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JAY COST • WILLIAM KRISTOL

THOROUGHLY MODERN VIRTUE

JONATHAN V. LAST on the qualities we now admire

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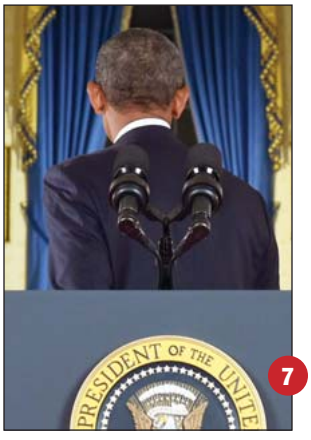

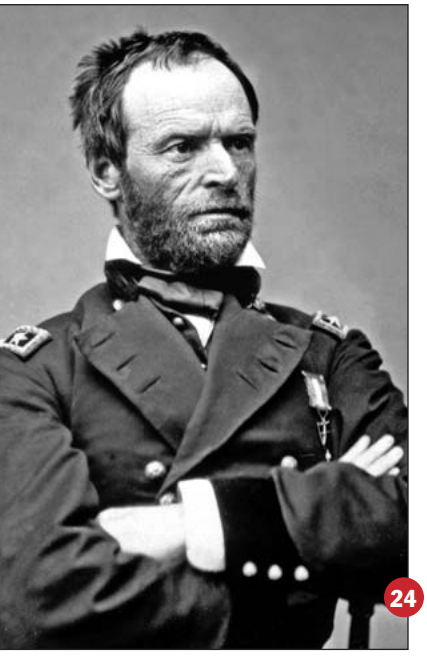

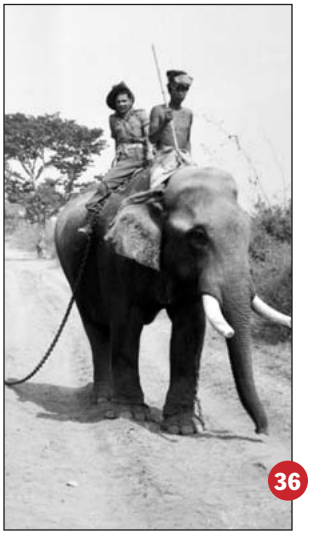

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COVER BY GARY LOCKE

The AFT's Apple Polishers

A recent *Time* magazine cover story has touched off quite a controversy. More than 70,000 people signed an online petition decrying the magazine's affront. The offending article is headlined "Rotten Apples: It's nearly impossible to fire a bad teacher. Some tech millionaires may have found a way to change that." For those of us that live in the real world, the only thing upsetting about *Time*'s education reporting is that it's more milquetoast than condemnatory. But we suppose the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) president Randi Weingarten—who's organizing the campaign against *Time*—has to earn her $407,323 paycheck.

According to the AFT, *Time* has smeared the reputation of America's hardworking teachers by pointing out that some of them are bad. Yet pointing out that bad teachers can undermine our public schools is not even a remotely debatable observation—nor is it any service to all the good teachers to cover up the truth. In education, there's even a term of art, "the dance of the lemons," for how bad teachers get shuffled from school to school because they can't be fired.

In 2010 *LA Weekly* published an exposé of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which happens to be the largest school district in the country, employing over 33,000 teachers. *LA Weekly* reported that, over the course of a decade, the LAUSD fired exactly four teachers for poor performance and spent $3.5 million in legal fees to do so. A supposedly chastened LAUSD responded to the report by promising to implement reforms. Earlier this year, however, *USA Today* noted that, on average, just 2.2 teachers are fired annually for "unsatisfactory performance" in the entire state of California. This problem is hardly unique to the Golden State. Public schools across the nation have Kafkaesque tenure and seniority rules, which teachers' unions defend to the death with their taxpayer-funded dues. If Weingarten's job is to protect bad teachers from ever being fired, she's indeed worth every penny of that salary. If, like most Americans, you care primarily about the well-being of children, you will conclude that she's attacking *Time* because it's telling the truth about the union racket.

Of course, *Time* was kind enough to publish a response from Weingarten that's largely fact-free venting about how the problems of public education have "nothing to do with tenure." Weingarten also has the temerity to complain about "the woeful lack of funding our schools receive." As if! In 2011, Washington, D.C., schools had the worst graduation rate in the nation. In 2010, census data showed that D.C. was spending $29,409 per pupil, and spending has surely gone up since then, while school performance remains abysmal. By comparison, Sidwell Friends, the elite private school in D.C. where the Obamas send their kids, charges around $35,000 a year. With a per-pupil budget comparable to D.C. public schools, Sidwell Friends has so much extra cash lying around they recently announced they're hiring a barista at $11 an hour to make smoothies and lattes for the privileged children who attend the school.

Nonetheless, MSNBC, *Politico*, *Huffington Post*, and the *Washington Post* all spilled sympathetic ink chronicling the AFT's ginned-up outrage. Of course, it should be noted teachers' unions don't speak for all teachers. In fact, one way to tell a good teacher from a bad one is the frustration they express at the plethora of bad colleagues getting in their way. We suspect if Americans knew just how bad the problem of incompetent teachers really is, there would be a real backlash—not just a silly Internet petition. ♦

Cities for the Rich

The Scrapbook's eyes fell recently on a piece in the *Atlantic* by Derek Thompson, which quantifies what The Scrapbook has sensed for some time. Drawing on the work of Jed Kolko, chief economist for Trulia, the real estate website, and UCLA's Matthew Kahn, it draws a clear connection between politically progressive metropolitan areas—San Francisco, New York, Boston, Los Angeles, etc.—and the inability of low- and middle-income residents to afford housing. Put another way, in real estate terms: Liberal communities are financially inhospitable to homebuyers who aren't wealthy.

The Scrapbook gives the author due credit for candor. The title of the piece—"Why Middle-Class Americans Can't Afford to Live in Liberal Cities"—is admirably straightforward, and Thompson lays out the problem in plain language: "Across the country," he writes, "rich, dense cities are struggling with affordable housing, to the considerable anguish of their middle-class families." But he also suggests (this is the *Atlantic*, after all) that the housing shutout for hardworking, middle-income taxpayers in deep-blue America is largely a consequence of "good intentions gone bad." To wit, progressives are more likely to impose stringent regulations—in zoning laws and otherwise—to preserve the environment or protect local character and history.

Well, maybe. Certainly The Scrapbook would agree that, in the realm of affordable housing and income inequality, there are many small reasons that add up to a big problem: High taxes and rent control, for example, are prime examples of the unintended consequences of "good intentions" in city government. It is also true that blue cities such as Bos-

ton and San Francisco, for example, are located on peninsulas, where expansion is limited, whereas, say, red Texas features miles of flat, open country, ripe for development.

Yet the "good intentions" here are precisely the point. One of the primary differences between left and right in America is the left's devotion to dogma, regardless of consequences, and the right's conviction that practical consequences must be borne in mind when enacting new laws and regulations. Whether liberal policies in urban America are well-intended or not, the evidence that they do not work—to the increasing detriment of citizens who aren't rich—has been so pervasive, and for so long, that even the *Atlantic* can't help but notice.

To which The Scrapbook would add one essential footnote. Yes, there are economic and political reasons why America's blue cities are less hospitable than red cities to middle-class homeowners. But no steady reader of the *New Yorker*, or the Style section of the *Washington Post*, or the "soft" features in the pages of the *New York Times* could fail to discern a certain semblance of contempt, a slight undertone of disdain, a faint echo of NIMBY, when mention is made of the American middle class, its values and customs, its appearance and politics—a sentiment now codified in laws and regulations. So when Democrats talk about "income inequality," what exactly do they mean? ♦

Maher's Attacks

Fifty years ago, almost to the day, a group of students at the University of California, Berkeley, demanded that school administrators recognize their right to freedom of speech and allow political activity on campus. Students swarmed a police car holding a comrade, Joan Baez sang "We Shall Overcome," and hundreds of protesters were thrown in jail. The Free Speech Movement of 1964 won, of course, inspiring a wave of student activism throughout the decade and the world.

The heirs of those daring dissidents have decided, however, to reject their legacy—and it's the university establishment now insisting that intellectual openness remain a hallmark of one of the country's most famous centers of learning.

In August, the group of Berkeley undergraduates that chooses commencement speakers booked comedian Bill Maher for the December ceremony. Nobody complained about the selection of the man who made the 2008 documentary *Religulous*, which roundly mocks religious belief, until he got into an argument with the next Batman, Ben Affleck, on October 3. On that night's episode of his HBO talk show, *Real Time with Bill Maher*, the host argued that "liberals need to stand up for liberal principles," such as "freedom of speech, freedom to practice any religion you want without fear of violence, freedom to leave a religion, equality for women, equality for minorities, including homosexuals." Maher noted, "These are liberal principles that liberals applaud, but then when you say, in the Muslim world, this is what's lacking, then they get upset."

Affleck certainly did. "It's gross! It's racist!" he responded angrily. "How about more than a billion people who aren't fanatical, who don't punish women, who just want to go to school, have some sandwiches?"

Maher took on the question directly. "All these billion people don't hold any of those pernicious beliefs? That's just not true, Ben." He pointed to a Pew poll that found 88 percent of Egyptian Muslims believe the death penalty should apply to Muslims who leave the faith. "There's a reason why Ayaan Hirsi Ali needs bodyguards 24-7," Maher said.

The Scrapbook is not in the habit of defending Bill Maher, and may never do so again, but he's the only late-night talker—a group regularly asked to give commencement speeches—who discusses substantive ideas on his show, and with people who hold differing opinions. That, to some Berkeley students, makes him "dangerous." One started a petition at Change.org demanding that Maher be barred from the ceremony. "It is the responsibility of the University of California to protect all students and uphold a standard of civility," the petition declared, giving such examples of the comedian's "hate speech" as: "You have to understand, you have to embrace the values of Western civilization. They're not just different, they are better." The first person to sign the petition was Sadia Saifuddin, the student regent of the University of California system. "I cannot stand for any action that makes our students feel unsafe," she wrote.

Over 4,000 people—not all of them Berkeley students—signed the online petition, sending fear into the hearts of the undergraduates who'd booked Maher. That group decided to rescind its invitation. The next day, the university sent them—and all enemies of intellectual freedom—a stinging rebuke. "The UC Berkeley administration cannot and will not accept this decision, which appears to have been based solely on Mr. Maher's opinions and beliefs, which he conveyed through constitutionally protected speech," it said in a statement.

Nobody gets the final word on this, of course, not even Bill Maher, if he manages to be heard at Berkeley in December—the conversation will continue. But the last words here go to Eiynah, a Pakistan-born Toronto writer and illustrator who received death threats after publishing the children's book *My Chacha Is Gay*. "What you did by screaming 'racist!' was shut down a conversation that many of us have been waiting to have," she wrote in an open letter to Affleck. "Most Muslims choose to interpret scripture in a peaceful way, but that doesn't mean the raw material isn't there for those who choose the path of violence. That material must be addressed." ♦

Minimum Sense

It turns out Elizabeth Warren, favorite senator of the left, is not only a self-described Cherokee without evidence of Cherokee ancestry, but a self-described consumer finance expert without evidence of any financial savvy. Joining two of her favorite themes, women's oppression and the cruel inadequacy of the minimum wage, she wrote this in a "tweetstorm" she cohosted the other day with fellow Democratic senator Kirsten Gillibrand: "2/3 of minimum wage workers are women, but the minimum wage no longer keeps a mom & her baby out of poverty."

No longer? Perhaps because of the space limitations of her chosen medium, Sen. Warren omitted to mention when exactly it was that the minimum wage kept "a mom & her baby" out of poverty. We wish she would enlighten us—though if she could, The Scrapbook might have to rethink some basic assumptions. We thought we knew—as single mothers of babies think they know with special keenness—that a mother and her baby are not a viable economic unit. That's why God invented fathers. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'An invitation to [Ben Bradlee and Sally Quinn's] historic Georgetown home was one of the most coveted status symbols in the nation's capital, an entry to an elite salon of the powerful, talented . . . " (*Washington Post*, October 29). ♦

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Another Country

Last winter, my father gave me an American flag he had been keeping in his closet. It had been moved there several decades before from his mother's closet, where it had rested for more than 30 years. It seems I was the first person to unfold the 48-star-spangled banner since it had covered the coffin of my great-grandfather Albert Luyster, who died of influenza in 1939.

Luyster served in the U.S. Infantry, 9th Regiment, Company D, which was dispatched to China during the Boxer Rebellion and the China Relief Expedition. According to Wikipedia, the regiment earned the nickname the "Manchus." My father told me his mother, Luyster's daughter, remembered that her father, a tugboat engineer on the Hudson River in civilian life, also saw service in Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War. That would have put him on the opposite side from my late mother's family, natives of the island. It occurs to me that couples entertaining the prospect of marriage might do well to investigate their genealogies. If their families were engaged in conflict in the past, it might be a sign they will be again, as were my mother and father.

It was around the time he handed down the flag to me that Dad started getting interested in genealogy. He would prowl around various Internet sites, then report his findings over our weekly Sunday lunch. The Luyster branch of our family, he explained, could only be traced as far back as the late-19th century in Jersey City. That was sorely disappointing. I remember my grandmother saying that one of our Dutch ancestors held the deed to half the city of New York.

As the weather turned warmer, instead of lunch we met for long bicycle rides through Rock Creek Park—at 77, the old man still sets the pace. Last summer, I would draw alongside him in the muggy air, and he would update me on his findings.

His other grandfather, August "Gus" Smith, was an Indianapolis-born newspaperman, a typesetter, who got a job at the *Daily News* in New York. That's where Gus's son Harold and *his* son, my father, were born. Whereas

Gus, center, with his four sons (Harold at right)

COURTESY OF THE SMITH FAMILY

Luyster served in foreign wars, my father remembered that Gus and Harold used to argue about FDR, whom Gus loathed for dragging America into World War II. Nonetheless, a picture my father has from that time shows two of Gus's boys in uniform.

Despite the commonness of our last name, my father had little trouble following the trail of Gus's forebears. His father was also from Indiana. Before that, the Smiths were Kentuckians, and one was a farrier. Shirley is another family name, and some of the Shirleys were Kentuckians, too, including a Revolutionary War vet who went west. Before independence, the Smiths and Shirleys were Virginians, concentrated around Prince William and Northumberland counties, where some were tobacco farmers and tobacco traders.

In the late-17th century, Dad tells me, the trail goes cold. Who knows why? Records can be lost; life was precarious. Or maybe the almighty Internet is still limited in its ability to provide answers.

In any case, family archaeology can be dizzying. Even as we push back further into the past, unearthing layers and hoping to reach some ur-relative, some family Adam, our own lives keep racing forward without pause. My father's solution is to imagine the progress of his life and project it backward in time. That is, he takes the year of his birth, 1937, and measures the reach of his life both forward 77 years, to 2014, and backward 77 years, which lands him in 1861. For him, this seems to foreshorten time. It left him feeling, after a recent trip to Gettysburg, that the Civil War wasn't so distant a fact.

Obviously, counting backward and forward can't slow the march of time—but for Dad it creates the illusion of bringing everyone closer. It helps him imagine himself a contemporary of his great-grandmother, Flora May Rupp, born in 1860.

This idea of genealogy as connecting the living with both past and future is at odds with the classical idea. "Like the generations of leaves are those of men," Glaucus tells Diomedes in Book 6 of the *Iliad*. "The wind blows and one year's leaves are scattered on the ground, but the trees bud and fresh leaves open when spring comes again."

True, the Greeks and Romans in literature often get to converse with, and seek advice from, shades in the underworld. Still, fallen leaves grow brittle and disintegrate in a season and then are gone. My father's notion, by contrast, with the generations all on the same continuum, talking to each other across time, captures continuity as well as change. It seems somehow American—like the Stars and Stripes, with its 13 unchanging stripes, and the country's development tangible in the growing number of stars.

Lee Smith

the weekly Standard

Waiting for Bumgarner

Most of us at The Weekly Standard are baseball fans. Like all human institutions we are imperfect, so we have a few colleagues who superciliously disdain sports, and a few others who vulgarly prefer football or basketball. But we ignore the naysayers and carpers in our midst. We're proud to endorse the words of baseball pioneer Albert Goodwill Spalding:

> I claim that Base Ball owes its prestige as our National Game to the fact that as no other sport it is the exponent of American Courage, Confidence, Combativeness; American Dash, Discipline, Determination; American Energy, Eagerness, Enthusiasm; American Pluck, Persistency, Performance; American Spirit, Sagacity, Success; American Vim, Vigor, Virility.

Or as Philip Roth put it a century later, "Baseball made me understand what patriotism was about, at its best."

We at The Weekly Standard are also admirers of human excellence. There are conservatives whose jaundiced view of human nature not only provides a useful check on utopian fantasies but also casts a wet blanket on any impulse to admire human achievement. There is a role and a place for that kind of conservatism. But it is not ours. We choose rather, in this time and place, to keep in mind the admonition of Leo Strauss: "We have no higher duty, and no more pressing duty, than to remind ourselves and our students, of political greatness, human greatness, of the peaks of human excellence."

San Francisco Giants pitcher Madison Bumgarner

NEWSCOM

And so, as fans of baseball and admirers of human excellence, we appreciated and indeed were thrilled by the World Series achievement of San Francisco Giants pitcher Madison Bumgarner: seven innings of 3-hit, 1-run pitching to get the Giants off to a winning start in Game 1; a 4-hit complete game shutout in Game 5 to give the Giants a 3-2 lead in the series; and five innings of scoreless relief on two days' rest to close out the series in Game 7. Curt Schilling, who has a claim to know about such things, called Bumgarner's the "best postseason performance ever."

We appreciate the achievement. We will enjoy the memories. But—to get to politics—our message to our fellow conservatives, as we turn the corner from Election Day 2014, is this: Expect no Bumgarner. Put not your faith in princes. Or, to quote the American Founder after whom Bumgarner was named: "Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm."

In other words, don't count on a conservative superstar emerging, one who can put the rest of the team on his shoulders and carry it to victory. Don't wish for what most likely will not be. Expect our standard-bearers to be flawed. None will have all the virtues one would want in a presidential candidate. All will reflect—will fully reflect—the crooked timber of humanity.

But that doesn't mean we can't win. The vast majority of World Series victories have been achieved without a Bumgarner. Baseball is a team effort. Democratic politics is a group effort. The reason there's a conservative movement is to shape, guide, and carry along leaders who can't do it all by themselves. As even Bumgarner didn't, in fact. Bruce Bochy and Pablo Sandoval and Hunter Pence and many others did, after all, play key roles. We have Bochys and Sandovals and Pences. We shouldn't waste too much time yearning for a Bumgarner.

It is the Democrats, in fact, who are in the uncomfortable position of resting everything on one person. Hillary Clinton is, they hope, going to overcome the evident failures of the Obama administration and the manifest deficiencies of contemporary liberalism. Expectations for her are high. She won't fulfill them.

The 2016 presidential election is unlikely to produce the drama or the heroism of the 2014 World Series. What Yogi Berra said of baseball is usually true of politics: "It ain't like football. You can't make up no trick plays." Conservatives needn't and shouldn't rest their presidential hopes on either brilliant trickery or extraordinary mastery. Neither is likely. The good news is neither is necessary for a victory.

—William Kristol

End of the Age of Obama

NEWSCOM

The end of the Age of Obama. It began with high hopes on a winter's night in Iowa in 2008 and ended in disappointment on a crisp fall day nearly seven years later.

Sure, the president has another two years in office, but he is now the lamest of lame ducks. He is soon to face a House majority that is one of the most Republican since the 1920s, and a Senate, we hope, about to be taken over by a Republican majority. But more than this, he seems to have no friends, and few allies, on Capitol Hill.

One fact of politics that the president never fully grasped is that *Congress*, not the White House, is the center of our political system. Sure, the president lives in a fancy house, enjoys a full-time chef, and has "Hail to the Chief" played when he enters a room. But Congress is—as Stanford's Morris Fiorina once put it—"the keystone of the Washington establishment." The Framers gave pride of place to Congress, making it Article I of the Constitution, and were so worried about its potential power they divided it into two. Ideally, the modern president can use his prestige and acumen to lead Congress, but Obama has fallen far from that ideal. He has treated Congress in a supercilious manner, burned his bridges with Republican leaders, and alienated even Democrats.

With nobody to call on Capitol Hill, the president will have lots of free time over the next two years. He might use some of it to ponder this truth: There are no permanent majorities in American politics. For over a decade, Democrats have been salivating at the prospect of demographic changes propelling them to permanent majority status. Obama in particular has been active on this front, and has ruthlessly divided the country along race, gender, and class lines in the hope of speeding this process along. But he has overlooked two historical realities.

First, demographic change has been part and parcel of the American political landscape since the Founding, and yet the parties adapt. We can go back to the Federalist/Jeffersonian divide of earliest days. The latter enjoyed a demographic edge for a time because of the fast expansion of the West, but the old Federalist ideology eventually became the backbone of the Whigs, who were competitive against the Jacksonians. Federalism and antislavery then inspired the Republicans. So demography "doomed" the ideas of the Federalists, until of course a homespun Illinoisan named Abraham Lincoln united the whole North around a reworked version of their economic program. More recently, consider: In 1928 it was the Catholic vote that flipped Massachusetts from Republican to Democrat. In 2004 a majority of white Massachusetts Catholics gave their vote to George W. Bush, a Methodist from Texas, over John Kerry, a Catholic from Massachusetts.

Second, despite our political class's pretensions to power, they remain mere pawns in a broader game designed by James Madison. Madison wanted a large republic precisely so demagogues could never build a fractious majority, as has been President Obama's clear ambition. A society that covers a large space with many people actually makes it *harder* to do what this president has so long wanted. Per Madison: "Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other."

We are seeing this play out right now. Obama's coalition in 2008 was relatively large—at 53 percent of the vote—but unstable. In a country as vast and diverse as ours, *all* such coalitions are bound to be unstable. And what we have seen is Republicans poach a critical mass of the Obama vote away, in 2010 and likely in 2014, to foil his agenda. Just as Madison might have expected.

It is well known that this president likes to golf and watch hipster favorites like *Game of Thrones*, so he probably is too busy to read dusty old books about men who lived long ago. But those who aspire to succeed this sterling mediocrity in the White House would do well to spend their free time a little differently.

We would suggest a careful study of the words and deeds of the Founding generation. There is much to learn from Madison's complex philosophy, Alexander Hamilton's innovative economic program, George Washington's careful and steady management, and Thomas Jefferson's pragmatic policy of conciliation. Let's hope our next president grasps that you have to respect our past to lead us effectively into the future.

—Jay Cost

Ditching Israel, Embracing Iran

Last week, the Obama White House finally clarified its Middle East policy. It's détente with Iran and a cold war with Israel.

To the administration, Israel isn't worth the trouble its prime minister causes. As one anonymous Obama official put it to journalist Jeffrey Goldberg, what good is Benjamin Netanyahu if he won't make peace with the Palestinians? Bibi doesn't have the nerve of Begin, Rabin, or Sharon, said the unnamed source. The current leader of this longstanding U.S. ally, he added, is "a chickens—t."

It's hardly surprising that the Obama White House is crudely badmouthing Netanyahu; it has tried to undercut him from the beginning. But this isn't just about the administration's petulance and pettiness. There seems to be a strategic purpose to heckling Israel's prime minister. With a possible deal over Iran's nuclear weapons program in sight, the White House wants to weaken Netanyahu's ability to challenge an Iran agreement.

Our new partners?

NEWSCOM

Another unnamed Obama official told Goldberg that Netanyahu is all bluster when it comes to the Islamic Republic. The Israeli leader calls the clerical regime's nuclear weapons program an existential threat, but he's done nothing about it. And now, said the official, "It's too late for him to do anything. Two, three years ago, this was a possibility. But ultimately he couldn't bring himself to pull the trigger. It was a combination of our pressure and his own unwillingness to do anything dramatic. Now it's too late."

In other words, the White House is openly boasting that it bought the Iranians enough time to get across the finish line. Obama has insisted for five years that his policy is to prevent a nuclear Iran from emerging. In reality, his policy all along was to deter Israel from striking Iranian nuclear facilities. The way Obama sees it, an Iranian bomb may not be desirable, but it's clearly preferable to an Israeli attack. Not only would an Israeli strike unleash a wave of Iranian terror throughout the region—and perhaps across Europe and the United States as well—it would also alienate what the White House sees as a potential partner.

The negotiations with Iran were only the most obvious part of the administration's policy of pressuring Israel. The White House knew the Israelis would have difficulty striking Iranian nuclear facilities so long as there was a chance of a deal. Jerusalem couldn't risk making itself the enemy of peace and an international pariah. All Netanyahu could do was warn against the bad deal Obama was intent on making.

The White House used plenty of other tools to pressure Jerusalem. For instance, leaks. Virtually every time Israel struck an Iranian arms depot in Syria or a convoy destined for Hezbollah, an administration official leaked it to the press. The White House understood that publicizing these strikes would embarrass Bashar al-Assad or Hassan Nasrallah and thereby push them to retaliate against Israel. That was the point of the leaks: to keep Israel tentative and afraid of taking matters into its own hands.

Another instrument of pressure was military and security cooperation between Israel and the White House—the strongest and closest the two countries have ever enjoyed, say Obama advocates. It allowed administration officials to keep even closer watch on what the Israelis were up to, while trying to make Jerusalem ever more dependent on the administration for its own security.

Don't worry, Obama told Israel: I've got your back. I don't bluff. The Iranians won't get a bomb. And besides, the real problem in the region, the White House said time and again, is Israeli settlements. It's the lack of progress between Jerusalem and Ramallah that destabilizes the region. As John Kerry said recently, the stalled Arab-Israeli peace process is what gave rise to the Islamic State.

From the White House's perspective, then, Israel is the source of regional instability. Iran, on the other hand, is a force for stability. It is a rational actor, Obama has explained, pursuing its own interests. The White House, moreover, shares some of those interests—like rolling back the Islamic State.

The fact that Quds Force commander Qassem Suleimani now calls the shots in four Arab capitals—Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, and Sanaa—makes him the Middle East's indispensable man. Compared with the one-stop shopping Obama can do in Tehran to solve his Middle East problems, what can Israel offer?

The Obama administration's Middle East policy, finally clarified last week, is premised on a fundamental misunderstanding of the Islamic Republic. The question is whether the White House has also misunderstood the character of a man, the prime minister of Israel, whose courage they mock.

—Lee Smith

Tunisia Stands Alone

A peaceful election in the birthplace of the 'Arab Spring.' BY MAX BOOT

Tunisian electoral officials tallying votes in Tunis, October 27

Tunis

Who knew being an election observer was such hard work? When the International Republican Institute, a nonprofit, U.S. government-funded organization devoted to democracy promotion, invited me to serve on its team watching Tunisia's parliamentary elections on October 26, I imagined myself lolling by a Mediterranean beach, sipping a café au lait, with a short break in the middle of the day to ascertain, yup, Tunisians are going to the polls. The reality was several days of nonstop meetings with Tunisian politicos, nongovernmental organizations, and election officials, both in the capital, Tunis, and in Jendouba, a governorate in the northwest near the border with Algeria.

On Sunday, election day, I got up at 5:15 A.M. and, with the rest of my team (an IRI staff member, local translator, and driver), set off, bleary-eyed, to observe preparations before voting booths opened at 7 A.M. We spent the rest of the day driving from polling place to polling place to see if balloting was being carried out by the book. The polls finally closed at 6 P.M., but our job was not yet done—we spent the next three hours locked in a small schoolroom that doubled as an election station, watching as four officials laboriously counted more than 450 ballots by hand.

Everywhere we went, we inquired about election chicanery. We found none. The violations reported to us were laughably minor—for example, some campaign posters being displayed in violation of Tunisian law, which strictly limits the size and location of such advertising. Although there were fears that Ansar al Sharia militants would try to disrupt voting, there was not one terrorist attack in the country. More than 60 percent of the 5.2 million registered voters turned out—not the highest figure possible but still a stirring sight: so many people who had spent their lives under a dictatorship exercising rights that we in the West take for granted.

That the election was so free and fair is impressive enough—remember how dishonest voting was in places like Chicago and Newark not so long ago? Tunisia's achievement was all the more remarkable considering that there is not one peaceful and democratic state in the entire Arab world. (Iraq is sort of democratic but violent.)

Tunisia has been showing the path toward Arab democracy ever since a 26-year-old fruit seller named Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire on December 17, 2010, to protest the harassment he had suffered from heavy-handed government officials. His death set off a month of protests that brought down longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. That triggered antigovernment protests that shook the entire region. In Libya and Syria, the result was perpetual war; in Egypt, the rise of a new dictatorship. Only Tunisia has continued to stumble toward self-government.

The first free elections, held in October 2011, left the Islamist Ennahda party in the lead but with far less than a majority—it won 37 percent of the vote, forcing it to form a coalition government with two secular parties. The rule of "the Troika" got off to a bad start in September 2012 when a fundamentalist mob stormed the U.S. embassy in Tunis, although, unlike in Libya, no American diplomats were hurt. This was followed in 2013 by the assassination of two leftist opposition politicians, Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi.

NEWSCOM

Max Boot, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, is author of Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present.

Secular political leaders blamed Ennahda for tolerating Salafist terrorists. Protesters took to the streets, the Tunisian General Labor Union called a strike, and for a few months the country appeared to be on the verge of coming apart. But cooler heads prevailed. Rather than cling to power the way that Mohamed Morsi had done in Egypt, Tunisia's Islamist prime minister resigned in January 2014. Ali Laarayedh was succeeded by a technocratic caretaker administration under Mehdi Jomaa, whose task was to supervise parliamentary elections on October 26, to be followed a month later, on November 23, by a presidential election. (The president's powers under the new constitution remain unclear but appear to be less significant, in many respects, than those of the prime minister.)

Ennahda is so eager to assure Tunisia's "deep state"—composed of holdover bureaucrats from Ben Ali's time—that it will not repeat Morsi's abuses, which led to a military coup in Egypt, that it has refrained from even running a candidate in the presidential election. The frontrunner is Béji Caïd Essebsi, an 87-year-old who has held numerous cabinet and parliamentary posts and heads a secular coalition called Nidaa Tounes (Call of Tunisia), formed to counter Ennahda. Ennahda is not, however, giving up its quest for power. It contested the parliamentary elections with great skill, employing a smoothly running political organization that grew up around the mosques during Ben Ali's dictatorship, when other political parties could not organize.

Yet Ennahda failed to win over a largely secular public: It finished in second place, with 31.79 percent of the vote, behind Nidaa Tounes's 39.71 percent. Neither party has enough seats to form a government on its own. The general expectation is that the two are likely to form a coalition with some of the smaller, secular parties in a government of national unity to address Tunisia's deep-seated economic woes, which in many ways have gotten worse since Ben Ali fled the presidential palace. Economic growth in 2013 was under 3 percent, and the unemployment rate was over 17 percent. Tunisia has produced many college graduates but few jobs for them—some 30 percent of young people with university degrees are unemployed.

Waiting uneventfully at the polls

A ballot goes in the box . . .

. . . and a finger goes in the ink jar.

TOP AND CENTER, NEWSCOM; BOTTOM, MAX BOOT

Regulations are oppressive, and corruption is endemic. One young businessman who was running for office told me it takes 126 pieces of paper simply to open a bakery. Little wonder that the standard procedure is to bribe a bureaucrat—or simply not bother. Tunisia has a vast public-sector bureaucracy, 600,000 in a country of 11 million people. Polls show that most Tunisians dream of working for the government, not starting their own businesses. Even with so many unemployed, farmers have to import laborers from Egypt and the Ivory Coast to harvest the citrus and olive crops—few Tunisians are willing to do manual labor.

Optimists cite the country's history as a trading center dating back to the time of Carthage (whose ruins can be seen in a ritzy suburb of Tunis) to argue that Tunisians are naturally entrepreneurial. There is some truth to this, but more than a century and a half of one-party rule—first under the French, then under post-independence leaders Habib Bourguiba and Ben Ali—has done much to sap Tunisians' energy and initiative.

More than 60 parties of varying size contested the parliamentary election, but only one, Afek Tounes (Tunisian Aspiration), ran on a platform of free-market reform. I met several of its activists, who generally have business backgrounds, and was impressed by their energy and idealism. They tell voters that they should seek salvation not from the government but from their own efforts and that the job of government is to get out of the way. But this Reaganesque message is a tough sell in a country whose political DNA was formed by a combination of French and Arab culture. Afek Tounes had only a modest showing, finishing in fifth place with 3.68 percent of the

vote, while the winning Nidaa Tounes is full of French-style socialists who are unlikely to support the radical free-market reforms the country desperately needs.

Tunisia is a tourist hot spot waiting to happen: It has a long and beautiful coastline on the Mediterranean, lots of beaches, scenic mountains, Roman ruins, and a friendly, French-speaking population. But many businesses shut down altogether during the prime tourist months of July and August—much of the population decamps to the beach. Hotels are another obstacle. I stayed in a grand marble pile in the seaside town of Tabarka that looked impressive, but the lights often did not work, and the food was unpalatable. Why, I wondered, aren't the Four Seasons, Mandarin Oriental, Sofitel, and other top hotel chains running resorts here? You can't find a McDonald's or a Starbucks anywhere, either. The real climate may be warm and sunny, but the regulatory climate is chilly and inhospitable.

Ordinary Tunisians are understandably dispirited by the lack of economic progress since Ben Ali left. Young people especially are disillusioned. I heard many of them say that it's nice to be able to criticize the government and even to elect their own leaders, but more than anything they want good jobs and more opportunity. If those frustrations aren't addressed, the country could take a dangerous turn.

Tunisia has already exported some 3,000 fighters—more on a per capita basis than any other country—to join ISIS in Syria. Two IRI observers actually heard a pair of long-bearded Salafists recruiting Tunisian youths to fight in Syria right in the middle of a popular café an hour outside Tunis. Unless the next government can jumpstart the economy, radical Islam's appeal may widen. Clean elections are a good start, and in that respect, at least, Tunisia has made more progress than any of its neighbors. But it still has a long way to go before it can deliver on the promise of the Arab Spring. ♦

The Campus Is Conquered …

So Israelophobia spreads to America's secondary schools.

BY EDWARD ALEXANDER

At the conclusion of the latest installment of the endless Arab war against Israel, the leaders of Hamas simultaneously accused Israel of "genocide" against the residents of Gaza and took to the streets, dancing, ululating, and jubilating in celebration of their "victory" over the Zionist enemy. That is to say, what the novelist Thane Rosenbaum called Hamas's "civilian death strategy"—deliberately bringing about the greatest possible number of Arab (as well as Jewish) deaths—had achieved a political triumph in the court of world opinion.

What is naively called the "Arab-Israeli conflict" has a deep-seated pathological fanaticism at its core. American secondary school students will learn nothing about it from a new curriculum that amounts to a regimen of crude indoctrination depicting Israel as the devil's very own experiment station, black as Gehenna and the pit of Hell. But this is what a duo of Washington State Palestinophiles named Ed Mast and Linda Bevis, founders of the local Palestine Solidarity Committee, have been promoting with passionate intensity for some time.

In early October, Bevis appeared, by invitation, at the Washington State Council for the Social Studies, the annual meeting of the state's social studies teachers, to preside over a workshop in which she could recommend the Bevis and Mast curriculum as a replacement for the material in currently used textbooks. (The conference's keynote speaker was a zealous Israel-hater named Jen Marlowe, stalwart of the "Jenin Freedom Theater.") Bevis is a regular at similar conferences and held forth a week later at the "Teaching for Social Justice" gathering in Portland. At least three schools are known to have adopted her materials; Bevis has not divulged the names of schools where she has been active.

The tawdry character of the Bevis and Mast curriculum is inherent in its bizarre title: "The Palestine Teaching Trunk." Its designers noticed that the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center had packaged materials relating to the Holocaust in one of the trunks used by Jews who were shipped off to the death camps of Europe. But how dare the Jews monopolize all that beautiful Holocaust suffering which other groups, and none more so than the Palestinian Arabs, would very much like, ex post facto, to claim for themselves? And so it came to pass that Bevis and Mast collected their own CDs and sacred relics of the "Palestinian cause" into an online "trunk."

Palestinian appropriation of Jewish symbols and Jewish history, especially the Holocaust, is, along with the importing of rockets and building of underground tunnels into Israel, a flourishing industry in Gaza. Nobody could have been surprised when a filmmaker arrived there in August to begin work on a "Palestinian" version of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. It has often been noted that the most important date in Palestinian calendars is not any Arab, Muslim, or native Palestinian event but May 14, 1948, the day Israel was founded. The depiction of

Edward Alexander's most recent book is The State of the Jews: A Critical Appraisal *(Transaction Publishers, 2013).*

Palestinian Arabs as Jews naturally involved turning Israelis into Nazis, a practice in which Mahmoud Abbas, the first elected president of the Palestinian authority, received expert training in the Soviet Union, where he earned a Ph.D. for a dissertation arguing that Zionist Jews encouraged Nazism in order to gain sympathy for Jewish immigration to Palestine. The level of "scholarship" in Abbas's dissertation is emulated in a very large proportion of the books on the Recommended Reading List of the trunk.

What we get in this proposed curriculum for an American public school system is not dispassionate analysis but (at a generous estimate) the half-truths of propaganda, a good deal of which calls to mind the material studied by Max Weinreich in his 1946 book *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes Against the Jewish People*. Yes, Palestinian Arabs are among the world's most ruined people. But why? Where, in the Mast and Bevis trunk, in the unwholesome stew of Edward Said, Rashid Khalidi, Noam Chomsky, Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, Robert Fisk, and Alexander Cockburn that this curriculum will force-feed students, is the following crucial question ever posed: What might have been the fate of Palestinian Arabs if their assorted leaders—Arafat, Abbas, Hamas—had been working to improve education, health care, governance, commerce, and public works in their own society instead of constantly trying to destroy someone else's society? What does the Bevis and Mast curriculum have to say about the fact that, throughout this past summer's war, Israel continued to provide Gaza with its electricity because Hamas's leaders spend their Satanic energy and vast millions to acquire rockets and build underground tunnels for no other purpose than the raw murder of Jews, as called for in the Hamas Charter quoting the Koran?

Another half-truth in the trunk is that Palestinian Arabs suffer grievously from "occupation" (even in Gaza, from which Israel departed many years ago) and hate Israel because of it. But which came first—the so-called occupation or the hatred? For 19 years, from 1948 to 1967, the disputed territories were entirely in Arab hands, theirs to do with whatever they pleased. Yet somehow it never occurred to them to establish a Palestinian state there, but only to use every meter of land as a launching pad for attacks on Israel. Since those territories became Israel's as a result of Arab aggression in June 1967, they could not retroactively have become its cause.

'The Palestine Teaching Trunk'

The glossary of terms provided by the packers of the trunk at first seems to offer comic relief from the ferocity of its other contents, as well as another kind of insult to the intelligence of its prospective users, teachers as well as students. "Breach of the law," we learn, means "Breaking of the law"; "Flotilla" means "a group of ships sailing together." But even in this collection of solemn idiocies lurks malice (to say nothing of ignorance or dishonesty):

> Anti-semitism: Semites are people from the Middle East. Although "anti-semitic" is often used to mean "anti-Jewish," the term literally means being against people from the Middle East. People who are against the policies of the Israeli government are sometimes confusingly accused of being anti-semitic, thus mixing up politics with religion/ethnicity.

Antisemites, I am sorry to tell Bevis and Mast, do not hate "Semites"; they hate Jews. The term originated in the nineteenth century as a pseudo-scientific euphemism when old-fashioned "Jew-hatred" had begun to sound barbaric. As for that last sentence, the straw man who equates criticism of Israeli policies with antisemitism has yet to be discovered. There is, of course, a resurgence of antisemitism in Europe more pervasive than at any time since the Hitler era. The old continent is unable to cope with the Israelophobia and generalized Jew-hatred of its rapidly multiplying and increasingly violent Muslim minority except by blaming its woes on its (peaceful) Jewish minority, who are once again fleeing the lands of their birth. But the trunk is the very last place you are likely to hear mention of it.

In examining the interminable lists of hole-and-corner organizations (including, e.g., "Women's' [sic] Peace Service" and "Queers Against Israeli Apartheid") and books recommended by Bevis and Mast, I thought about the accusations long made against the Catholic church for dogmatic intolerance; but what struck me was not the similarity but the contrast. The Roman church, even at the canonization of a saint, admits and listens patiently to "a devil's advocate," a person formally assigned by the church to prepare arguments in opposition to the proposed beatification and canonization. But Bevis and Mast have not the slightest interest in assuring representation of diverse views. Their recommended

reading includes not a single articulate voice making the case for Israel. Indeed, it dare not risk impartial voices. Where, for example, is the book by Conor Cruise O'Brien called *The Siege* (1986), long deemed indispensable for understanding the history of the conflict? It is nowhere to be found. O'Brien, a highly skilled writer and editor, was deputy chief of the Irish delegation to the United Nations from 1956 to 1961, and well placed in more ways than one to provide an even-handed picture of the conflict between Israel and its belligerent neighbors: Sitting in the Irish U.N. chair, he found himself between Iraq and Israel. But, apparently because O'Brien's book gave no evidence of authorial unwillingness to share the globe with a Jewish-majority state, he disqualified himself from inclusion in the trunk.

It goes without saying that works of the late professor Edward Said, and also books by his acolytes, are the most prominent ones recommended in this scandalous curriculum. Since Said is represented by no fewer than five titles, let us take a sampling of what Seattle's ninth- or tenth-graders might learn from him about Jews, Zionism, and Israel. In *The Question of Palestine*, Said asserts: (1) Jews are not truly a people because their identity in the Diaspora is entirely the result of external persecution; (2) the Holocaust served to "protect" Palestinian Jews "with the world's compassion"; (3) "The historical duration of a Jewish state [in Palestine] was a sixty-year period two millennia ago." In other writings, for example in the journal *Critical Inquiry*, Said declared that

> the U.N. Charter and every other known document or protocol entitles a people under foreign occupation not only to resist but also by extension to deal severely with collaborators. Why is it somehow OK for white people . . . to punish collaborators during periods of military occupation, and not OK for Palestinians to do the same?

Touching and beautiful words—which may help to explain the recent photos showing hooded Hamas agents shooting Arab "collaborators" in the head in the streets of Gaza, but will not tell our students much about anything else Said mentions. Indeed, his double career as literary critic and ideologue of terrorism is a potent argument against those who still believe in the corrective power of humanistic values.

Since Bevis is herself a schoolteacher, she shows some solicitude for those students—produced in such abundance by our high schools—who can neither read nor write nor speak English. In trunk class they can play games like "The Occupation Game," which uses "action cards." Here are two representative examples:

> You try to prevent a soldier from inappropriately touching your sister at a checkpoint. Spin the wheel:
> 1-2: go to ARREST
> 3-4: go to BEATING
> 5: go to Action Card #21
> 6: they berate you and let you go

Action Card #21 (referred to frequently in the game) says:

> You are shot by Occupation soldiers and die instantly.
> You hover over the world for some time, unable to leave because you love and fear for your family and friends.
> You have desires but no power. You wait, along with the living, for the Occupation to end.

Matthew Arnold, who as a school inspector in England knew a thing or two about secondary education, on which subject he wrote several books, used to say that there must be "such a thing as conscience in intellectual work." Where is the conscience in people who would corrupt the young by imposing "The Palestine Teaching Trunk" upon (relatively) innocent junior-high or high-school students? And where is the American electorate that will vote for school levies to support curricula that catechize young people in the ideology of a murderous fanaticism with which this country is now at war? Better to recognize that "contemporary issues" should not be at the center of education at all. The parochialism of the contemporary not only distorts the perspective of students but is poor preparation for a thoughtful life. ♦

The Great Casino Loophole

Why Indian gaming is proliferating.

BY JIM SWIFT

Embroidered slots chairs at El Paso's Speaking Rock Casino, run by the Tigua Indian tribe

Two years after it was supposed to help revitalize Atlantic City, the $2.4 billion Revel casino—all 57 stories of it—is closed. It's an expensive eyesore that sums up Atlantic City's decline.

Vegas is still a big draw, but it's an anomaly these days. Destination gambling, as it was once known, is dying: 80 percent of states now have some form of legalized gaming.

Some residents don't like it. As Christopher Caldwell chronicled in these pages ("HOUSE OF CARDS," October 6), Massachusetts voters will decide Tuesday whether to repeal outgoing governor Deval Patrick's casino proposal. But the growth of gaming across America won't be easy to contain. When it comes to community input, commercial casinos are only half the story. Indian casinos lack the same level of state and local oversight—their approval being mostly left to an indifferent federal government.

Traditional commercial casinos—run by corporations and granted approval to operate by voters or lawmakers—have seen tremendous growth in the 2000s. As of 2012, there were 513 commercial casinos in the United States, and revenues were good—$37.5 billion, the "second-largest gross gaming revenues ever," according to a study by the American Gaming Association.

Indian gaming, though much younger, has practically caught up. As of 2013, there were 466 Indian casinos in 39 states, with revenues of $26.1 billion in 2011. Indian tribes don't have to jump through the same hoops as private actors in most states to set up a casino on their land. And once Indian casinos are approved, unless they go out of business, they're unlikely to go away—thanks, in part, to the legal protection of tribal sovereignty.

The Supreme Court expanded tribal sovereignty in 1987's *California* v. *Cabazon Band of Mission Indians*. The ruling was damning to states: Unless they had a law on the books that made gambling a criminal act, they could not completely outlaw Indian gaming.

Congress responded by passing the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). The law sought to limit—with few exceptions—Indian casinos to "such lands [as] are within or contiguous to the boundaries of the reservation of the Indian tribe on October 17, 1988." Recently, however, tribes have been purchasing land, sometimes hundreds of miles from their reservations, to gain a more favorable market for their casinos. Indian reservations are often located in remote areas, and tribes have adapted, aquiring land near cities and converting it to sovereign property through a federally managed process called "fee to trust."

Such "reservation shopping" is contrary to IGRA's intent. Former senator Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) stated while in office, "The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act was originally intended to promote tribal economic development and self-sufficiency—not to enable tribes to become gambling enterprises that constantly expand to new casino locations." His ally on this issue, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), agreed: "The fact is that some tribes have abused their unique right to operate casinos and have ignored the intent of Congress by taking land into trust miles away from their historical lands. This is done simply to produce the most profitable casino and the greatest number of potential gamblers, often with little regard to the local communities."

Tribal land acquisition is no different than any individual or corporation buying a parcel. But when it comes to sovereignty, tribes can

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either include a request to allow gambling in their petition to the Interior Department to turn "fee" land into "trust" land—and thus an extension of the reservation—or they can make it later, after the government has taken the land into trust for a tribe.

Off-reservation land acquisitions intended for commercial purposes require a business plan outlining the benefits be sent to the Interior Department. This sets in motion a process by which states and localities can weigh in or appeal. Few trust-land acquisitions are challenged, and even fewer are reversed. Kelsey Waples, writing in the *Pepperdine Law Review*, called the process "extreme rubber-stamping."

For gaming on nonreservation trust lands, IGRA requires that two conditions be met: The casino must "be in the best interest of the Indian tribe and its members"; and it must "not be detrimental to the surrounding community." The first question is sort of a joke—what tribe *wouldn't* benefit from a casino? The second, which is considerably more important, appears to be irregularly enforced.

Making matters worse, the Obama administration has consciously made it easier for tribes to acquire the right to operate a casino on land far removed from their reservation. Tess Johnson, writing in the *UNLV Gaming Law Journal*, observed that the Obama administration in 2011 "rescinded a 2008 Guidance Memorandum from the Bush Administration that only permitted for gaming sites within a 'commuting distance' from the reservation." Since 1988, the Interior Department has approved 51 percent of applications to allow gaming on trust land. A third of those have been approved by the Obama administration.

A decade-long quest for a casino by the Menominee tribe of northern Wisconsin in southern Kenosha is a good case study. The proposed casino is 160 miles from the tribe's reservation.

The casino is popular in Kenosha. But Lake County, Illinois, six miles from the casino site, appealed to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, asking it to reconsider eight-year-old environmental impact statement data, as residents there are concerned about traffic, job and economic losses, and problem gamblers.

Lake County's appeal was ignored, and the feds approved the Menominee tribe's request. The legitimate concerns of a community 6 miles from a proposed $808 million casino lost out to the semi-sovereign community that will run it from 160 miles away.

It's not known how much the Menominee tribe will actually benefit from a casino, as it's set to be run by Hard Rock International, owned by the Seminole tribe of Florida. (There are no Seminole reservations in Wisconsin.) Richard Monette, a casino law expert at University of Wisconsin-Madison, estimates the Florida tribe could take 30 to 40 percent of the casino's total revenue.

The Obama administration has consciously made it easier for tribes to acquire the right to operate a casino on land far removed from their reservation. Since 1988, the Interior Department has approved 51 percent of applications to allow gaming on trust land. A third of those have been approved by the Obama administration.

Since the feds have green-lighted the casino, final approval, by law, is left to Governor Scott Walker. Facing a close reelection battle, Walker sought a 180-day extension to delay his decision, initially required on August 23, until after the race is decided—not a badge of courage.

Walker's office has been tight-lipped about whether he'll give the casino a green light. But according to the criteria for approving off-reservation casinos Walker set, the casino's future is in question. The governor told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* last year that approval from all 11 tribes in Wisconsin would be one requirement. The Forest County Potawatomi tribe and the Ho Chunk Nation of Wisconsin, which both operate their own casinos, are not on board.

Complicating the matter is Walker's well-publicized fight with unions.

The Menominee tribe has already promised unions it will allow "card check"—a controversial union organizing tactic—to determine whether the casino's employees unionize. In a card check organizing scheme, if 50 percent plus 1 employees sign a card, the union is recognized. Anti-union advocates say this allows for workplace intimidation and coercion, with secret-ballot elections a better, more democratic method.

A decade ago, the Menominee tribe signed a memorandum of understanding with two unions—the United Food & Commercial Workers Union Local 1444 and the UAW Local 72—guaranteeing "card check" votes for casino workers, should the casino be approved. In other words, the tribe made the decision for its future employees a decade before they even applied for jobs. The casino is expected to employ 3,000 people, an enticing prospect for membership-hungry unions that are bleeding members.

The tribe and the unions then teamed up to fight efforts by Wisconsin Republicans to require legislative approval of new off-reservation casinos. The GOP's bill failed to get enough votes in 2004, but a new version passed in 2006—only to be vetoed by then-governor Jim Doyle, a Democrat.

Since then, Republicans haven't pursued the matter, and the feds approved the Menominee casino—leaving the decision in Walker's hands. On the verge of his reelection bid, he could have handed unions a victory or provoked their ire; instead, he punted.

Perhaps commercial casinos have reached their peak; certainly some voters are having buyer's remorse. But people are learning they have even fewer means of regulating or restricting gambling in their communities when it comes to the growth of Indian gaming. ♦

Better Than Regulation

A carbon tax won't happen without some give from the left. BY ELI LEHRER

Despite growing support from some conservative policy wonks, the idea of taxing carbon dioxide emissions, even as an alternative to the sort of heavy-handed greenhouse regulations promulgated by the Obama administration, has failed to garner much enthusiasm on the right.

The idea remains almost untouchable for Republican politicians, and the notion that there's any chance that could change in the near future has been dismissed as "wishful thinking" by left-wing outlets like *Mother Jones*.

While this may be a fair assessment of the political facts as they stand, if progressives actually wanted to avert the various catastrophes that environmentalists say are inevitable without serious policy action—changes in growing seasons, collapse of certain fisheries, rising sea levels, and possibly increases in certain types of natural disasters—there are ways they could help sell a carbon tax to the right.

Conservatives will never support a carbon tax so long as they fear it will be used to promote more intrusive government, more spending, and more control over individuals' lives. But if the left convincingly made the case that they are willing to give up new revenue, new regulations, and new resource development restrictions to make it happen, conservative support for a carbon tax is within the realm of possibility. But progressives will have to make certain policy concessions to get there.

For those on the right who do support a carbon tax—primarily conservative and libertarian-leaning economists like Gregory Mankiw, Kevin Hassett, and Irwin Stelzer—a primary attraction is the opportunity to use carbon tax revenues to cut taxes on productive activity, like labor and investment, and instead substitute a price on externalities that hurt the public. Adele Morris of the Brookings Institution has shown how a very modest carbon tax could easily help the United States bring its highest-in-the-world corporate income tax rates down to around the average for wealthy nations without eliminating the research and development tax credit and other widely supported tax breaks. The centrist environmental think tank Resources for the Future has done excellent work on how it might be used to cut payroll taxes.

Should we reconsider?

The precipitating event that forces consideration of such tradeoffs was the Supreme Court's 2007 decision more or less requiring the Environmental Protection Agency to restrict carbon dioxide emissions under the Clean Air Act. While there are reasons to question the court's ruling, it will be nearly impossible to overturn. With bureaucrats set to regulate carbon dioxide, a carbon tax begins to look like an attractive alternative to the morass of costly regulations the Obama administration's EPA intends to impose. The only other commonly discussed alternative—enacting a carbon-trading scheme, such as the cap and trade bill that passed the House in 2009—has proved nearly impossible to implement in any democracy. The European Union's scheme has already collapsed twice, and a major one in California seems to be degenerating into a slush fund.

A carbon tax, properly constructed, could encourage energy producers to find the lowest-cost ways to reduce carbon dioxide emissions while leveling the playing field for energy sources like nuclear, wind, solar, and hydro. A first step might be for the EPA to allow states flexibility to pursue their own carbon taxes in lieu of subjecting themselves to new greenhouse gas regulation. Such an approach could prove a hugely attractive political option for Republican office-seekers, who would be able to promise cuts to state income, property, or sales taxes, while giving the boot to EPA busybodies. In private discussions, OMB officials have made positive noises about the possibility of allowing this to happen under the current law, and states including Virginia and Washington have discussed the possibility. Rep. John Delaney (D-Md.) has introduced a bill that would make state-level carbon taxes an option.

But all of these possibilities would require those on the left to come to the table by giving up their own

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dreams of recycling carbon tax proceeds into "green jobs" schemes and other boondoggles beloved of progressives. Some environmentalists are on board with the notion of a revenue-neutral carbon tax (although many insist on difficult-to-administer schemes that would provide a "dividend" to taxpayers), but that cohort shrinks significantly when it's proposed that the tax replace EPA regulations, much less preempt energy-related regulations like fleet fuel-economy standards for automobiles. To have any chance of political success, a carbon tax would have to do exactly these things.

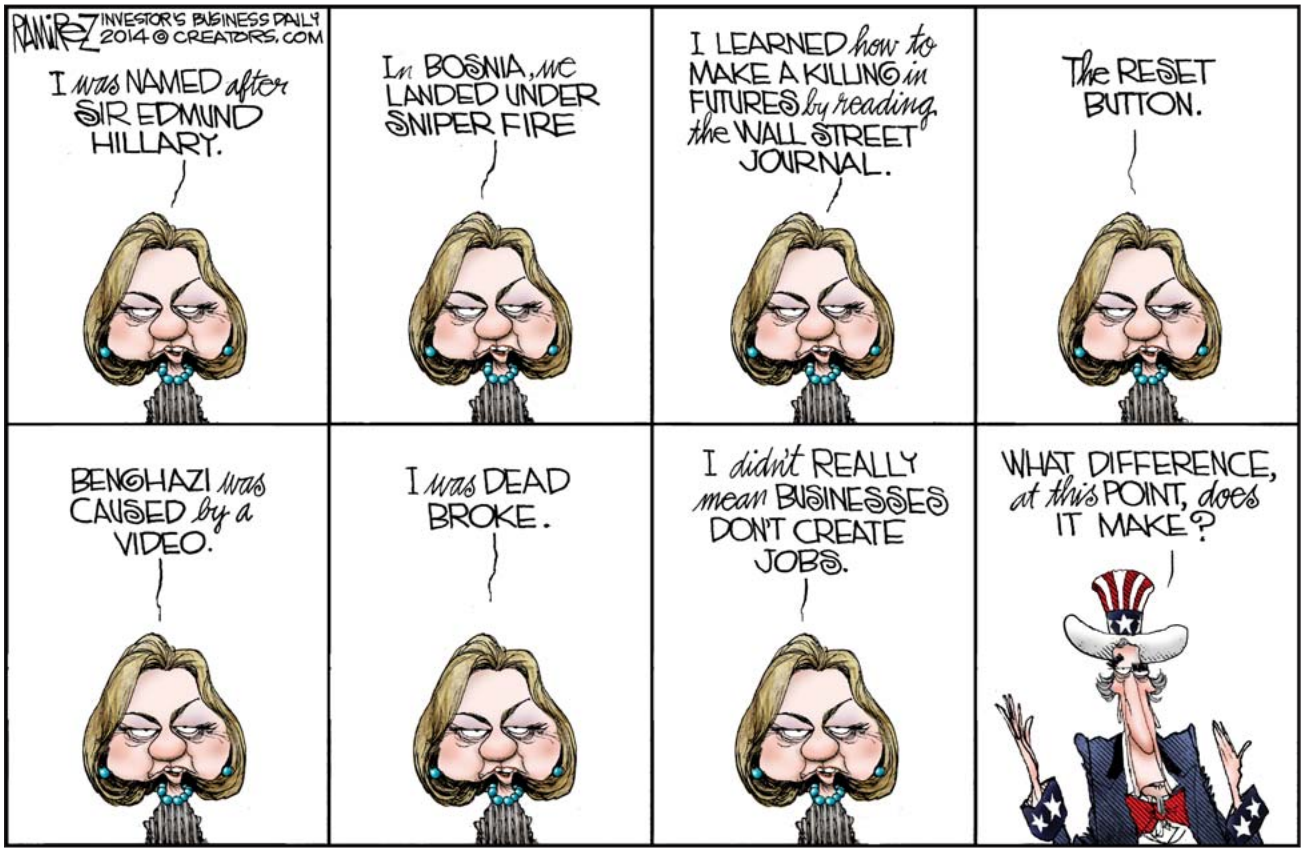
Finally, to bring conservatives around to the idea, a carbon tax should also be coupled with a general easing of restrictions on energy development, particularly natural gas. As research by the Berkeley Earth Group has shown, new natural gas development has done more than any other single factor to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the past decade. Allowing ample gas development over the next 50 or so years could do a lot to mitigate whatever energy price changes might come from a new carbon tax.

While a few environmental groups, most prominently the Environmental Defense Fund, have been willing to make common cause with the gas industry in some cases, they remain a minority. Many progressive groups, ranging from Greenpeace to MoveOn.org, oppose *any* new gas development and all other conventional energy development as well. This includes almost lockstep opposition by environmental groups to the much-debated Keystone XL pipeline, even though energy economists like MIT's Chris Knittel have shown pretty convincingly that pipeline expansions would reduce overall carbon dioxide emissions.

With equally few exceptions—largely the progressive iconoclasts at the Breakthrough Institute—environmentalists have shown little enthusiasm for nuclear power, even though it's one of only two viable forms of baseload power generation that emits no carbon dioxide at all. (The other is hydro, which is largely tapped out in the United States but might be developed for U.S. use in the Canadian north.)

Even with all of these inducements, it's unlikely the conservative grassroots will embrace a carbon tax. No more than 2 percent of voters—nearly all of them on the left—tell Gallup pollsters the environment is their most important issue. Even environmental voters, furthermore, tend to be far more concerned with water and air quality than climate change.

Conservatives won't make many sacrifices to get their desired climate policies because few voters—and almost no members of the conservative base—care about the issue. But given the right set of concessions from the political left, a carbon tax proposal could be crafted that would get a fair amount of political support. ♦



Virtues, Past & Present

The old ones are still the best ones

By Jonathan V. Last

In November 1993 an unlikely book appeared at the top of the bestseller lists. William J. Bennett's *The Book of Virtues* was a tome: 832 pages of moral instruction. People ate it up. *Newsweek* called it "just what this country needs," and *Time* said it "ought to be distributed, like an owner's manual, to new parents leaving the hospital." Looking at a copy of *The Book of Virtues* today is like examining a relic from some forgotten age. You pick it up, turn it over in your hand a couple of times, and think, *People were so different back then. How did they live like that?*

The answer comes in a few different parts. First, it really *was* a different age. Think for a moment about two years—1971 and 1993. In 1971 America was still celebrating having landed a man on the moon. The Watergate break-in wouldn't happen for another year. Vietnam was winding down. The Department of Education didn't exist.

By 1993 the Department of Education was an entrenched part of the federal government, and it was the almighty Soviet Union that no longer existed. The Cold War was in the rearview mirror, and with it the space program had begun to wane; an entire generation had never seen a live moon walk, and no American would ever again leave low earth orbit. Instead of looking to the skies, we were looking into screens: The World Wide Web was migrating into common use with the creation of the web browser. The two Americas of 1971 and 1993 were quite different. And here's the kicker: We're as far away from 1993 today as they were in 1993 from 1971.

Yet some human longings seem innate. The success of *The Book of Virtues* suggested that there was a latent demand for virtue then, which, at first glance, looks strange from where we sit now. Who would dare suggest today that parents be given a thick book of moral instruction for raising their children? But if you stare hard enough, the picture changes. If anything, we might be more puritanical and values-driven today than we were in 1993. We just adhere to different values. And boy, howdy, do we cling to them. People still believe in deep moral truths, you see. They simply apply those beliefs in the service of very different virtues.

The world is already en route to forgetting Donald Sterling. But the historical record will show that for two straight weeks in May 2014 he was the most important story, and the most reviled man, in America. Sterling was the 80-year-old owner of a professional basketball team, the Los Angeles Clippers. He had been married to the same woman since 1955, but around 2003, he began carrying on with a series of younger women. And by "carrying on" I mean buying them real estate and cars and bringing them to sit with him, courtside, to watch basketball games featuring the team he co-owned with his wife.

In 2014 the most recent of those girlfriends secretly taped a conversation with Sterling in which he said some not-very-nice things about African Americans. He used no foul language or racial slurs, but was demeaning and nasty nonetheless. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being your garden-variety bigot and 10 being a KKK Grand Wizard, Sterling was probably a 4. But the tape of that conversation became public, and the great machine that is American society lurched into action, its gears screeching and grinding. Television and radio hosts condemned Sterling; the public convened protests. Corporations that did business with Sterling's team cut ties. The president of the United States—*the president of the United States*—interrupted an overseas trip to castigate Sterling at a press conference. And then the NBA announced that

GARY LOCKE

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it intended to forcibly terminate Sterling's ownership.

None of this is meant as a defense of Sterling. He seems by all accounts an unpleasant fellow who more or less got what he had coming. No, the point is to highlight America's shifting emphasis on different virtues. Sterling's infidelity and the public humiliation of his wife—the woman to whom he had been married for almost 60 years, who had borne him three children—was unremarkable. It was mentioned nowhere as a defect of Sterling's character. His private, whispered racist thoughts, however, were important enough to elicit the displeasure of the leader of the free world. They were enough to cause his associates to expel him from their business and deprive him of his property.

In short, think of the litany of shame and approbation heaped on Hester Prynne and then multiply it by a thousand. Except that it wasn't adultery that did Sterling in; it was racism. The scarlet "A" doesn't exist anymore, but the scarlet "R" is very real indeed.

It's clear that the problem *isn't* that we no longer live in an age concerned with virtue. The problem is that we have organized ourselves around the wrong virtues.

At top, a 2013 Washington, D.C., street fair; below, a pro-marijuana sign in Denver, 2013

Did I say "wrong"? Sorry. That's so judgmental. So let's call them, instead, the "modern" virtues. There are, by my count, seven cardinal modern virtues:

- Freedom
- Convenience
- Progress
- Equality
- Authenticity
- Health
- Nonjudgmentalism

These are the characteristics modern society most prizes and has begun to organize its strictures around. Often with nonsensical results.

For example, the writer Mary Eberstadt notes that we live at a bizarre moment when it is nearly impossible to speak with any moral judgment about sexual practices—but a great deal of moral and philosophical energy is spent on the subject of food. You wouldn't dare say that someone ought not put this part there with that person. And you wouldn't say it because (a) your peers would think you a troglodyte and (b) you don't really think it's wrong. It's just a lifestyle choice. Maybe it's not for you, but who are you to judge? Food, on the other hand, is different. It's morally elevated to eat organic grains and eggs that come from cage-free hens. You're a better person if you only eat locally grown produce. A better person still if you don't eat meat. And the best people eat with one eye always— always!—on "sustainability." Whatever that is. On the subject of food, some lifestyle choices are better than others. And we're not afraid to say so.

Actually, there is one—and pretty much only one—judgment that you *can* make about sex, and it is this: Imagine that you're in college and one Saturday morning your roommate comes home and proclaims that she just slept with some guy she'd never met and whom she never intends to see again. Could you suggest to her that this might be a suboptimal life choice? Why no, no you could not.

Imagine, however, that your roommate came home and confessed that she slept with some guy she'd never met and that they had not used "protection." Well, that's a different story. You could lecture her. You could shame her. You could gather your friends and stage an intervention, explaining that this is a terrible, awful thing to do. Downright irresponsible. Something that just isn't done, because you could get a *disease*. Sexual morality is now a function of health outcomes.

And not just sexual morality. Consider smoking. Over the last 30 years, an overwhelming moral consensus has emerged concerning smoking. Where people once smoked on airplanes and in movie theaters and in bars and at home during dinner, today smokers are treated as if they have a terrible and highly contagious disease. They can't smoke in public buildings or often even in public spaces. Smokers are the new lepers, except that no one would look down on a leper as being morally repugnant. Why the reversal? Because it is now universally agreed that smoking is disastrously unhealthy. And healthy living is a cardinal virtue,

TOP, TIM EVANSON; BOTTOM, NEWSCOM

something to be pursued at all costs, not merely because it is prudent, but because it is good and right.

Yet, at the same time that smoking tobacco has become verboten, smoking marijuana has been gaining wider acceptance. How could this be? It's not like getting stoned is good for you. No, the emerging moral acceptance of marijuana comes because health is trumped by another of the modern virtues—freedom. Because today we tend to believe that people ought to be able to live however they like, and that societal norms should have little claim on them.

You can see the tensions inherent here. Why should freedom be a virtue when it comes to reefer but not Lucky Strikes? For that matter, why should health trump freedom in one context but not another? But these tensions aren't unique to the modern virtues. Certainly, the classical virtues are often in tension, too. It can be devilishly hard discerning, for instance, when prudence should override perseverance. Or vice versa.

The real problem with the modern virtues isn't that they're contradictory—the classical virtues can be just as confused. And it isn't that they're somehow "wrong" as virtues. Equality, authenticity, a devotion to physical health, and even nonjudgmentalism can be fine things, taken in right measure. No, the modern virtues fail because, for the most part, they concern the outer self, the human façade, the part of ourselves that the world sees most readily—while the classical virtues form an organizing framework for our inner selves . . . for our souls, if you believe in that sort of thing. And it turns out that when you scale people out to the societal level, the superficial moral framework of the modern virtues turns out to be an insufficient organizing principle. When it comes to virtue, the old ways are still the best ways.

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If you're looking for a good explanation of the old ways, you could do worse than Alasdair MacIntyre's summation of Aristotle. Here's MacIntyre explaining what virtue really is:

> The virtues are precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve *eudaimonia* and the lack of which will frustrate his movement toward that *telos*. . . . For what constitutes the good for man is a complete human life lived at its best, and the exercise of the virtues is a necessary and central part of such a life, not a mere preparatory exercise to secure such a life. . . . Virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to feel in particular ways.

There's a lot to unpack in those 88 words, even if you remembered what *eudaimonia* is. (Don't worry, I didn't either.) But overall, it's a fine working definition of virtue: Virtues are the internal qualities that allow us to be our best selves and enable us to lead complete and fulfilling lives. When you think about virtue in that sense, you really understand why the modern virtues are so inadequate. Being your *authentic* self and living a physically *healthy* life are clearly second-order goods. To be your best self and live the most fulfilling life, it's far more important to exhibit, say, charity and courage.

Yet extremism in pursuit of virtue can easily become vice. Which is to say, no single virtue is, on its own, necessarily virtuous. Hope is essential for the human spirit, yet when it stands alone it turns its bearer into a Pollyanna. Charity—one of the greatest of the virtues—is sublime, yet if you have nothing but charity, you might well become gullible. Curiosity is wonderful; without it we'd still be living in caves and clubbing large animals with sticks. But curiosity run amok, and unleavened by other virtues, turns you into a gossip. Or worse. Dr. Mengele was a curious sort.

I don't mean to be overly dramatic, but history is full of monsters created by manias for a single virtue. Robespierre, for instance, was devoted to justice. When he unleashed the Terror it wasn't an accidental byproduct of his wild pursuit of virtue—it was his object: "Terror is naught but prompt, severe, inflexible justice," he wrote. "It is therefore an emanation of virtue." Yikes.

Virtue is additive. No single virtue is sufficient in and of itself, and each one, taken on its own, is corruptible. Yet each virtue becomes more valuable with the addition of others. And for any single virtue to be brought to its full bloom, it must be surrounded by its sisters. Courage and prudence: Together they give people the spine to do great things. Integrity and forbearance: Without them, no society can function. Chastity and temperance: All right, let's not get carried away here. The point is, when a man has cultivated the virtues as a class, then, and only then, does he become a man in full.

Of course, not everyone can be expected to cultivate all of the virtues at all times. We have to muddle through as best we can and pick our spots. So how do we keep our imperfect devotion to virtue from becoming malformed? In Patrick O'Brian's *Master and Commander* books, Stephen Maturin, a physician, philosopher, and spy, notes that virtue

should always be commingled with humor. This observation is, I think, the best engine governor we have for virtue, to keep it from pushing the needle across the line and into the red zone. I'd bet just about anything that Robespierre never laughed about justice.

All that philosophical stuff is nice enough, but this is America, where we love winners. So what you're probably thinking right about now is: *Fine, no single virtue is good enough on its own. But which virtue is the best? Who's the king of the virtues?*

Picking a favorite virtue is like picking a favorite child: It's the kind of thing you're supposed to pretend not to do—but everyone does anyway. We can toss chastity and temperance out of the ring straight off, obviously. They're important, in their way, but exactly no one is going to make them contenders for the title. Same for thrift and simplicity. Nice to have, but not first-tier virtues. Fellowship is fine, but a luxury. And justice? It's the virtue we'd much rather have done unto others than practiced on ourselves. No thanks. Aquinas called prudence the queen of the virtues, saying that she gently guides all the rest. And Aristotle deemed courage to be the first virtue, because it makes all the others possible.

Good points, all of them. And you probably have your own favorite. But I'm with Cicero, who declared, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others." It is the alpha, the point from which all virtues must begin. It is gratitude that allows us to appreciate what is good, to discern what should be defended and cultivated.

You need not believe in God to pursue the virtues (though it certainly helps). Yet if you do believe, then your first instinct in all things must be gratitude: for creation, for love, for mercy. And even if you don't believe, you must start again from gratitude: that a world grown from randomness could have turned out so fortuitously, with such liberality. That the Hobbesian state of nature has been conquered. At least for a spell.

Gratitude, as Yuval Levin has argued, magnifies the sweet parts of life and diminishes the painful ones. It is the wellspring of both humility and ambition, the magnetic pole for prudence, the platform for courage, the inducement to charity and mercy. And in addition to everything else, gratitude is the engine for progress: We build not because we are dissatisfied with the world as it is, but because we are grateful to all those who have built it to this point and wish to repay them by making our own contributions to their work. Work for which we should be grateful. ♦

The End Game

Sherman breaks the deadlock

By Geoffrey Norman

On September 2, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln received a telegram from General William Tecumseh Sherman that read, "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won." This was more than a victory. It was deliverance.

All summer Atlanta—like Petersburg, Virginia—had been a city under siege, and as these two stalemates dragged on, the prospects for the president's reelection grew bleaker. They were dismal enough that at one point he said he expected to "be beaten, and beaten badly." The war had gone on so long, and the casualties had been so severe, that enough voters in what remained of the Union were inclined to elect former general George McClellan, a Democrat, and trust him to make the best deal he could. There would, then, be no conclusive victory reestablishing the Union and ridding it of slavery. The bleeding would be stopped. But the return on all the suffering would be meager.

Gen. Sherman—standing behind cannon with arm resting on its barrel—and his staff outside Atlanta, 1864

Atlanta had been holding out for some six weeks after Sherman's army had defeated the forces under J.B. Hood in a series of bloody battles that pushed the Confederates into defensive positions inside the city where they, and the civilian population, were supplied by a single rail line. When that was cut in the battle of Jonesboro, Atlanta was doomed, and Hood took his troops out of the city, lest they starve there as John Pemberton's army had at Vicksburg. On his way out, Hood put all useful military supplies to the torch, a scene that was dramatized 75 years later in *Gone with the Wind*.

A week after sending his message to the president, Sherman ordered that "the city of Atlanta, being exclusively required for warlike purposes, will at once be vacated by all except the armies of the United States."

In a wire to his superior in the War Department, General Halleck, Sherman went on record. "If the people raise a howl against my barbarity or cruelty, I will answer that war is war and not popularity-seeking."

And to the mayor of Atlanta, who did, indeed, protest an action that would make civilians homeless refugees with winter approaching, he said, in effect, that he agreed. That it was a hard and heartless thing, but, he added, "You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it."

He would do what he must, then, and Mayor Calhoun should do the same. Which meant he must leave Atlanta "and take with you your old and feeble, feed and nurse them . . . until the mad passions of men cool down and allow the Union and peace once more to settle over your old homes at Atlanta."

And this was just the beginning.

The fall of Atlanta may have secured the reelection of Abraham Lincoln, but it did not mean the end of the Confederacy and the war. Lee still had an army in Virginia, besieged as it was. And Hood still had more than 30,000 men who could fight and fight hard. And there was, in Sherman's rear, his nemesis Nathan Bedford Forrest, the cavalryman and raider who was one of the war's most aggressive, creative, and lethal generals. In the course of the war, Forrest killed 31 men and had 29 horses shot out from under him.

These two were absolute antagonists, but they had similarly stark visions of war and its nature. Sherman made characteristically plain his desires when it came to Forrest. In the aftermath of the battle of Shiloh, Sherman witnessed the remarkable escape of Forrest, who had taken a ball in the spine but was still in the saddle, using a Union soldier as a

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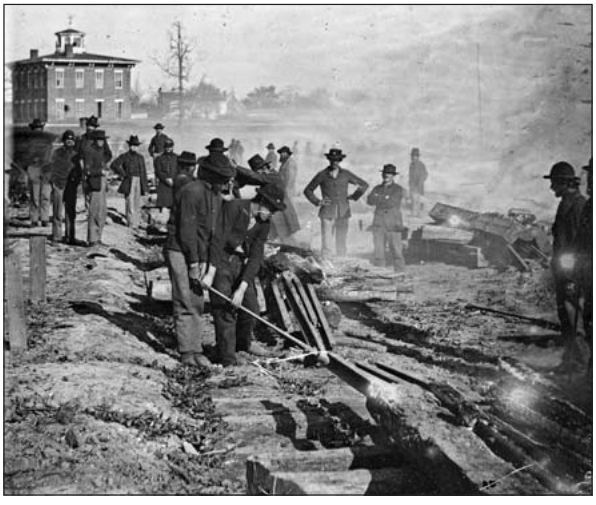
shield. "Boys," Sherman shouted to his soldiers, "forget the rest of the Confederates, run down that man and kill him. Bring me his body; I want to see him dead."

Forrest escaped and lived to fight many other days, and Sherman went on to the conquests of Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and then Atlanta. He had done the last of these by cutting the final Confederate supply line into the city. Now, it was he who was vulnerable to the same tactic. Or so it seemed. Hood and Forrest could threaten the long Union line extending back into Tennessee and, ultimately, all the way up into Kentucky.

Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, saw possibility in this situation and took solace from an example in recent European military history. He promised victory to a formation of Confederate troops, "though misfortune has befallen our arms from Decatur to Jonesboro."

"Our cause is not lost," Davis said, for "Sherman cannot keep up his long line of communications; retreat sooner or later he must. And when that day comes, the fate that befell the army of the French empire in its retreat from Moscow will be reenacted. Our cavalry and our people will harass and destroy his arms, as the Cossacks that of Napoleon, and the Yankee general, like him, will escape with only a bodyguard."



Union troops destroying railroad tracks

To which Ulysses S. Grant—the practical man, confronted by the romantic—said, "Who is to furnish the snow?"

Still, Sherman had not destroyed the army he had chased all the way to Atlanta, and for a few weeks he was obliged to reverse course and pursue Hood over the same ground he had so arduously taken during the summer. In one encounter, Sherman was supposed to have wigwagged a signal from Kennesaw Mountain, which had been the scene of the bloodiest battle in his march on Atlanta. The message became part of the national vocabulary. To an outpost under attack at Allatoona Pass his message read, "Hold the fort, for I am coming."

The fort held. But this success did not accomplish the mission of closing with Hood's army and finishing it. The spirit of resistance flickered. So Sherman came up with another plan, one that departed from military orthodoxies and, thus, was viewed somewhat skeptically at first by his superiors, to include Grant and Lincoln. But Sherman was a formidable advocate, and he had a record of success. Against Hood and Forrest, he wrote, "It will be a physical impossibility to protect the railroads" that supplied his army. In an attempt to do so, he would "lose a thousand men monthly and . . . gain no result."

His alternative, breathtaking in both its simplicity and audacity, was to "cut a swath through Georgia to the sea, divide the Confederacy in two, and come up on the rear of Lee."

The obvious risk in such a plan—and the fuel for the qualms felt by Lincoln and Grant—was that it would leave an enemy army, Hood's, loose in Sherman's rear and render him and his lines vulnerable. But Sherman had anticipated this objection. He proposed, first, to place a large element from his force in Hood's rear. Given the Confederate general's lust to take the offensive, this force would act almost like bait. At worst, it would keep Hood occupied and, at best, defeat him in battle once and for all.

And then Sherman had no intention of using lines of supply, extending far to his rear, on this proposed march to the sea. He would not, in fact, depend on supply lines at all. His army would supply itself by plundering Georgia.

The logistics were straightforward enough. The troops would take what they needed to feed themselves and their horses and mules. Supplies would be to their front, not in the rear. But there was more to it. Sherman meant, he explained, to break the will of the South. "If we can march a well-appointed army right through [Confederate] territory, it is a demonstration to the world, foreign and domestic, that we have a power which Davis cannot resist." And, for emphasis, he added this: "I can make the march and make Georgia howl."

He intended to "make war so terrible" and Southerners so sick of it that "generations would pass away before they would again appeal to it."

'Know thy enemy" is one of the oldest maxims of war, and Sherman knew and understood his. He had spent long stretches of his early army career in the South and had, in fact, walked and ridden much of the ground over which he later led his army on the way to Atlanta. He had a feel for the terrain

in that campaign and an understanding of the character of his opponents drawn from his days, just prior to the war, when he had been superintendent of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning & Military Academy, which later became Louisiana State University. He had friends in the South and felt a genuine sense of affection for its society and culture, even a willingness to tolerate slavery. He had tried to warn his friends in the South of what they would face if they pushed things too far.

"The North can make a steam engine, locomotive or railway car; hardly a yard of cloth or shoes can you make. You are rushing into war with one of the most powerful, ingeniously mechanical and determined people on earth. . . . You are bound to fail. Only in your spirit and determination are you prepared for war."

Though he felt affection for the South, Sherman was a warrior and then a Union man. There was a sentiment, even a year or two into the war, for thinking of the Confederates "not as enemies." Lincoln, himself, had said so in his first inaugural, but that was before the fighting began. Sherman had made his feelings clear on this matter in a letter to Treasury Secretary Salmon Chase several months before the fall of Atlanta. The war, he wrote, had been "complicated with the belief on the one hand that all on the other side are *not* enemies." It was time, Sherman went on, "to proceed on the proper rule that all in the South *are* enemies."

Sherman elaborated on this conviction, putting down his thoughts about the kind of people he and his army were fighting, dividing them into four classes of people comprising, roughly, prosperous landowners, small farmers, union sympathizers, and then "the young bloods of the South: sons of planters, lawyers about town, good billiard-players and sportsmen, men who never did work and never will. War suits them, and the rascals are brave, fine riders, bold to rashness . . . first-rate shots and utterly reckless." Men of this class, Sherman went on, "must all be killed or employed by us before we can hope for peace."

He went on to write that the South must be made to understand that the Union army would "take every life, every acre of land, every particle of property . . . that we will not cease till the end is attained; that all who do not aid us are our enemies, and that we will not account to them for our acts."

Lincoln was aware of the letter and wanted its contents published so, in his mind, "the bonds of affection" would plainly be severed. Sherman decided against making the letter public. Not because he was having second thoughts and inclined toward moderation; to the contrary, as he later made clear in word and deed. But he was constantly at loggerheads with the press and did not want to stir things up.

So several months later, when Sherman proposed to "make Georgia howl," he was utterly in earnest. The essence of his planned march was brutality toward the civilian population. Civilian suffering was the point. Between Atlanta and his objective, Savannah, there were no substantial Confederate units to oppose him, merely some feeble militia formations and small bands of cavalry that were far in numbers and effectiveness from those commanded by Forrest, who would be left in the rear, along with Hood, to do his worst.

But if the point of the march was plunder and destruction, it was still a military operation. Sherman insisted on this. The troops he sent back to Nashville, under generals Thomas and Schofield, were veterans of the campaign that took Atlanta and good soldiers. But the units selected to make the march were the best under his command, 62,500 veterans of the hardest and most successful fighting in the Western theater of the war. And even these formations were culled, with the surgeons inspecting them and dismissing the weak and sick, who were, as one man who made the march recalled, "sent back to Chattanooga and Nashville, along with every pound of baggage that could be dispensed with. The army was reduced, one might say, to its fighting weight, no man being retained who was not capable of a long march. Our communications were then abandoned by destroying the railroad and telegraph."

It was the beginning of something large, even epic, and the man sensed this. "There was something intensely exciting," he wrote, "in this perfect isolation."

The mission was simplicity itself: "We were expected to make fifteen miles a day; to corduroy the roads where necessary; to destroy such property as was designated by our corps commander and to consume everything eatable by man or beast."

Stripped to the essentials, the troops moved out on November 15, having first set fire to what was left in Atlanta that might be useful to any Confederate units that returned. One Union officer wrote of this second burning of the city: "All the pictures and verbal descriptions of hell I have ever seen never gave me half so vivid an idea of it as did this flame-wrapped city tonight."

Sherman watched a formation on the march, leaving the smoldering city behind, with a band playing and the troops singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" as they marched. "Never before or since," he wrote later, "have I heard the chorus of 'Glory, glory, hallelujah!' done with more spirit or in better harmony of time and place."

The soldiers were not, of course, marching into battle in the ordinary sense. They would fight skirmishes all the way to North Carolina, where their march, and the war, would end, but there were no frightful engagements like Lookout Mountain or Chickamauga. This was a military

operation of a different sort. The troops were under discipline, though they were expected to be ruthless in carrying out their duties. "If the enemy burn forage and corn in our route," Sherman commanded, "houses, barns, and cotton gins must also be burned to keep them company."

So they burned and foraged and took what they wanted and were not inclined to be polite, or even civil, about it. They spread out across the land and they took what was needed and more. They tore up railroad tracks, heated the rails, and twisted them around trees into what they called "Sherman neckties." They shared with their commander a sense of mission. They were out to avenge and punish and, being unopposed, they went about it thoroughly and diligently and often roughly. They killed livestock and other animals, including pet dogs. And, as one of them put it, "destroyed all we could not eat, stole their niggers, burned their cotton and gins, spilled their sorghum, burned and twisted their R. Roads and raised Hell generally."

Sherman estimated "the damage done to the State of Georgia and its military resources at $100,000,000" during their march to Savannah.

This was, undeniably, a species of "total war." But there were limits. Historian Shelby Foote said that he was unable to document a single case of rape committed by Sherman's troops during their sack of Georgia and, subsequently, their even harsher treatment of South Carolina. There was plenty of "fraternization" with the blacks who followed in the wake of the troops who had liberated them. But there were lines, and discipline held.

Still . . . it was a brutal business, and in the minds of some, it presaged the atrocities of coming conflicts. John Keegan, the formidable British military historian, calls Sherman's great campaign "an extraordinary achievement, though it had inaugurated a style of warfare that boded the worst sort of ill for peoples unable to keep a conqueror at bay, as Hitler's campaigns in eastern Europe seventy-five years later would testify."

To which any American student of his country's Civil War (however much an amateur) would have to take strong exception. The atrocities of Nazi armies and soldiers found their example (if they needed one) in the old wars of Europe and the dark, medieval spirit of Hitler and his corps of followers. The March to the Sea was American in its essence. Terrible but paradoxically merciful.

Sherman's operation saved lives and shortened the war and was restrained enough in its brutality to make possible the long but eventual reconciliation. And it made him one of history's great generals—in the estimation of historian B.H. Liddell Hart, "the first modern general."

The American Civil War has often been described as the last romantic war and the first modern war. This is certainly true in the realm of weapons and tactics. In the early days of the war, many infantrymen were still armed with smoothbore flintlocks with an effective range of 30 or 40 yards and with which a good man might get off three shots in a minute. When Sherman's men ran into resistance from a Georgia militia unit a few days into their march, they returned fire with Spencer repeating rifles. The men could shoot seven times without reloading, and the fight was so one-sided that Sherman's men felt sorry for the old men and young boys they cut down.

Abandoned wagons and possessions surround the last train leaving Atlanta after Sherman's evacuation order.

The nearly exponential increase in firepower led to a reliance on defensive measures that included elaborate field fortifications and trenches anticipating those that came to characterize fighting on the Western Front in World War I. In the Civil War, troops were moved to the front, and between theaters of operation, by train. Warships were clad in iron and there was an attempt to make a submersible. Men were sent aloft in balloons to observe the movements of enemy troops.

And some Civil War weaponry anticipated the twilight guerrilla and terrorist operations of the present. During the course of Sherman's march, one of his men lost a foot to a weapon that had been improvised by the retreating Confederates and that struck Sherman as especially repellent. The man had triggered an artillery shell that had been buried and booby-trapped. It was what would be called today an IED, and its use infuriated Sherman, who later wrote, "This was not war, but murder."

Perhaps even he still believed that it was possible to "refine" war.

Even so, Liddell Hart's judgment stands. Sherman was the first great "modern general." He understood what war had become and did not flinch from its logic. And while the destruction of property and the suffering inflicted on civilians by his troops was awesome and made more so because it was deliberate, there was very little blood spilled on this long march. He made war on his enemy's ability to make war, and this was less bloody and more conclusive than the stand-up battles fought by generals still operating on the old romantic premises.

Hood, for example, took the bait Sherman had put out for him back in Tennessee and attacked the numerically superior force commanded by General John Schofield. This army was separated from that of General George Thomas, and Hood evidently believed he could defeat the one and then turn on the other, in spite of the fact that he was outnumbered by both Federal formations.

His subordinate commanders protested against the attack, but Hood insisted. He might have been the last of the Civil War generals still clinging to the stand-up frontal assault as the sine qua non of offensive action. It had worked for him when he was under the command of Lee in the east. The victory at Gaines Mills during the Seven Days' battles had been won by his brigade, attacking up a hill, into the teeth of Union resistance. The fight had been so fierce that when it was done, he'd been found sitting on a cracker barrel weeping.

There had been many battles and many frontal assaults since then, and they had cost Hood the use of an arm and leg and left thousands of men—his and the enemy's—dead or mutilated. But he still believed, and he ordered his men in. There was a moment when it looked as though the Confederates had broken the Union line. But as so often happened, the assault failed at the moment when it seemed almost to have succeeded because the losses made it impossible to exploit success. This was the Battle of Franklin, and it was a catastrophe for the South, with 7,000 casualties out of a force of slightly over 20,000. One in three of Hood's men, then, went down; among them, a dozen generals, with six of them killed, including Patrick Cleburne, who was considered by many to be the finest division commander in that army and perhaps in the entire Confederacy.

Hood fought one more major battle after Franklin. He was, again, outnumbered, and this time, he was attacked. His men held for a time but eventually broke, and the battle became a rout. A few of his men escaped, owing to the rearguard actions of Nathan Bedford Forrest and his cavalry, now the only effective Confederate force in the entire theater and too small, by far, to be much of a threat.

The end of Hood's army occurred almost simultaneously with Sherman's capture of Savannah, which he presented to President Lincoln, in another of his wired messages, as a "Christmas gift . . . with 150 heavy guns and . . . about 25,000 bales of cotton."

The president wired back his thanks to Sherman and Thomas for his rout of Hood and for bringing "those who sat in darkness to see a great light."

At the close of the year 1864, with Lincoln safely reelected, the war's end was inevitable and in sight, for those with eyes to see. Sherman's great operation had accomplished all that it was designed to do. Georgia was burned and broken. Hood's army was ruined, and Forrest could not alter the course of things.

These two—Sherman and Forrest—fought to the end and were, perhaps, the two commanders who left the most compelling lessons for history. Both are still figures of controversy, to the point where they are routinely described as having committed war crimes. The case against Forrest is much the stronger. And outside of the purely military spheres, his reputation continues to fall. Troops under his command almost certainly did commit atrocities at Fort Pillow. However, an investigation after the war did not result in charges against Forrest. The investigation was conducted by, of all people, General William Tecumseh Sherman.

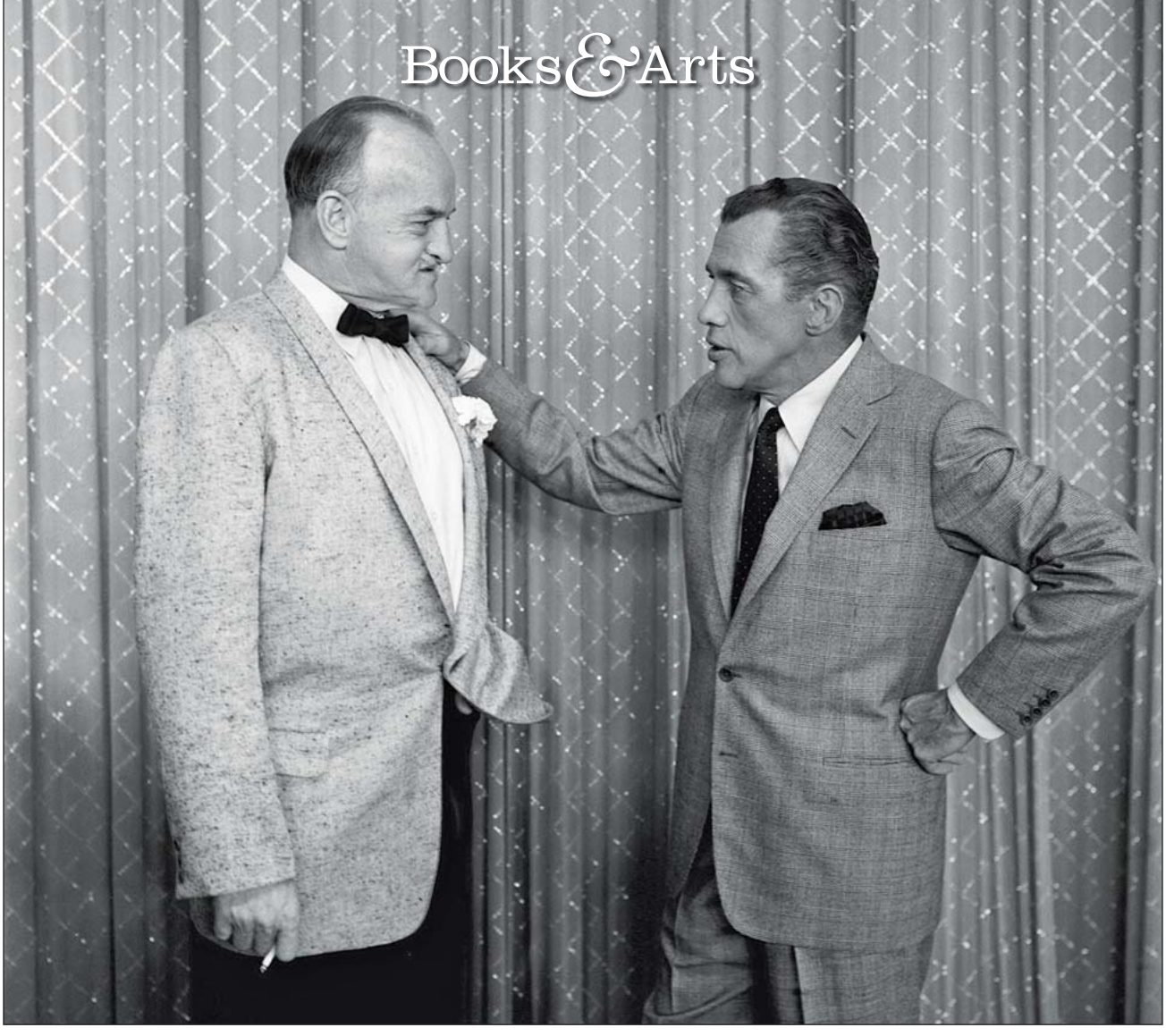
The case against Sherman is mostly academic. Destruction of civilian property—to include entire cities—is a routine feature of modern warfare. Sherman was a pioneer, in this regard, and a relatively restrained one at that.

It is as strategists and tacticians that their accomplishments still compel the attention of military men. George Patton once spent a long vacation walking and studying the ground over which Sherman had maneuvered his army on his way to Atlanta and, then, to the sea. Liddell Hart's writings about Sherman influenced a whole generation of military men, many of them German. Forrest, too, was the object of intense study by later warriors, among them, Erwin Rommel. In the popular conversation, Sherman and Forrest are remembered for pithy statements. Forrest never actually said that his design was to "get there firstest with the mostest." This was a creation of the newspapers. What he actually said, in answer to a question, was, "Ma'am, I got there first with the most men."

Sherman said and wrote many quotable things, including, about the prospect of being a presidential candidate, "If nominated, I will not run. If elected, I will not serve."

But the words that he is best known for, by many who cannot identify the source of the quote, are, of course, "War is hell."

Yes, one thinks, and he made sure of it. ♦



'Lord' Buckley (1906-1960), purveyor of hipster slang, on 'The Ed Sullivan Show' (1959)

CBS / GETTY IMAGES

Whatever You Say

What is slang, and where does it come from?

BY SARA LODGE

Charlotte Brontë liked to let her hair down linguistically from time to time. In an unpublished piece of early fiction, she imagines a scene at a horse race in which the owner of the defeated favorite suspects that his horse was doped. Ned Laury introduces an underworld informer, Jerry Sneak—the man who interfered with the horse—but demands: "Who'll provide the stumpy, the blunt, the cash as it were to pay for the liquor that cousin of mine will require before he peaches?"

The Vulgar Tongue
Green's History of Slang
by Jonathon Green
Oxford, 432 pp., $29.95

This kind of "flash" slang was doubtless not what the Brontë family used at tea in Haworth parsonage; but it was disseminated through magazine articles that offered readers a vicarious taste of vulgar vocabulary. Modern viewers of Mafia movies who, in turn, pepper their conversation with references to people being "whacked" by "wiseguys" in the "waste management business" are engaged in the same verbal tourism.

But what counts as slang? Where

Sara Lodge, a senior lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews, is the author of Thomas Hood and Nineteenth-Century Poetry: Work, Play, and Politics.

does it come from? And why does it exert such a powerful hold on the middle-class imagination? Jonathon Green sets out to answer these questions in the course of charting the development of slang as it is recorded in literature, from medieval beggar-books to World War II soldiers' pornography.

Perhaps appropriately, "slang" has proved a slippery word for dictionary-makers to trace. As Green points out, although the word is used in a variety of contexts from the 1750s to mean "a line of work," "nonsense," and as a verb, "to swindle" or "to banter with," no formal attempt was made to pin down its origins until 1859, and no etymology has been proven. It may derive from Scandinavian languages: In Norwegian, *sleng* means "an invention, device, strategem," and a *slengjenamm* is a nickname; in Swedish, *slanger* means "to gossip." The notion of "slinging" as "throwing" may also be relevant: slang as a set of words hurled into the world. Nobody really knows.

Green, however, has a strong view of where slang originates and why. It is, in his view, a product of the city. It can absorb dialect words and those of professional jargons, but its role is distinct. Slang, he argues, exists as a counter-language, a "language that says no." It is necessarily oppositional to "standard English" and is spoken to reinforce a community that needs to express itself, often in coded fashion, in a vocabulary that signals its disregard for polite norms.

Some of the earliest written records we have of slang are in books that profess to warn the reader against the cant used by professional criminals and false beggars to evade detection by law-abiding citizens. This genre of book flourished between the 14th and the 16th centuries and endured in various guises into the modern era. Travelers were warned to be on their guard against the Prigman, who walked with a stick in his hand "like an idle person," but used his implement to steal drying clothes from hedges; the Abraham Man, who feigned madness in order to solicit financial aid; and the Courtesy-man, who inveigled his way into victims' homes, helping himself to their property. The wary were also alerted to "moochers" (petty thieves), and the strategems used by prostitutes and their pimps to "cross-bite" their targets, encouraging the punter to pay for his pleasure before appearing in the guise of an enraged father or brother to beat and rob him.

One of the questions such books raise is whether the slang they "record" was, in fact, accurate or wholly invented by the author. Hypocrisy is written into the fabric of the text—the "warning" against roguery is clearly also an invitation to the reader of higher social standing to participate imaginatively in the criminal conversation, to be thrilled by its threat and titillated by its rudeness. Having such words in our own mouths (whether voiced or not) is a way of being tickled by the roughness of someone else's tongue, of shivering at the lewdness and violence of their whisper in our own ears.

On the whole, one is struck by the creative energy that flows through the human desire to speak 'bad' language and the mixed motives that lead those who do not share that vocabulary to try to gather, analyze, and preserve it.

Though guides to thieves' cant were gradually replaced by 19th-century accounts of "flash" language, the two-faced attitude to slang that they display remained typical. Charles Dickens, in *Oliver Twist* (1838), used some 200 slang terms to give Fagin's den the feel of a real underworld hideout. Readers reveled in this language; copies of the book circulated even among real pickpockets. But Oliver, despite growing up in the workhouse, is never allowed to use a slang expression; as a born gentleman, he instinctively speaks purely. It is the proof of his incorruptible innocence. In his magazine *Household Words*, Dickens published an essay on slang, probably by George Augustus Sala. The 1853 article expressed the view that either slang should be "banished, prohibited" or that there should be a New Dictionary that would

> give a local habitation and a name to all the little by-blows of language skulking and rambling about our speech, like the ragged little Bedouins about our shameless streets, and give them a settlement and a parish.

In this intriguing simile, slang words stand in for the urban poor themselves: They need to be expurgated or assimilated.

Green shows that in the 19th century, America and Australia both took a more positive view of slang than Britain did. Dickens mocked the vulgar nature of American newspapers by satirizing them as "the New York Sewer, the New York Stabber, the New York Plunderer, and the New York Keyhole Reporter." But the American popular press, particularly in its court reports, was a creative medium for representing the irreverent voices of a diverse population. It gave us expressions such as the "Bible Belt," "blurb," the "Chicagorilla" (gangster), the "cliffhanger," the "hick," the "goofball," and the "pushover." Walt Whitman, an avid slang collector, observed that "language is . . . like some vast living body. . . . And slang not only brings the first feeders of it, but is afterward the start of fancy, imagination and humor, breathing into its nostrils the breath of life."

America's greater tolerance for the genius inherent in grassroots language may well explain why its literature, from Mark Twain to Philip Roth, is better connected to the "workingman" as a speaking subject rather than as an object of anxiety. In the 21st-century world, where informal oral media

(TV, film, YouTube) shape global discourse, it is American slang that has "gone the distance."

Green offers us 18 broadly chronological chapters on the history of slang. Some of these chapters focus on particular forms where slang is to be found (e.g., "The Stage and the Song"), others on particular speech communities (Australia, America, African Americans), others on recurrent themes (sex, sports, war). There is much here of interest, yet it must be confessed that the material is sometimes drier than such a lubricious subject would lead one to anticipate. Green has elsewhere written explicitly for the popular market: He is responsible for such tomes as *The Big Book of Filth* (1999), *The Big Book of Bodily Functions* (2001), and the *Dictionary of Insulting Quotations* (1997). Here, however, he is writing as a lexicographer for an academic press, and some of these chapters make dense reading for anyone who does not have a scholarly interest in the development of vernacular language.

Green's method is to cite sources (authors, books) rich in recorded slang and to discuss their place in the development of the glossary of what we know (or assume) to have been slang patter across the years. These sources can involve fascinating micro-narratives, as when we are introduced to characters such as John Taylor (1578-1653), the "Water-Poet," a writer who had made his living as a boatman and traded on this to make a literary splash. Long before the days of Amazon, he became a successful pioneer of self-publishing, largely through publicity stunts designed to attract readers' interest. He would plan a journey—to Prague, or on foot from London to Edinburgh with no money—and then seek sponsorship to undertake the trip and write about it. He produced at least 150 works, liberally larded with loose language.

However, for the nonspecialist, the effect of riding Green's slang railroad through 18 different territories is sometimes tiring: One looks out of the window at passing scenery that is perhaps not so very different from that of the valley before. Indeed, the author himself remarks that one of the features of slang is the consistency of its preoccupations. A professor studying current student slang found that the leading thematic categories were: intoxication by drink or drugs (17.46 percent), terms of approbation (15.23 percent), romance, sex, and related body parts (12.06 percent), and insults and terms denoting misfits (11.42 percent). The focus of youthful banter has not changed much since the days when Bertie Wooster described drunken chums as "oiled," "primed," "squiffy," "wozzled," and "illuminated."

One of the more illuminating pleasures of this book is discovering that some slang expressions still used today are ancient: "Dead as a doornail" and "daffy," meaning eccentric, both date from the 14th century. There are also the expressions that, despite their admirably graphic qualities, have slipped away. "Pancake turner" was an early synonym for "disc jockey," and "cellar smeller" in the 1920s referred to the kind of young man (still extant) who turns up at parties only to drink the host's wine. There are some unpleasant surprises, too. It is, historically, all too evident that slang concerning the female genitals is driven by fear—they are the "bite," "snatch," "man-trap," "snapping-turtle," and "horrorbag"—while slang for their male counterpart is often driven by wishful thinking: "yard," "bazooka," "kingo," "machine," and "sugar-stick."

On the whole, one is struck by the creative energy that flows through the human desire to speak "bad" language and the mixed motives that lead those who do not share that vocabulary to try to gather, analyze, and preserve it. Slang in literature is like the blue note in jazz—a note that gives the standard tonality a dissonant *frisson*, a kink upwards or downwards, whose dirty slur adds color and verve to the cadences of polite language. Reading this book, one can celebrate those who brought slang out of the basement bar and into the recording studio, while at the same time recognizing that the true sound of its street music remains forever up in the air. ♦

B&A

Baltic Dawn

Some things change, and more things stay the same.

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

I first visited Estonia—or more specifically, its capital, Tallinn—in August 1993, two years after the small Baltic state regained its independence after nearly half-a-century of Soviet occupation. Tallinn was in the process of uneasy, edgy transformation. The Soviet past was not yet cleanly past. It was still lurking in the dwindling Russian military bases. It was still visible in the general shabbiness, in the rhythms of everyday life, and, above all, in the presence of the large Russian settler population, a minority that Vladimir Putin now eyes hopefully, if not necessarily realistically, for its trouble-making potential.

Everything Is Wonderful
Memories of a Collective Farm in Estonia
by Sigrid Rausing
Grove Press, 304 pp., $24

Totalitarian colonial rule had been replaced by a national democracy, the *ruble* had been succeeded by the *kroon*,

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and free-market reformers were at the helm; but the new government was operating in the rubble of the command economy. There was no spare cash to smooth the transition to capitalism. Inflation had exceeded 1,000 percent during the course of the previous year, savings had been wiped out, the old Soviet enterprises were dying, and the welfare net was fraying.

Yet in Tallinn there was a discernible sense of purpose, buttressed by memories of the prosperous nation prewar Estonia had been. What people wanted, I was told, was a "normal life." That was a phrase that could be heard all over the former Eastern Bloc in those days, a phrase that damned the Soviet experience as an unwanted, unnatural interruption and resonated with dreams of that elusive Western future. Life was tough in Tallinn, but there were hints of better times to come. If the country was to be rebuilt, this was where the turnaround was taking shape.

But Sigrid Rausing went somewhere else in 1993, to a place far from the hub of national reconstruction, a place where the inhabitants had little idea of what could or should come next, a bleak place—poor, even by the demanding standards of post-Soviet Estonia—where nationhood was misty and visions of the future were still obscured by the wreckage of an alien utopia. Rausing, a scion of one of Sweden's richest families, was a doctoral student in social anthropology. To gather material for her thesis, she spent a year on the former V.I. Lenin collective farm on Noarootsi, a remote peninsula on the western Estonian coast.

Noarootsi had once been inhabited by members of the country's tiny Swedish minority, most of whom had been evacuated to the safety of their ancestral homeland by Estonia's German occupiers shortly before the Red Army returned in 1944. The final minutes before their departure were caught on film: the exiles-to-be assembled on a beach, Red Cross representatives mingling with smiling SS officers. Baltic history is rarely straightforward.

Rausing's thesis formed the basis of her *History, Memory, and Identity in Post-Soviet Estonia: The End of a Collective Farm*, an academic work published by Oxford University Press 10 years ago. This was never a book destined to top the bestseller lists, but for anyone able to weather the clouds of jargon that drift by—"the effect was to emphasize the experience of oppositions in the form of a homology"—it offers a sharp, intriguing, and unexpectedly wry portrait of what Rausing refers to as the "particular post-Soviet culture of 1993-94, the culture of transition and reconstruction," a culture that no longer exists.

Sigrid Rausing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rausing has now reworked the topic of her time in Noarootsi into *Everything Is Wonderful*, a personal, intimate account of that year in which she largely dispenses with academic analysis—indeed, there are moments when she pokes gentle fun at its absurdities—and gives her considerable lyrical gifts free rein. Graduate-school prose now finds itself transformed into passages of austere beauty. They describe a landscape that reminds her of Sweden, only "deeper, vaster, and sadder"; more than that, they portray a people adrift. There is something of dreaming in her writing, images that haunt. Spring returns, and

> the children were outside again, playing and shouting in the long twilight, until there was an almost deafening din echoing between the blocks of flats. One day someone burnt the old brown grass strewn with rubbish between the blocks, and the children kept up their own private fires deep into the night.

There is a subplot too, tense and awkward, sometimes expressed in not much more than a hint, that surrounds the position of Rausing herself, an attractive thirtysomething Swedish heiress inserted into this exhausted husk of a community and, for a while, lodging with the heavy-drinking, possibly/probably lecherous Toivo and his long-suffering wife, Inna. Ingmar Bergman, your agent is on the line.

That's not to say that Rausing neglects the broad themes of her academic research. As she notes, the two books "overlap to some degree," and they have to. Without repeating some of the background covered in the first volume, isolated, depopulated Noarootsi—with its Soviet dereliction, abandoned watchtowers (the peninsula had been in a restricted border zone), emptied homesteads, and taciturn, enigmatic inhabitants scarred by alcoholism and worse and speaking a language of a complexity Rausing struggled to grasp—would have seemed like nothing so much as the setting for a piece of postapocalyptic gothic. So Rausing provides a brief, neatly crafted, and necessary guide to Estonia's difficult and troubled history, neglecting neither the obvious horrors nor the subtler atrocities, such as the attempted cultural annihilation represented by the wholesale destruction of Estonian

literature. Tallinn Central Library lost its entire collection of books—some 150,000 of them—between 1946 and 1950.

Sometimes, traces of that history—forbidden for so long—come crashing through the silence. Ruth, 76, a Seventh-Day Adventist, tipped by tyranny into something more unhinged than eccentricity, hands Rausing a handwritten retelling of her life: "Devilish age, sad age. Schoolchildren also spies . . . life as leprosy." But *Everything Is Wonderful* is a book in which the story lies mainly beneath the surface. Old ways linger on amid new realities. There is a new cooperative store, but the old Soviet shop hangs on, "selling household stuff as well as some food, pots and pans, exercise books, shoes if they got a consignment, and ancient Russian jars of jams and pickles with rusty lids and falling-off labels."

Throughout the brutal winter, heating is intermittent. Heating bills are no longer subsidized, but the majority of villagers "patiently" pay them nonetheless. New habits creep in. Empty Western bottles and other packaging are displayed in apartments, demonstrations of "a connection with the West, a way of expressing the new normal"—that word again, that "normal" in which most had yet to find their feet. Meanwhile, Swedes bring hand-me-down help and the suspicion that they might be looking to reclaim a long-lost family home.

Rausing is a participant in this drama. We learn of her fears, her loneliness, of her wondering what she is doing in this distant Baltic corner, and of her small pleasures, too ("the tipsy sweet happiness of strawberry liqueur"). But she is a spectator as well, and a perceptive one, not least when it comes to the profoundly uncomfortable relationship between Estonians and the Russian minority. The latter are resented as colonists, yet caricatured in terms that remind Rausing of the "natives" of the "colonial imagination: happy-go-lucky, hospitable people lacking industry, application, and predictability." She dines in a restaurant in a nearby town, where "the atmosphere was a little strained between a Russian group of guests and the few Estonians in the room." Later, Rausing learns that the "only" Russians living in the "comfortable Estonian part of town" are deaf and dumb; they are "outside language," as she puts it, and thus able (she theorizes) to "assimilate . . . through muteness."

That sounds extreme, but the scars of the past were still very raw back then. Sometime in the mid-1990s, I watched a senior member of the Estonian government bluntly explain the facts of Estonia's (to borrow a Canadian phrase) twin solitudes to a delegation of Swedish investors. There was, he said, little overt trouble between ethnic Estonians and the country's Russians, but there was little contact either: "We don't get on."

Rausing's tone is quiet, often wistful, marred only by interludes of limousine liberalism—apparently there was something "liberating" in the way the locals didn't care too much about their possessions, which is easy enough, I imagine, when those possessions were, for the most part, Soviet junk—including an element of disdain for the market reforms that were to work so well for Estonia. The prim pieties of Western feminism also make an unwelcome appearance. Watching a pole dancer in a rundown resort town summons up concerns over "objectification," but Rausing's response to reports of a topless car wash in Tallinn is endearingly puzzled and—so Swedish—practical: "Really strange, particularly given the Estonian climate."

But this should not detract from Rausing's wider achievement. Her book is the last harvest yielded up by that old collective farm, and the finest. ♦

B&A

The Hispanic Challenge

Is there a formula for Republican success with Latino voters? BY JAY COST

Since Barack Obama's reelection in 2012, immigration reform has been at the top of the national agenda. Of course, very little has come of it—apart from some legally dubious executive actions, as well as a lot of blather from pundits, left and right, who seem to have no understanding of the Hispanic community. All we ever get are variations on the same theme: Unless they accept a terrible immigration bill, loaded up with payoffs to special interests, conservatives will be doomed to a permanent minority status. Meanwhile, conservatives are too often caught flat-footed. Apart from a handful of opponents, such as Senator Jeff Sessions, who has brilliantly recast the debate along class, rather than racial, terms, they have very little of value to offer.

A Race For the Future
How Conservatives Can Break the Liberal Monopoly on Hispanic Americans
by Mike Gonzalez
Crown Forum, 288 pp., $26

But this intellectual drought is finally at an end, thanks to Mike Gonzalez, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation. *A Race For the Future* is a smart, informed take on what the right should do for, and with, Hispanic voters.

This is a book full of provocations, but the most daring move by Gonzalez is to ignore altogether the debate on immigration reform. He views it as "a proxy war for feelings and attitudes

Jay Cost is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

that lie beneath the surface and that are linked to an evident lack of mobility among many Hispanics." The immigration debate between left and right is a fight over whether America should add another massive lump of unassimilated immigrants into the national mix. Conservatives—largely the white, married middle class whose descendants assimilated generations ago—oppose this. Business interests, racial polarizers, and Democratic pols—who are interested in cheap labor and/or votes—simply do not care about assimilation. In fact, many oppose it, some even outright.

Gonzalez wants to transcend this debate altogether, to render it moot by way of a policy that assimilates Hispanic Americans into the great American nation. He casts a gaze across history and sees how the Scots-Irish, Irish, Italians, Poles, and Jews all went from being separate from the mainstream to being inextricably a part of it. And then he asks: Why not Hispanics? His book is about adapting public policy to make this happen for America's newest arrivals.

This is no small task. In Gonzalez's telling, the surge of Hispanic immigration began right around the time that the institutions immigrants would need to succeed began to crumble. Just as Hispanics started arriving en masse, the sexual revolution and the Great Society displaced the preeminence of the traditional, two-parent family. This has hurt demographic groups across the board, but it leaves new arrivals particularly vulnerable, because they do not have shared memories of the way things used to be.

Hispanics, moreover, began arriving in large numbers around the time that the civil rights movement was reaching its zenith, inducing a profound shift in government policy. Looking to protect as many minorities as possible, the Johnson administration went so far as to create a term out of whole cloth, "Hispanic" (which Gonzalez grudgingly uses for lack of a better word), to catch a wide variety of peoples—from Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, etc.—who often have no real connection to one another. In this way, the federal government impeded the process of assimilation by treating them as a disadvantaged minority, like African Americans, when in fact they were simply new immigrants, as the Irish and Italians once were.

Finally, the traditional role of public schools as the transmitter of shared social values began to degrade: "Gone are the texts," says Gonzalez, "that once taught all Americans, native or immigrant, how to be an upstanding citizen with the civic knowledge needed to help the republic survive." White natives can more easily suffer this shift because cultural and social norms are still embedded in their families. But what of Hispanics? They are new to the country, and much more dependent on the school system to learn what it means to be American. In this way, our educational establishment has utterly failed them.

Sitting in the background is the idea that, in important respects, Hispanics have had it worse than previous immigrant groups. The first couple of generations of Irish and Italians certainly faced more hardship and isolation when they arrived, but during this period, they were laying the groundwork for future success. Hispanics came during an era of relative material comfort in America and have been protected by a seemingly beneficent federal government. Those protections, however, have inhibited the development of the social capital necessary to rise into the middle class.

This points to Gonzalez's mandate for the conservative movement. All too often, he writes, conservatives "have failed to pull up the welcome wagon" for Hispanic immigrants, yielding a monopoly on their political support to the progressive left. The right must respond to this by helping Hispanics develop the capital (financial, human, and social) to rise to the middle class. For Gonzalez, that means encouraging savings and business development, promoting stable families, and, of course, education.

Governor Susana Martinez of New Mexico (2014)

This is an enormously important book. For too long, conservatives have had the terms of the immigration debate dictated to them: Provide an amnesty that lowers wages, raises unemployment, and welcomes more immigrants who need assimilation—or lose the Hispanic vote forever. This is a policy choice that has been set up by the left, on the left's terms, and for the left's benefit. It is a debate that conservatives can never win.

The only alternative is to change the terms of the debate. To do that, conservatives need to have a firm grasp of the Hispanic condition and offer serious proposals on how to improve it. Mike Gonzalez offers both. ♦

NEWSCOM

B&A

Agony and Ivory

Following the elephants to victory in Burma.

BY TEMMA EHRENFELD

Elephant Company
The Inspiring Story of an Unlikely Hero and the Animals Who Helped Him Save Lives in World War II
by Vicki Constantine Croke
Random House, 368 pp., $28

The fighting in Burma would be the longest campaign of World War II, under conditions so bad that the Japanese called the place *jigoku*—hell. Soldiers hiked across hot, dry plains one day and slogged through mud under pelting rain the next. They fought off blackflies, mosquitoes, ticks, and leeches, as well as dysentery, cholera, dengue fever, scabies, trench foot, yaws, and malaria. Imagine pitch-black nights, vegetation so dense it induced claustrophobia, bitter water or none at all, deadly snakes, and soldiers who coped with diarrhea in combat by cutting off the backside of their trousers.

Elephant Company tells the story of Lieutenant Colonel James Howard Williams of the British Army, who became famous as Elephant Bill for leading a troop of elephants that hauled and placed logs to make bridges for Allied supply lines in Burma. No one else realized how useful the elephants could be or knew them so well. Vicki Croke, who won a trove of source materials from Williams's son, portrays a man without doubts or flaws. The real man must have been a phenomenon; the reader feels virtuous by association. It's easy to forget Joseph Conrad and *Apocalypse Now* and instead think of Rudyard Kipling's "Mandalay" or "If" ("You'll be a man, my Son!").

Williams came to colonial Burma in 1920 to work as a "forest man" for a British teak company. The job had colonial perks—in even the most remote outposts, natives served dinner on white tablecloths and bone china—but it also meant braving loneliness, heat, monsoons, and disease. Many forest men died. Only great demand could justify the bizarre and dangerous teak industry.

Impervious to termites, and especially treasured by the Royal Navy, teak grew over large areas, scattered among other trees, in dense jungle far from roads. It was difficult, and slow, to harvest. First, a ring of wood was removed from the tree, which was left to die and dry out for two to three years. This was necessary because green teak sinks, and the logs would be transported by water, sometimes as far as 1,200 miles. In non-monsoon season, working elephants hauled dry logs to dormant creeks. When the waters came, the logs hurtled downstream to larger rivers, such as the Irrawaddy, where they were bundled into rafts and steered into the Rangoon River, which carried them to the mills of Rangoon. Five to 20 years might pass before a log became a milled plank.

As a forest man, Williams traveled among camps to supervise some 300 local workers and provide medical care to about 100 elephants. Croke describes him as unusually interested in the elephants and respectful of the locals, particularly of a man named Po Toke. At the age of 15, Toke had taken on the care of a baby elephant born in captivity. Usually, these calves died, but Toke had nurtured his into a magnificent tusker named Bandoola.

In the colonial system, Po Toke's enterprise and skill didn't make him a candidate for Williams's job. Instead, he taught Williams and convinced him to create an "elephant school" for the calves of working mothers. Eventually, Williams persuaded his bosses that it was more efficient to raise tame elephants than to capture and subdue wild ones. It was a hard case to make: Bandoola, at 23, was still too young for the most strenuous logging and wouldn't reach full maturity until his 40s. Raising an elephant is a long haul.

We learn how teak-company elephants went wild each night, set free to forage, mate, or practice their fighting skills, often with wild elephants. Each elephant had its own *uzi*, a local man trained from youth in elephant lore, who would retrieve the animal in the morning. An *uzi* could unfailingly pick out his own elephant's footprints and determine from the droppings what the elephant had eaten—and, therefore, its possible route. Once within earshot, the *uzi* would sing from a safe distance, so as not to startle the elephant, before coming near to rub its trunk and coax it back to camp.

Elephants thrive on such tenderness, and we see them treat each other and their keepers with touching care. One calf pokes backward into the face

IWM / GETTY IMAGES

Temma Ehrenfeld is a writer in New York.

of his mother, who has gone blind; when she feels him, she puts her trunk on his back so he can lead her forward. When a calf drowns in a swollen river during the monsoon, his mother dies three weeks later, apparently of grief. Elephants can be dangerous, too, especially when the males enter *musth*, a term derived from the Urdu word for intoxication. In *musth*, a male's testosterone can rise to 100 times its normal level. Fluid pours down the elephant's cheeks and part of his erect penis turns green from the urine scalding his thighs. The bull's smell scares off other males and attracts females. He also becomes dangerously combative and erratic. The *uzi* immediately chain a *musth* bull and might "tip" him, sawing off part of his tusks. When Po Toke once tried to tip Bandoola while he was in *musth*, the tusker lunged forward over and over, breaking the heavy chains on his forelegs. He had been tied to a giant tree, but he shoved against it until it began to rock, and then pulled it up from the roots.

Bandoola's great triumph came during the war, when he led a group of elephants up a series of steps cut into a sheer cliff face. Elephants normally don't do stairs. At the summit, standing still, the bull's huge legs quivered uncontrollably for an hour. When Williams nearly died of malaria, Bandoola carried him towards civilization under lashing rains through a monsoon-swollen river.

> Deadly two-ton tree trunks shot down the rapids like missiles, crashing into one another with a sound like thunder. . . . The elephant was pitched at a steep angle, leaning his flank into the wall of water, shouldering all his weight against the chocolate-colored torrent in an effort to keep his footing. Yet Williams felt oddly lucky. . . . This was the only elephant who could brave the crossing: the strongest and most stout-hearted creature in the forest, the best friend Williams ever had.

Elephant Company has a pleasant, escapist sheen, yet its painful details stick in the mind. ♦

B&A

A Classical View

The Parthenon marbles at home in the world.

BY PAULA DEITZ

Athens

When my husband and I visited London together for the first time many years ago, we spent hours studying the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum, concentrating on the sculptures remaining from the east pediment of the Parthenon: Helios, the sun god, rising with his horse-drawn chariot at daybreak as the draped figures, attendant upon the birth of Athena, arced over to Selene, the moon goddess descending with her chariot at the far end.

Paula Deitz is editor of the Hudson Review.

So taken were we with their realistic beauty that we purchased, through the museum shop, a life-size cast of the head of the horse of Selene, the final figure in the sequence, straining visibly against the efforts of the night's run. Now mounted on driftwood overlooking Blue Hill Bay at my house in Maine, he presides over the watery path of the August full moon. Living with him each summer has bonded me to the Parthenon, much like those European travelers who, beginning in the 18th century, discovered classical antiquities.

To view the Parthenon's golden-hued columns illuminated against the night sky from almost anywhere in Athens is both seductive and riveting. Even in its skeletal state from centuries of neglect, the temple is inspiring in its radiant purity, symbolic of Pericles' victories in the 5th century B.C. that ushered in a productive peace for Athenians and the first period of self-governing democracy. As the finest example of a Doric temple, it was completed in only nine years by Callicrates and Ictinus, working under the master sculptor Phidias from 447 to 438 B.C.—an incredible feat considering the slow process today as restorers raise marble blocks on ropes in a system of cranes and pulleys. With marble from the same quarry on Mount Pentelikon, it looks as it must have in ancient times—except for the white beach umbrellas that have sprouted up to protect workers from the blazing Attic sun.

Climbing up the steep paths of the 300-foot-high Acropolis, the monumental limestone podium for an assemblage of temples, a visitor senses viscerally in the crowds how it felt to participate in the Panathenaic, the ancient ritualistic procession that celebrated Athena and her gilded statue within the Parthenon. (The name Parthenon itself refers to her "virgin chamber.") Once through the Propylaia, the ceremonial gateway and its Doric colonnade, one approaches the Parthenon indirectly to one side, unlike the direct axes of Roman antiquity. With its majestic form translated as power architecture in myriad descendants, and as a symbol of civic unity, the Parthenon is the original iconic building (from the Greek word *eikōn*, meaning image).

On my first visit to the Parthenon, I looked carefully for those architectural tricks that give the structure its subtle perspective, an optical illusion of straightness: The top steps of the plinth are almost imperceptibly curved concavely, and the fluted columns of somewhat different diameters lean inwards with a slightly convex profile. I then wound my way to the east pediment, where the original of my horse's head, one of four drawing Selene's chariot, was lowered on May 10, 1802,

under the aegis of the permit (or *firman*) the British ambassador, the Earl of Elgin, had received in Istanbul from Athens's Ottoman rulers.

As I turned the southeast corner, I saw, to my astonishment, Selene's horse's head, like mine, his open jaw spilling over the ledge—as well as Helios' horses rearing up and Heracles reclining at the opposite end. These casts of the originals, placed by the Greek Archaeological Service, convey how details of the sculptures would have been articulated in the searing light and deep shadows of the noonday sun.

View of the Parthenon from the Acropolis Museum

This experience has been further enhanced since the opening five years ago of the Parthenon Gallery at the Acropolis Museum, designed by Bernard Tschumi. The museum is placed in an urban well along the Dionysious Areopagitou, the pedestrian promenade leading to the Acropolis, and its streamlined glass, steel, and concrete structure hints at the classical by delineated, "fluted" vertical side fins. The key to its handsome presence is its transparency, from the glass plaza and interior floors over visible layers of excavated ancient neighborhoods to the illuminated interiors at night.

As a parallel Parthenon, the top gallery is rotated off-center to face the original with its exact dimensions and orientation. Within, the museum displays the three major groups of sculptures: the east and west pediments, the metopes in high relief (installed above to be seen from their original perspective), and the frieze in low relief that depicts the famous Panathenaic procession, with its "montage" of crowded horsemen and charioteers that (Tschumi has pointed out) inspired the cavalcade scenes in Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*. The central core of the museum is the size of the original cella, the inner enclosed area of the temple on which the frieze was mounted. This assemblage now reads as the single work of art that Phidias intended.

To make the narratives as seamless as possible, the marbles remaining in Greece have been blended in sequence with casts of the Elgin Marbles. Upon inquiry, I learned that a complete set of these casts, first requested by the Archaeological Society in Athens, was sent by the British Museum as a gift to the king of Greece as early as 1846, only 30 years after the British government had purchased the marbles from Lord Elgin. (During a return visit to the British Museum, I found in the archives the ledger sheet, in a spindly, 19th-century hand, noting the date of sale of these casts: September 5, 1846.) In fact, over the years, there has been a constant exchange of information and casts between the British Museum and Greece to establish accuracy in reconstituting the whole, and the 1846 casts on display have been beautifully preserved.

With the Parthenon's eventual evolution into a church founded by Frankish crusaders in the early 13th century, and then into a mosque under the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century, it suffered a final degradation as a munitions storehouse, exploded by Venetian attackers in 1687. No wonder so many fragments of the decorative sculpture remain missing! (The most complete account of the Parthenon marbles is found in the 1674 drawings by the French artist Jacques Carrey.)

After Napoleon's Egyptian campaign was thwarted in 1798 by Admiral Nelson's defeat of the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile, the Ottoman Empire was well-disposed to a request from Lord Elgin, in 1801, to make casts and acquire marbles at this long-neglected site.

In touring the Parthenon Gallery, and recalling my first view of the Elgin Marbles in London and their influence on my life, I suddenly had this perception: Although the Parthenon marbles were born in Greece, they have been raised in England, where the British Museum became their conduit to the rest of the world, even inspiring poems like John Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Never considered fakes, the casts have themselves become art for display in museums and arts academies.

Now, in Athens, the Parthenon Gallery, with its combination of originals and casts, tells the whole story of the sculptures, except where sections are lost forever. At night, looking through the ultra-clear glass that surrounds the gallery, the visitor has a breathtaking view of the Parthenon illuminated above and, in a band just below, a detailed reflection of the north frieze and metopes—a coming-together through space and time that restores the Parthenon, in its entirety, to public view. ♦

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B&A

Cold Fusion

Art is born in the experience of loss.

BY JULIANNE DUDLEY

In her debut collection, Chloe Honum takes the popular theme of springtime and rebirth, and turns it on its head. Or rather, she digs deeper. Rebirth is only possible—only has meaning and significance—because of the reality of death.

> *Every year my sister and I*
> *sifted through the clutter*
> *of early spring,*
>
> *of what the warm earth*
> *coughed up: fresh death,*
> *nothing wasted.*

She describes the time between seasons when, in order to make room for new growth, last year's dead is brought to the surface. Having been preserved by the frozen ground, the brown leaves and insect exoskeletons are "coughed up" with the approach of warmer weather. Thus, while spring is a time of new life, it is also a time of "fresh death." This comparison is set against the more specific theme of the sickness and eventual death of the poet's mother.

The first poem, "Spring," begins: *Mother tried to take her life. / The icicles thawed*. Many of the poems explore this unusual juxtaposition, in the poet's attempt at reconciliation with her mother's eventual success. As the mother recovers from her initial suicide attempt, the mother-daughter relationship undergoes a revolution. The poet becomes caretaker, worrier—mother. *Sitting on the edge of her hospital bed*, she says, *I spoke in whispers yet my voice had never been so loud. Because I asked her to, she said she wanted to live*.

Julianne Dudley is an assistant editor at The Weekly Standard.

The Tulip-Flame
by Chloe Honum
CSU Poetry Center, 72 pp., $15.95

The role of nurturing, life-giving mother has been abandoned and is taken up by the daughter. Yet it is not welcomed by her patient, and therein lies the tension: *My love was a knife against her throat*. Sadly, ironically, the poet realizes that her concern and need for her mother are more threat than inspiration for her mother to go on living.

In "Dress Rehearsal," she describes dancing in a ballet studio.

> *Branches etch the film of ice*
> *on the studio window. A crow looks in,*
> *hopping and shrieking when I dance*
> *in my black tutu trimmed with silver.*
>
> *The ballet master says,* You are its
> mother.

This recalls Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," in which the speaker describes sitting alone, *save that at my side / my cradled infant slumbers peacefully*. As he sits in quietude, he observes "the secret ministry of frost" as it creeps over all things exposed. Coleridge and Honum describe similar situations, therefore, but for the fact that Coleridge's speaker has an actual child while Honum's speaker, at this point still a child herself, is identified as the "mother" of a crow. This unnatural relationship, similar to the poet's role reversal with her mother, is both unwanted and unwonted.

Coleridge's poem is a benediction of sorts, with the speaker addressing his son: *Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee*. But for Honum's speaker, the "blackest / cold-wet air" of midwinter is foreboding. No season can be sweet to her because she cannot escape the pain of abandonment.

Throughout the collection, Honum skillfully employs imagery and symbolism to convey the sense of being untethered:

> *All that falls is caught. Unless*
>
> *it doesn't stop, like moonlight,*
> *which has no pace to speak of,*
> *falling through the cedar limbs,*
> *falling through the rock.*

With no mother to guide her—indeed, with that mother the very source of her pain—she is in a free-fall of grief. In one poem, she describes how *a large moth collided / with my throat and shuddered / there, as if attached to me, / trapped in a wheel of air*. The image of the moth, which appears elsewhere, is especially powerful because of the moth's obvious disorientation: Presumably attracted by the light on the porch where the speaker is standing, the moth becomes "trapped" and flutters around in circles. Yet why are moths attracted to artificial light? Some scientists believe that moths are typically guided by the light of the moon, and in the absence of moonlight, or in the presence of a more distracting light, moths can be misled, often at the risk of being burned.

This is a deeply personal collection, drawing on Chloe Honum's experience of grief, loneliness, betrayal, and fear. And while it is easy to imagine that she wrote as a form of catharsis, the poetry's direct, intentional language reveals a more disciplined approach. No phrase is wasted, no emotion unexplored. If it is therapy, then she is the therapist, analyzing and interpreting her own reactions to traumatic events.

"I didn't set out to write about my mother's suicide," Honum recently told the *Toronto Quarterly*. "But it's a subject I was drawn to over and over. . . . To say one true thing about her death—that was exhilarating and healing." ♦

"The other day I was talking to a senior Obama administration official about the foreign leader who seems to frustrate the White House and the State Department the most. 'The thing about Bibi is, he's a chickens—t,' this official said, referring to the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, by his nickname."

—Jeffrey Goldberg,* The Atlantic, *October 28, 2014

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE PRESS SECRETARY

For Immediate Release
Press Briefing by Press Secretary Josh Earnest, 11/3/14

(continued)

turned out to be a Mennonite farm, which we've since boycotted.

Q: I'm sorry, Josh, but the question is about the other nicknames that have emerged since last week's story broke—not about the First Lady's preference for Amish free-range chicken.

MR. EARNEST: I understand that. What I'm trying to say is "chickens—t" was meant as a term of affection. We like to think of the Israeli prime minister as earthy and organic. And the First Lady likes organic chicken.

Q: It's also been reported that the White House nickname for German chancellor Angela Merkel is "Spaetzle Thighs." Any comment on that?

MR. EARNEST: Well, as you know, spaetzle is a kind of hearty egg noodle—it gives you a lot of energy. Who doesn't love spaetzle? Plus Chancellor Merkel has a sort of starchy personality.

Q: And the thighs?

MR. EARNEST: Um, I think that probably has something to do with the Internet. Not that I've done an image search for that sort of thing.

Q: Josh, can you talk about this *Vanity Fair* story, in which the president called congresswoman Nancy Pelosi "the Joker"?

MR. EARNEST: Sure. It's true. And it's because, as you all know, Rep. Pelosi is so, um, funny.

Q: Is it true that British prime minister David Cameron is referred to as "the Prime Wanker"?

MR. EARNEST: Look, the president has nicknames for all the world leaders—it's his way of promoting tranquillity in the global community. So what if he calls someone "chickens—t," or "Spaetzle Thighs," or "the Prime Wanker," or "Comrade Putin," or "My Best Friend and Supreme Leader Ali