but also to confirm their belief that Iran must be stopped—at all costs.

If one or two years from now Iran has attained a nuclear weapon and Hamas has a few hundred Fajr missiles in its warehouses, this war will rightly be seen as just one more step

toward control of the region by radical forces and toward the undermining of Israel's strategic situation. But if this week of conflict has persuaded Egypt's new leaders that their border with Hamas must be policed, and has reminded Arabs, Israelis, and Americans alike that Iran must be stopped before it sows more conflicts in the region and gets the bomb, it will have proved a historic miscalculation by Iran and Hamas.

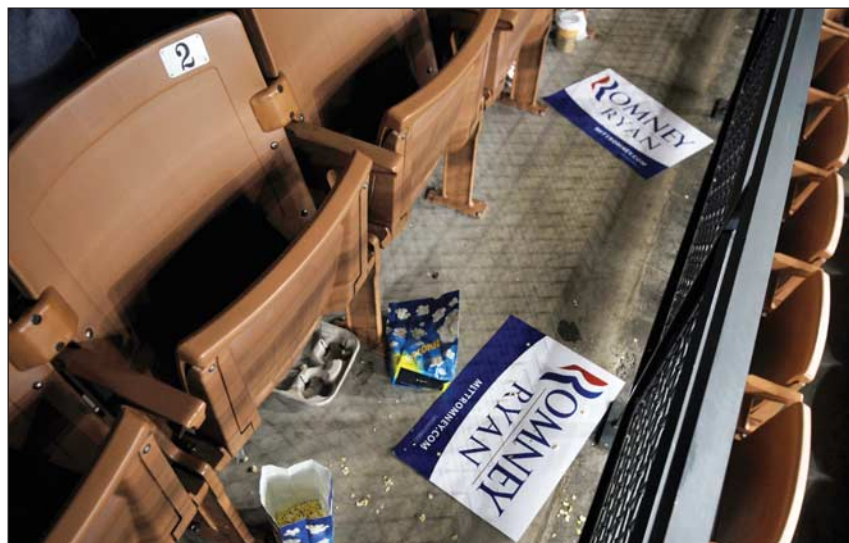
That outcome is possible, and

depends substantially on what President Obama made of it all. He saw his “pivot to Asia” interrupted by war in the Middle East—and was forced to talk about Gaza when he spoke in Bangkok, and to break his secretary of state off the trip. The administration's rhetoric, from Obama down, was solidly behind Israel throughout the war. What policy toward Iran that portends for 2013 will determine whether Israel or the Islamic Republic emerges as the ultimate winner or loser. ♦

After the Tumult and the Shouting

A dyspeptic election.

BY JAY COST



Time to clean up the mess.

If I had to choose one word to describe the 2012 presidential election, it would be *decline*. The results showed a decline in overall turnout, a decline in the GOP coalition relative to its 2004 high, a decline in the Democratic coalition

relative to its 2008 high, and in general a stark decline in public confidence that the nation's leaders can fix its pressing problems.

Just look at the results. In 2008, some 131.5 million Americans went to the polls; while the votes are still being tallied, this time around there probably were between 127 and 130 million votes cast. Most of the decline

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came from white voters; in fact, between 6 and 9 million white voters went missing this year, relative to 2008. It is a reasonable guess that the number of white votes in 2004 roughly equaled the number in 2012, despite the fact that millions of new whites have become eligible to vote and the aging white population has entered peak voting years.

Much has been made of the increasing whiteness of the GOP coalition, with the implication being that Mitt Romney lost because he failed to attract enough support from ethnic or racial minorities. Without doubt, this was a problem for the GOP nominee and certainly made a difference in key swing states. In Colorado and Florida, Romney's support among Hispanics was lower than that of George W. Bush and even John McCain.

But Romney's problems were much bigger than this, as he failed to pull enough white voters into his coalition to win. In Colorado, Florida, and Ohio, Romney improved on McCain's share of white voters, but these states saw notable declines in white turnout. Meanwhile, in Iowa and Virginia—where white turnout was roughly constant—Romney failed to match the levels that Bush pulled when he won both states.

This suggests that the identity politics explanation is insufficient to explain Romney's electoral problem. It was not merely a failure to attract Hispanics and, to a lesser extent, African Americans into the GOP coalition (preliminary data actually suggest that Barack Obama won fewer African Americans in 2012 than he did in 2008). There seems to have been an overall hesitation among many types of voters—white or not—about entering the GOP coalition. It looks as though many backed Obama over Romney, and many more simply chose not to vote.

An examination of the exit poll makes it easy to see why. Obama's campaign against Romney, which portrayed him as an out-of-touch plutocrat, appears largely to have been successful. Romney's favorable rating in the exit poll was just 47 percent,

with 50 percent holding an unfavorable view. By 53 to 43 percent, voters said that Obama was "more in touch with people like" them, and by a staggering 53 percent to 34 percent, they said Romney's policies would favor the rich instead of the middle class.

In other words, Romney lost in large part because of a yawning empathy gap. Typically, this plagues Republican candidates to some degree, even victorious ones, but it was pronounced this year, and appears to have been determinative. The voters who showed up on Election Day identified more closely with Obama than Romney, and those who stayed home presumably identified with neither. Importantly, this problem transcended age, race, ethnicity, and gender. Compared with Bush in 2004, Romney simply failed to connect with people.

What of the Democratic performance? There is little for the left to celebrate here beyond the fact that their candidate won a second term in the Oval Office. After all, President Obama won fewer popular votes, a smaller share of the popular vote, and a smaller share of the Electoral College. The last president to be reelected with such a diminished coalition was Franklin Roosevelt in his third and fourth terms. No president in American history but Barack Obama has ever entered a second full term with his coalition diminished across the board.

It is not hard to see why Obama's support fell. If the public was skeptical of Romney's ability to represent their interests and values, they were almost as skeptical of Obama's ability to tackle the tough problems. A plurality of voters said that the health care law should be repealed. Voters almost tied over whom they preferred on the economy, which remains the number-one issue, and there was a similar split on the deficit. More broadly, a majority of voters said the government was "doing too much," which clearly ran against Obama's message as well as his proposed second-term agenda. While voters approved of Obama's job performance, they were curiously split

on a related question—49 percent said they were "enthusiastic" or "satisfied" and another 49 percent said they were "dissatisfied" or "angry." This is hardly a ringing endorsement for the 44th president.

On balance, what does this all mean? While analysts have been slicing and dicing the data showing the behavior of this bloc and that group, the forest has gone missing for the trees. Romney's underperformance relative to Bush's is notable, but so is Obama's underperformance relative to his 2008 haul. Combine this with the decline in turnout, particularly among white voters, and it appears that the country at large was dissatisfied with the choice offered.

Indeed, there is no evidence whatsoever—either in the vote totals or in the exit poll—that the country had much confidence in either candidate, or either party, to handle the problems that confront us. If a single question on the exit poll captured the country's lack of enthusiasm for both candidates, it was, "Who would better handle the economy?" Only 48 percent chose Obama. One would think that would sink the president's reelection chances, but of the 49 percent who chose Romney, only 94 percent voted for him, with the rest backing Obama or a third-party candidate. The same thing happened with the deficit: Slightly more voters picked Romney (49 percent) than Obama (47 percent) to handle that issue, but Romney won only 95 percent of voters who trusted him more. That is Election 2012 in a nutshell: Voters did not trust Obama to handle the tough issues, but even less did they trust Romney to represent them in the Oval Office.

It is not hard to see how the nation's deep disgruntlement could produce a major upheaval in two or four years' time. It comes down to two questions. First, will the problems that plague the body politic continue? Nobody is optimistic about robust economic growth in the near or medium term, which in turn suggests the continuation of trillion-dollar deficits. Second, will a candidate emerge who can relate to voters

and convince them that he or she offers a real course correction, which 52 percent of 2012 voters said was needed? Clearly, neither Romney nor Obama managed to make that case, but that does not mean no future candidate could channel public frustration into a peaceful revolution, one that would remorselessly sack the powers that be.

In the meantime, conservatives who are navel-gazing need to think beyond electoral groups. That analysis is inherently favorable to the Democratic party, which for generations has been the undisputed master of us-versus-them identity politics. And it misses the much bigger point: The country was not persuaded that the Republican nominee had their interests at heart. Part of the blame belongs to the Romney campaign, but part of it reflects the failure of the Republican party during the Bush years to deliver the prosperity that remains at the heart of the conservative political pitch. It is sad but true that most voters have no adult memory of how Reagan pulled off a turnaround from the Carter malaise; instead, their most salient memories of Republican presidential leadership are of economic stagnation during the two Bush tenures, father and son.

The silver lining here is that the country is also increasingly skeptical of the Democrats, albeit not enough to deliver Romney the presidency. In 2016 the Republican party must find a nominee who can relate to average Americans—and then deliver the kind of prosperity that has been sorely lacking for the past decade.

The United States of America in 2012 is a dyspeptic and disappointed nation, deeply frustrated and lacking confidence in either political coalition. As a consequence, we saw stark declines—in participation, in confidence, and in the vote shares of both parties. If the problems that have driven the country's dissatisfaction persist, then decline could easily generate tumult, and the next several elections could produce major changes in the way business is conducted in Washington, D.C. ♦

By the Rivers of . . . Quebec?

The cheap, green answer to our electricity needs.

BY ELI LEHRER



Generating plant at Niagara Falls, Ontario: More of this, eh?

Jake Irving looks excited. Sitting at a table in a noisy Washington, D.C., bistro, he pulls a chart out of a briefcase with a flourish. The numbers are simple: Canada's untapped, undammed rivers have enough potential to make a serious difference in North America's energy needs while helping the economy on both sides of the border.

According to data his Canadian Hydropower Association has collected from its members, Canada has an estimated 163,000 megawatts of untapped hydro capacity: enough to meet any expected increases in U.S. demand for electricity, enough to transform about a third of the U.S. vehicle fleet to electrical power or to replace many scheduled-for-retirement power-generating plants. "This," he tells visitors, "is where we're going." Irving has every reason

to act the cheerleader, but hardly anybody doubts his fundamental point: Hydropower offers the potential of an energy boom almost as large as the one now associated with natural gas.

Indeed, hydropower from Canada offers Americans an almost too-good-to-be-true source of energy. It's clean and renewable like wind and solar power, while being reliable, proven, and cheap like coal and natural gas. In fact, developing more hydropower in Canada for use "down south" appears likely to achieve both the cost and efficiency goals prized by conservatives while satisfying the environmental goals of the political left. For the moment, however, the lack of interest groups that support more hydropower—and the presence (on both sides of the border) of groups that oppose it—makes it difficult to know what will happen, despite potentially massive benefits for the U.S. economy.

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Hydropower is cheap and reliable. Only coal has the potential to be cheaper, and ongoing Obama administration regulations seem sure to make coal plants far more expensive—if they continue to exist at all. Places in North America like Quebec, Manitoba, and Idaho, where almost all power already comes from hydroelectricity, pay between six and seven cents per kilowatt hour, while areas like New York, California, and Ontario that have pursued “all of the above” energy strategies sock customers with bills ranging from 14 to 17 cents per kilowatt hour. Furthermore, existing power transmission lines make it surprisingly easy to send power to the United States from Canada. Manitoba, for example, has high-capacity lines that connect it to Minnesota to its south, but *not* to Ontario to its east.

While not environmentally harmless—no form of energy is—hydropower is among the most earth-friendly energy sources around. It doesn't require digging anything out of the ground and produces no emissions of particulates or greenhouse gases in the course of actual power generation. Building dams, it's true, interrupts rivers, disturbs wildlife habitat, floods significant areas, and releases greenhouse gases when vegetation dies. Placing dams in Canada interrupts rivers, of course, but the areas likely to be flooded are very sparsely inhabited, have little rare wildlife, and will release far fewer greenhouse gases than would less icy areas.

Hydropower's track record is also by far the longest of any renewable power source. Water-powered mills existed in antiquity, and water has generated electricity since the 1870s. (Most large U.S. utilities can trace their histories back to hydro-power companies.) Unique among significant sources of power, hydro plants can also be turned on and off in minutes when demand spikes or plummets.

In short, untapped hydropower in Canada is vastly more promising than any other form of emissions-free energy. The 25,000 megawatts of new hydropower already under

construction or advanced planning in Canada, none of it requiring direct subsidies, is greater than the 21,000 megawatts of wind power that the United States has built (largely with funds from the stimulus bill and other efforts) since 2008. In addition, Canada's untapped hydropower is enough to more than replace the 255,000 megawatts of coal-generating capacity that the United States has taken offline since 2008 because of obsolescence, new environmental regulations, and low natural gas prices.

Despite all of hydro's advantages, there's no plan to build new river dams in the United States. The reason is simple: There's no good place to do it. Even the U.S. National Hydropower Association admits as much. While it talks of doubling U.S. hydropower with a variety of efforts (many of them requiring subsidies and tax credits), all but a minuscule fraction of the proposed increase would come from adding generators and capacity to existing dams to explore thus-far-unproven sources like tidal power and pumping excess capacity into storage areas. This additional power, although clean and thus satisfying to some environmental groups, remains undeveloped absent subsidies because, in many cases, it would be just as expensive as trendy renewables like wind and solar power.

U.S. environmental groups aren't enthusiastic about building more dams, but even those that typically oppose dams say that more hydropower could make sense, particularly if it displaces dirtier forms of fuel. “If there aren't renewable projects built, we're never going to get out from fossil energy in the United States,” says John Seebach of the group American Rivers, which has often led opposition to dam projects. “The only power source that hurts rivers more than hydro is coal.”

For all the great possibilities, however, bringing in more hydropower from Canada isn't a sure thing. Even Jake Irving admits “these aren't all going to happen” when looking at his own association's predictions of new capacity. Furthermore, building

lots of dams in Canada does nothing to satisfy the Obama administration's sure-to-continue quest for “green jobs.” In fact, precisely because it's so cheap to produce, increased hydropower capacity could well displace American jobs in high-cost wind and solar power.

Indeed, the broad benefits of cheap power and a cleaner environment overall might even paradoxically be seen as a barrier to hydropower development. The most important real gains from developing hydropower will be distributed so widely that they'll tend to boost living standards for almost everyone rather than offering any particular group in the United States a huge payday. (Canadian construction interests will reap that reward.) Although untapped hydro capacity is enormous, it's not enough to replace more than a fraction of coal plants that environmentalists and their allies in the Obama administration want to see eliminated. And, for those who want “energy independence” for the United States, building dams in another country obviously doesn't achieve it.

Financing a big hydro expansion is also a challenge. All of the biggest Canadian hydroplant owners are “crown corporations”—government-supported enterprises—that the various provincial governments own and control. While all are generally profitable, they exist partly for public purposes and thus might well be stopped from making potentially risky investments largely for the benefit of people who aren't citizens of their provinces, or even their country. Thus, the companies with the experience, knowledge, and political juice to get a massive number of projects built don't necessarily have a motive to begin doing so.

Nonetheless, building hydroelectric power plants in Canada—lots of them—offers a rare win-win situation for America's energy future. Indeed, it's by far the most economically viable form of green energy and a rare opportunity to meet the energy goals of both left and right. ♦

Charity Begins in China

The good works done by Christians after the 2008 earthquake have led Beijing to ease up on private philanthropy

BY JILLIAN KAY MELCHIOR

The day after Long Cai Bin was baptized, an earthquake destroyed his hometown. But it might have opened his country to his faith.

On May 12, 2008, Long was sitting outside his door in Beichuan, a city in China's Sichuan Province, when his chair began to shake. The ground shook with it, and people started fleeing the surrounding buildings. When they saw Long, they were attracted by his calmness, and they clung to him, looking for guidance.

"My first thinking was to help people," Long says. "And my second was to ask God for help."

Long had become a Christian after being drawn to the love and friendship demonstrated by Beichuan's Protestants. As the disaster struck, he had his first important chance to emulate them. Long led his terrified neighbors to safety, taking them to the nearby riverbank, where the land was flat and free of buildings. Holding each other, they waited until the earth stilled and quiet fell.

Beichuan was near the epicenter of the Sichuan earthquake. The city's location proved as perilous as it was beautiful, planted in a deep valley atop the Dragon Gate seismic fault. When the earthquake hit, shoddy buildings flattened, crushing thousands of people. The 7.9-magnitude quake also triggered landslides and floods, creating a triple curse for the city's inhabitants. About half of Beichuan's population perished in the quake, which claimed as many as 90,000 lives.

Yet the Sichuan earthquake proved a decisive moment for China's Christians. Catholics and Protestants alike volunteered bravely, searching for survivors despite aftershock fears. Nationwide, Chinese Christians donated millions of yuan to help those in need.

The Chinese public took notice. For all of communism's promises, the Sichuan quake established that the Chinese government simply isn't up to the job of responding to citizens in need. It's not only victims of national

disaster, either: From treating victims of AIDS to feeding the hungry to taking care of the country's orphans, disabled, and elderly, it's clear that Chinese Christian charities do a much better job than the government. And that reality is leading to a seismic change in modern Chinese society that has gone mostly unreported.

Christian churches in Sichuan saw a dramatic increase in conversions after the earthquake. But the conversion of the government might be more dramatic. Despite its long antipathy toward Christianity, the government appears to realize that the churches fill a glaring gap in Chinese society. Beijing has taken some promising steps this year to encourage Christians and other believers to continue expanding their philanthropic pursuits.

Rebecca Lee, a law professor at the University of Hong Kong, wrote that natural disasters, and the Sichuan earthquake in particular, "have brought the shortcomings of the bureaucratic government starkly into focus, creating the opportunity, and indeed the necessity, for the charitable sector to thrive."

Pastor Wei Kang, president of Sichuan's Protestant Pastoral Union, agrees the disaster was a critical turning point. "After the earthquake, the church did so much good that the government saw and wanted to expand it," he says.

Wei is the pastor of a government-sanctioned church in Chengdu with around 8,000 members. The pastoral union's offices in the huge church became a center for Protestant charitable activity during the disaster. Donations poured in from Christians across China; the pastoral union distributed nearly \$8 million. The church supplied victims with food and aided reconstruction efforts, spending almost \$2 million to rebuild Tong Ji Zheng Ma Liu Village in Pengzhou City, about 30 miles from Chengdu. In especially hard-hit areas, the pastoral union established ongoing monthly support to families that lost everything.

"After the earthquake, many people came to the church because we did so much charity work," Wei says. "Other people may have given just once, but we never stopped."

Christians' earthquake aid was truly an ecumenical effort. Catholics and Protestants, members of state-sanctioned, "house," and "underground" churches—all gave, and gave generously.

Jillian Kay Melchior has traveled extensively in China, reporting on Christianity as a Robert Novak fellow with the Phillips Foundation.

That put the government in an awkward position. In Wenzhou—China’s most capitalistic city and one of its most Christian—the Catholic diocese collected 2.5 million yuan (about \$395,000) and donated it to a government-run earthquake charity fund. Much of the money came from the city’s 80,000 underground Catholics, who have been subjected to periodic persecution.

The Wenzhou diocese requested that the money be used to rebuild schools in Sichuan, but the government was horrified at the prospect of a building bearing the name of Catholic donors. So the money instead bought computers and sports equipment—items rather more difficult to inscribe. Nevertheless, a government-issued plaque thanks the “Catholics of Wenzhou diocese,” the wording careful neither to dismiss nor to acknowledge explicitly the generosity of underground worshippers. That plaque hangs on the wall of a factory-turned-underground church, not far from a neon cross and a poster of Jesus.

Christians’ charity after the earthquake also favorably affected public opinion, though it’s difficult to measure the degree. One good indication is the number of conversions; pastors in the earthquake area have universally reported a sustained increase in the number of baptisms since the disaster. Fu Chen Chi Protestant Church in Mianyang, another city hard-hit in 2008, has seen annual baptisms nearly double in the four years after the disaster, Pastor Cao Yue Han reports.

“After the earthquake, more people became Christian, and also people had a deeper faith than before,” Cao explains. “They became Christian, not only [because they were afraid] after the earthquake but because they could see the charity and they could see the kindness of the Chinese Christians.”

While post-quake religious charitable activities received a lot of publicity, they were no anomaly. Though it garners little attention in the Chinese and foreign press, China’s Christians are extraordinarily generous. According to incomplete statistics released in September by the State Administration for Religious Affairs, registered religious Chinese, which it numbers at over 100 million, gave more than \$475 million over the last five years. More than half came from China’s Protestants and Catholics. And that number does not include the charity of China’s unregistered believers, who account for the majority of Christians in the country.

The philanthropy of Chinese Christians is impressive in

scope. They are quick to respond to natural disasters: When a 5.7-level earthquake struck Yunnan and Guizhou provinces on September 7, 2012, Christians were among the first to mobilize. The year before, when a high-speed train collision killed 40 and injured nearly 200, underground Catholics queued up quickly to give blood. But Christian outreach isn’t limited to catastrophe. Across the nation, Chinese believers operate nursing homes, orphanages, and social-service centers, caring for the poor, sick, unwanted, and abandoned.

Dozens of residents of a Northern Chinese village contracted HIV while selling their blood. Their communities cut them off, refusing even to eat with them. A nearby priest visits each month, giving them emotional support and money for food.

“These people didn’t believe that anyone cared,” the priest says, adding that “before, people wouldn’t get checked. Now, they get checked for HIV because they know [someone] will still care.”

Another Chinese Catholic group oversees an ongoing effort to help the impoverished and elderly. One old woman was orphaned as a child and left homeless after the government confiscated her shanty. Malnourished, she developed

a crippling disease in her lower back and legs. Her only income was a government stipend of less than \$50 a month. Finally, a distant relative took her in, but it’s the church that supplies food and money. They gave her a coat for the harsh winters, so precious to her that she refuses to wear it except when she has guests. She wept openly during a visit from aid workers, embracing them and thanking them. “She’s gone most of her life believing no one loves her,” one church worker says.

Chinese Christians reach a neglected sector of society, one the government itself has failed to help. “For the government, there are too many poor,” one church worker says. “The government is okay with social services related to religion, but [officials] don’t dare to help you register. The government does think [religious charity is] good for society, but may not [overtly] support it.”

Recognizing the need for philanthropic activity is one thing; embracing it is another. As it stands, China’s laws severely limit the number and scope of philanthropic organizations, and religious charities are especially controlled. There is no single law regulating philanthropic activity. Legally speaking, charities remain



Christians pray for victims at a collapsed Sichuan church.

undefined. Philanthropic entities are registered as “social organizations,” “civil non-enterprise institutions,” or “foundations,” all governed under a sloppy patchwork of laws developed since China’s 1979 reforms.

Registration is extremely cumbersome, and charities are made or crushed by government fiat. Yu Fangqiang, a Chinese human rights lawyer, observed in a recent blog post for the nonprofit group Asia Catalyst that “in mainland China, it is extremely hard to start up a non-governmental organization (NGO) without a background in government.” Likewise, one religious worker in China recounts his surprise upon hearing about “gongos” in a meeting about Christian charitable activity. What are those, he wondered—only to learn that China has a number of paradoxical “government-organized non-governmental organizations.” George Orwell is laughing in his grave.

Registration is an especially effective barrier against religious charities. With few exceptions, such as the Amity Foundation and Jinde, China’s religious charities are registered solely at the local or provincial level, which limits the places where they can raise funds and carry out activities. And registered faith-based charities are forbidden from promoting religious messages while performing services. While it’s not illegal to give or help others, unregistered charities face many limits, the most significant being that they are not permitted to solicit donations at all.

In addition to onerous registration requirements that prevent charities from getting too big, there are legal provisions that deter small charitable organizations from being founded. Philanthropic organizations that want to fundraise must meet hefty initial capital requirements. They’re also required to spend most of the cash they raise in the same year, making it difficult to carry out long-term projects.

Further discouraging philanthropy, China offers minimal incentives for donors. Individuals can, in theory, get a tax deduction by donating to a registered charity. In practice, it’s difficult. Lee notes that in 2005, “it took two months and 10 administrative procedures for a senior official in the Ministry of Civil Affairs”—one of the primary bureaucracies dealing with Chinese charities—“to successfully claim a tax deduction for his RMB 500 donation.” That’s about \$80. Companies can get a tax deduction of up to 12 percent, but only by donating to government-approved organizations that carry out “public welfare activities.” With so few incentives—and a mindset developed under decades of government paternalism—it’s no wonder that China’s *Xinhua News* reported in 2005 that 99 percent of corporations don’t give to any charities at all.

Another problem is that the existing legal framework has few accountability measures for charities. A series

of high-profile scandals have undermined people’s willingness to give. The most famous incident involved a 20-year-old woman named Guo Meimei, who claimed to be a general manager at the Red Cross Society, and who flaunted her bling on the Chinese equivalent of Twitter. Chinese netizens were understandably suspicious about whether their charitable donations had paid for her Hermès handbags and orange Lamborghini.

Despite these barriers, enthusiasm for philanthropy is growing. A new study by China’s leading wealth researcher, the Hurun Report, found that the country’s richest citizens are increasingly interested in both religion and philanthropy. And religious workers across China report that even middle- to lower-class citizens donate money and volunteer at Christian charities.

Though the government mostly succeeded in masking it from the international community during the 2008 Olympics, China is still very much a developing country. The nation’s leaders like to boast how hundreds of millions of people have risen above the poverty line since 1978. Less known is that more than 1 in 10 nonurban Chinese—128 million people—subsist on a dollar or less a day.

Despite all the talk of a growing middle class, China struggles with socioeconomic stratification. In this respect, ironically, religious charity assists a socialist goal: It transcends and unites classes. As the rich give their money and their time, they come in contact with the impoverished, building bonds with people they would not otherwise encounter. The wealthy and influential thus develop an appreciation for the problems of the poor.

Religious charity also could mend social fissures created in the darkest days of communism. China’s Maoist years cultivated a paranoid lack of trust and an obsessive sense of privacy among the citizenry. Back then, sharing personal details was a political liability—even a mortal danger. To this day, many people refuse to put their names on their mailboxes: They don’t want their neighbors knowing who they are. This suspicion continues in the church, where priests are often reluctant to confess to other clergy who may know them.

Religious charities help heal these wounds, says a source close to the underground Catholic bishop in Wenzhou. They emphasize not only helping others but also loving them. “After the Cultural Revolution, people forgot how to love each other,” he says. “And at the same time, there is a niche, a blank place, that the government has never filled, the charity [sector].”

Despite that need, charities too closely linked to religion or politics have long met government opposition, reports the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, an organization that encourages global legal-reform efforts to support civil society and philanthropy. “Advocacy,

religious, critical, and policy-oriented groups are often much more closely monitored by Party and state authorities,” ICNL reported in a paper published in August. “In some cases, organizations have been closed and civil society activists have been detained, tried, and imprisoned for their peaceful activities.” The government has often repressed religious practice using catchall excuses, penalizing believers for nebulous infractions such as “violating state security” or “disrupting public order.”

Then came the Sichuan earthquake. As the disaster struck, Chinese Christians rose to the occasion. Their actions persuasively argued for them the case that their Christian beliefs actually made them *better citizens*. Far from undermining their country and government, Christians supported China in crisis, embodying the principle of “social harmony” so prolifically espoused by the government. The government is responding—slowly but encouragingly.

Premier Wen Jiabao briefly discussed philanthropy in his March address to the National People’s Conference, a speech similar to the American president’s State of the Union. He talked about the need “to accelerate the development of social welfare and charitable [and] philanthropic pursuits” and promised to “push for innovations in administering the rule of law and social management and put in order (or rationalize) the relationship between government and civic and social organizations.” The National Human Rights Action Plan of China, which the government released in June, calls for “encouraging religious believers to carry out charity activities.”

Earlier, the State Administration for Religious Affairs, the bureaucracy that oversees religion, and five other major government departments had issued a “Notice on Encouraging and Guiding Religious Groups to Perform Charitable Work.” In an editorial coinciding with the paper’s February release, the *People’s Daily*, the Communist party’s house organ, asserted that “the government will clarify related policies, further improve the management and coordination mechanism, and strengthen efforts to implement related policies, in order to make religious groups more willing to engage in long-term charitable activities.” Observers speculate that the new policies will remove some of the barriers to registration and fundraising for religious charities, instead treating them more like other, nonreligious philanthropic

organizations. It will also likely allow more tax deductions for religious charities and their donors.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs submitted a draft charity law this summer to the State Council, China’s legislative body. Though this legislation is still being heavily reworked and amended, it could reform the convoluted oversight of philanthropic work, removing some of the biggest inhibitors. The ministry also released internal policies aimed at improving transparency and oversight of charitable foundations, presumably to restore trust in philanthropic organizations after the misuse scandals.

Finally, in September, China hosted its first-ever Week of Religious Charity. Though it focused on state-sanctioned houses of worship, neglecting the charitable activities of unregistered Christians, a government news release stated that China’s religious charities have “gradually transform[ed] from simply meeting the material needs of service targets to paying full attention to their psychological, spiritual, and social needs.”

The devil, of course, will be in the details. The Chinese government is expert in writing laws that appear to expand rights while creating critical loopholes that reinforce arbitrary official rule. There’s reason for skepticism. Texas-based ChinaAid, which monitors religious freedom, has reported a significant increase in persecution of believers in recent years. And the State Administration for Religious Affairs focuses on the state-sanctioned church, ignoring the majority of Chinese Christians, who worship outside the official religious bureaucracy.

Yet it’s that historical persecution that makes the Communists’ evolving policy on religious charities all the more significant. By encouraging religious charities, Beijing is doing something unprecedented: acknowledging the positive effect Christians have on Chinese society.

By unchaining independent philanthropy, China would strengthen its battered civil society. Citizens engaging in charitable activity would get practice in small-scale self-government. Both are essential to China’s larger political development.

Opening the door to religion is inherently liberalizing. The government can’t expand the charitable works of Christians without also expanding free speech, free assembly, and even property rights for believers. If liberty ever comes to China, Christian charity—along with a natural disaster—may prove to have been one of the most important catalysts. ♦



A bedroom—with religious items—at a Catholic-run charity in Wenzhou



Winston Churchill, Henry Luce, 1949

Winston's Table Talk

Churchill and the art of delicious conversation. BY TRACY LEE SIMMONS

It was Lord Birkenhead who said that Winston Churchill, a friend of decades' standing, was a man always "easily satisfied with the best." This sharp declaration could cut in sundry ways, of course, and Churchill's friends could have as much sport with him as his enemies did: It was Birkenhead who also said that "Winston has devoted the best years of his life to preparing his impromptu speeches." Cutting, indeed—but one senses more than a few drops of affection dripping from these ladlings of wit. They were amused attempts to bring greatness down to where we commoners could see and understand it.

Tracy Lee Simmons, who teaches honors humanities at Lynchburg College, is writing a book about Thomas Jefferson.

Dinner with Churchill
Policy-Making at the Dinner Table
by Cita Stelzer
Pegasus, 336 pp., \$26.95

Some characters of history's drama cannot readily be summed up. Little wonder, then, that we're eager to get at them through back doors, through muddy facts from their biographies rather than straightforward accounts of their achievements. They feel more like one of us that way.

Cita Stelzer, journalist and Reader at Cambridge, has opted to help us understand one side of Winston Churchill's greatness by demonstrating his buoyant use of the dinner table as a means of vigorous coaxing

and high-spirited entertainment. For Churchill was a natural deipnosophist, a master of table conversation—and had he not been, the history of our times might have been vastly different. Andrew Roberts writes, in a helpful introduction:

His great gifts of conviviality, intelligence, humor, memory, anecdotal ability, wit, hospitality, and—not least—alcoholic hard-headedness, all helped him to charm and ultimately persuade all but his most intellectually prosaic of guests.

Cita Stelzer shows us how he did it. And since "intellectually prosaic" most kindly describes the type of company Churchill would find in today's political circles, *Dinner with Churchill* serves up more than a nicely documented

TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

study of the past. It's a record of manners and mores that have passed away in a world in which the smart set isn't so smart, or even identifiable, anymore, but is instead a menagerie of policy wonks and verbally fumbling hucksters. This was a period when men in power, even some of the most despicable of them, could read real books and furnish their minds with ideas older than yesterday's headlines.

And nobody of this robust time quite combined Churchill's qualities of intellectual amplitude and social flair. From early on he was a spirited raconteur and shone brightly in conversation, especially when dining with the beau monde. In 1906, Violet Bonham Carter, daughter of the future prime minister H.H. Asquith, sat "spellbound" at dinner next to the 32-year-old Churchill:

I was transfixed, transported into a new element. There was nothing false, inflated, artificial in his eloquence. It was his natural idiom. His world was built and fashioned in heroic lines. He spoke its language.

Nor did the light dim over the years to come. John Maynard Keynes dined with Churchill four months after he became prime minister, during some of the most anxious and distressing days of the war, and found him "extremely well, serene, full of normal human feelings and completely un-inflated. Perhaps this moment is the height of his power and glory, but I have never seen anyone less infected with dictatorial airs or hubris." Churchill might have been a creature of his time and class, a brilliant man in a (fairly) brilliant milieu, but he struck his contemporaries as exceptional.

"Diplomacy," Churchill once said, "is the art of telling plain truths without giving offense." And where better to exercise this delicate juggling act than over meals, when nerves tend to be less taut? The dinner table had always been a venue of choice for a gourmand like Churchill; yet he also came to believe that the act of dining together made for equanimity and good feeling among opponents as well as allies. He was not the first statesman to practice dinner

diplomacy, but he sought to make it an artform and a basis for amity among rivals. Nothing engendered sympathy more predictably than breaking bread (along with smoking and drinking, in the days before both became semi-criminal practices).

Stelzer spends the greater share of this book trekking us along Churchill's frigid and sultry routes in pursuit of aid in war and postwar settlements. From his first official meeting with



President Roosevelt, off the coast of Newfoundland in August 1941, to his three-week post-Pearl Harbor sojourn at the White House, to Moscow, Adana, Tehran, Yalta, Potsdam, and, finally, to Fulton, Missouri, and Bermuda for his (unsuccessful) meeting with President Eisenhower, Churchill chugged from one dinner to another. He artfully formed the menus and judiciously chose the wines and champagnes when he was the host—and endured tactless or tasteless choices by others when he was not. Once, having discovered that he had run out of cigars, his American hosts scrounged up some White Owls on which Churchill took two puffs, and politely declined the rest.

We learn many of the diverting, if less consequential, facts that are always welcome to readers of history. For instance, we learn how Eleanor Roosevelt found herself less than pleased with a guest of such a high nuisance quotient as Churchill, who moved himself into the White House, bossed the staff to accommodate his numerous whims, and tirelessly talked a flagging FDR into late, brandy-soaked nights. This caused the frustrated first lady to drop hints—of diminishing subtlety—to knock it off and go to bed. Also, when Churchill visited Stalin the following summer in Moscow, he noted the "totalitarian lavishness" of his rooms and feasts while most of the population beyond the walls of his dacha were starving.

Most tantalizingly, however, Stelzer includes all the menus she could find, most of them reproduced in facsimile from table cards, which give us a clear picture of, say, what the Big Three ate at Tehran: Persian soup, boiled salmon trout from the Caspian, turkey, cheese soufflé, and a bizarre showpiece called "Persian lantern ice." Fancy enough, but not as elaborate as it might have been. Churchill claimed to enjoy only "plain English" fare, though his diet could have been a good deal more plain than it was. He had a few constants: He preferred more simple (and undercooked) meat dishes, and rarely compromised on soups, all of which had to be clear, nothing cream-based. (The true test of a cook, he thought, was skill at soupmaking.) And all his meals were accompanied by gallons of champagne, wine, Scotch, and brandy.

With Churchill and drink, we move from history to legend. "You can't make a speech on ice water," he is supposed to have said. The scantest research reveals that Churchill kept alcohol streaming in his system every hour of every day. One Roosevelt aide said that while the prime minister stayed at the White House, Churchill's "consumption of alcohol continued at quite regular intervals through most of his waking hours," though, it was added, "without visible effect." Churchill did begin drinking

whisky in the morning, from a glass hugely diluted with water or soda—what one secretary recalled was practically a “mouthwash”—though he saved his serious drinking for dinnertimes and after, and almost always with company.

There is no evidence that Churchill’s prodigious drinking impaired his capacity to work. The Canadian prime minister wrote in his diary that dinner wine, for instance, had an effect on Churchill purely of “quicken[ing] his intellect and intensify[ing] his facility of expression,” an observation confirmed by almost all witnesses. Alcohol enhanced, not diminished, his companionship. What we call “social drinking” was a prime cause and condition of fellowship for Winston Churchill—it was the forge of bonds among civilized people. Churchill

famously said that he took more out of alcohol than alcohol took out of him—and anyway, his drinking seemed to create an image he wished to sustain, happy to allow others to believe that he drank more than he did.

His drinking provided occasions of mirth. When he joined Franklin Roosevelt for their conference at Casablanca, Churchill wrote a letter of distress at finding the place less than hospitable: “Dinner at [FDR’s villa] (dry, alas!) with the Sultan. . . . After dinner, recovery from the effects of the above.” Perhaps he saw the value of posing a counterimage to the teetotalism of Hitler, whom A.J. Liebling called the “archetype of the abstemious man. When the other krauts saw him drink water in the Beer Hall they should have known he was not to be trusted.” ♦

had to go beyond his personal experience and head out into society as a reporter.” And, of course, Wolfe set out to practice what he preached, publishing three hefty bestsellers—*The Bonfire of the Vanities*, *A Man in Full*, and *I Am Charlotte Simmons*—that aimed to “take real life and spread it across the pages of a book.”

Set in Miami, *Back to Blood* continues his commitment to research techniques “as thorough as Zola’s.” The acknowledgments page lists journalists, teachers, and painters, as well as a neurosurgeon, a social geographer, and “the great Haitian social anthropologist Louis Hersn Marcelin.” Wolfe also thanks the city’s former police chief, John Timoney, for taking “the covers off an otherwise invisible Miami.”

Nestor Camacho, the main character in *Back to Blood*, is himself a cop looking for a chance to boost his career. In the opening chapter, Nestor dramatically retrieves a panicked Cuban defector who has scrambled up the towering mast of a schooner filled with revelers in Biscayne Bay. The rescue is widely publicized and, initially at least, Nestor basks in his new status as a “high-wattage hero.” But his bravery plays less well in nearby Hialeah, where many Cuban Americans (including Nestor’s family) have come to reside. The defector, they know, never reached dry land. And under federal law he must be hauled back to Cuba, where prison awaits. Nestor’s own parents fled Castro in a crude dinghy, risking sunstroke and starvation along the way. Thus, Nestor, his father tells him, has sullied the honor of the entire Camacho family.

Nestor has other problems. His girlfriend, Magdalena, dumps him for a more prosperous *Americano*, a psychiatrist named Norman Lewis whose specialty, pornography addiction, is now much in demand, and who is as erratic and sex-obsessed as any of his patients. But Magdalena is beautiful and naïve and yearns for the sort of glamour that one finds in South Beach, not among the tidy *casitas* of Hialeah.

In one of this novel’s most memorable (and representative) episodes, Lewis takes a reluctant Magdalena to the infamous bacchanal that always springs up in waters close to the Columbus Day

BCA

Miami Vise

A Cuban-American cop gets caught in a web of allegiances. BY BRIAN MURRAY

It’s been almost 25 years since Tom Wolfe issued a call for “the new social novel.” His 1989 manifesto, “Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast,” argued that, since the end of the Second World War, American novelists had lost their way, having convinced themselves that the high calling of Art required “highly refined forms of fiction”

designed to appeal to an ever-narrowing band of sophisticated readers.

Some sought critical approval by offering up strenuously clever “fictions” based on the theory that the novel was “first and foremost a literary game.” For them, realism was passé, a method for middlebrows like John O’Hara and Irwin Shaw. As the once-faddish John

Hawkes declared: “I began to write fiction on the assumption that the true enemies of the novel were plot, character, setting, and theme.” Others did write about real situations, but only “very tiny

ones, tiny domestic ones, for the most part, usually in lonely Rustic Septic Tank Rural settings,” claimed Wolfe. These novelists, the so-called Minimalists, specialized

“in a deadpan prose composed of disingenuously short, simple sentences—with the emotions anesthetized, given a shot of Novocain.”

Wolfe insisted, instead, that the new American novel should be old again. His models were Balzac and Zola, Dickens and Thackeray. He praised Sinclair Lewis, John Steinbeck, and other American realists who were not only eager to tackle big themes in a spirited way but who “assumed that the novelist

Back to Blood

A Novel

by Tom Wolfe

Little, Brown, 720 pp., \$30

Brian Murray teaches at Loyola University Maryland.

Regatta, held annually along the coast of Miami Beach. For days, as the boats race, the party rages on, offering an epic display of drunkenness and nudity. To Magdalena's dismay, this year's orgy includes the late-night projection of a porn film on a huge mainsail—a Technicolor display of genitalia on a Brobdingnagian scale. Stuck within this “flotilla of depraved lunatics,” Magdalena “felt more than depressed. Something about it made her afraid.”

Nestor also abandons his Hialeah comfort zone. He wants vindication and a fresh start. Wolfe, however, sends him on a wild ride through some of the darker quarters of the beautiful city long known as a sunny place for shady people. Nestor encounters a fine mix of dodgy Wolfeian characters, including an art forger, a crooked Russian tycoon, some strippers, and a mammoth drug dealer conducting business in Overtown, where the demand for crack is always high. When Nestor's arrest of the drug thug turns up on YouTube, the muscular young cop is assailed once more. Nestor is earnest and well-intentioned, but now finds he has “a proven ability to piss people off in gross numbers.”

Nestor's life is brightened, however, when he befriends Ghislaine Lantier, a pretty college student looking to do some good in the world. Ghislaine is sympathetically drawn, unlike her father, a Haitian-born professor whose sense of high status derives from his belief that he is “essentially European,” a “descendant of the prominent de Lantiers of Normandy.” He believes he is therefore intrinsically superior to all those ill-educated, dark-skinned Haitians who have also made their way to Miami, bringing along their rural superstitions and their “language for primitives,” Creole. Back in Haiti,

no family like his, the Lantiers, even looked at really black Haitians. Didn't so much as waste a glance on them ... couldn't even see them unless they were physically in the way.

With his own particular snobbery, Professor Lantier represents the infatuation with ancestry—with “blood”—that Wolfe finds resilient not only in Miami but everywhere the supposed wonders

of multiculturalism have taken hold. In Wolfe's view, it's no accident that this fixation upon ethnicity and race has come to the fore. It is yet another symptom of cultural fragmentation. It's the soil in which tribal animosities find nourishment and thrive. “The secret about Miami,” notes one character, “is that everybody hates everybody.”

Wolfe has a long record of mocking the reigning clichés of the cultural left, and works like *Radical Chic*—his acid account of Leonard Bernstein's courtship of the Black Panthers—retain their relevance and sting. Back in the day,



Tom Wolfe

Wolfe even poked fun at the *New Yorker* and the *New York Review of Books*, and, as a result, it's not surprising to find his novels dismissed with disdain. When *A Man in Full* first appeared, both Norman Mailer and John Updike gave it a poor grade, noting that while Wolfe was trying hard, he obviously lacked the talent and the “noble purpose” (Mailer's phrase) to merit the serious consideration of his literary betters. Updike deducted points because Wolfe “failed to be exquisite.”

Surely they knew better. *Back to Blood* is not Wolfe's best book; after a strong start it grows diffuse, and several intriguing characters, including Nestor's hardworking father, leave the stage. Still, it offers much of what Wolfe's many readers have long enjoyed, including a profusion of apt and vivid details and a parade of characters who are both preposterously overdrawn and

yet recognizably true. *Back to Blood* also confirms that Wolfe isn't really a Zola-like realist, despite his well-informed sociological interests and his fondness for constructing multiplotted page-turners on Victorian-era platforms. He's a great comic writer with a special gift for timely satire. It's absurd to complain that Wolfe doesn't write exquisite prose. It's like blaming Hogarth because he doesn't paint like Vermeer.

And although he's often described as a conservative, Wolfe is much closer to Mark Twain than to, say, G.K. Chesterton. Like Twain, he targets pomposity in all of its rich and varied forms. And like Twain, he's a skeptic who, in recent years, has taken to using Zola's old term, “the human beast.” For Wolfe, man is a curious creature, preoccupied with gaining status and avoiding humiliation, and made unique not because he has a soul but because he has developed speech as a great and powerful tool.

And yet, there has always been something faintly ministerial about this lapsed Presbyterian from Richmond, the mannerly man in the crisp white suit. Unlike Twain, Wolfe does not take aim at religious faith. In fact, at least since *The Me Decade* (1976), Wolfe has implicitly lamented the decline of the old systems of belief and the rise of shabbier creeds peddled to his unmoored countrymen in a media-made culture that, by all appearances, has happily accepted the death of God.

In recent interviews, Wolfe has also made the point that Nietzsche's dire prediction of “the total eclipse of all values” is, by the looks of it, coming to pass. “Anyone who thinks religion is bad for society,” Wolfe has said, “is out of his mind.” And so, beneath the comedy of his recent fiction, one detects the same fear that gripped Magdalena at the Columbus Day Regatta, even as her loony lover, Norman Lewis, urges her to relax and enjoy the view. This lurid carnival, Lewis explains, is “an extraordinary preview of the looming *un-human*, thoroughly animal, fate of Man!” It is “Man's behavior at the level of bonobos and baboons ... a picture of mankind with all the rules removed.”

It is also the grim picture that this sprawling and funny novel provides. ♦

Jolly Old St. Nick

His generosity and wonderworking were fabled in Christendom. BY DAWN EDEN

Legends surrounding the life of Nicholas of Myra rank among the most popular stories of the early Church—and for good reason. He slapped heretics and gave gifts to children. What more could you want of a saint?

However, according to Adam C. English, hagiographers over the centuries have toyed around quite a bit with the story of Santa Claus's namesake. While the legends aren't entirely ho-ho-hokum, the Myra bishop is often confused with another saint, Nicholas of Sion. With this volume, English—a Baptist minister and Campbell University professor of religion—sets out to distinguish between two lives that have become as tangled as a pile of used Christmas tree lights.

English's quest for the historical Nicholas, who lived from about 270 A.D. through the early fourth century, is not without potential pitfalls. The author likens his task to that of those who, in the early 1500s, were charged with cleaning a mosaic of St. Nicholas that had been fished out of the sea. The tiles comprising the saint's forehead and halo had become encrusted with mussels.

When the mussels were peeled back, some of the mosaic tiles popped off, and legend has it that the icon bled from the forehead during the procedure. Reconstructing the life of Nicholas is like trying to clean that icon. . . . The barnacles of legend, myth and exaggeration that have cemented themselves to the historical facts must be pried away. And yet, it should be kept in mind that the folkloric barnacles cannot be

Dawn Eden is the author, most recently, of My Peace I Give You: Healing Sexual Wounds with the Help of the Saints.

The Saint Who Would Be Santa Claus

The True Life and Trials of Nicholas of Myra
by Adam C. English
Baylor, 226 pp., \$24.95



St. Nicholas (detail) by Piero di Cosimo

detached without permanently scarring—or even losing—the person. They are too tightly joined.

Those “folkloric barnacles” are especially valuable to English because they accrued during “the grandest and most sweeping moment in church history: the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity. . . . All the growing pangs of this conversion process manifested themselves in the life of Nicholas.” Such a sweeping assertion raises the reader's hopes to the level of a child awakening on Christmas morning. What is actually under the tree, however, is not quite as dazzling as the wrapping implies.

English is a capable storyteller, weaving biographical information about his

subject (mostly drawn from the saint's earliest *vita*, Michael the Archimandrite's *Life of Saint Nicholas*) with rich historical details about his religious and sociological milieu. Most enjoyable are his forays into literary history, as he traces the development of popular legends to show how, centuries before the modern figure of Santa Claus emerged in 20th-century Coca-Cola ads, the saint's generosity and wonderworking were fabled throughout the Christian world. Nicholas's renown for rescuing young people, as when he provided dowries for three sisters to prevent their being sold into prostitution, led to his becoming incorporated into folk narratives. One French medieval ballad features him as the hero of a gruesome Hansel and Gretel-like tale in which he resurrects three boys who were sliced, diced, and pickled by an evil innkeeper. (Think of *that* the next time Santa Claus brings a mincemeat pie.)

The problem is that English would have us see his subject as a kind of Zelig—an “amorphous, Protean character . . . [who] can assume any shape.” He agrees with William Bennett's claim that Nicholas is “every-saint, one for all people and all causes.” Yet the historical evidence he amasses seems to show the opposite: Nicholas of Myra is not “for all people and all causes” but for Christ and the church, and against all forms of paganism, schism, and heresy.

Granted, Nicholas is never seen resorting to violence against persons. Unlike the legend of his slapping the heretic Arius at the Council of Nicaea, English shows that on the only occasion when history records Nicholas encountering a heretic (a Marcionite prelate named Theognis), he won over his opponent through “a string of letters . . . patiently persuading him of what was right.” We are likewise told that the saint's campaign against paganism was free of bloodshed: Rather than taking up “visible weapons,” he “armed himself with hope and firm confidence.”

Even so, Nicholas was no model of relativistic tolerance. As English observes, the record shows he “not only spoke against the gods and goddesses,

he also destroyed their temples and sacred groves with his own hands." Not for nothing do medieval frescoes depict him "red in the face with holy anger, toppling temple columns with his bare hands and then swinging an axe into the base of a sacred cypress." The real-life Santa may indeed have had rosy cheeks; but with him around, no *tannenbaum* was safe.

In this light, a bit of trivia that English tosses out in his final chapter reveals what is perhaps the most prophetic aspect of Nicholas's legacy.

Some of the saint's bones that had been given to the St. Nicholas (Greek Orthodox) Church in Lower Manhattan were destroyed in the 9/11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. There is something poignant about the ashes of those killed by radical Islamist hatred being mingled with the remains of a saint who devoted his life to serving the God of love. Between the lines of English's book shines the witness of a holy man whose courage and devotion can prepare us to face the ghosts of Christmases yet to come. ♦

and Gulf coasts and the resulting blockade-running by the South; the commerce-raiding of Confederate privateers and such legendary ships as the CSS *Alabama*, CSS *Florida*, and CSS *Shenandoah*; and the exhausting and complex warfare fought on the river networks that marked the geography of the Confederate states.

There are also well-detailed descriptions of specific combat actions, such as the series of Union Navy actions on the lower Mississippi River that resulted in the capture of New Orleans early in the war, and the Battle of Mobile Bay in August 1864, which helped seal the fate of the Confederacy. Between these two historical bookends is a complex and bloody narrative filled with the successes and failures of both sides, and the many lessons learned by a still-young United States.

Of particular interest is the important but often neglected connective tissue between the main events of the war. That connective tissue includes such diverse elements as international trade, interservice rivalry between the Union's Army and Navy, the potential and actual involvement of Great Britain, France, and other nations, and the oft-overlooked but significant influence of geography. And, by way of connective tissue, McPherson consistently illuminates how key military and civilian leaders influenced the war's storyline. In the second paragraph of his introduction, for example, McPherson presages his dedication to recognizing the importance of key players with a strong (and, for many, surprising) opinion about the Union's Admiral David Glasgow Farragut:

Farragut's victory at Mobile Bay and his even more spectacular achievement in the capture of New Orleans in April 1862, plus the part played by his fleet in the Mississippi River campaigns of 1862 and 1863, did indeed entitle him to equal status with Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman in winning the war.

Another key leader, in this case a civilian, was Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, who served in that job from March 1861 until March 1869.



The Civil War at Sea

How the Navy came of age in the War Between the States. BY JOSEPH F. CALLO

The names of the epic Civil War land battles—Bull Run, Shiloh, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and Chickamauga—have a certain ring to them. Even the term "Sherman's March to the Sea" is evocative. In contrast, there is little that reverberates in the names of the Civil War's naval actions, which include the Battles of Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Island 10, Fort Sumter, and Mobile Bay, as well as the occupation of New Orleans.

Yet knowledge of the naval component of the Civil War is crucial for a number of compelling reasons. Arguably the foremost is that it's essential in determining how that war was lost by the Confederacy and won by the Union. There's also the matter of the unusual number of technological advances in naval warfare that occurred during the war between the states, including steam propulsion, ironclad hulls, screw propellers, rifled cannons, explosive shells, rotating gun turrets, submersibles, and naval mines.

Joseph F. Callo is the author of John Paul Jones: America's First Sea Warrior.

War on the Waters
The Union and Confederate Navies, 1861-1865
by James M. McPherson
North Carolina, 304 pp., \$35

And those technological advances did more than reshape the naval combat of the Civil War; they significantly expanded the ways that naval power would be employed in the future.

In a broader context, the naval component of the Civil War is also a unique chapter of the full narrative of American maritime power. In that perspective, it serves as a historical bridge, connecting the United States' stunning advance as a major maritime nation during the War of 1812 to the sweeping seapower concepts personified by Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan and President Theodore Roosevelt at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

Enter James McPherson's exceptionally well-illustrated descriptions of the Civil War's major naval events. Covered with relevant detail and clarity, these events include: the Union's blockading of the Confederacy's Atlantic

During his tour he became known for his management skills and for refusing to rely on seniority when making key appointments. Early in his study, McPherson describes the secretary:

Welles's naval experience was limited to a two-year stint as the civilian head of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing during the Mexican-

Interestingly, this description of Welles puts one in mind of William Jones, secretary of the Navy during the War of 1812. Jones served in that job from January 1813 to December 1814 and, as was the case with Welles, his administrative skills were an essential part of the Navy's successes during wartime. Neither man

the conflict. A noteworthy example involved the Union's attempts to take Charleston in July 1863. At the time, Rear Admiral John Dahlgren was the newly appointed commander of the Union's South Atlantic Squadron. Dahlgren immediately began planning a joint Army-Navy operation against Charleston with Major General Quincy Gillmore, and their cooperation was initially exemplary.

The first phase of the Charleston operation involved landing troops at the south end of Morris Island and then moving north against two artillery fortifications, Battery Wagner and Battery Gregg, both of which overlooked the outer Charleston Harbor entrance. The Army troops were supported by fire from the guns of four Navy ironclads, and when the initial assault against the two batteries was repulsed, the attack evolved into a siege. After weeks of hammering by Dahlgren's naval gunfire, the defenders eventually evacuated the batteries and the positions were taken by General Gillmore's troops. It was a significant Army-Navy operation that, for all practical purposes, closed the port of Charleston. It was also an example of how a joint Army-Navy operation could (and should) be run, while coincidentally demonstrating the effective use of naval gunfire support for an Army ground operation.

The logical next phase at Charleston was an attack on Fort Sumter, and that turned out to be a different story. Independently, Dahlgren and Gillmore planned amphibious assaults against the fort on the night of September 8. When each learned of the other's plan just hours before the attacks were to begin, there was a serious lack of the cooperation that had marked the Morris Island operation.

The argument was based on whether the assault would be led by the Army or Navy. The dispute was not resolved, and the Navy attacked first with a combination of sailors and Marines; it was repulsed. Observing the Navy's failed effort, Gillmore called off the Army assault. There were no further major attempts to capture Charleston, and as it turned out,



The Monitor meets the Merrimack, Hampton Roads, 1862

American War. A long career as a political journalist in Connecticut had given little promise of the resourceful administrative capacity he would demonstrate as wartime secretary of the navy.

Later, McPherson leaves no doubt about Welles's important role in the Union's victory, and his strength of character in standing up to public criticism:

This buildup of what was by 1865 the world's largest navy was an extraordinary achievement, for which Gideon Welles deserves much of the credit. An excellent administrator who put in long hours at his desk, Welles endured recriminations by merchants whose ships and cargoes fell victims to the [Confederate commerce raider] *Alabama* or other raiders and indictments by the press for the escape of runners through the blockade. Welles eschewed public responses to these accusations, confining his comments to his diary and retaining the full confidence of President Lincoln.

was charismatic or a great strategic thinker; both were, however, exceptional managers, and they brought what turned out to be essential skills to their job. In the process, they also helped shape the job description for naval secretaries to come.

As an extension of his attention to the principal players of the war, McPherson weaves such details as political infighting within the Union Navy into his work. At one point, for example, he describes the internal disputes surrounding the ineffective leadership of Rear Admiral Samuel Francis Du Pont while that officer led attacks against Charleston. Following extended infighting, Du Pont was eventually replaced by Rear Admiral Andrew H. Foote, who early in the war had led a successful gunboat attack against Fort Henry on the Tennessee River.

As part of his emphasis on persons and personalities, McPherson also includes instances of Army-Navy discord, which was a constant in

none was necessary. The port had been effectively closed to blockade runners by the previous Army-Navy actions. As McPherson puts it, “the capture of the city would be merely symbolic and not worth the cost.”

Following the Union Navy’s successes at the Battle of Mobile Bay—known for Admiral Farragut’s order from his flagship USS *Hartford*, “Damn the torpedoes [the term used at that time for mines]. Full speed ahead!”—the naval component of the Civil War drifted to an end. The Union Navy’s work was, overall, well done: Despite the fact that more than 90 percent of the Confederate blockade runners’ efforts were successful, the Union Navy had maintained a blockade of the Confederacy that was effective enough to cripple the South’s war effort. The war on the Mississippi and other rivers was also an overall success for the Union Navy, which became the enabler afloat for the Union Army.

“To say that the Union Navy won the Civil War,” writes McPherson, “would state the case much too strongly. But it is accurate to say that the war could not have been won without the contribution of the navy.”

With the end of the Civil War, the U.S. Navy’s sights quickly shifted away from an inward and coastal focus, and seapower in its blue-water sense became firmly implanted in the national psyche. The naval component of the Civil War had been a pivot point that assured fulfillment of a prediction made by John Paul Jones in 1778. At that time, Jones—not generally considered a seapower visionary—wrote to a friend who was pessimistic about the progress of the War of Independence and the state of the Continental Navy:

Our Marine [Navy] will rise as if by enchantment, and become within the memory of Persons now living, the wonder and envy of the World.

Jones might have been a bit off in his timing, but he was spot-on with the balance of his prediction. As the smoke cleared from the Civil War, the U.S. Navy’s sights were fixed on far horizons. ♦

BCA

Exiled in Europe

Joseph Roth’s real home was the German language.

BY MARK FALCOFF



Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth, 1936

Some literary historian of the future will have to explain why just now several of the major German-language writers of the interwar period long regarded as passé—Stefan Zweig, Lion Feuchtwanger, Klaus Mann, and Joseph Roth—have come suddenly back into fashion in the English-speaking world. Perhaps the most prolific of all—though not necessarily the most financially successful—was Roth, whose best-known work, *The Radetzky March*, is a nostalgic reconstruction of the last days of Vienna under the Habsburgs. Published in 1932, it is still in print and has lost none of its charm. But this was hardly Roth’s only success; he was also the author of more than 20 other

books, including novels, short stories, travel essays, and journalism. Now, a huge selection of his private letters have been made available through his translator, the poet Michael Hofmann.

Roth was born in 1894 in the town of Brody, in Galicia, on the easternmost reaches of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Though of Jewish background, he was a baptized Roman Catholic, which was

common in those days among those who wished to pursue prestigious professions (e.g., Gustav Mahler) or, as in Roth’s case, to hold a commission in the army during World War I. After 1919, the young, thrice-decorated veteran emerged as a talented practitioner of the *feuilleton*—the literary essay that appeared (and in Germany, still appears) in a special section of newspapers. He was also an incessant traveler and reporter, visiting the Soviet Union

Joseph Roth
A Life in Letters
translated and edited
by Michael Hofmann
Norton, 512 pp., \$39.95

Mark Falcoff is completing a new translation of Klaus Mann’s *Mephisto*.

in 1926, Albania and the Balkans in 1927, Italy and Poland in 1928. By the age of 30, he had risen to be the Paris correspondent of the liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Throughout this time, he remained a Habsburg loyalist—in one letter he refers to himself as “a patriotic Austrian [who] love[s] what is left of my homeland as a sort of relic”—and, in fact, he occasionally moved in Legitimist circles until Hitler’s *Anschluss* in 1938. He died in a shabby hotel in Paris the following year.

The major event in Roth’s life, of course, was the Nazi seizure of power in Germany. Goebbels’s takeover of the German press and book publishing firms deprived Roth of much of his reading public and of a reliable source of income; thereafter he lived the life of an impoverished literary nomad. (As Hofmann puts it, with “no money, no books, no bank account, no clothes . . . a Jew in Austria, an Austrian in Germany, and a German in France.”) Living from hand to mouth, never staying long in the same place, he somehow managed—with no secretary and long before the invention of word processing—to produce vast amounts of newspaper copy and to write novels, three in 1933 and 1934 alone. But the vise was closing in: Austrian publishers began to become nervous about printing him even while their country was still independent of Germany, and it was not always easy to find a market for his books in France.

These letters reveal, not surprisingly, a very confused and unhappy man. Nonetheless, they also show him to be an acute observer of the European scene. Here, for example, is his description of a Socialist congress in Marseilles in 1925:

Fat wives, heelless sandals, perms, hatless, Jews who aren’t Jews, because they have taken up cudgels for some foreign proletariat; bourgeois who aren’t bourgeois, because they are fighting for a foreign class.

Social Democrats, he confides to a friend, are “a party of toothless dragons.” On the subject of the then-venerated André Gide, he quotes an exchange with Jean Paulhan, who had remarked, “*C’est*

un acteur, n’est-ce pas?” Roth replied, “*Il est plus qu’un acteur, il est une actrice.*”

He admonished Klaus Mann, who had attended a writer’s congress in Moscow in 1934. (Unfortunately Mann’s side of the correspondence is not given, but its tone can be inferred by this comment of Roth’s: “A Western European going east of Warsaw for the first time, becomes an utter child . . . no new world is being readied there.”)

Roth lived the life of an impoverished literary nomad. As Hofmann puts it, with ‘no money, no books, no bank account, no clothes . . . a Jew in Austria, an Austrian in Germany, and a German in France.’

In another context, remarking on the same country:

I don’t believe in the perfection of bourgeois democracy, but I don’t for a second doubt the narrowness of a proletarian dictatorship. . . . I am well aware—as Western Europeans are apt to forget—that the Russians were not invented by Dostoyevsky. I am quite unsentimental about the country and about the Soviet project.

Visiting Odessa as early as 1926, he writes that “never has it been brought home to me so strongly that I’m a European, a man of the Mediterranean if you will, a Roman and a Catholic, a Humanist and a Renaissance man.” Brave words when much of the Western intelligentsia was ready to go over to the Soviet vision, bag and baggage—and often, of course, without taking the trouble to visit the country itself.

Sometime in 1928, Roth was finally put into contact with his idol, Stefan Zweig. Present-day readers may have some difficulty grasping just how

important an event this must have been. Zweig was then at the peak of his fame and fortune: Born independently wealthy, he was also probably the most widely read (and translated) writer of German. The correspondence with Zweig increasingly occupies ever-larger sections of this book, with Zweig’s own letters often included. Much of it has to do with money, since Zweig was generous with financial help, which Roth certainly needed after 1933.

Nonetheless, one must confess a certain ennui with this section, which is also filled with malicious gossip about personalities in the publishing world who have long since disappeared down the black hole of memory. There are also some rather unpleasant comments about Jews: The Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann is referred to as a “Jewish National Socialist,” something which has a strangely contemporary ring to it. The correspondence reveals a complicated relationship between two vain, talented, and creative individuals, but it is probably only of interest to literary historians.

What gives this book its special interest is the fact that Roth represents the final moments of an archetype: the cosmopolitan European, at home in several countries, and, before 1919, not even fully sensitive to national boundaries. (The Austro-Hungarian Empire was home to 17 different language and cultural groups.) Roth’s real home was the German language, and this explains why, after 1933, and particularly after 1938, he became homeless in both a physical and spiritual sense.

Nonetheless, he never lost his own particularly self-shaped identity. Hofmann quotes a friend who observed Roth sometime in the 1930s: “When summoned to the telephone, he slowly hobbled away with the aid of a stick, his thin legs in narrow old-fashioned pants, his sagging little paunch at odds with his birdlike bones, the east Galician Jew made the impression of a distinguished, if somewhat decayed, Austrian aristocrat—in other words, exactly the impression he had striven all his life to give, with every fiber of his body and soul, by means both legitimate and illegitimate.” ♦

Kings of the Jingle

How music and commerce combine to make America. BY TED GIOIA



'I'd like to buy the world a Coke.' (1971)

Could Mozart write jingles? “Are you kidding,” responds the ad copy for a 1990s music marketing production house. “*A Little Night Music* had ‘beer commercial’ written all over it.”

Mozart was no stranger to market forces, often selling his services to wealthy merchants. But in our time, famous musicians have taken the further step of selling *merchandise*—sometimes with amusing consequences. One example: Bob Dylan was asked at a 1965 press conference, “If you were going to sell out to a commercial interest, which one would you choose?” The counterculture icon smiled slyly at the journalist, and quipped, “Ladies’ garments.”

Fast forward to 2004, when Dylan and his music showed up in television ads peddling bras and panties for

Victoria’s Secret. Was anyone surprised? Dylan had already licensed “The Times They Are a-Changin’” to the Bank of Montreal in 1997. Even earlier, the Beatles’ “Revolution” appeared in a Nike ad. The Rolling Stones allowed

Microsoft to use “Start Me Up” to sell Windows 95. And Michael Jackson not only sang and danced in Pepsi commercials, but suffered serious burns when his hair accidentally

caught on fire while filming an ad, an event that may have set off his addiction to painkillers and plastic surgery.

Some music fans still deride these increasingly common deals as sellouts. Others simply ignore them, as if they were the sporadic infidelities of an otherwise loyal spouse. But Timothy D. Taylor, professor of musicology at UCLA, puts them under the microscope as part of this history of the modern marriage of music and commerce. His conclusion—“There is no longer a meaningful distinction to be made between ‘popular music’ and

‘advertising music’”—may be an exaggeration, but it is true enough to give the heebie-jeebies to those who still look to popular music for a clarion call of rebellion against the System.

Taylor shows that “sellouts” by recording artists date back to the earliest days of broadcasting. Almost from the start of radio, companies hired musical acts to promote their products. Not only did the musicians sing about yeast, cigarettes, maple syrup, ginger ale, and other products, but they often were required to take on the identity of their sponsor. Radio listeners enjoyed performances from the Wheaties Quartet, the Happy Wonder Bakers, and other ensembles with equally uncool names.

These businesses had no interest in promoting music for its own sake; they used songs to move products off store shelves. When General Mills considered dropping Wheaties in 1929, they found that most of the cereal’s sales came from the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, where a singing commercial had been used for three years to promote the product. Wheaties survived, and it was thanks to a silly tune.

*Have you tried Wheaties?
They're whole wheat with all the bran.
Won't you try Wheaties?
For Wheat is the best food of man.*

Taylor is at his best when recounting the history of these often-insipid radio and TV jingles. I wasn’t around when Pepsi mounted a major assault on Coke in 1939 by way of its “Pepsi-Cola Hits the Spot” jingle—a song which told Americans that Pepsi delivered twice as many ounces as Coke for the same nickel. (Lucky for them, Michael Bloomberg wasn’t born until 1942.) But other accounts remind me of daring, funny, and strange ad campaigns from my youth. Some even launched hit songs, such as Coke’s “I’d Like to Teach the World to Sing” (1971) or Alka Seltzer’s “No Matter What Shape (Your Stomach’s In)” (1966).

In retrospect, we can trace a connection between these slick marketing messages and the later rise of music videos. So we shouldn’t be surprised that the MTV generation has shown more tolerance than the baby boomers did when

The Sounds of Capitalism

Advertising, Music, and the Conquest of Culture
by Timothy D. Taylor
Chicago Press, 368 pp., \$35

Ted Gioia is the author, most recently, of The Jazz Standards: A Guide to the Repertoire.

their favorite stars turned into product pitchmen. Yet even the most naïve music fans must cringe when they see will.i.am of the Black Eyed Peas named director of creative innovation for Intel, or McDonald's handing out five dollars to bands every time a song mentioning a Big Mac gets played on the radio.

Advertising agencies are more focused on music than ever before, and companies are willing to pay top dollar for the right song. The old-school jingle is now derided as crass and out-of-date. But the upside of hiring big names may be offset by equal risk. Wrigley was delighted to have Chris Brown tout the benefits of Doublemint gum to the tune of his hit song "Forever," until they had to pull his ads after he was arrested for assaulting Rihanna. Taylor shows how corporations, once cautious about jumping on the newest music, now try to discover the next hot band. But will they open themselves to the same kinds of exposure that companies who hired Tiger Woods or Lance Armstrong have recently faced?

If Timothy Taylor is a fine music historian, he is a miserable economic theorist. Whenever he offers Big Picture explanations of his subject, he collapses into generalizations so ludicrous as to approach unintentional comedy. Does Professor Taylor really believe that advertisers rely on music in order to ensure "the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations"? Does he really think that the evolution of jingles in the 1980s had anything to do with "the sacralization of consumption by Ronald Reagan"? Apparently so.

Like many academics, Taylor has difficulty telling the difference between economic theories and business strategies. Advertising professionals espouse many different views on economics, from Marxist utopianism to laissez-faire faith in free markets. But these differences of opinion do not hinder their work, which focuses on selling a product, not upholding any economic system. Taylor should know that street vendors sang about their products during the age of feudalism, and that jingles still show up on television in socialist countries. Instead, he gets lost in his own rhetoric and ideology.

Taylor might have avoided these missteps if he had lived up to the promise of his book's title and actually explored the full history of music and commerce, and not just the modern use of songs in advertising. He makes only the most cursory references to street vendors, medicine shows, and other predecessors to the radio jingle. He apparently hasn't seen the WPA study, conducted a year before the debut of the famous Pepsi jingle, on street cries in New York. Nor does he note the attempts, long before the invention of radio, to impose legal restrictions on musical selling in London, New York, and other cities—as a result of the incessant clangor of singing vendors. Even the world's oldest profession used music to sell personal services in medieval Europe.

Taylor skips over interesting stories that might force him to modify his theories. Instead, he offers up clumsy generalizations about a "new capitalism"

driven by consumption, which enlists music in its nefarious schemes. He never explains why the fastest-growing economics in this "new capitalism" downplay consumerism in favor of savings, investment, and capital formation. He never ponders why jingles took off during the Great Depression, when economic survival, not consumption, drove mass behavior. Again and again, Taylor's theories collapse when put under the mildest scrutiny.

Fortunately for readers, however, the cumbersome theorizing is mostly restricted to the first and last chapters. As soon as he stops trying to play armchair economist, Taylor is an outstanding guide to his subject. We still need a more complete guide to the interplay between capitalism and music. But for a fun, spirited look at marketing music in modern media, *The Sounds of Capitalism*, like that supersized bottle of Pepsi, mostly hits the spot. ♦

BCA

Indestructible Dream

Exploring the human instinct to live after death.

BY PETER LOPATIN

HL. Mencken was, perhaps, not wide of the mark in defining *immortality* as "the condition of a dead man who doesn't believe he is dead." Mencken's quip points—if only indirectly—to a problem that inevitably arises when we consider the fact of our mortality: We know that we are going to die, but we cannot imagine our own nonexistence. This pair of realizations forms the two halves of what Stephen Cave calls the mortality paradox: "Death presents itself as both inevitable and impossible." And in this informed and metaphysically nuanced work, he examines how our varied responses to that

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Immortality

*The Quest to Live Forever
and How It Drives Civilization*
by Stephen Cave
Crown, 336 pp., \$25

paradox have shaped civilization itself.

More strongly, however, Cave argues that the desire for immortality drives civilization's greatest achievements: "Almost all facets of humanity's development can be understood as expressions of the will to live forever." This is an expansive claim that bears a heavy burden of proof, and while I am not certain that Cave sustains the burden, he certainly comes close, presenting his arguments in a brisk, engaging style, and drawing effectively upon a wide-ranging stock

of religious, philosophical, and scientific sources, both ancient and contemporary.

According to Cave, our inability to conceive of our personal nonexistence, and our abhorrence at the seeming inevitability of death, together provide “the conceptual peg” on which we construct “immortality narratives” (four, by his count) that serve to enable us to project ourselves into a future beyond the grave. These narratives (to whose description Cave devotes the bulk of his book) are, respectively: “Staying Alive,” “Resurrection,” “Soul,” and “Legacy.” Cave skillfully delineates the characteristics and appeal of each narrative and shows how each comes up short as a solution to the anxiety that motivates it. He then proposes an alternative—the “Wisdom” narrative—that offers much food for thought, if not a final resolution of the problem.

“Staying Alive” indefinitely—in its most basic sense—entails nothing more than refining the multiplicity of technologies that humans have devised to meet the challenges of a world outside Eden: agriculture to ensure a steady supply of food, architecture to shelter us, weapons for hunting and defense against our enemies, medicine to cure our ills and heal our wounds.

In a deeper sense, however, staying alive has become an effort to transcend human finitude. The search for the secret to transforming base metals into gold was only half of the alchemists’ dream; the other half was the search for the *elixir of life*, the consumption of which would transform base humans into immortals. More broadly, and with examples ranging from China and Japan to Egypt and the ancient Middle East, Cave shows how the founding myths of ancient cultures often center around the promise of immortality. He argues persuasively that “the very idea of civilization is bound up with our hopes of living forever,” and that civilizations have, since antiquity, offered the promise of redemption from our mortality.

In the modern age, science has transformed the problem of conquering mortality from a noble quest pursued by mythical heroes into a series of discrete bioengineering problems, each of which

is amenable to solution by technologies that are either already at hand or on the horizon. Drawing from dramatic developments in genetics, molecular biology, nanotechnology, and computer science—developments that have already produced tangible results—the quest for the modern equivalent of the alchemists’ elixir has been infused with a new sense of urgency. The so-called transhumanists are unabashedly ambitious in this regard, promising, for example, that in due course we will be able to enhance our gray matter with “nanobots,” thereby

The “Soul” narrative posits a non-material, quasi-divine “stuff” that survives the death of the body and provides a convenient out:

The soul bridges the gap between this world and the next; it keeps an essential part of us out of the grave even when our bodies fail and permits us to fly directly to the next world without an embarrassing interim as a hapless pile of bones.

Finally, the “Legacy” narrative offers us the alternative of a cultural or biological “solution” to the prob-



‘I see dead people.’ (Haley Joel Osment, Bruce Willis in ‘The Sixth Sense,’ 1999)

increasing our cognitive capacities far beyond anything we can now imagine. Their scientific promissory note claims that we will reach the apotheosis called *superintelligence*, a state in which our knowledge of the laws of nature will be total, and nothing—including immortality—will be impossible for us. We will have achieved “longevity escape velocity” and will remain forever one step ahead of the grim reaper.

Next in Cave’s list is the “Resurrection” narrative. In its traditional religious forms—exemplified in the resurrection of Jesus and drawing on the antecedent Judaic belief in bodily resurrection—we will rise, literally, from the grave and be made whole again. In its contemporary, scientifically inspired form, scientific resurrectionists (or “reanimators,” as Cave aptly calls them) claim that science will supplant the hand of God as the reanimating power.

lem posed by the mortality paradox: because homo sapiens is, as Ernst Cassirer put it, the “symbolic animal,” we can, in a sense, survive beyond the grave insofar as our achievements—whether artistic, scientific, military, or otherwise—survive us. Biologically, we may take comfort in the thought that, in our offspring and in the memories of those who knew us, we will—at least in some respect—“live on.” On a grander biological scale, we may find peace of mind in the realization that we are but a small part in a great web of life (“Gaia,” or whatever), or that, as Richard Dawkins has put it, “the genes in the world have an expectation of life that must be measured not in decades but in thousands and millions of years.”

But as to each of these immortality narratives, the devil is in the details, as Cave so deftly makes plain. We

may live much longer lifespans, but how will we deal with the problems of overpopulation and social conflict that will result? And what about the inevitable boredom and sense of purposelessness of simply continuing “as is”? If I am going to live forever, what need is there to do *this*—or anything—today rather than tomorrow? What difference will any of my deeds make? All mistakes will be correctable. Eternal life—whether corporeal or spiritual—seems to entail the eternal indifference of “whatever” and “why bother?” Faced with the challenge of Hillel’s “If not now, when?” the reply would be, “Whenever.”

As to resurrection, whether through cryo-preservation of the recently deceased, or “computational resurrection” whereby the contents of one’s brain are uploaded (or is it downloaded?) to some “virtual person in a virtual world who would have all of your recollections, opinions and quirks,” or turned into software and installed in a robot, these schemes raise serious conceptual questions (apart from doubts as to their scientific plausibility) concerning the nature of personal identity. Is the downloaded duplicate a counterfeit you? Will the resurrected me be the disease-wracked specimen I was at the moment of my death? The questions are many, and the problems raised by those questions are genuine and disturbing.

Although it avoids the pitfalls of the other immortality narratives, the “Legacy” narrative loses much of its luster in Woody Allen’s quip that “I don’t want to live on in the hearts of my countrymen; I want to live on in my apartment.” Whether I survive as brief memories in the minds of those who knew me (memories whose duration is limited by their bearers’ own mortality) or in some “symbolic” form—perhaps through a hospital wing dedicated in my name, or in tales of my valor on the field of battle—I will be, nonetheless, as dead as a doornail.

Cave’s philosophically and scientifically informed skepticism concerning promises of immortality leads him to propose an alternative that might

enable us to face our finitude without being reduced to mere “twitching blobs of biological protoplasm completely perfused with anxiety and unable to effectively respond to the demands of their surroundings.” The alternative is Cave’s “Wisdom” narrative. Drawing on such diverse sources as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the philosophies of Epicurus and Ludwig Wittgenstein, among many others, Cave fashions a plausible and compelling view of a life that does not recoil in horror at the thought of mortality. In place of that fear, he proposes a way of valuing the present—and of cherishing finitude itself—based on the convictions

that: (1) unending life would be a curse, not a blessing; (2) fear of death simply makes no sense; and (3) we should devote ourselves to cultivating those very virtues which, if grasped, would obviate the existential angst that gives rise in the first instance to the desideratum of immortality.

A passage from Wittgenstein—one which, ironically, Cave does not cite—is very much on point: “If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.” This exhortation is one that we would do well to heed. But we must hurry, for time grows short. ♦



Westlake Lives!

Two posthumous gifts from a master entertainer.

BY JON L. BREEN

When Donald E. Westlake died on New Year’s Eve 2008 at the age of 75, he was mourned as an expert and notably prolific writer of crime fiction under multiple bylines, and also as a comic novelist whose stature (in a different milieu) rivaled that of P.G. Wodehouse. To some, his position was even loftier: The Booker Prize-winning Irish novelist John Banville proclaimed Westlake one of the great writers of the 20th century.

Early in his career, Westlake wrote short fiction for mystery and science fiction magazines and, under a variety of pseudonyms and house names, soft-core paperbacks for the sleaze market. He broke into hardcovers

with *The Mercenaries* (1960), a gritty, hardboiled crime novel that received an Edgar nomination, and continued in that vein with several other books before producing his first comic

novel, *The Fugitive Pigeon* (1965). His first major series character was a professional thief known only as Parker, introduced in the paperback original *The Hunter* (1962). The Parker series was written under the pseudonym Richard Stark, a name which suits the dark and violent mood of the books. Westlake-as-Stark would continue the series into this century, with an extended hiatus of 23 years between 1974 and 1997, and a total of 24 novels.

Under his own name, Westlake wrote a shorter (15-volume) but similarly durable series about another professional thief, the capable and ingenious, but very unlucky, John

Memory

by Donald E. Westlake
Hard Case Crime, 336 pp., \$7.99

The Comedy Is Finished

by Donald E. Westlake
Hard Case Crime, 320 pp., \$25.99

Jon L. Breen is the author, most recently, of Probable Claus.

Dortmunder, whose elaborate capers are presented in a farcical vein. The first Dortmunder book, *The Hot Rock* (1970), was reportedly intended for the Parker series but was converted to a comic novel when the scenes started to develop humorously. For most of his writing career, Westlake interspersed stand-alone novels among series entries, but in the last few years of his life, he confined himself to three Parkers and four Dortmunders. Introducing a reprint of the 2001 Parker novel *Firebreak*, Terry Teachout suggested that Westlake “was usually at his best in his series novels,” but that’s not necessarily so.

Befitting a performer of longstanding and unmatched versatility, Westlake has so far had no fewer than three final bows. First came *Get Real* (2009), involving the Dortmunder gang with one last trouble-plagued caper. Reality television provided an inviting target for Westlake the satirist—one character solemnly pontificates that “in the world of reality, we do not have surprises”—and loyal readers were pleased he was in good form for what appeared to be his last novel. But there were two discoveries to come, both from *Hard Case Crime*, an inventive line of mostly hard-boiled crime fiction with the look of 1950s/60s paperbacks.

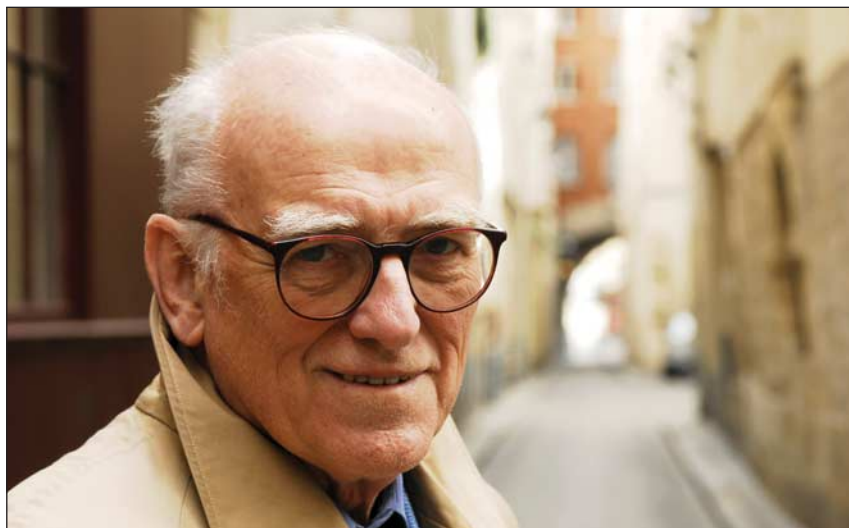
Posthumous novels, of course, are not unusual. All of Franz Kafka’s novels, the three books in Stieg Larsson’s Millennium trilogy, Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*, and John Kennedy Toole’s *A Confederacy of Dunces* were all published after their authors’ deaths. And novels like Charles Dickens’s *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and Austen’s *Sanditon* were left unfinished for other writers to speculate about.

But what about posthumous novels that are neither the last work of a writer recently deceased nor a virtually completed work that, for some reason, wound up in the bottom drawer? Both of the Westlake discoveries are in that category. So two questions arise: Why weren’t they published while Westlake was alive, and would he have been happy to see them published after his death?

Neither of the two books is in a series, and neither is typical of the author’s work. *Memory*, very dark in mood, is more mainstream than crime novel, and is notably lacking in anything resembling comedy. *The Comedy Is Finished* is certainly in the mystery/suspense genre, but, in spite of being full of one-liners and arguably having a happy ending, it is by no means a comic novel.

Memory was written in 1963 and was shopped to publishers by Westlake’s then-agent, Scott Meredith, who specialized in genre fiction and,

completely forgets all aspects of his past life—he knows he lives in New York, for example—but his short-term memory is shot, and he must resort to writing notes to remind himself of everyday things. While he eventually gets back to New York, his efforts to reestablish himself with his friends and profession are painful. For an actor, what could be worse than not being able to remember lines? This is a very unhappy book, and as close to humorless as Westlake could possibly get. But it is also relentlessly involving and readable.



Donald E. Westlake in Paris, 2004

despite an impressive client list, had a somewhat unsavory reputation. Westlake’s friend and fellow writer Lawrence Block has said that many editors praised the novel, but none bought it. From Westlake, known as a mystery writer, a serious and commercially dubious literary work was deemed unsellable. According to Block, in the late 1970s, by which time Westlake’s reputation as novelist and screenwriter had grown, his agent Henry Morrison thought he could sell the novel, but Westlake declined, pronouncing it too dated.

Memory tells the story of Paul Cole, an actor with a touring company who receives a concussion in a fight with a jealous husband and spends the entire book trying to deal with the resultant memory loss. It’s not the convenient amnesia common in suspense fiction: Cole remembers his name and never

Even Westlake’s close friend Block doubted any other complete manuscripts would turn up. But another friend and fellow novelist, Max Allan Collins, came forward to challenge the publisher’s label of *Memory* as Westlake’s “final unpublished novel.” *The Comedy Is Finished* was written in the late 1970s, and in the early ’80s Westlake sent a copy to Collins. At some point he decided not to publish, noting that the central situation, the abduction of a comedian, might seem too similar to Martin Scorsese’s film *The King of Comedy*.

As an explanation, however, such a claim is hard to buy. In Scorsese’s film, a late-night talk-show host, played by Jerry Lewis, is imprisoned by a show-biz wannabe, played by Robert DeNiro. The motivation is dissimilar from that of Westlake’s characters, and the situation is played more for humor.

Maybe Westlake thought the book wasn't up to his standard of quality; in any case, Collins's copy seems to be the only surviving manuscript.

While *Memory* has been published as a paperback original, *The Comedy Is Finished* is a hardcover—but that vintage-paperback look is unchanged. The scene depicted on the jacket—a naked woman with a gun and a man tied to a chair—*does* occur in the novel, and it echoes the title's hint that this is not among Westlake's humorous novels. The story opens with television comedian Koo Davis warming up his studio audience. It's immediately obvious from his fast-talking style and his backstory—broke into show-biz prominence in the late 1930s, entertained the troops in various wars, lost some of his audience through support of the Vietnam war—that he is patterned after Bob Hope.

At the end of the first chapter, Koo is kidnapped, and a disgraced, low-level FBI agent and minor Watergate figure, Mike Wiskiel, gets the case. The kidnapers are Weatherman-type radicals demanding the release from prison of 10 "political prisoners." Koo and his five varied captors, throwbacks to the vigilante terrorism of the late 1960s and early '70s, are fully drawn characters. The suspense and surprise are masterfully engineered. One unexpected turn is a flashback to the Korean War and a brainwashed GI Koo met while on tour, and among the features is one of the oddest father/son relationships in fictional annals.

Ultimately, this is not the best Westlake novel. Some of the plot turns and character reversals seem too contrived and easy; but while the denouement is not completely credible, the maintenance of suspense and reader involvement is undeniable. Above all, it illustrates Westlake's ability to take either a serious or comic approach to the same situation. In both the farcical Dortmunder novels and the tough Parker series, elaborate crimes are planned and carried out by professional criminals before something goes wrong. But the treatment of events is entirely different in each series. *The Comedy Is Finished* could

have been played for laughs instead of drama, with the reversals that frustrate the kidnapers promising comic fodder. Either way, the story would be compelling reading.

Westlake's earlier treatment of 1960s militants took a lighter approach. *Up Your Banners* (1969), a comic novel with an underlying seriousness (as opposed to a very serious novel festooned with wisecracks), is a delightful story about an incendiary issue: the hiring at a predominantly black New York high school of a white teacher who happens to be the principal's son. Most of the characters are likable, human, and sometimes absurd; such terms as "Negro," "colored," and "black" all appear in a time of changing racial nomenclature. The subtly racist board of education meeting is deftly handled, and the ending is not all that predictable.

It is difficult to write about Donald

E. Westlake without wanting to take a self-indulgent detour to read or reread his prodigious output. He wrote five grim, downbeat private eye novels as Tucker Coe, four comic amateur detective novels as Samuel Holt, and various one-shots under such names as Curt Clark, Timothy J. Culver, and Judson Jack Carmichael. And while it may seem heresy to say so, his great series about Parker and Dortmunder are not his finest work. Two late non-comic novels—*The Ax* (1997), in which corporate downsizing leads to murder, and *The Hook* (2000), about a bestselling novelist's deadly struggle with writer's block—are possible candidates for Westlake's best.

Memory is very nearly in their league. *The Comedy Is Finished* doesn't rank quite that high, but read it anyway. Westlake would undoubtedly have been happy to see these two books in print. ♦

BCA

Douglas of the West

He was not called 'the Little Giant' for nothing.

BY EDWARD ACHORN

His contemporaries called him "the Little Giant." They recognized that although Stephen A. Douglas was physically a pipsqueak—standing only 5-foot-4, small even for his generation—he loomed over American political life through his intensity, intelligence, and energy. Unfortunately for his historical reputation, he clashed with another Illinois man—a tall, homely, and ungainly fellow named Abraham Lincoln, who well over a century ago was transmogrified into a secular god, beloved

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**Stephen A. Douglas
and Antebellum Democracy**

by Martin H. Quitt
Cambridge, 224 pp., \$24.99

by conservatives and liberals alike.

If Douglas is known at all today, it is almost entirely in Lincoln's reflected glory. Douglas was the Democrat who debated the Republican Lincoln in 1858, winning reelection to the Senate, in part, by crudely playing the race card, accusing Lincoln of favoring social equality for blacks, and their intermarriage with whites—charges Lincoln fiercely denied, not without displaying his own racism. Douglas is also remembered as the presidential nominee of a bitterly

divided Democratic party who lost to Lincoln in 1860.

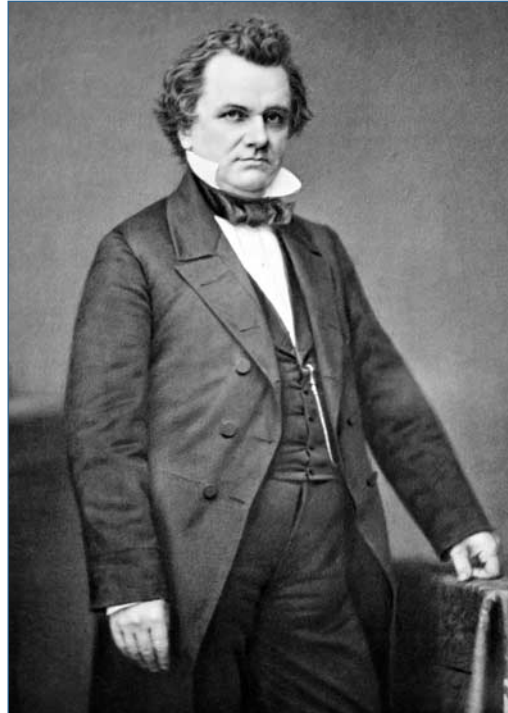
Largely forgotten, though, are elements of his character that speak well of Douglas: his stunning rise from a paltry youth; his guts in defying the weak and corrupt administration of President James Buchanan; his determination to keep the country from being torn in two; his staunch patriotism. This insightful new study explores these elements, and more.

Using unpublished and recently discovered letters, Martin Quitt, professor emeritus of history at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, offers a glimpse into Douglas's troubled youth and unpleasant family life in rural Vermont. His 31-year-old father died when Douglas was two months old, and for the rest of his life, he maintained a certain reserve, if not coldness, toward his mother. He left school at 15 to try to make a go of it as an apprentice furniture maker, failing because of his weakness and puny build. He then set out for the West, where he very nearly died from a protracted illness, tended to by a landlady without help from his family. He seemed to reveal some of his bitterness later in life, when he accepted an honorary doctorate from Middlebury and declared: "My friends, Vermont is the most glorious spot on the face of the globe for a man to be born in, *provided* he emigrates when he is very young."

In Illinois, Douglas found the land of his dreams—the place where he could pass the bar exam with a minimum of fuss and enter a political career without waiting in line. At 21, he was appointed state's attorney of Morgan County. In quick succession, he was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives, appointed registrar of the Springfield Land Office, made Illinois secretary of state, and, at 27, named associate justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. One year later, he won a seat in Congress. Four years after that, he was elected to the United States Senate.

This meteoric rise, in striking con-

trast to Lincoln's tortuous, crablike journey to political power, reflected Douglas's remarkable ability to connect with people. Considerably more buoyant than Lincoln, he seemed the living embodiment of the high-energy, youthful, can-do spirit of what was then known as the Northwest. A contemporary observed that one of the diminutive politician's odd techniques of winning over voters (all male in



Stephen A. Douglas, ca. 1858

those days) was to "sit on their laps, and clap them on their backs," exuding a "magnetism" that was "almost irresistible." This habit of sitting on other men's knees was, Quitt assures us, "an act less of homoerotic titillation than of homosocial bonding." It's hard to imagine any modern politician getting that grotesquely chummy.

In the House, and especially the Senate, Douglas became a national figure. He tried to split the difference on slavery, ignoring its inherent immorality and insisting that every state and territory had the right to protect it, or not, as its people saw fit. This neutrality pleased neither those in the North, who found slavery an abomination and a threat to free men, nor those in the South, who insisted it be

permitted to spread unimpeded into new territories. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), far from tamping down sectional hostility, whipped up a toxic swirl of politics and violence which contributed directly to the explosion of the Civil War.

It is interesting that his nonchalance toward slavery permeated his private life. His first marriage was to the daughter of a wealthy North Carolina slaveowner, and when she died, he oversaw a family plantation, and its benighted slaves, on behalf of their sons. At the time when he met his first wife, he spelled his last name "Douglass," and Quitt offers an interesting theory for the dropped "s." The celebrated autobiography of the escaped slave Frederick Douglass had been published a year earlier: "One can imagine that the congressman heard jokes about a putative kinship with the author of the slave narrative."

Douglas's finest hour was surely in 1860, when he realized he had no hope of winning the presidential race and instead ventured into the South—at the risk of assassination—to plead for sustaining the Union. (One newspaper in Montgomery, Alabama, questioned why "this insolent braggart" was coming to town, and eschewed local responsibility for any act a "desperado" might make in response.) At Lincoln's inauguration the following March, legend holds, Douglas held the president's stovepipe hat on his lap. After the fall of Fort Sumter, he declared that while he remained "unalterably opposed" to Lincoln's political views, he was "prepared to sustain" the president in defending the country and the Constitution—setting a powerful example for Democrats in joining in the war effort. He died after a protracted illness in June 1861.

This somewhat choppy book offers events out of chronological order and with little narrative drive. Still, it throws an interesting light on certain aspects of Stephen A. Douglas's life and career, bringing attention to a consequential man long lost in Lincoln's shadow. ♦

Reason for Rhyme

The lost art of memorizing (and reciting) verse.

BY WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

*Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten;
Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down.*

Thus John Greenleaf Whittier's heroine defies Stonewall Jackson and his Confederate troops.

I learned the poem by heart decades ago, and it is not likely to leave me until I leave. Catherine Robson's extraordinary book, a feat of imagining as well as of scholarship, explores the memorization and reciting of poems in classrooms across England and America through substantial portions of the last two centuries. Memorization began to decline in the decades after (roughly) 1920, America holding out a bit longer than Britain, as the backlash against rote learning in both countries combined with other factors to spell the end of the practice. Robson compares herself in the introduction to a historical novelist, and her treatment of the subject throughout is lovingly and tellingly inflected with personal and familial experience. She notes that many would be willing, perhaps in a sentimental mood, to regret the loss of a world in which many individuals could recite fine-sounding lines; but she's under no illusion that bringing back that world is in the least way possible, whether or not desirable.

A professor at New York University, Robson grew up in England, and the three poems she chooses for extended discussion are English ones: "Casabianca" by Felicia Hemans (*The boy stood on the burning deck*), Thomas Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" (*The*

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Heart Beats

Everyday Life and the Memorized Poem

by Catherine Robson
Princeton, 312 pp., \$45

curfew tolls the knell of parting day), and "The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna" (*Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note*) by Charles Wolfe. There are also brief treatments in an afterword of W.E. Henley's "Invictus" (*I am the master of my fate: / I am the captain of my soul*) and Kipling's "If." Of course, these poems were also American recitation favorites—"The boy stood on the burning deck" is recited in the school exercises attended by Tom Sawyer—but Robson's book focuses mainly on the English school scene.

Robson says her approach to the subject is allied with three key fields of recent academic inquiry: the history of the book, the cultural history of reading, and questions of literature's "reception" over time. If this sounds like the dread Cultural Studies of current ubiquity, Robson's theoretical inquiry is always grounded in the particular and consists not merely of factual data but of conjectures about recitation performances and their preparations. She notes that poetry works especially well not only as a teaching agency in developing pre-reading and reading skills, but also as furnishing "prestigious material for recitation." (One of her nice phrases for this activity is "Christ by other means.")

She quotes one Percival Chubb, an American who wrote in a frequently reprinted book on teaching English in the elementary school that although memory and recitation are useful in "confirming the child in correct ways

of speaking ... its greatest service is in storing the mind with the priceless treasure of the noblest thoughts and feelings that have been uttered by the race." These early impressions and memories "impart a tone to one's spiritual system for life, rich and pure enough to outsize all base and cruder songs and to set the pitch of character."

Such rhetorical flights may remind us that, 30 years before Chubb's encomium, the high destiny which was to be poetry's had been boldly staked out by Matthew Arnold. In his great essay "The Study of Poetry" (1881), Arnold predicted that "more and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." He also declared that "most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry." Twenty years previously, Robson tells us, Arnold had been pleased that, under the Revised Code of 1861-62, the memorized poem in Britain achieved its fullest expansion. For Arnold, the great value of memorized recitations was that, in them, subject matter was not "talked about," it was "learnt."

This educational bias helped me understand something I hadn't previously about Robert Frost's practice as a teacher at Pinkerton Academy in New Hampshire, just before he left for England in 1912. Frost believed, and carried out in his pedagogy, that the real test of literary appreciation consisted in how well students read poems aloud rather than in any "analytic" attempts to say what the poem meant, or how it struck them. What seemed to me perhaps a unique Frostian slant on things was, in fact, decidedly in the tradition that Arnold rationalized and that had existed for decades in schoolrooms. Robson invites us to take her book's title literally, as when, in her discussion of "Casabianca," she claims that "if we do not learn by heart, the heart does not feel the rhythms of poetry as echoes or variations of its own insistent beats." She argues that since contemporary readers no longer hold poems with regular iambic rhythms (or any sort of rhythms) at their core, we think about literature in altogether

less “corporeal” ways than did our predecessors. Perhaps so, and typical of the imaginative outreach of her procedures.

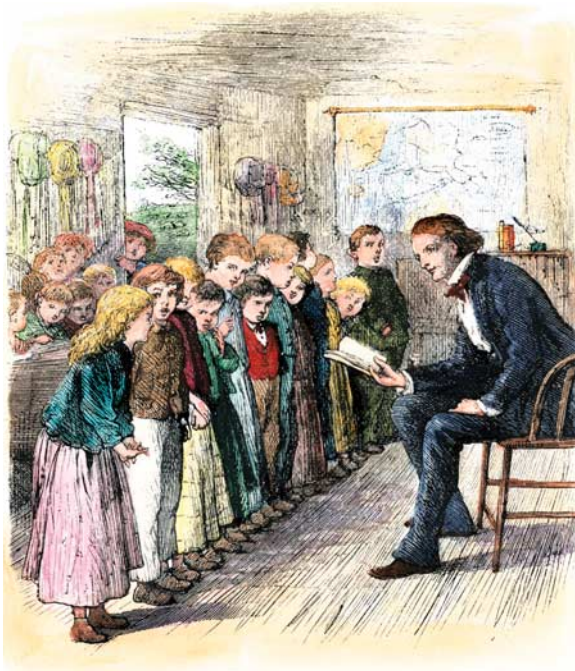
The chapter on Gray’s *Elegy* is the longest, and was of the most interest to me because, although “Casabianca” and the Sir John Moore burial poem are of undeniable historical and cultural interest, their limitations as poems are still obvious. Robson makes a case for changing the biases of literary studies after the “theory wars” of the later 20th century. She thinks these studies provided a “devastating attack upon the concept of trans-historical value,” and notes that the mainstream of literary criticism now has “generally been loath to declare in print that a text is good or bad.” Attention should be paid instead to contexts, historical and otherwise.

As someone evidently out of this “mainstream,” I have never been loath to make a judgment, in class or in print, that a particular poem (not a “text,” please) is good or bad or somewhere in-between—so I find myself slightly at war with history and contexts. But Gray’s *Elegy* is so rich a poem, so crammed with varied images and compelling verse movement, that it is simply in a different class from the other two poems. Robson acknowledges the difference, at least in terms of the *Elegy*’s relative difficulty and complexity, by informing us that it was assigned to “top” classes, or final stages of public education, and was probably taken to “heart” only by pupils who were particularly academically able. She is interested especially in imagining, both as historian and novelist, its reception by British pupils: “What might the *Elegy* have meant to individuals who underwent the experience of leaving one [social] class and entering another?”

Here she makes excellent use of Richard Hoggart’s pioneering *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) by suggesting, as did Hoggart, that scholarship winners from the working class are often (invariably?) split in their class loyalties

as they “cross” from a lower to a higher one. Then there is the question of performance: How difficult would it have been to memorize all or even part of this long poem for an 11-year-old boy from a Lancashire mill town in 1894? It would, at any rate, be a rather different challenge from being able to recite, “The boy stood on the burning deck.”

For Edmund Gosse, who wrote a biography of Thomas Gray, the *Elegy*’s



“balanced perfection” made it, more than any other English poem, “the ideal object for literary study.” And, from the outset, it admirably passed the critics’ test for value. Dr. Johnson excepted it from Gray’s other poems, which he disliked, and wrote famously that it “abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every bosom returns an echo.” A hundred years later, when Arnold (in “The Study of Poetry”) disparaged 18th-century English poetry as too prose-like (Dryden and Pope were “classics of our prose”), Gray, for him, was the true poetical classic who, above all, “lived with the great poets . . . with the Greeks.” Then, in another century, when the new-critic Cleanth Brooks demonstrated in *The Well-Wrought Urn* that irony and paradox were to be found in all great poems, the *Elegy* more than

passed the test, even though its sober, fairly conventional stanza form might look as if “straight” sentiments rather than complex ironical ones characterized its expression.

Overall, Robson’s book has no single “thesis,” but branches out in so many challenging directions that such a unifying concept would be a simplification. Of the biographical, familial anecdotes she brings to bear, one is about a young girl in an elementary school in London’s Bethnal Green (a very poor district) who stands up to recite “He fell among thieves,” an imperial poem of sensational violence by a now-forgotten poet, Sir Henry Newbolt. Did she and her classmates ever think about the difference between their cramped lives and the heroic glory celebrated in the poem? The reciter was Eileen Adams, Robson’s grandmother, “sharp as a tack and at the top of her class,” who would leave school at 14 to work in an East End sweatshop, marry at 20, and then contract the tuberculosis that kept her a semi-invalid throughout her life.

In another scenario, Robson imagines herself as a student in a public elementary school, sometime between 1870 and 1920, when she would perhaps have memorized a fine ballad, “Lord Ullin’s Daughter,” by another forgotten poet, Thomas Campbell. In fact, she writes, her education contained no recitation of poems, and certainly not one as “popular” as the Campbell poem, which she did not discover until she was in her forties. After quoting the ballad in full, she doesn’t make the case that it is an unjustly neglected poem, nor one that everyone should know: “Instead, I will just say this: I would have liked to have had ‘Lord Ullin’s Daughter’ with me for all those years.”

Having spent more decades than Robson did without reading, let alone memorizing, “Lord Ullin’s Daughter,” I am grateful to Robson for its belated discovery. ♦

“In a Dilbert-esque faux pax [sic], a Taliban spokesperson sent out a routine email last week with one notable difference. He publicly CC'd the names of everyone on his mailing list.”
—ABC News, November 16, 2012

PARODY

