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June 2016

A monthly review *edited by Roger Kimball*

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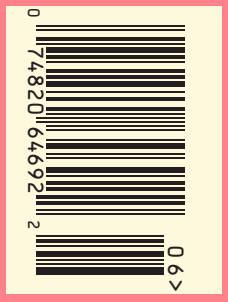

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Contributors to this issue

Leann Davis Alspaugh is the managing editor of *The Hedgehog Review*.

Henrik Bering is a writer and critic.

James Bowman is the author of *Honor: A History* (Encounter).

John Check teaches music theory at the University of Central Missouri.

Timothy Congdon is the chairman of the Institute of International Monetary Research at the University of Buckingham.

Anthony Daniels is a contributing editor of *City Journal*.

Christie Davies is the author of many articles on nineteenth-century Scottish clerical humor.

Paul Dean teaches English at Summer Fields School, Oxford.

Dominic Green teaches Politics at Boston College.

Mary Stewart Hammond's *Entering History* (W. W. Norton), will be published in October.

Victor Davis Hanson is a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Charles Hill, a research fellow at the Hoover Insitution, is a Brady-Johnson Distinguished Fellow at Yale University.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali is the Founder of the AHA Foundation, a Fellow with the Future of Diplomacy Project at the Harvard Kennedy School, and the author of *Infidel* (Free Press) and *Heretic* (Harper).

William Logan's next book of poetry, *Rift of Light* (Penguin), will be published next year.

Allan H. Meltzer is Professor of Political Economy at Carnegie Mellon University and a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Jeffrey Meyers's book *Robert Lowell in Love* (UMASS Press) appeared in January 2016.

Stephen Miller's latest book is *Walking New York* (Fordham).

Mario Naves teaches at the Pratt Institute.

Jay Nordlinger is a Senior Editor at *National Review*.

James Piereson is a Senior Fellow at The Manhattan Institute and the author of *Shattered Consensus* (Encounter).

Kyle Smith is a film critic and columnist for the *New York Post*.

Michael Spence's new book, *Umbilical* (St. Augustine's Press), won The New Criterion Poetry Prize.

Tomas Unger's writing has appeared in *The Threepenny Review* and *Poetry Ireland Review*.

Karen Wilkin is an independent curator and critic.

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Notes & Comments: June 2016

Sex & power

For this relief much thanks.
—Francisco, Act I, Scene I, *Hamlet*

So it's come to this: the Obama Administration has issued "Dear Colleague" letters to the nation's universities reminding them, as "a condition of receiving federal funds," that they must follow the "gender equity" provisions of Title IX, and, furthermore, that those provisions now very much include the care and feeding of so-called "transgender students": "a school must not treat a transgender student differently from the way it treats other students of the same gender identity." Among other things, this means that girls who think, or at least say, they are boys, and vice-versa, must be allowed to use bathrooms designated for the opposite sex. "A school may provide separate facilities on the basis of sex," the "Dear Colleague" letter warns, "but must allow transgender students access to such facilities consistent with their gender identity."

The appropriateness, indeed, the legality of "Dear Colleague" letters—missives whose chief purpose is to intimidate and bully—is itself a large subject, as indeed is that rancid instrument of Jacobin intimidation, Title IX. But we must draw a veil over consideration of those large-scale evidences of the operation of Leviathan in order to concentrate on what may well turn out to be one of the Obama administration's signal domestic policy achievements, its retromingent effort to violate the privacy of bathrooms, locker rooms, etc., in pursuit of the pseudo–civil rights issue of (trans)gender equity.

Attentive readers know that there is nothing new about the Obama administration's love affair with the issue of "transgender" rights. The President actually mentioned the subject in his last State of the Union Address. In one sense, he is simply capitalizing on a trend that first took root in the academy a decade ago and that, more recently, has received the imprimatur of *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and other reliable barometers of politically correct attitudes. The rhetoric has become increasingly shrill as the campaign for this species of psycho-sexual extravagance has mutated from a private crusade into a legal imperative. When the legislature of North Carolina recently defied the DOJ on the issue of who may use which bathroom, the *Times* accused the state of being a "pioneer in bigotry" and lambasted the "absurd" "lunacy" of those who question the propriety of the new dispensation.

Well, *The New York Times* is one thing. The Department of Justice is something else. Here we move from the noisy irritation of an incontinent rhetorical chihuahua to the jackboot of unlimited state power. Last month, Loretta Lynch, the Attorney General of the United States, gave a speech in which, invoking Jim Crow, she assured the "transgender commu-

nity" that the Obama administration had their backs: "we see you; we stand with you; and we will do everything we can to protect you going forward." Oh, and she also countersued North Carolina.

What is going on here? How is it that an issue that, until yesterday, most people thought deserving of the ministrations of psychiatry emerged as the latest candidate for civil-rights sainthood? There are, we believe, two imperatives working behind the scenes.

The first involves the long, long wave of the cultural revolution, in particular those precincts of the revolution that aim to transform life by emancipating sex. As Irving Kristol observed in 1994,

> "Sexual liberation" is always near the top of a counter-cultural agenda—though just what form the liberation takes can and does vary, sometimes quite wildly. Women's liberation, likewise, is another consistent feature of all countercultural movements—liberation from husbands, liberation from children, liberation from family. Indeed, the real object of these various sexual heterodoxies is to disestablish the family as the central institution of human society, the citadel of orthodoxy.

It is curious how regularly the campaign for liberation transforms itself into a demand for new forms of servitude. The free speech movement was born in Berkeley in 1964. Nowadays the cry is for limits on speech that is "offensive" or "privileged." A banner seen at Harvard Law School sums it up: "Free Speech is Not Equal Speech." Similarly, in the 1960s the slogan was "free sex"; now, ironically, we encounter something closer to "free from sex." Consider, to take just one example, Paisley Currah, a professor of political science at Brooklyn College and the author of *Making Transgender Count*. "Just as Herbert Marcuse's theories were important on campus in his day, gender theory is important now." Ms—or is it Mr.?—Currah is quite right to conjure up Herbert Marcuse. The German-born radical, who died in 1979, was a pivotal Sixties guru. But he was more than that. In his "protests against the repressive order of procreative sexuality" and insistence that genuine liberation requires a return to a state of "primary narcissism," Marcuse sounds a very contemporary note. Such a "change in the value and scope of libidinal relations," he wrote in *Eros and Civilization*, "would lead to a disintegration of the institutions in which the private interpersonal relations have been organized, particularly the monogamic and patriarchal family."

Seen as an ingredient in the long march of the cultural revolution of the 1960s, the sudden efflorescence of a phenomenon that belongs in the pages of Krafft-Ebing is just the latest item on the agenda to "disestablish" traditional manners and morals. But the Obama administration's interventions on the issue of transgenderism are also part of a larger movement to insinuate state power into the interstices of everyday life. Tocqueville famously warned that in democracies despotism did not so much tyrannize over citizens as it infantilized them. And it did this, he wrote, by reaching in to the nooks and crannies of life, sapping initiative, and transforming independent actors into wards of the state—"sheep," as Tocqueville put it, with the bureaucracy of the state as the shepherd. Imagine: functionaries in Washington telling people across the country how they must arrange their restrooms based on arbitrary criteria! The author of Genesis noted in passing that "male and female created He them." But that was before Barack Obama and Loretta Lynch arrived with their coercive "progressive" mandate. If the state can tell us how we must order public bathrooms, what can't it do?

Meanwhile, in Europe

Europe has never been friendly to free speech. In 2001, the European Court of Justice ruled that the European Union can suppress criticism of its institutions and its leaders. Back then, the Court had the British economist Bernard Connolly in its sights, whose book

The Rotten Heart of Europe it found "aggressive, derogatory, and insulting" and "akin to extreme blasphemy." Today, it's the comic Jan Böhmermann, who faces criminal prosecution—yes, criminal prosecution—in Germany for writing a satirical poem about the Turkish President Recep Erdoğan. Thank goodness for Douglas Murray, who organized a competition in *The Spectator* for the best offensive poem about Erdoğan. We are pleased to report that the former Mayor of London Boris Johnson won the prize with a suitably ribald limerick. To see how Boris rhymes "Ankara," you'll have to look it up.

A spot of light

Most museum expansions these days are disasters architecturally and in other ways. It is a pleasure, therefore, to report on a triumph at Yale. The Yale Center for British Art was Louis Kahn's last building. It opened in 1977, three years after Kahn's death, and was instantly acclaimed a modernist masterpiece. Nearly forty years on, it was in need of facelift. The New Haven architect George Knight did a masterly job of restoring the building, bringing it back to a state of pristine elegance while quietly updating its infrastructure. When one looks around at other contemporary museum projects—the travesty that is Met Breuer, for example, or the monstrosity that is the new Whitney Museum of American Art—one is grateful for this subtle and deferential work of architectural recuperation.

A word of thanks

It is with some astonishment that we realize that with this issue we conclude our thirty-fourth volume. When Hilton Kramer and Samuel Lipman started *The New Criterion* back in the early 1980s, they frankly acknowledged that it was a brash experiment: a cultural review that was at once a champion of high modernism and traditional values. It seemed to many to be a contradiction in terms. And yet here we are on the eve of our thirty-fifth season. We could never have achieved this milestone if it were not for the small but growing band of readers who understand the importance of robust cultural criticism to the health of a democratic society more and more inured to politically correct intellectual conformity. Thank you, all. As we end another season, we would like to pay homage to the institutions and individuals whose leadership has made our work possible. In particular, we want to mention the late, lamented John M. Olin Foundation, which was there at the creation of *The New Criterion* and which supported our work for decades. The Sarah Scaife Foundation and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundations have likewise been essential partners. We are more grateful than we can say for their stalwart and enlightened support. Writing this gives us an opportunity to pay special homage to Michael W. Grebe, for many years the head of the Bradley Foundation, who is retiring this month. Mike's visionary leadership at Bradley has helped countless worthy enterprises, not least *The New Criterion*, and we are proud and grateful to salute his many important labors on behalf of American culture. In recent years, Olin, Scaife, and Bradley have been joined by other partisans of permanent things. The late Donald Kahn intervened at a critical moment to provide generous and essential support for more than a decade. This year, in addition to acknowledging the key support of a few anonymous donors—you know who you are—we want to mention our Editors' Circle donors The Achelis and Bodman Foundations, The Carson-Myre Charitable Foundation, Arthur Cinader, Daniel D'Aniello, The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Richard Hough, The J. M. Foundation, Virginia James, The Marcus Foundation, The Fred Maytag Family Foundation, James Piereson, The Paul E. Singer Foundation, The Thomas W. Smith Foundation, George Yeager, and Helen Zell. We thank you all for your continued support of our endeavors. *The New Criterion* could not exist without you.

In defense of dissidence
by Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Editors' note: The following is an edited version of remarks delivered at The New Criterion*'s gala on April 21, 2016 honoring Ayaan Hirsi Ali with the fourth Edmund Burke Award for Service to Culture and Society.*

America: it's an idea. I repeat it, it's an idea. I've never felt more at home in any other place than in the United States of America. I'm at home with the idea of America. That doesn't make me disloyal to being Somali or having lived in Kenya for several years. There are many things about Kenya and Nairobi that I'm attached to. I lived in The Netherlands and I was given a great deal of freedom. I couldn't be who I am if I hadn't happened to have lived in The Netherlands.

But there's something that is unique and so exceptional about being in the United States of America and belonging to that idea of America. Four nights ago, I went to see *Hamilton*. Now, think about any other nation on the planet where you could have that kind of reflection on the founding fathers, all cast with African Americans and other minorities. Throughout, I thought, "I wish they were alive. I wish they could see this. I wish Thomas Jefferson could see this. I wish Alexander Hamilton could see how he was portrayed." And maybe, in this audience, I am speaking to the choir. I know you appreciate how exceptional America is.

We have to pass on these ideas to the next generation. We often think about the next generation as our children. I have a four-year-old son. We're teaching him about the flag and all, but he's only interested in the swords and spears and the fighting process of it. But the next generation also includes immigrants. And we appreciate it more than you who are born here. In fact, I think that there are more immigrants willing to die for the idea of America than Millennials. I teach a class at Harvard, and there was someone who came to the Kennedy School, and he said, "I don't care what America looks like 500 years from now. I don't care if it's dominated by Islam." And I just thought, cringing, "Of course I care. I care. I don't want the idea of America to be dominated by Islam."

Do you know what Jihad is? Everybody knows what Jihad is. Do you know what Da'wah is? This is critical. We are almost fifteen years from 9/11, and most Americans, and most Europeans, know what Jihad is, but they don't know what Da'wah is. Da'wah is the process of Islamization. Da'wah is the strategy of Islamizing every single aspect of society and politics to reflect Islamic law (Shariah). Da'wah is also what leads to Jihad. If you don't know what Da'wah is, then you will never understand Jihad. Da'wah and jihad are linked, as the Dutch intelligence agency AIVD noted in a 2004 report titled *From Dawa to Jihad*: "The network strategy, international missionary efforts, and the interaction or even interwovenness of *Dawa* and *Jihad* demonstrate the relationship between the various forms of radical Islam and the phenomenon of radical-Islamic terrorism." The AIVD defined the risk of da'awah to free, open societies as follows:

> The Dawa-oriented forms of radical Islam are not necessarily violent by nature, but nevertheless they generate important security risks. Dawa is usually interpreted as "re-Islamisation" of Muslim minorities in the West. These minorities are seen as "oppressed brothers" who should be liberated from the "yoke of Western brainwashing." The groups focusing on Dawa follow a long-term strategy of continuous influencing based on extreme puritanical, intolerant and anti-Western ideas. They want Muslims in the West to reject Western values and standards, propagating extreme isolation from Western society and often intolerance towards other groups in society. They also encourage these Muslims to (covertly) develop parallel structures in society and to take the law into their own hands. What they mean is that Muslims in the West should turn their backs on the non-Islamic government and instead set up their own autonomous power structures based on specific interpretation of the Sharia.

It should be noted, however, that da'wah efforts of Islamization are not limited to Muslim minorities in the West.

You do not understand the threat of the day if you do not know what Da'wah is. And here we are: I'm in the company of friends, conservatives, people who care about the idea of America. And you do not understand, you do not know what Da'wah, the competing idea, is. You're honoring me, and I'm thankful, but I almost want to say to all of you who do not know what Da'wah is, "Shame on you." Do you know why I want to say that? Because when we look back in history to when our fathers and grandfathers and our ancestors were confronted with bad ideas, and we reflect on it, we say, in the comfort of our sofas, "How did they not see? How could they not know it? How did you not know what Hitler was up to? Well, they may not have known it in the 1930s, but then in the early 1940s, they should have known it."

And here we are in the information age, and you don't know what Da'wah is. Here we have a bad idea with a strategy, with agents, with resources, and you have no idea what it is. If you don't understand what Da'wah is, you don't understand the role that a country like Saudi Arabia plays. Our president, Barack Obama—I'm a black woman, so, I think, in the climate of today, when only black people may say negative or critical things about black people—you will permit me to say: I'm not really keen on him. But he's *our* president and he represents us. And he's now in Saudi Arabia. And when I learned that he actually didn't like the Saudis, I thought, "Well, there's something." Everybody's been asking me, is there anything you could ever like about President Obama? And I thought, "I love the fact that he doesn't like the Saudis." But he's in Saudi Arabia and he's not going to be talking about Da'wah.

Da'wah is a project to Islamize, to transform—it's religious imperialism. In practice, it often entails Saudi religious imperialism. And if you know where Indonesia is and what Indonesia was, and the fact that it is the largest Muslim majority country in the world, and if you see what Saudi religious influence did in Indonesia, what they did in Pakistan, what they did in various parts of Africa, then you understand what cultural imperialism is. If you don't understand that in our age, you have absolutely no right to judge those Germans and delightful people behind the Iron Curtain who subscribed to Stalin and what came after him.

If you and I don't understand the threat of our time, how can we judge the past? And what have we to give to the future? What have we to give to the next generation? Islam, Muslims, National Security: they baffle everyone. But they need not baffle everyone, because Islam is an idea. It's a doctrine.

The founder of Islam, Mohammed, in Mecca, employed the tools of religion as we understand them today. He went from door to door to give his message, whatever that is. I believe in freedom of speech: it wasn't my message, and it will never be, but that's what he was doing in Mecca. Ten years later, he went to Medina, and he had a different message: he used force to back his ideas. Those who refused to accept his idea of one God were forced into it. The religion of Islam, as an idea, from the very beginning, was supremacist. In Mecca, they told everyone: all of your gods, whatever

you worship, it's all bad, inferior. Come to this one God. But in Medina, you had no choice, you had to come to him, otherwise you were beheaded; you were killed; your children taken in to slavery; your women taken into slavery. And there are, today, Muslims, who follow Mohammed, the founder of Islam, in his Medina rendering. Those are the Medina Muslims.

If you want to distinguish—unlike Donald Trump, who said, "all Muslims, close the doors to all of them," pretty hysterical—between those Muslims that you don't want to welcome, who have identified you as an enemy though you haven't identified them as an enemy, you're going to have to delve into the history of Mohammed. You're going to have to understand what he said and did in Mecca and what he said and did in Medina. And there are, in the United States of America and beyond, in this incredibly interconnected world, Muslims who want to abide by Mohammed's message beginning from Medina. They are our enemies, because they have defined us as an enemy. They are my enemies because I'm an apostate. I'm no longer a Muslim, therefore I have to be killed. They are your enemies because you are not a Muslim. And those Muslims who want to act on the Medina principles, on the principles of abrogation, of political supremacy, of the Caliphate, who don't recognize boundaries between nations, they are our enemies. It's very easy to define that. It should not have taken us fifteen years to get there. And we're still not even there.

The other Muslims, those who when they invoke Mohammed do not mention Medina, are not interested in politics. They think of their religion only in terms of spirituality, of prayer rituals to God and the observance of dietary restrictions. They're not our enemies. They're religious. They define religion the way we define religion in the United States of America. You can be a Baptist or Jewish Orthodox, or something else, and as long as you're not seeking to impose it on the rest of us, the rest of the world, you are practicing what we describe as freedom of religion. But if you are a Medina Muslim, you are not practicing freedom of religion. You are lying to our faces: you are saying "I'm practicing the freedom of religion," but, in fact, you are pursuing a political doctrine, a project of using religious freedom in the West to undermine religious freedom and freedom of expression. And if you do it using Jihad, violence, law enforcement and even the military, we come after you. We understand, in this country, what violence is. We have the rule of law. We have a military that will come after you. We have law enforcement that will come after you.

But if you pursue the idea of Islamization, the Medina project, and you do not use violence, you are making use—or maybe abuse—of the freedom of speech, the freedom of association, the freedom of the press, all the freedoms that we have, in order to pursue your idea. The Dutch intelligence agency, the AIVD, described it as follows in 2004: "Dawa-oriented radical-Salafist organisations and networks from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the Arab Gulf states strongly emphasise 're-Islamisation' of the Muslim minorities in the West. . . . Their efforts are purposefully aimed at encouraging Muslims in the West to turn their back on Western values and standards." And you know what: I'm a freedom of speech fundamentalist. I'm a First Amendment fundamentalist. I really think you can hold ideas that are abhorrent to me and to all of us. But—and here's the big but—you have to play by the rules of the game. If you're pushing an idea that the best thing for our society and all other societies is Sharia law or Islamic law, then I want to have the opportunity to tell my audiences, in college, in high schools, in public, why Sharia law is not really such a wonderful idea. To begin with: for women, or gays, or Jews, or Christians, or those who drink, or those who have relationships outside of marriage. I've just described Manhattan. But 34 percent of Muslim inhabitants in Britain will not condemn stoning adulterers and adulteresses. And this is not Manhattan, this is in Europe, where certainly at least some people have committed adultery. In Pakistan, 75 percent of the population supports the death penalty for people who leave the Islamic religion (Pew 2013). Is that tolerant?

You have to start caring about these things, if you want to share a neighborhood, a school, a class. Your children do that, with everyone else. And if these are the beliefs that are being promoted, then I invite you, please, to fight this fight in a way that you've been taught. You're not Islamophobic; whatever corner you're being pushed into, you're not. Because, ultimately—and here's where I think we must stand strong—if you believe that the idea of Islamic law is a bad idea, you must defend the freedom of speech. The other side either calls it "Islamophobia" or the classic name: blasphemy. If you say this about the prophet, it's blasphemy. ("Islamophobia" is a very new term. When did it come into sway? 2006? 2005? It's a very young idea. But before Islamophobia came around, it just used to be called blasphemy.)

One fifth of humanity is labelled Muslim. And the Medina agenda is to co-opt them: it's to convince them that Sharia law, Islamic law, unreformed, is the best idea. That the idea of America is very bad. And that they should submit to Islam. Major resources for this cause are being pushed by countries like Saudi Arabia, where our president is. If you want to defeat or even engage with the idea of Islamic religion and Islamic law, the way to go is blasphemy. I believe in blasphemy. In fact, Surah 25, Chapter 25 of the Quran is called The Criterion, and portends to be the distinction between right and wrong. So *The New Criterion*, even the name itself, is blasphemic.

In many ways I think it's comical that I'm being recognized for saying men and women should be equal before the law. That's what I'm being recognized for, pretty much. That's what it amounts to. And that idea that men and women are equal before the law is blasphemic to Islamic law. The fact that homosexuals and heterosexuals should be equal before the law is blasphemic to Islamic law. The fact that people of different religions—Jews, Christians, those who have no faith—are equal before the law is blasphemic to Islamic law. The idea that human beings, men and women, can make their own laws based on reason, not shackled by divine law, is blasphemic to Islamic law.

The idea of America is secular. It is about the fact that we are created equal. That we make and amend our own laws. What is blasphemy to them is valuable and is law to us. And I took an oath when I became an American citizen. And my oath in my heart was: that is what I'm going to defend. Hear, hear, blasphemy.

A paper dragon (with teeth)
by Allan H. Meltzer

China has not established the rule of law and thus there is no justice.
—Ai Weiwei: Weiwei–University presentation, 2013

Public attitudes toward China's future have turned from celebration of its development to concern about confrontation with the United States. China's leaders repeat their pledge to make China a global power, a serious rival to the United States. The United States responded to the challenge by offering the principal regional countries other than China a multilateral trade agreement that commits countries to more open, competitive trading arrangements and supplements the military-political role the United States has taken since the end of World War II.

China responded both economically and militarily. It established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with fifty-seven partner countries. The Bank has $100 billion to lend for infrastructure in Asia. China has the dominant role and the purpose is to bind countries economically to China. Of less importance, the renminbi is now included in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) basket used to calculate the SDR or Special Drawing Right. Since the SDR has very little current importance, and the U.S. dollar is the main international currency, China's interest in making its currency an alternative to the dollar is, for the present at least, unlikely to have much importance. Markets for dollars are large and liquid. Markets for China's renminbi are not.

Militarily, China has launched an aircraft carrier, upgraded its army, and developed a landing strip on a man-made island in the South China Sea. This is a provocation because several countries claim that the islands fall within their territorial waters but not in China's. And the United States insists that freedom of navigation must not be hindered.

China's announced objective to become a major world power is central to its challenges to the United States. I believe the Chinese can succeed only if the United States falters. The reason is that China replaces the rule of law with authoritarian control of its people and economy. As the quotation from the noted artist Ai Weiwei proclaims, without the rule of law, China's government can punish dissent without restriction. And it does.

The former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin recognized that China had to make political reforms that restricted authoritarian government. He did not make those reforms when he held power and his successors have not tried. At the local level, however, the party now permits citizens to elect village committees in some places. Fujian province, on the coast opposite Taiwan, has gone the farthest toward local autonomy without opposition from the Communist Party.

Lawyers and scholars have not agreed on a succinct definition of the rule of law. The concept is so complex that statements typically replace a definition with a list of features. One consistent theme is avoiding discretionary decisions whether by judges, politicians, or officials. The objective is to have rules of general applicability with all parties subject to the same penalties and opportunities. "Equal justice under the law" is engraved on the U.S. Supreme Court building.

Equality under the law is, of course, an ideal. Countries differ greatly in their commitment as well as in the laws they pass. Singapore has some strict rules, but it attempts to enforce them without prejudice.

Understanding the importance of the rule of law is the foundation of democratic societies. Two propositions show its importance.

First, excepting only oil-rich states like Saudi Arabia, all rich countries have the rule of law. The rules differ. Several developed from British law but took their own paths.

Second, no country without the rule of law has become rich. A plausible reason is that the rule of law provides a degree of certainty that encourages innovation, new ideas, new products, and new ways of achieving economic and social progress. It is not accidental that most significant innovations start in rule-of-law countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan. In contrast to authoritarian countries, there is little or no fear of penalties for innovating. Also, corruption and cronyism are most difficult to prevent where competition is absent, as in authoritarian countries.

China's president currently makes a major effort to eliminate bribery and corruption. Permanent success is unlikely to follow. Authoritarian systems can award valuable arrangements, so the very human tendency to profit personally remains a valued right that an official can sell to a willing buyer. Officials have discretion to award those who reward them. The better way to reduce corruption substantially is by reducing regulation, increasing competition, and adopting the rule of law.

Authoritarian regimes most often create monopolies to produce economic goods and services, sacrificing the benefits that come from competition over time. China has a mixture of state-owned enterprises and privately owned but regulated firms. The state-owned enterprises earn much less profit by any measure. Often they are inefficient, overstaffed, and slow to adopt new ideas. China invited foreign firms to produce in China but required them to bring their latest, best technology. Chinese firms adopted foreign technologies and methods, so they were able to compete internationally. (Now, China depends on cyber spying to learn about innovation.) Without the rule of law, China will be slow to develop independently. Authoritarian systems do not favor individual initiative. Absence of freedom of contract and secure property rights discourages innovation.

The former Soviet Union is a relevant example. Like China, it had many talented scientists and engineers. And it spent large sums on research, but it did not develop new technologies. Its major achievement—the first successful space orbit—was principally the work of captive German scientists and engineers at the end of the Second World War.

On the Fraser Institute's list of countries with the twenty-five largest GDPs adjusted for purchasing power differences, all but the oil-rich countries have some form of the rule of law. Most of the non-oil countries in the top twenty-five have scores of 90 for property rights and in the 80s for "freedom from corruption." As the United States increased the extent of government regulation of business in recent years, its rating for rule of law declined. In the current Heritage ranking, the United States is in tenth place with scores of 80 for property rights and 72 for freedom from corruption. In contrast, China's rank is eighty-ninth with scores of 20 for property rights and 35 for freedom from corruption. An alternative measure by the Cato Institute for 2012 puts the United States in twentieth place for rule of law with a score of 6.5 out of 10. China is placed at 132 (out of 152) with a score of 4.2 out of 10.

The data from both Fraser and Heritage support the two propositions about growth and rule of law or freedom. Rule of law is necessary but not sufficient for high per capita income. Although lawyers have not agreed on a succinct definition of the rule of law, secure property rights and personal freedom are on every list.

Ai Weiwei's statement suggests how far China is from adopting a rule of law constitution. China's government knows about the rule of law and it accepts the rule of law in international transactions, but it shows no sign that it plans to adopt and enforce general laws or a constitution that protects people and property. Doing so limits the power of an authoritarian government. To sustain a growth rate high enough to make China a world-class power, China's ruling authorities must severely limit their power to make and change rules at their whim. The rulers are

unwilling to permit greater freedom. No plans for reform open a path toward individual rights or a constitution that grants citizens enforceable rights to personal and economic freedom. Chinese authorities act forcefully against corruption. Yet they do not recognize that corruption is inherently fostered by a powerful state that can reward some who offer bribes and punish others. This is the very opposite of the rule of law.

Realizing China's multi-year goal of becoming a wealthy and powerful nation is highly ambitious under the best of circumstances. Doing it without adopting the rule of law makes the goal impossible to attain. Unlike its Asian neighbors, China's high growth of GDP ended long before it became a wealthy country. China will grow, but its growth will not reach the level needed to achieve China's goal of wealth comparable to the United States or Western Europe.

For many years, commenters marveled at China's sustained 10 percent annual rate of growth and projected it would remain unchanged into the future. A common conclusion about five years ago forecast that China's output would surpass U.S. output by 2020. There was much discussion of China's challenge to the United States. Some saw authoritarian direction as a better way to solve economic and social problems than democratic capitalism. Forecasts of this type did not mention that it was the aggregate, not the per capita GDP.

That positive view of China is no longer heard. The growth rate is down to 6 or 7 percent per annum, and, because Chinese statistical reports are not always accurate, the growth rate may be lower than 6 percent. Wasteful production, especially of buildings that remain empty, is a long-standing Chinese problem that commentators discounted or ignored until recently.

President Xi and others boasted that China had created a new political-economic system, superior to democratic capitalism. Those boasts now have less appeal. China's high growth rate brought substantial wealth and improved living standards for many. Like similar periods of high growth in Japan and South Korea, high growth ended when the number of unskilled workers moving from agriculture to industry declined.

Current negative comments focus on the sharp drop in stock prices and devaluation of the currency. These are as overdone as the previous euphoria. China is neither a superior new model nor a government of incompetent administrators. It is a government of humans who often make errors when events move rapidly. Many of its newly wealthy citizens show their skepticism about the future by buying expensive property on the U.S. and Canadian west coast.

An important difference between China and its neighbors is that Chinese growth slowed when large parts of China remained poor and backward. While many residents of coastal cities enjoy a greatly increased living standard, large numbers of Chinese continue lives not very different from the past. A measure of China's relative position is that per capita GDP is only 22 percent of the U.S. level. And the United States no longer has the world's highest per capita GDP. The difference between the two countries is an indication of how much China must grow to reach developed country status. Of course, it does not have to close the entire gap.

Economic growth occurs when population or labor force and productivity grow. China's future population growth rate is negative. For thirty-five years, until recently, government policy restricted births and forced abortions. The low birthrate of the past implies that population will age and decline. Forecasts predict that the current 1.4 billion population will decline to 500 million by the end of the twenty-first century. The forecast calls for a decline of little more than 1 percent per annum. The forecast may, of course, prove wide of the mark, but the direction is clear. Declining population will reduce economic growth. To keep population stable, population must grow at a rate just above 2 percent a year. Currently, Japan shows the effect of slow population growth on GDP growth.

That leaves productivity growth as a possible source of high economic growth sufficient to become a wealthy nation. There are good reasons for skepticism that China can restore past productivity growth.

As a possible example of growth over the next seventy or eighty years in the United States and China, I assume China's annual productivity growth is twice as fast as in the United States, say 4 percent versus the United States's 2 percent. Allowing for declining population, China's

GDP rises annually by 3 percent. In about 2090, China's per capita GDP would be only one third of U.S. GDP. The comparison is one example of many. The maintained 2 percent U.S. growth rate may be too high. Also, China's higher growth is unlikely to be sustained over seventy years. The main point is that whatever numbers one chooses, China starts from a low level and is unlikely to realize its leaders' ambitions to become the world's leading power.

The years of China's high productivity growth saw a massive movement of workers from rural farms to manufacturing centers. Workers brought few skills other than the ability to work hard and willingness to do so. This large pool of unskilled labor is no longer available for several reasons.

First, as worker skills increased, productivity and wages rose. Much of the textile industry moved out of China to Vietnam, Bangladesh, and other low-wage countries.

Second, Chinese agriculture is very inefficient. Farms are small, land cannot be purchased, and much of the work is done by hand labor. Communist ideology prevents farmers from reaching efficient scale. Currently 35 percent of the labor force remains in agriculture. It produces only 10 percent of China's GDP. In the United States, 1 percent of the labor force is in agriculture. It produces one percent of the much larger U.S. GDP. China reports that urban income is three times rural income on average. A principal reason is low agricultural productivity. I have never received a good explanation of the failure of Chinese farmers to develop agricultural cooperatives that enabled them to own farm equipment collectively as in the United States during the era of small farms.

Third, China retains restrictions on worker movement from farm to city. These restrictions slow China's current and future growth and retard agricultural productivity.

China will continue to grow. Its current effort to increase the share of private consumption from 34 percent of GDP is a way of raising consumption standards in the interior of the county to benefit a large part of its population. This policy is likely to contribute to real growth of output. But it will be slow.

Another opportunity for growth calls for China to increase the technical skills of its workforce. Currently, China exports computers, hand-held telephones, and other technical products. China produces the packaging and provides the marketing. Most of the technical parts are imported from Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. As the Chinese labor force acquires the necessary skills, the growth rate will benefit.

China's problems are now discussed actively. Many refer to the large number of empty buildings as a waste of capital spending, where earlier these problems were ignored. Some critics join China's officials in seeing one of China's main problems as the transition from an export-oriented economy to domestic consumption. Others see the major problem as the need to convert state-owned enterprises into privately owned or directed firms. This recognizes that the private sector is more productive and much more profitable than the state sector. Still, others point to extensive water and air pollution, sizable income inequality, and widespread corruption, in order to criticize the emphasis on economic growth as excessive.

If China's leadership could close the state-owned enterprises or sell them to investors and make them compete, China would take a step toward higher growth. The state-owned enterprises absorb a large share of the credit issued by state-owned banks. They receive favorable treatment. They waste capital and earn much lower returns than companies in the private sector. They produce much of the air pollution that burdens China's cities. They are protected politically and the government seems unable to reform them.

Other problems facing China are inadequate pension and health care systems for the demands of an aging population. Satisfying these demands draws resources from investment to consumption, slowing economic growth but adding to social welfare. China is unlikely to have the resources to invest heavily to raise productivity while servicing an aging population and reducing air and water pollution.

Important as many of these problems are, they are not the main obstacles to achieving the leadership's goal of making China a great power. No country, ever, has been able to make the necessary adjustment and achieve a high living standard without adopting a strong rule of law embedded in some constitutional system. China's administrators, therefore, face a major choice. They must

restrict their authority by adopting a rule-of-law constitution. That does not mean they must become as open and free as Hong Kong. Singapore has a strong rule-of-law tradition but also strong restrictions on personal behavior. Property rights, limited special privilege, allowing the market instead of the administration to allocate credit, uniform enforcement of laws, open competition to improve products and services, and freedom of speech—unlike laws under authoritarian rulers—encourage innovation and fair dealing.

For China to grow from its current level of per-capita GDP to a level four or five times higher, it must adopt the rule of law. That is not an overnight change. It must remain in effect, as part of a constitution, long enough to be believed. Most likely it has to survive a crisis that challenges the authoritarian state to intervene to protect its friends. Estimates by MIT Professor Daron Acemoglu suggest that a country gains as much as a 20 percent increase in per capita GDP over thirty years by shifting from autocracy to democratic government.

Some Chinese officials recognize that a constitution that protects the rule of law is essential for China's development. At the Fourth Plenary Session of the Communist Party, an officially appointed group proposed adopting a constitution that supported the rule of law. They wrote that this major change is a prerequisite if China is to achieve its development goal—becoming a major world power. No response followed. Neither the 2015 report of the International Finance Forum, where current and past officials discuss current reforms and propose additional changes nor the discussion and proposal of President Xi mention the rule of law or constitutional change. The rule of law is not likely to be proposed.

Current Chinese leadership has undertaken a massive program against corruption. High officials, previously immune from prosecution, have been arrested. The program is popular and costly. It cannot succeed permanently. Once the program ends, corruption will be lower for a time. Without enforcement of the rule of law, it will return.

Instead of seeking a possible cooperative relation with the United States and its Asian allies, China's leadership has chosen confrontation. Examples are the development of island military bases in the South China Sea that push China's border far beyond the international limit and into areas claimed by several of its neighbors. In the East China Sea, China confronts Japan over an island. On the non-military side, China offers its neighbors "One Belt, One Round" to lead these countries to China for trade and commerce. And to tighten the linkage, China opened the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to develop ties binding its neighbors to China. The AIIB has $100 billion to lend and fifty-seven member countries. China is the Bank's manager. The United States and Japan are not members. The Bank is an alternative to the United Nations Asian Development Bank, which China sees as controlled by Japan and the United States.

In all of these activities China views itself as an ancient civilization that was held down by the West and has now risen to a position that demands respect and admiration. The United States responded with the Trans-Pacific Partnership inviting countries into a trade agreement centered around the United States. The agreement, if ratified, will exclude China.

The former Soviet Union managed to confront the United States for decades despite its lack of freedom and economic growth. Most Soviet citizens remained impoverished during the Cold War. That did not prevent the challenge.

China is unlikely to come close to closing the gap in per-capita income with the United States, Japan, or Western Europe. That does not prevent an authoritarian state from using its resources to strengthen its military, as China has done and seems determined to continue doing.

But, as the Soviet Union eventually learned, confrontation with the United States can be very costly. If the United States decides to increase military spending by one percentage point of per capita GDP, China must shift 5 or 6 percent of its current per capita GDP to match the United States. That reflects the difference in the incomes of the two countries. It takes a determined president and a Congress that seeks stability and acts to sustain it.

Our response must continue to show that rule-of-law countries offer the greatest opportunity for individuals to raise living standards and enjoy opportunities and freedom. This contrasts with China's authoritarian system that denies freedom of speech and uses force and the threat of force, as seen in Tiananmen Square.

Insubstantial pageants
by Paul Dean

The appointment of Emma Rice as the Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe in London, succeeding Dominic Dromgoole and the founding director Mark Rylance, caused surprise when it was announced in 2015. Ms. Rice, then in charge of the Kneehigh Theatre in Cornwall, a venue with a reputation for experimental workshop productions, had directed only one play by Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, which Kneehigh staged at Stratford in 2006—if a production can be described as "by" Shakespeare that was marketed as "adapted by Emma Rice, written by Carol Grose," with only a handful of Shakespeare's lines retained (there is an inexplicably admiring account of it in Martin Butler's Cambridge edition). Nor, by her own admission, did Rice know much else in the canon. Interviewed in advance of her first season, she explained that she had been doing her homework as best she could: "I have tried to sit down with Shakespeare but it doesn't work. I get very sleepy and then suddenly I want to listen to *The Archers*" (a long-running British radio soap opera). She even disclosed that, at her interview for the post, when asked what plans she might have for the 400th anniversary, she replied, "What 400th anniversary?"

One might well wonder who else was on the shortlist, and in keeping with that reaction Rice christened her first season "The Wonder Season," declaring, "I bring story, I bring humanity, I bring event and I bring wonder"—all of which, presumably, Shakespeare forgot to bring. Her manifesto to staff was equally heavy-breathing stuff: "We are irreverent. We are brave. We are naughty. We are true." (Readers will supply further adjectives.) She is committed to "gender-blind" and "color-blind" casting, about which more anon, and in her inaugural production, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Helena, one of the quartet of human lovers, becomes Helenus, a gay man with designs on Demetrius, while the mechanicals are all female (including "Rita Quince") except for Bottom. The production opened in May, with the "performance artist" Meow Meow as Titania, and received mixed reviews. Dominic Cavendish in *The Daily Telegraph* was "transfixed" by its "tremendous energy" but deplored the "crass sexualisation" of some of the staging. Susannah Clapp in *The Observer* was a fan: "It is sometimes over-energetic, but it is a glory . . . I have never seen the Pyramus and Thisbe playlet made so funny." That last reaction was not shared by all her fellow critics. For Lyn Gardner in the London *Guardian*, *Pyramus and Thisbe* felt "flat." While praising the production's irreverence, she had reservations about its "relentless jokiness" and lack of "a genuine sense of wonder and magic." "There are times," she concluded, "when, for all its exuberant gleefulness and merry laughter, it seems a tad charmless." Ian Shuttleworth in *The Financial Times* probed deeper, sensing a mistrust of Shakespeare behind the rewriting: "It's as if he's regarded as someone who offers a lot of opportunities for inserting comedy rather than being much cop at providing it himself." Exactly. The whole point of the play

within the play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, is that it must be played straight. The mechanicals are bad actors trying to be good ones, and their performance should be aimed at the onstage aristocratic audience whom it fails to please, not at the theater audience in a frantic bid for laughs. If that distinction is blurred, an important dimension of the play's meaning will be lost, but if *Pyramus and Thisbe* is acted badly well, as it were, it will be very funny indeed. Emma Rice is not the first director to fall into that trap and she certainly will not be the last.

The school parties attending the press night were also reported to be hugely enthusiastic, and this is where more troubling questions arise. They were well put by Melanie Phillips in an article in the London *Times* (whose critic, Ann Treneman, judged the Helena/Helenus switch as having "worked brilliantly" but found *Pyramus and Thisbe* "overdone to the point of tedium"). Phillips briskly dismissed Rice's populist innovations and insisted, "In Shakespeare's plays, the words are everything." She went on:

> The notion that they are unintelligible and off-putting to modern audiences, particularly the restless young, is wide of the mark. . . . The repeated flinching at the apparent difficulty of the language derives from the view that children must never be presented with any obstacles. This explains the obsession with "relevance," or couching everything in the idiom of today's world. . . . The accessibility of Shakespeare depends upon the intelligence, passion and talent of the teacher or theatre director.

Attempts to simplify or modernize Shakespeare's English can never be anything but crude and debasing. There may be a case for translating Chaucer—although it's easy, and much more fun, to learn to read Chaucer's English. Now that the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version have fallen into disuse, I suppose there is a case for contemporary liturgical rites. There is no case at all for "translating" Shakespeare, who remains part of the living language precisely because—but only for so long as—his plays are studied and performed as he wrote them.

Citing the findings of the American Alliance for Theatre and Education, that coming to an understanding of Shakespeare's language gives students an immense confidence boost and helps them master complex intellectual operations in other disciplines, Melanie Phillips concluded:

> That's why Shakespeare's plays help the most disadvantaged. That's why teachers or theatre directors who bowdlerise them or imbue them with "relevant" gimmicks treat the most disadvantaged with contempt, corrupt the work of the greatest playwright in history and debase our general culture.

As someone who fell in love with Shakespeare's work at the age of twelve and has been teaching it to children aged between nine and eighteen for nearly forty years—and who has produced several of the plays, in sensibly abridged versions retaining the original language, with actors as young as eleven or twelve—I can say that Phillips is absolutely right. A good production of Shakespeare or good teaching of his plays will excite and enthuse children of all ages; a bad production will put them off and bore them (the very thing Emma Rice says she doesn't want to do). What do I mean by "good" and "bad" there? Overwhelmingly, an approach that trusts Shakespeare, does not assume the teacher, director, or actor is cleverer than he is, and respects his decisions. Ignorance and incompetence are regrettable, but the kind of arrogance exemplified by Emma Rice's "Shakespeare would be cheering me if he heard me speak" is inexcusable. Claptrap about "relevance" needs to be treated with the contempt it deserves; it's for *us* to make *ourselves* relevant to the work of art, not the other way round. Those school parties at the Globe had not seen Shakespeare's *Dream* but Emma Rice's, and they had been sold short. I hope their teachers told them so next day.

When we hear talk of "blind" casting, there are some basic problems to be addressed. I will mention here another production, the new *Cymbeline* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford, which I saw just after it opened in

May. This is one of the most complex of Shakespeare's plays both in structure and language, and the young cast at Stratford delivered a lagely uncut text in a performance lasting three hours and a quarter. They made a heroic assault on a virtually impossible task, and the evening contained many fine moments. They were severely handicapped, however, by three calamitous decisions by their German director, Melly Still: Cymbeline became a Queen rather than a King, the wicked stepmother of the original play became her ducal husband, and one of the two male princes became a girl, renamed from Guiderius to Guideria. (A more minor character, Pisanio, also became Pisania, but this did not have as warping an effect.) Melly Still explained in the programme:

> *Cymbeline* explores the restoration of order from disorder. To most of us that probably means patriarchal order. I was interested in shifting expectations by making both Cymbeline (the monarch) and Guiderius (the heir) women. Rather than the restoration of patrilineal order, it becomes about the possibility of a new order.

And on the change from stepmother to Duke she says:

> I love wicked stepmothers in fairy tales. But *Cymbeline* is more than a fairy tale—it's a thriller, epic and mythic. Hopefully this interpretation of the Queen as the Duke allows us to focus on his actions rather than his type.

All of which is about as wrong-headed as it could possibly be. Shakespeare has worked with certain expectations that the director feels at liberty to "shift"; the structural trajectory of his play is falsified as a closed ending becomes an open one; the fairy tale element, crucial to the play's generic balance, is discounted; and the stepmother is made into a rounded character rather than a type in a reversal of the original portrayal. Michael Billington's review in *The Guardian* commended Cymbeline's change of gender because it "turns the character from a cipher into a complex figure"; in other words, again, it does the *opposite* of what Shakespeare wrote. Melly Still, like Emma Rice, distorts the play for her own ideological purposes and in the interests of irrelevant "relevance," setting it in the context of the forthcoming British referendum about the European Union, with a result described by Ann Treneman as "Euro-trash gone bonkers" (the London *Times*). Scenes set in Rome or France had the dialogue in Italian or French, and there was even Latin when Caesar's ambassador arrived in England—all with surtitles that were only partly visible from where I was sitting. This is frankly absurd.

Rice and Still's productions share a fallacy that needs exposing: why, if we are to be "blind" to gender and color, must changes be made that force exactly those things upon our attention, and make us baffled by aspects of the plays that we would previously have understood without difficulty as part of their meaning? Can anyone seriously imagine that there will ever again be a production of *Othello* with a black-faced white actor—or actress—in the title role, as used to happen routinely? Yet why not, if color and gender have ceased to matter? The truth is that of course they haven't. They have rarely mattered more than in our flexi-gender, multi-ethnic society. Rice tells us that she once saw a revelatory production of *Othello* with a black Iago—evidently she was not being "blind" on that occasion!

If these questions are going to be addressed by Shakespeareans—as I believe they must be—then they need to be addressed *intelligently*. As part of the virtuosic final scene of *Cymbeline* (almost five hundred lines and thirty minutes of playing time), the king is reunited with his two sons, abducted in infancy, whom he has not seen for twenty years, and they are re-united with their sister, Innogen, whom they have previously failed to recognize since she was disguised as a boy. This moment came across very movingly at Stratford, but as a reunion between a mother, her son, and one of her two daughters, and between two sisters and a brother rather than two brothers and a sister. That is a theatrical experience which Shakespeare neither wrote nor intended us to have. The emotional tonality of the dialogue was quite different from what it would have

been had the original character genders been kept. Again, if Shakespeare had wanted to write about homosexuality in the *Dream*, he would have done so. Indeed, arguably he went on to do so in the sonnets, and in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, where the whole convention of a boy actor playing a female character playing a boy as part of the plot enabled him to explore questions of sexual identity with a delicacy and subtlety apparently beyond the comprehension of his modern theatrical interpreters.

Of course I am not arguing for a blanket return to all-male casting, although circumstances have meant that some of my own productions have been with all-boy casts, and the effects have been fascinatingly different from those with mixed casts. (It is notable, however, that the Globe has staged all-female versions of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Richard III*, and nobody has been bold enough to say *that* is unhistorical.) All I ask is that Shakespeare's decisions about the gender of the *characters* be adhered to. In the *Dream* he wanted the classical arrangement of two boys and two girls. Things were already complicated enough without the distraction of a gay interest. Moreover, if *Pyramus and Thisbe* were to be put on by workmen, the characters had to be exactly that: men. Their trades are relevant to the play and women did not have trades in Shakespeare's time. In Emma Rice's production, they have to become Globe stewards and cleaners—anyone notice any gender stereotyping there?—with Bottom as a Health and Safety officer. I am not saying the mechanicals shouldn't be *acted* by women, but "Rita Quince" is not a male *role*. Not a line had to be changed, Emma Rice claimed. Why change the name then? Far from being dictated by "blind" casting, it almost puts our eyes out with its clunking self-advertisement.

It happens that we have some precious contemporary evidence on this matter. In 1610, about seven years after it was written, *Othello* was acted in Oxford, and a spectator, Henry Jackson, noted (in Latin) that Desdemona, "slain in our presence by her husband, entreated the pity of the spectators by her very countenance." Note "her": Jackson accepted Desdemona was a woman, although she was played by a boy, simply because there was no alternative possibility. (Nor, incidentally, does he even mention Othello's race.) In another instance, Simon Forman, who provides our earliest eyewitness account of *Cymbeline*, probably at the Globe in 1611, consistently refers to Innogen by female pronouns. Jackson and Forman show what *real* color- and gender-blindness is like.

Finally, I notice that *Cymbeline* also figures in "The Wonder Season" (not directed by Rice, I should add). Or, actually, it doesn't. It has been "reclaimed and renamed" *Innogen* out of a wish to "empower" the heroine. I thought she had been empowered sufficiently for Shakespeare's purposes by Shakespeare himself. But it turns out I was mistaken—just as he was. Well, that's good enough company for me.

Mixing memory & desire
by Dominic Green

Steinbeck admitted that he did not deserve it, but accepted anyway. Sartre assumed that he did deserve it, but refused on principle. Pinter plainly did not deserve it, but accepted, also on principle. Tolstoy was glad to miss out, because he would have had to dispose of the money. Joyce, who could have done with the money, was never nominated.

The follies attending the selection process of the Nobel Prize for Literature constitute one of the only two interesting things about the prize. The other interesting thing about the Nobel is not the acceptance speeches, though Pinter's speech, a note-perfect send-up of anti-American paranoia, suggested that the old ham could still turn on the absurdist humor of his early plays. No, the other interesting thing is the subsequent trajectory of the winner's reputation.

For the committee, despite its best efforts, is not entirely daft. Nor are its judgments irrelevant. Even in a bad year, the decision reflects the price of a reputation, if not the value of the work. That price is usually an index of political taste, and whatever passing pieties might conform to Alfred Nobel's meaningless request that the prize go to writing that worked in an "ideal direction." In 1961, the committee rejected J. R. R. Tolkein on the perfectly accurate grounds that Tolkein's troll-ridden sagas could not be confused with "first-rate prose." More than five decades later, it is still inarguable that naming a protagonist Bilbo Baggins is incompatible with "storytelling of the highest quality."

The 1961 committee rejected Lawrence Durrell, because his "monomaniacal preoccupation with erotic complications" left a "questionable aftertaste"—an impression familiar to anyone who has read *The Alexandria Quartet*, but not one that precludes good writing. Similarly, Alberto Moravia was rejected for "sexually emphasized neurosis," "schematism in the characterization," and "general monotony"—all of which might be an asset if your subject matter is fascism and bourgeois society. Absurdly, the committee rejected Robert Frost, then in his eighty-seventh year, because of his "great age," even though earlier that year Frost had read "The Gift Outright" at President Kennedy's inauguration without falling off the stage. Less unfairly, the committee dismissed E. M. Forster as "a shadow of his former self" who had not written a novel in decades.

The 1961 winner was Ivo Andrić, the Bosnian Serb novelist and Tito functionary whose previous efforts in an ideal direction had led to the vice-presidency of the Society for Cultural Cooperation of Yugoslavia with the Soviet Union, and the presidency of the Yugoslav Writers' Union. There have been worse years. In 1974, the tipsters fancied Vladimir Nabokov, Graham Greene, Jorge Luis Borges, and Saul Bellow. The prize went to two Swedes, Eyvind Johnson and Harry Martinson, both of whose brilliance had already been recognized by their appointments to the Nobel committee.

These days, the problem is not 1961's moment of madness or 1974's embarrassment

of riches. The problem is finding a fellow to travel with: to identify a single writer who not only deserves recognition, but also conforms to the committee's gentle prejudices. Regardless of politics, there are not enough good writers. Consider the 2015 winner, Svetlana Alexievich of Belarus. For the first time, the committee gave the prize to an investigative journalist. Admittedly, it takes enormous courage to investigate anything that happens in Belarus, the hermit kingdom of eastern Europe where journalists' cars have a tendency to drive into trees. And admittedly, Alexievich has compiled oral histories too. But we must only recall the works of Studs Terkel to recognize that oral histories, reliability aside, are the cut-and-paste jobs of literature. In terms of quality, it would make more sense to give the prize to the editor of a decent poetry collection.

At least the French novelist Patrick Modiano, the 2014 winner, is a literary type. The typical Modiano novel begins with a mystery of origins and identity, and proceeds by passivity and vagueness. Sometimes, the story terminates in a tragedy of life foreshortened. Sometimes the track runs full circle, as though life is a series of improvisations, each designed to keep you where you are. Either way, the "force of circumstances" determines the outcome.

The premise of a Modiano mystery mimics that of a detective novel, but the execution eschews the vulgarity of a traditional detective plot. *Voyages des noces*, translated into English as *Honeymoon* (1995), begins with the narrator, Jean B., in a hotel bar.

> A woman had committed suicide in one of the hotel rooms two days before, on the eve of the fifteenth of August. The barman was explaining that they had called an ambulance, but in vain. He had seen the woman in the afternoon. She had come into the bar. She was on her own. After the suicide, the police had questioned him. He hadn't been able to give them many details. A brunette.

Instead of solving the crime like Sam Spade, Jean leaves his wife and child, pretends to fly to Rio, and then holes up in Paris. There, he reimagines the movements of a young refugee couple that he had met twenty years earlier, during the German occupation. The mystery turns out to be existential. Jean resolves it not by identifying the cause of the woman's suicide, but realizing that his marriage is over, and that his life is as futile as the couple's suspended existence was, as they waited out the war, imprisoned in each other's company.

> Circumstance and settings are of no importance. One day this sense of emptiness and remorse submerges you. Then, like a tide, it ebbs and disappears. But in the end, it returns in force, and she couldn't shake it off. Nor could I.

In *Rue des Boutiques Obscures* (1978), translated into English as *Missing Person* (1980), a private detective is assigned to a cold case, the disappearance of Gay Orloff, a Russian-born dancer with American citizenship. Investigating his own past, the detective recovers the memory of how he, Gay, and two other fugitives from the Nazis had split up as they crossed the mountains into Spain. On the uphill path, he had ignored the detective's traditional assets, "a vague premonition" and "an ultra-suspicious nature." Abandoning his friends, he lost his way in a snowy desert, a survivor without a moral compass. "It kept snowing. I walked on, looking in vain for some landmark. I walked for hours and hours. And finally I lay down in the snow. All around me there was whiteness."

Nor does the effect of Modiano's *stile blanc*, his "plain style," resemble that of Chandler or Hammett. There is little precision in the characterization, no sharp-focus resolution, and no well-timed metaphors that land like rabbit punches. Modiano's focus is always slipping, the memory always partial and foggy. It is as though the vicar has slipped Rohypnol into Miss Marple's sherry.

As Stefan Beck observed when reviewing *Paris Nocturne* in these pages last November, this vagueness is precisely the affect that Modiano wishes to create. Like Durrell's aftertaste and Moravia's monotony, Modiano's mood is attuned to his subject matter. This is

really two appalling subjects, pressed together by the force of circumstances, and compounded by the participants' deferral of a moral reckoning. One is the child's shame and the writer's boon, a pair of appalling parents. The other is France's shame, and the provocateur's boon: the appalling things that the French did under German occupation.

Modiano was born in Paris in July 1945. His father, Albert, was a career criminal of Greek and Italian Jewish extraction. His mother, Louisa Colpijn, was the daughter of an Antwerp laborer. In the late Thirties, she began working as a film actress. Albert and Louisa met in Paris in 1942, part of an extended network of professional thieves, fugitive Jews, *déclassé* White Russians, and unemployed actors and singers: the ambience of Truffaut's *The Last Metro* (1980). Modiano has tried to piece together their biographies, mostly from his mother's conversation and his own researches. In his memoir *Pedigree* (2005), he compares the fragments he has obtained to "a few markers, beacons in the quicksand."

Louisa spent the early years of the war in Brussels, working in Flemish-language films and radio, and living with her fiancé in the Canterbury Hotel, which had been partly commandeered by the officers of the *Propaganda-Staffel*, the propaganda office of the German occupation. In July 1941, she joined a touring company, which played to captive audiences: the laborers of the Todt Organization, who were building the Atlantic Wall on the coasts of the Low Countries and northern France.

Arriving in Paris in June 1942 through the assistance of one of the Canterbury's officers, Louisa lived in a room at 15, Quai de Conti, in an apartment rented by an antiques dealer from Brussels and one "Jean de B.," whom Modiano imagines as an adolescent writing "fervent letters to Jean Cocteau in secret." More prosaically, Jean de B. introduced Louisa to "a young German" called Klaus, with a "cushy administrative post," a flat on the Quai Voltaire, and a taste for "the latest novels by Evelyn Waugh." Later, Klaus was killed on the Russian Front.

Meanwhile, Albert Modiano wandered away from his army unit after the Fall of France in June 1940, and returned to Paris, where he had grown up. Refusing to register as a Jew, Albert lived under several false names and survived by trading in the black market. Modiano writes that his father traveled in this "murky, clandestine world" by "force of circumstance," but his own account belies this. In 1930, aged eighteen, Albert Modiano had begun a career in the shade as a petrol smuggler. In the Thirties, he dealt in stockings, perfume, and Romanian petrol, and ran the first of a series of shell companies; a letter to his brother refers to selling off an antique chandelier. He was already in the game, already murky and clandestine; the war raised the stakes and further lowered the tone. What enormities did it take to stay at the table at all costs?

In February 1942, Albert and his girlfriend, "Hela H., a German Jew who had been engaged to Billy Wilder back in Berlin," were arrested during an identity check in a restaurant off the Avenue des Champs-Elysées. Patrick Modiano repeats the story that his father, on his way from interrogation to the "Depot," the holding tank, managed to escape from his captors in the confusion after a light went out on the stairwell. Perhaps he did, but that does not explain Hela H.'s release the next day. Given what Patrick Modiano also repeats, it is hard not to suspect that Albert Modiano was released because he could be useful to the collaborationist police and their German masters. He had powerful connections among both. In the autumn of 1943, when he was arrested for the second time and held in the Depot pending deportation to the camp at Drancy and points east, "someone" interceded with the police to free him.

Collaboration, like resistance, took different forms. In French, *collaborationiste* denoted the substantial number of ideologically inspired collaborators, and *collaborateur* the even more numerous pragmatic kind, who collaborated to get on, or to get by. Albert Modiano and Louisa Colpijn were both *collaborationistes*, but Albert's work in particular involved him with *collaborateurs*.

When Louisa Colpijn met Albert Modiano in October 1942, he was working for two Armenian brothers, Ivan and Alexandre Schoumanoff. Albert Modiano knew them from before the war. Now, they were running a *bureau d'achat*, a "purchasing service," at 53, Avenue Hoche. A "purchasing service" was a euphemism for the gray area between Paris's black market and its German customers—a commercial holding tank. The various branches of the German civil and military authorities set up more than two hundred such offices all over Paris. Using the money that the Vichy government paid each week into an account at the Banque de France to cover "Occupation costs," they bought anything useful, no questions asked, then resold the goods to the occupying military or exported them to Germany.

The profits were massive. The offices profited twice over: having bought the goods with Vichy money, they billed the Vichy government for the purchase of good. The largest network of bureaux was run by the *Abwehr* (military intelligence) official Hermann "Otto" Brandl from an office in Place du Bois de Boulogne (now Place de l'Avenue Foch). "Otto" amassed steel, iron, copper, tungsten, wines, brandy, perfume, textiles, and even wood pulp.

In David Drake's thorough and damning *Paris at War* (2015), we read that in the first quarter of 1941, Brandl's network was spending 15 million francs a day, rising to 50 million FF a day in the autumn of 1941. An operation on this scale could not have worked without large-scale collaboration. To clear the goods, the organization took over "several acres of property" in the suburb of Saint-Ouen, where it employed some 400 "packers, dockers, drivers, and gangers." At a time when a factory worker might earn 1,500 FF a month, the collaborationist workers received between 5,000 and 12,000 FF a month.

To allow French citizens to make deals without feeling like they were shaking hands with the Germans, local "intermediaries" acted as middlemen. Some of those middlemen were Jewish, like the Bessarabian-born Joseph Joanovici, and the Russian-born Mikail Szkolnikoff, who received 10 million FF in January 1941 alone. Both of these names appear in Patrick Modiano's novels, along with that of "Otto" Brandl. So do the names of Brandl's friends in the Carlingue, the "French Gestapo."

Founded by a disgraced policeman, and led by the ex-convicts Henri Lafont and Pierre Bonny, the Carlingue appropriated properties for "Otto" Brandl's organization, targeted Jews suspected of holding valuable stock, and entrapped and tortured members of the Resistance. In *Dans le peau de Patrick Modiano* (2011), Denis Cosnard estimates that members of the Carlingue, their friends, mistresses, and hangers-on appear in at least twenty of Modiano's novels. Louis Malle's study of resistance and collaboration, *Lacombe, Lucien* (1974), whose script Modiano co-wrote, transposes the Carlingue's Paris operation to rural Normandy.

Three of Modiano's novels feature Henri Lafont's chauffeur, Eddy Pagnon. It is known that Pagnon helped entrap Resistance members for the Carlingue. Patrick Modiano implies that Pagnon was the "someone" who saved his father from deportation in the winter of 1943.

What did Albert Modiano do to stay alive? Did he help Pagnon as he trawled for *résistants*, to be tortured by the Carlingue or murdered by the Germans? Or did he just profit by the side deals and appropriations?

"It takes time for what has been erased to resurface," Modiano wrote in *Dora Bruder* (1997). Modiano's 1968 debut, *La Place de l'Étoile*—the name refers both to the traffic circle around the Arc de Triomphe and to the blank space where Modiano's heartless father did not wear the prescribed yellow star—was one of the first novels to discuss collaboration. Evenings at the Carlingue's headquarters at 93, Rue Lauriston are imagined—sex parties upstairs, torture in the basement. Names are mentioned without explanation, as if their meaning is already understood, or cannot quite be remembered, or should be forgotten. The protagonist, raging at both Jews and anti-Semites, and unable to discriminate between past and present, ends up on Freud's couch at

the end of the novel. Connoisseurs of juvenile provocation will note that *Portnoy's Complaint* came out a year later.

Modiano remains at the scene of the crime in his next two novels. In *La Ronde de Nuit* (1969), he imagines Eddy Pagnon, caught between the Gestapo and the Resistance, and trying to escape. In *Les boulevards de ceinture* (*Ring Roads*, 1972), he projects himself into wartime Paris, and trails his father's wartime dealings. Instead of saving his father, he ends up with him in the police van. "Whatever happens, I'll stay with you to the end."

"Periods of great turbulence often lead to rash encounters," Modiano reflects in his constructively vague autobiography, *Pedigree* (2005). The details of Albert Modiano's encounters and connections accumulate with each novel. But many of the clues are only comprehensible with the help of guides like Cosnard and Drake, or David Pryce-Jones's *Paris in the Third Reich* (1981). The more you read, the harder it becomes to believe that the bizarre and wicked characters in the novels were real people. Also, Modiano's blank recitations exclude as much as they confide. Everything is in shadows and fog.

How reliable is Modiano's *Pedigree*? There were no "latest novels by Evelyn Waugh" for Klaus the cushy German to read in 1942. *Scoop* had come out in 1938, and the novel before that, *A Handful of Dust*, in 1934. And what about the elisions in Modiano's account of Flory Francken and Dita Parlo?

> Flory Francken, aka Nardus, whom my father called Flo, was the daughter of a Dutch painter. . . . In 1938, she'd been implicated in a minor incident that had landed her in criminal court, and in 1940 she had married the Japanese actor Sessue Hayakawa. During the Occupation, she was close to the actress Dita Parlo, who had starred in *L'Atalante*, and her lover, Dr. Fuchs, one of the directors of the so-called Otto Bureau.

If Modiano really wanted to know, and if he really wanted us to know, he would look on the internet. A few searches show that Flory Francken was the daughter of the Dutch Expressionist Leo Salomon (1868–1955). More importantly, she was part Jewish, and the daughter of a notorious art hustler. Her father, who had adopted the name Nardus to cover his origins, had made huge sums in New York in the early years of the century, as a kind of fraudulent Berenson, selling fake Old Masters to real new money.

Nardus retired to a villa of pink marble in Tunisia, to paint blamelessly in his garden. He entrusted his collection of around 150 artworks to a Belgian friend, Arnold van Buuren. Flory became a lady's companion. The "minor incident" was Flory's theft in 1938 of a jewel from her employer, the Countess of Merschof, for which Francken received a sentence of eighteen months. In 1940, while Nardus was in Tunisia, the Nazis forced Arnold van Buuren to sell Nardus's art collection, which included works by, or attributed to, Rembrandt, Botticelli, Rubens, Vermeer, Velázquez, and Mantegna. Flory Francken tried to recover the artworks at the end of the war, and was able to retrieve a single Velázquez. In 1988, her nephew Serge engaged a Belgian lawyer named Patrick Neslias to try again. He is still trying.

Flory's friend Dita Parlo had acted in Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante* (1934) and Renoir's *La Grande Illusion* (1937). Parlo's lover, Dr. Alfred Fuchs, was a lawyer from Berlin and brother-in-law to Wilhelm Radecke who, as head of the *Abwehr* in Paris, supervised the recruitment of informants and thugs for "Otto" Brandl's purchasing offices. David Drake describes Radecke as a regular client at the One Two Two brothel in the 8th Arrondissement. The brothel's official allocation of champagne was one hundred bottles a month, but it got through one hundred and fifty bottles in a busy night. Radecke secured an *Auswies* for its owner, Marcel Jamet, so that Jamet, having bought petrol on the black market, could drive out to a contact near Reims and buy thousands of bottles for the brothel.

Subtract the glamour, and the facts are worse than the fantasies. "Baron Woolf" was the German functionary Comte Franz Woolf-Metternich, later honored by France

for his efforts to save the contents of French museums from being looted. "Doctor Carl Gerstner, economic adviser at the German embassy," was Karl-Heinz Gerstner, and the man he was advising was Woolf-Metternich's rival, Otto Abetz, the German ambassador and art thief. Maria Chernichev, with whom Modiano's father "conducted some huge black market deals," was a mistress of the Carlingue boss Henri Lafont. Fat "M. Fouquet," who visits Modiano's parents as a child, had been close to Eddy Pagnon's mistress Sylvaine Quimfe, a "pool shark and adventuress." Gay Orloff was an ex-girlfriend of Lucky Luciano, who spent the war in Paris and committed suicide in 1948.

Modiano says that he recites the names, nicknames, glamorous associations, and murderous alliances before they are "lost in the cold night of oblivion." But they are not lost at all. They are all there in the history books and visible in the cold light of the internet. Compared to those accounts, Modiano's allusive namedropping begins to look deliberately obscure. The mystery seems more important than the detection, the drama more satisfying than its resolution. The mood of confusion replicates its subject too accurately, and the amoral drift of the characters takes on a general monotony. The questionable aftertaste derives not just from the subject, but its handling.

"The French," his alterego Shlemilovitch explains in *La Place d'Étoile*, "have an overweening affection for whores who write memoirs, pederast poets, Arab pimps, Negro junkies and Jewish provocateurs." For the same reason, Modiano was not well known in the English-speaking world before 2014. He was too French, too allusive; too local in style and subject matter. The Nobel committee compared Modiano to Proust—not because he keeps writing the same book, but as an artist of memory. This, though, seems an odd comparison. Reading Modiano, the overwhelming impression is that he would like to forget everything.

New poems

by Tomas Unger, Mary Stewart Hammond & Michael Spence

Old tune

And the lonely will be left to their worry.
And things will go mostly as they've gone.
And the sea will never, but never, become the sky.
And no one will locate the horizon.

And someone will find another answer, another question,
and die wise, and then be disproven.
Some will wander so entirely away they leave us
wondering if nothingness is not something else—

the way they inhabit the mind, not the memory.
And someone will be newly seized by the sense
all our words are false, seeing how the real becomes
only itself. And someone who hadn't felt human

will hear an old tune that renews that old pain.
Someone will begin again. Someone else will begin.

—Tomas Unger

Reading the Declaration of Independence on the Fourth of July

for Rob

It is a tradition in this family, to gather after lunch on the 4th
under a pavilion built on the flat roof of an old boathouse.
There, five generations of the owners of an Adirondack camp

pass a copy of the Declaration from person to person around a table,
taking turns reading aloud *When in the course* a designated passage,
it becomes necessary for one people and hand it to the next.

A 5th generation *these truths to be self-evident* toddles, unsteadily,
about the floor *all men are created equal* with her sippy cup.
Massive logs braced with tree limbs *evinces a design to reduce them*

under absolute Despotism hold up the roof. *The history*
of the present King Its overhang and the railings *is a history*
of repeated injuries frame the forest undulating around a lake

pocked with islands. *obstructing the Laws for Naturalization*
of Foreigners Wind crinkles a patch of water. A wooden Chris Craft
motors by setting the water *plundered our seas,* to sloshing

harder *destroyed the lives of our people* under the boathouse.
Across the lake, through a dip in the trees, two ridges fade
circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled into the mist.

In the foreground, the long arm of a pine entreats. A hemlock's limbs
dangle down *deaf to the voice of justice* and the occupants
of this landscape *these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be*

Free and Independent pass the past and who we are, and how we came
to be, into the present, Jefferson's language *we mutually pledge to each other*
our Lives marrying with theirs, his words inhaled into their bodies.

Then, 56 names, each signer, are tolled, one by one, around the table,
knowing that stroke of the pen could cost them their lives.
Button Gwinnett. Lyman Hall. George Walton. William Hooper. Joseph . . .

The names linger in the air. We are here.

—Mary Stewart Hammond

Undertow

I'm running down the corridors,
Late for my watch on the bridge,
For captain's mast, for General Quarters.
It's winter, my face frigid:

Why is my uniform tropical white?
Down the passageway
Of shadowless fluorescent light
I gasp, but the view stays

Unchanged—a tunnel of painted steel.
I'm yelling: *I did my time—*
And I resigned! This can't be real!
But all the ladders I climb

Now lead to where the lifeboat is stored.
The PA speakers blast:
Man overboard! Man overboard!
The boat's being lowered. I'm last

To grab a ratline and clamber in.
My grip slips on the line—
I hit the water. And wake: my skin
Slick with the old brine.

—Michael Spence

Reflections

The other McCarthy

by Stephen Miller

When the novelist and essayist Mary McCarthy died in 1989, she was praised for her character as much as her writing. Leon Botstein, the President of Bard College, where McCarthy occasionally taught, said McCarthy was "a person of great character." The novelist Mary Gordon observed that McCarthy "combined purity of style with a kind of rigorous moral honesty."

Did the many observers who lauded McCarthy's character read what she wrote about Colonel Robbie Risner, an American prisoner of war whom she met when she visited North Vietnam in 1968? She trashed him in *Hanoi* (1968) and in "On Colonel Risner," which appeared in *The New York Review of Books* in March 1974. Writing about Risner, a POW who had been tortured repeatedly for defying his captors, McCarthy makes unsubstantiated allegations that recall those made by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the Army–McCarthy Hearings. On June 9, 1954, Joseph Welch, the chief counsel for the United States Army, famously said to him: "Have you no sense of decency, sir?"

Mary McCarthy and Colonel Risner have one thing in common: both were on the cover of *Time*. In 1955 *Time* called McCarthy "quite possibly the cleverest writer the U.S. has ever produced." Ten years later *Time* put Risner on its cover too. He was a great American airman, a Korean war ace who now was flying missions over North Vietnam. A few months later, he was shot down. He spent more than seven years as a prisoner of war.

Risner was one of two airmen McCarthy met on her trip to North Vietnam. She does not name them in *Hanoi*, but when she reissued the book six years later, including it in her collection of essays on Vietnam (*The Seventeenth Degree*), she added a footnote identifying the "older man" as "Robinson ('Robbie') Risner."

McCarthy met the POWs in the living room of a Hanoi villa. She was not sure "whether this was their actual place of confinement." It was not. The North Vietnamese always made sure that visiting delegations interviewed POWs in settings that made it seem as if the POWs were being treated humanely.

McCarthy admits to a certain uneasiness about wanting to meet American POWs. She notes that many anti-war activists who visited North Vietnam did not want to meet them: "Quite a few American visitors shrink from interviewing the pilots . . . [because] it would be painful to meet one's own countrymen in such circumstances." If she knew it would be painful to meet American POWs, why did she want to meet them?

Furthermore, why did she choose to write about the meeting? Susan Sontag also went to North Vietnam and wrote a book about it, but she did not write about her meeting with American POWs. She told Frances Kiernan, the author of *Seeing Mary Plain, A Life of Mary McCarthy* (2000), "I saw a lot of the things that she [McCarthy] saw and I was taken to see the same prisoners. There we were in this room and there was a guard over to one side. I was really dumb in those days. But I still had my instincts and I thought, This is a terrible situation. I don't understand it and I don't know what's right. So I didn't deal with it in my book."

McCarthy does not say how long the meeting with the two airmen lasted, but she "quickly exhausted" the topics approved by the North Vietnamese: Health, Family, Treatment, Current View of the War. McCarthy first mentions the younger airman, who told her that "he would have voted for Goldwater if he had been registered in 1964." The younger POW, McCarthy says disdainfully, "seemed wholly unmodified by his experience, and the sole question he put me was 'Can you tell me how the Chicago Cubs are doing?'"

Towards the end of the paragraph McCarthy introduces Risner: "The second prisoner, an older man, had not changed his cultural spots either, except in one respect: he claimed to like Vietnamese candy." McCarthy implies that the two airmen have limited intellects and limited interests. She fails to understand that the two prisoners made innocuous remarks because English-speaking North Vietnamese officials were present. If the POWs had said anything substantive, they risked being tortured.

McCarthy was dismayed by the POWs' "stiffness of phraseology and naive rote-thinking, childish, like the handwriting on the envelopes the Vietnamese officers emptied from a sack for me to mail." She does not consider the possibility that torture may have affected the POWs' handwriting. The North Vietnamese often wrenched arms out of sockets.

According to McCarthy, the two airmen "had been robotized" by their education and their service in the military. "It had been an insensible process starting in grade school and finished off by the Army." McCarthy quotes North Vietnamese officials to support her negative view of American airmen. The American pilots, one said, were "like beings from a protozoic world." McCarthy admits that she felt "a cultural distance so wide [between herself and the American POWs] that I could see myself reflected in their puzzled, somewhat frightened eyes as a foreigner."

Long before McCarthy visited North Vietnam, she had a negative view of the American military. In 1953 she wrote about a conversation she had with an anti-Semitic Air Force colonel whom she met on a train. McCarthy tries to argue with him, but she comes to the conclusion that he is immune to rational argument. "The desolate truth was that the colonel was extremely stupid. . . . Unfortunately, the colonel, owing perhaps to his military training, had not a glimmering of an idea of what democracy meant to him."

Being in the American military, McCarthy implies, ruins your mind—especially if you are an officer. Even non-career military men become mentally rigid. In a letter to her friend Hannah Arendt, she says of Charles Bohlen, the Ambassador to Vietnam: "Having been a soldier, he has a kind of natural belligerency that cannot face the idea of a *retreat* from a position."

McCarthy, though, admired North Vietnamese military officials. Colonel Ha Van Lau, the head of the North Vietnamese War Crimes Commission, was "a delicate-featured, slender, refined officer, from Hue, of Mandarin ancestry (he reminded me of Prince Andrei in *War and Peace*)." McCarthy was most impressed by the North Vietnamese leader Pham Van Dong—"a man of magnetic allure, thin, with deep-set brilliant eyes, crisp short electric gray hair." He has courtly manners and he does not employ "the prevailing political clichés." Twenty-one years later, McCarthy told Dick Cavett that Pham Van Dong "was the most impressive politician I've ever met . . . . I liked him very very much."

Elizabeth Hardwick once said of McCarthy: "I never knew anyone who gave so much pleasure to those around her." McCarthy did not give any pleasure to Risner. Risner's description of the meeting with McCarthy, which appears in his memoir, *The Passing of the Night: My Seven Years as a Prisoner of the North Vietnamese* (1973), comes at the end of a chapter entitled "Meeting Foreign Delegations." The chapter begins:

> Of all the indignities we were forced to undergo, I guess I resented meeting the foreign delegations more than any other. . . . There was something so basically inhuman about appearing before delegations and being asked how your food was and having to say it was excellent when it was not. Or to questions of your treatment, to lie in front of cameras and say it was great, when they had literally tortured the stuffings out of you to make you appear.

Risner says he was tortured before and after he met an East German delegation and before and

after he met a North Korean delegation, but he does not say he was tortured before he met McCarthy. Perhaps because the North Vietnamese thought he was "doing better," they wanted him to meet "an American—an American woman." North Vietnamese officials warned him: "Do not say anything to disgrace or slander our country. If you do, you will suffer for the rest of the time you are here."

After showing Risner several articles that McCarthy had written, the North Vietnamese made him look presentable and took him to the Plantation, "a nice-looking prison." Several officials were present at the meeting, including the Cat, the name the POWs gave to the North Vietnamese official in charge of torture.

Risner's description of the meeting is brief—comprising only four paragraphs. Risner's third paragraph has a surreal quality. "Can I send him a cake?" McCarthy asks. The Cat replies: "He does not need that. We give him plenty of wholesome foods." In "On Colonel Risner," McCarthy says she does not remember any such conversation: "Although I am a devoted cake-baker, I bake them only for people I like and I did not like Lieutenant Colonel Risner."

In the fourth paragraph Risner says that McCarthy "mentioned hopes for an early end to the war. 'We had better knock on wood,' and she knocked three times on the table . . . [ellipsis Risner's]." McCarthy's knock on wood got Risner in trouble. "I was in interrogation for three hours trying to convince the Dude [a POW name for a North Vietnamese official] that raising eyebrows and knocking on wood were not secret signals."

In the last paragraph Risner expresses his anger at having to meet McCarthy: "I know I suffered because of her request to see me, and to my knowledge she did absolutely nothing to help our cause. This was true of all the appearances." The North Vietnamese, Risner notes, only gave visas to anti-war Western journalists.

Early in 1974 Robert Silvers, the editor of the *New York Review of Books*, asked McCarthy to reply to Risner's account of their meeting, and she agreed to do so. In "On Colonel Risner," she lashes out at Risner, calling him a specious, repellent, servile, lying zealot.

In the third paragraph of the essay McCarthy includes a footnote that she had appended to the new edition of *Hanoi*. Why publish the footnote twice? Perhaps she thought it would have a wider readership if it also appeared in *The New York Review of Books*. Here is the entire footnote:

> This was Robinson ("Robbie") Risner, today a widely admired hardliner and Nixon zealot. From my [original] notes: "tight lined face, wilted eyes, somewhat squirrely. Fawns on Vietnamese officer. Servile. Zealot. Has seen error of ways. Looks at bananas. Grateful. 'Oh, gee, bananas too?' Speaks of his 'sweet tooth.' Loves the Vietnamese candy. Effusive about it. Perhaps ostracized by his fellow-prisoners. Speaks English slowly, like a Vietnamese practicing the language. Stereotyped language."

Risner's politics, which McCarthy could only have learned about from Risner's memoir, is not relevant to the discussion of their meeting. She brought it up to imply that was Risner was as untrustworthy as Nixon.

According to McCarthy, Risner was servile because he was afraid of losing the favors the North Vietnamese had granted him: "I guessed that he had been currying favor with his captors and obeyed because of fear that favors would be withdrawn." McCarthy does raise the possibility that Risner was servile because he had been tortured, but "that explanation did not occur to me at the time." Why didn't it occur to her in 1968? Didn't McCarthy know about the television interview with the POW Jeremiah Denton in May 1966, when Denton signaled to the world that he had been tortured by blinking the word "torture" in Morse Code?

Though McCarthy concedes that Risner may have been tortured, she still maintains that he "was specious in some way I could not have easily defined. . . . I tried to assign his speciousness to this religious streak in him." Risner was a member of the Assembly of God—a Pentecostal Sect. "If I had seen him testifying, with contrite mien, at a revival meeting back in Oklahoma, that probably would have repelled me too."

The main point McCarthy makes in "On Colonel Risner" is that Risner lied about their meeting because he did not want his readers to know that he had been servile: "It is under-

standable that Risner today does not wish to recall his effusive flattery of his captors, which went far beyond what was called for in the circumstances, but the picture he gives of himself as reluctant, curt, unforthcoming is more than forgetful. It is false."

Though McCarthy grudgingly acknowledges that Risner may have been tortured, she does not think her friend Pham Van Dong knew anything about it. She cannot imagine that this "highly perceptive and intelligent man" would support such a cruel and stupid policy. Then she takes a final swipe at Risner: "Colonel Risner's book does not convince me that he is giving the full truth of his experiences." She vaguely says that "he is offering something less and something more."

McCarthy's assessment of Risner's character and conduct was completely inaccurate. Risner was one of the most defiant POWs. According to Colonel Gordon Larson, a fellow prisoner, Risner was "the most influential and effective POW there." In *Faith of My Fathers* (1999), John McCain says: "From the first moment of his imprisonment to the last, Robbie Risner was an exemplary senior officer, an inveterate communicator, an inspiration to the men he commanded, and a source of considerable annoyance to his captors. Among the longest held prisoners, he suffered the appalling mistreatment regularly inflicted on POWs during the brutal early years of his imprisonment."

McCarthy wrote "On Colonel Risner" roughly a year after the POWs had been released from North Vietnam. She could have asked Jeremiah Denton or John McCain or hundreds of other former POWs what they thought of Risner, but apparently she did not, or she chose to ignore what they said.

Why did McCarthy write "On Colonel Risner"? It is not as if her reputation in the academic/literary world had been damaged by what Risner wrote about their meeting. One can reasonably assume that few members of the academic/literary world read Risner's memoir.

McCarthy wrote "On Colonel Risner," I suspect, because she was angered by Risner's effrontery. It is as if she is saying to readers of *The New York Review of Books*: "Risner, a poorly educated Nixon-supporter from the Bible Belt, has some nerve disputing what I said about the meeting." She thinks he is arrogant and vain: "A naïve sense of his own importance transpires from the book and this primitive vanity perhaps explains the cake memory: 'a cake just for *him*!'"

In the same issue of *The New York Review of Books* that McCarthy's article appeared, Anthony Lewis reviewed Risner's memoir. Lewis, a columnist for *The New York Times*, had also travelled to North Vietnam, and he too had met POWs, but he did not write about his meetings. Lewis does not doubt Risner's veracity: "Risner and others say they were tortured before meeting foreign delegations, to make them promise to say the right things."

"The former prisoners," Lewis notes, "are often critical . . . of American journalists and others who visited Hanoi during the war, saying they were too naïve in accepting what they were told about the prisoners and other things. I think the men underestimate the difficulties, and the efforts made to get a sense of the truth, *but there is something to their feelings* [italics mine]."

Risner was happy to learn that some anti-war liberals had criticized McCarthy for her portrait of him. He told Frances Kiernan: "Some of her contemporaries, who allegedly were her friends and were liberals like she was, took her to task for what she had done."

Risner called McCarthy's depiction of him "character assassination." Kiernan agrees. "She went out of her way to attack him."

Did Risner give much thought to McCarthy's attack? Probably not. In the military world, he was a hero. There is a statue of him on the grounds of the U.S. Air Force Academy. Risner—his widow wrote me—did not brood: "Robbie lived life to the fullest and didn't dwell too much on the past." I suspect that Risner would have agreed with an observation of McCarthy's: "To be disesteemed by people you don't have much respect for is not the worst fate."

Reconsiderations

The master propagandist

by Henrik Bering

When we think of propaganda art, images of Soviet Stakhanovites furiously exceeding their production quotas, heroic tractor drivers on their mighty machines, and fresh-faced collective farm girls in abundant wheat fields fill the mind. Above it all rules Stalin, the Man of Steel, who comes in two basic versions: as the unshakable defender of Mother Russia against fascism, or as the bountiful father of the nation, whichever suits the occasion.

F. S. Shurkin's *Morning of our Fatherland* from 1948 has it all: Stalin—the man who had dismissed the famine of 1932–33 as just a minor bureaucratic foul-up by a few overeager officials who were "dizzy with success"—positively glows with benevolence as he surveys the landscape, while the combine harvesters whir and the power lines sing. About the portrait, the wonderfully sycophantic artist has pronounced: "In the sound of the tractors, in the movement of the trains, in the fresh breath of the spring fields. In everything I saw and felt the image of the leader of the people."

"Official" propaganda art, we have all been taught, is crude and laughably primitive, invariably inferior to real art. Except, of course, when it isn't. And here the career of Jacques-Louis David is highly instructive. David became France's leading artist during the nation's most turbulent period, first acting as the high priest of the Revolution, then switching horses to become the celebrator-in-chief of Napoleon. Through his ability to make the politically reprehensible appear attractive, David delivers the ultimate proof of the seductive power of art.

Among Parisians used to the charming trifles of the Rococo, those marzipan sexpots of Boucher and Fragonard, David's *The Oath of the Horatii* caused a sensation when it was exhibited at the 1785 salon. Here David took his inspiration from a story found in Titus Livy and adapted for the stage by Corneille, which for its stark Roman values is hard to beat: Back in the misty days of the monarchy, a quarrel over cattle existed between Rome and neighboring Alba. Instead of engaging in a full-scale war, it was decided to settle the matter by letting three representatives from prominent families on each side fight it out, the Horatii representing the Romans; the Curatii, the Albans.

Fate would have it that one of the Horatii was married to a sister of the Curatii, while one of the Curatii brothers was betrothed to a Horatii sister. In the combat, the two younger Romans are killed, which Horace, the eldest brother, avenges by singlehandedly dispatching all three Curatii. When his sister Camilla curses him for the loss of her fiancé, he slays her in a fit of rage: empathy was not a Roman trait.

David's first plan had been to paint the subsequent incident wherein Horace senior pleads with his fellow Romans not to sentence his son to death, citing the young man's great service to the state. But the artist was dissuaded by friends who thought this might be pushing the notion of stoic acceptance a little too far. So David painted a scene of his own imagination, namely the three Horatii

swearing on their glinting swords held aloft by their father before going into battle.

With its stern Roman code, *The Oath of the Horatii* is considered David's first masterpiece. The clarity is extreme: there are none of the warm fuzzy outlines of a Fragonard painting. David's emphasis on the physical vigor of the three brothers and their synchronized gesture convey their moral certitude and commitment to violent action, while the slumping females suggest abject submission. In this pitiless universe, the painting suggests, there is no room for private feelings: loyalty to the state invariably trumps the private concerns of the individual.

Because it was painted four years before the Revolution, art historians have labeled *The Oath* "a prerevolutionary painting." But it captures the spirit of frustration that was in the air at the time: among the enlightenment philosophers, Denis Diderot, who died the year before the painting was shown, in particular had advocated Roman stoicism to replace rococo frivolousness. He had slammed Boucher for "prostituting his wife"—"This man has everything, except truth"—and had admonished Fragonard to have "a little more self-respect."

At this stage, David was not a republican, as there was yet no such movement to join. He still sought clients among the nobility and royal commissions, but he found the rules of the Academy stifling. When the Revolution did break out in 1789, David started out as a moderate, but became increasingly radicalized. He joined the Jacobins in the National Convention, became close to Robespierre, and ended up with plenty of blood on his hands. His signature was among those on the death decrees of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and on a large number of arrest warrants during the Terror.

For the Revolution, David painted three of its so-called martyrs, most notably Jean-Paul Marat, the venomous pamphleteer whose thirst for blood was insatiable and who was killed in his bath by Charlotte Corday. But in David's version, Marat is transformed into a Christ-like figure. As pageant-master of the republic, David also arranged the great festivals, culminating in the Festival for the Supreme Being in 1794, all meant to invest the revolution with meaning and with figures of admiration.

But he had to abandon a planned painting of the events of June 20, 1789: *The Oath of the Tennis Court* showed members from the third estate who, upon finding themselves locked out of a meeting of the Estates General, constituted themselves as a National Assembly in a local tennis hall. David had made a detailed sketch, but things were moving too fast. Some members had been arrested, others had been executed.

When Robespierre and his henchmen were overthrown, David's own life was in danger. He was incarcerated briefly twice during the Directory, the five-man council governing France after the Terror, but was let go because of his genius. "From now on I will no longer attach myself to men, but to principles," he promised himself. But not for long. He was quickly seduced by Napoleon: "Finally here is a man to whom altars would have been erected in ancient times. Yes, my dear friend, Napoleon is my hero."

From having glorified the murderous dictatorship of the rabble, David now set about immortalizing the dictatorship of one man. For Napoleon, he did *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (1800), the ultimate Man of Destiny painting: never mind that the likeness was slight and that Bonaparte rode a humble mule and spent part of the descent sliding on his rear. What David was concerned with was the idea of the conqueror. As he told a friend, "The cloak of Bonaparte is thrown to make one imagine the wings of a demigod gliding in the air."

Though keenly aware of its propaganda uses, Napoleon had a limited appreciation of art: "Nothing is beautiful unless it is large." David certainly did large. His *Coronation of Napoleon and Josephine* in Notre Dame measures twenty-two by thirty feet and bestowed magnificence on Napoleon's new instant nobility—the strutting sons of blacksmiths and bakers who became generals and marshals and on whose swords his power rested. David also did *The Distribution of the Eagle Standards*, which shows Napoleon blessing the Imperial eagles,

and his officers swearing loyalty. This type of ceremony, first introduced in *The Oath of the Horatii*, had become something of an obsession for him.

After Napoleon's final hundred days, David went into exile in Brussels, though he could have stayed in Paris if he had sought forgiveness for having signed the royal death warrants. In Belgium, he produced some good portraits, but only some second-rate mythological paintings. The element of political excitement was clearly missing.

One way to view David is as a crass opportunist, which is precisely what some of his contemporaries did, but nowadays art historians tend to see him more as a political naïf who had a penchant for strong leaders and absolute values. The problem with this "political naïf" argument, often heard in cases where artists or writers have gone astray, is that it frees the artist of responsibility for his actions and claims that special rules should apply to genius, as David himself seemed to suggest: "Only a man truly a friend of the arts can fully appreciate the head and heart of an artist."

But David's art was not innocent: his gifts as an artist helped the forces of evil in his day triumph. As a propagandist and choreographer of political events, he is the forerunner of Albert Speer and his great Nazi rallies in Nuremberg or the filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl's celebration of Aryan Supermen in the 1936 Olympics.

The uncomfortable fact is that you can have a painting like *The Death of Marat* that manages to convey true human tragedy—what critics have called an oil version of Michelangelo's *Pietà*—that is at the same time a gross historical lie. A modern equivalent would be to glorify Nazi characters like Julius Streicher or Joseph Goebbels, spewing torrents of hatred. But as proved by David's portrait, if enough time has passed, only the work of art remains.

David is indeed a great painter, but morally, he stinks.

Letter from Melbourne

Trying too hard

by Anthony Daniels

It has been thirty-four years since I was last in Melbourne, and physically it has not improved in the long interval. I remembered it as a handsome, if not characterful, city; now I was aghast as I walked down Swanston Street, one of its principal thoroughfares, at what had been done to it. It was like a vast open-air museum of modern architectural pathology, waiting for UNESCO to declare it a world heritage site.

It was not that insufficient money had been spent on it; on the contrary, it was that the architects had tried too hard.

To do what, exactly? One sensed that they were in competition—on the city's behalf—with Sydney, to make it appear more dynamic, more modern than Sydney, despite it always having prided itself on being the Athens to Sydney's Rome, or at least the Boston to Sydney's New York. It was cultivated where Sydney was brash; its money was older or more respectable (or had the aura of such) despite having been founded later in Australia's short history.

The architects had risen (or fallen) to the challenge by trying to be original, and there is little more damaging to the fabric of a city than the attempted originality of architectural mediocrity. The buildings were given eccentric shapes for the very sake of that eccentricity, but there was no attempt at harmony; they were a choir of cats trying to screech the loudest. As for the decorative features, they were those of the manic-depressive woman who, in her manic phase, applies cosmetics too liberally, with insufficient attention to the contours of her face. The modernity of Sydney by comparison is unselfconscious and self-confident, with much better and more elegant results.

Swanston Street debouches—or debauches—on to Federation Square, an assemblage of buildings intended for cultural purposes, scarcely credible in its hideousness. Its architect had evidently taken a spider's web as his inspiration—but that of a spider after it had been given marijuana that rendered its web random and disorganized. Future generations (let us hope) will wonder at our age's inability to erect minimally pleasing public buildings: the problem is far from Melbourne's alone.

The advance in Australia of political correctness in the last few years has been startling: it acts as a viral infection, so that some do not even know that they have caught it, even as they oppose it. But of all the Australian states, so I was told, Victoria—Melbourne beings its largest city by far—is the most politically correct, indulging in what a Dutch friend of mine calls "creative appeasement."

Opposite the buildings of Federation Square is the Anglican St. Paul's Cathedral, a sandstone mock-gothic church constructed in the heyday of Victorian municipal pride and architectural grandiloquence. Prominently displayed on its frontage was a large banner bearing the legend "Let's fully welcome refugees." There is a Christian duty of compassion towards the suffering of others, but, in a manner typical of the politically correct, this legend evades the difficult questions about the current wave of refugees from the Middle East, of whom Australia has so far been rather wary, to put it mildly. It has stopped the influx

of refugees by not allowing their boats to land and parking them on the Central Pacific island of Nauru, which was once rich (thanks to its phosphate, now exhausted), and that now derives its income from renting a camp to Australia for the refugees. The boats have stopped coming.

How many refugees should Australia welcome, who should do the welcoming, does it matter where the refugees come from, does Australia have an infinite duty of care to the refugees of the world, and so forth? If sentimentality is the luxury of an emotion without having to pay the price for it, as Oscar Wilde put it, here was a perfect example of politically correct sentimentality.

It is difficult to get away from political correctness in Melbourne once you notice it. On the other side of the Yarra river is another arts center. The surrounding lawn has a notice:

> Keeping the Arts Centre Green
>
> The Arts Centre strives to maintain and operate its facilities responsibly, with respect to the environment and climate conditions. These lawns are maintained with recycled water which is not suitable for drinking.

It is obvious that anyone who has real respect for the environment would agitate strongly for the immediate demolition of the concrete buildings of the arts center, which scour the eyes with the aesthetic equivalent of wire wool.

In an effort to escape political correctness, indeed to have an antidote to it, I went to a production of Strindberg's *Miss Julie* by the Melbourne Theatre Company, which is a department of Melbourne University. Whatever else may be said of Strindberg, he was not politically correct, however much his views might have careened through a large spectrum of thought and opinion: and if ever a man were a misogynist, Strindberg was that man.

I was naïve. Political correctness is a lens through which anything can be looked at; and while multiculturalism is in theory an important doctrinal component of that correctness, it is severely monocultural when it comes to the past. For the politically correct, the past is not a foreign country where they do things differently; it is the same country where they do everything the same. Hence the text of *Miss Julie* as rendered by the Melbourne Theatre Company was littered with the word *fuck* and its cognates.

But if we, or at least the most enlightened and sophisticated among us, use the word constantly to demonstrate our liberation from bourgeois rectitude, it follows that they must have used in it Strindberg's time too. Now Strindberg was certainly not the kind of man to respect a taboo, including that against strong language, but *Miss Julie* is a play from his naturalistic period, written in the late 1880s, when it was very unlikely that such language would have been used (and indeed no other translation uses it). It was, after all, nearly forty years before Shaw's *Pygmalion* caused a sensation on the London stage by the use of the comparatively mild word *bloody*. The use of *fuck* in this context, as well as being jarring, adds nothing to the meaning. It is an attempt to be bold without risk, original without talent: the same deformation as the Swanston Street architects.

Even worse, however, was the provision of a happy ending to *Miss Julie*. In the original, Jean (the valet) suggests in the final scene that Miss Julie (the daughter of the count) has no choice but to commit suicide; she walks off the stage, presumably to do so. Strindberg, who was going through his Social Darwinist phase, suggests that she was a loser in the struggle for existence; but in the Melbourne production, the last scene is given moral uplift, when the cook, Kristine, suggests at the end that Miss Julie must keep her pecker up, to use an old British colloquialism. I was reminded of the days when as a student I shared a house with a hard-line Marxist-Leninist, who regarded suicide as a petty bourgeois deviation, the failure to accept the total sufficiency in life of Marxism-Leninism.

Nearby the theater is the National Gallery of Victoria where paintings in the permanent collection are well-displayed. Large crowds were drawn to a comparative exhibition of the work of Andy Warhol and Ai Weiwei, not necessarily full of people whom one would normally expect to see at an art exhibition. This was confirmed when I bought the catalogue at the gallery's bookstore. The woman at the counter in front of me said to the man behind it, when

asked what she thought of the exhibition, "It resonated with the kids," to which he replied, "That's exactly right." What surprised me was not the actual words of this interchange, but its tone of approbation: the exhibition was good because it resonated with the kids.

And indeed the atmosphere inside was not the one of hushed awe that would have prevailed had the exhibition been of the works of Piero della Francesca or Poussin. It was more that of the funfair than of a temple of the Muses. And this was not altogether surprising, given Ai Weiwei's dictum that everything is art, and that one of his works exhibited consisted of floating balloons in the shape of birds or dragons, into the midst of which the public was invited:

> We invite you to enjoy participating in this artwork
> Please follow the instructions of the staff &:
> Tap the balloons gently
> Refrain from striking or kicking the balloons
> For safety and enjoyment, ensure that children in your care are supervised.

An introduction to the catalogue, written jointly by the Directors of the National Gallery and the Andy Warhol Museum, puts it:

> Warhol and Ai are remarkable for the ways they have redefined the role and identity of the artist in society . . . they have transformed our understanding of artistic value and studio production.

Transformed, certainly, but improved or deepened? That is another matter on which the catalogue remains oddly and resolutely silent. When it refers to Ai Weiwei's study of art history during his period of residence in New York, it is clear that anything before 1950 is not history, but artistic pre-history, like the cave paintings at Lascaux.

Not that either of the men was untalented, far from it. And indeed many of Ai Weiwei's works, in particular, are extremely evocative. Taking Warhol's idea of filming the Empire State Building throughout a single day as an inspiration, Ai had the idea in 2003 of filming a car journey round one of Peking's ring roads through the windshield, without moving the camera at all. The result is strangely mesmerizing: the longer you watch, the magic charm suspended from the rearview mirror and jiggling constantly, the stronger grows your awareness of the sheer grind, soullessness, and ugliness of life in a city that has grown enormously without regard to anything except growth itself. The traffic continues in Sisyphean fashion, without any evidence of end or purpose; and Man seems to have exiled himself from his own works. And when Ai inscribes the Coca-Cola logo on a Han dynasty vase, he is making a comprehensible and powerful comment on the current culture of China.

Nor can it be said that Ai Weiwei is attached in any romantic way to China's immediate past before there was Coca-Cola. His father was exiled to the remote west of China during the Cultural Revolution as a potentially hostile intellectual. Ai Weiwei has known political oppression as few of us have known it.

But is this enough to make a great or even a good artist of him? When people walk past his installations saying to one another, "Cool, this is cool," I am inclined to doubt it. He is clever, ingenious, inventive, suggestive, but also self-advertising, shallow, and glib as, for example, in his famous series of pictures in which he gives the finger to the White House, the Houses of Parliament, the Reichstag, the Louvre, the Sydney Opera House, Shanghai, and St. Peter's. To disrespect everything is the best way to devalue your own disrespect. Moreover, there is an aesthetic thinness to Ai's work that causes an overvaluation of originality: the fault of the very Melbourne architects.

The fawning nature of much of what is written in the catalogue is the latest manifestation of the famous, or infamous, Australian cultural cringe: the feeling that, as a distant and new outpost of European civilization, Australians have no culture of their own to speak of and must defer to whatever metropolitan countries bring them. But actually Australia has a distinguished artistic tradition of its own, as a visit to the Australian section of the National Gallery of Victoria (located in the deranged spider's web) will quickly reveal. There is more real sustenance in Sydney Nolan or Russell Drysdale—among many others—than in Warhol or Ai Weiwei, if people would but look and see it.

Theater

Out of their minds

by Kyle Smith

"What time is it?," a retired engineer named André asks throughout *The Father.* Answer: late. And getting dark. André is losing his mind, and won't admit it. Who would? This exceptional French play, by Florian Zeller (translated by Christopher Hampton, at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre through June 12), exacts a toll on us. It gets into the core of our frailty, and scrapes.

André, played with devastating fluidity by Frank Langella in one of the season's outstanding stage performances, begins the play demanding that his daughter Anne (Kathryn Erbe) fire his cleaner, who he thinks has stolen his watch. In fact, he has hidden the watch and forgotten the act of hiding. It's an apposite metaphor for the insidious practical jokes Alzheimer's plays, and as *The Father* goes on André keeps losing his place in time. When he grows cantankerous and difficult, there are sideways glances and muted discussions. It's time, Pierre avers, for a change. Time for what we euphemistically call "a home" when in fact it's a waiting room. God's.

What makes the play bracingly theatrical, in the best sense of the word, is its sleight of hand, deftly executed by the director, Doug Hughes. Different actors play the same part so the audience can share in André's confusion and horror. Wait a minute, isn't that a different person playing Anne? It is (Kathleen McNenny, later in the play). And Pierre, Anne's partner, is played by both Brian Avers and Charles Borland. Or is one of them Anne's other partner? This is what it's like to lose the ability to recognize your closest kin. When the lights go out between scenes Hughes slightly adjusts the scenery, or removes a decorative item from the walls. André's mind is emptying out before our eyes. The play is a contemplation of life's cruel, relentless process of subtraction—the friends departed, the evaporating memories, the places you can no longer see again.

André is frustrating, he's embarrassing, he's despotic, he's a little funny (apropos of nothing, he claims incorrectly that he was once a dancer and rises to his feet to do an elegant twirl in his slippers and pajamas). "I feel as if I'm losing all my leaves," he says, in one of Zeller's many startling and crystalline lines. Anne does her utmost to keep him by her side, even as one of her men (which one is it?) viperishly asks him how much longer he's planning on getting in the way and slaps him, hoping to provoke a display of rage that will seal André's fate. Langella strikes deep, somber chords of our shared humanity when, in the closing moments, he cries, "I want my mommy." In the end it is as it was in the beginning. In one ordinary family, Zeller is out to pinpoint and illuminate what unites us, and he does it magnificently.

By contrast, in *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (at the American Airlines Theatre through June 26), Eugene O'Neill puts his own family under a microscope, excluding all others. The dramatist who promises to expose the sordid truth beneath the surface of the bourgeoisie traffics in cliché—but *Journey* isn't even that. This family isn't yours. It isn't America's.

Born in scandal and gossip, the play would have blistered when first performed, but today it is impossible to take seriously. A writer who delivered a similarly turgid, maudlin script in 2016 would be laughed out of the room at any half-decent Netflix drama. Considering also the disastrous and even more antiquated spring production of O'Neill's *Hughie*, which starred Forest Whitaker in a near-monologue about a self-deluding small-time gambler that lasted only thirty-seven performances, a revaluation of O'Neill is order. And by revaluation, I mean devaluation, by which I mean to roughly the level of the Venezuelan bolívar.

O'Neill remains the most acclaimed of all American playwrights—four Pulitzers and a Nobel came his way—but his bludgeoning can no longer be mistaken for soul-stirring. Composed three decades after the year (1912) in which it takes place, *Journey* is an adolescent fit of score-settling aimed at O'Neill's parents and brother, who appear undisguised. O'Neill didn't even bother to change their names.

Noting that someone depicted in the play was still living—in fact, O'Neill himself was the only one—the playwright ordered *Journey* locked away with instructions that it never be produced and not even be published until twenty-five years after his death. Instead, it hit the stage three years after his 1953 passing, heaving with gossip about O'Neill's morphine-addicted mother Mary Ella Tyrone (Mary in the play, portrayed in the current production by Jessica Lange), his alcoholic miser father James (Gabriel Byrne), and his ne'er-do-well alcoholic brother James Jr., or Jamie (Michael Shannon). Upon himself, Edmund (John Gallagher Jr.), O'Neill paints a halo. Edmund—tender young poet, fragile soul, an angel and a lamb tied together with a rainbow—will be recognized by everyone who has ever been about twenty years old as an example of how we see ourselves at that age, as the put-upon youth whom an unjust world owes so much more than it is willing to give. O'Neill managed to carry such self-sentimentalization into his fifties.

Journey is a three-hour, forty-five-minute pity party O'Neill threw himself, in which either residual bitterness or an artistic preference for excess caused him to distort all relevant facts: His mother, far from being the doomed figure on death's threshold as in the play, recovered from her addiction merely two years later and lived on for a decade. The summer house she and the boys deride actually cost James O'Neill an extravagant $40,000. (Mary also whines about the family car being second-hand. As of 1910, there were five automobiles for every 1,000 Americans.) Far from being condemned by his father's decision to send him to a cheap state-run sanitorium, the young O'Neill (who had only a mild case of tuberculosis) shortly checked into a pleasant and well-managed facility, the Gaylord Sanitorium, from which he emerged in perfect health and creatively reinvigorated.

As autobiography, then, the play over-dramatizes. This need not trouble us were it not also true that it over-dramatizes as a play. *Journey* is overdetermined, overwrought, and overweight, gassing on for nearly four hours for no reason except that O'Neill's characters can't stop repeating themselves. It takes him a page to get across what a great playwright could say in a pause. He mistakes lumbering banality for raw naturalism, bulk for scale. Everything is on the surface: the characters are like news anchors reading off the headlines from their souls. Suspense isn't constructed or crafted; O'Neill simply puts off revealing the exact nature of Mother's problem by withholding the word "morphine" until more than two hours into the play. In the supposedly climactic late-night scene we get several minutes of fussing over electric lights, which James Sr. considers unaffordable. We need this why? There are dozens of earlier references to Father's stinginess.

If any play could have used a daring reconceptualization, it's this one. Instead the director, Jonathan Kent, stages all of the action on a single routine set recreating without imagination a 1912 living room (walnut furniture, a bookcase, a stair) as sea sounds waft in from just outside the door. Characters rotate in and out like wooden horses on a carousel of recrimination and nostalgia. Each of the four principal characters (there is also a maid) takes a turn rhapsodizing bygone days and blaming the others for his woes. Mary pins her dope addiction on the loss of her infant son (whom O'Neill calls "Eugene" though in reality the doomed child's name was Edmund), on James Jr. for recklessly exposing the baby to his measles at age seven, on Edmund for filling

her with worry about his consumption, and on James Sr. for steering her to the doctor who first prescribed morphine for her, among other sins. James blames Mary for driving him to drink and Jamie for leading a dissipated life that, imitated by Edmund, supposedly brought on the latter's consumption. Edmund blames his tubercular lungs on his father's having hired a cut-rate doctor to examine him. Jamie blames his father for forcing him into an acting career he didn't want.

Loudly as the dramatis personae groan, the rusty gears of dramatic machination groan still louder. To mirror Mary's descent into an opiate fog after starting the play drug-free, the characters mention (three times) in the opening morning scene that the Long Island Sound fog has lifted. The Sound's fog steals in along with Mary's, and O'Neill is so enamored of his trope that he can't stop nudging us to notice: "I really love fog," Mary says in Act Three. "It hides you from the world and the world from you. No one can find you or touch you any more." Later, she says, "How thick the fog is. . . . I wish it was always that way" and "Why is it fog makes everything sound so sad and lost, I wonder?" Edmund adds, "The hardest thing to take is the blank wall she builds around her. Or it's more like a bank of fog in which she hides and loses herself."

The other noun O'Neill assigns Mary to use as many times as possible, as if expecting a royalty on the word, is "home." The neighbors have "decent, presentable homes they don't have to be ashamed of," she says, whereas of the family summer house she complains, "I've never felt it was my home." Then it's, "Oh, I'm so sick and tired of pretending this is a home," "It's unreasonable to expect [the servants] Bridget or Cathleen to act as if this was a home. It never has been and it never will be," "It was never a home," and "women need homes, if they are to be good mothers." Have you grasped that Mary is lonely? O'Neill isn't quite sure you have, so he has her proclaim it: "Sometimes I feel so lonely," "It's so lonely here," "Mother of God, why do I feel so lonely?," "I've been so horribly lonely," and—double points for this one—"in a real home one is never lonely."

Mary grows loopy with drug (though many of the above quotations come from her more lucid phases), yet every other character is equally given to posting his thoughts and emotions like a campaign staffer distributing yard signs ahead of election day. The men drink, and drink some more, and talk about how much they're drinking, and talk about it some more, and repeatedly tell us why they're drinking (to forget about Mary), and say things like "What's wrong with being drunk? It's what we're after, isn't it?" James accuses Jamie of being drunk and patronizing whores, so Jamie later staggers home crocked from a whorehouse and disgorges hundreds of words about the experience, building grandly to this clunker: "All I wanted was a little heart-to-heart talk concerning the infinite sorrow of life." O'Neill can't let his grand theme—self-delusion—be merely implied, so he has Edmund say, "Who wants to see life as it is, if they can help it?"

Edmund is supposed to dazzle us with his verbal gifts, and yet O'Neill has him say, "It's pretty hard to take at times, having a dope fiend for a mother!" Yes, the exclamation point is O'Neill's. Forget Netflix, I'm not sure you could sell that line in the writers' room at *Days of Our Lives*. As for the climactic midnight appearance of a wraithlike and now completely unhinged Mary, O'Neill introduces it with a leaden lump of speechifying he mistakes for a sudden ray of the poetic spirit within the lad:

> Yes, she moves above and beyond us, a ghost
> haunting
> the past, and here we sit pretending to forget,
> but straining
> our ears listening for the slightest sound,
> hearing the fog
> drip from the eaves like the uneven tick of a
> rundown,
> crazy clock—or like the dreary tears of a
> trollop spattering
> in a puddle of stale beer on a honkey-tonk
> table top!

Some great playwrights are masters of structure, others adepts of language. O'Neill is an utter failure at both.

Because what yesterday was beyond the pale is today not only within the pale but on the pale's red carpet waving and blowing air kisses, *American Psycho* is now a Broadway musical, having

begun its surprisingly long life in popular culture by proving itself the rare item considered too egregious for a major publishing house. In 1990, Simon & Schuster slashed Bret Easton Ellis's novel out of its catalogue after it sparked the ire of journalists and feminists outraged by its graphic, indeed pornographic, descriptions of violent acts towards women. Their rival publisher Sonny Mehta bought the book for Vintage and rode the publicity to the bestseller list. The book went on to sell more than one million copies and in 2000 a then-little-respected actor named Christian Bale gave a wickedly daft performance of the title role, an insecure financier who fancies himself an axe murderer, in a film adaptation directed by Mary Harron that coaxed out the material's black comedy. Today the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre is hosting an even more emphatically comic musical edition starring Benjamin Walker, who spends a generous portion of the show in his underpants, and featuring splashy musical numbers that make use of, inter alia, dancing bankers in bath towels. Coming soon: *American Psycho* the breakfast cereal with strawberry-flake blood!

Making the right enemies isn't always a sign that you're onto something: the novel's bloodlust scenes were indeed revolting. But early reviewers, with Savonarola dogmatism, completely missed its satiric elements. Patrick Bateman, Ellis's yuppie anti-hero, is a sort of Humbert Humbert of status lust bitterly aware that his designer suits, Ivy League education, and Agent Orange–strength exfoliation creams are not enough to earn him a dinner reservation at Dorsia or spare him the humiliation of being addressed as "Halberstram" by a more socially successful rival banker, Paul Owen (a very funny Drew Moerlein). Knowing that others have finer business cards than he does drives him into panic.

But the most alarming thing Bateman does is consult Donald Trump's *The Art of the Deal* for life guidance; the killing spree transpires only in his imagination. When he boasts that his interests are "murders and executions," his interlocutor replies as if he has said "mergers and acquisitions," and perhaps he has: maybe the ultimate source of Bateman's torment is the knowledge that he is just a jargon-spewing bore in a suit.

The part requires an actor who is by turns a cringing whelp and a lunging Rottweiler, a rake and a nerd, one additionally gifted with a singing voice and a certain kind of dancing ability: angular, muscular, insistent, and manly rather than balletic. Such a performer is Benjamin Walker, who, while no match for Bale and his impish lunacy, is nevertheless an able guide through late-'80s money-mad New York.

Unlike Bateman's imaginary murder implements, the satire in *American Psycho* (cunningly adapted with a book by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa and kaleidoscopic direction by Rupert Goold) can be a bit blunt-edged. But was not Koch-era New York a bit blunt-edged? In the late 1980s the city began to take on an hourglass shape defined by its top and bottom echelons. Mammon and mayhem ruled in tandem, and the stage version bows to the city's peculiar range of apparitions, from mole people living in subway tunnels to Upper East Side Christmas parties in the sky. A breathtaking array of ingenious lighting cues and projections (Justin Townsend designed the lights, Finn Ross the video installations) shuttle us from Bateman's stark, chilly apartment to a cab, darkened dance clubs, his office, the Hamptons, and the eerie pavements where streetwalkers loiter.

If ever a show left you humming the lighting, it's this one, because, alas, the music and lyrics by the failed rock musician Duncan Sheik are lackluster and shapeless. Sheik's songs for this entry are even worse than the exuberantly clunky compositions he did for his previous Broadway production, *Spring Awakening*. *American Psycho* intersperses unnerving new arrangements of several memorable 1980s pop numbers—Phil Collins's "In the Air Tonight," Tears for Fears' "Everybody Wants to Rule the World"—and these songs, even in redesigned form, are so much more tuneful than Sheik's work that at some point the show's creators should have reworked it as a jukebox musical stocked with established hits. Locating the sinister undertones of gummy car radio classics leads to some of the high points of the show, but you can't have a great musical with songs as weak as Sheik's, and so *American Psycho* is unlikely to be favorably compared to *Sweeney Todd*. Like Bateman himself, the show is immaculately turned out yet strangely hollow at its core. Still, *American Psycho* might be the best recent example of an unlistenable musical that's eminently watchable.

Art

Rousseau at Musée d'Orsay

by Karen Wilkin

At the now-legendary banquet at the Bateau Lavoir studio organized by Pablo Picasso and his friends in 1908 to celebrate Henri Rousseau, the honoree famously told his host that they were "the two greatest painters of their day, you in the Egyptian manner, I in the modern manner." This wonderful, often-quoted observation is usually interpreted as an indication of Rousseau's naïveté. Picasso was, after all, already Picasso in 1908 and his colleague, inaccurately known as the Douanier, the customs officer—he was, in fact, a toll collector—is even today still seen as an outsider, an innocent, self-taught artist. Picasso, at the time, together with his friend Georges Braque, was beginning to change forever our conceptions of pictorial space, recklessly defying all conventional ideas about representation. Rousseau, for all the off-beat charm of his work, clung to time-honored ideas about illusionism, meticulously modeling and shading rigid, confrontational figures against leafy backgrounds—he described himself as the inventor of the "portrait landscape"—painting eerie city scenes and dream jungles of giant houseplants inhabited by improbable beasts. What Picasso replied to his guest is not recorded, but there's no doubt that the young Spaniard was a fan of the older man's work. He treasured Rousseau's large, full-length portrait of a standing woman, found in a Paris junk shop—"you can paint on the back," the proprietor apparently told him—as well as two small heads, portraits of the artist and his second wife, all of which are now in the collection of the Musée Picasso. Nor was Picasso alone in his enthusiasm for Rousseau's work among the Parisian avant garde of the time. Alfred Jarry, the creator of *Ubu Roi*, was an early admirer, as were the dealer Wilhelm Uhde, the critics Felix Vallotton and Ardengo Soffici, and the poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire. Artists as diverse as Rousseau's friends Robert Delaunay, Max Weber, and Carlo Carrá collected Rousseau's work or attempted to emulate it—or both. (Delaunay convinced his mother to commission a painting from the artist; Weber acquired as many works as he could afford and brought them with him when he returned to the United States after his years in Paris.) It's worth noting that none of the artists and writers on this list were Rousseau's contemporaries. Since they were all born in the late 1870s or early 1880s, they, in fact, belonged to the generation of Rousseau's children—he was born in 1844 and died in 1910. Most of them knew each other. All of them were deeply engaged in opposing the status quo in their respective fields, which, along with their youth and open-mindedness, may explain their delight in the older painter's intense, strange, and surprising pictures.

The appetite for the Douanier's paintings increased steadily after his death. In 1924, the last work the American collector John Quinn added to his immense collection of modernist art was Rousseau's *The Sleeping Gypsy* (1897), with its inquisitive lion and evocative moonlit desert setting. Now one of the Museum of

Modern Art's signature treasures, *The Sleeping Gypsy* is unapologetically installed among other adventurous works of the period. Rousseau's status as a largely self-taught outsider is ignored at MOMA, as it is at the other major institutions that boast of owning his work. He is presented, as he should be, simply as one of the progressive painters of his time—"in the modern manner"—among his peers, without other qualifications. Yet the idea persists that the Douanier was an unclassifiable anomaly, a Sunday painter "discovered" by the young vanguardists of Paris in the early part of the twentieth century and embraced by them for their own amusement. His paintings, many of them very ambitious in size, with their careful finish and unsettling narratives—especially his stylized jungle scenes—are described as naïve or childlike, and their uncanny proto-Surrealist qualities regarded as inadvertent. A monograph published in 1978 was titled "Portrait of a Primitive: The Art of Henri Rousseau." Despite his association with the avant garde (and despite most museums' installations of his paintings absent special pleading), Rousseau's aims are often viewed as very unlike those of his more sophisticated, adventurous colleagues; if his paintings look modern, it is implied, it is purely accidental.

Though Roger Shattuck's *The Banquet Years*, a fascinating study of Paris between 1885 and 1914, as embodied by the work of Rousseau, Jarry, Apollinaire, and Erik Satie, attempted to set the record straight ten years earlier, correcting entrenched misinformation about the painter's biography (some of it promulgated by the artist himself, some by Apollinaire). We are reminded, for example, that Rousseau did not go to Mexico during his military service, as he often maintained—he may have heard descriptions from fellow soldiers who had been there—and that, far from having been discovered by Picasso and his colleagues, he had begun to exhibit in 1884 with the Groupe des Indépendents and then showed regularly at the Salon des Indépendents, almost from its inception, starting in 1886. He may have not begun painting until he was in his forties and may have been, for the most part, self-taught, but he seems to have had advice about his art from some well-known academic painters, one of whom helped him to obtain copying privileges at the Louvre. Far from being "undiscovered" until the Paris vanguard took him up, Rousseau was noticed, albeit not necessarily favorably, long before Picasso's banquet. Critics hostile to his work singled him out for ridicule, almost from when he first began to exhibit—one described him as "painting with his feet, with his eyes closed." A comprehensive exhibition, seen in 2005–2006, at the Tate, London, the Grand Palais, Paris, and the National Gallery, Washington, added a good deal to our understanding of Rousseau. The show revealed his close attention to the zoo and greenhouses in the Jardin des Plantes, to the stuffed animals in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, and to the dramatic covers of popular magazines showing exotic beasts attacking their victims. The violent, albeit stylized and often stiff, confrontations of predator and prey in some of Rousseau's jungle pictures turn out to be quite literal quotations from taxidermied groups in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle and from the gory scenes on the covers of adventure magazines.

Now, a new interpretation of this enigmatic artist's achievement is offered by "The Douanier Rousseau. Archaic Candour," at the Musée d'Orsay, seen last year in Venice and scheduled to travel to Prague this fall.[1] The show's avowed intention is to challenge what the texts call "the convenient prevailing view of the Douanier Rousseau as an anachronistic self-taught painter." Instead, we are told, he should be seen as someone very much of his era—presumably the early years of the twentieth century, when the younger modernists became interested in him, rather than the 1870s, when he first started painting—who, we are also told, was viewed as an artist whose work influenced other advanced artists. To make the point, the installation combines a

1 "The Douanier Rousseau. Archaic Candour" opened at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, on March 22 and remains on view through July 17, 2016.

chronologically arranged, ample selection of works by Rousseau—portraits, "portrait landscapes," cityscapes, the occasional still life, allegories, and jungle scenes—with paintings by other artists chosen to suggest influence, affinity, or common aspirations.

Fortunately, the selection of works by Rousseau is strong enough to overwhelm the rather over-determined thesis. We can simply delight, as Picasso did, in the portrait of the standing woman in black that he owned, and note the row of potted plants behind her, the patterned drape that frames her, and the small bird, oddly rather like a flying fish, hovering above. We can be charmed by the Guggenheim Museum's celebrated quartet of prancing soccer players in their nifty striped uniforms. We can be simultaneously fascinated and horrified by the explicitly titled *The Lion, Being Hungry, Attacks the Antelope* (1898–1905, Beyler Foundation, Basel), with its smiling lion and his hapless, weirdly reptilian prey, watched by a spotty owl and a leopard, lurking amid the over-scaled, carefully delineated foliage. And we can marvel at the sharply individualized, diversely costumed figures packed on to an outdoor stage in the bizarre but delectable "history painting," *The Representatives of Foreign Powers Come to Salute the Republic as a Sign of Peace* (1907, Musée Picasso, Paris). (Note the British lion at the feet of the allegorical figure of the Republic, with her Phrygian cap.)

But we also encounter, at intervals, Renaissance works that the Douanier appears to have responded to (or that his supporters invoked in relation to his art), along with pictures by his colleagues, friends, admirers, and others, some made during the years when the French vanguard was fêting Rousseau—literally and figuratively—some made long after his death. There are also works seemingly thrown in for contrast. These include an energetic, if wholly unlikely, little lion/tiger confrontation by Eugène Delacroix, as loose and fluid as Rousseau's jungle pictures are precise, and William Bouguereau's slick *Equality before Death* (1848, Musée d'Orsay), a terrifyingly sleek image of a nude male corpse, stretched out beneath a swooping winged nude, who spreads a shroud. This slightly repellant image is paired with Rousseau's far more disturbing *War, or the Ride of Discord* (*ca*. 1894, Musée d'Orsay, Paris), one of the largest, most powerful, and unforgettable works in the exhibition. A demonic frizzy-haired child, wielding a sword, runs beside a dark horse with a long frizzy tail; the title notwithstanding, there is no rider, yet speed is suggested by the horse's outthrust neck and miniaturized head. The odd pair races, neither touching the ground, against a luminous turquoise sky dotted with salmon pink clouds, streaking across a rocky field bracketed by broken trees and strewn with nude corpses, being pecked at by ravens; the ferocity of the imagery seems reinforced by the rigidity and magical clarity of the drawing.

A few works by usually anonymous self-taught or folk artists are also included, most memorably, perhaps, one of Edward Hicks's many versions of *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1845–1846, The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.), with the usual happy association of savage and domestic creatures—big cats, a bear, an ox, and a goat—being patted by children, and what seems to be William Penn arranging things with a circle of Native Americans in the background. Hicks's playful coexistence of usually warring species (including, perhaps, Penn and the Indians) is wholly different in mood and feeling from the vague sense of danger that emanates from Rousseau's perfervid groves of sansevieria and coleus, with their threatening creatures.

Some of the comparisons are thought-provoking and illuminating. It's both interesting and provocative, for example, to be confronted by Rousseau's *Portrait of Mr. X (Pierre Loti)* (1906, Kunsthaus, Zurich) in close proximity to Vittore Carpaccio's *Portrait of Man with a Red Cap* (1490–93, Museo Correr, Venice). The mustachioed Loti, looming in front of a distant landscape with factory chimneys and a slender tree, holds a cigarette in a thick-fingered hand; a striped cat perches on a red stool in the foreground, staring us down, its triangular white ears rhym-

ing neatly with Loti's white collar. Then we realize that Loti's red, fez-like cap reads as a cognate of that of Carpaccio's curly haired, suave protagonist, with his appraising gaze. Both hats are red and conical, both are set at the same jaunty angle. Carpaccio's painting could be described, like Rousseau's, as well as like a good many Renaissance works, as a "portrait landscape," with its strip of water, trees, town, and misty hills, squeezed into the space between the edge of the canvas and the poised sitter. Rousseau, despite his claim to having invented the "portrait landscape," was surely aware of such Renaissance prototypes as the Carpaccio and may even have known this work. We are also asked to consider how Rousseau's stylized smoker might have served as what the wall texts call "a source of inspiration" for a work such as Fernand Léger's hunky *The Mechanic* (1920, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa): a muscular type, with a moustache, in a sleeveless shirt, cigarette held between the fingers of a hand like a baseball mitt. Maybe.

Other comparative works, such as Paolo Uccello's enchanting *Saint George Slaying the Dragon* (1430–35, Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris) have been included because Rousseau's first critical supporters, Apollinaire and Soffici, both connected the Douanier with the Renaissance master of perspective, with his carefully modeled figures and charming carousel horses. (Uccello's domestic-size green dragon, balanced on its hind legs, with its corkscrew tail and pleated wings, is so delightful that you wish George had made him a pet, instead of spearing him.) It's often harder to credit direct cause and effect with other inclusions, such as Picasso's portraits of his daughter, *Maya with a Doll* (1938, Picasso Museum, Paris), in a section devoted to Rousseau's oddball images of stiff, chubby, rather unappetizing children, in the company of equally stiff, chubby, unappetizing kids painted by Philipp Otto Runge in 1808–09, by an anonymous American journeyman about 1845, by Carlo Carrà in 1915, and by Diego Rivera in 1946. (Tennessee Williams's "no-neck monsters" come to mind.) It's difficult to grasp the point of the grouping, other than to establish that Rousseau's way of portraying children might not have been an aberration, but a type. Whether Picasso was thinking about the Rousseaus he had owned since the first decade of the twentieth century when he painted Maya almost thirty years later is, of course, debatable.

Many of the comparative works are engaging in their own right, such as an assortment of portraits that includes a Breton woman by Paul Gauguin, a family group by Maurice Denis, and a small full-length depiction of Wassily Kandinsky in an interior by Gabriele Münter. It's good to see Paula Modersohn-Becker's large *Portrait of Lee Hoetger in a Garden* (1906, Paula Modersohn-Becker Museum, Bremen), with her melancholy sidelong glance, although any connection with Rousseau seems fortuitous. Some of the authors of the comparative works—Carrà, notably—expressed their desire to capture some of the distinctive qualities of Rousseau's work in their own; other inclusions seem to demonstrate a tenuous affinity, at best. It's hardly news that modernist painters embraced a wide range of sources outside of the "official" academic Western canon as stimuli—from Japanese prints to African sculpture and a lot in between. A taste for confrontational, hieratic figures, bold shapes, and "primitive" concepts of form is simply an attribute of modernism, at least until abstraction became entrenched, not necessarily a sign of Rousseau's influence. The well-illustrated catalogue examines these cross-connections, both documented and presumed, in some detail. There's also an informative critical anthology of responses to Rousseau, starting in 1890. Most of all, there are those haunting, delicious paintings. In the last gallery, filled with some of Rousseau's lushest jungle scenes, including *The Dream* (1910, Museum of Modern Art, New York), with its voluptuous nude on a velvet sofa, its watchful lionesses, its elephant, and its dusky flute player, amid rampant foliage, we can forget everything except the pleasure of seeing works by this stubborn original, however we choose to categorize him.

Exhibition notes

"Scottish Artists 1750–1900:
From Caledonia to the Continent"
The Queen's Gallery,
Buckingham Palace, London.
March 18–October 9, 2016

The pictures in this exhibition of Scottish artists were all collected or commissioned by British monarchs, and they reflect their greatly varied tastes. They also provide a history of the monarchs' changing relationship with Scotland from George III, who only knew the Scots who had come to England, to Queen Victoria, who loved the Scottish Highlands so much that she bought an estate there and rebuilt Balmoral Castle in the Scottish baronial style to be her home. Here her German consort Prince Albert not only strode about in a kilt made of a new tartan he had designed but also insisted that all male staff and visitors wear it too.

The earliest items in the exhibition were commissioned by George III or his wife Queen Charlotte. They stem from the time of the Scottish Enlightenment, that Golden Age of Scottish culture that produced David Hume, Adam Smith, Dugald Stewart, James Hutton, and Joseph Black, the men who contributed so much to the creation of the modern world. Among these enlightened ones were the eminent architect Robert Adam, who provided designs for Queen Charlotte, and the internationally famous painter Allan Ramsay, who had studied not only in Edinburgh and London but in France and Italy. Caledonia was already linked to the Continent.

There are many royal portraits by Ramsay in the exhibition, but the finest is his *George III* (1761–62), a depiction of the new king (he succeeded in 1760 and was crowned in 1761) in his coronation robes worn over a coat and breeches of cloth of gold. It is a magnificent full-length, life-size portrait in oils that shows Ramsay's complete mastery of color, detail, and proportion. Few sittings were possible, but King George III, a cultivated man with interests in the arts as well as science and agriculture, would visit him at work in his studio for friendly talks. Ramsay was a noted linguist and Queen Charlotte enjoyed her sittings with him for the companion painting *Queen Charlotte with her two eldest sons* (1764–69) because he spoke German with her. It is a relaxed and affectionate family portrait. The children have their (suitably martial) toys and the Queen is seated next to her spinet on which sits her work basket resting on top of a leather-bound copy of John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1695). Enlightened times indeed.

Ramsay deserved to be a painter to the court; he was the equal of the younger but now more famous Johan Zoffany and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Yet he owed it to ethnic nepotism, to the patronage of the powerful Scottish nobleman and for a time Prime Minister John Stewart, the third Earl of Bute. Bute's great enemy, the radical democrat John Wilkes, called his newspaper *The North Briton*, a deliberately insulting term for the Scots aimed at Bute and perhaps at the Scottish novelist Tobias Smollett who edited *The Briton*, a newspaper set up to support Bute. It was a time of great success for talented Scotsmen who took the high road to England. Both Allan Ramsay's and Doctor Samuel Johnson's assistants were Scottish, but gifted migrants are not necessarily popular. One of Ramsay's most remarkable Scottish assistants and pupils was Alexander Nasmyth, a portraitist who turned to landscape painting and is represented in the exhibition by his *View of the High Street Edinburgh and the Lawn Market* (1824). He has widened and flattened the High Street with the skill of a Canaletto.

The Prince Regent who deputized during George III's illness and later became George IV was an avid and discerning collector of paintings. He had a particular liking for seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish genre paintings depicting the everyday life and disorderly celebrations of ordinary people. It is hardly surprising that he became the patron of David Wilkie (later Sir David), a Scottish artist so strongly influenced by the work of David Teniers the younger that he became known as the "Scottish Teniers." Wilkie's work had an international reputation and his prints sold well throughout Europe. The Prince commissioned from him *Blind-Man's Buff* (1812–13), and a companion piece, *The Penny Wedding* (1818). Perhaps to

the disappointment of his debauched patron, Wilkie left out the more interesting scenes for which some of the genre painters of the Low Countries were famous—the drunkenness of the peasants with the puking, brawling, and relieving oneself in public that went with it, the coarseness, the indecent groping, and even the procuring of whores. None of this is to be found in the decorous art of David Wilkie, who has reduced the notoriously lewd and riotous celebrations of the Scottish peasantry in the age of Robert Burns to mere good, clean fun. Robert Burns, a mighty toper and tupper who equated whiskey and freedom and sired several illegitimate children by different women, would have been puzzled at their innocuousness had he lived to see them. But Wilkie was painting at a time when Scotland was experiencing something similar, if milder, to the Second Great Awakening in the United States, and the respectable middle classes were on the rise.

The King also employed Wilkie to paint *The Entrance of George IV to Holyroodhouse* (1822–30), marking the first visit of a British monarch to Scotland for nearly 200 years. It was a weird piece of Celtic pageantry imagined and choreographed by Sir Walter Scott, who dressed George IV in a kilt, stressed his Stuart ancestry, and invented the Scottish tartan traditions that today still entice dollars from the wallets of entranced tourists. In Wilkie's picture, though, the King is in his red-coated British Field Marshal's uniform and only some of the Scottish nobles are kitted out in Highland dress. It is a splendid piece of colorful, archaic magnificence, possibly inspired by Wilkie's knowledge of the work of Rubens. It is a reminder, too, that the claims of the Jacobite pretenders, a potential menace to the Hanoverian dynasty in the first half of the eighteenth century, had finally vanished with the death in 1807 of the last of that line, Cardinal-Bishop Henry Benedict Thomas Edward Maria Clement Francis Xavier Stuart. If his brother Bonnie Prince Charlie had won at the Battle Culloden in 1745, the Cardinal would have become Henry IX of England and Henry I of Scotland. The Cardinal left no issue. He had been living on a pension provided by George III after Napoleon's invasion of Italy had reduced him to penury.

It cannot be said that the artistic tastes of Victoria and Albert matched the sophistication of their royal predecessors. They regularly bought each other as Christmas presents the paintings of John Phillip, the son of an Aberdeen cobbler who had trained in London and specialized in Scottish scenes before discovering Spain in the 1850s, a backward country, known for its poverty and illiteracy. The efforts of the eighteenth-century reformers so admired by Goya had failed, and the savagery of the guerrilla war against the French invader and occupier had brought ruin and political instability that led to repeated insurrection, military intervention, and civil war. But for the British Victorian artist Phillip, it was what tourist guides to poverty-racked countries call "exotic," "vibrant," "romantic." If progressive opinion today were ever to consider the matter, Phillip would be condemned as "Iberianist." The titles of his works alone—"*El Paseo*" (The Evening Promenade) in 1854, *The Letter Writer of Seville* also 1854, *The Dying Contrabandista* (Smuggler) in 1858—suggest what they are: crass pieces of sentimental storytelling, cluttered with heavy-handed detail, hints provided so as to stimulate banal discussions among those viewing them in a jolly group. When he died, Queen Victoria described John Phillip in a letter to her daughter as "our greatest painter," but then as a child she had loved the plodding novels of Sir Walter Scott. To each his or her own.

Fortunately, this section of the exhibition is redeemed by several outstanding landscape paintings by Scottish artists little known today. David Roberts's *A View of Toledo and the River Tagus* (1841) shows a mastery of sunlight shining through mist and reflected on water that is worthy of Turner. Turner thought so too, for he became Roberts's sponsor and friend. David Farquharson's *View of Strathmore with Harvesters* (1881) captures the sharp light on the haystacks on a rare bright day in Perthshire, while the distant hills are seen in outline through the filter of air rising in the heat. More characteristic of Scottish weather is Joseph Farquharson's *Flock of Sheep approaching through a blizzard* (1881). The ground is covered in heavy snow and it is being blown hard and high by

the wind. It is just possible to make out a line of trees and a shepherd struggling towards us with his flock. Suddenly in the foreground appear the vivid black faces and curved horns of the leading Highland sheep; their heads burst out of the blizzard while their bodies are obscured by the driving snow. Farquharson was strongly influenced by the French Barbizon School of landscape painting and decided to transfer the techniques of painting *en plein air* developed in the mild climate of Fontainebleau to the joyless frozen wastes of Scotland, with the help of a wooden painting hut on wheels with a large window and its own stove. He also had made for him a set of life-sized wooden sheep to distribute in the landscape in case the cold proved too fierce for the real ones. He was undoubtedly the greatest portrayer of cold sheep that the world has ever known. Contemporary artists nicknamed him "Frozen Mutton," but his unpretentious realism was much praised by Walter Sickert, who compared him with Gustave Courbet; today his work is enjoying a well-deserved revival.

Scottish pre-eminence in philosophy, mathematics, science, economics, and industry during that small country's time of greatness between the Acts of Union with England of 1707 and the end of the nineteenth century are internationally recognized, but the exhibition reminds the world that there were artistic achievements too and that they were stimulated by royal patronage. Yet how Scottish was Scottish art, or rather the art created by Scotsmen and women, except in the narrow sense that they chose Scottish subjects and notably landscapes? Of course, artists from other nations traveled to Scotland to find visual inspiration. Does it make Landseer a Scot? From the start, Scottish artists had a good knowledge of the art of Italy, France, Spain, and the Low Countries and traveled there to complete their education. But in this respect were they any different from their English and Welsh counterparts? Before the invention of the airplane, the easiest route from Caledonia to the Continent passed through London—and so did Scotland's artists.

—*Christie Davies*

"Munch and Expressionism"
The Neue Galerie, New York.
February 18–June 13, 2016

Is there any pocket of culture that isn't conversant with, if not the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch (1863–1944) himself, then his signature canvas *The Scream*? Few images have filtered through the popular imagination with as much persistence. Like Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, and Alberto Gorda's photograph of Che Guevara, Munch's paean to psychological distress has been honored, quoted, and parodied; it's proven infinitely parrot-able. Here in the twenty-first century, *The Scream* has been co-opted by the digital zeitgeist: those who send bad news electronically can do so with an emoji dubbed "Face Screaming in Fear." Given the contemporary prevalence of Munch's image, it comes as a surprise to learn that *The Scream* didn't have the same currency during the artist's lifetime. In a radio interview, Jill Lloyd, the co-curator with Reinhold Heller of "Munch and Expressionism," stated that our reigning emblem of hellish anxiety didn't gain traction until after Munch's death. That *The Scream* continues to resonate with audiences says much about the primal emotions it embodies.

Munch did four variations of *The Scream*, as well as a suite of prints; the best known of these, an oil on canvas from 1893, is the star attraction of The National Gallery in Oslo. That painting, it should be noted, is not on view at The Neue Galerie. The version of *The Scream* squirreled away in a side gallery of "Munch and Expressionism" was done in pastel two years later and is more stylized and less discordant. It is, in so many words, fairly underwhelming, but it does serve, albeit inadvertently, a curatorial purpose: to place Munch in a historical context that extends beyond a single iconographic picture. In the catalogue, Lloyd states that while Vincent Van Gogh "is justly deemed a precursor or 'father' of Expressionism, Munch, by contrast, inspired and participated in the movement." Munch's notoriety in Germany helped kick-start Expressionism. An exhibition of his work held at the Verein Berliner Künstler in 1892 garnered the kind

of press best measured in column inches, not praise. Roundly drubbed as a "mockery of art," the show was shuttered before the closing date due to the controversy it generated. Munch was pleased by this turn of events; the scandal was "the best advertisement I could have hoped for." He subsequently made Germany his home for sixteen years.

Playing upon his newfound fame, Munch organized a series of German exhibitions that helped solidify his outré reputation among a local cadre of forward-thinking patrons, critics, and collectors. Munch's status was codified by the critic Julius Meier-Graefe, who featured him alongside Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin in *Modern Art*, a 1904 text that served as a touchstone for the burgeoning Expressionist movement and, especially, the painters of Die Brücke. This group of Dresden-based artists—its members included Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rotluff, and Emil Nolde—shared "similar yearning[s]" with Munch, and repeatedly invited the older artist to participate in its annual exhibitions. Munch demurred every time. These rebuffs did little to staunch Die Brücke's admiration, though you can't help but wonder why Munch held himself apart. Arne Eggum, an art historian and the former director of The Munch Museum, conjectures that Munch had his eye on establishing a reputation in Paris—Dresden being a veritable Podunk in comparison to the City of Light. Munch and the Expressionists wouldn't be exhibited together in Germany until 1912, at which point the Norwegian had returned to his native land.

"Munch and Expressionism" makes no bones about mixing-and-matching the recalcitrant master with his progeny. Divided into sections according to specific motifs—among them, "Portraits," "Adolescence," "Experiments in Printmaking," and that reliable chestnut "Battle Between the Sexes"—Munch's art is placed alongside that of Die Brücke, as well as pictures by Egon Schiele, Gabriel Munter, Oskar Kokoschka, and the uncategorizable Max Beckmann. The inevitable comparisons aren't revelatory—at least, for those conversant with the by-ways of twentieth century art—but they are satisfyingly predictable. Nor do they always favor Munch. In the "Urban Scenes" portion of the show, Munch is overshadowed by Kirchner, whose *Street Dresden* (1908) retains its punch some hundred years after the fact. Its acidic palette and lava-like rhythms make Munch canvases like *Midsummer Night's Eve* (1901–03) and *The Book Family* (1901) look woefully polite. Admittedly, the exhibition doesn't include *Evening on Karl Johan Street* (1892), a moody canvas that is a precursor to *The Scream* and a Munch masterpiece. A lithographic take on *Karl Johan Street* at The Neue Galerie has much to recommend to it, but even on the attenuated evidence found in "Munch and Expressionism," it's clear that Munch was far more innovative as a printmaker than as a painter.

Truth be told, Munch remained very much a nineteenth-century painter until the end of his life. An inherent parochialism both powered his vision and prevented a full reckoning with Modernism. Post-Impressionism clearly threw him for a loop, and his experiments with its pictorial liberties are ham-handed when they aren't over-heated. (Lord only knows what he made of Cubism and its offshoots.) The artist we see in pictures like *Christian Gierloff* (1909), *Puberty* (1914–16), and *Bathing Man* (1918) is wildly out of his depth: pictorial space warps-and-woofs with no discernible purpose, the palette turns muddy when it doesn't chalk out altogether, and the brushwork flails where previously it had snuck up on the images with a brooding, understated sensuality. The post-1900 canvases, even the much-lauded self-portrait *The Night Wanderer* (1923–24), are enough of a mish-mosh to make a minor figure like Erich Heckel seem a contender. And then there's the Austrian painter Richard Gerstl, dead by his own hand at the age of twenty-five: his canvases all but steal the spotlight of "Munch and Expressionism." His was a powerhouse talent and is too little known. The name "Gerstl" may not generate the same buzz or box office as "Munch," but this is a museum with the means and institutional interest to organize an overview of the work. Who knows? *That* exhibition may be a revelation.

—Mario Naves

Gallery chronicle
by James Panero

Are galleries the new museums? The "mega-galleries" would certainly like us to think so. Those four or five commercial empires upon which the sun never sets, and which cast an ever lengthening shadow over the global art trade, now look to confer prestige on their artists by mounting their own "museum-quality" exhibitions. For this they can deploy their museum-sized venues. They can bring in one-time independent scholars and former museum professionals to secure high-end loans and publish voluminous catalogues. They can create a market, usually for name-brand artists with overlooked (and therefore undervalued and available) bodies of work. The business plan is often similar: at Gagosian, the biographer John Richardson with "late Picasso," or the esteemed MOMA alumnus John Elderfield looking at Helen Frankenthaler beyond *Mountains and Sea*. The firewall that at one time separated museums from the commercial art trade has become a revolving door—hello, Jeffrey Deitch—or at the very least a popular and lucrative means of egress.

But is this all such a bad thing? Not for the biggest galleries, at least—that's business. Not for the museum people—finally free of the funding squabbles and baroque progressivism that has come to define institutional culture. Not even for the public—since this can really lead to "museum-quality" shows, free to see and, at least, more free of political baggage than many of today's museum exhibitions. One need only contemplate the recent rehanging of the American floor at the Brooklyn Museum—where didactic wall texts regard art as little more than examples of massacre, genocide, and environmental devastation—to realize that our museums now often treat their collections with all the nuance of how "decadent" art was once presented in the Soviet Union. In contrast, free of mercenary fundraising concerns papered over by a circus of neoliberal acrobatics, the galleries can still present art as is, cleanly and visually, without textual over-determination.

The latest big museum–gallery shakeup has been the forced 2012 departure of Paul Schimmel from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles—hello again, Jeffrey Deitch—and his arrival a year later at the mega-gallery Hauser & Wirth. This past March the international conglomerate, with locations in Zurich, London, Somerset, and New York, opened its latest venue, called Hauser, Wirth & Schimmel, in a 100,000-square-foot former flour mill in downtown Los Angeles. Boasting "museum-style amenities," the gallery offers 30,000 square feet of exhibition space, roughly equivalent to the old Whitney Museum.

Back in New York, Schimmel has now brought this gallery's full commercial might to bear with "Philip Guston: Painter, 1957–1967," at Hauser & Wirth's 23,000-square-foot Chelsea space on 18th Street (itself a temporary location as a new building goes up on 22nd).[1] Expertly deployed over the gallery's four large exhibition rooms, label-free and optimized for visual discovery and investigation, the exhibition is

1 "Philip Guston: Painter, 1957–1967" opened at Hauser & Wirth, New York, on April 26 and remains on view through July 29, 2016.

truly of museum quality, if museums are even still the measure of such qualifiers.

The Guston "narrative" is by now one of those origin stories of contemporary art. A painter of glittering abstractions in the 1950s, Guston re-emerged in the 1970s as the creator of cartoonish and nightmarish imagery, of Klan hoods, hobnailed boots, and bare bulbs. These works have become shorthand for the turn away from overly serious abstraction to the "new imagism" of "bad painting" that has come to dominate the contemporary art scene. That Guston's 1970 coming-out at Marlborough Gallery was slammed in *The New York Times* by none other than Hilton Kramer as a "mandarin pretending to be a stumblebum" has itself become a part of the mythology, an indication of saintly status, and a central aspect of a marketing strategy. To defend Guston against Kramer's now sacrilegious statements is itself a settled precept of the contemporary art catechism.

But of course, Hilton was right. Guston was the ultimate insider, a tenured don of the New York School when he came out as a schizoid caricature of the "bad" outsider artist. He employed the kind of imagery that might be dreamed up by the insane, scrawled on some asylum wall, but, as Hilton observed, Guston's facility as a painter was the giveaway of a more controlled calculation. Calling the transformation a "pseudo-event," Hilton wrote:

> In offering us his new style of cartoon anecdotage, Mr. Guston is appealing to a taste for something funky, clumsy, and demotic. We are asked to take seriously his new persona as an urban primitive, and this is asking too much. . . . The very ease with which he has adapted this slang to his own elegant usages is itself a measure of its established place in the pictorial vocabulary of our time.

The intelligence of the current Hauser & Wirth show is how it looks exclusively to Guston's experimental transition years of the late 1950s and 1960s, focusing on the subtle visual shifts Guston tested out during this period while only hinting at what was to follow. Yes, we already know what came before and what comes after. If this were a museum, didactic imperatives would have mandated the inclusion of some early lyrical Gustons to sing to us at the start and some sinister Klan men to clobber us at the end.

Schimmel says more through their absence. He signals that here is not just a period between two others, each better known (and more highly sought-after—again, this is a mega-gallery out to promote a name-brand artist with an undervalued body of work). These middle years were instead open-ended, poignant, and charged, argues this exhibition—and worthy of their own appreciation outside of the story arc (while still indisputably framed by it).

For all the facility and over-determination that I find in both early and late Guston, middle Guston indeed strikes me as the one period where he seems truly adrift. The work therefore seems most vulnerable, moving in fits and starts, and unsettled. Beginning with the *Rite* and *Fable II* of 1957, Guston's bright lyricism, his "Abstract Impressionist" palette seemingly of melted crayon, darkens in shade. Out of his white ground surrounding his Crayola shapes emerges an occluding mist. Over the next few years, this increasing density subsumes his forms, swirling and mixing and clouding his canvas. Out of the murk, more ominous shapes finally emerge: a bloody square in an untitled painting from about 1959, the shadowy legs of an easel, or the artist, in *Painter* (1959), here on loan from the High Museum of Art, Atlanta.

Schimmel divides the gallery rooms up by color, creating immersive environments of Guston's haunting purples, grays, and pinks. Meanwhile increasingly darker, more defined forms come to the foreground. With our knowledge of late Guston, it becomes easier to see that there was always some visual source code informing Guston's filtered impressions—he was never a pure abstractionist. This exhibition ends with a wall of forty-eight drawings, simple scratches of charcoal and ink on paper. Here is the coda to the middle period, the moment from 1967 through 1969 when Guston finally stripped out his last abstract fittings to reveal the underlying armatures upon which he would hang his new, stumbling, 1970s self.

Unlike the modernists of Paris who looked to Africa for their "primitive" influences, the sculp-

tor Elie Nadelman (1882–1946) largely drew on the rich folk traditions of his transplanted home in America and their deep European roots. Born in Poland to a middle-class Jewish family, Nadelman found early artistic success in the avant-garde circles of Munich and Paris before immigrating to the United States in 1914. In 1926, he and his wealthy wife, Viola Spiess Flannery (1878–1962), created the Museum of Folk and Peasant Arts on their estate in Riverdale, The Bronx, which came to house some 15,000 objects. Spanning six centuries and thirteen countries, this first museum of its kind traced the origins of American folk art while inspiring Nadelman's own penetrating sense for plastic form.

Suffering financial reversals following the stock market crash of 1929, the Nadelmans were forced to close their museum and, in 1937, sold what remained of their collection to the New-York Historical Society (where Elie for a time served as its curator). Now with "The Folk Art Collection of Elie and Viola Nadelman," and an accompanying scholarly catalogue published by D Giles Limited, the N-YHS has mounted a survey of this singular collection that draws on new research into its creation and influence over Nadelman's own body of work.[2]

If Nadelman is recognized today, if he is known at all, it is through his two colossal white marble statues that flank the grand promenade of the Koch (née New York State) Theater at Lincoln Center. Manufactured some twenty years after his death, based on his tiny, mangled figurines that lined the tables of his Riverdale home at the time of his death, these two sculptures came into being through his curatorial champion, Lincoln Kirstein, the co-founder of the New York City Ballet who had mounted a major Nadelman retrospective. Credit also goes to the artistic sensibilities of the theater's architect, Philip Johnson, and the folk-art interest of the Rockefeller family, which had first collected the models for these particular sculptures in 1931 and purchased a selection of Nadelman's folk art in advance of the N-YHS sale for Colonial Williamsburg. (It also so happens that Governor Nelson Rockefeller controlled the theater's development as an extension of the state's involvement in the 1964 World's Fair. It was no small undertaking for Johnson to tap a new vein of pure Carrara marble from the same quarry used by Michelangelo and ship the two massive blocks to New York.)

The last time Nadelman appeared in a New York museum in any significant way was in 2003 with the Whitney's own survey (see my review in these pages in March of that year). A decade is far too long for an artist whom Kirstein called "among the last sculptors of quality to provide service on the scale of Renaissance master-craftsmen." Co-curated by Margaret Hofer and Roberta J. M. Olson, the relatively small but penetrating exhibition now at N-YHS might make me rethink everything I've just said about museums were its quality not such an exception to the rule, so well does this exhibition present the examples and history of its Stoneware, Chalkware, Mochaware, Rockingham Ware, Gaudy Dutch, and Penny Woodens. To understand what these all are, you must see the show, but their names indicate the range of materials once employed in object-making before our plastic present. In his own sculpture, exhibited alongside these examples, Nadelman explored not only the craft but also the use of the arts created through these materials, distressing his surfaces, such as in the polychrome cherrywood sculptures of *Tango* (*ca.* 1920–24), to signal a history of human touch.

Kirstein saw the challenge of maintaining Nadelman's reputation as "the fate of artists strongly attached to tradition in crisis." Nadelman was one of those rare moderns who looked to tradition over progress. "The art of today has neither past, future, nor ambition to be compared with other art of long survival," Kirstein observed in his Nadelman monograph of 1973, still the best book published on the artist. "Nadelman's craft was rooted in continuity he wished to extend, adapting rediscovery to new considerations of scale, material, and use, suiting his own time, seen not as a fading year, but as one fixed date." Here, through his obsession with the arts of the everyday, we can see how, in Kirstein's choice words, Nadelman was always "salvaging the monumental by the miniature."

2 "The Folk Art Collection of Elie and Viola Nadelman" opened at the New-York Historical Society on May 20 and remains on view through August 21, 2016.

Music

New York chronicle

by Jay Nordlinger

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center put on an unusual and interesting program. They called it "The Romantic Viola." After the lights dimmed, Wu Han bounded onto the stage. A pianist, she is the artistic director of CMS, along with her husband, the cellist David Finckel. Wu Han said (approximately), "This program is so fascinating, I can't help jumping onto the stage to talk about it." I think differently: I would rather jump onto the stage to play it. But so enthusiastic a talker is Wu Han—and so brief a one, usually—even a curmudgeon like me can't begrudge what she does.

The star of "The Romantic Viola" was Paul Neubauer, who became the principal violist of the New York Philharmonic at twenty-one. Then he pursued a solo and chamber career. He is one of the most famous violists in the world, if you don't think that's too ridiculous a sentence. I have written about him in these pages for many years. I say, "He has one of the best string sounds going." Also, he plays with sovereignty. There is almost an arrogance about his playing, or an aristocracy, if you like. He knows what he's doing. And he knows that he knows.

His instrument, the viola, is a marvelous thing: part violin, part cello—all viola. The instrument is to strings what a mezzo-soprano is to singing. These sounds are exceptionally appealing, to many people.

Why do people make viola jokes? I have put this question to several violists, including Lawrence Dutton, of the Emerson String Quartet. He gave an answer I never would have expected. He did not say, "Oh, it's so unjust." He said, "Because the quality of viola playing has been so poor. The jokes are deserved." The better musicians go to the violin, he said, while the junior varsity takes up the viola.

Paul Neubauer, of course, is an all-star. He and a small army of supporting musicians played a nicely mixed program, ranging from Schumann to Turina to Tower. (More about her—Joan Tower—in a moment.) At the end of the first half came a piece by Gordon Jacob: a Suite for Eight Violas. Jacob was an English composer who lived from 1895 to 1984. He was a friend of the viola, composing two concertos for it. He wrote his suite in 1976, in honor of Lionel Tertis, the famous (yes) violist and teacher who had recently died. It was for Tertis that William Walton wrote *his* viola concerto—the most famous of all such concertos. Jacob's suite is in four movements, beginning with one called "Dedication." It is unmistakably English. It has that melancholy that is not quite sad, and that happiness that is not quite happy. What a strange sensibility, and endearing.

Onstage with Neubauer were, necessarily, seven of his fellow violists. It was virtually a convention. Among them was Larry Dutton, and also the current principal of the New York Philharmonic, Cynthia Phelps. At certain points in the suite, I thought of a phrase I had never thought of before: "viola choir." It is a very good idea.

Joan Tower is an American born in 1938. She has composed four pieces for Neubauer—the latest of them last year. The first was *Wild Pur-*

ple. Then came *Purple Rhapsody*, *Simply Purple*, and *Purple Rush*. Tower has been quoted as saying, "I always thought of the viola sound as being the color purple." I can't help thinking of Alice Walker's novel (*The Color Purple*). Also of *Purple Rain*, by Prince, who died in April.

Simply Purple and *Purple Rush* were on this CMS program. They are both for solo viola (i.e., unaccompanied viola, viola alone). The second is a companion to the first, or a follow-on. Sometimes composers do this. My late friend Lee Hoiby did this with songs. In a program note, Tower explained that the second piece was the same as the first in its "actions," but faster. Much faster (hence *Rush*). The first piece, *Simply Purple*, is absorbing in its unfoldment, I think. And it is obviously a complete piece, a finished work. The second piece is plenty virtuosic—but it struck me as more a compositional exercise. I look forward to a second hearing, and perhaps a better impression.

And I salute the composer for enhancing the repertoire of this marvelous, if mocked, instrument.

A concert of the New York Philharmonic began with an OOMP, which is to say, an obligatory opening modern piece. It was by Franck Krawczyk, who—don't let the name deceive you—is French. His bio includes an amazing fact: he was a piano student but ended his career on that instrument when he stopped playing in the middle of a recital. Apparently, he simply stopped while playing Beethoven's "Pathétique" Sonata. He wanted to write his own music—which he did, going on to study composition.

The Philharmonic played *Après*, a work in three movements. Each movement is dedicated to someone important to the composer. The first is dedicated to his teacher in Lyons, Gilbert Amy; the second is "pour György Kurtág," the Hungarian composer; and the third is "à la mémoire de Henri Dutilleux," the French composer. He died in 2013, three years shy of one hundred. Kurtág just turned ninety. So we are talking about long-lived composers.

Krawczyk's first movement is called "Coda . . . Ruines." Has a piece ever begun with a coda (which means, you recall, "tail")? The second movement is "Reconstitution," which, in addition to being for Kurtág, is an "Hommage à L. van Beethoven." The third movement is "Matin," and, like the preceding movement, it relates to Beethoven (as well as its dedicatee, Dutilleux). I did not hear any of the "Pathétique" Sonata, however—Mr. Krawczyk's aborted piano swan song. I'll tell you a few things I did hear.

The first movement has a wash of strings. I thought of Barber's famous *Adagio*. Then there are groanings and interjections—angry interjections. This movement is well conceived and well shaped. It is interesting in its harmonics. In the second movement come pots and pans: lots of percussion. This, too, is interesting. Krawczyk is a skillful orchestrator. The music is baldly modernist. It is suspenseful and angry, resembling the soundtrack of a scary movie, I thought. For me, this movement went on too long. At some point, I was startled to hear a piano. Was this at the beginning of the third movement? I'm not sure. The movements blend. I had not noticed the piano onstage. That instrument is joined by the harp—putting me in mind of Britten, who liked to employ the harp, often spookily. Before this movement is over, we have declarative brass.

At the beginning of the concert—before the Philharmonic's music director, Alan Gilbert, gave the downbeat—I heard something strange: a dog not barking. The conductor had not come out with the composer to talk about the piece. He simply bowed and started conducting it. Was the composer present in the hall? He was. When his piece ended, Krawczyk sprinted onto the stage—I mean, sprinted—to take his bow. On the evidence of *Après*, he has a lively musical mind and a respect for others. Built into this work is gratitude, which is a valuable quality, in music as elsewhere.

I'll say something that may be ungrateful. The concert continued with Schumann's Cello Concerto, in which the soloist was Carter Brey, the Philharmonic's principal. He played with his customary poise and dignity. More than most soloists, he looked at the conductor. Is this because he is used to being in the orchestra? The concerto would have benefited from

more tang, more flavor, from all involved, especially in the last movement. A blandness covered the performance. But could the performers truly help it?

Here is where my ingratitude, or possible ingratitude, comes in. Despite effort, I have not been able to warm to the Schumann Cello Concerto, although its middle movement—an F-major song, in part—undoubtedly has merit. The outer movements are stuffed with Romantic filler. Virtuosic gestures, amounting to a parody of Romantic storminess. Not even Slava and Lenny—Rostropovich and Bernstein—could bring this piece to life for me.

So, I propose a parlor game, a question: What is the worst piece written by a major composer? No, a different question is better: What is the worst piece in the standard repertory? I might vote for the Schumann Cello Concerto—and I make so bold as to say this because I love the man, Schumann. I believe he nodded in his cello concerto. We can talk about his violin concerto later, but then, that's not in the standard repertory.

The Metropolitan Opera revived *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, or *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, one of Mozart's operas. In the pit, James Levine—who received a standing ovation at the outset. The company had recently announced that Levine would be retiring as Music Director, though he will conduct some performances next season as Music Director Emeritus. He has long battled health problems. The overture to *The Abduction* was full of pep—but not especially precise.

This opera is hard for singers. Mozart is characteristically hard, but *The Abduction* is exceptionally so. One soprano, Konstanze, sings an aria that goes, "Martern aller Arten," meaning, "Torture of all kinds." That could describe the opera at large, for singers (though these tortures have their rewards). In an interview, Renée Fleming once told me that, at the beginning of her career, she got a lot of work singing Mozart roles—because other sopranos shied away from them. And when she finally gave him up, she did so with relief—because he was so hard.

Singing the plum, show-stealing role of Osmin, the Pasha's overseer, was Hans-Peter König. He is a German bass. Initially, he sounded tired. He got a little better as Act I continued. The tenor singing Belmonte, Paul Appleby, was adequate but tight. His higher notes were especially unfree. Konstanze was "a Russian with a mouthful of a name," as I said in a 2008 review of her: Albina Shagimuratova. She has a very interesting voice: juicy, potent, pliable, and full of colors, mainly dark. Here in Act I, she did some impressive singing, but she also did some sloppy singing, and I'm afraid she also screeched.

One bright spot in Act I was the comic interplay between König, as Osmin, and Brenton Ryan, the young tenor portraying Pedrillo. König is a very large man, and Ryan is whip-thin. Bossing Pedrillo around, Osmin gave him an amusing stomach-bump. Yet there was not much to smile at in Act I. Levine was without his usual intensity, and his usual crispness. There was no sparkle in the show. At the first intermission, it felt like midnight to me. Had we really just begun?

"And then there was Act II." That's what the friend sitting next to me—a soprano, as it happens—said at the end of that act.

It was completely different from its predecessor: sparkling, precise, wonderfully Mozartean. For part of the difference, we can credit the arrival of another singer, Kathleen Kim, the soprano portraying Blondchen. She was all poise, femininity, and (to use this word again) sparkle. She provided a definition of perky defiance. Possibly, she perked up Hans-Peter König—who sang beautifully, freshly, and smartly. The interplay between them was delightful. He is immense, and she is tiny. They made the most of it. Brenton Ryan sang handsomely and confidently. And Paul Appleby did some welcome loosening up.

When I reviewed La Shagimuratova in 2008, she was the Queen of the Night, in Mozart's *Magic Flute*. I said, "She sank her teeth into the Queen's music—making it meaty, crunchy, and dramatic. She was not as clean and pure as some. But she was formidable and exciting, as the Queen should be—a songbird with teeth." Something like that applies to her Konstanze. Her "Martern aller Arten" was flawed but bold. Imperious. And throughout the night, when

she was singing less than optimally, I still thought, "What an interesting voice."

In Act II, James Levine found his Mozart groove. He stayed in it for Act III. He demonstrated his typical combination in Mozart: majesty and litheness. Tempos were right, phrasing was right. Ensembles had their natural shape. Act III features that hit aria for Osmin, "O, wie will ich triumphieren," with its famous low D. König handled both the aria and the note satisfyingly. Levine, and his friend Mozart, closed out the evening with a crisp, buoyant chorus—those giddy shouts of C major. Levine has more performances in him.

Into Carnegie Hall came the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, led by its fine music director, Robert Spano. It was the centennial of Robert Shaw's birth—I mean, to the day. This concert took place on April 30, 2016. Shaw, best known for his choral conducting, was the music director of the ASO from 1967 to 1988. Early in his tenure, he founded the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus. They were on hand in Carnegie Hall, too. The esteemed conductor died in 1999.

I had a funny thought: Would Atlantans be miffed that, to celebrate the Shaw centennial, the orchestra and chorus skipped up to New York, and the country's most famous concert hall? Why not celebrate at home? But perhaps Atlantans are too content for such thoughts.

The centennial concert finished with a Shaw classic, and a Brahms classic: the *German Requiem*. But it began with a new work, for the same forces as the Brahms: orchestra, mixed chorus, soprano, and baritone. This was *Zohar*, by Jonathan Leshnoff, an American. Our program booklet described him as "a leader of contemporary American lyricism." In other words, "Brace yourself: he's a square." Alternatively, "Don't worry: it's going to be all right."

The title of his piece refers to a commentary on the Books of Moses. In a written statement, Leshnoff says, "The *Zohar* is extremely profound, dealing with the most basic and deepest issues of Judaism and life. I barely understand its surface level, but even that surface level inspires me to the core of my being." Leshnoff is a believer. This comes through in the very first notes of his piece. The texts are in English, most of them translated by the composer himself. There are six movements, some of which are massive and choral, others of which are more intimate and soloistic. (The same is true of the Brahms *Requiem*, of course.)

Leshnoff's first movement is a crying out: a huge, choral crying out. Its rhythms are sharp. I was reminded of John Williams, the movie composer. For some, and from some, this would be a putdown. Not from me. Also, this movement sounds like it could be from a contemporary musical. The next one—"What is man?"—is prayerful, hushed, reverent. And it was sung just that way by Jessica Rivera, the soprano. She was utterly sincere and unaffected. I was thinking that this movement could function as a stand-alone piece, quite apart from *Zohar* as a whole.

The next movement is quick and scherzo-like. Profound or holy works need such a movement, don't they? I think of Mahler's *Rückert-Lieder* and its "Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder!" For that matter, *Siegfried* can be thought of as the scherzo movement of Wagner's *Ring*! In any case, the ear and mind need the relief. This third movement of Leshnoff's even swings a bit.

It's followed by a song: a yearning song, one that becomes impassioned, even desperate. It was convincingly sung by the evening's baritone, Nmon Ford. The next movement is a reprise of the first, as far as I could tell. Then it resolves into C major, going into the final movement, "Higher than High." This is a quiet, mystical section. It ends with the repetition of the word "You."

How do you criticize a piece like this? It is so personal, so religious—beyond criticism, in a sense. I enjoyed *Zohar*, and I appreciated it. What's more, I congratulate Jonathan Leshnoff for going his own way. He is obviously not trying to be cool, and he is obviously not writing for fellow composers, or critics. Recently, I wrote a short essay on the state of contemporary music. At the end, I addressed the age-old question, "Is classical music dying?" This death is always being predicted; it has yet to occur. "Music is one way in which people express themselves," I wrote. "It is also a way in which people praise God." Yes.

The media

House of cads

by James Bowman

On the day after the Indiana primary confirmed that Donald Trump would be the Republican nominee for president, Kathleen Parker of *The Washington Post* was looking elsewhere—back a couple of days to an event that had happened during Ted Cruz's final, desperate attempt to seize a chance at the nomination for himself. Out of that desperation, Mr. Cruz had announced that, if nominated, he would choose Carly Fiorina as his vice-presidential running mate. Accordingly, Ms. Fiorina was introducing the Cruz family at an event in Lafayette, Indiana when, as they were entering the stage behind her, she briefly fell off it. From the video, it's pretty clear that the candidate himself didn't see this happen, though his wife did, and helped the would-be veep, who was unharmed, back up onto the platform in time to give her husband a hug when he arrived at the microphone. For a brief moment you can see Mr. Cruz glancing to his right to see Heidi pulling Carly back up, though he does not otherwise register any reaction to her fall. For Ms. Parker, that one glance was enough.

> One second, you're a candidate. The next, you're a cad. Whatever Cruz has wanted voters to think about him—the qualities and character that can't be gleaned from a résumé—he lost control of the narrative. His reflex in a crisis moment wasn't to help but to continue his march along the road to selfdom. But she was fine, some will object. She may have signaled to Cruz that she was okay and that he should continue. It doesn't matter. When a lady falls, a gentleman helps her up. Period. It was a rare opportunity for Cruz to shed his image as a reptilian barfly and trade his mom-jeans for Lycra tights and a cape. But, no. In a Titanic fail, he paddled away as his female crewmate foundered. Some may argue that chivalry is dead. Sadly so. Good men have been slapped too many times for paying a compliment or holding a door. Still, we want our presidents and their spouses to be ladies and gentlemen. And, for most women, equality was never meant to justify leaving them to fend for themselves—or for men to be treated as universally suspect.

Try to think of the last time you heard or read the word "cad" used unironically. Not easy. I can't imagine that any more than a tiny fraction of the *Post*'s readers under sixty—if there are any—are familiar with the word at all. Even in the United Kingdom, where memories of the old honor culture are a bit stronger, a recent obituary in *The Daily Telegraph* of one Michael "Dandy Kim" Caborn-Waterfield, a man who would seem to have fit the old definition of "cad" perfectly, describes him, rather, as a "gentleman adventurer"—itself a pretty obscure usage by now, I would have thought. But of course that may itself have been an instance of the gentlemanly rule—*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*—if you assume that "adventurer" is at least more *bonus* than "cad."

If it takes a chivalric revival for the columnist to signal her own virtue and so to work off a by-now wholly redundant political grudge, then so be it. I'm all in favor of it—the revival, not the grudge—but I couldn't help noticing

the irony of the publication date. To write, on the day that Donald Trump appeared to have clinched the nomination, that "we want our presidents and their spouses to be ladies and gentlemen," would seem, if anything would, to risk having one's punditry license revoked. Of course, Mr. Trump had been and still is being called many worse things than ungentlemanly, but he himself, never shy about parading what he regards as his own admirable qualities, might be expected to gag on any claim to being numbered among the ever-dwindling band of the country's gentlefolk.

Much was made just before the time of his Indiana victory of a caller to the Rush Limbaugh Show who, in explaining his preference for Mr. Trump over Mr. Cruz, said that he thought the latter to be altogether *too* gentlemanly and compared him to the notoriously gentlemanly Bush family. He didn't mean it as a compliment. "It's not really about, 'Well, you know, people are being fooled that he's not really conservative'," said Sean in Philadelphia. "It's not. I know he's not a conservative. The fact is, to put it simply, Trump will fight. Not only will he fight, he'll fight dirty, and the thing is we gotta get that. We have to have someone that's gonna fight in the mud, 'cause that's where our opponents are." Do you get the impression, as I do, that for a lot of people a vote for *either* Trump or Cruz has been a vote against precisely that gentlemanly Republican tradition represented by Jeb Bush, whose candidacy went nowhere?

I don't, by the way, think that Sean in Philadelphia is quite right about the Republicans' failure to fight during the last eight years (or to fight back during the previous eight), but you've got to admit that he's got a point about where the fight is likely henceforth to take place. I hope Kathleen Parker doesn't think it frightfully ungallant on my part if I point out, in agreement with Sean, that if Donald Trump is no gentleman, Hillary Clinton is nobody's idea of a lady. I forbear to mention the obvious about her spouse. And, like her prospective opponent, she is much less likely to want to claim the distinction than to think it would be an insult to her progressive bona fides. She's exactly the woman a lot of men can imagine slapping them "for paying a compliment or holding a door," to use Ms. Parker's words. And yet, from the lofty vantage point of *The Washington Post*'s op-ed page, this Southern belle (Ms. Parker, not Mrs. Clinton) is somehow able to dream that the election will be decided by people who want their presidents and their spouses to be ladies and gentlemen—or gentlemen and ladies, as the case may be.

Disliking Mr. Trump as I do, I wish this were so at least as fervently as Kathleen Parker does. But I can't let the wish blind me to the fact that it is not so. For the last three months, I have been writing in this space about what has happened to American politics as a result of our abandonment, thirty or forty years ago, of the honor culture which—as perhaps some people are beginning to realize—was built in to the Founders' assumptions about our democratic and constitutional institutions and without which those institutions may very well cease to function as they should—or at all. Indeed, insofar as the impending nominations of Mr. Trump and Mrs. Clinton as their parties' candidates for the presidency are symptoms of such a breakdown, this is already happening. Both are disliked (to put it no more strongly) by more people than admire or like them, and yet their march to the nomination has been unstoppable. There are technical reasons for this, particularly in Mrs. Clinton's case, but it cannot be denied that both candidates are expressions of the popular, democratic will among the most politically active Americans in the Year of Our Lord 2016.

Yet, somehow, it occurs to hardly anyone that we should see in this unlikely and ungentlemanly pair a reflection of our increasingly unlovely selves, addicted as we are to the vulgar celebrity culture out of which they have both emerged. E. J. Dionne of *The Washington Post* has written of "the stunning success of Donald Trump's crossover act" as "the demolition of the line between celebrity and political achievement," but, in this, Mr. Trump is only following the example of his prospective opponent, who emerged as a political figure in her own right out of her role as the wronged wife in the great political soap opera of the 1990s.

That is the grain of truth which lay behind Mr. Trump's outrageous claim that if she were not a woman she would not be winning so much as five percent of the vote.

Celebrity, as I may have mentioned before, is what rushes in to fill the cultural vacuum when honor is gone. Now we treat even the once–most honored of our public men of the past like celebrities. And, like all celebrities, they exist at the media's pleasure. So when the media and other politically correct gatekeepers of American history find that the great ones of the past have been guilty of such peculiarly post-1960s sins as racism, sexism, etc.—which they could hardly have foreseen as becoming sins at all—they may be expected to drop off their pedestals in the ensuing cultural earthquake. Fortunately for Alexander Hamilton, someone has thought to write a fabulously successful rap musical about him which portrays him as having risen out of the ranks of victimhood to his eminence among the Founders, so his presence on the ten dollar bill is said to have been preserved.

Instead, Andrew Jackson, slave-owner, Indian killer—and, we might add, as a frequent duelist a champion of the *very* old honor culture—had to give up his place on the twenty to Harriet Tubman, having already been purged from the Pantheon of Democratic Party heroes and heroines by that party's numerous exponents of political correctness. As it happens, several writers have found in Mr. Trump himself a rather Jacksonian figure—if not in terms of achievement at least in the sense that his appeal is to the same segment of the population that the General appealed to, though it is proportionally smaller now than it was in Jackson's day. This is the segment made up of mostly less well-off but independent-minded, mainly rural and small-town voters with a deep suspicion of urban, social, and political elites, who do not think of Adolf Hitler, or even Charles Lindbergh, whenever someone says "America First." It's almost enough to make you think that we have had the same two parties in America under different names since the beginning—*rus et urbe*, Paine vs. Burke, Jeffersonians vs. Hamiltonians, South and West vs. North and East, free silver vs. gold, the Mandarin elite vs. "the rabble." That word, by the way, is another one which (perhaps like "cad") James Traub of *The New York Times* thinks is due for a revival in the age of Trump. At least it is if it helps to keep the rabble down and out of power.

If the media have been slow to recognize this revival of an ancient division—and an ancient snobbery—among Americans, it must have something to do with a lingering conceit, not unlike that of Kathleen Parker, of their own honor culture, which they have yet to realize is as long gone as everyone else's. Glenn Kessler, famed "fact-checker" of *The Washington Post*, is another example. He takes his fellow journalists to task for not more frequently confronting Mr. Trump with those "Four-Pinocchio whoppers" that he, Mr. Kessler, has so helpfully pointed out for them. I know it's hard to believe, but this laborer in the vineyard of "fact" must think that, if only more authoritative journalists like himself joined the candidates' own chorusing of "liar!" against each other, people would believe them. He must suppose that people regard "fact-checking" journalists the way they regard themselves: as the disinterested final arbiters of what is truth and what is falsehood. He should apply himself to checking *that* fact. I think he might find it necessary to award himself at least a couple of Pinocchios.

At any rate, it's hard to deny the evidence that substantial numbers of people prefer to believe Mr. Trump rather than his critics, whether the latter are in the media or in the ranks of his now fallen opponents. A truly independent-minded person might wonder if there could be a reason for that, apart from mere stupidity or perversity. But then again, I suppose it's not really a surprise to find journalists obsessed with their own political virtue when so many principled Republicans and conservatives have rushed to embrace the cause of "NeverTrump." It must seem to the Trumpists that such people have cast their lot in with the politically correct, for whom purity of motive is the only thing that matters in politics. It might also occur to them that these bitter-enders are emulating the "Not in My Name" war protesters of a decade ago, people who think that politics is an excuse for proclaiming

their own high principles—virtue-signaling, as it has lately been called—rather than coming to terms with democratic realities.

I don't say that they are right about this, but isn't there something just the tiniest bit Pharisaical about the NeverTrumps? "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." It all reminds me of what the late Irving Kristol used to say about the sort of pure conservatism—now they call it libertarianism—that likes to bang on about Our Enemy, the State. "Guess what?," said Irving. "The State doesn't care." Libertarians have grown used to their own irrelevance—and, I fancy, rather proud of it—since Albert Jay Nock's day. I suppose high-principled conservatives might as well join them. Indeed, they already have, insofar as they have come to believe that there is political virtue simply in being irrelevant.

Sometimes, of course, there is, but I don't think we are yet in such a bad way as that, whatever the media's apocalyptic imaginings about Trumpism would have you believe. The fourth estate are themselves so solidly planted in the Mandarin class that they can no longer imagine what it is like to be outside it, looking in. And that failure of imagination on the part of an entrenched elite is why the media's endless animadversions against Donald Trump have been counterproductive. I share many of their opinions of Mr. Trump, but I find myself wondering more and more often if he isn't going to be hated and ridiculed and anathematized and boycotted right into the White House. The more loudly the media insist on their prerogative to tell the rabble who is and is not fit to lead them, the more firmly do the rabble insist that 'taint so—which they can only do by voting for the candidate monstered by the media, irrespective of whether he is an actual monster or not. On that subject, I prefer to offer no opinion, though I would just note that honor, in the absence of an honor culture to support it, ends in mere quixotism.

We mourn the passing of
Wendy Vanderbilt Lehman (1944–2016)
A valued supporter of The New Criterion

Verse chronicle

Foreign affairs

by William Logan

Frederick Seidel's long devotion to Savile Row suits, Cleverley shoes, Ducati motorcycles, and Patek Philippe watches—accoutrements of the one percent, or at worst the two percent—has made him seem, though he grew up among bobby soxers, a Beau Brummell past his sell-by date. If at eighty he's finally aged into himself, he's a man no less at odds with the world. Seidel lives in a bespoke suit of amused rage and disappointment.

The poems in *Widening Income Inequality*, a phrase much in the news (and a splendid name for a grunge band), display Seidel's poems at their most fetid and triumphant, their subjects often nipped from the headlines, phrases strewn like salt on an open wound, with a strong dose of political incorrectness added.[1]

> I'm Mussolini,
> And the woman spread out on my enormous
> *Duce* desk looks teeny.
> The desk becomes an altar, sacred.
> The woman's naked.
>
> I call the woman teeny only because I need the
> rhyme.
> The shock of naked looks huge on top of a
> desktop and the slime.
> *Duce! Duce! Duce!* is what girls get wet with.
> This one's perhaps the wettest one's ever met
> with.

It's hard to shock readers these days. Though Seidel's late poems court a blend of crassness and bad taste, wearing a boater and toting a bouquet, he's still the little boy—a little boy of eighty—who's learned a few bad words and wants to try them out. Short lines are followed by lines longer than the Lackawanna, syntax is pretzeled into shape; then there's the embarrassing but delicious admission that "teeny" isn't the right word at all—it's there just to catch the rhyme.

Seidel decided in mid-career to channel Ogden Nash. (That might have bewildered Nash more than anyone.) Nash's light verse, mostly forgotten now, often made the reader wait for a rhyme devised by some contortionist—sublime only because it was ridiculous. His "In the Vanities/ No one wears panities" compares favorably with Seidel's "In my astronomy, I lick her cunt/ Until the nations say they can't make war no more./ Her orgasm is violunt./ I get the maid to mop the floor." Once or twice in this collection, Seidel becomes a latter-day Byron (who, after all, rhymed "intellectual" and "henpecked you all"), but mostly it's Ogden Nash all the way down.

Seidel has invented a world—a world half Fellini, half fantasized by some creepy uncle with a taste for porn, overpriced haberdashery, and dirty jokes. In his lurid snapshots of the rich and shameless, Seidel has become a late-blooming Weegee, ready with his Speed Graphic and a pocketful of flashbulbs. The *bon ton* of Manhattan and elsewhere hasn't had such an anatomist since Wharton.

1 *Widening Income Inequality*, by Frederick Seidel; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 118 pages, $24.

Still, many of these poems are no more plotted than a train wreck: "Pussy Days" begins with contact lenses, followed by an odd moment in the Toyko subway, an incident in Bombay, tropical disease, a beautiful woman named Shireen, the Shah of Iran, the Shah's cancer, a parenthetical remark about the boss of Fiat, back to the Shah, then to the surgeon Michael DeBakey, tropical disease again, Hemingway in Paris, *A Farewell to Arms*, French riot police in 1960, the Algerian War, and at last Newark Airport. Having dipped into the swamps of memory, the poems often dredge up a load of muck.

On occasion this method, if it amounts to method, makes me want to rethink everything I dislike about Seidel. He watches a model train in a Christmas display:

> It circles the department store's Christmas tree all day,
> Into and out of a tunnel made of papier-mâché.
> It's a passenger train, but something queer,
> A freight train caboose brings up the rear.

That's not the only thing.

> It's a freight train with a yellow star,
> And has a Michelin yellow-star dining car.
> Sleeper compartments under sweeping-search-light guard towers.
> Hissing Zyklon B gas showers.

This dream vision, superimposing the Holocaust on children's toys, is as brutal and terrifying as Anthony Hecht's "'More Light! More Light!'" or "The Book of Yolek." It would be, that is, if not for the penultimate stanza, which shows Seidel's compulsion to wreck what he creates:

> In God's department store at Christmastime are many choo-choos.
> Chuff-chuffing to their death are many Jew-Jews.
> And then there are the Hutus,
> And Tutsis vastly murdering them, producing Hutu boo-hoos.

The descent into bathos is rarely so steep.

Seidel began as a follower of Lowell in *Life Studies* mode, an imitator so canny you couldn't always tell them apart. He's become the ultimate Peck's Bad Boy, not by drinking or drugging or whoring too much, but by setting down what others think but wouldn't dare express—or don't think and are sorry someone does. His poems begin like car bombs (the real thing, not the Millennial drink), and he has a sense of *discordia concors* that would have shocked poor Sam Johnson. Seidel is perverse, ludicrous, exhibitionistic, goofy, and so delighted by schoolyard vulgarity he has made it an Olympic event. He's a man who thinks it clever to rhyme "stool cards," "prison guards," "stool bards," "drool hards," and "school yards." Byron wept! Yet if you don't read him, for the rude fancy as well as the occasional flights of terror, you'll have missed something crudely eccentric—no, carnivalesque—in contemporary poetry.

It's hard to know what Maureen N. McLane's *Mz N: the serial* wants to be, it tries so hard to be something.[2] Next year with any luck we'll have *Mz N: the movie*, then *Mz N: the cookbook*, and, if the sequels come hot and fast, eventually *Mz N: for dummies*. This breezy little book lives under the Falstaffian shadow of Berryman's *Dream Songs*, though Mz N is just a scarecrow imitation of Henry. Many poets have tried to counterfeit Berryman's crackpot sequence, three-fifths brilliant and two-fifths mere sludge. The results have shown how difficult it is to imitate the inimitable.

McLane's ragged lines, often bobbed to a word or two, are only occasionally wrapped around a subject; really she's happiest nattering on with no destination in sight. The titles are not much help—"Mz N Trans," "Mz N Meadow," "Mz N Monster," "Mz N Thirteenth Floor," and so through a clatter of identities to places even Rand McNally would have trouble finding. The titles are just hooks on which to hang a jazzy monologue ("Mz N Hermit" opens with a hermit thrush), and often the only grounding lies in literature. The poems are as chock-a-block with allusion as Eliot, but a poet whose lines are rarely more appeal-

2 *Mz N: the serial: A Poem-in-Episodes*, by Maureen N. McLane; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 116 pages, $24.

ing than day-old oatmeal might be cautioned against throwing in, like a handful of raisins, the "Poet's self-centred/ seclusion" (Shelley), "look into thy heart" (Sidney, sort of), "why not say what happened?" (Lowell), or "with how sad steps/ o moon" (a triple play, Sidney to Wordsworth to Larkin). The echoes offer a devastating criticism of the language in which the poems are cast.

In some ways these rags of poems are strung together, like T-shirts on a clothesline, by Wordsworth's "growth of a poet's mind," as the second title of *The Prelude* had it. The great panjandrum of the Romantic era tried to write in the "real language of men"; and *Mz N* in plucky imitation offers a splash of Millennial slang here ("haters," "why don't you/ chill out"), comic obscenity there ("a hermit thrush/ says fuck all"), with scattered outbreaks of contemporary theory ("a classed grid/ a kind of massive erection of the self/ amidst the machinery/ of institutions"). I have trouble disliking a book that in a few lines goes from "Those that have the power/ to hurt and will do none" (Shakespeare, also misquoted) to "death metal."

Mz N's preferred mode is angsty free association, if association is ever free. She brings up Mary Shelley:

> What should we do
> Après le déluge
> Victor left Geneva
> Alien now alien in his natal home
> The Monster would have left
> for South America with his mate
> but for her murder & his ice rage
> Mary and Shelley left
> for France with Claire
> Then they left for Italy

It's hard to see the point of what seems torn from a page of term-paper notes.

In *Mz N*, a lot of things get said, or "sd": Hume, Arendt, Brecht, Gertrude Stein, even Beyoncé, among others, have things to say. Perhaps Robert Creeley can be blamed for "sd," blamed as well for the frantic short lines, weary concentration on trivia, and prosaic blandness. *Mz N* might be arch satire on the aimlessness of contemporary verse, but that would give it too much credit. The intelligence beneath the lines is never in focus.

When her sister asks her to be a surrogate mother, Mz N's response is curiously affectless:

> This was intriguing
> this was frightening
> as there had been no babies
> come thru her
> & to have a baby
> not her baby
> seemed a strong hard thing
> to split the body for.

(Then, more pungently, "Shitting/ a pumpkin/ is what a friend/ of Shulamith Firestone/ said in the late '60s/ it was like.") However much these poems talk about thinking, or think about talking, they're almost immune to the life beneath.

The old resentments and flyweight anguish of these underdeveloped scenes (the subtitle's subtitle is "A Poem-in-Episodes") might have been better diagnosed than embodied. McLane is so quiveringly sensitive to poetry, as her autobiographical criticism in *My Poets* made plain, she might think that dumbing down her work makes it performance art; but *Mz N* lacks the bravado of exposure or bravura language of the *Dream Songs*. McLane is a knowing poetry critic and Romantics scholar with two earlier books of poems not so unprepossessing. Much as I like the frenzied sprezzatura of these poems, the desperation never quite followed up the rare flashes of description ("maples liquefy/ into a queer green flame"), in the end reading them is like being trapped in an elevator with a meth head.

Les Murray writes poems galumphing, a bit tone deaf, out at elbows and knees. *Waiting for the Past* sounds like, not verse post-Eliot, post-Lowell, but the lost poems of McGonagall.[3] You can read pages of Murray and wonder if he's a poet at all; then your eye lights on a passage so strange, so breaknecked and roughnecked, that you'd mistake a pile of broken glass for diamonds in the rough:

3 *Waiting for the Past*, by Les Murray; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 81 pages, $24.

the steel houses it threw
all over Hindmarsh Island,

the barrages de richesse,
film culture, horseradish farms,
steamboats kneading heron-blue

lake, the river full again.
Upstream, the iron cattle bridges.

There have been very few poets who could turn pastoral description into encaustic, or think through landscape like Wordsworth—Murray makes Australia seem the next county over from the Lake District. The description is rarely ornament. It would be beneath him not to write with a purpose in mind.

Purpose, of course, is double edged. Murray's books suffer from long stretches of rabid hectoring, poems like scripts from a reality show called *Demagogues Go Wild*. He has little time for the Outback bucko going walkabout with his billycan, while sharing his cocksure traits—a Ned Kelly rage over obscure grievances, distaste for culture with a capital C, and of course hatred of nobs and experts of all sorts.

Such rants spiral into the sheer blithering of "Persistence of the Reformation":

four hundred years of ship-spread
jihad at first called
the Thirty Years War
buff coats and ships' cannon
the Christian civil war
of worldwide estrangement

freemasons, side massacres
the nun-harem, Old Red Socks
wives "turning" for husbands
those forbidden their loves
bitter chews of an old plug
from Ireland and Britain.

A lot of history has been put into the op-ed trash compactor here. Old Red Socks was Ian Paisley's name for the pope, but when a poet's shouting in your ear you don't want him to stop to explain. You just want him to stop.

There's a kind of Murray garble-speak—sentences malformed, metaphors skew-jawed:

The oblique rudder lever mis-thumbed
against its chisel opposite
crimps awry, gets re-occluded
biting corners off middle dabs.

Give up? A nailclipper cutting toenails. The title spells it out, but that's not always the case.

Some lines that seem mysterious, however, need only the twist of a pocket-watch key:

Cervantes. This one-strum pueblo
seen beyond acorn banksia
along a Benedictine surf—
never the Oz end of a cable, though.

How Spanish was the Indian Ocean?

Well, not.

This appears perfectly impenetrable unless you know that Cervantes is a small town north of Perth on the Indian Ocean. A ship named the *Cervantes* was wrecked close by. Acorn banksia (orange banksia) is a tree, or further north a shrub, with large orange flower spikes. For "one strum," perhaps read "hick"; for Benedictine, "mostly silent." The cable would presumably be transoceanic.

Murray shows a beautiful recklessness in his subjects. It's not just that *humani nihil a me alienum puto* must be tattooed on his forearm, but that he writes about things few poets would bother with: a cargo plane full of horses, English as a second language, the expansion of universities, a Bollywood video in an Indian restaurant, a girl who lets a boy cut off her finger. Consider Murray's titles: "Nuclear Family Bees," "Tap Dogs Music," "The Privacy of Typewriters," "Diabetica," "Big Rabbit at the Verandah," "Eating from the Dictionary"—the capaciousness of his imagination is often a little eaten away by the trivia it prefers.

If Murray is a Demosthenes with pebbles still in his mouth, if the poems are too often factory-floor leavings swept up with a push broom, if he's all too capable of overbearing images (chickens "crying in tin hell-ships/ warmed all night by shit-haloed bulbs") or lines that need a CIA codebook ("Balconious kung fu of Shanghai," "all that axed splinter cookery"),

that's just Murray being Murray, though I sometimes wish he were Murray less often. He's a non-pareil like Whitman—and about as much of a rough as that autodidact Brooklyn editor. Murray possesses many of the qualities of an extraordinary poet, but the talents are so frequently mismanaged you're surprised he's a poet at all. Non-pareils are like that.

Melissa Green published a gorgeous, flawed book in 1987, drenched in intoxicating description that concealed any intimations of damaged personality. Then she vanished. *The Squanicook Eclogues* should have been the beginning of a stunning career, but Green spent the following year in a mental ward. Apart from a memoir published in 1994 and a chapbook issued in a small edition almost a decade ago—I had to bribe a man with lunch to get a copy—she has lived on the margins of poetry, almost forgotten. When a writer disappears, unless he's J. D. Salinger, no one goes looking.

Magpiety is the wretched refuse of a career cut short, or cut to pieces.[4] *The Squanicook Eclogues* looks as gorgeous as it did thirty years ago, poems drifting along in deft alexandrines, surviving on the ghost of rhyme:

> After a blustery, fretful March, the fields have yawned,
> Tossing off their goosedown coverlets to thaw.
> In airing upstairs farmhouse rooms, the sunlight paints
> A sudden gold leaf on the dresser drawers and wall.
> In his oldest jacket, I wade the oxen road,
> And under my boots, a gingery leaf-fall breeds new growth.

In the midst of this Keatsian drowse, it's easy to overlook the resourceful meter or the rhymes that go beyond even Wilfred Owen, letting a couple of consonants or a vowel compose the echo. However lovely the layers of impasto, the sequence is a fever dream that leaves no recollection of what was said. When you return to the poems a second time, a third, what seemed an argument is just a series of beguiling images, the traffic of sensibility without sense—or perhaps where sense lies locked away. What she borrowed from Derek Walcott is clearer now.

The early poems nose along in a mood, offering arpeggios and variations like a young Mozart. Here and there something harsher emerges, showing how much she needed a polemical angel like early Lowell, who planed away at the world, rarely able to resist a savage point for more than a line or two. She swallowed him, like other influences, without becoming him:

> Does broken Carthage most resemble death,
> or do those workmen on the roof who lift
> a horizontal beam, stripped to the waist,
> still forge the final crosspiece of the West?

That might have been an outtake from *Lord Weary's Castle*, but the cautions of hope suggest how often her poems are a defensive withdrawal from her sources.

Green never lost the desire to write, however much circumstance conspired against her. The fragments of unpublished books collected here—poems mourning Joseph Brodsky or deriving from "Tom O'Bedlam's Song," a sequence about Heloise and Abélard, a clutch of poems she thought would be her last—reveal a mind dark with longing, driving toward extremities of expression, or language. This is Heloise:

> They dolved my mother's cophin when I was five.
> But at Argenteuil, I had a hundred mothers.
> The nuns nantled me with kisses, governed me
> with love, fed me on sculsh and sugared flawns.

For these lines not to be precious is a triumph. She says of the sequence, "I nearly had to invent a language," and at "nearly" the reader's ears should twitch—the words are English, but antique: *dolve*, a variant of "delve" (here, "to put . . . into the ground by digging," *OED*); *cophin*, coffin; *nantle*, to lift up; *sculsh*, rubbish; *flawn*, a custard or cheesecake.

Green often lets ideas run away with her. There's scarcely a sequence here, however truncated, that would not have been better even shorter. These haunting, haunted poems, the lines often airy as feathers, are scarred by

4 *Magpiety: New and Selected Poems*, by Melissa Green; Arrowsmith, 144 pages, $20 (paper).

psychic damage, by a life not fully lived—the imagination never finds a way fully to integrate itself, and the poems remain postcards from the abyss. In their scattershot focus, their trawlings from manuscripts lying in drawers, they do not avoid the fraught condition of their writing (she once almost lost a foot to infection), particularly in the valedictory poems:

> The reeds are writing their wills.
> Wind has given up braiding the white wisps of
> the salt hay's hair.
>
> There's no telling when the weather will turn.
> There's [*sic*] isn't a place
> in the world where I'm allowed to say—*I'm*
> *tired to death of life*.

Magpiety is not a selected poems in the usual sense. Like some whimsy of Borges, these fractioned books may never be whole. I'd guessed that "magpiety" was a portmanteau, letting "magpie" draw too near "piety," but not that it was first used by Thomas Hood in 1832. That catches her peculiar blend of chatty seriousness marked by touches of affectation, or affection. It's almost as if Green had been on a desert island for the past thirty years, or perhaps two centuries, with palm leaves for paper and ink made of soot and fish blood. Now she's back.

Marianne Moore is the most underrated of the great moderns. Frost, Pound, Eliot, Stevens, and Williams attracted critics galore, and each poet proved a major influence on the poetry of the next century. Pound was a maker of manifestos—but the poetry of the other men became manifestos of their own. Moore, whose ambitions were more cryptic, was such an unlikely poet, her subjects so absurd, her poems so off-kilter and difficult to grasp, she never had nearly such effect. Others attracted disciples by the hundred, Moore only a few—like Elizabeth Bishop—as singular as herself.

During the years of her greatest popularity, in the 1950s and '60s, Moore was writing her weakest work, having become a poetry mascot dragged out whenever the public needed to be reminded how peculiar poets were. Though she was asked to write liner notes for a spoken-word album by Cassius Clay and to name Ford Motor Company's latest showboat (eventually baptized the Edsel, through no fault of hers), such acceptance might as well be called refusal—these honors had nothing to do with her poems. Quirky poets rarely establish schools of poetry, at least not since Byzantium. Feeding her reputation for oddity was a way of denying how radical and original a poet she was.

Moore was thirty-three when friends in England secretly arranged to print her first book, *Poems* (1921). She had not been eager to publish and was appalled when the volume arrived in the mail unannounced. (Many reviews were unkind or uncomprehending.) Three years later, the editors of the *Dial* convinced her to publish a second book, incorporating most of the early poems. Moore's work attracted conspirators—the editors promptly awarded the book, *Observations*, the annual *Dial* prize (given in 1922 to *The Waste Land*).[5] That had been their plan all along. The reissue of the book now is an occasion to mark the work of a woman who, as great poets do, redefined the poetic.

Reading Moore's poetry is like getting slapped in the face with a frozen haddock. Who else would begin a poem about roses,

> You do not seem to realize that beauty is a
> liability rather than
> an asset—that in view of the fact that spirit
> creates form we are justified in supposing
> that you must have brains,

or one titled (her titles sometimes stood as the first line) "England,"

> with its baby rivers and little towns, each with
> its abbey or its cathedral,
> with voices—one voice perhaps, echoing
> through the transept—the
> criterion of suitability and convenience,

or a poem called "The Labors of Hercules," "To popularize the mule, its neat exterior/

5 *Observations*, by Marianne Moore, edited by Linda Leavell; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 119 pages, $16 (paper).

expressing the principle of accommodation reduced to a minimum"? Often you have to read her lines two or three times to take in the subtleties. Her poems are a triumph of empirical passion.

This is the poetry of an actuary from the sub-basement of the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company or some browbeaten minion crawling from the archives of Faber and Faber, a poet part Harvard professor, part safari guide, part fossil hunter. Poets are their influences; but Moore arrived full blown, possessing, like Whitman, only a scrappy relation to the poetry that came before. When you think of her precursors, you think, Darwin.

Moore never had a lyrical ear—she wrote in a thorny prose broken into the syllabics of intricate stanzas. Her rhymes, at first embarrassingly amateurish, later became far more daring, half-hidden like overgrown wayposts. Though her tightly bound family was fond of joky pet-names (Moore was usually Rat, but also Weaz, Pidge, and Fangs), her poems lacked warmth or sentiment. The modernists were more personal than critics once thought, but their tone (except for Frost and Williams) could be Arctic or bookish. Moore's habit of dropping lines from books or newspaper articles into her poems may seem like Cubist collage; but her thinking was provoked by the stray trash of reading—like Pound, who wrote the Adams Cantos with *The Works of John Adams* propped open on his desk. She was at home among discards. Consider her abecedary of animals—chameleon, dock rat, jerboa, pangolin, paper nautilus, snail, wood weasel. One of her animals was a steam roller.

The animal kingdom offered Moore a realm from which human behavior could be observed without intimacy. A poet who revealed emotion by displacement, she knew herself perfectly well when she wrote, "'The deepest feeling always shows itself in silence;/ not in silence, but restraint.'" Almost inevitably, she attributed the lines to someone else. You learn about Moore from the way she observes: the "elephants with their fog-colored skin," the mussel shell "opening and shutting itself like// an/ injured fan," or, from what is possibly a self-portrait, "your cheeks, those rosettes/ of blood on the stone floors of French châteaux." No one could have invented her; she had to invent herself.

Linda Leavell, who wrote a biography of the poet, has used the text of the second edition of *Observations*. The first had been produced quickly; after it sold out, Moore made one radical revision, one addition, and numerous small cuts and corrections, especially to punctuation. (She was an inveterate reviser whose fiddling bedevils critics even now.) The introduction, unfortunately, tries to drag Moore into the twenty-first century by the scruff of her neck, touting her as a poet who could "look beyond racial and national stereotypes," a "socially engaged poet, whose views about multicultural tolerance, biodiversity, . . . and individual liberty we are only now beginning to appreciate." Really? Moore would have laughed in her face—or scurried away, shaking her head. Had Aristotle somehow been transported to New York in the Coolidge years and happened across *Observations*, he would have said of this poetry always at right angles to itself, "There, there is poetry as I understand it."

Christopher Logue died in 2011, his translation of the *Iliad* unfinished. *War Music* collects the shattered parts of the greatest modern translation of Homer, on which Logue labored in fits and starts for half a century.[6] Though often true to the spirit of the poem, the translation radically revises the details, giving us an *Iliad* more vulgar, more brutish—and breathtakingly up to date. Pope, who reinvented Homer for the Augustans, looks like a piker in comparison.

Logue took a page from Pound, whose *Cathay* and *Homage to Sextus Propertius* gave poets license to alter an original wholesale. As Samuel Johnson remarked, "We must try its effect as an English poem; that is the way to judge of the merit of a translation." Boswell, in the same passage from his life of Johnson, says about Pope's Homer, "The truth is, it is impossible perfectly to translate poetry. In a different language it may be the same tune, but it has not the same

6 *War Music: An Account of Homer's Iliad*, by Christopher Logue; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 341 pages, $28.

tone. Homer plays it on a bassoon; Pope on a flagelet." Logue plays Homer with a bullhorn.

War Music starts like a film treatment:

> Picture the east Aegean sea by night,
> And on a beach aslant its shimmering
> Upwards of 50,000 men
> Asleep like spoons beside their lethal Fleet.
>
> Now look along that beach, and see
> Between the keels hatching its western dunes
> A ten-foot-high reed wall faced with black clay
> Split by a double-doored gate;
> Then through the gate a naked man
> Run with what seems to break the speed of light
> Across the dry, then damp, then sand invisible
> Beneath inch-high waves that slide
> Over each other's luminescent panes;
> Then kneel among those panes, burst into tears.

That's Achilles. The characters are everywhere rich with subtle attention. In a later scene, Hera and Athena approach. The gods turn around to see "(Steadying her red-sepal hat with the russet-silk flutes)/ Creamy-armed Hera with teenaged Athene/ (Holding their scallop-edged parasol high)/ As they wobble their way down the dunes,/ Shouting."

Donald Carne-Ross, the classicist and BBC producer who goaded Logue into tackling the poem, said in his foreword to Logue's *Patrocleia* (1963) that the poet was "far less 'civilized'" than Homer. Indeed, he's scarcely civil at all—Logue's gods are squabbling and vengeful ninnies; Agamemnon a high-handed tyrant, the Trump of his day; Achilles a petulant man-boy. No one comes off well, and the reader is reminded, despite the modern exaggerations, what a subtle psychologist Homer was.

Logue's *Iliad* is both contracted and accelerated. He's capable of metaphors soaked in finesse and penetration: "when the armies met, they paused,/ And then they swayed, and then they moved/ Much like a forest making its way through a forest"; Hector's "spear's tip flickers in the smoky light/ Like the head of a crested adder over fern." Logue also delighted in grating anachronism. Still, it would be overly prissy to give up Ajax "grim underneath his tan as Rommel after 'Alamein"; Diomedes "brimming with homicidal joy"; or Achilles:

> Observe his muscles as they move beneath his skin,
> His fine, small-eared, investigative head,
> His shoulders' bridge, the deep sweep of his back
> Down which (plaited with Irish gold)
> His never-cut redcurrant-coloured hair
> Hangs in a glossy cable till its tuft
> Brushes the combat-belt gripping his rump.

The description, however out of place (Irish gold in ancient Greece?), is brutally effective.

When Logue writes, "It was so quiet in Heaven that you could hear/ The north wind pluck a chicken in Australia," the reader might be forgiven for wondering how many chickens lived Down Under three thousand years ago. But who would want to miss seeing a deadly arrow "float on/ Over the strip for a beat, a beat; and then/ Carry a tunnel the width of a lipstick through Quist's neck." (Logue frequently had his way with Homeric names—Troy's bit characters seem to have wandered in from the Klingon Empire.) An Uzi here, a fighter plane there, some bread trucks trundling along—all remind us of our distance from Homer, and oddly sometimes our nearness, too. Men still kill each other hand to hand.

Logue knew no Greek, like Pound and Lowell translating piggy-back on the translations of others. That may seem akin to using a glove box to handle radioactive isotopes, but the method offers great freedom in exchange for loss of fidelity. Whoever Homer was, if he was anyone at all, he inherited a poetic form and a hoard of phrases from what may have been half a millennium of bardic singers. The *Iliad* was the work of centuries, with a jumble of arms and armor never seen on a battlefield together. The epic was likely no closer to the original than *Hamlet* had an ancient society of Shakespeare fanatics preserved the play in public recitals, knowing only iambic pentameter, the major incidents, and phrases lodged in memory. Logue has given us piecemeal, from the burnt scrolls of Herculaneum or the rubbish dumps at Oxyrhynchus, an *Iliad* Homer would still have recognized as his own.

Books

The inexorable truth

by Victor Davis Hanson

The word *Somme* has become synonymous with obscene. This July 1, 2016 marks the hundredth anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme—the worst single-day experience in British military history. The World War I bloodbath saw over 20,000 British and imperial troops killed or never accounted for, and another 35,000 wounded—all in just the first few hours of a head-on assault against entrenched German lines near the Somme River in France. After Zero Hour on July 1, the British fell at the rate of eight men per second. Andrew Roberts notes that "By 8:30 a.m. just under half of the 66,000 British soldiers who had attacked in eighty-four battalions were casualties."[1]

The centennial of the nightmare this year has already birthed a series of commemorative analyses, which, in the custom of the last century, still seek to make sense of the surreal. Why exactly for 141 days did the British Expeditionary Force, along with its French allies, so unimaginatively continue to batter well-entrenched German positions? When the months-long battle wound down in mid-November, the Western Front in northern France was pushed back eastward only about six miles, along a line less than thirty miles long—at the price of a million Allied and German soldiers killed or maimed.

Over the last century, even the revisions of the Somme have been revised. Along with Passchendaele and Verdun, the battle almost immediately seemed to define a European lost generation, whose leaders had supposedly sacrificed the old order for little more than dynastic rivalries. We still tag the Somme with a variety of consequences and legacies: supposedly callous château generalship, the catalyst for postwar modernism in art and literature, the end of patriotism, the anti-war poetry and prose of Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves, the reactive birth of Blitzkrieg, later British and French appeasement, and the Allied postwar emphases on air power—but most always with the annihilation of British manhood for ostensibly nothing.

The distinguished British military historian and biographer Andrew Roberts's anniversary take is more nuanced and empathetic. His succinct treatment is confined to the battle's first day and entitled *Elegy*, at first glance a misnomer given the usual vocabulary—disaster, catastrophe, outrage—associated with the battle. But tragedy, not melodrama, is Roberts' commemorative homage to the bravery of hundreds of thousands who did their duty, fought, died, or were maimed—and mostly failed to achieve long-term British objectives. Roberts is adamant that the dead were not betrayed by their generals, at least not deliberately and callously so, and that ultimately they contributed to the Allied victory.

Roberts does not seek to wade into the detailed acrimony and controversies of what went wrong with the battle plan, or to offer even a systematic and continuous narrative of the day's events. Instead he notes that the British never

1 *Elegy: The First Day on the Somme*, by Andrew Roberts; Head of Zeus, 320 pages, $29.95.

really articulated what was to follow strategically should the attackers break through and thus were never quite sure what the point of the later twenty weeks of carnage were all for. Instead, as the title implies, Roberts mostly offers first-hand accounts of the killing (enriched by his own exploration of the terrain of the Western front), collated from a variety of memoirs, contemporary news accounts, and official reports, with chapter headings organized in rough sequential order from pre-battle planning ("Strategy," "Tactics," "Preparations") to the day's battle itself ("Zero Hour" and "The First of July") and final assessments ("Aftermath," "Lessons Learned," and "Conclusions").

Many of the primary source accounts make graphic reading of shredded bodies, excrement, rats, and vaporized soldiers ("Others might have been old or young. One could not tell because they had no faces and were just masses of raw flesh in uniforms."). Irony abounds. General Haig's idea of unleashing an artillery barrage, unlike any seen in military history, to soften the German lines up certainly seemed practicable during the week before the battle. His artillery corps fired 1,627,824 shells along the Somme front. As one German survivor of the barrage described what in the end turned out to be an ineffective storm of shrapnel, "Tomorrow evening it will be seven days since the bombardment began. We cannot hold out much longer. Everything is shot to pieces." Before Zero Hour even the British gunners felt sorry for the targeted Germans, who nonetheless were quick to emerge from their dug-outs to slaughter Tommies in withering machine-gun cross-fire: "I could not resist feeling sorry for the wretched atoms of humanity," one British artillery gunner remarked of his own bombardment, "crouching behind their ruined parapets, and going through hell itself. Modern war is the most cruel thing I ever heard of."

In truth, the artillery barrages (which were responsible for about 60 percent of all combat deaths in World War I) were woefully inadequate—given the expansive front and the extent of the German labyrinth of trenches. The shelling started too soon before the battle and tipped off the Germans of the big push to come. They for most part retreated deeper into the earth and to the rear within their superior subterranean networks, and simply waited out the barrage. Too many British shells were duds. There were too few guns to target German batteries and to stop counter-artillery fire against the attack. Despite elaborate British efforts to bury phone lines, communications with the advancing front ranks were too sporadic to redirect artillery fire into German machine-gun positions. Their murderous cross-fires wasted thousands of British troops, who plodded through the mud with over sixty pounds in their backpacks.

What does Roberts, the historian and memoirist, make of it all? He notes of the dead and wounded, "Sometimes it can be hard to visualize such huge numbers. To get a sense of the extent of the slaughter, roughly the same number of Britons (and Newfoundlanders) were killed and wounded on the first day of the Somme as there are words in the main body of text in this book." His assessment could be best called "balanced" and comes to conclusions similar to at least four of the most recent biographies of British commander of the British Expeditionary Force, Sir Douglas Haig, that dispense with the idea that British generalship was out-of-touch, self-serving, uncaring, and in the end tactically imbecilic: "Often depicted as a heartless butcher, Haig was in fact anything but." By the same token, Haig's German counterparts were likewise professional and occasionally astute. Rupprecht, Crown Prince of Bavaria, who commanded the targeted German Sixth Army, was no rigid Prussian militarist. By all accounts, he was sensitive to the quandary of the Western Front and one of the few German royals who deserved his high command on the basis of talent and preparation rather than connections.

If Haig's plan to blast open the German trenches and march through to open countryside was unrealistic, given British limitations in follow-up artillery, supplies, and manpower, he may have been at least on the right track in preferring that the Somme attack should have been launched on a narrower front with more intense and shorter bombardment. In Haig's defense, Roberts in various ways makes the argument that by summer 1916, for good or evil,

there were not very many alternatives to expelling the German army—the finest and most feared land force in the world on the eve of the war—from Belgium and Northern France: "If there was a way of fighting the First World War that did not involve trying to smash frontally through formidable enemy defenses, neither side discovered one. This was Haig's dilemma." Certainly sitting in fetid trenches would not relieve the beleaguered French to the south at Verdun, who were reeling under weeks of concurrent German offensive hammer blows. On other fronts, the Russians and Italians were also wearying under the Central Powers' pressure. Blasting a hole in German lines along a northern front, then, was not just Haig's idea of saving the fragile Entente and putting an end to the misery of trench warfare, but had been agreed on by the Allies at the 2nd Chantilly Conference of December 6–8, just months prior.

Perhaps nothing short of outright victory and the end of the war could justify such horrendous sacrifice. But that said, did *anything* good come out of the Somme? Roberts, who acknowledges British lapses both in preparation and operation, goes somewhat further than most historians, in noting that the meat grinder at the Somme probably eased pressure from the French effort at Verdun, and by implication saved the very existence of the French Army as a fighting force. British tenacity and courage shocked the German General Staff. Previously, they had hardly imagined that a maritime power like Britain could slam it out in an infantry offensive against the imperial Germany army. That reality of a permanent slugfest began to force the Germans to look elsewhere for victory, such as unrestricted submarine warfare that proved catastrophic for the Central Powers by bringing in the United States.

Tactically, after the Somme, the British army gradually refined its operational doctrine and learned how to slice more deeply through German lines. Firepower had to become more narrowly focused, with artillery barrages synchronized far better to the actual time and progress of the infantry advance, and, when possible, spearheaded by hundreds of clumsy tanks along with air support. Those lessons from the Somme finally bore fruit in late summer 1918 when the final big Allied push shattered the German army.

The succinct *Elegy* is not one of Roberts's signature comprehensive histories such as his World War II history *The Storm of War* or biography *Napoleon: A Life*. But it is similarly elegantly written with his characteristic good sense and keen analysis. It succeeds well in reminding us that war is far too complex to sum up as a story of fools and geniuses, villains and heroes, although such Manicheans often play prominent roles in the course of conflicts. Perhaps the book's message—given that Roberts repeatedly juxtaposes memoirs of the surreal slaughter to anecdotes of the unshakeable morale and discipline of the British soldier—is that some 400,000 British youth were in history's wrong place at the wrong time, and yet managed by their heroism to help prevent a general collapse of the entire Allied cause. And from their sacrifice at the Somme came a weakening of imperial Germany, reassurance for a tottering France, and the tactical knowledge for an eventual victory:

> Slaughter on the Somme was tragically unavoidable. The Allies were forced to try to liberate Belgium and northern France from the Germans in a war that could not have been fought in any other way than a series of attritional battles on a continental scale. That is the dreadful, inexorable truth, and part of that steep learning curve had to evolve through trial and costly error.

Golden years

Edward Dusinberre
Beethoven for a Later Age:
Living with the String Quartets.
University of Chicago Press, 262 pages, $30

reviewed by John Check

When the twin Voyager probes were launched from Cape Canaveral in 1977, they each carried with them a Golden Record. Containing audio recordings of natural

sounds, spoken greetings in a host of languages, and musical works from around the world, the record was a time capsule of life on earth. It was intended, as Edward Dusinberre writes, "to convey a snapshot of humanity to any space traveller who might find it in the future." The last musical selection on the record, performed by the Budapest Quartet, was the fifth movement of Beethoven's Op. 130 string quartet, a work deemed by the panel of experts selecting the music as one of humankind's most sublime achievements.

Beethoven's quartets are the main theme of Dusinberre's book, and they afford him a way of making sense of the composer's immensely complicated life. So it is that we meet first the youngish man whose Op. 18 quartets, six all told, were published in 1801. Later we find the older man who, with his Op. 95 "Serioso," seemed to bid farewell to quartet writing; fourteen years passed before he wrote another. Finally, we behold the invalid, near death in late 1826, composing an alternative ending to Op. 130, which originally concluded with the "incomprehensible" *Grosse Fuge*. Powerful patrons are depicted, such as Count Andrei Kirillovich Razumovsky (the dedicatee of the three Op. 59 quartets) and Prince Karl Lichnowsky (whom Beethoven never could respect). Mentioned, too, are little-known figures who showed the composer small but impressive kindnesses. With feeling, Dusinberre writes of the composer's struggles with deafness, captured in the Heiligenstadt Testament. He also relates the pathetic ups and many downs of a man temperamentally unsuited for the role of guardian of his nephew, Karl (who was so often overwhelmed by his "needy" uncle that he once attempted suicide).

All of this is told from the perspective of a man who is himself a superlative performer: Edward Dusinberre, the first violinist of the Takács quartet. The Takács, founded in 1975, winners of a Grammy award, and the quartet-in-residence at the University of Colorado Boulder, has recorded all sixteen of Beethoven's quartets. Dusinberre's immersion in the composer's life and works was undertaken, he writes, "to prevent the music [from] ever becoming too comfortably familiar." His having taken physical possession of the music and achieving mastery over it lends the book special authority.

The book's subordinate theme centers on the dailiness of life in a professional string quartet. Dusinberre tells the unlikely story of how, as a twenty-three-year-old Englishman, he joined an established group whose remaining three members were all Hungarians. Not merely did he join, but he became the lead voice, the first violinist, the man at the helm. We follow him as he works his way into his role as a chamber musician—a role requiring, simultaneously, individual assertiveness, attentiveness to others, and ample discretion. We feel his sense of loss, soon after joining, at the death of the quartet's original violist. There are lesser challenges for other members—shoulder surgery and blocked arteries—along with the usual unpredictabilities, frustrations, and satisfactions of life as professional concert artists. There are hours upon hours of rehearsal and practice.

The transition between these two themes is provided by the figure of Ignaz Schuppanzigh, the Viennese violinist and leader of a quartet that premiered many of Beethoven's works. Schuppanzigh performs a dual role in the book. For one thing, he serves as foil to Beethoven; the contrast between the two—between the professional musician and the genius composer—couldn't be sharper. He also serves as a repository for Dusinberre's imaginative sympathy. In a concert featuring the Op. 127 quartet, for example, Schuppanzigh broke a string and had to finish the night clumsily on an instrument with just three strings. Dusinberre comes to his defense by pointing out that he used gut strings, which break more easily than today's synthetic strings. In another place, where the composer mocks the violinist for his rotundity, one can almost feel the author wince. Dusinberre is good also at capturing the wounded pride of a performer encountering a setback in his career—in Schuppanzigh's case, an embarrassing public performance—and his subsequent recovery.

The weakness of this otherwise excellent book resides in the quality of its analyses. First, there are mechanical considerations. About a dozen musical examples are set out in notation, but only one shows all four parts and another shows but two; all the others consist of single lines of music. Furthermore, bar numbers are identified in a list of examples at the beginning of the book, not within the music itself; this makes finding one's bearings in the score harder than it ought to be. More important, the analyses are too brief to be effective; they are simply not detailed enough. At the same time, they are too detailed for readers who cannot read music or who do not understand its terminology. Let two examples suffice. In multiple places, Dusinberre refers to the development of a sonata-form movement. Fine, but the significance of a development cannot be understood without also understanding that of its flanking parts, the exposition and the recapitulation. He also refers at times to a diminished seventh. Context, though, is required to tell whether this refers to a two-note interval or a four-note chord—the context presupposing a goodly degree of musical sophistication.

Dusinberre's commentary is most successful when he speaks metaphorically. Consider his remarks about a part of Op. 132: "Towards the end of the section there is no doubting the rustic character of the viola and cello's loud and rude interruption of the dance: they are a couple of belligerent intruders shattering the idyllic atmosphere before making an equally abrupt exit." He concludes by suggesting that "the end of the Trio now [blurs] the line between reality and memory."

Dusinberre's prose style is commendably transparent, enabling one to see through his words directly into his meanings. At times his tone acquires a certain tartness, thanks to an ironic twist or a bit of deftly deployed understatement. Apropos of the latter, he tells of a slip he once made (a mistake in counting rests) that caused a performance to go awry; the musicians, flailing about, hoping to find each other, made a hash of the compositional logic of the piece. Finally, a demonstrative downbeat was given and the final chord sounded. "It is a wise plan," he notes, in perfect deadpan, "to finish any piece with a chord in the key intended by the composer."

At the end of the book, Edward Dusinberre writes that anyone "who engages with Beethoven's music—as an audience member or a professional or amateur string quartet player—is a lucky custodian of his restless, enquiring spirit." Dusinberre has been a faithful custodian of music that Beethoven himself believed was intended "for a later age." In reality, of course, it is music for all ages. And, as suggested by the inclusion of the Golden Record in the Voyager probes, it is music universal in its appeal.

Growing pains

Robert J. Gordon
The Rise and Fall of American Growth. Princeton University Press, 784 pages, $39.95

reviewed by Timothy Congdon

Endless economic growth, culminating in the world's highest living standards, is part of the way that America—meaning "the United States of America"—sees itself. The phrase "the American dream" is hackneyed, but even the one word "America" can become a metaphor of desirability and longing. In Jacques Brel's 1962 song, Madeleine was the alluring but difficult to attain girlfriend who was "mon Amérique à moi." The first generation of Europeans after the Second World War yearned for America almost as a distant vision, although there was only the Atlantic between their shattered continent and its real-world embodiment of economic dynamism and success.

One thesis of Robert J. Gordon's *The Rise and Fall of American Growth* is that the United States did indeed enjoy a period of exceptional growth, between 1920 and 1970, that transformed living standards for the better. In these five decades, output per hour rose by just over 2.8 percent a year, enabling people simulta-

neously to improve their material circumstances and to enjoy more leisure. (Because of compound interest, productivity growth of 2.8 percent a year results over fifty years in a quadrupling of a worker's output.) But Gordon also identifies subsequent deceleration and relative failure. In the forty-four years to 2014 output per hour went up at the much slower rate of 1.6 percent. The last decade, blighted by the Great Recession of 2008 and 2009, has been particularly disappointing.

Gordon is worried. In his words, the American economy faces "headwinds" so serious that in coming decades the "growth of real median disposable income per person will be barely positive and far below the rate enjoyed by generations of Americans dating back to the nineteenth century." The evidence for the slowdown in growth is in official statistics, which are difficult to dispute. Will the problems become entrenched? If the United States were to be a nation of economic torpor and "secular stagnation" (to quote the buzz phrase), its self-image and global reputation would be undermined. Even more fundamental, the attractiveness of its style of free-market capitalism might come into question. For all of the twentieth century the United States had the world's largest economy, but on some measures it has now lost that status to China. Does America's remarkable economic vitality lie in the past?

The Rise and Fall of American Growth is unquestionably an important book that raises fundamental questions about the United States's economy and society. Its conclusions, however, are far from compelling. Although its explanation of the American economic track record is well argued and relatively uncontroversial, almost nothing in this explanation is relevant to Gordon's conjectures about the future. Sure enough, there was a discontinuity in the American growth record at about 1970, as Gordon demonstrates. But there is also a discontinuity in his book on the subject. The gloomy forecast in Chapter 18 on "Inequality and other headwinds: long-run American growth slows to a crawl" is not logically implied by the analysis in the first seventeen chapters.

Gordon had previously written influential academic articles on the bunching of "the Great Inventions" in, roughly speaking, the two generations from 1880. The wave of Great Inventions (above all, electricity and the internal combustion engine) constituted, in his view, "a second Industrial Revolution." The period of fast economic growth in the fifty years to 1970 can then be attributed essentially to the diffusion of the new ideas and their adoption across the economy. Gordon, rather paradoxically, identifies the Depression and the Second World War as drivers of the exceptional productivity growth seen in the late 1930s and 1940s. The Depression was followed by the New Deal, which promoted unionization and minimum wage legislation, which in turn forced companies to adopt more productive methods so that they could meet union demands and pay higher wages. The Second World War gave an artificial boost to spending on factories and machine tools, as well as to highly efficient mass production of armaments, and these developments further increased output per worker.

Gordon acknowledges that recent decades have seen remarkable advances in computer technology and digitalization, and allows them to be called "the third Industrial Revolution." The third Industrial Revolution was evidenced in an apparent acceleration in productivity growth in the late 1990s, much celebrated at the time in the stock market's "dotcom bubble." But the value of the new technologies was exaggerated and the productivity surge did not last long. To quote, "Although [the third Industrial Revolution] was revolutionary, its effect was felt in a limited sphere of economic activity, in contrast to [the second Industrial Revolution], which changed everything."

A weakness of Gordon's discussion of the past is that for most of the time it relies on a simple growth accounting framework (in which output depends on the number of workers, the hours they work and their output per hour) and, well, anecdote. The anecdote may be informed by numerous references to the journal literature, but anecdote

it remains. The relative importance of—say—electricity and telephony is not assessed rigorously. Moreover, Gordon does not refer in any depth to the theory of economic growth. For example, Adam Smith, whose remarkable work on *The Wealth of Nations* appeared in the same year as the Declaration of Independence, is not noted. Smith was the first theorist of modern economic growth and could be seen as the prophet of "America," where America is the land of boundless possibility. His emphasis on trade as the key to specialization, and the resulting gains from the division of labor and economies of scale, could be in Gordon's book somewhere.

The simplicity of the growth accounting framework and the omission of Adam Smith ought to make readers pause to wonder about how carefully Gordon derives his conclusions. Sure enough, the more complex growth accounting framework pioneered by Robert Solow in the 1950s is mentioned, but in this reviewer's opinion it is not properly integrated into the book's main themes. The Solow approach—which attempts to measure the contributions of labor and capital inputs to output growth, and usually shows that output rises faster than the sum of these contributions by a somewhat mysterious "residual"—is not the only analytical game in town. But it does help in making comparisons of economic growth across space and time, and in understanding differences in growth rates in different periods and different nations.

Gordon claims that "the residual" is often associated with—indeed, might even be equated with—"innovation." This is open to question. Throughout *The Rise and Fall of American Growth*, innovation is about the discovery and emergence, not the copying and multiplied application, of new technologies. A famous 1967 Brookings Institution study of *Why Growth Rates Differ* by Edward Denison deployed the Solow model to identify the causes of the extraordinarily high growth rates in continental Europe (not Britain) in the twenty years from 1945. Its message was that the rapid increase in output was mostly due to "the residual," not to growth of the labor force and the capital stock.

But where did that buoyant residual come from? An obvious answer is at hand. In a world where capital and ideas were flowing freely between nations on an ever-increasing scale, Europe—the Europe of Jacques Brel and his contemporaries, who had once been so entranced by "mon Amérique à moi"—could copy existing American technologies. By the 1980s Europe had gone far to catch up with America. But that was due to imitation, not innovation. More generally, the residual is high when nations, or indeed regions, companies or individuals, become aware of already developed superior ideas and methods, and adopt and replicate them. The astonishing economic growth of Japan from the 1950s to the 1990s, and of China since Mao's death in 1976, is also best understood in these terms.

It follows that rapid output growth is most likely when large differences are found in output per head between countries, and also between regions, companies, and individuals. Copying that which already exists is much easier than inventing something entirely new. Moreover, because inequality in incomes is the result of large differences in output per head, a high level of inequality should presage above-average output growth. The twentieth-century United States has a good illustration of the playing-out of this idea in practice. Thomas Piketty's best-selling *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* has two charts that bear on the question, one on income inequality in the leading English-speaking countries and the other on inequality in the United States itself. Both charts show that the United States had all-time peak inequality in 1929. This was just ahead of the Great Depression, but it was also early in the 1920–70 period of strong productivity growth that Gordon lionizes.

But in Chapter 18 Gordon identifies the "dimensions of rising inequality" as the first headwind that will check economic growth. That cannot be right. Inequality *by itself* is good for future growth, simply because of the ease of learning and copying relative to the difficulty of innovating. That is why Europe and China are so much closer to the United States in living standards today than

they were in 1945, and it is at least part of the reason for the post–1929 productivity surge in the United States. Sure enough, inequality may be the symptom of dysfunctional characteristics of an economy and indeed of a society, and—if these characteristics persist—that may hold back economic growth.

But the condition "only if these characteristics persist" has to be noticed. Gordon offers a contentious diagnosis and a faulty prognosis. The negatives for future economic growth are the various kinds of dysfunction found in modern America (high levels of incarceration, widespread drug taking and abuse, sub-standard state education). The positives for future economic growth are the ability of capable and intelligent human beings to address the dysfunctional features of their society (high levels of incarceration, etc.), so that the poor, badly educated, and indigent of one generation are the better-off, better-educated, and diligent of the next. The American dream is all about the overcoming of inequality, as people make better lives for themselves.

Let it be acknowledged that the inequalities in American society are deep-seated and have persisted over the generations. But large gaps in income and wealth are not ineradicable. Gordon overlooks the significance of religion for American inequality, perhaps because he views it as a somewhat indelicate topic. Lisa Keister's 2011 *Faith and Money* reported that the net worth of Jews, who constitute less than 1.5 percent of the United States's population, is over four times the national average. She also observed that "human-capital acquisition, [and] family behavior and processes" had contributed to the Jewish achievement. Specifically, to quote her words, "educational attainment is high among Jews, fertility rates are low, rates of female employment when children are young are low, and wealth [of parents concerned for their children's upbringing] appears to follow."

People with other religious beliefs are not blind. They can see the importance of family structure to the transmission of human capital between the generations and the critical importance of the early acquisition of such capital to later success in life. Keister's data showed that Episcopalian and Presbyterian Protestants remain, over 300 years after they founded the American colonies, among the United States's richest citizens. They also showed that white Catholics—descended from the Irish so despised in the nineteenth century and the Italians at the bottom of the heap in the early twentieth century—are catching up with the Protestants.

Chapter 18 indicts the United States's unsatisfactory public education system, its demographic challenge as the baby boomers reach retirement age, its high and rising public debt, and global warming and resource depletion. The list is exactly what one would expect from a university professor who, like far too many such, nature contrived to be born into the world as a politically correct liberal. Unhappily, Gordon's list is not one that makes any sense given the contents of his previous seventeen chapters. The suspected villains in Chapter 18 are new to the plot. Whereas changes in productivity growth in the United States's historical record are attributed in the seventeen earlier chapters to variations in the pace of technical progress and capital investment, these two considerations hardly appear in Chapter 18. The first seventeen chapters are about machinery and technology; Chapter 18 is about human beings, and, to be blunt, their moral and intellectual quality. Here is the discontinuity that vitiates Gordon's thesis. (Keister's *Faith and Money* is a serious and honest attempt to understand inequality over the generations. Tellingly, it is not cited as one of the 500 books and articles in Gordon's references.)

Further, as with inequality, it is easy to pick holes in Gordon's position. Agreed, the United States does have a public debt problem, not least because social security entitlements are unsustainable. But—even after the fiscal policy blunders of the George W. Bush and Obama administrations—the ratio of federal and state debt to gross domestic product is no more than 105 percent. In 1945 the figure was over 150 percent. Yet 1945 was slap bang in the middle of the years

identified by Gordon as experiencing very strong productivity growth. As in other parts of the book, the neglect of economic theory is distressing. Yes, there are theories that propose that high public debt restrains output growth, but, no, these theories are not universally—or even widely—endorsed by most people who call themselves "professional economists."

Gordon's book on *The Rise and Fall of American Growth* is a valuable contribution to the public-policy debate. For good and topical reasons it asks whether the American economy can achieve the same dynamism in the twenty-first century as in the twentieth, and so challenges familiar elements in America's traditional self-image. Without continued economic growth, the United States would cease to be "America." But Gordon's pessimism about the future has a different analytical basis from his mostly optimistic survey of the past, and the gloom and doom may prove overstated.

Names & prices

Simon de Pury & William Stadiem
The Auctioneer:
Adventures in the Art Trade.
St. Martin's Press, 228 pages, $25.99

reviewed by Benjamin Riley

The trouble starts on the first page of Simon de Pury's memoir, *The Auctioneer*. What could one expect of a book that begins with the sentence: "If anybody needed a rebound, it was I"? He uses the word "tycoon" twice and bellows the faux-literary exhortation—"O Captain!" There is no relief to be found on the second page where de Pury, the former president of the Phillips de Pury auction house, compares the breakup of his affair (with ARTINFO's patroness, Louise Blouin MacBain) to the felling of the Twin Towers by al Qaeda. On that very same page the author asks us to "please excuse [his] delusions of grandeur," but not before finishing the sentence by saying that they "actually did have some foundation in reality." This must be the same reality that causes de Pury to suggest that in falling for the artist Anh Duong, who "could surely be said to be the distaff trophy of the art world," he had answered "a similar siren call" to the one that "had lured Odysseus to near-disaster." We are, of course, still on the second page. Later we are subjected to an account of de Pury's sartorial habits: his suits are from Caraceni and his red leather diary is from Smythson. In the words of an old Scottish television commercial: "I once had an Irn-Bru too, but you don't hear me going on about it."

It would be a tiresome exercise to point out each instance of a mottled cliché or dreadful line of prose or nettlesome name-drop, but a few more will be illustrative. Many times all three of the aforementioned sins populate the same sentence: "This was art, not sex. Such was Anh's immersion in *la vie bohème*, Chelsea version. But art is sexy, as sexy as anything, and eventually something started between us." "Microsoft's Paul Allen, Mr. Seattle, was a huge benefactor of the emerging art scene in that Nirvana of tech. Mary liked the idea of bringing the mountain to Mohammed." "As I previously noted [who could forget?], Anh is one of the only true bohemians I know. She has no false modesty, no prudery. There's nothing *Swiss* about her, like the high-propriety people I had grown up around." OK—I'll stop the cruelty.

Actually, please allow me one more. Since this is, ostensibly, a book about art, or at the very least that nebulous construction known as "the art world," we should hear what the author, who, it must be admitted, is a major figure in said world, has to say about it. In a chapter called "Going Contempo," we get de Pury's *longue durée* view of the art market.

> Contemporary art is the New Old Masters. That's because there aren't any more Old Masters for dealers and auction houses to sell. They're all in museums. The same is becoming the case for Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, which are increasingly rarely found in private collections. And as time goes by, even

twentieth-century modern art gets a bit long in the tooth. The Abstract Expressionists, Jackson Pollock et al., seem Old Masterly.

I suppose the Old Masters sales that Christie's and Sotheby's continue to put on are nothing but a charade? The author projects his lack of interest in traditional art onto the art world without pausing to consider whether what he says has any relation to reality. De Pury refers to Michael Douglas as Gordon Gekko in 1987's *Wall Street* in saying that "greed is good," and it may indeed be for de Pury, who has enriched himself mightily by operating in the always increasingly bizarre contemporary art market. But he mistakes the price of a work for its value. In fact, he admits as much in saying that "in today's pecuniary scorecard of greatness, the price of an artist's work is often taken to be the measure of a man. What else could serve as a common denominator for the diverse tastes of Wall Street, Russia, China, and Arabia?" De Pury buys into this pernicious idea fully. Not once, by my count, does he mention the formal qualities of a work: composition, brushwork—you know, those pesky things we're taught to look for and appreciate in art history classes. Inevitably when he mentions a work of art, it is either directly preceded or followed by its price. Early in the book de Pury claims that "ever since childhood my three obsessions have been art, music, and soccer." One suspects he has omitted mendaciously his only real fixation: money. "If the Romans came to the Coliseum to see blood, the New Yorkers came to Phillips to see money."

When not ruminating on just how splendid the bags of money being paid for bad art is, de Pury traffics in the sort of tired formulations that are offensive not for their contents but for their laziness: "I mused at how the art market seemed to be dominated by these men with Levantine roots. I guess they shared some kind of genius trading gene." "An auction is only as big as its buyers, and tonight boasted what on the old New York Yankees was known as 'Murderers' Row.'" "My father was a baron, though that was a title he kept in the closet. (Just for the record, I'm one, too, and I keep my title in the closet as well. Self-effacement runs in the family.)" Self-awareness does not.

This book does no credit to de Pury's character. What might have been an insightful look into the looniness of the contemporary art market, to the inner-workings of which de Pury has been especially privy, is instead a grating, self-congratulatory list of names and prices. I should note that perhaps de Pury should not be the sole recipient of all the above abuse. He has a co-author in William Stadiem. De Pury says in the book, "whenever I saw a podium, I wanted to be on it." With regards to this unfortunate book, de Pury would do well to step off.

Centurion of the century

Arthur Herman
Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior.
Random House, 960 pages, $40

reviewed by Charles Hill

The Great Man theory of history seems an idea whose time has gone, although candidates have lately sprung up in Russia, China, and America. The self-fashioned commander embodies his own nation's identity, and indeed all things to all men, within a legendary pantheon across the centuries: Alcibiades, Napoleon, Mao Zedong. The qualities required include "command presence" defined as occupying more space in a room than one's actual size; an exalted reputation leavened with flashes of the common touch; a vaguely genealogical mystique; and an oracular rhetorical style of speech in an awareness that words may matter most of all. From boyhood on, something informs such personalities that greatness beckons, yet flaws, sometimes tragic, at other times merely human, will be revealed.

A distinctively unforgettable physical appearance is required. Arthur Herman opens his massive, unfailingly evocative biography *Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior* with:

> You can see him in your mind's eye. The khaki uniform and pressed pants, the gold braided cap, the sunglasses, the corncob pipe firmly in his teeth and the ramrod straight back . . . as the years passed, Americans came to see him as a pillar of strength—or a tower of vanity. A man ready to be the savior of his country—or a man the country needed to be saved from.

This is not a personage one can imagine coming down the corridor of the D Ring in today's Pentagon.

In World War I, MacArthur's appearance was almost insolently unorthodox: a gray West Point sweater with his varsity "A," a crumpled barracks cap instead of a helmet, a riding crop, and no sidearms—all as visible proof of his supposed invulnerability. As the top American official in the Philippines in 1936, he spent most of an hour each morning primping to sartorial perfection for the delectation of his public and took the title "Field Marshal" of the Philippine Army while costumed in a specially designed uniform of operetta-style grandiosity. Yet on other occasions, MacArthur followed the example of some of history's supremos by appearing with no medals whatsoever. And at still other times, he would appear in studied dishevelment: when summoned by President Truman to Wake Island in October 1950 to confer on the Korean War, he appeared, as Truman described it, "with his shirt unbuttoned, wearing a greasy ham and egg cap that evidently had been in use for twenty years." Too much for the former haberdasher to bear.

Beneath his outer garb, whichever mode he chose, MacArthur was sharply assessed by the women in his life, most intriguingly by his mother, who, until her dying day, followed him everywhere in his career—from West Point to Manila and all possible assignments in between with no embarrassment detectable on the part of her son. The general was no hero to his first wife, who mocked him as "a buck private" in bed. Clare Boothe Luce—who surely knew more about famous men than any other woman of her era—noted when interviewing him for *Life* magazine that he was "actually a small man with narrow sloping shoulders and tiny delicate hands." But the camera loved him, and those encountering him up-close were invariably awed by his personal psychological dominance. Even Luce had to conclude that he was not a fraud but a "genius."

A genius of what? Of grand strategy, of possessing what Clausewitz called the *coup d'oeil*: the supreme commander's native ability to size up a military situation as though from on high and to dare to act decisively against the odds and obstacles that others would feel compelled to take into account. MacArthur's was not so much a career as a force of nature continuously directed toward striking in surprise his adversary's Clausewitzian "center of gravity." Such decisions invariably are controversial and every operation, in Wellington's phrase, "a near-run thing." Herman's account of MacArthur's generalship aspires to near-Thucydidean heights as a manual for statecraft and might have come closer to classic status if the author had contained his temptation to explain and justify each episode.

MacArthur's destiny was played out in the light of his father's fame: Arthur MacArthur was arguably the greatest U.S. military officer of his time. At a fort on the Rio Grande, when Geronimo was restive, the boy Douglas learned to ride and shoot. He imbibed his father's profound certainty that America's future lay in Asia, drawn from reading and writing on China and his own legendary service in the Philippine War; all through his formative years, young Douglas gained a love of the Army "to almost religious idolatry."

MacArthur's first heroic escapade came at Veracruz when President Wilson's incursion into Mexico ran into trouble. His cinematic derring-do with a commandeered locomotive brought a Medal of Honor recommendation, which was denied for lack of witnesses and his own flouting of orders.

In the run-up to the Great War, MacArthur forged the "Rainbow Division" to incorporate national guard units from many states as the first truly all-American force. While commanding it in France, he sparked a rivalry with General Pershing that would dog him again

and again over the years as MacArthur came to embody the saying that "It is sometimes the order that you don't obey that makes you famous." In 1918 MacArthur's division was in trench-raid combat for eighty-two days, taking almost 2,000 casualties. Beginning what would seem an absurdly large collection of Silver Stars, MacArthur was promoted by Pershing, under pressure from Washington, to brigadier general, with Pershing getting satisfaction by denying MacArthur's second Medal of Honor recommendation. The Secretary of War countered by declaring MacArthur "the greatest American field commander produced by the war."

The 1920s and 1930s immersed MacArthur in a mélange of boring assignments, politically dangerous responsibilities, personal embarrassments, and notable achievements: Superintendent of West Point; opposition (apparently) to the court-martial of Colonel Billy Mitchell for excessively promoting air power; leader of the U.S. Olympic Committee as America won the Amsterdam Games. As Army Chief of Staff—unsuccessfully opposed by Pershing—MacArthur faced down FDR in a fight over the defense budget, but then did Roosevelt's dirty work in breaking the Veterans' Bonus March, which gained him the label "The Most Dangerous Man in America." Even more potentially devastating was the discovery by the gossip columnist Drew Pearson that the now-celebrated Army Chief of Staff was keeping a mistress, a Filipina movie star, in a Washington apartment, a scandal covered up by a shady deal before mother learned of it.

With the Second World War on the horizon, MacArthur was assigned an impossible task: plan to defend the archipelago against the amphibious and air attack that surely would be mounted by Imperial Japan. MacArthur's preparations would be infamously denounced when, on the day after Pearl Harbor, his B-17 squadron counted on to bomb the incoming enemy was, through confused communications, destroyed on its airstrip. MacArthur then took the fateful decision to withdraw his headquarters to the island fortress of Corregidor and commit American troops to defend the Bataan peninsula to the death.

The debacle was swiftly reversed psychologically as the American people, yearning for a hero after all the bad news, saw in MacArthur an inspiring figure single-handedly standing up to the Japanese onslaught. As Herman describes it, untruth, exaggeration, and self-deception all were employed to lift America's morale.

Suddenly a national icon, MacArthur was ordered to leave Corregidor and set up headquarters in Australia. A reporter overheard him say "I shall return," a declaration everafter attached to his legend. But he also had vowed "to die with his men on the rock," words that would haunt him for the rest of his life.

With his flair for the theatrical, MacArthur refused to be taken to Australia by submarine, instead to be carried by Patrol Torpedo boats across vast stretches of open sea patrolled by Japan; it was an irresponsibly stupid decision, and the harrowing mishaps that resulted nearly doomed the general and his entourage several times over until, reaching Mindanao, they were flown over Japanese-held Java and the Dutch East Indies to Australia. There, finally awarded the Medal of Honor, MacArthur took supreme command as Bataan surrendered, and MacArthur's comrades suffered a living hell before death, or life worse than death as prisoners of the Japanese.

Herman describes America's Pacific strategy in immense detail, causing even a well-informed reader to reconsider whether it was strategically sound or seriously distorted by interservice rivalries. Bitter personal and institutional ambitions clashed over decisions for resources, but a grand strategy nonetheless emerged between design and opportunistic case-by-case maneuvering. The glamour would belong to the Navy with its iconic Corsair and Dauntless aircraft, dashing pilots, and rugged admirals as they won Pacific carrier battles highlighted by Midway and "the Marianas Turkey Shoot" and to the unimaginably courageous Marines who stormed ashore to take enemy-held islands.

In the Western Pacific it was otherwise. MacArthur's army and land-based Fifth Air

Force fought along a string of strange names in places still remote today—Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Rabaul, Leyte—all aptly labeled by Herman as "Green Hell" and surely among the worst disease-ridden, god-awful war-fighting terrain in history. Operating nearly separately, yet taken together in the impact they made, the Navy defeated Japan's forward thrust, while MacArthur's Army defeated the enemy's ground forces in a war for the region whose resources were crucial to Japan's military-industrial power.

The two arms of American strategy then came together in the battle to retake the Philippines, which Fleet Admiral Ernest King would have bypassed altogether. When FDR visited the Pacific theater to tell MacArthur that fighting to liberate the Philippines would be a mistake, he was confronted by the great commander in his full self-fashioned persona: leather flight jacket, Filipino Field Marshal cap, aviator sunglasses, enormous corncob pipe—all enveloped in a silent political aura, the awareness that MacArthur by this time was spoken of as a possible challenger for the presidency. "In all my life," Roosevelt later said, "nobody has ever talked to me the way MacArthur did." MacArthur prevailed, and thus came about the war's most famous photograph: the heroic general sloshing ashore at Leyte from his sandbar-blocked landing craft and then his radio transmission: "People of the Philippines, I have returned!"

From then on, American strategy was less grand than grinding: Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and then—President Truman's atomic bomb decision to end it all.

MacArthur's appointment by Truman to be Supreme Commander of Allied Powers in Japan (SCAP) would be his finest role, actual and theatrical. His arrival, unarmed, at Yokohama at a time when one fanatic diehard might have caused a catastrophe was called by Churchill "the single most courageous act of the war." His stagecraft for the surrender ceremony aboard USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay was one of history's masterpieces of performance art. His oratory at that moment recalled the mission of civilization vouchsafed to Aeneas:

> Yours will be the rulership of nations,
> Remember, Roman, these will be your arts:
> To teach the ways of peace to those you conquer,
> To spare defeated peoples, tame the proud.

And, like Roman emperors, MacArthur would hear voices recalling him to the reality that he was less than divine, that in fact he was, as President Truman sneered, "Mr. Prima Donna, Brass Hat, Four Star MacArthur . . . a play actor and a bunko man."

MacArthur knew that victors across history had suffered severe setbacks from extended occupations of defeated lands and was determined not to follow their example. As Herman assesses it, MacArthur "is still the one occupier of a foreign country in modern history to emerge with his reputation enhanced rather than diminished." MacArthur met the challenge by first recognizing that this would be the largest administrative task ever undertaken by the U.S. Army. Second, by making it absolutely clear that he fully possessed supreme authority. Third, by preserving the dignity and gaining the trust of a real emperor, Hirohito. And, finally, by seeing the occupation as "the world's greatest laboratory for an experiment in the liberation of a people from totalitarian military rule and for the liberalization of government from within."

George F. Kennan, with his unerring propensity for missing the grand strategic point, intellectually assaulted MacArthur at the height of his influence and popularity: too slow on industrial recovery, too much demobilization, all detailed by Kennan in a forty-two-page diatribe against SCAP and all its works. Japan, Kennan said, should be an anti-communist ally of the United States, not a model for liberalizing Asia. Kennan regarded his 1948 trip to Japan as "the most significant constructive contribution I was ever able to make in government," believing that he had "tethered" MacArthur and reversed America's Japan occupation policy. It would take a while, but Japan emerged as both a liberal Asian model as well as a Cold War ally, a product of MacArthur's more expansive feel for the future.

With the Atomic Age opening, a doctrine of containment was in some sense unavoidably obvious. Kennan's containment doctrine had a major flaw: what if communism broke through the container at a place where American forces were not unambiguously committed and where political realities militated against a U.S. military response? The Korean War displayed both MacArthur's strategic genius and his own flaws, revealing his natural *coup d'oeil* talent and his loss of it through hubris.

In March of 1949 MacArthur's delineation of Asia's line of defense did not include Korea, making him the precursor of Acheson's famous and much-denounced January 1950 speech to the National Press Club, which did the same. War came, shockingly soon after the end of World War II. At age seventy, MacArthur was appointed Commander-in-Chief of United Nations–authorized coalition forces and also given control of the Republic of Korea's military.

Driven back to the "Pusan Perimeter" on Korea's far southeast coast, MacArthur devised, and by force of will put into action, an immense amphibious operation all around the peninsula to carry out his surprise Inchon Landing, a strategem that would take its place in history's annals of improbably daring actions alongside Demosthenes's seaborne expedition around the Peloponnese to strike ashore at Pylos near Sparta and Wolfe's scaling the Heights of Abraham to surprise Montcalm at Quebec. The Inchon assault turned the war around. Thereafter, however, MacArthur's strategic gift, like Napoleon's by 1812, seemed to lose its magic as he divided his forces after crossing the 38th parallel and advanced to the Yalu border of Mao's China ahead of intelligence-gathering capacities. Herman sorts through all the complexities of the Korean War's course up and down and up the peninsula again and makes the best case for MacArthur, but something once there was there no longer. When Washington decided on a ceasefire and a demilitarized zone to divide Korea, MacArthur's plan was to use atom bombs on Manchuria, to spread nuclear waste along the North Korea-China border, to pull Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Chinese forces from Taiwan into the war, and to move the U.S. Eighth Army across the 38th parallel again—all this while calling upon Mao to admit defeat or face a far wider war. MacArthur's letter to the U.S. House of Representatives declaring that "there is no substitute for victory" was taken as insubordination to civilian control of the armed forces. As Commander-in-Chief, President Truman relieved MacArthur of his duties in April 1951.

MacArthur returned to America as more a legend than merely the hero he undoubtedly was. The issues his life and career raised still have not been worked out. From the Korean War to the present, and very likely for the foreseeable future, the United States has not fought a war with the intention of winning it: the costs seeming too great to BEAR. So wars, which still have to be fought, go endlessly on until one side grows weary and withdraws—usually our side.

This reality makes *MacArthur: American Warrior* close to an epic, while at the same time bearing out Thomas Mann's claim that only the exhaustively detailed is truly interesting. More than a biography, it is a tale of a time in the past almost impossible to contemplate today as having taken place, with MacArthur himself as a figure perhaps too remote to understand, but all the more important to encounter.

Nadar's highs & lows

Félix Nadar, translated by Eduardo Cadava and Liana Theodoratou
When I Was a Photographer.
MIT Press, 336 pages, $24.95

reviewed by Leann Davis Alspaugh

Although Eduardo Cadava's introduction to this first-ever complete English translation of *Quand j'étais photographe* positions Nadar's photography as a form of mourning, the subject himself refuses to take this line. With good-natured impetuosity, boundless curios-

ity, self-deprecating wit, and often foolhardy courage, the unconventional memoirs of Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, 1820–1910) are more impressionistic than documentary, more bemused than abject.

Aside from his portraits of French literary and artistic celebrities, Félix Nadar (born Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, 1820–1910) is best known for his aerial photography and his images of the catacombs and sewers of Paris. Although Nadar often looks back to the eighteenth century as a "heroic age" of scientific invention and inquiry, his own time was no less active, with a wealth of discovery and innovation in transportation, medicine, science, mechanics, and, of course, photography. He was also a formidable and opinionated art critic ("the homunculus Meissonier, obstinate in his pedicular painting") as well as a caricaturist, actor, and novelist who seems to have known virtually everyone of interest in nineteenth-century Paris. What Nadar lacked in scientific education or intellect, he made up for in perseverance and energetic application. Most endearing is his honesty about how bad he is at math: "my innate terror of anything that resembles the execrable number."

Neither a scientist nor a mathematician, Nadar nevertheless became a successful if sometimes gullible businessman. In "Female and Male Clients," he assures aspiring photographers to seek honor before profit, though this will be difficult, as his hilarious war stories relate, when one deals with clients so uniformly vain, affected, and stupid that they don't even recognize themselves in photographs. In "The Blind Princess," Nadar enjoys the patronage of German royalty who are also old friends who had helped him some years before following a balloon mishap in Hanover. The sitters are charming and Nadar exults in the expertise that allows him to chat smoothly while setting up the camera—until he commits a faux pas by asking about a long-absent prince. In "Gazebon Avenged," he is so intrigued by a smooth-tongued workman who proposes to show him how to take long-distance photographs that he gives away a fair amount of money before he realizes he has been the victim of a revenge plot.

In "Subterranean Paris," Nadar details his three-month project in 1861 photographing the catacombs and sewers of Paris with artificial light. It is difficult to imagine the technical obstacles he and his assistants faced, lugging bulky cameras, cables, batteries, and lighting apparatus through the underground caverns. At the time, the catacombs contained the remains of about eleven million Parisians, the bones of kings mingling with revolutionaries and laundresses. When the niches were full, catacomb workers pushed the bones further into the recesses to make room for more. They also arranged the bones with an eye for aesthetic display, a grotesquerie that no doubt appealed to Nadar's sense of the absurd. The sewers presented Nadar with another kind of challenge: not only how to light the vast tunnels, but also how to convey their scale. He achieved this by posing mannequins near pipes or sluicing systems since no human being could be trusted to stand absolutely still for the eighteen-minute exposure time.

The British geographer Matthew Gandy has written thoughtfully on the "enigma" of sewers, once locales of crime, poverty, and political intrigue (think *Les Misérables*) that became, under Baron Haussmann, the means of improved personal and public hygiene. With the modernization of Paris, Gandy observes, the entire relationship between the body and the city changed, particularly under the impetus of "capitalist urbanization." Nadar writes neither of the anthropology nor the politics of the sewers, but of the nastiness of the place and its ignominy—its planners envisioned it as a model of urban progress, but they didn't count on the increasing demand for personal water usage. He is dispassionate in recounting how tourists were pulled through the sewers on tram cars by "escorts wearing high statutory boots" and subtly scathing in noting the absence of rats encouraged presumably by officials to stay out of sight so as not to make people nervous. As he rides along on the sewer tram (reconnoitering?), Nadar notes the effluvium released by a washhouse and the sickeningly strong smell of a perfumer. Above ground, these businesses keep the public clean and smelling sweet, but underground, in Na-

dar's words, there is a "circulus of mud . . . [where] microbes have their states here, they reign and govern."

Nadar was also widely recognized for aerostatic photography, taking aerial photographs for land surveying, to aid military and postal operations during the Franco-Prussian War, and for the sheer pleasure of hot-air ballooning. The passage from "The First Attempt at Aerostatic Photography," in which Nadar describes the experience of floating above the earth, is deservedly well known—"Free, calm, levitating into the silent immensity of welcoming and beneficent space . . . "—but all was not smooth sailing for an aeronaut with his lack of experience and scientific understanding. Once he mastered the art of ascending in *Le Géant*, he then had to figure out why none of his negatives were coming out. In desperation, one cold dawn, determined to ascend and obtain a usable negative, Nadar throws overboard everything that could possibly weigh down the balloon. Left with only a camera obscura and a glass plate, he takes off his coat, his vest, his boots, and—no ladies present—strips down to his underwear. Eager to conserve his gas, he ascends while keeping the gas valve closed—experienced aeronauts know that the valve must remain *open* to allow excess gas to expand as it heats—and at last, an image of the village of Petite Bicêtre emerges on the glass plate. Chagrinned, Nadar realizes his mistake: "I at last have the explanation that my lay reader, more sagacious than me, has already guessed." We may be forgiven for not understanding that sulfured hydrogen gushes from a balloon's open gas valve and, when that balloon is also a photography laboratory, it interacts and clouds the chemical developing bath of silver iodide. How Nadar avoided an explosion can only be due to dumb luck.

One of the more intriguing theories in contemporary photography criticism is the idea of the agency of the photograph. Nadar anticipates this idea in "Homicidal Photography," which begins with the true story about a love triangle in which a pharmacist's wife takes up with a lover and then she and her husband conspire to murder the man. This "failure of an insipid epic of little people" partakes of the public's increasing interest in sensationalist journalism with its emphasis on crime and depravity among the lower classes, a theme that also found expression in contemporaneous novels such as Emile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* (1863) and George Gissing's *The Nether World* (1889). Nadar vividly describes the shabby existence of the pharmacist and his wife as well as the horrific state of the lover's decomposed body after six weeks in the river. In the process of the police investigation, a photograph of the body (taken by the Prefecture) is leaked to *Le Figaro* and the public clamors to see it. The photograph has such power in public opinion and in the courtroom that it influences the outcome of the trial—"But *PHOTOGRAPHY* wanted it this way this time . . . ," Nadar writes.

Across his career as a photographer, Nadar relates, perhaps unwittingly, the many aspects in which the photograph would seem to have volition or power: as a call to action (in "Homicidal Photography"), the linguistic coding of the image (diverging interpretations of ambiguous images from the catacombs or the sewers), rhetorical echoes (Nadar uses the metaphor of printing a photograph to describe a strong memory), the potential of the image to embroil the photographer in the affairs of other people (most noteworthy in "The Professional Secret"), the photograph's capacity for either hiding or "demanding" to appear, and the implication that without photographic evidence, a certain person, place, or thing might not be real.

Photography's tendency toward positivism is perhaps one reason why this art form remains so provocative. In his photography and even more so in the memoirs presented here, Nadar signaled the problematical nature of positivism mixing, often indiscriminately, fact and fiction, artifice and documentary evidence. In his final vignette "1830 or thereabouts," the author indulges in a colorful reflection of Paris at a simpler time, canvassing society high and low, science, the arts, fashion trends, and the influence of Polish refugees.

As compelling as this account may be, Nadar would have been only ten years old at the time—far too young for the kind of cosmopolitan observations he "recounts." He ends on an inconclusive, even cranky note, and we are left to conclude that this decades-long experiment in science, technology, and memory was not so much a string of autobiographical exploits as a series of Proustian remembrances of lost time.

In praise of subsidiarity

Yuval Levin
The Fractured Republic:
Renewing America's Social Contract in the Age of Individualism.
Basic Books, 262 pages, $27.50

reviewed by James Piereson

Writing near the end of *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville expressed an apprehension that this new form of government in the United States might eventually yield to a new kind of despotism under which a central authority would minister to the wishes of the people while depriving them of the independence required for active citizenship. Tocqueville foresaw a "soft" despotism that, as he wrote, "does not break men's will but softens, bends, and guides it; it is not at all tyrannical, but it hinders, restrains, enervates, stifles, and stultifies so much that in the end each nation is no more than a flock of timid and hardworking animals with the government as its shepherd." He feared that the democratic revolution in America might eventually produce a passive population that has traded its liberty and independence in exchange for comfort and security.

Yuval Levin, the editor of *National Affairs* magazine and a widely cited author in his own right, dissents somewhat from Tocqueville's prognosis in his insightful book-length essay *The Fractured Republic: Renewing America's Social Contract in the Age of Individualism*. Americans, he points out, far from being mired in comfortable passivity, are afflicted today by something far different: anger, discontent, and frustration with national politics and the performance of government at all levels. Public opinion polls and election campaigns—the rise of Donald Trump!—provide ample evidence of the public's unease with the direction of the country and growing pessimism about the capacity of the federal government to address collective problems. Americans, as a man in a once-popular movie put it, "are mad as hell and they're not going to take it any more." Yet there is little agreement across the political spectrum as to how we should understand this condition or what we might do about it. This, then, is the great value of Mr. Levin's book: it cuts through the confusion of the present moment, explains how we got to where we are, and suggests some possible avenues out of the impasse.

The main problem, he argues, is that Americans across the political spectrum are caught in a "nostalgia trap." They assess the current situation in terms of social and economic standards that were established in the immediate post-war decades. That was an unusual period when the American economy grew by 4 or 5 percent per year, American producers sent automobiles, steel, coal, and agricultural products around the world to economies still on their backs from the war, private sector unions negotiated good wages and benefits for workers, crime was falling, families and churches were strong, and there was little ideological distance between the two political parties. The post-war system "worked" in part because it was based upon a sense of shared values in regard to economic growth, hard work, family, and the role of government. It is little wonder, then, given our current situation, that Americans long for a return to the mix of dynamism and stability that characterized the post-war era.

As a consequence, the two political parties are exceptionally backward looking, albeit in quite different ways. Republicans and Democrats long to restore different elements of the post-war order. Liberals and Democrats, for example, wish to restore the corporatist economic structure of the 1950s and 1960s, characterized by powerful labor unions nego-

tiating with corporate oligopolies, while also reigniting the spirit of liberation and rebellion that burned during the 1960s. Conservatives, meanwhile, tend to assess the present in relation to recollections of the social stability and shared values of the 1950s and take their economic and political bearings from the 1980s when, under Ronald Reagan's leadership, they restored the nation's economic dynamism following the inflation and slow growth of the 1970s while presiding over a military build-up that helped to win the Cold War. Each side looks back to the post-war period as a kind of golden age and seeks to restore a piece of it without acknowledging how far away we have since moved from the conditions of that era.

Mr. Levin views the post-war era—roughly the period running from 1945 to the year 2000—as following a coherent trajectory that has left us in a situation in which it is impossible to put into place the grand designs of either liberals or conservatives. As he writes, "In our cultural, economic, political, and social life, this has been a trajectory of increasing individualism, diversity, dynamism, and liberalization. And it has come at a cost of dwindling solidarity, cohesion, stability, authority, and social order." This is what he means by the "fractured" republic. Over the course of these decades, Americans lived through a cultural revolution that promoted greater freedom and liberation from social norms and a market revolution that promoted dynamism and innovation while destroying the private sector unions and corporate oligopolies that dominated economic life from the 1940s to the 1980s. Conservative attempts to restore social consensus and liberal attempts to restore a managed economy are both bound to fail due to the liberating effects of these twin revolutions.

Nevertheless, as he points out, the role of government in American life has continued to expand even as social life has become more fragmented and disorganized. Federal spending has grown year by year, federal regulations continue to accumulate, and federal tentacles now reach into just about every organization and institution in society, even now (in response to the Affordable Care Act) into religious institutions previously thought to be out of bounds for federal regulators. These two developments are in fact related because, as the author observes, "hyper-individualism and excessive centralization are not opposite inclinations but complementary impulses." Tocqueville long ago observed that as government expands its reach, it crowds out the institutions of civil society—churches, community organizations, family, and neighborhood groups—and thus forces individuals to look to the state for support, thereby creating a vicious cycle through which the collapse of local institutions leads to calls for more government which in turn produces ever more fragmentation and dependency. Neither of the parties has a solution to the problem because neither can come to grips with the hyper-individualism and social fragmentation that are at the root of it.

Mr. Levin, a principled conservative, doubts that liberals have any practical remedies for the condition he describes because, as he says, they are locked into the idea that "the only genuine liberty is individual liberty and that the only legitimate authority is the authority of the national government." For various ideological and historical reasons, they tend to see the mediating institutions of society—family, church, schools, and community—as potential threats to liberty that justify further interventions by federal authorities. We can see this in the ways in which the current administration tries to enforce civil rights regulations against schools and colleges and in the ways it stifles experimentation by the states in welfare and Medicaid programs. Yet, as he argues, the problems of our era grow precisely out of these impulses: the excessive centralization of political authority combined with the fragmenting consequences of hyper-individualism.

As a consequence of this, he thinks that conservatives are in a better position to win this debate because of their appreciation for the role that civic institutions can play in nurturing liberty and citizenship. In his view, the way forward in America is through the

empowerment of the middle layers of society that stand between individuals and the national government. He sees the revitalization of these mediating structures—state and local governments, families, churches, and local voluntary associations—as a way of restraining the power of the federal government and of providing individuals with opportunities to exercise citizenship through participation in civic institutions. This is the traditional doctrine of "subsidiarity"—the idea that social problems should be addressed, to the degree possible, at the local level—but one that takes on greater urgency at a time when national authority has been extended to its limits and the national government is stalemated by partisan polarization. The way out of our impasse will thus be through a conservative agenda that emphasizes "modernization through subsidiarity, a revival of federalism, and a commitment to a robust pluralism of moral subcultures."

This is an attractive agenda, and one with which all conservatives are likely to agree, but one wonders if it is sufficiently compelling to counter the powerful forces of centralization and individualism that the author identifies as the sources of our problems. The agenda is not new: conservatives have been speaking in terms of federalism and voluntarism for decades now. Richard Nixon pushed "fiscal federalism" and Ronald Reagan "the new federalism" with little if any success. Republicans have argued for decades that Medicaid, housing, and welfare programs should be "block granted" to the states to allow for greater local control and experimentation with new approaches. Robert Nisbet and Michael Novak were writing decades ago about the importance of mediating institutions. George H. W. Bush had his "thousand points of light" and George W. Bush his "compassionate conservatism." One would be hard pressed to identify much effect either had in countering the centralizing trends of our time. The ideas are sound, but perhaps they need to be pushed with greater determination.

Nor do we really know how to revitalize civic institutions once they have been weakened by decades of disuse. Many of these institutions developed spontaneously in response to community needs and out of a belief that local problems had to be addressed by voluntary community action. They have been displaced to a great degree by the introduction of federal funds, followed by federal regulations. Can we withdraw those funds and the regulations? That has always proved difficult to accomplish because too many people depend upon the funds. Moreover, it would defeat the purpose to look to national power to fund or otherwise strengthen local institutions.

We do not, in short, know how to get from where we are to where we must go. It is, admittedly, a difficult problem to crack, and for that reason Yuval Levin deserves great credit for opening up the discussion with this most illuminating essay.

Editors' note: Readers are reminded that *The New Criterion* does not publish during July and August. In the meantime, we invite you to visit our website at www.newcriterion.com for daily cultural coverage and to subscribe to our weekly newsletter, "The Critic's Notebook."

Notebook

Hemingway & Alfred Flechtheim

by Jeffrey Meyers

Alfred Flechtheim, the German collector, art dealer, and publisher, was a shadowy but significant figure in Ernest Hemingway's life. Hemingway knew him at the peak of his prestige, influence, and fame, but lost contact when Flechtheim was overwhelmed by tragedy.

Flechtheim was born in Münster in northwest Germany in 1878, the scion of a wealthy Jewish family who—like the Buddenbrooks in Thomas Mann's novel—had been grain merchants for several generations. He began work in his father's business, but was soon drawn to modern paintings. "There is something crazy about art," he declared. "It's a passion stronger than gambling, alcohol, and women."

In 1910 Flechtheim married the Jewish heiress Betty Goldschmidt, and during their honeymoon in Paris he spent a large part of her substantial dowry on Cubist art. They had no children, but their elegant home was lined with bookcases and filled with contemporary paintings and Oceanic sculpture. In 1913 he opened his first gallery in Düsseldorf on the Rhine—followed after the war by others in Berlin, Frankfurt, Cologne, and Vienna. He invited many celebrities from the world of theater and film to his famous costume parties in the main gallery. His friend, the German heavyweight champion Max Schmeling, loyally affirmed, "If I were a painter, I would want Flechtheim to represent me."

In the Düsseldorf catalogue of 1987, *Alfred Flechtheim: Sammler. Kunsthändler. Verleger*, Wilmont Haacke wrote that Flechtheim "was impulsive and explosive, bold and productive, quick-witted and amusing, always trustworthy and ready to help, a true brother and pal." The art dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Flechtheim's former partner and fellow German-Jewish exile, fondly recalled his friend's impressive personality: "He was startlingly colorful and won everyone over by his sense of humor, his jokes and his derisive wit, his vitality and daring. . . . He was the dynamic businessman, permanently chewing on a huge cigar, both cunning and effusive, and revealing above all his great passion for modern art." The influential Greco-French art critic Christian Zervos described him, in a barrage of adjectives, as "nervous, agitated, lively, shrewd, joyful, despairing, sensual, unfair, enthusiastic, chatty, theatrical."

In his essay on the Weimar art world of the 1920s, Malcolm Gee writes that Flechtheim "stood not just for French influenced taste, but for a cosmopolitan awareness, intelligence and sense of style." His gallery "was a meeting point for a cross-section of Berlin society, from the world of high finance to that of sport and entertainment." He exhibited works by Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists—Manet, Renoir, Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Seurat—before they became fashionable and expensive. He also represented many of the best contemporary painters: Picasso, Braque, and Gris in France, Klee, Beckmann, and Grosz in Germany. His ugly face fascinated artists. As a patron of the arts he helped many of them by commissioning his own portraits and was painted by Paul Klee, Jules Pascin, Otto Dix, and many others.

Klee's weird linear sketch of Flechtheim, with overlapping planes, is idiosyncratically

colored in red, blue, beige, gray, and yellow. His profile has curlicue hair, eyes on a tilted axis, cigar-like pointed nose, jutting prognathous jaw, and wide open mouth that seems to be screaming. In Pascin's blurred frontal portrait (1927), Flechtheim is seated on a wooden chair with legs crossed and hands on his lap. He wears a matador's "suit of lights," as he sometimes did at his costume parties. His slim figure is dressed in a black bicorn hat, tight brown jacket, thick shoulder pads, knee breeches, red tie, white stockings, and black slippers. A heavy greenish-brown cape is draped over his left arm and falls to the floor. His eyebrows are arched, his nose thin, his face long, his expression contemplative and sad.

Dix's brilliant but cruel portrait (1926), completed after a quarrel, has strong anti-Semitic overtones. Standing and gazing to the left, Flechtheim has hunched shoulders and a compressed neck. His lined face looks like a cross between a great ape and a primitive statue. He has dark hair, heavy-lidded eyes, yellowish skin, a thick red lower lip, protruding ears, and a gigantic hooked nose. Frank Whitford observes that, "with his left hand firmly on the frame of a painting by Braque (a Gris, ironically signed by Dix, hangs on the wall), and his right hand supporting his weight on an erotic drawing by Picasso, the dealer has been made to personify the acquisitiveness and even greed on which his trade depends. Almost thirty years after painting this picture, Dix admitted that it made Flechtheim look avaricious and grasping."

In contrast to Dix, George Grosz—who had a successful career in exile—remembered Flechtheim with great affection and called his old companion and dealer "a veritable mirror of civilization." Grosz's biographer Kay Flavell notes that Flechtheim was "one of the few friends who had turned up at the railway station to say farewell to Grosz and his wife in January 1933. He had also firmly supported Grosz's determination to leave Germany and make a completely new start elsewhere. The cause of Flechtheim's death, Grosz suggested, was the strain of living 'in a vacuum,' the inevitable accompaniment of exile."

As in Russia before the revolution of 1917, there was a flowering of great art in Weimar Germany before the old order disintegrated and a dictatorship took power. The magazine *Der Querschnitt* (Cross-Section), published by Flechtheim, promoted the very best work in Germany and was the first to bring out Hemingway's work in that country. In a 1934 Stanley-and-Livingstone encounter in the wilds of Africa, Hemingway was astonished to meet a stranger who, although unfamiliar with *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*, had read some of his youthful jeux d'esprit in Germany. The stranger said:

> "Hemingway is a name I have heard. Where? Where have I heard it? Oh, yes. The *Dichter*. You know Hemingway the poet?"
>
> "Where did you read him?"
>
> "In the *Querschnitt*."
>
> "That is me," I said, very pleased. The *Querschnitt* was a German magazine I had written some rather obscene poems for, and published a long story in, years before I could sell anything in America.

At that time "Undefeated," the long story he refers to, had been rejected by the *Dial* and he had not yet published any stories in America or England, although he had recently sold his first trade book, *In Our Time* (1925), to Liveright.

In his study of Hemingway and the little magazines, Nicholas Joost describes the avant-garde *Querschnitt*—published from 1921 to 1935—as "an even more sophisticated if also more raffish monthly than the *Dial*. It was similar to the American journal in its cosmopolitan taste, its espousal of the vanguard and its practice of publishing contemporary art." The editor, Hermann (known as Hans) von Wedderkop, was "dubbed 'Mr. Awfully Nice' because his spoken English apparently was confined to those two words." But "awfully nice" was probably his favorite phrase rather than the absolute limit of his English. *Der Querschnitt* published caricatures, nude drawings, and photos of boxers, skiers in snowball fights, and swimmers splashing in a stream. The urbane, sophisticated, and satirical magazine continued to appear during the horrendous German inflation of the 1920s and in the middle of that decade reached an impressive circulation of 14,000.

In Paris in the early Twenties, Wedderkop met the young American pianist and composer George Antheil in Sylvia Beach's Shakespeare and Company bookstore. Under the mistaken impression that Antheil was a literary man, Wedderkop asked him to become his Paris representative. With the help of Ford Madox Ford and Ezra Pound, Antheil acquired five poems from James Joyce's *Chamber Music* (originally published in 1907) and an essay by Pound.

In 1924–25 *Der Querschnitt* also published in English four caustic and violent, atheistic and deliberately obscene poems by Hemingway (the longest in two parts) and his story "Undefeated," translated into German as "Stierkampf" (Bullfight). The slight but shocking poems were "The Earnest Liberal's Lament," punning on his hated first name, which cites three kinds of sexual transgressions and echoes Hamlet's "That I was ever born to set things right"; "The Lady Poets with Foot Notes," which mocked Edna Millay, Amy Lowell, and others; "The Soul of Spain with McAlmon and Bird the Publishers," proprietors of the Paris small press Contact Editions and Three Mountains Press that brought out Hemingway's first two books. Part I of this poem repeats "fart" and "shit"; Part II, about bullfighting, includes photos taken by Hemingway during the running of the bulls at the *feria* in Pamplona.

The fourth poem, "The Age Demanded," which echoed Pound's "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley," was a bitter and retaliatory postwar satire:

> The age demanded that we sing
> And cut away our tongue.
> The age demanded that we flow
> And hammered in the bung.
> The age demanded that we dance
> And jammed us into iron pants.
> And in the end the age was handed
> The sort of shit that it demanded.

In "Undefeated," an old wounded matador attempts a comeback at a night fight in Madrid. After being gored, he finally kills the bull on the sixth try and is rushed to the hospital. When asked, "What do you keep on doing it for?," he stoically replies, "I was going good. . . . I didn't have any luck. That was all."

Hemingway couldn't resist referring to the magazine as "Der Queer Shit" and referring to "Wedderschnitt, editor of the Querkopf." (Later on, mentioning his German translator, he said, "she may have made errors but was always Horschitz.") But he was well pleased with his handsome first appearance in Germany and in April 1925 wrote, "*Der Querschnitt* have translated the bull fight story into German and Picasso is illustrating it for them. The '*Schnitt* is also publishing a book of my dirty poems to be illustrated by Pascin." In November 1924 Eugene Jolas, a friend of Joyce and the editor of the Paris little magazine *transition*, failed to see the humorous and provocative aspects of Hemingway's juvenilia. In an "Open Letter to Ernest Hemingway," he warned that "the young author was much admired, but that he was on the wrong tack with the poems he was publishing in *Der Querschnitt*."

Hemingway was amused to be earning good money in this unseemly fashion. Ignoring Jolas's paternalistic advice, in April 1925 he told a friend, "Wedderkop publishes my complete obscene works faster than I can write them. In Germany I am known as the junge amerikanische Heine"—a follower of the great German satiric poet. Delighted by his scandalous reputation, he also wrote, "Wedderkop and Flechtheim are in town. Flechtheim claims I'm Germany's only lyric poet. Appears greatly happy that people all over the world write in and cancel their subscriptions every time a poem is published. Says he wants one for every number. . . . Wants me to write a Stierkampf book with him. He is an old aficionado. Drawings by Gris and Picasso photographs." Flechtheim paid an advance for the bullfight book that became *Death in the Afternoon* (1932). It was finally published in German by Rowohlt in 1957.

In *A Moveable Feast* (1964) Hemingway recalled that Sylvia Beach handed him a serendipitous payment from the magazine:

> "This came while I was out," she said. It was a letter and it felt as though it had money in it. "Wedderkop," Sylvia said.
>
> "It must be from *Der Querschnitt*. Did you see Wedderkop?"
>
> "No. But he was here with George [Antheil]. He'll see you. Don't worry. Perhaps he wanted to pay you first."

"It's six hundred francs. He says there will be more."

"I'm awfully glad you reminded me to look. Dear Mr. Awfully Nice."

"It's damned funny that Germany is the only place I can sell anything. To him and the *Frankfurter Zeitung*."

Six hundred francs, or $24, was half of what he'd earned from writing in 1925.

Hemingway and Flechtheim, both defiant and larger-than-life personalities, shared a strong interest in war, boxing, and bullfighting, as well as in literature and art. In November 1927 Hemingway announced, "Pauline [his second wife] and I are going for a week and see the Six Days [bike race], Flechtheim, Rowohlt my German publisher and drink a little beer." The *Dichter* got a warm reception when they met again in Berlin. Referring to the German heavy cavalry, he noted that Flechtheim "was the only Jew who had been an officer in an Uhlan regiment in the war." (Photos of Flechtheim in his Uhlan uniform appear in the Düsseldorf catalogue.) On April 1, 1928 Hemingway contributed an unrecorded poem to a special issue of *Der Querschnitt* that celebrated his publisher's fiftieth birthday. The magazine reprinted "The Age Demanded" but ruined the meter and meaning by leaving out "iron" in the sixth line. He added a brief tribute after the last line of his poem: "the sort of shit that it demanded./ (But not by Flechtheim)."

Hemingway tended to resent people who helped him and repaid generosity with hostility, and Flechtheim was no exception. Though the magnanimous publisher was not his sole supply of income and was not a sodomite, in October 1928 Hemingway claimed, "my only source of jack [was] the money paid by the noble citizen and prominent jewish bugger and great art dealer Alfie Flechtheim, who was featuring my obscene poems throughout the fatherland." He also declared that Wedderkop, employed by a Jew, "hates Kikes worse than we do."

In his poem "The Soul of Spain," Hemingway parodies Gertrude Stein's stuttering repetitions, takes a swipe at the *Dial* for rejecting his work and honoring Proust instead of Pound, and uncannily foreshadows the title of the painting he bought from Flechtheim: "The Dial does a monument to Proust./ We have done a monument to Ezra./ A monument is a monument." In September 1929 he returned to Berlin for beer and bike races, and with the money from his latest novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, acquired Paul Klee's *Monument in Arbeit* (Under Construction, 1929).

The subject of this picture has a massive, powerful, and rounded-rectangular head, with a thatch of hair, strong brow, thick wavy eyebrows, large round black eyes, small mouth, and firm jaw. Two tiny laborers, carrying shoulder baskets of construction material—like Egyptians building the pyramids—climb up fragile ladders to the tall triangular scaffolding. Hemingway immediately identified with the formidable giant, who actually looks like him. The tiny figures build the monument as he builds his work and creates his image. He could also have seen them as his family and followers, parasites and critics, swarming over his great figure. Each of Hemingway's three sons inherited an important picture. Gregory, the youngest, desperate for immediate payment in cash, impulsively sold the Klee to a Madison Avenue dealer for much less than he could have earned at auction. Flechtheim and Hemingway bought paintings they loved; the Germans and Gregory cared only about their commercial value.

In *Islands in the Stream* (1970), Thomas Hudson describes the weird colors in Hemingway's painting:

> Across the room, above the bookcase, was Paul Klee's *Monument in Arbeit*. He didn't love it as he loved [Juan Gris's] *Guitar Player* but he loved to look at it and he remembered how corrupt it had seemed when he first bought it in Berlin. The color was as indecent as the plates in his father's medical books that showed the different types of chancres and venereal ulcers, and how frightened of it his wife had been until she learned to accept its corruption and only see it as a painting. He knew no more about it now than when he first saw it in Flechtheim's Gallery in the house by the river [Spree] that wonderful cold fall in Berlin.

The corruption in the painting represents the corruption in Hudson's (and in Hemingway's) third marriage.

Hemingway left Paris and returned to America in 1928, and never saw Flechtheim again. Flechtheim's great wealth and prestige did not protect him, and he was one of the first prominent Jews to be persecuted by the Nazi regime. In 1933 Storm Troopers invaded his gallery and broke up his auction. The Nazis also seized the contents of his galleries and stole his personal art collection. Later that year he fled to Paris and then to London. In January 1934, he organized a Klee exhibition at the Mayor Gallery on Cork Street in London. Meanwhile, his former employee Curt Valentin sold his stolen art in New York to raise money for the Nazis.

Two friends described Flechtheim in Paris in July 1933. The German diarist, diplomat, and patron of the arts Count Harry Kessler reported that Flechtheim believed, against all evidence, that modern art might still be able to survive in Germany:

> He told me what is happening in the Berlin art world. Diametrically opposed trends exist among the Nazis. One supports modern art, the other wants to exterminate it. . . . He thinks that there is a bitter running fight between antagonistic trends and personalities within the Party, Göring and Goebbels. These internal quarrels and the inevitable dreadful economic emergency will destroy them. The crash, in his view, will come in autumn.

Hopelessly optimistic about Nazi art policy, Flechtheim was psychologically unprepared for the disastrous events that soon destroyed him. A second friend recalled, "what horrifies me the most is the senseless fear that has taken hold of Flechtheim. In a completely empty restaurant, he looks left and right, even during the most harmless conversations, to make sure no one is listening to us." After escaping from Germany, he was still afraid he'd be captured and dragged back to a concentration camp.

In August 1935 Flechtheim, in a poignant letter, pleaded with Alfred Barr, the director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York: "I lost all my money and all my pictures. The only things I didn't lose are my name, my experience, my knowledge of nearly every French modern picture, my connections in Europe." He asked Barr to buy "nearly the only thing I saved," *Standing Youth* by the German sculptor Wilhelm Lehmbruck. Abby Rockefeller bought the statue for the museum in 1936.

The Nazi exhibition of "Degenerate Art," beginning in Munich from July to November 1937, attracted a million viewers and provided excellent opportunities both to attack modern art and the Jews and to condemn them as immoral and corrupt. The exhibition claimed that the 650 works of art, some originally sold by Flechtheim and confiscated from German museums, lacked artistic technique, destroyed natural beauty, and insulted German ideals. Only six of the 112 artists were Jewish. But the "*Kunst*" poster advertising the exhibition, like Otto Dix's portrait, used and distorted Flechtheim's pronounced Semitic features and transformed them into a grotesque African mask with concave face, thick lips, and enormous nose. Some exhibitions featured a life-size photo of Flechtheim expensively dressed and smoking a capitalistic cigar that matched his hooked beak.

In London in March 1937, Flechtheim, who had diabetes, first slipped on an icy street, then punctured his leg on a rusty nail, got blood poisoning, and had his leg amputated. He died penniless and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Golders Green, North London. Ivor Churchill, younger son of the Duke of Marlborough, published an appreciation in the *Times*: "When he survived the amputation of a leg, hopes were high for his recovery, but a sudden relapse cut short the gallant and protracted fight which he had waged." To complete the tragedy, Betty Flechtheim rashly returned to Germany in 1941. About to be deported to a concentration camp, she poisoned herself and died a slow death from an overdose of veronal.

Despite Flechtheim's knowledge of French and English, his extraordinary experience, expertise, and connections in the international art world, he never regained his old powers. Devastated emotionally and financially, he was a broken man who'd lost the will to live. He ended up maimed, in misery, pain, and despair.

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Books considered