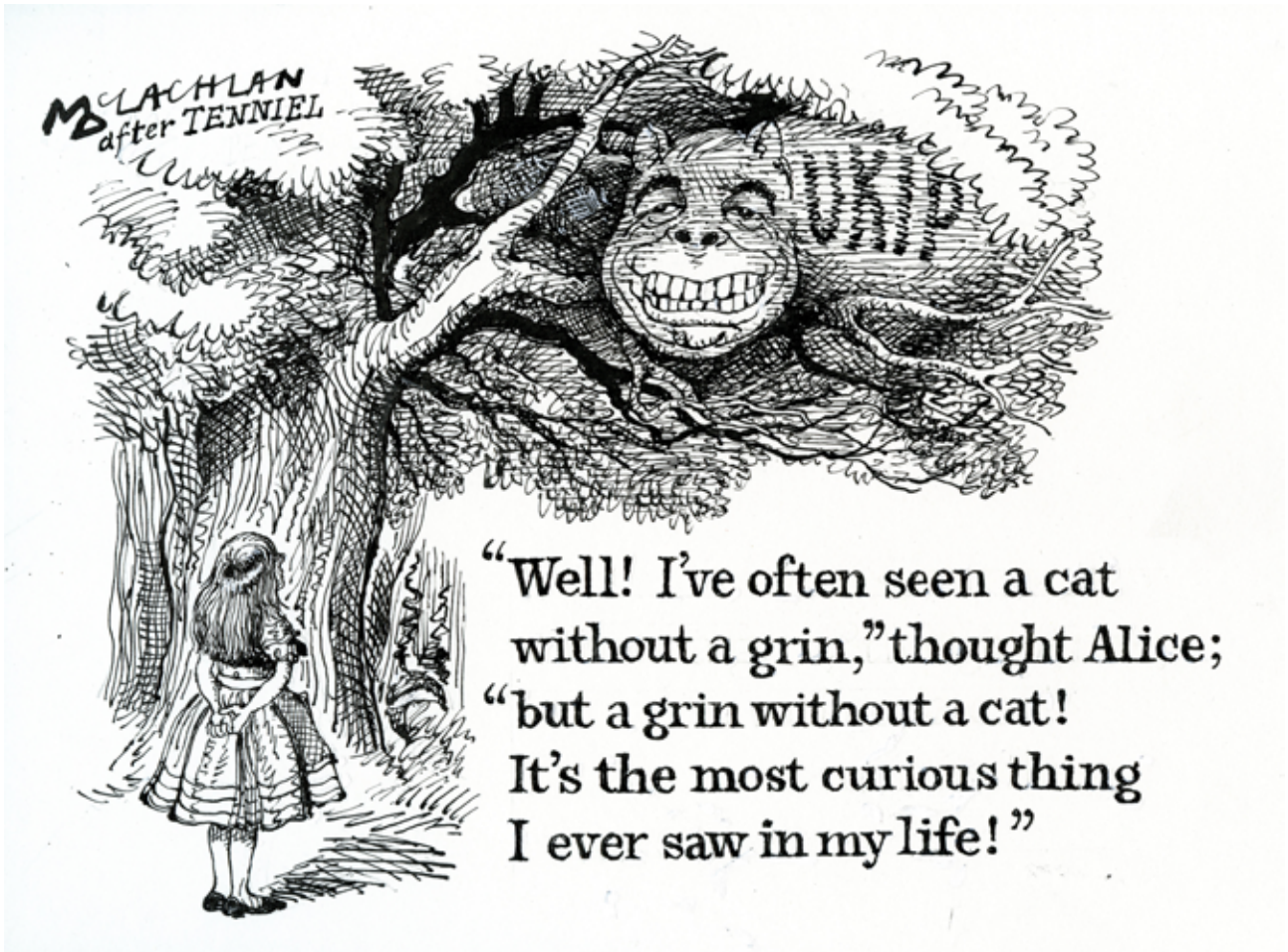


The

Salisbury Review

The quarterly magazine of conservative thought



“Well! I’ve often seen a cat without a grin,” thought Alice; “but a grin without a cat! It’s the most curious thing I ever saw in my life!”

**Don't Publish
& Be Damned**

Robert Salisbury

Burmese Daze

Christie Davies

**Gove's Special
Needs**

Alistair Miller

Letter from America

Matthew Walther

**The Stafford
Whistleblower**

Jane Kelly

Information Everest

Theodore Dalrymple

Summer 2013
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The cheers as Margaret Thatcher's cortège passed seemed uncertain against a background of booing from leftists scattered among the crowd. Since the Iron Lady left politics, self-reliance, profit, family, country are words best kept to yourself. It is no longer respectable to make a public demonstration of one's conservatism. Community, integration, globalism, multiculturalism and diversity are the new coin. To trade in anything else is thought crime. If she were alive she would ask, 'Should the state govern our thoughts as well as our words?'

Thanks to two decades of an education system devoted to social control, people are no longer sure. An entire generation has been brought up to believe not only in censorship of the spoken word but of our innermost thoughts. You can hear that control in the conversation of the young. They wince at forbidden words such as 'black', 'queer', 'nation', 'straight marriage' or 'flooding with immigrants'. No need for a British Stalin. We are as terrified of speaking out as anybody on the Moscow Underground in 1937.

It was why, following the Tory party's defeat at the last election, David Cameron was forced to create a non-lethal political Vichy. He could not say Tory things, so he signed a pact with the Liberal Democrats. They would murmur the political orthodoxies while he got on with dismantling Labour's inheritance. However like Vichy, Cameron is merely housekeeping for a foreign power. Labour, even out of office, still rules. Labour's political machine, tuned to an education system of their creation, decides what can be said or not said, whose cause is to be advanced, whose to be destroyed.

Rising welfare payments, unlimited immigration, press censorship, secret tribunals, anonymous denunciations, dawn arrests of journalists, white male stereotyping, the undermining of the family, all continue. Labour has converted their absurdly misconceived political policies into unchallengeable moral positions. Today arrest awaits anybody who publicly condemns many nostrums of the left. Like Petain in 1943, David Cameron is helpless.

Thatcher came to power in 1979. It is said she was reluctant to tackle the education system because of her experience as Minister of Education – Thatcher the

Milk Snatcher – but it is unlikely that a politician of her mettle would have been so weak. She knew the country was bankrupt and without money we were sunk. She concentrated on the country's enemies plain in view: the unions, state run industries and confiscatory taxes. She believed that as people reaped the benefits of capitalism a prosperous Britain would engender its own social reforms. She was wrong. While Britain grew more prosperous, our schools and universities were under relentless assault by out of office Marxists. They knew that a people who can barely read or write, have no grasp of the fundamentals of modern science, who are ignorant of their own history, cannot govern themselves. An élite must then do it for them. They were that élite. By 2010 the work had been done. Our schools had been turned into holding pens where nothing was taught, while further up the system an entire generation of semi-illiterates, many brandishing degrees, had been created.

It is therefore surprising that Labour has not directed more of its firepower at the Gove education reforms. Perhaps, confident of sweeping victory in 2015, they are sure they can reverse them, or that the collective change of mind they have engineered in the young is irreversible and, with the coming of press censorship following Leveson, any remaining dissent can be stamped out.

It is why education would be the priority of Mrs Thatcher today. Her reforms would be sweeping and mostly reverse the changes she made in the eighties as Heath's inexperienced Minister of Education. We would see tax relief for private schooling, the restoration of the 11 plus, the return of grammar schools, the reduction of fake universities to polytechnics and the return of the old apprenticeship system.

Without the self knowledge a robust education system brings, the nation will fall apart, not just into England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, but into tribalism, corrupt and fragmented government, even street fighting among religious fanatics. Then all we will be able to comfort ourselves with are the words of the Empress Theodora of Byzantium, who when urged to flee the coming horde, but insisting she remained, remarked, 'For my part I like the old saying – the Empire is a fine winding sheet.'

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Don't Publish and be Damned

Robert Salisbury

A Tory believes in the nation. He therefore also believes in the nation's institutions and nurtures both jealously. The future of his polity depends upon it. Of course, as a Tory he recognizes that, as the world changes, so national institutions must evolve; but, equally, he knows that revolutionary change deracinates. Like Montesquieu, he understands that in old polities institutions mould men, rather than men institutions. Successful institutions provide stability.

The Leveson report triggered a government surrender to the combined power of celebrity and the left of centre establishment that should alarm any Tory. It is not just because that David Cameron sent Mr Letwin to surrender to the enemies of press freedom in their own railway carriage that should worry us. It is rather that the Prime Minister thought that losing one vote in the House of Commons would do him more damage than sacrificing an essential liberty which keeps the nation's institutions clean.

Readers of this magazine will know how long the battle for freedom of the press was. The invention of printing made it almost impossible for governments to control information. This did not mean that governments did not try. As early as the reign of Henry VII, the crown appointed a printer (1504) which it hoped would enable it to control the new technology by embracing it. Printing privileges were granted sometimes verbally, but more often under the Great or Privy Seals.

The Sixteenth Century is littered with proclamations, laws and licenses designed to control the content of printed books and pamphlets. They were never wholly effective and, contrary to what Frederick Siebert asserts, it is doubtful whether Elizabeth's government ever really deluded itself into believing that it could completely control what was printed. We could not say the same about Charles I who used the Court of the Star Chamber to try and control the press, an attempt which culminated in the foolish and celebrated Decree of 1637 designed to censor publications against the Crown.

Parliament used the resulting outrage as one of its weapons in its struggle to resist the King's eleven years of tyranny. However, that did not stop it from passing its own Licensing Order of 1643, thereby reintroducing virtually all the provisions of the Star Chamber Decree of six years earlier. Parliament did not get away with it entirely and John Milton led the outraged reaction with his *Areopagitica: A Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing* of 1644.

It all sounds curiously reminiscent of today's proposed Royal Charter.

Things did not improve at the Restoration as the Clarendon government under Charles II established tight controls over the press, giving only one individual the right to publish an official newspaper and investing him with the duty to act as censor for official publications. It was only when the Licensing Order lapsed in 1694, as a result of the Declaration of Rights of 1689, that press publication exploded. Swift, Addison, *The Tatler* and *Spectator* mesmerised this country and a similar avalanche of free comment and debate launched itself in the thirteen American colonies.

The results were profound. In America the new press freedom facilitated the colonists' efforts to share their profound attachment to Liberty. In this country, freedom of debate and freedom to attack political opponents and national institutions, often unfairly, unleashed movements over the following century that made the abolition of slavery, parliamentary reform and scientific development impossible to resist.

The law, too, was forced to catch up with what press freedom had unleashed. Parliament, for instance, passed the first copyright act in 1710 and, by 1774, the courts had held that copyright was not permanent and therefore could be limited in duration.

What is interesting about all this is that established institutions, especially governments, resisted press freedom. They hated anything they could not control, particularly if they were made to look ridiculous. And nothing makes governments look more ridiculous than imposing controls which then do not work. They also lose authority as a direct result, but then governments with tyrannical tendencies are often stupid as well as weak. Elizabeth I's government was faced with an emergency which threatened its survival, just as Churchill's was in 1940. Press controls designed to prevent valuable information reaching the enemy mostly seemed reasonable to the public. The controls of the 17th Century did not, since they were designed to protect the government at a time when the government's interest and the national interest did not seem to coincide. Similarly, Parliament, which is supposed to be the guardian of our liberties, was happy to exclude the press long after it had relaxed wider controls over what was published, to the irritation of Dr Johnson and his fellow Parliamentary reporters.

From this quick canter through history we can

conclude that governments have always found it desirable to control the dissemination of information, but that they have always found it tricky to do so. New communications technologies make it even more difficult for them. The Tudors and Stuarts failed to control the printed word. Today's governments are finding it even more difficult to control billions of electronic words, whose numbers are increasing at an accelerating rate. So from a practical point of view a government that tries to even control a declining industry like printed newspapers will not prevent the words they are attempting to censor from reaching the public. Today each individual can easily be his own publisher. Ineffective attempts at control not only lose governments their authority: they also spawn elaborate new structures designed to underpin the new arrangements, but which merely make things worse.

The proposed new Royal Charter sounds like a classic example of the genre. It perverts a long established bit of British flummery designed to give authority to non-political bodies under the Crown. On the whole such bodies do not attract political controversy and therefore their Royal prefix does not drag the Crown into the political bear pit. The only obvious exception to this rule is the BBC and it is a big one. Equally, it is not at all clear what will happen if anyone petitions against the proposed Royal Charter. The Charter might not be granted for years. The government would begin to look careless as well as ridiculous.

The government might also like to consider whether the law of unintended consequences applies to the licensing of journalists. Already most of the professional press have said that they would not submit to the proposed regime. The Government would therefore be creating two classes of journalist, one regulated and one unregulated, just like the Tudors and Stuarts. The regulated will find that signing up to regulation will accelerate their own decline and the unregulated will become a British samizdat, a phenomenon we had always thought was necessary in Soviet Russia, but unnecessary here. Confronted with the prospect of monster fines, they would either follow their regulated colleagues down the path of self-censorship or become martyrs. They would be cheered on by millions of tweeters and bloggers whom no government could begin to control.

Interestingly, we are already beginning to see the press censoring itself and the authorities relishing the prospect of applying the new rules in ways the Prime Minister and Mr Letwin surely never intended.

So is it really necessary to introduce any regulation at all? There can be no doubt that much of the press has lived beyond the law for years, aided and abetted by a number of corrupt policemen among others and

by politicians who failed to take a leaf out of Stanley Baldwin's book. Once the scandal became too great to ignore, it did not prove necessary to rush a new law through Parliament in order to bring these miscreants to justice. It seems that there were already laws adequate enough to prosecute Mrs Brooks and others. They just needed to be enforced.

The cry for new legislation looks therefore as though it was driven by another motive: the desire of the socialists of Hacked Off, their allies in the Labour Party and the new power in the land, the celebs, to control what the press says about them. The bad behaviour of the press has given them the opportunity to prevent the newspapers from printing disobliging stories about them before the fact. The Government began by resisting pressure from Hacked Off and its allies but buckled and, in buckling, put something really important at risk: the effectiveness and honesty of our national institutions, of which the greatest is Parliament.

Parliament could not conceivably have done its job without the reforms of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Without them Revolution would have resulted. Reform would have been almost impossible without a free press, independent, vulgar and disrespectful. Parliament needed pressure from the press and the public to force it to change for, like any other institution, it could not reform itself from the inside. Today the public is disillusioned with Parliament. A free press can help drive Westminster out of its Austro-Hungarian complacency.

How perverse, therefore, that the Letwin compromise envisages a 'little dab of legislation'. Can one be a little bit pregnant? And, anyway, the 'dab' will hardly be the last word. There are already voices on the Labour benches asking for more and Harriet Harman has already appeared on TV promising to deliver it.

David Cameron presides over a government which is doing important things. If Messrs Gove and Duncan-Smith succeed in giving opportunity and self-respect back to the poor, they will have vindicated the judgement of Conservative voters in 2010. However, if the Cameron government at the same time reintroduces parliamentary control of the press, however remotely, after three centuries of liberty, it will be sheltering the national institution which is in most need of reform. Its legacy will not be the legacy of a Robert Peel but of a Charles X of France. It will be remembered as a reactionary administration, not a Tory one.

Let us hope that the rumours of second thoughts turn out to be well-founded.

Lord Salisbury is a former Leader of the House of Lords.

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How Julie Bailey Tried to Cure the NHS

Jane Kelly

First do no Harm

Hippocrates

In November 2007, Julie Bailey was in the sluice room at Stafford, now mid Staffs Hospital, getting a bedpan for her mother, when, she recollects, a junior doctor appeared. ‘You need to get your Mum out of here before she comes to any harm,’ he said. Her mother Bella, 86, was due to be discharged, but it was already too late; shortly after the doctor’s warning, she fell, and died shortly after.

‘The hope of getting out of there was gone’, says Julie. ‘I can still see the fear on her face.’

Bella Bailey was one among possibly 1,200 patients who died in Mid Staffs of unimaginable neglect. After her death Julie spent six years fighting for a public inquiry. When she eventually got her wish it was the biggest report in the history of the NHS, costing £10 million, lasting 139 days, with one million pages of evidence, and 181 witnesses. It revealed horrors worthy of the old work house system.

‘I dread to think how many people we’ve lost’, says Julie, 51, looking pale and tired, in the café she now runs in a dusty side street in Stafford. She keeps her laptop open, as complaints from the public about their hospitals still flow in. ‘There is still nobody to help these people’, she says.

She was once a social worker, but wanting a less stressful life, and to look after her mother, she retrained as a dog groomer. Her business was successful and she lived with Bella and teenage daughter. Her son, a graduate of Bristol University, is a teacher. Bella, who was divorced, once had four jobs to keep her family going. ‘She instilled me with her work ethic’, says Julie.

Her café has hardly any customers. ‘I am nearly broke,’ she says. Locals stay away because they now resent her campaign. Stafford was once a prosperous market town but apart from charity outlets there are few shops left in the centre. The last big department store closed recently. Inside the old-fashioned covered market, there are notices saying, ‘We support Stafford hospital.’ It employs 3,000 people and Julie is blamed

for its threatened closure. The recession has made locals reluctant to lose one of their last resources, no matter how bad.

‘They think I am a mad woman who won’t let go,’ she says. She’s received death threats and her mother’s grave has been desecrated.

Her ordinary life changed suddenly on 25th September 2007 when Bella, who had a chest infection, began vomiting because of a hiatus hernia. She entered Stafford hospital in the afternoon for what should have been a routine operation. A doctor did not see her until late at night. Julie says he had poor English and didn’t listen to details of her mother’s existing problems.

The following day came repeated questions and she says no attempt to treat the chest infection, which worsened. Bella told Julie that during the night she had been left lying in her vomit after calling out for help and being ignored. Julie tried to convince herself that Bella had been hallucinating, but when she was given what appeared to be unnecessary tests and catheterisation, she began to worry.

Bella was moved to Ward 10, known locally as ‘the death ward’. It was cold, noisy and smelly. Nurses, if they appeared, were brusque and uninterested in the patients. Julie says they never got her mother’s name right. Worse, old people were unable to eat or get the covers off their plates starved. She and other visitors began to wash and feed patients, give them water and bedpans, doing it surreptitiously as the staff were intimidating.

‘The nurses would glare at us’, she remembers, ‘we knew they were desperate for us to put a foot wrong so they could ask us to leave.’

There was the constant problem of getting the right drugs at the right time. People could scream in pain for hours, without attention. In April this year it was disclosed that on April 11th 2007, Gillian Astbury, 66, a diabetic, who was being treated for a broken arm, died in mid Staffs after failing to get her insulin. The hospital admits that other diabetics were probably treated in the same way.

To try to protect her mother, Julie stayed at her side, sleeping on a hard plastic chair, when she could find

one, abandoning work, paying £12 a day to park, living on canteen food. She and her daughter pleaded with nurses to make sure Bella was given drugs and oxygen. After a month on the ward, she became gravely ill. A doctor took Julie aside. His English was poor but she says she's still haunted by his words.

'He said Mum would die a painful death,' she says, and, 'it would be better if you leave her here with us. She will die just like that,' he said clicking his fingers.'

He then asked her to sign a form saying, 'do not resuscitate'. She refused and told him that she knew her mother was not safe under his care.

'This is the nurses' fault not mine', he replied.

'He was no different to the majority of the nurses', says Julie, 'cold and uncaring'.

No one seemed to be in overall charge. Julie once saw a manager strutting through the ward, 'a wedge of anger wrapped in polyester', she says. She barked a reprimand at a patient who was sobbing in pain, turned off her buzzer and disappeared.

Despite delivering 24 hour care to her mother for eight weeks Julie could not save her. 'They destroyed her', she says. 'A strong vibrant woman they robbed of any dignity and left begging for her life.'

Staff thought they'd seen the last of Julie. But shortly after her mother's death she wrote letters of complaint to the director of nursing, to a Chief Executive of the hospital and tackled two matrons. They refused to admit there was any problem. Driven on by the terrible things she's seen, she and her children wrote a letter to the local *Staffordshire Newsletter*. It made the front page of their Christmas edition. 'The floodgates opened', says Julie, 'forty people immediately responded'.

On December 18th, 2007, the Bailey family started a campaign called, 'Cure the NHS,' (CTNHS) and set up a web site. From the start they faced opposition. The paper also published a letter from the hospital saying that 'All the concerns of the family had been dealt with.' It was her word against theirs. She started going out leafleting, asking people to contact her if they had concerns about the hospital.

Her family had always been Labour voters so she wrote to her MP, David Kidney. He sent her numerous reports exonerating the hospital, saying that a recent inspection had found only one fault, a jar of jam without a lid. 'I wanted to scream', says Julie. Instead, she wrote to Alan Johnson the then Health Secretary. She says he offered his condolences on 'the loss of her wife', ignoring all her details of abuse. As far as Labour were concerned it was a local issue, unconnected to their version of the wider NHS.

'The shift away from patient care started to happen under Labour', she says. 'It destroyed the culture of care in the NHS by replacing it with a top-down, target-driven culture.'

For the next two years she followed Labour ministers around their constituencies with banners demanding a public enquiry. She led protests outside the hospital, which, in 2008, amazingly received Foundation Trust Status making it semi-independent from the Department of Health. Despite its above average death rate, it also received a good report from the Health Care Commission.

'The day they got that rating I received 400 emails from distressed relatives', says Julie. As more families contacted Julie she was filled with dread at their stories. 'I would have done anything to get something done at the hospital', she says. 'It wasn't about Mum, it was about saving the others. I was on a course of action I had never expected. I gave up my business and opened this café as a meeting place. I had no time for normal work or family life', she says, 'I lost friends and it just took me over completely.'

A breakthrough came when she spoke on Radio Stoke. After the broadcast a nurse from the hospital rang in to confirm her story. A hospital executive followed denying everything, but the CTNHS website gained more responses. She began appearing on national TV and radio. 'I don't prepare what I'm going to say', she says, 'I just tell the truth.'

In March 2009, the Baileys launched a petition demanding a full public inquiry. In June 2009 there



was a secret inquiry under Health Secretary Andy Burnham, with twelve staff giving evidence and no names mentioned. Julie and her followers were noisily outraged and in October 2009 the Conservatives promised her a full inquiry if they got in.

On June 9th 2010 Robert Francis QC opened a public inquiry into care provided in mid Staffs between 2005-2009. 'I was always determined we would get a safer NHS', says Julie. 'No matter what it cost.' His final report, after thirty-one months, on February 6th 2013, told us all we now know about the NHS at its worst.

Has this pale little woman from the Midlands cured the NHS? She is bitter that no one has been held responsible for any deaths. Robert Francis blamed the failure of the hospital on the drive to cut its budget by £10 million in order to achieve Foundation Trust Status. But Sir David Nicholson, who was in charge of the Stafford Health Trust at that time, is now Chief Executive of the English NHS, one of our highest paid civil servants.

'He says he didn't know what was going on', says Julie, 'but you only had to open a ward door to smell

the stench of urine, hear patients screaming in pain and see staff being bullied, and know that the care was appalling.'

'His resignation will not cure the NHS overnight but it would be a bloody good start.'

She is pessimistic about future patient safety, unless all data on hospital performance is put on to an independent web site. 'A place where people can put their concerns', she says. She needs funding to organise this full time. Yet her actions so far must have made a difference, showing how ordinary members of the public could crack open an institution, which had become as she says, a dangerous sacred cow. Thanks to Julie, nothing need be quite so bad again.

Jane Kelly worked for the Daily Mail as a celebrity interviewer.

From Ward to Whitehall. The Disaster at Mid-Staffs by Julie Bailey, published by Cure The NHS, £7.99. www.curethenhs.co.uk

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Mountains of Information

Theodore Dalrymple

If information were the same as understanding, Beatrice and Sidney Webb's *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation?* would be the object of the deepest academic respect rather than of derision, for no one could say of it that it contained no information in its more than a thousand closely-printed pages. But the Webbs were as credulous in the face of their own supposed facts as any peasant who prays at the reliquary of his local saint; they were like people trying to understand the theory of evolution by the study of mediaeval bestiaries.

The cult of information as the key to understanding, and wisdom is confined to no single field, however, and has been made all the worse by the ease with which information, or assertions posing as information, can now be gathered and permanently recorded. This is all the more dangerous because each of us tends to believe the written word in whatever form it may be. As there is no smoke without fire, so there is no writing without truth. And does not understanding derive from truth?

I still do a certain amount of medico-legal work, in the course of which I must to read through hundreds of pages of documents, mainly medical notes. They

often amount to several pounds *avoir du poids*, from which, *prima facie*, one might be inclined to infer that that they were manifestations of thoroughness and concern for the welfare of the patient; but several hours into their study they convey rather the contrary impression, that of thoughtlessness, the blind following of routine, the insensate duplication of effort and even an indifference to the patient as an individual. Very rarely do they easily allow the reader to reconstruct the medical history of the person to whom they supposedly refer; in doing so, one feels like an archaeologist trying to understand an ancient civilisation from fragments of pottery.

This problem has become much worse since computerisation. After about the first three or four pages of computer printout of a medical record, one's eyes begin to glaze over; a strange kind of numbness creeps over the top and back of one's head. It takes an enormous effort of will to continue to concentrate rather than merely to skim; but one must concentrate, because buried somewhere in all that repetitive, ungrammatical, abbreviation- and statistic-laden verbiage may be an important, even vital, clue or piece of information. The

problem is that in modern medical notes all information is treated as equal; there is no distinction made between the essential and the trivial. No doubt doctors know their patients well where there is still continuity of care, where doctors have a special individual responsibility for or relationship with a patient, and so the lack of emphasis on important information in the notes is less damaging; the doctors carry important but implicit information in their head. But where patients are passed between doctors as in a game of pass the parcel, the notes are the main source of knowledge of the incoming doctor about the patient.

As if this were not bad enough, the proliferation of forms to be filled in, especially by nurses and paramedics, completes the impression of thoughtless dehumanisation. I am not against the filling of forms as an *aide-mémoire*: sometimes the best



of us is inclined to forget to perform routine but essential tasks. However, the proper use of such forms is itself a matter of judgment; in the modern world, or at least in modern Britain, the filling of forms has become a substitute for judgement. Such forms have proliferated (not only, I suspect, in medical notes, but in almost all other fields as well) like a paper, or computer screen, equivalent to some dreadful weed in a novel by John Wyndham.

Recently I trawled through some medical notes that, printed out, were more than six inches thick. Many hundreds of hours of form-filling had been devoted to the case; often the same forms filled in over and over again, though often with different answers to the same question. ‘Has the patient ever had *x*?’ was sometimes answered Yes (a tick) and sometimes answered No (a cross). The apparent contradiction or impossibility of this never occurred to anyone, not in the space of hundreds of pages. The forms were like holiday photographs that, once developed, were never looked at again. This phenomenon is now almost universal in the case notes that I examine.

Some of the forms in the notes were laughable: one, particularly absurd, was twenty pages long and

contained about two hundred items on analogue scales from one to ten. I have noticed that underliners of books rarely seem to get beyond a book’s first fifty pages; and in like fashion, fillers-in of this form, of which there were several in the notes, rarely progressed further than the first ten questions. This was perhaps just as well, for trying to decipher the meaning of two hundred analogue scales would be difficult enough, let alone analysing the meaning of any changes in the answers over time. This was the *reductio ad absurdum* of the cult of information-gathering.

What was quite clear from these notes was that the form-filling had become, for those who did it, the essential work to be done, completely unconnected from the diagnosis or treatment of the patient about whom the forms were supposedly filled in. One can well imagine nurses going home

after a hard day’s bureaucracy feeling exhausted and satisfied that they had earned their money. There was an old saw in the medicine of olden times that the operation was a success but the patient died; the modern equivalent would be that the patient died but the forms had been filled in.

The mountain of miscellaneous, irrelevant, trivial or actively misleading information and pseudo-information did not prevent, perhaps even caused, the most obvious feature of the case to be persistently overlooked, and for the appropriate simple test not to be performed. Potential propitiation of auditors, managers and coroners had become the essence of the endeavour, rather than diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. The death of common sense and judgement is also the death of humanity.

Theodore Dalrymple latest book is The Pleasures of Thinking, Gibson Square.

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Councils of Despair

Bill Hartley

I had been asked at short notice to assist a friend of mine who had picked up a council contract. He runs an industrial cleaning company. Manual labour hasn't been part of my routine but he was desperate and I felt guilty about not having done anything active for several weeks. Finding a pair of overalls I met with his team at 7.30 one Monday morning without much idea of what to expect.

We drove through the backstreets of a northeast town before turning into a rundown council estate. My friend told me there was an easy way of distinguishing between properties where the occupants had exercised their right to buy and those still in council hands. The latter don't see it as their responsibility to keep the hedges trimmed. In his experience it is rare for a council tenant on the worst estates in the northeast to get out a pair of clippers. As I was soon to learn, for some tenants the council's responsibilities extend further than you might suppose. Got a blocked drain or a leaking pipe? Under no circumstances will you investigate it yourself. Even if a simple leak goes on to render the kitchen unusable then so what? The expectation is that the council will have to provide a replacement. You can imagine the man-hours used to deal with problems that could have been reduced by some simple self-help. I know because my friend makes his living dealing with them. He is the beneficiary, the extra cost for the council landlord and presumably one of the reasons why some authorities are keen to get rid of the worst of these estates.

We arrived in a cul de sac with some well-neglected hedges. The houses at the end had been secured against squatters by a private security company. The town has had an influx of Eastern Europeans and the council was determined that this project shouldn't grind to a halt because of squatters. The security companies do a very thorough job. Simply boarding up the windows would be ineffective. They have prefabricated steel shutters bolted to doors and windows from the inside. It was, though, still possible to glimpse the UPVC window frames, installed, I learnt later, about a year before the houses were vacated. However even these measures were not seen as being completely effective against a determined assault. Therefore the lead flashing had been stripped from the rooftops and I was told that indoors the copper pipes had also been removed. Signs posted outside informed metal thieves that they would

be wasting their time.

Further down the road some houses had been identified as not being beyond redemption. Because of this I got my first ever glimpse of public/private sector operations lined up against each other in the same street.

My friend works on the basis that if you pay minimum wage you get minimum wage types. What he needs are grafters who can do this hard, dirty and sometimes dangerous work on their own initiative; hence he pays over the odds.

At first glance my three workmates would not have seemed the most prepossessing bunch. Certainly my old employers in the Civil Service would have been reluctant to take them on. They were working class males, resolutely non-PC, but they could work. Within minutes they had scoped the job and set to on the most disgusting part, with me trying to keep up.

When the tenants were re-housed the attitude seemed to be that anything not wanted could be left *in situ*. This ranged from furniture to household waste. It is difficult for anyone with moderate standards of hygiene to appreciate the awfulness of collecting the decomposing mess left behind; nappies, ancient foodstuffs and much worse. In fairness not all of this was the fault of the occupants. Seeing the properties emptied, the gardens had become a focal point for fly tipping in the neighbourhood, so we were probably disposing of the mess from lots of other homes. The council had secured the buildings but not the perimeter.

With the snow having recently melted and glutinous mud underfoot this was like rubbish collecting on the Somme. We filled two trailer loads and stopped for coffee, relieved that the most unpleasant part was over. Not that I wanted to take my friend's livelihood away from him but it occurred to me that this was the sort of hard graft work that the Ministry of Justice expects those on Community Punishment to undertake. I would guess though that an attempt to do so would be thwarted by a Health and Safety risk assessment. Our first casualty of the day (hand cut by broken glass) was being treated out of the back of a Land Rover with a splash of antiseptic.

An hour after we had started work members of the local council's Works Department arrived. A nearby property was to be refurbished rather than demolished and the first job was to replace the front

wall. This was about two feet high and fifteen feet long. Three bricklayers spent a considerable period of time looking at it then unloaded their equipment. Meanwhile we continued to work. That morning according to the weighbridge at the local tip we shifted six tons of assorted rubbish. Our final task on the council worksheet was to demolish a garden shed. This was a rather robust looking construction and of recent vintage. It stood on a concrete platform and consisted of breezeblocks built to a height of about three feet. Above this was heavy duty corrugated sheeting; rather excessive for a garden shed and not something I suspect that a private householder would routinely buy. For most people a garden shed is a simple timber construction, prefabricated and bought from somewhere like B&Q but this of course was a council property.

Out in the street there had been a development. A JCB had arrived. The council workmen stood back and watched as the scoop on the machine was used to demolish the old wall. It was about 10.45 by now and the engine noise was finally attracting attention from inside the house. Curtains were drawn indicating that the family had surfaced. Mum, Dad and two small children appeared at the windows to join the council workmen in observing the spectacle.

In the garden of the abandoned house Dave, one of my workmates, had sized up the garden shed job. Declining offers of help he attacked the breezeblocks with a sledge hammer. Following this he continued to use brute force to tear down the corrugated sheeting. The council people had also started to do some work. They were erecting temporary barriers around the JCB. This had been prompted by the arrival of a supervisor who also lingered to watch. The JCB continued to delicately nudge over sections of the wall long after Dave using nothing but muscle power had the shed in ruins. We then made an interesting discovery. Whilst the council had troubled to use good quality materials to erect the walls of the shed, the roof had been made of some cheap chipboard material. The weather had done its work and the roof turned out to be porous and soggy which explained the damp concrete floor. The council had built a good quality shed with a roof that leaked.

By day four we had succeeded in clearing houses in three streets. The council bricklayers meanwhile had finished building the new wall. Their supervisor came to see us. Dave made a sarcastic remark about the brickies' productivity. Perhaps modesty prevented him comparing it with the 22 tons of rubbish we'd shifted by now. The supervisor explained that he had three jobs on the go in various locations on the estate and added that although the contracts had gone to private sector companies the council bosses insisted on his

finding work for the direct labour people, so he had to carefully select non-crucial aspects of the project where he could employ his people. This meant jobs where their poor productivity would not have an impact on the overall project. For their part the council workmen hadn't seemed remotely bothered by the rate at which private contractors with scarcely any supervision were working on various jobs in close proximity. The project was being funded by central government, so the addition of council workers was a cost that could I suppose be quietly absorbed. The supervisor thought that their poor work rate was something even the council could not ignore indefinitely. It turned out not to be the only questionable expense added by the council.

Being there for eight hours each day enabled me to observe the rhythms of the estate. It was not an encouraging experience. The only movement early in the morning was that of children going to school. Indeed until late morning only women and children were to be seen. Later the males began to surface. Most wore the same grubby leisurewear, chiefly tracksuits. Hoods over the head were evidently a device to impart some sense of menace to the wearer, or perhaps it was designed to give young males confidence when they ventured out. If so, it didn't succeed. I watched a succession of pasty-faced males who appeared prematurely aged meander listlessly to and fro. They were a sad unthreatening bunch despite the street wear. Sometimes they would gather in small groups outside a front door to smoke, listlessly watching the building activity, which was designed to better their lives. The workmen on the buildings treated them with complete indifference. It was like two different species; the employed working class and this sub-group who ought to have had something in common with them but clearly viewed doing a day's work as beyond their comprehension. In a way the project was keeping both them and the council workmen in a manner to which they had become accustomed.

I asked the supervisor why we were putting in so much effort clearing properties which were soon to be demolished. After all everything would eventually be carted off to some landfill site. It turned out that the old properties were to be replaced by new houses. These were to be handed over to a housing association, whose representatives would soon be visiting with council officials.

'They want to show a nice tidy site to the housing association people', he explained. 'So they don't get an early warning of what kind of tenants they'll be getting in the new houses.'

Bill Hartley was a management consultant.

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Letter From America

Matthew Walther

Recently I learned that, even though its glass-ceilinged atrium has been designed to look like some kind of garden, one cannot smoke inside the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland. The security guards who informed me of this were very polite gentlemen. ‘Sir’, said one, ‘we need you to put out your cigarette.’ ‘Right then’, I thought, and stubbed out the offending cancer stick on the tile beneath my feet.

Not by nature much of a convention-goer, I found myself visiting the Gaylord at the behest of my employer, who had sent me to meet other young right-of-centre Americans at the 2013 Conservative Political Action Conference. The conference, always referred to as CPAC (pronounced ‘See? Pack!’), is the occasion for dozens of speeches by legislators, journalists, and right-wing hangers-on in what in America is generally called the ‘Conservative Movement’. Between the speeches, conferences attendees visit booths at which scores of grassroots organizations, policy think-tanks, and media outlets hand out swag. In the evenings all the above congregate at local watering holes to discuss, over whiskey sours and Coors Light beer, everything from America’s border security policy to the best means of reforming the country’s banking system (returning to a gold standard seems to be the emerging consensus). The non-smoking policy aside, my time at the Gaylord, which is to say at CPAC, was a good one.

CPAC has no proximate British equivalent. I have very little knowledge of how, say, Tory Party conferences are conducted, but my sense from reading British newspapers is that they are highly official – to say nothing of officious – affairs which mainly involve party bigwigs, in-the-loop denizens of Fleet Street, and almost no one else. In this sense, they more or less resemble the Republican National Conventions held during presidential election years. (Even at the RNC, however, there is typically a strong anti-establishment presence: the 2012 proceedings that formally nominated Willard Romney to the Grand Old Party’s national ticket were very nearly hijacked by supporters of Texas Congressman Ron Paul, easily the most right-wing member of the House of Representatives.) To make sense of CPAC requires one to imagine a hypothetical gathering in some posh London suburb of, say, disenchanted hereditary peers,

somewhat outré Ukipers, patriotic Labour voters concerned about the EU and mass immigration; at this hypothetical gathering would be virtually any at least ostensibly non-left-wing politician who hopes to hold national office in Britain. Imagine Eric Pickles sitting on a gay marriage panel with John Redwood, Jacob Rees-Mogg exchanging Wodehouse quotations with Boris Johnson, Frank Field and Peter Hitchens taking questions about Britain’s future (or lack thereof) in the EU, the staff of the *Spectator* and columnists from the *Sunday Telegraph* handing out buttons and offers for discount subscriptions: this should give you some idea not only of what a British CPAC would look like, but also of why one is not likely to take place any time soon.

Britain has become a mass democracy without any extra-party engines for promoting the will, such as it is, of the electorate. (It has been some time since Fleet Street was of much use in this area: its always close relationship with Westminster has now become incestuous.) Because nothing like the – admittedly far from perfect – American primary system for the selection of candidates exists, every five years Britons are made to choose from a line-up of stale political hacks who, almost by definition, hold no views about substantive issues that in any significant way differ from the left-of-centre metropolitan consensus. If candidates are deselected from a particular constituency, it is almost invariably at the behest not of voters but of either party grandees or journalists whose refined sensibilities have been offended by off-the-cuff remarks made by the candidate about race or some other ‘sensitive’ issue.

Compare this to the United States, where foes of abortion, Mexican immigration, gun control, high taxes, increased spending, homosexual civil unions, restrictions upon free speech, foreign intervention, and drug legalisation – this list is by no means exhaustive – can be and are represented by well-funded non-profit organisations whose sole *raison d’être* are to ensure the election of conservative candidates and hold the toes of already elected congressmen and senators to the fire. In recent years, wobbly incumbents like Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah have nearly lost their seats due to primary challenges from right-wing insurgent candidates. Party favourites like Tray Grayson have

lost primary elections to unknown outsiders like Rand Paul. (Even Ronald Reagan's first go at the presidency was not in 1980 but rather in 1976— against his party's seated president, Gerald Ford.) While the success or failure of candidates like Paul—and his Senate comrades-in-arms Ted Cruz and Mike Lee— lies ultimately with the whims of individual voters, the importance of so-called grassroots organisations, which are to some extent simply mediators between ordinary citizens and the candidates themselves, cannot be underestimated. And the power of such groups is never more apparent than at CPAC, where once a year they mass their forces and show the Washington establishment, which most of them are in but not of, that the ordinary Kansans and Wyoming-ites they represent are serious about making sure that abortions are virtually impossible to obtain and that oil drilling continues unimpeded by federal regulation.

This is not to say that the British system does not have its advantages. Populism is often as dangerous as it is distasteful; what Evelyn Waugh called the 'Attlee-Cripps terror' was probably as direct a representation of the people's will as any series of political changes has ever been. And I myself am a firm opponent of universal suffrage as such – as far as I am concerned,

the stupidest idea that has emerged in the West in half a millennium, other than perhaps *sola scriptura* or the automobile – but I don't see the Reform Bills of 1832, 1867, and 1884 being repealed any time soon, unless the Beer, Baccy, and Crumpet Party come into power in an unpredicted landslide in 2015. (Don't even let's consider the colossal staying power of certain other egregious pieces of legislation passed in 1918, 1928, and 1969 respectively.) The British people do not have but desperately need some say in who stands for Parliament and some influence upon the creation of their parties' official policy. Founding, funding, and recruiting for the British equivalent of, say, National Right-to-Life or Gun Owners of America would be a step in the right direction.

In other words, the choice is clear: either strip away nearly two hundred years of quasi-democratic precedent (Wrong, as Sellar and Yeatman would say, but Wromantic) or organise and agitate (Right but Repulsive – or at least not very much fun). After all, they're your parties and you can cry 'Enoch Was Right' if you want to.

Matthew Walther is assistant editor of The American Spectator.

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Burmese Daze

Christie Davies

No one would dispute that Burma has an authoritarian government backed by the military and elected by fraud. The received liberal wisdom is that the saintly Nobel Prize winning Suu Kyi, daughter of the independence leader Aung San and chairman of the National League for Democracy, will be able to lead that suffering country back to peace, freedom, prosperity and human rights. No doubt she would like to achieve this and in central Burma she and her party enjoy considerable popularity. But Burma's problems go rather deeper.

If you ask ordinary Burman villagers what improvement there has been in their lives, as the government has in recent years relaxed some of its oppressive grip on everyday life, they will speak first of the improved availability of cheap motor cycles. It reminds us that the military dictatorships that ruled Burma from 1962 onwards were strongly socialist. This aspect of their rule more than any other reduced Burma from a state of relative prosperity to being one of the

world's poorest and also most corrupt countries. Under British imperial rule before World War II the Burmese economy had flourished. The British administration had brought internal order, free trade and economic development to a previously backward and endlessly warring part of the world. The amount of land under cultivation now increased so that there was not only enough food for the local people but a large export of rice, which paid for imported manufactured goods, as did the export of oil, teak and gemstones. The rapid building of roads, railways, river steamers and ports by the British had linked Burma to the world economy as did literacy in and teaching through the medium of English.

After Burma became independent in 1948 a newly elected socialist government announced an eight-year plan and substantial state ownership. The economy went into rapid decline. In 1962 the military took over and introduced the 'Burmese Way to Socialism'; they nationalised all the main industries and trading

companies and imposed price controls. It left land in the hands of the peasants but restricted trading in land. Food production could no longer keep up with population growth and there was massive inflation.

It is in the light of that history that we should perceive the priority ordinary people give to owning a motorcycle. Under socialism only those with military

connections could afford one and they were expensive, high quality, Japanese bikes for the privileged only, a symbol of socialist inequality for the ordinary people who had to walk or hitch a ride with a horse and cart in a country where the public transport systems were in decay. Then cheap Chinese-manufactured motorbikes became available on the black market, that great agent of freedom and democracy under socialism. At first the government refused licences to the drivers but as their numbers increased it was forced to concede and is now mainly concerned with getting people to wear crash helmets. The motor cycle means freedom to move around and to trade and it means this for women as well as men; in contrast to the Muslim countries, the women of Buddhist Burma have long enjoyed considerable personal autonomy. The most resented inequality in Burma remains

the remunerative influence enjoyed by those who have relatives in the military; a poor man will become wealthy overnight because a cousin has been promoted to commander and his neighbours need access to the new man of power. The opening up of the economy has brought not a free market but new patterns of corruption among military cronies.

Part of the reason for the power of the military lies in the ethnic civil wars that have taken place ever since the country became independent. Perhaps two-thirds of the population of the country are Burman, the others are indigenous ethnic nations, the Shan, Karen, Chin and Kachin, who enjoyed considerable autonomy under British rule and fought with the British against the Japanese during World War II. By contrast Aung San, the father of Suu Kyi and founder of the Communist

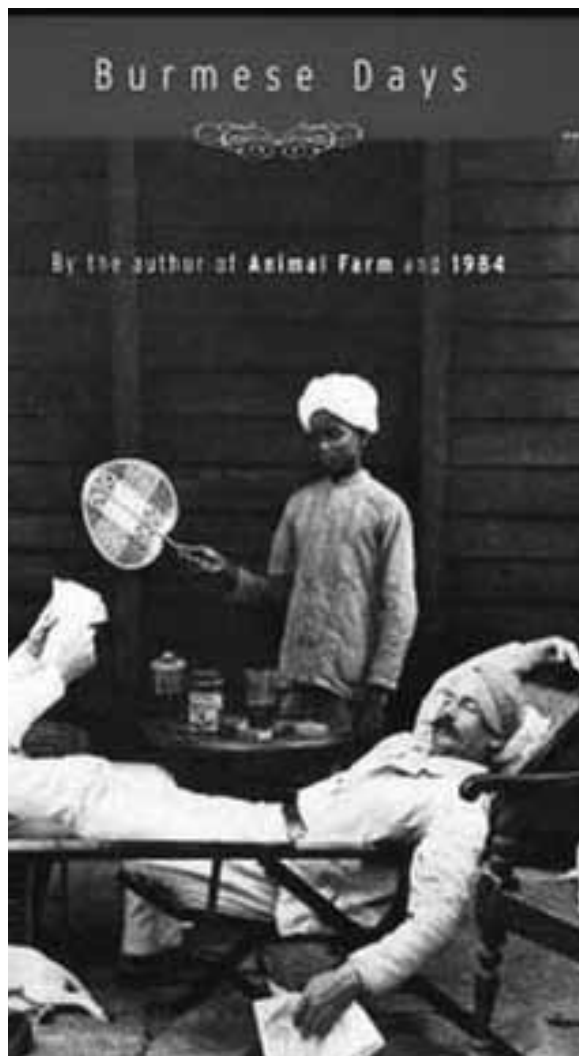
Party of Burma, received military training in Japan and formed the Burma Independence Army that fought alongside the Japanese invader. It took Aung San and his pals rather a long time to work out that the Japanese oppressors of Korea and murderous invaders of China were tyrants not liberators. He only switched sides in March 1945, when the British and Indian armies in

Burma had already defeated the Japanese, but his twists and turns did enable him to become *de facto* Prime Minister of Burma and to negotiate the country's independence with Attlee. Unlike other Burmese nationalists he seems to have realised that Burma could only be a stable country if it had a loose federal structure and was even willing to offer the other ethnic nations the right to secede from Burma.

Whether Aung San was sincere or whether he would have been able to make the deal stick, we shall never know since, for quite different reasons, he was murdered by a political rival in 1947. His successors have subscribed to an 'integral nationalism', an ideal of a nation in which only Burmese-speaking Buddhists count. Whenever under international pressure the present government arranges a ceasefire with one

of the insurgent minorities, the army acts covertly to undermine it. Hundreds of thousands of refugees drawn from ethnic minority nations living at the edge of the country have fled across the border to China, Thailand or Bangladesh. Since the refugees are not Palestinian and the Burmese are not white, this has not led to strident, leftist demonstrations in Britain. They explain the atrocities away by saying that Burma is 'post-colonial' and still in the process of 'nation building'. Half a century on it is still all Britain's fault. A rather poor novel by a former colonial policeman in Burma, George Orwell's *Burmese Days*, is flourished by them in support of these sentiments. Indeed it is a best seller in several languages among naive contemporary tourists in Burma.

At one point it was even proposed that Buddhism



become the sole official religion of Burma. The military rulers are pious and have regularly sought 'merit' and obtain a decent billet in the afterlife or else a short cut to nirvana by building new stupas and temples, sometimes to the detriment of the exquisite existing ones. Do evil and buy indulgences. This was the tactic of the Burmese villain U Po Kyin in Orwell's novel but few readers get the point; likewise they are unable to see that the virtuous Dr Veraswami, his Indian rival for the solitary place in the European club that would be allocated to a non-European, was as much a foreigner and a part of the British colonial order as the arrogant white members of the exclusive club. The present day Burmese military have even with their own fair hands publicly added extra layers of gold leaf to images of the Buddha so that some of these bulge fat and ungainly from their ever multiplying coats of gold. It is a Buddhist version of getting out of purgatory by paying for a fine altarpiece.

The self-destructive pushing to one side of the English language is another aspect. An old Buddhist monk complained to me in perfect English that the school where he had learned his English from Australian teachers had been closed by the government and that young people no longer spoke the language properly. There is a parallel with Sri Lanka where a violent linguistic and religious nationalism led by Buddhist monks eventually led to a Sinhalese war of elimination against the Tamils who were Hindus and often skilled in English as well as the Tamil language.

Buddhism, a religion of peace, was once the dominant religion in Pakistan, Kashmir, Afghanistan and much of central Asia until, as the ruins of stupas and temples there show us, the gentle religion was destroyed by the armies of Islam, the religion of war. The Muslim destruction of the giant cliff-carved Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan in 2001 was just the latest act in more than a thousand years of Islamic vandalism. But in the Burmese state of Rakhine close to the border with Bangladesh it is the Rohingya Muslim minority who have long been the victims. A quarter of a million of them have fled to Bangladesh to escape persecution by their Buddhist neighbours. Buddhist monks have been particularly active in stirring up hostility against them; more shades of Sri Lanka. The Rohingyas were already taking trying to escape the rule of the violently expanding Burmese Empire and find refuge in British-ruled Bengal in the late eighteenth century. Even religions of peace, including Christianity, have a capacity for ferocity against those of other faiths.

When Burma became independent in 1948, it denied citizenship to anyone whose ancestors had not been in the country in 1823, the year when Burma began to be absorbed into British India. During the time when

Burma was administered as part of Britain's Indian empire, Indians emigrated to Burma in large numbers to become merchants, doctors, engineers and civil servants as well as mere labourers. In the early 1960s the Burmese government confiscated the property of and expelled about three hundred thousand Indians as part of the drive to establish Burmese socialism. A pan-Third Worldist Indian government provided transport for them to go to India; leftist agitators in Britain had a rare moment of silence and, deprived of its Indian and overseas Chinese entrepreneurs, the Burmese economy collapsed.

Suu Kyi is often silent and at best ambiguous about the religion, ethnic and indeed racial conflicts (the Rohingyas and those from India or Bangladesh are often referred to as 'the blacks') in Burma. If she were in power she would be unable to resolve them, for the Burmese majority, though at a personal level absolutely charming, are intensely nationalistic and extremely pious Buddhists. The minority nations want federalism and the Burmese majority want complete unity and dominance. The army has been the instrument of that dominance and Suu Kyi is not able strongly to challenge this.

With the opening up of Burma to trade, investment and tourism, the economy has recovered from the worst days of socialism and will continue to grow, but with a very large input from China. The Chinese in alliance with the military elite now control the natural resources of Burma, notably its copper and jade, and will soon have chopped down the last teak tree. They expect to construct a huge dam, which will provide electricity across the border to China, and have nearly finished building a major oil and gas pipeline going to Yunnan in the interior of China, from a new port on Burma's Indian Ocean coast, which will receive tankers from the Middle East. Chinese exports by container ship will follow and then possibly a naval base to outflank America and overawe India. Burmese isolation is dead. A problem that now arises is that these new developments run through the territories of the minority ethnic nations and displace local people, while the benefits go elsewhere. Armed rebels may well decide to attack the new installations provoking Chinese intervention. Wild jihadists may decide to take up the cause of the Rohingyas. The age of empire is back.

Christie Davies has just returned from Myanmar/ Burma. He has been a visiting scholar at several Indian universities.

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A Short History of Exploding Fertilizers

Robin Cave

On Patriots' Day in Boston, two bombs were exploded killing three people and wounding many others. A day later, in West, Texas, a fire at the West Fertilizer Company led to an explosion which killed ten people and destroyed half the town. A coincidence? Maybe the two Boston Chechens had accomplices a few thousand miles away in Texas who planned a follow-up, or perhaps two groups of terrorists came to the independent conclusion that it was a good time to try something.

Back in 2001, two planes flew into the World Trade Center and killed about three thousand people. Ten days later, at the AZF fertiliser factory in Toulouse, an explosion caused 29 deaths and 2442 injuries. Another strange coincidence? The AZF factory in Toulouse had two to three hundred tons of ammonium nitrate, a common nitrogenous fertiliser, and it was that which exploded. It is also used in explosive compositions, and can be made, with some difficulty, to explode on its own.

In the late fifties I visited a fertiliser factory in Essex, which produced ammonium nitrate. Liquid ammonia was produced from natural gas in a refinery next-door, piped through the fence, and stored in a spherical steel tank. Some of the ammonia was oxidised using a platinum gauze catalyst, to prepare nitric acid, which was combined with more ammonia to produce ammonium nitrate. The fertilizer factory that exploded in West Texas is reported to have had a storage tank holding 20 tons of ammonia, and about 200 tons of ammonium nitrate in store.

There have been two purely accidental explosions involving the fertilizer. In 1921, at Oppau, near Mannheim in Germany, BASF had a dump of about 4,500 tones of a 50/50 mixture of ammonium nitrate and ammonium sulphate. The storage piles had caked hard, so they broke them up with explosives. On 21 September the whole dump blew up, and 430 people were killed. On 16 April 1947, in the docks at Texas City, a fire broke out on the freighter *Grandcamp*, which had been loaded with 3,130 tons of ammonium nitrate. The captain decided to smother the fire with steam, causing the whole cargo to blow up killing 576 people, and destroying Texas City.

Clearly the likely behaviour of ammonium nitrate is not mysterious. The explosion near Mannheim is believed to have been the biggest man-made (non-nuclear) explosion

ever. Anhydrous (liquid) ammonia is inflammable. If it leaks from a tank, it evaporates and the mixture with air can be very inflammable, though ammonia is lighter than air, and has a very strong, noticeable smell. It seems more likely that the ammonium nitrate exploded, though it is not very easy to detonate.

What do we make of this in relation to Boston? The bombers may have used ammonium nitrate but they probably relied on old-fashioned gunpowder, a mixture of potassium nitrate, charcoal and sulphur, the latter two can be bought over the counter, packed into a pressure cooker with ball bearings. An alternative could have been what the IRA called 'Co-Op Mix', ammonium nitrate and cooking oil. On the other hand setting off the explosion in West Texas would have required a relatively sophisticated timer.

What was used is significant. Experts believe people such as the Boston bombers consist of small numbers of self-radicalising young men isolated even within their own Moslem communities. For example Chechens living in America. This was true of the 9/11 bombers who *'were not 'recruited' by Al Qaeda. They were Middle eastern Muslims isolated even among the Moroccan and Turkish Muslims who predominate in Germany.' ... three wound up living together as they self-radicalized** The same is true of the 7/7 bombers in London.

The popular view of a worldwide network of support for such groups supplying them with the latest equipment is erroneous. The bombs used are crude, made from over the counter materials and it is impossible to stop anybody buying them. The real detonator is between a bomber's ears. Its primer a cascade of foolish liberal excuses by the left for the murderous excesses of Islam. That the Americans are behind every bombing, that they 'oppress' Arab States when the latter need no lessons in oppression. As long as such nonsense is believed we will have 'over the counter' bombers.

* Testimony before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security Washington, DC, March 12, 2008.

Robin Cave is a retired chemist

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Does Michael have Special Needs?

Alistair Miller

What is one to make of Michael Gove? He is by all accounts a charming and cultivated man. His speeches are certainly a notable improvement on those of his predecessor, Ed Balls, and display a mix of wit and erudition that make a refreshing change from the platitudes, buzz words and slogans that one has come to expect from education secretaries. His policies together with the air he sometimes conveys in interviews of being ‘a clever boy’ have tended to evoke extreme reactions. But possibly the most significant accolade comes from an unexpected quarter – *The Times Educational Supplement*. In a recent editorial, Gerald Kelly writes:

... his single-mindedness has refashioned education more thoroughly and more rapidly than any other secretary of state in recent history has managed. Many have hated those changes. But none can deny the impressive determination that made them happen.

Many of us doubted that a new Conservative government would be able to uproot the entrenched orthodoxies of the educational establishment and free schools from the shackles of state control. As Chris Woodhead put it, we simply expected to get ‘more Balls’. However, this time, the Gordian knot really does seem to have been cut. Though there have been some embarrassing ‘technical difficulties’ and the wholesale reform of the examination system has proved, in Gove’s own words, ‘a bridge too far’, reforms are in the process of being instituted that appear to strike at the heart of what has been going wrong in English education. The tyranny of micromanagement, which has reduced teaching to the ‘delivery’ of authorised schemes of work accompanied by a regime of obsessive planning, assessment and target-setting (leaving the teacher exhausted before he even sets foot in the classroom), has been overthrown by the institution of free schools and by the removal of ‘unnecessary prescription about how to teach’ from the National Curriculum programmes of study. Standards will be restored by the abolition of inappropriate coursework, continuous assessment, resits and modules – all of which are so flagrantly open to abuse. Accountability will be made more balanced and meaningful by the institution of new school assessment measures that

recognise all pupils’ progress across a whole range of subjects. And progressive education will be dealt what may be a crushing blow by the drafting of a new National Curriculum that details a core of essential knowledge and facts that every child needs to know in order to be ‘culturally literate’.

It would be hard to over-emphasise the sea change this term ‘culturally literate’ represents. It is commonly assumed that with advent of the National Curriculum instituted by Margaret Thatcher’s government, a traditional knowledge-based curriculum was reinstated. But, in fact, the underlying pedagogy was deeply progressive (the educationalists who framed it made sure of that) and the prime aim was not to develop a coherent body of knowledge but to equip pupils with a range of all-purpose learning and thinking skills. The problem is well exemplified in primary history. Instead of teaching the story of the nation chronologically and teaching it by telling stories (which are inherently memorable), pupils are supposed to deduce historical knowledge for themselves by examining artefacts and source material, and by learning to ‘sift through evidence’ – appropriate for the PhD research student, but a waste of time for children, who are deprived of the facts, dates, stories and iconic images (the bearings) essential to any historical understanding. It is to Michael Gove’s great credit that he has recognised that the National Curriculum itself needs fundamental reform.

The terms ‘cultural literacy’ and ‘core knowledge’ derive from E D Hirsch, the American academic and critic of progressive education whose work has greatly influenced Gove. Hirsch argues that school curricula should transmit the core knowledge that is shared by educated people and is essential to participate intellectually and culturally in wider society – indeed to be literate in any meaningful sense. His approach has been adopted in Massachusetts, now the top-performing American state; and the National Curriculum is being reformed so that it focuses on this core knowledge. This is a dramatic change for the better. Gove has also learned from Hirsch about Antonio Gramsci, the pre-war Italian communist who argued that the progressive educational ideology that was then fashionable, and

that was deemed democratic because it did away with hierarchical knowledge and didactic teaching, actually deprived the working classes of the very tools they needed to empower and emancipate themselves. In a sparkling speech entitled 'The Progressive Betrayal' delivered in February to the Social Market Foundation, Gove was able to turn the tables on his opponents by citing Gramsci and arguing that it is he who is the radical, the political progressive – precisely because, educationally, he is conservative.

So far, this is very good indeed, but Gove goes further. In the same speech, he argues in impassioned terms that there has long been a deep-seated desire amongst working class people to secure the rewards of a traditional education, to 'secure access to the means of intellectual enlightenment'; and it is only the denial to them of this that has caused social mobility to stall in Britain over the past forty years. He cites the housemaids who read Dickens and Conrad, the kitchen maids who saved up money to attend classical music concerts and the Oldham mill worker who sneaked looks at Milton's *Paradise Lost* during his shift. This thirst for knowledge and for culture is reflected nowadays in the fact that successful people, whatever their background, invariably choose to send their children to private schools with 'rigorously academic' curricula. But why then, asks Gove, should not all children have this opportunity? Look at schools like Holland Park, previously failing but where 91 per cent of pupils now secure '5 good GCSEs including English and Maths'. Look at the highest performing educational jurisdictions – Singapore, for example – where all children follow a traditional curriculum. There is 'abundant proof that children from every background can succeed academically', so long as they are taught by 'gifted professionals' that are committed and passionate. Therefore, concludes Gove, all children should be given a traditional academic 'liberal' education until they are 16.

There is much truth in all this. But there is also a considerable sleight of hand. The problem is that Gove has carefully omitted from his speech the critical words 'ability', 'aptitude' and 'intelligence'. And even though he is advocating an academic curriculum for all, he has carefully avoided the claim that *all children* can succeed academically. True, many working people have striven for culture and intellectual enlightenment; but they had the *aptitude* for it. True, people who have the money choose to send their children to private schools; but not all these children are academically inclined, and after laboriously scraping the required grades at Common Entrance, they progress to senior schools that cater for 'all-rounders' (Millfield is a famous example). Gove cites Westminster as a

school whose 'medieval cloisters connect seamlessly to the corridors of power', but only a few will win places there because the entrance papers are simply too difficult for the average pupil. True, there are academies with 90 per cent of pupils securing '5 good GCSEs including English and Maths' – but what does it take nowadays to get a C grade in Maths or English? And with coursework, modules and resits (which evidently all favour the less able) abolished, GCSEs made 'more rigorous', and only 'EBacc' subjects (the more rigorous academic subjects) included in the '5 good GCSEs', what will be left of that 90 per cent?

Gove cites Singapore as an example of one of the world's most successful school systems. But he neglects to mention one of its most striking features. From age 9, pupils are streamed *by ability*; and at the end of primary school, pupils sit exams so that they can be streamed in their secondary schools *by ability* with only the two higher streams being prepared for university. In other words, the system is selective in all but name. Even more startlingly, less able pupils might spend an extra *two years* at primary school mastering the basics before they move on to secondary school – which, since no such measure is ever likely to be introduced in this country, begs the obvious question: how are English pupils who are two years behind by the age of 11 to cope at secondary school with an academic curriculum? The answer, of course, is that they will not and they do not.

For over forty years now, it has been unfashionable (to put it mildly) to argue that pupils differ in their academic ability or intelligence, and that these differences are innate. Instead, we have had the egalitarian project of ending 'under-achievement'. At one level this is laudable. It is obvious that there can be bad schools and that attainment in these schools can be significantly raised. But when pupils are classed as under-achieving *merely because they are less able* we have entered new territory. When it is argued that all pupils' achievement can be transformed merely by instituting 'equal opportunities' and ensuring that all teachers are 'inspirational' or 'gifted' (mere professional competence and experience are no longer enough), we have asserted something for which there is no empirical evidence whatever. In fact, there is a mountain of evidence to the contrary gathered over the best part of a century by those who have made it their professional business to study and measure intelligence. It is simply that, for political and ideological reasons, this psychometric evidence is ignored.

The conclusions of psychometrics were summarised by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray in *The Bell Curve*: there is a general factor ('g') of cognitive ability or intelligence on which human beings differ;

IQ tests most accurately measure this factor; IQ scores are stable over much of a person's life; and cognitive ability is substantially heritable. But though educationalists and politicians live in a state of denial, it is blindingly obvious to classroom teachers that pupils differ enormously in cognitive ability or intelligence. That however hard you try, some pupils simply 'won't get it'; and even when after a great deal of extra work they do seem to get it, the concept will not stick; and even when it does stick, the pupil has the greatest difficulty in applying the concept. Of course, all pupils can make progress, and extra work and remedial teaching will yield dividends; and the core knowledge curriculum has the advantage that being descriptive rather than analytical in nature it is relatively accessible to all pupils. The problem is that differences in intelligence are both quantitative *and* qualitative in nature. Less able pupils do relatively worse on tasks requiring imagination, reasoning and generalisation (the things that have high 'g-loading') than they do on those that are more mechanical and require merely basic literacy and numeracy. The more abstract or theoretical the task, the less accessible it is. Inevitably a secondary curriculum composed of academic subject disciplines will, in addition to transmitting 'core knowledge', seek to develop a more theoretical, analytical understanding of key concepts; and in laying the foundations for more advanced study, it will assume that the pupil is capable of taking the

subject to a higher level. Herein is the dilemma.

Why struggle to master work that is essentially beyond one, to acquire a superficial half-knowledge that will soon be forgotten, when one could be studying a practically-based body of knowledge and skill and gaining all that accrues – intellectually, morally and motivationally – from the study of a subject *in depth*? Why condemn pupils who lack the aptitude for academic work to a watered down grammar school curriculum that is of little interest or practical use – when a whole range of virtues, moral and intellectual, could be fostered through practical and craft education on the apprenticeship model (as Richard Sennett has argued in *The Craftsman*), an education that, unlike its academic counterpart, is accessible to all? Gove has done well to learn the lessons of the world's most successful school systems regarding the raising of academic attainment. What is now needed is a comparable study to find which countries or jurisdictions are best at educating the pupils who do not have an aptitude for academic study and at preparing them to lead fulfilled lives as valued members of society.

We all wish to educate our children. But what is the ultimate aim of education? Is to produce an intellectual or a *good person*, a philosopher or a citizen? It is a question that Michael Gove might do well to ponder.

Alistair Miller is a teacher. [back to contents page](#)

A Century of IQ

Richard Lynn

The intelligence quotient or, to give its popular acronym, the IQ, has now achieved its centenary.

This measure of our thinking, problem solving, learning and memory abilities was devised in 1912 by Wilhelm Stern, a professor of psychology at the University of Breslau, now Wroclaw in Poland.

Stern's IQ scale was constructed with the average set at 100, and with a range from zero to about 200. Approximately 96 per cent of people have IQs between 70 and 130, with about 2 per cent below 70 and 2 per cent above 130. People with IQs below 70 have some degree of learning difficulty, but most of these have IQs between 50 and 70 and function reasonably well performing undemanding jobs.

About one person per 1,000 has an IQ of 145 and above, and IQs higher than 160 are possessed by only approximately one person in 30,000. An IQ of 200 is about the highest ever recorded and is very rare. It has

been estimated that this IQ was possessed by Francis Galton, Blaise Pascal and John Stuart Mill.

During its hundred year existence it has been found that our IQ affects our life in a number of important ways. It is a significant determinant how well we do at school and in further education, our income, occupation, health, life expectancy, and of our choice of friends and partners.

In the early years of the twentieth century, attitudes to the IQ assumed a political dimension. The liberal-left generally approved of the IQ and research showing its importance. One of the most salient issues was the discovery that intelligent women were having relatively few children and the inference was drawn that the IQ of the population was deteriorating. In many countries eugenics societies were established to promote ways to reverse this trend.

The principal supporters of eugenics came from

the liberal-left. In Britain they included H G Wells, Sidney and Beatrice Webb and George Bernard Shaw. The programmes they advocated were the provision of financial incentives for those with high IQs to have more children, designated positive eugenics, and measures to reduce the numbers of children of those with low IQs, designated negative eugenics. In the United States and a number of countries in continental Europe, the principal of these negative eugenics measures was the sterilisation of the mentally retarded to prevent the birth of mentally retarded children. This was not introduced in Britain, but H.G. Wells in his book *A Modern Utopia* (1905) came up with the alternative of getting rid of them by dumping them on an uninhabited island.

In 1944 IQ supporters achieved a major political success in Britain with the introduction in the eleven plus exam to select children with high IQs for grammar schools. This was initially welcomed by the liberal-left because it promoted the ideal of equality of opportunity. It enabled children from working class families who had high IQs to obtain a grammar school education and enter the middle and professional classes. In the second half of the twentieth century, liberal-left opinion turned against the IQ. There were several reasons for this change. Firstly the liberal-left opposed the eleven plus exam because it preserved the socio-economic hierarchy. The liberal-left became more concerned with the promotion of equality of outcome, which it argued could be achieved if all children attended comprehensives. The liberal-left implemented this agenda during the Wilson government of 1964-1970 when Shirley Williams, the education minister, closed down most of the grammar schools and replaced them with comprehensives. This programme was continued by the Conservatives in the Heath government of 1970-1974 by the education minister, Margaret Thatcher. By the end of the 1970s, in England only Kent and Buckingham retained grammar schools and the use of IQ tests in the eleven plus examination.

A second reason that the liberal-left became disenchanted with the IQ was that research on twins showed that our IQs are largely determined genetically. It was found that the IQs of identical twins are much more similar than those of non-identicals, and several studies found that even when identical twins have been brought up in different families they have very similar IQs. The political implication of the strong genetic determination of the IQ is that it would be very difficult to reduce social inequalities, as those who are born with high IQs do better than those whose IQs are lower.

Even more disturbing for the liberal-left was the evidence of race differences in IQs. This was found first in the United States in 1918 when the IQs of

conscripts were tested and it was found that blacks had an average IQ of 84 and whites an average IQ of 100. This difference has been confirmed in numerous studies and is still present today. In 1994 Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray argued in their book *The Bell Curve* that this IQ difference goes a long way to explaining why blacks do more poorly in education and employment, and have higher rates of welfare dependency and single motherhood.

The liberal-left has been further discomforted in the last decade during which IQs have been calculated for all nations and races and it has been shown that there are large differences between different peoples. The Ashkenazi Jews have the highest IQ at an average of 110. This is one of the reasons that they are so successful and prominent in the professions, business and academia and as recipients of awards and prizes for outstanding intellectual work like the Nobel Prize. In the United States Jews comprised about three per cent of the population during the last century and have won about a third of the Nobel prizes.

The Chinese, Japanese and other Northeast Asians have the next highest IQ at 105. This explains why Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore have done so well economically during the last half century, and why China has achieved such high rates of economic growth in recent years since it has introduced a market economy. The European nations have an average IQ of 100, which makes it difficult for them to compete economically against the Northeast Asians. The lowest IQs are those of the Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert and the Pygmies of the West African rain forests at an average 53, and the Australian Aborigines at an average 62. IQs in sub-Saharan Africa are approximately 70 and this retards their economic development. The calculation of IQs for all nations in the world has shown that IQ differences contribute significantly to differences in economic development and to our understanding of why some nations are rich while others remain poor.

For all these reasons, during the course of the century the IQ has changed from being a liberal-left to a conservative concept. Conservatives are neither surprised nor worried that their worldviews have turned out to be largely correct. People are born with unequal abilities, so some will do better than others, and there is nothing much that can be done about it. Differences in IQs are the rock on which liberal-left ideals of a more equal world will inevitably founder.

Richard Lynn is Professor Emeritus of Psychology at the University of Ulster and is the author, jointly with Tatu Vanhanen, of Intelligence: A Unifying Construct for the Social Sciences.

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Cooling off on Gay Marriage

Paul Gottfried

I recently heard Fox News' 'legal expert' and former Bill Clinton advisor Susan Estrich explain to her predominantly Republican listeners that the call for a national right to gay marriage is a 'spontaneous, popular thing'. Unlike the divisive decision made by the American Supreme Court in 1973 to uphold a woman's unconditional right to an abortion for the first trimester, a judgment by the Court to uphold a right to same sex marriage would be met with ecstatic approval. The public would be inexpressibly delighted with this result, and especially sensitive young people, who approve of gay marriage as a human right by a whopping 4 to 1 margin. If Estrich's effusions are to be believed, and no other feminist and social leftist, to my knowledge, speaks with such smiling certainty, the Court would be yielding to the popular will if it proclaimed gay marriage to be a constitutionally protected right for the entire country.

For about the last five years I've been reading about the swing in popular opinion throughout the Western world toward whatever gays are currently demanding. Or to put it more exactly, toward an affirmation of anything the organized cultural Left is demanding on behalf of gays. It's as if the consensus about the nature of marriage or sexual bonding that's been around for the last million years changed overnight when the public suddenly woke up one morning and decided that they had not considered a burning moral issue with appropriate care. The scales fell from their eyes and at last they understood what they had not properly grasped until the present moment. So mighty was this revelation of truth that even stodgy reactionary parties like British Tories and American Republicans were forced to overcome their intolerance. Long-time bigots came crawling to the altar of sensitivity and confessed their sins.

Even now the support for gay marriage in the US is far shakier than the media would allow us to believe. According to a CBS poll taken in March, approval for this novelty stands at 53 per cent. But two factors must be taken into account. The support being registered is coming disproportionately from young people, who are under thirty and who are disproportionately influenced by public educators and the Culture Industry. Furthermore, those who do polling, like CBS and the Pew Foundation, are strongly in favour of the liberal causes for which they're providing surveys. Well over

twice as many states have rejected same sex marriage referenda as those that have accepted them. Moreover, the six states that voted to approve same sex marriage in the last sixteen months are among our most liberal, including New York, Maryland and Washington; even in those states, the referendum for same sex marriage passed after the gay lobby had outspent its opponents by an over four to one margin. This does not even factor in the new, edifying TV shows featuring loving gay couples and quarrelsome heterosexual ones, the movies showing similar epiphanies, glaringly biased news coverage, and the steady work of our public educational institutions in getting the kids to celebrate gayness and same sex marriage.

The reason that the media, various celebrities, and Hollywood are so intent on having the Supreme Court inflict gay marriage on us all in a hurry, is not for the reason that Susan Estrich gives. Rather there is awareness that the present campaign to mainstream and even glorify gay marriage cannot be sustained forever. It may be reaching its limits in being able to convert people to a bizarre idea, no matter how much money and expensive propaganda have been thrown at it. In 2008 what is possibly the most liberal state in the union, California, voted against Proposition Eight, which would have legalized gay marriage. The advocates didn't take the defeat lightly; and there were multiple acts of vandalism against Mormons and other religious groups that opposed the proposition.

Moreover, the results of the referendum have not been fully implemented, because the gay lobby and its friends have been able to keep the issue in appeals court, which, given the deep pockets of Hollywood allies, has not been difficult. Particularly interesting in the California case is that the two sides were almost evenly matched in funds, although as usual the gay lobby had more money to spend and had far more control over the media. Perhaps even more noteworthy, however, was the massive defection to the other side of blacks and Hispanics, two pillars of the political left in the US. Although both groups happily vote for the left in every election, because of their dependence on social programmes, neither has shown fondness for the gay lobby.

I think the power establishment has moved too far too fast on the issue of gay marriage; and it may not be able to keep up the pace of its efforts to erode

the traditional and until recently the only concept of marriage, as a heterosexual union. If Susan Estrich and her influential friends really believed what they tell us, that soon everyone but a few religious fanatics will love the idea of gay marriage, they wouldn't be working so hard to have the courts stick it down our throats. They know that the window of opportunity may eventually close, and that the sustained efforts needed to advance their project have required a great deal of money and media energy.

These prerequisites may not be there indefinitely for the hyped-up advocates of gay marriage. Enthusiasms dissipate, and those who have been promoting the gay cause will eventually lose interest in their latest 'human rights issue,' which may well be succeeded by another.

There is one side issue of the Supreme Court's handling of same sex marriage as a supposed right, which may puzzle non-Americans. On the way to dealing with this key question, the court had to consider the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act, enacted in 1996 with the approval of then President Clinton and a clear congressional majority. In this legislation heterosexual unions were the only form of marriage that the federal government recognized; and the repudiation of gay unions went so far that the federal administration refused to extend spousal benefits to gay partners that it would grant to heterosexual ones. The Supreme Court struck down this denial of spousal benefits on the grounds that it was inconsistent with the constitutional power of states to define and regulate marriage. By then, however, Clinton had changed his colours and like his wife, Hillary, who hopes to become the next president, expressed passionate opposition to a signature law of his own era. The former president also discouraged any attempt to comply further with a law that was no longer fashionable among his supporters or those of his wife. In a striking *volte-face*, Clinton called for the ignoring of his own law, to the applause of the American media.

The question however is whether the court's striking down of DOMA's denial of spousal benefits to gay partners implies a national right to gay marriage. The answer is no. The second decision does not follow from the first. It is a traditional right of state governments to determine the legal definition of marriage. This has been true even for introducing such a radical departure from traditional human arrangements as gay marriage. The striking down of whatever in DOMA relates to the federal government's attempt to regulate marriage through the awarding or denial of benefits to gay partners does not require the court to impose gay marriage on all of the states. On the contrary: what the court seems to be doing is affirming the principle that the right to regulate marriage belongs to the states, at

least for the present.

But here I am sceptical. States' rights have been whittled away and even eviscerated throughout my life, and there is no reason to believe this process will stop. The source of most of the mischief is the infinitely noxious and infinitely elastic Fourteenth Amendment, which was imposed on the defeated Confederate states by the triumphant Union and the acceptance of which was made essential for the eventual re-entry of the discomfited side into the political arrangement it had tried to leave.

Section I reads:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Both the 'due process' and 'equal protection' phrases in this amendment have been repeatedly used to expand federal power, usually in the name of protecting some group's or individual's equal right to something or other. This amendment has been cited inter alia to justify nationalizing the franchise, punishing those who discriminate against blacks, women, and other minorities and even to punish those who fail to practise reverse discrimination against white males. Supposedly minorities have a protected right to special access to jobs and better universities as integral to their exercise of citizenship. The Fourteenth Amendment was further expanded in California by the state judiciary in 1995 to block the enforcement of Proposition 187, a referendum that denied social benefits to illegal aliens. The California court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection requirement applied not only to citizens. It expressed a 'human right' and therefore could not be taken away from illegals in the US.

My conventionally conservative Republican acquaintances (and I'm proud to say that I don't have many left) would rush to tell me that I'm being unnecessarily harsh on the Fourteenth Amendment. It was originally passed to protect former slaves, who had a rough row to hoe in the Southern states. The radical Republicans who passed this amendment (which among other features stripped Confederate leaders, who had been in government before the War, of the right to serve again in political posts except after congressional pardon) were just looking out for black freemen. My answer to this statement is: If what you are telling me is the true purpose of that amendment,

then why can't we agree to go back to its original meaning, which was the federally protected right of former slaves to hold property and be safe in their persons? The Fourteenth Amendment has since been interpreted to mandate loads of other things, and by now we're stuck with most of these social policies, particularly if they're linked to the god-word 'equality'.

I have also noticed that just about all legal authorities now adhere to the idea that our Constitution has evolved in a progressive direction about the Fourteenth Amendment. After all, no one wants to give the impression of being a racist or sexist! A text-minded Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia, nonetheless, asked the lawyer who was arguing for a national right to gay marriage 'When exactly was this right created or when did it become part of the Fourteenth Amendment? Can you give me a date?' More than anyone else on our federal judiciary, except possibly for his black colleague Clarence Thomas, Scalia has tried to discourage the practice of using the courts to revolutionise society. Despite his opposition this practice has now spread to Canada, England and the EU countries, where 'human rights' tribunals are superseding elected governments in determining social, moral and religious issues.

Unfortunately support for judicial social engineering in the US remains high, to the extent that the public can usually be reliably whipped up into accepting each new 'landmark' decision by the courts as an advance for

equality or social justice. Progressive court decisions, which spring from a 'living constitution', are invariably accompanied by staged fits of enthusiasm by the media and educational establishment. One would have to be a fool or an engaged ideologue not to notice that the 'people', like 'democracy', now means whatever consensus the ruling class is working to shape.

If at some point the Supreme Court decided to inflict a nationwide right to gay marriage on the population, they would probably get away with it. The decision would occasion some hard feelings, like 'Roe v Wade', but one shouldn't overestimate the effects. The court's sweeping decision in 'Roe' helped the Republicans win some elections but our local variant of the Tories did very little to limit 'a woman's right to choose,' beyond naming some anti-abortion judges to the federal courts. Today the right to an abortion with few or no strings attached is greater than it was in 1973, although the enthusiasm for what is already a done thing has begun to wane. There is no reason to believe the public could not be made to accept or live with a national right to gay marriage the way they became used to 'Roe'. The leftist monopoly of propaganda machines is as impressive now as it was in the 1970s. And those who challenge judicial tyranny in a mostly consistent way, like Scalia, are already old and unlikely to be replaced.

Paul Gottfried's latest book is Leo Strauss and the Conservative Movement in America: A Critical Appraisal. See page 52.

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"And if anyone here present knows of any lawful impediment why these two people should not be joined together....."

Keeping the Lights On

Will Emkes

For a modern society, the absence of electricity is tantamount to disaster; life literally stops. Such was the situation in Cape Town when the energy utility Eskom shut off all power to the city. It was a bewildering spectacle. My impression was that Cape Town no longer resembled a city at all, but rather, a dark and elaborate maze from which I had to escape. I had made my way up into Oranjezicht, a suburb at the foot of Table Mountain that stands elevated above the city bowl. From there it seemed that Table Mountain had cast an impenetrable shadow across the entire city; there was nothing other than complete darkness. In Oranjezicht, the houses resemble fortified bunkers, all enclosed within high security walls and a mesh of barbed wire. Apart from the odd private security firm patrolling the houses it was completely still; the suburb was asleep. Below me, however, the city had grown restless – looting had begun and gangs had flooded into the city with the intention of hijacking cars.

That was five years ago. The blackouts, or ‘load shedding’ as it was reported, were estimated to have cost the South African economy in excess of R50 billion. Today, very little has changed. South Africa continues to rely on Eskom for 95 per cent of its power. With endemic corruption, mismanagement, and seemingly unstoppable increases in electricity tariffs (200 per cent over the past five years) the crisis is far from over; in fact, it looks set to get worse. Eskom’s reserve margin – the difference between supply and demand – regularly drops below one per cent and, even by conservative forecasts, over the next few years demand will once again outweigh supply.

Last year, those ingenious executives at Eskom really had to scrape the barrel in devising a new strategy to deal with demand. This parastatal, with a legislative monopoly on providing electricity, has now entered into the somewhat paradoxical business of paying its biggest customers not to use its product and desperately begging everyone else to do likewise whilst at the same time increasing prices for the average consumer. It is a very odd company for which this kind of corporate strategy wins votes in the boardroom.

Many on South Africa’s increasingly lively left have repeated their calls this week for the nationalisation of major industries. This is the familiar rallying cry of figures like Julius Malema and his band of benighted zealots. After the complete failure of the ANC’s black

economic empowerment program and its subsequent reincarnations they see this as the only means by which the ANC can restructure the economy and deliver the post-apartheid fairness and equality that was envisioned in the NDR. Eskom is an example of why this should never be allowed to happen.

Fifteen years ago the ANC had all but committed to selling Eskom, along with other state-owned enterprises. This, however, came to nothing. The utility was then too efficient, providing electricity for peanuts. Herein lies the Eskom problem. South Africa has historically provided cheap electricity to industrial consumers, negotiated in apartheid-era purchase agreements. The economic policy of the ANC has been to continue this, although international comparisons now put the price for industrial users well above that of other emerging economies such as Turkey or Thailand. In short, Eskom was never built on a sustainable business model – robbing the future to pay for the increasingly expensive present resulted in an inevitable burnout, which could no longer be placated. In Britain, when British Telecom came to be sold, Harold Macmillan made much of his ‘selling of the family silver’ verdict for Thatcher. The ANC, like Macmillan before them, are unaware that the ‘family silver’ has already been pawned numerous times.

The problem is government. ANC cadres, state bureaucrats and Eskom executives are more or less the same people. And so the on-going legislative monopoly is nothing more than an extension of state power. This is not any ideological point, but rather a pragmatic one. Eskom is beset by inefficiency, mismanagement and institutionalised inertia. The embattled energy expansion plans and rehabilitation of Eskom’s finances can only be achieved by the injection of private capital. In the effort to avoid future blackouts and long-term solutions there is no other way.

South Africa’s Department of Energy needs only to look north for an answer. Many other African governments have begun to produce workable solutions to their energy problems. Nigeria has all but completed the privatisation of its energy sector. Mozambique is able to spend nearly four times its gross domestic product on infrastructure development by handing over 65 per cent of the program to the private sector. Uganda has completely reversed the ruinous infrastructure development path it was heading along

by securing private sector deals that have enabled them to pull state-owned utilities back from disaster.

If the ANC does not allow independent producers to help in generating the necessary electricity and, instead, the people of South Africa are left to rely on Eskom, industry and households will once again be plunged into darkness. Eskom has a monopoly on the entire industry: generation, transmission and distribution. The ANC must legislate to change this in order to make trading possible and establish wholesale and retail markets. Generation should be opened up to independent entities and allowed to conclude agreements with distribution networks. Eskom's role should be to facilitate this arrangement over their network for a small fee. A fairer South Africa will be the result of allowing wholesale electricity markets to exist with competing generators free to offer electricity to competing retailers. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), an organisation that has consistently opposed the privatisation of South Africa's 'Big Four' has said that Eskom, 'must be a national service, efficiently

providing secure and affordable power to the people and to industry'. A market that allows trading between generators and retailers will give consumers the ability to choose between different suppliers at competitive prices – it is only then that COSATU's dream of secure and affordable power can be realised. In five years, that most horrible of third world experiences, being caught in a lift during a prolonged electricity failure (brown-out on floor twenty five) will become a feature of life in Britain. We will have the Greens and Brussels to thank for this instead of the ANC.

The ANC's attitude towards the Eskom crisis resembles a kind of schizophrenia. One element of the party continues to believe the hallucinatory voices insisting that the state should have the primary responsibility for energy provision. However, when Jacob Zuma walks into Luthuli House and flicks a switch to no avail – reality will always win out in the end.

Will Emkes is a journalist.

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Christ on Malibu Beach

Jackson Adams

The hugely successful TV mini series *The Bible* is the story of Christ as seen by modern America. The first episode, aired in March 2013, of the ten part series was seen by 13.1 million viewers, the largest cable television audience so far of the year. 'The Bible' may well be how everyday Americans will think of Christ – he has a Portuguese accent, Peter a Yorkshire one – for decades. English viewers will be amused to learn that the Devil has a French accent, something they may have long suspected.

Spanning Genesis to Revelation makes it, in the words of a *New York Times* review, 'like a trip through a Christian theme park'. The first two-hour segment covers all of the Pentateuch, the last segment the great majority of the New Testament. 'Greatest Hits' stories like Abraham sacrificing Isaac or David and Bathsheba are connected by a narrator whose cursory voice-overs reverberate with summer blockbuster profundity.

Critics' reception of the project, even the most charitable, could only describe its quality in lukewarm terms. The most positive attention the series received was that it was bringing Bible stories into a world on its way to becoming biblically illiterate.

Producers Mark Burnett, an expat Briton who has

seen much success in Hollywood with reality shows like *Survivor*, and Roma Downey, an Irish actress famous for her role on *Touched by an Angel*, admit as much. Describing themselves as believers, they claimed in making the series the desire to create something to serve as 'an exciting introduction' to the Bible.

This distinction is important, and mercifully the series recognises itself as a new departure by openly stating in the beginning that it 'endeavours to stay true to the spirit of the book'. It is therefore not a simple account of the Bible, but an interpretation that time and again proves itself to be rather heavy handed with its source material.

The story of Jesus calling Peter is particularly fitting. The film dialogue:

Peter [with a broad Yorkshire accent]: 'what do you think you're doing?' Jesus [with a slight Portuguese lilt]: 'We're going fishing.' Peter: 'There are no fish out there this time of day. In fact, there are no fish out here any time of day.' Jesus: 'Peter, just give me an hour, and I will give you a whole new life.' Peter [immediately, without reflection]: 'Who says I want one?'

Compare this to the King James:

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master; we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

Seeing the versions side-by-side makes one wonder how the mini-series' creators got from A to B. The mini-series takes the biblical story into its own hands, altering the story (and by extension the characters) significantly in the process. The viewer does not see what Jesus reportedly said to Peter, but what the creators of the series take Jesus to have meant – that he was going to use Peter to change the world.

When doctoring real biblical dialogues isn't enough, the series makes up scenes between characters to interpret their biblical actions. There are multiple episodes of 'the arrogant and ruthless' Pilate talking to the young Herod Antipas during a

Roman Sumo wrestling match and later with his wife during an oil massage; Caiaphas complains to his henchman, the unrepentant, two-eared Malchus, about the pestilent apostles; Old Testament Lot's wife nags him into moving to the city (Sodom) and away from Abraham. The whole makes for a wooden blend of fact and fiction that ends up generating a new narrative. One might even go so far as to say a new gospel.

To some extent, this process happens in every cinematic translation of a written story. Within the confines of the audio-visual, one is forced to experience directly what could otherwise be experienced imaginatively. The experience inevitably loses something in the process. The extent of the loss is largely determined by the quality of the cinema, and the viewer's predispositions. The more willing one is to play along with the spell cast on the senses, the more believable the experience.

When cinematic faith invokes religious faith, the alchemy becomes all the more toxic. Such treatment of the Bible may offend some, but then again, it's not really the Bible. Rather it can only ever be the Bible according to so-and-so.

This stubborn reality won't bother the producers much – they know to which address the royalty cheques are sent. It shouldn't bother those who know the Bible either – they can undress what they see and hear with what they know is actually written. On the contrary, it is those who are meant to benefit who end up missing

out – the innocent and the ignorant, 'biblically illiterate' ones who do not know enough to disbelieve their eyes.

What makes this state of affairs all the more ironic is the attempt to render the Bible more attractive to a biblically illiterate audience. By emphasizing the Bible's 'gritty' parts, the creators manage to inoculate much of its believability. Turning angels into ninjas, Roman and Babylonian occupiers into brutish gangs, and biblical heroes almost uniformly sexy shows a distinct lack of faith in the original power of the text. It does show the values of the creators, and by extension what they believe the audience wants to see.

Fortunately the producers are quite frank when it comes to their programme. Mark Burnett in a televised interview with Lorna Dueck put it this way, 'there's different ways to explain the Bible: one's kind of like telling you – don't do this, don't do that and it's kind of threatening. I don't think

it's the most helpful way. The other is the more loving way ... we've humanised our story. It's not told from a distancing, lecturing point of view with one dimensional characters. These are real people who really lived this.'

Roma backs Mark up: 'We've tried to make it gritty and real and authentic ... we've told the story so that you can find the place where you can relate to the character, which is very important that (as Mark says) we weren't preaching, that it didn't come across as something holy and distant, that you could appreciate the lives. This was a tough place that these people were living in.'

'Real' and 'Authentic' are notoriously difficult concepts. For those who use the terms unabashedly the result tends to mean 'real to me' and 'authentic in my culture and context.' What is 'real' and 'authentic' in twenty first century Malibu, California wasn't necessarily so in first century Judaea. When watching 'the Bible', one can take comfort that all one beholds is a fairly accurate depiction of an ideal Malibu Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus. This should come as a relief to the unimpressed – even Oprah has a crush on Malibu Jesus.

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The Pursuit of Happiness

John Phelan

The nineteenth century Italian Nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini wrote that ‘A Country is not a mere territory; the particular territory is only its foundation. The Country is the idea which rises upon that foundation; it is the sentiment of love, the sense of fellowship which binds together all the sons of that territory’. This is true. ‘France’ has a meaning because of the French. It is not the border posts or six letters on a map that make France but the fact that the people who live there consider themselves French. But what does this mean?

For Mazzini it meant that all Italian speakers, then under a patchwork of governments, should be brought into a single state. To be Italian was an ethno-linguistic and cultural category. Most subsequent nationalists have followed Mazzini in this and the desire to alter state boundaries to correspond with perceived patterns of dispersal of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups continues to drive conflict from Northern Ireland to South Sudan.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, however, some years before Mazzini, there was a very different answer to the question. In 1775 British colonists rose up against the government in London and, the following year, declared their independence. But what it meant to be an ‘American’ was very different from what it meant to be an ‘Italian’. Ethnically and linguistically the colonial rebels were much like the people they were fighting to separate themselves from.

Instead, the American Founding Fathers based their nation on an idea which Whig historians like Trevelyan saw as having deep roots in English history. That idea, as set out by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, was ‘that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.’ To be a citizen of the United States meant nothing in terms of language or race (the canker of slavery excepted), it meant simply to hold to that idea.

In a world of rulers who claimed to rule by Divine Right the notion ‘that all men are created equal’ was revolutionary, so much so that even the man who wrote it failed to live up to it and kept slaves. Indeed, the idea that people were ‘endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights’ which existed separately from and independent of temporal power was likewise

revolutionary in an age of capricious monarchs.

Just as revolutionary, and perhaps more pertinent today, is the notion that men have the right to the unhindered pursuit of their happiness. In the 18th century social order was something to be preserved but in the United States each man had the right to define his own goals and pursue them as he thought best.

‘Pursuit’ is the key word. A man did not have the right to *happiness* but to its *pursuit*. The millions of people who flooded into the United States before the First World War were not guaranteed a pot of gold or the various goodies envisioned by the characters of *West Side Story*, but they were guaranteed the right to search for them in whatever way they thought best.

And many of them found it. Jefferson may have made no promises that freedom would increase happiness (though Adam Smith was making that argument in *The Wealth of Nations* the same year Jefferson wrote the Declaration) but that was the result. This was the source of Jefferson’s famous dictum that ‘That government is best which governs least.’

My fiancée’s great grandfather emigrated to the United States in 1906 from what is now Hungary where he worked as a coal miner. The modest, three bedroom house in east St Paul, Minnesota, where his grandchildren grew up, represented the achievement of a dream; a modicum of wealth and security. The variety of churches of various denominations scattered around the neighbourhood is a testimony to how widely that dream was shared. It also demonstrates that anyone from anywhere could be an American as long as they held to those old, foundational, Jeffersonian ideas of freedom and opportunity, self-reliance and responsibility.

By contrast a nation based on shared ethno-linguistic and cultural characteristics is going to struggle to maintain its integrity when large numbers of people who do not share those characteristics are introduced. This was not something which Europe had to worry about when the pattern of immigration had it as an exporter of people. But that trend reversed suddenly and dramatically in the post-war period and particularly in the last twenty years. There are areas of many European cities, particularly in Britain and France, which, on the ethno-linguistic and cultural definition of Mazzini, are no longer British or French.

This demands a little more explanation. If Basil

Fawcett had said ‘Don’t mention the war!’ to a Bolivian he might have assumed that the high strung hotelier was talking about the Chaco War. Or he might have wondered what on earth he was on about at all. But most Brits instantly know what Fawcett means because ‘the war’ remains a massive presence in our lives through survivors, films, stories etc, and its place in our national mythos. It is part of our culture.

Culture at the level of language and touchstones such as ‘the war’, Gollum’s tears, or *Coronation Street*, are tools evolved among a group of proximate people to facilitate communication. In the same way that no one can hear you scream in space because, as a vacuum, there is no medium for sound to travel in, so, without a shared culture, we are often mutually uncomprehending.

But a nation based on an idea, such as the United States, is vulnerable if people reject that idea. In America the Jeffersonian ideas upon which the country was founded have been under attack since the 1930s. Then, under President Roosevelt, the Federal government assumed the responsibility for ensuring the happiness of the people, not merely for maintaining the

circumstances where that happiness could be pursued.

Increasingly, and quite contrary to what Jefferson and the other Founding Fathers intended, Americans pursue their happiness through the government’s power of redistributive taxation. The 2012 Presidential election gave Americans a very clear choice; a candidate who had some idea how to create an environment in which wealth could be created and a candidate who promised to take more of what someone else had created and give it to you. It was jobs against welfare and welfare won.

This represents a repudiation of the foundational American idea of government limited to guarding the arena where happiness can be pursued. And, in the sense that America is a country founded on that idea, it represents a repudiation of America itself. As the Frenchman Alexis De Toqueville predicted in the 1840s, ‘The American Republic will endure until the day Congress discovers that it can bribe the public with the public’s money’.

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Doctor Johnson’s Irish Quintet

Peter Coady

Samuel Johnson (1709-94) is as celebrated for his social life as he is for compiling his famous dictionary. But apart from taking tea with the London intelligentsia, the good Doctor also shared his home with a black ex-slave, a blind Welsh poetess and an impoverished widow; a diversity to delight modern progressives. He also – allegedly – suffered from ‘Tourette’s Syndrome’, which makes him even more contemporary. It’s a pity he was a devout Christian, which is not so fashionable. Even so, this lumbering, pock-marked eccentric can still be saluted as a great ‘networker’, a master of the social media of his age.

Johnson’s following had a strong Gaelic tinge. The numerous Scots were led by James Boswell, Johnson’s travelling companion and biographer, but there was also an interesting quintet of Irishmen. Three of its members, Arthur Murphy (1727-1805) Oliver Goldsmith (1730-74) and Richard Brinsley Butler Sheridan (1751-1816) were distinguished playwrights. Sheridan also worked as a poet, actor, theatre manager and Member of Parliament, so he had even more jobs than names. The fourth Hibernian was Edmund Malone, a Shakespearean scholar originally

employed as an amanuensis but who later became a valued confidant. It was largely through his efforts that Johnson gained his illustrious resting place at Poets’ Corner in Westminster Abbey.

The fifth member of the Irish cohort was the renowned Edmund Burke (1729-1797), statesman, orator and essayist. This founder of modern conservatism was born in a Dublin slum and educated in a Catholic ‘hedge school’. At the age of twenty-one he moved to London to study law, but soon switched to politics and journalism. He entered Parliament in 1765 as a member of the Whig party, and played a major part in political events for the next 30 years.

Ireland was a hot topic during that period. Burke hated its Penal Laws and campaigned for their repeal. Unlike some of his more bellicose countrymen, he did not demand independence for Ireland, but simply some limited measure of home rule. The terrors of the French Revolution horrified him, and he was afraid similar violence would break out in Ireland if the beleaguered Catholics received no relief. As it turned out, he was perfectly correct.

Johnson approved of this combination of fervour,

shrewdness and principle. He naturally saluted Burke's oratorical genius, stating that 'Burke is the only man whose conversation corresponds with the general fame he has in the world.' Even so, there were times when he grew tired (or envious) of this loquacity, complaining that his friend 'was never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in haste to leave off'.

Burke was not just a talker, though. He called on Johnson one evening in June 1780 when the anti-Papist Gordon Riots were raging and then walked home through the burning streets. As a well-known champion of Catholic rights, he was exactly the sort of man the mob wanted to tear to pieces, yet he coolly identified himself to the rioters and delivered a scathing judgement on their behaviour. Some of them, he said later said, 'were malignant fanatics, but the far greater part were more dissolute than ill-disposed. At any rate, I was neither to be forced nor intimidated from the strait line of what was right. When I had done, one or two of them shook me by the hand...'

Arthur Murphy was another Dubliner, a small, dandified fellow. His plays – mostly light comedies – were much praised by the critics and, more importantly, they made him wealthy. Johnson was a great admirer, remarking: 'I don't know that Arthur can be classed with the very first dramatic writers, yet at present I doubt if we have anything superior to him.'

Murphy returned the compliment by writing a short biography entitled *An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson*. An ambitious man, he gave up the theatre, became a successful barrister and was appointed Commissioner of Bankruptcy in 1803.

Johnson got to know Richard Sheridan in 1777, not long after the latter rose to fame as the author of *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*. He successfully proposed Sheridan's membership of The Club, an intellectual talking-shop that met for supper every week at The Turk's Head in Soho, saying 'he who has written the two best comedies of his age is surely a considerable man'.

Sheridan was considerable, but often in the wrong way. He had a rackets personal life, chasing women (though married), recklessly spending and fighting duels. In August 1772 he took on Captain Thomas Mathews in a sword-fight at Kingsdown, near Bath. Both men broke their weapons but carried on the fight hand-to-hand. Sheridan suffered a deep wound and was carried from the field soaked in blood. It was eight days

before he was out of danger. Mathews, who was also badly injured, escaped in a post-chaise.

Sheridan's main source of income was the Covent Garden Theatre, which he owned and managed. It gave him a good living but after it burnt down in 1809 his finances became precarious. When he lost his seat in Parliament three years later he had to sell his grand house in Richmond Hill. Refusing all offers of help, he went bankrupt and was arrested for debt, no doubt by one of Arthur Murphy's officers. He died in poverty in 1816.

If Sheridan began well and ended badly, Oliver Goldsmith did the opposite. Aged fourteen he went up to Trinity College, Dublin, to study theology and law but was a poor scholar who lazed his way to the bottom of the class. When he finally graduated in 1749 he was accomplished at playing cards, singing Irish songs and playing the flute, but nothing else. He tried various



Johnson Pays the Rent

professions without success before going on a walking tour of northern Europe, busking for pennies along the way. After this early 'gap year' he used his last few coins to book a passage to England in 1756 and begin a literary career.

Johnson met Goldsmith in the early 1760s. He noticed the Irishman's unprepossessing appearance – at last, someone as ugly as himself – and also his lack of common sense, remarking that 'his genius is great but his

knowledge is small...no man is more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand or more wise when he had'. This sometimes brought out Johnson's protective instincts, like the occasion when Goldsmith's landlady in Canonbury Tower threatened to have him arrested for unpaid rent. She gave him a day to find the money and confiscated his clothes for security.

Goldsmith panicked and went running to Johnson, who took him back to the lodgings. There in Goldsmith's chaotic study he found the just-completed manuscript of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Realising the book's quality, he took it to a publisher he knew and sold it on the spot for £60, a most handsome sum. Flush with cash, Goldsmith cleared his debt on the spot. Then, grown suddenly brave, he gave the landlady a stern ticking-off, which Johnson found highly amusing. Her reaction is not recorded, but we can only hope Goldsmith got his clothes back.

Peter Coady was a probation officer.

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The Culture Cult

Daryl McCann

Back in 1965 Roger Sandall (1933-2012) became the first full-time documentary film director at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. Sandall made nine documentaries during his eight-year tenure at the Institute, *Emu Ritual at Ruguri* winning first prize at the 1968 Venice Film Festival. In spite of this, all of them, shockingly, were suddenly banned from public viewing in the early 1970s and have remained so ever since. The proscription of his ethnographic films prompted Sandall to write a seminal work, *The Culture Cult* (2001), which explores the genesis of a revolution that has seen free men and women throughout the world allow themselves to be bound and gagged.

The greatest challenge to Western societies, contends Sandall, turned out not to be Marxism, but anti-bourgeois bohemianism. *The Culture Cult* nominates Frank Boas' opening of Columbia University's anthropology department in the 1920s to 'would-be writers' Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead as the starting point for the institutionalisation of bohemia in the West. This radical new notion of anthropology – 'heavily didactic semifiction' in Sandall's words – went on to shape much of our contemporary world, including American-style liberalism: 'The effect on American manners and morals would be to legitimise the bohemian counterculture of Greenwich Village.'

Bohemia's 'exemplary original' was Rousseau (1712-78). Sandall identifies Rousseau's rejection by eighteenth century French society as the catalyst for his subsequent enmity towards the luminosity of the West and its greatest thinkers of the time. Whereas the sophisticated Parisians were false and perverse, decided Rousseau, the mythical 'Noble Savage' was natural and dignified. The revolt of the civilised against civilisation had commenced.

Ressentiment also informed the views of the German philosopher and critic Herder (1744-1803). Many speak of Herder's passion for 'cultures' as an indication of the man's open-mindedness and affection for humanity, but not Sandall, who adroitly draws the portrait of a provincial intimidated by the erudition of the French *philosophes*. Herder's contention that every last primitive clan had 'its own irreplaceable contribution to make to the progress of the human race' was less a celebration of diversity than a tribal dagger

aimed at the heart of civilisation. Sandall's designation of Herder as 'the father of multiculturalism' is not intended as an accolade.

Despite their academic pretensions, most twentieth-century ethnographers, including the aforementioned Benedict and Mead, deceived themselves no less than the dilettante-adventurers of the previous century. The real-life tribalism they sought to document had already been 'defanged' by Christianity, and toe-curling acts of human sacrifice, deflowering, and cannibalism were not so easily observed. In any case, under the bohemian credo of cultural relativism, academia was predisposed to sanitise tribal cultures for the purpose of skewering bourgeois mores. The inequities of the West were unfavourably contrasted with a dreamy version of tribalism that underplayed the role of compulsion and brutality. Sandall sardonically posits Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995) as the consummation of all the 'Noble Savage' caricatures twentieth-century anthropology has bequeathed us.

The triumph of the anti-bohemian insurgency over the past ninety years can be measured by the virtual disappearance from academic discourse of the concept Matthew Arnold in his *Culture and Anarchy* (1868) defined as 'civilisation'. Arnold spoke to the British people, extolling the civilisational exemplars contained in the 'illustrious traditions of Hellenism, Hebraism, Christianity, none of which are British'. In other words, he was claiming something for 'civilisation' that went beyond a Herder-like celebration of what we today would call 'culture'. The conquest of academia during the 1960s was followed by mainstream political victories.

Governments in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand of all political persuasions had seen themselves as morally bound to assist indigenes 'to cross the divide' between their traditional tribal cultures and modernity. From the early 1970s, a new agenda made its appearance. Australia's Whitlam administration (1972-75), for instance, began encouraging indigenous people 'to preserve their traditional cultures at all costs'. The integration of Aboriginals into Australian society and its modern capitalist economy now took second place to identity politics.

In 2001, the time of *The Culture Cult's* publication,

Sandall's warning that 'artificially petrified indigenes are doomed' was all but ignored. His message that the best chance of a good life for an Aboriginal Australian was 'full fluency and literacy in English, as much math as [they] can handle, and a job' fell on deaf ears. Not until Aboriginal leaders such as Noel Person raised the alarm on national television in 2002 over plummeting literacy rates in remote communities, not to mention an epidemic of substance abuse and unprecedented levels of domestic violence, did people begin contemplating the need to reverse the disastrous policies initiated by Whitlam.

Germaine Greer's *On Rage* (2008) encapsulates much of what is wrong with anti-bourgeois bohemianism. Greer attempts to contextualise the substance abuse, domestic violence and suicide over the past decades in remote Aboriginal settlements. The unacceptable behaviour of so many Aboriginal men in those communities is the consequence of a 'hunter-gatherer people' facing defeat and humiliation at the hands of 'Whitey'. Greer's solution to the rage of Aboriginal men in remote areas is for them to create yet another forum in the name of 'hunter-gatherer' resistance.

In 2007 the Northern Territory government released the *Little Children are Sacred* Report, which detailed the dysfunction in remote Aboriginal communities. The conservative Howard government, then in its last months of power, initiated the Northern Territory Intervention. Not unexpectedly, Greer argues against the merits of the Intervention in *On Rage*, suggesting that rather than quelling the wrathful violence of Aboriginal men it would only exacerbate the problem. More unexpectedly, the rising up of Indigenous Australians, not just to support the Intervention, but also to breathe new life into the regional Country Liberal Party. Last year, largely on account of first-time Indigenous support, the CLP swept to power in the Northern Territory's election.

The profound insight of Roger Sandall is that that substitution of the notion of 'civilisation' for the politically-correct counterfeit 'culture' has allowed so-called progressives, including academic-activists such as Greer, to barbarise our institutions, hijack the political agenda, immiserate those caught in the margins of society, and generally diminish our freedom of expression through their PC dogma. Bess Price, an Indigenous woman who won the Central Australian seat of Stuart for the CLP in the August 2012 election, said it for all of us when she berated those who opposed the NT Intervention. The critics valued the inviolability of Indigenous culture above the sacredness of real existing human beings:

When Aboriginal women in Central Australia ask for help, when they are killed, raped and beaten, when they

cry for their abused children, you ignore them and you support those oppressing them.

In March of this year an Indigenous Australian, Adam Giles, was elected by his parliamentary colleagues to become the Chief Minister of Northern Territory. Giles, in his first address to the media, made it absolutely clear that he wanted to work on behalf of all Territorians, be they 'men or women or Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal or otherwise.' Greer's 'hunter-gatherer' forum must seem a lame proposition to the man now in charge of an entire government.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, the Soviet Empire collapsed while many governments throughout the Western world attempted programmes of fiscal responsibility. All appeared right with the world. The political trajectory of Germaine Greer, our emblematic bohemian socialist for the purposes of this essay, bears out Sandall's concerns about the wellbeing of Western civilisation coming into the new millennium. From *The Female Eunuch* (1971) onwards there have been few facets of Western modernity that Greer has not disparaged, while her commentaries on non-Western cultures are almost always supportive. In *Sex and Destiny* (1984) she lamented Western attitudes towards sexuality, fertility, and family while admiring the 'pro-child' traditions of pre-modern cultures. After embarrassing herself by writing sympathetically about female circumcision in *The Whole Woman* (1999), Greer eventually confessed that her real gripe was Westerners criticising *any* tribal practise, since this would 'reinforce our cultural superiority'.

Greer's endorsement of the 'Campaign Against Monica Ali's Film Brick Lane' in *The Guardian*, July 2006, exposes the perfidy of modern-day progressives. Rousseau and Herder could have ghostwritten Greer's diatribe against Ali. It is an anti-Western discourse that pointedly juxtaposes Ali's 'British-ness' and lack of authentic 'Bengali-ness' with the cultural *bona fides* of London's Bengali community. For Greer, blinded by her anti-bourgeois bohemianism, freedom of expression is trumped by the 'self-esteem' of tribal culture.

The shame of it is that Western civilisation, for all its inequity and complexity, offered humanity an escape from the cruelty and coercion of tribalism – a unique 'openness' as Karl Popper would say. *The Culture Cult* explains why our political elites seem so desperate not to offend the forces that conspire to destroy us; and why the rest of us are sullen and silent: 'Cultures are good: civilization is bad. Those six words tell you all you need to know about the moral judgement we have inherited from Herder and Rousseau.'

Daryl McCann is a frequent contributor to Quadrant.

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The Pryce of Marriage

Sarah Searle

Vicky Pryce, former successful businesswoman and political wife, will be leaving prison at the end of this month. After two months behind bars she must have become almost accustomed to the noise and stink of prison and having every second of her day controlled by an army of butch ladies. She has experienced what must be a life changing experience, one of the most unpleasant available, after admitting that in 2003 she agreed to take driving points accrued by her then husband, former Cabinet Minister Chris Huhne.

Throughout her mismanaged courtroom defence, the judge was extremely unhappy about her plea of ‘marital coercion’, a law from 1925, which the left-wing press called ‘medieval’ as it’s only available to married women. The government now plans to revoke it.

Because Pryce, 61, had been a successful economist for several large banks, it was impossible for Mr Justice Sweeney to believe that she could have been bullied into an illegal action by her spouse. She put enormous energy into her career, was successful, and no doubt looked to the world like a strong woman, but her courage failed on the domestic front and she found herself standing in the dock at the Old Bailey. But her case also put the law and the institution of marriage itself on trial.

It was Mr Bumble in *Oliver Twist* who first noticed that the law knows nothing about marriage. To the assertion ‘The law supposes that your wife acts under your direction’, he famously replied:

If the law supposes that ... the law is a(n) ass – a idiot. If that’s the eye of the law, the law is a bachelor; and the worst I wish the law is that his eyes may be opened by experience.

If coercion, or shall we call it plain bullying, by both sexes within marriage was not possible, there would be far less literature. All the great writers have relished the wit and misery engendered by domestic strife. It’s a central theme of Jane Austen, the Brontes, Barbara Pym, Anita Brookner, Jean Rhys, Muriel Spark, the Elizabeths Bowen and Taylor, and Penelope Mortimer, who in *The Pumpkin Eater* wrote about a middle-class wife oppressed by her philandering husband. It was based on her marriage to divorce lawyer and author Sir John Mortimer QC.

One could also mention Dickens for the many sour

marriages he described, and for his own, in which his dutiful wife was coerced into visiting his mistress. Tolstoy captured the agony of the unhappily married woman in *Anna Karenina*. Henry James, Ford Madox Ford delineated in exquisite detail the agonising struggle between marital partners. August Strindberg called this, *The Dance of Death*.

If a jury can’t decided whether one party has been bullied they could look at the psychology of those involved. We can all be fairly sure that Mairaid Philpott was coerced by her husband Mick into supporting his story after he set a fire, which killed their six children. On secret tapes made by the police she was crying while her husband threatened and cajoled her. She had no identity except as an adjunct of him. That is an extreme case but I have often thought the same about many conventionally married women, who willingly merge themselves into another person.

It’s a sad fact that anyone can become a victim in marriage or partnership according to the depth of their vulnerability and their unresolved needs. In middle class parlance this is usually explained as their desire to maintain the *status quo*, for the sake of the children.

It’s complicated of course because the obvious bully may be the more dependent of the two, the man who makes vicious remarks about his wife’s appearance but does not really want her to lose weight because he fears any increase in her self-confidence will threaten his control over her.

People have to compromise to live with someone successfully but many couples seem to spend their time trying to prove that the other one is an idiot. They must have been in love once, you think, but unpleasant patterns of dominance and compliance have set in and ossified. As one anonymous writer put it, marriage is a romance in which the hero dies in the first chapter.

Of course everybody starts out with unrealistic aims. Most relationships in the west begin with ‘limerence’, the ecstatic feeling of being in love, when the two people seem to reflect one another’s desires. This love may last a lifetime, the couple might end up like Donne’s compasses, but it usually dies down after about three months. What follows is a period of renegotiation, a realisation that you may not have so much in common after all. There is a jostling to balance intimacy against personal boundaries.

No matter how successful both parties are in the

eyes of the world, victory in this private struggle will surely go to the partner who is the most emotionally detached. The one who remains desperately in love, or gives up their own identity to merge into the other person, will be vulnerable.

Much has changed in relationships between men and women in the last fifty years, but the husband usually remains the stronger, because he is the one with the most money and contacts. Women who stay at home to look after their children naturally lead narrower, more dependent lives than the breadwinner. Men also have the ace card that their status remains un-stigmatised by age.

I know intelligent, well-read women, former career girls, whose husbands insult them constantly as if they have failed in some huge way. When I mentioned this verbal abuse to one such friend, she was shocked that I was aware of it, as if she and her husband were fighting behind invisible soundproof walls; or more likely, she'd forgotten that his nastiness wasn't the norm.

Another has a husband who constantly nags at her in a high-pitched voice. One hears it whinnying out of her mobile. Others are just so irritated by the mere company of their wife that they cannot speak to her without utter exasperation. In this state they often sound like toddlers having a tantrum with Mum.

Women can of course be tyrants. Anthony Trollope's Mrs Proudie is the perfect image of a 'She Who Must

Be Obeyed'. As a child when we visited my father's parents it was odd to see him and his father, normally garrulous men, sitting in tense silence. They had decided long before that it was safer not to speak unless spoken too. It is of course unlikely that she would ever have ordered them to commit a crime, but my Dad did join the army in 1938 to get away from her, so she might be blamed for his eagerness to murder Germans.

It's possible to see couples sniping and attempting to control each other, without going to the extremes of badgering anyone to commit fraud. There are myriad fads to fuel iron whims. There are a myriad of fads to fuel iron whims; you might declare yourself or your child allergic to plastic gnomes or dust mites. This turns every visit to friends' houses into tortures, allows rigid control over wherever the family goes and constant attention to the risk of whatever the threat is. If the partner is caught off guard, rather than being on permanent red-alert, the ultimate charge of negligence can be used, more punishing than any old fashioned fit of the sulks.

There are women who avoid marriage, fearing they might love too much only to be bullied and belittled, or fail to love enough and turn into tyrants. Marriage, like some great force of nature demands its victims, and there are rarely any survivors. Such was Vicky Pryce.

Sarah Searle is a journalist.

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The Swiss

John Lalor

As I write, there is a discussion on BBC Radio 5 Live about the recruitment of 16 and 17 year olds to the British Army. Despite these being purely for training roles, not combat, there are claims by Child Soldiers International and Forceswatch that this is highly dangerous to the delicate psyches of children, even the children of peaceful, neutral Switzerland (my present homeland) whose formidable standing army has kept the country out of wars for 200 years.

In Switzerland 16 and 17 year olds are not children. They can buy beer and leave school at 16, and young men are mandated to serve in the military. I don't think anyone would doubt that there are negative consequences to joining the armed forces. You could die. But what critics of the military fail to notice is that there is much to gain from joining an army. I recall my university days with a sense of both embarrassment

and wasted opportunity. We were self-absorbed, naïve, cosseted children. In the army a youth has much to gain in the way of leadership, social skills, planning abilities and technical training.

Indeed, having previously lived in Israel, where military service is 3 years, I am reminded of that country's young. Confident, articulate, completely unaffected by political correctness which is socially acceptable lying, it is so refreshing to hear honest opinion, unclouded by a labyrinth of speech codes. By the looks of it, on many measures, Swiss youth is doing well. Here, where alcohol and marijuana can be consumed in the open, the vile scenes in British and Irish cities every weekend night are largely absent.

As a psychologist, one of the first things I learned about Switzerland was how their education system worked. A nation's education system tells you a lot about its people. It's like 1950's Britain and Ireland's,

and that's its strength. Fewer than 20 per cent of Swiss 13 year olds make it into the secondary school system (*Kantonalschule* or *Gymnasium*) geared to produce university entrants. How prescient of Albert Jay Nock to argue, almost a century ago, that no more than 13 per cent of the population should go to university.

Then, for about 70 per cent of Swiss youths, there is the 4-stream *Sekondarschule*, which is 3 years' long. After this, having received 9 years of mandatory education in total, the Swiss do an apprenticeship. Why do you need a degree in computer science to work in computer programming? Why pay for 4 years' studying for a degree in business just to work in an office? Do nurses need university degrees to nurse? Here, companies, organisations and health systems, and, please note, international companies, take youths as young as 15 years of age and train them for 3 years. The youths also continue part-time in school.

Of course, the Swiss education system has its faults. In Britain and Ireland, you can waste your early-teens dossing, pick yourself up around the age of 17, and make it onto a good university course – like me. Youths have differing developmental speeds. Also, I have seen so often that the Swiss system is very poor at helping those who don't work, and succeed, independently. Bright children who don't get the grades (often through laziness) are told, at 12 years of age, to give up on university and aim for an apprenticeship. They, in many cases, end up operating far below their intellectual and occupational capacities. In general, the recognition and amelioration of weakness and vulnerability is not a Swiss attribute. Nor does the country produce enough doctors, PhDs, and other more academic and less technical graduates. Germany and the rest of the world do, and they flood into Switzerland having gained a free education. Seems like a great deal for the Swiss.

However switching educational streams – from *Sekondarschule* up to *Kantonalschule* – is possible, but it's very hard and takes an additional year. Many youths in their mid-20s realise that their apprenticeship led them into a profession that has a ceiling in terms of progress and growth. They take conversion courses, and go to university part-time, to make the transition for example, from being an electrician to an architect.

Overall, I would say the education system – for all its faults – is a cornerstone in what it is to be Swiss. Effectively every youth has a purpose for they are useful and they are not treated like children. Young Swiss men are put through 21 weeks of military training at about the age their British and Irish contemporaries are in 'university' after which, they are assured, they will earn more and thus magically become 'assets' to the exchequer. So, while 70 per cent of 20 year old Swiss can say 'I am a (fill in your

recognized, respected, productive profession here)'; what can their contemporaries in Britain or Ireland say? 'I study (fill in your diluted, over-subscribed course at a fake university (polytechnic) here), and when I'm finished, I'm taking a gap year.' It's the difference between being able to say 'I am' and 'I study'.

Finally, Switzerland is not really a country. Well, not in a centralised (say Dublin to the rest of Ireland) top-heavy sense. It grew organically from three cantons in the heart of the country in 1291, to its present form of 26 cantons governed lightly from Bern. Within the national borders, *Zurchers* and *Luzerners* and *Genevoise* might as well be from opposite sides of the world, so steeped are they in their respective histories, culture and, above all else, cantonal pride. Indeed, not until the 1850s was Switzerland anything more than a collection of cantons whose commonality was that they weren't German, French, Austrian or Italian.

Little things show you this tremendously independent mentality: their car registration plates, which have the canton flag of the owner and the Swiss flag. Meanwhile, we in the EU are going in precisely the opposite direction, subsuming national flags for the wholly artificial and ahistoric EU flag. Switzerland didn't even join the UN until 2002 – more the pity she did.

I am often torn. I occasionally get a sense of alienation when going on hikes or cycling trips. There are flags everywhere. Switzerland is a country of flags. And not simply national flags. or cantonal (county) flags. There often seems to be more interest and pride in regional, municipal (*Gemeinde*) flags. The family crest, reaching back centuries in one canton alone (inter-cantonal migration is rare here) is a thing of pride. Families are bonded to their origins. No room here for jettisoning centuries of history for some mythical superstate; People are firmly wedded to their land and people.

How do you instil this mentality so badly lacking in Britain and Ireland? First: the micro level. Rip up half a century of progressive educational nihilism. Burn effigies of Tony Crosland the public school educated, hugely wealthy Labour Education Secretary who swore, to destroy every grammar school in England. Herald success and competition, rather than mediocrity and 'equality'. Return to the system that produced youths with solid occupational training, thus giving them purpose, self-efficacy, and pride. Then use genuine incentives for the many NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training) to do some form of military service. Even if it's only 21 weeks-long like here in Switzerland. It may be their last chance to develop the essential skills of self-discipline and self-control in a society so polluted with self-entitlement and phony self-esteem.

Next: the macro level. Create internal competition: pit county against county in a fight to recruit businesses and wealth creation. Starve central government of power and funds. And forget the evils of spending power: give taxation powers to cantonal and *Gemeinde* (a.k.a. council) level government. Why? Spending is easy; taxation hurts. About 31 per cent of Swiss taxation is done at Federal level, in Bern. The rest is at cantonal and *Gemeinde* level. The differences are stark. The canton of Zug, between Zurich and my fair environs of Luzern, has nothing to offer international businesses: just low, low corporate taxes, and low personal taxes for employees. Like utterly natural-resource-free Hong Kong, its people decided to be

rich; they decided not to destroy and repel businesses.

Things move slowly here. Unlike the rest of Europe with its European superstate psychosis, or America with its Obamacare takeover of 14 per cent of the economy at the stroke of a pen, the Swiss are in no hurry. And here lies their success: they find what works, they stick with it, and they watch agog as the rest of us ‘progress’ towards collapse. Given that we are so enamoured with change, perhaps we should emulate the Swiss.

John Lalor is an Irish psychologist and executive coach living in Switzerland.

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Conservative Classic – 51

Le Roi se meurt, Eugène Ionesco
Anthony Daniels

Modern man is above all Promethean, not only in his attitude to the life of the race in general but to that of his own individual self. The phrase ‘having it all’ perhaps best captures this Prometheanism: the idea that we can indefinitely both expand and satisfy our desires, even if they are contradictory, and that the only thing that stands in the way of total and permanent earthly fulfilment is a combination of technical incapacity and political malevolence, to be overcome by scientific research and social reform respectively.

Promethean man has many achievements to his name, but among them is not an ever-increasing happiness in proportion to those achievements. The perfectly fulfilled life continues to elude him and to shimmer like a mirage in the distance, drawing him ever onwards and sometimes luring him into dangerous territory. Eugène Ionesco’s great play, *Le Roi se meurt*, (1962), translated variously as *Exit the King* or *The King Departs*, is like a bucket of cold water tipped over Promethean man to remind him of a few uncomfortable home truths that he would much rather forget.

The sheer utopian impossibility of Promethean man’s dreams means that he is doomed to eternal disappointment; but since he does not recognise this impossibility, he is inclined to paranoia and scapegoating. One of his symptoms is that he recognises no limits, and Ionesco’s play deals with the most important of all such limits: death.

This is a limit which we must all face one day and

which no scheme of improvement will ever allow us to eliminate or evade. Yet nothing could be more alien to Promethean man than preparation for death, since such preparation would be an implicit acknowledgement that his outlook is flawed. For him, the only good death is the one that is indefinitely postponed.

In the play, King Bérenger I has to be told that he is very soon to die. The figure of Bérenger is absurd: kings do not have that name, and in any case his kingdom has dwindled almost to nothing. The walls of his palace are cracking and the cobwebs cannot be swept because the brushes are worn out and there is no money for new ones. And yet he is referred to as ‘His Majesty’: the contrast between the magnificence of the title and the king’s impotence being itself symbolic of the inescapability of human vanity in the sense of the preacher in Ecclesiastes.

Ionesco punctures our human pretensions from the very opening of the play. The palace guard announces the arrival on the stage of the king:

His Majesty King Bérenger I. Long live the King!

The stage direction reads:

The King, with a lively step, dressed in a purple coat, crown on head and holding a sceptre, crosses the stage from the little door on the left and leaves by the door at the right rear of the stage.

Then the guard announces:

Her Majesty Queen Margaret, first wife of the King, followed by Juliet, cleaning woman and nurse to

Their Majesties. Long live the Queen!

They too cross the stage without staying, and the guard announces the arrival of Queen Marie, second wife of the King, and first in his heart, followed by the cleaning lady and nurse to Their Majesties. Bérenger is obviously no Sun King.

When they reassemble on the stage, Queen Margaret says to Juliet that there is dust everywhere and fag-ends on the floor, after which the following exchange takes place:

Juliet: I've just come from the cowshed, from milking the cow. She hardly gives any more milk. I haven't had time to clean the living-room.

Queen: This is not a living room. How many times do I have to tell you? It's the throne room.

Juliet: All right, the throne room, if Your Majesty says so. I haven't had time to clean the living room.

The absurdity of humanity's overestimation of its own power is then succinctly demonstrated by an exchange between Queen Margaret and the palace guard (in the absence of the King) after the Queen complains that it is cold in the palace.

Guard: The sun is late. However, I have heard the King give it orders to appear.

Queen: But the sun doesn't listen to him any more.

The two Queens discuss the need to tell the King he is to die in an hour and a half (that is to say at the end of the play). Marguerite wants to tell him straight out, Marie to equivocate. Marguerite blames Marie for not having warned or prepared him before.

We don't have time to take our time. The time of frolicking is over, no more pleasures, no more happy days, no more of your striptease. All that is finished. You have let things drag until the last minute, now we don't have a minute to lose since we're at the last minute.

When the royal physician (who is also the royal surgeon, royal bacteriologist, royal executioner and royal astrologist, an implicit mockery of medicine's pretensions to bring final existential enlightenment and satisfaction to mankind) reiterates what Queen Margaret had told the King, that he is dying, he replies:

What, again [you're telling me]? You're boring me. I'll die, yes. In forty years, in fifty years, in three hundred years. Later: When I want, when I have the time, when I decide. In the meantime, let us consider the kingdom's affairs.

The King tries to mount the throne and in doing so feels pains all over. But even this does not recall him

to his mortality, the warnings of the Queen and the physician notwithstanding. He explains away his own malady as follows:

It's because I haven't got it into my head that there's nothing wrong with me. I haven't had time to think of it! If I think of it, I'll be cured. The King cures himself, but I was too busy with the affairs of the kingdom.

The King is modern Promethean man who says, like him, 'I'll die when I want, I am the King, it's I who decide,' and will not accept that there are some things which are beyond his will.

When the King finally accepts that he is to die, he extols life – which he has never done before. Like so many of us, he values only what he is about to lose. And for or the first time also he enquires after the life of Juliet, cleaning woman and nurse, whom he has hitherto taken for granted. She tells him that her life is boring.

It bores you! There are people who don't understand. It's also beautiful to be bored, it's beautiful not to be bored, to be angry, not to be angry, to be discontented and to be contented, to be resigned to everything and to make demands... It's magic all that, a continual party.

The royal physician tells us how the King will be remembered:

He will be a page in a book of ten thousand pages that will be put in a library which will have a million books, one library among a million libraries.

And the King, despite his title, is Everyman: his fate is our fate.

I cannot do justice to the poetic humour of Ionesco's dialogue. But it is important to remember that Ionesco was the one prominent member of the Romanian intelligentsia of his time who was uninfected by the totalitarian ideologies that beguiled almost everyone else. He kept aloof from the fascism that was endemic in Bucharest University when he was a student there, and after the war held equally aloof from the Marxism that had become the opium of the intellectuals. He was indifferent to politics, except in so far as he resisted its claim to be the most important part of human life: itself a political stance, of course, and a conservative one, if by conservatism we mean an attitude to life rather than a fully-formed doctrine.

Le Roi se meurt is an antidote to any kind of political utopianism, and is both poetic and satirical. It satirises man's preposterous, and often dangerous, attempts to escape the existential limitations of his life. It punctures his attempts to ignore death, his pretence that by busying himself with his little projects it will go away. The King's speech to Juliet is a call to us to

pay closer attention to the transcendent pleasure of existence itself, and not to invest ourselves with any providential role. Ionesco had seen enough of thousand year Reichs and regimes that claimed finally to liberate man into the realm of the truly human.

Oddly enough, Ionesco's meditation on the importance of death is not depressing, but on the

contrary uplifting. It liberates us to take pleasure in what we are fortunate enough to have, namely existence, rather than to bear the crushing, all-pervasive and life-destroying responsibility to bring about perfection. It is also an antidote to the moral grandiosity that is so characteristic of the politics of our time, and that usually ends in moral squalor rather than grandeur.

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Reputations - 40

Kierkegaard at 200

David Wemyss

Many people have heard of Kierkegaard but only a few have read him. He was born in Copenhagen in 1813, the youngest of seven children. By the time he was 21, four of his siblings and his mother were dead. It's an amazing story of family melancholy, and even madness. Some think he was forged years before he was born, when his troubled father, little more than a boy at the time, cursed God on a blasted Jutland heath – and was still brooding over it at the age of 82. Kierkegaard certainly had a religiously claustrophobic upbringing, but by the time he entered the University of Copenhagen in 1830 to study theology he had managed to reinvent himself as something of a young man about town.

In 1837, when he was twenty-four, he fell in love with Regine Olsen, the daughter of a local dignitary. Three years later they were engaged. Thirteen months later he broke it off. His writings suggest that he wanted to protect Regine from his 'thorn in the flesh', although it may also be of note that the letter of farewell that accompanied the return of the ring pleased him well enough to use *verbatim* in *Stages on Life's Way*. In October 1841 he left for Berlin, where, in the same lecture theatre as Karl Marx – there's no evidence they ever met – he sat listening to the German philosopher Friedrich Schelling. Here his authorship began to take shape.

Four months later he returned to Copenhagen and spent the next thirteen years as a sort of literary-philosophical gadfly, living on his inheritance. The gloomy father had ended up making a lot of money from hosiery, and just as well too. T S Eliot worked in a bank and Kafka was an insurance man, but it's impossible to imagine Kierkegaard working for a living in an office. In fact, although it sounds a bit gnostic,

a lot of what you need to understand about him is probably there in microcosm in that single thought.

An arch-conservative and monarchist, he was a virulent critic of the emergent democratic movements in Denmark in the middle of the nineteenth century. In particular, he anticipated the gradual flattening of human kindness into something uniform and doctrinal, and the wresting of easeful speech into simpering premeditation.

In 1855 he was dead at 42, worn out after a year of polemical pamphleteering against the Danish State Church, which he believed to be run by careerists promoting little more than bourgeois humanism. There was a disturbance at the funeral. The progressive theologian N F S Grundtvig observed drily that one of the icicles hanging from the underside of the Church roof had melted and fallen off.

And Kierkegaard's religious tone could certainly be icy. It may be fashionable to emphasise the equality of the lowest, he argued, but Christian love remembers the equality of the highest – not exactly a vote-winner in a new democratic age. He didn't care. Two was a crowd and three a spiritless age. It may sound like a recipe for solitary fanaticism, but his point was that one was a crowd too.

Throughout the authorship, he always returns to the Lutheran idea that you can do nothing under your own powers. You can only sit tight and be open to the possibility of grace. But some of the writing is breathtakingly beautiful devotional literature that could really make people sit up in a mainstream church service. Some of it is a pastiche of Hegel, densely philosophical. And some of it bears comparison with twentieth-century modernist novels. The cast list of pseudonyms and fictional characters is unprecedented

in western literature.

Behind the literary polyphony, even Kierkegaard scholars determined to take the pseudonyms seriously and still usually accept that there's a 'real' Kierkegaard behind all the masks. The pseudonym Anti-Climacus, author of *The Sickness Unto Death* and *Practice In Christianity*, is a popular candidate here. He assumes the existence of a God-grounded self that can be lost without noticing – easier than losing a banknote – and so its recovery presupposes that we *do* notice. Deep disquietudes are simply necessary, but then things begin to look up.

Our life-histories can just be 'spoilt', as it were, for as long as we live – even until the end of time – but all the dead words and overcast feelings and regrets can somehow be *repeated* mysteriously – unaltered but yet also anew – in what the earlier pseudonym Constantine Constantius calls *Repetition*. For those of us who remember and notice too much, our memories are made easeful in spite of themselves – even if the gift can never be in our own hands to hold on to.

And it can only come to those who have reached the point of needing it in the first place, so the issue can't be forced. Kierkegaard was particularly fond of attributing this kind of thing to Old Testament sufferers like Abraham and Job. Every word is backlit all of a sudden, and the torment of a few words is forced to give way to the continuity of them all. The trajectory of a whole life comes into view.

It's a lovely formulation, but how many people will be capable of appreciating it? Doesn't Kierkegaard sound too religiously over-heated for contemporary taste? Isn't he in danger of alienating readers who started out enjoying the literary sparkle and fizz but now have to worry about where he is taking them? However much he comes across as a 20th century modernist exploding all over the middle of the 19th century, he is also beginning to sound as if his position

really does rest on literal religious beliefs, and, if you have an antipathy towards such beliefs, you're going to feel increasingly uncomfortable. It is a shame we're all so theologically phobic these days because, although his presuppositions *are* metaphysical, the structure of his thought remains compellingly elegant from a purely secular point of view.



It might look as if that can't be right, because repetition (or grace) is evidently supposed to be some kind of miracle, but secular understanding has always recognised the odd little remissions that come unannounced to those able to sit out a defining melancholy, and let it shift a little of its own accord.

Of course some will say that this is all very well, but it's really to do with serotonin and synapses, and drugs if necessary. Some people are wired up to be melancholy, or acutely self-aware, or obsessive-compulsive, and it is all in the neuroscience. It has nothing to do with miracles, and talking about remissions of fate is just an aggrandisement of what the good days feel like for those mildly gloomy sorts who don't need drugs but

might benefit from some sort of cognitive therapy. I would agree with most of that, except that there are all kinds of mildly gloomy sorts, and you might as well say that they're wired up to notice the evening light and the lengthening shadows.

Kierkegaard works his best effects in quietness and at dusk. The wild Jutland heath of his father's mania has been overplayed for too long.

In *Manhattan*, Diane Keaton accuses him of terminal adolescence, and I do know what she means. He is the perfect discovery for a young person going through that 'nobody understands me' phase. But I am nearly sixty now, and one of the great discoveries of my evening years has been that nobody *does* understand me. I just had to wait thirty years to grasp that that probably means I am definitely alive.

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Roy Kerridge

Few people nowadays admire tower blocks on council estates. Slowly but surely they are being pulled down and replaced by three or four storey flats, often of fairly pleasant design – sloping roofs and lack of uniformity. Existing tower blocks are being jazzed up with garish bright colours, scarlet balconies with yellow squares slapped on here and there, as if to please the grown up children who supposedly live there.

Towers for human habitation may be frowned on, but steel, glass and concrete towers for business are still held semi-sacred, a sign of Growth going Upward. China once a land of pagodas, presents a New York or Chicagoan aspect to the world. Arab countries follow suit, and Europe imitates America. Hideous towers lit up at night like a vision of Hell indicate a successful and wealthy nation, the biblical warning of Babel notwithstanding. One hundred years ago, cityscapes anywhere in the Old World would show a skyline dominated not by offices but by spires, minarets or domes. Capitalism required no monument; all glory was given to God.

The only delightful post-war architecture of any size in London today is the Hindu Temple at Neasden and the still more fairy tale-like Hindu Temple nearing completion at Ealing Road, Wembley. No doubt there are other Temples further north that are equally pleasing to the eye. Christendom could catch up by dusting off Victorian plans for unbuilt churches or cathedrals. This *has* happened in Liverpool, with the Anglican cathedral, and it *nearly* happened with the Catholic cathedral also, but for a last minute change of

architectural plan. For sheer craftsmanship, Hindus still lead the way, adept at working not in steel but in stone.

Diehard readers of this column may remember my occasional references to a Leopard Gecko. This pet reptile, apt to bite the hand that fed it, had a stern and haughty air, well-fitting to its Pakistani or Afghan desert homeland. It plainly regarded itself as a huge and noble dinosaur, and met our admiring eyes with a look of withering contempt. One day I found it dead, its chin resting on a flat stone, a peaceful smile on its face. I threw its body into a bush in the garden and never expected to see it again. Our garden is ornamented with toy plastic dragons and dinosaurs. Some time later, a gardener found our gecko, hideously shrivelled with black holes where its cat-like eyes had been. Assuming it to be a toy, the lady gardener, a volunteer from Elders' Voice, placed the corpse among the plastic dinosaurs. So in death as in life our gecko posed as a mighty dinosaur. It was the way it would have wanted to go.

Last night I visited Heaven in a dream, shown around by a friendly angel. When I enquired about Hell, I was stunned to be told that there was no such place.

'No Hell?' I exclaimed. 'then where have you put Hitler?' In answer the angel took me to a cloudy region where the instruments of a 'heavy metal' rock group had been set up. Shifty-looking souls stood about waiting for the musicians to turn up.

'The lead singer is Adolf Hitler,' one of them told me. With a cry, I awoke. How happy I felt to learn it had all been a dream and that Hell exists after all.

Leveson

The Czech Police Museum is on Ke Karlovu St number 2 Prague. One of the exhibits is a samizdat copy of *The Salisbury Review*. It was seized by the secret police, the STB, as part of a folio of evidence against a suspect accused of anti-state activities. Soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall children in Czechoslovakia were given copies of *The Salisbury Review* in English as part of their language lessons. You have only to lose your freedom to know how precious it is.

If the recommendations of the Leveson Enquiry are acted upon by David Cameron, Britain's newspapers and magazines will become *de facto* organs of state. Then, as Lord Salisbury remarks in his leading article, in this edition, 'The regulated (press) will find that signing up to regulation will accelerate their own decline, and the unregulated will become a British samizdat...'

George Orwell said 'Journalism is printing what someone else does not want printed: everything else is public relations.' Even though the *Salisbury Review* is only a grain of sand in the shoe of authority, we have no intention of signing any concordat with the state.

The Editor



St Paul gets a bad press. Jesus preached a simple gospel of love for your neighbour, then Paul came along and made it all so complicated. That view is quite false. The gospels were written thirty years and more after Paul's letters and contain some difficult theology. St Paul defines the bewildering concept of Original Sin in words of one syllable: *The thing I would, that I do not; and what I would not, that I do.*

Paul is one of God's supreme miracles and acts of grace. He is second only to Jesus Christ himself in the history of Christianity. It was St Paul and not the gospel writers who first gave us those words from the Last Supper: *In the same night that Jesus was betrayed he took bread...Likewise after supper he took the cup...* Paul was the greatest of all the Christian teachers and the biggest influence on St Augustine and Martin Luther. Paul's teaching that life is a crisis demanding decision is even at the centre of the philosophy of atheist existentialists

Many philosophers have declared that the main problem of humanity is our passions. We will one thing, but our desires throw us off course. Paul realised that the fault does not originate in the passions but in the will itself. We consist of contradictory volitions and are divided selves.

The divided self produces anxiety so we are not at ease. We find we become dissatisfied and like Hamlet can even find the whole of life and experience *a foul and pestilential congregation of vapours*. In loneliness, in our need for love and when we don't find it, we thrash around in so many false substitutes for love, compounded by the frustration to which this leads. C S Lewis described it as *an ever-increasing craving for an ever decreasing pleasure*. In the dark hours the restless mind runs on. We can even be anxious in our sleep. This is when we can turn to St Paul's glorious *Epistle to the Romans* and find rest:

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord.

He had a fully incarnated physical presence: he asks for his books and his cloak; and he tells us to stop drinking water and take some wine. He has a besetting sin – his *thorn in the flesh* – and it is enough for him to

believe that God has afflicted him with this besetting sin in order to stop him getting too big for his boots. He got too big for his boots anyway, but he knew the cure, for he coined the phrase himself – *charity shall cover the multitude of sins*.

St Paul was no stained glass saint but a real flesh and blood man, passionate and emotionally charged. In jail in Rome he writes imploringly to Timothy:

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me. For Demas hath forsaken me and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia; Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me...

Paul so often gives us the sense of his close physical presence. How movingly he writes to the Galatians: *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand...*

Even in prison in Rome, in danger of execution, he finds vivid opportunities to teach the gospel:

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

This is Paul in his prison cell. There's no doubt he was looking through the grille at the Roman soldier standing guard: at his breastplate, his shoes, helmet and sword. He doesn't preach abstractions but, by using the physical reality which he sees around him – even using the threat of military detention, to teach us the truth that makes us free.

For all his great learning, St Paul is not the ponderous didactic professor for he is the supreme poet of mystical insight:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am becoming as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal...Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know, even as also I am known.

Finally, this is how deep St Paul's love for Jesus Christ went. His body even took on the imprint of the nails:

From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Peter Mullen is Assistant Priest at St George's Headstone Harrow.

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ARTS AND BOOKS

Violent and Vulnerable

Robert Crowcroft

Leviathan, Thomas Hobbes, edited by Noel Malcolm, Oxford University Press, 2012, £195.00.

Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury came up with many good ideas. Almost everyone will be familiar with the notion that life is ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’; but his impact on political thinking is unquantifiable. Hobbes’s *magnum opus* was *Leviathan*, first published in 1651. This book – to give it its full title, *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, shaped a whole range of political ideologies, from right to left and everything in between. Hobbes’s provocative writings on the social contract, the duties of rulers and citizens, religion and human nature are timeless. They continue to divide readers, which is just as it should be. In creating *Leviathan*, Hobbes had reworked many of the arguments in his earlier *De Cive*. With the conviction that man, being simultaneously vulnerable yet violent, needed government, and that the authority of the sovereign should be absolute, Hobbes provided a clear-eyed vision of politics. *Leviathan* is one of my very favourite books. It defies simple characterisation. Even when time is short, one can open the text at random and be guaranteed to find a stimulating paragraph.

Noel Malcolm, Senior Research Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and a Fellow of the British Academy, has produced the definitive edition of the greatest work of political philosophy ever composed in the English language. *Leviathan* is a uniquely rewarding book, and this sumptuous three-volume set is nothing less than a publishing event. Quite apart from the sheer intellectual power of *Leviathan*, this is, in presentational terms, a striking collection. It’s one of those rare things that feels nice in the hands and looks good on the bookshelves. Malcolm has spent many years working on Thomas Hobbes – he earlier published an edition of his correspondence – and this shines through. These volumes are steeped in scholarship and consistently compelling.

Volume one, written wholly by Malcolm, serves as a general introduction to *Leviathan*. This describes

the background to the writing of the text. There are many intriguing insights into the evolution of Hobbes’s thinking and his working habits. He chose the title *Leviathan* because, in the Book of Job, ‘...God having set forth the great power of Leviathan, calleth him King of the Proud’. The self-interested nature of all mankind makes a powerful ruler necessary. In Hobbes’s mind, Leviathan thus represented the state and signified the need for there to be one unchallenged, legitimate power in the land if the social peace was to be safeguarded. Malcolm goes on to tell the story of the famous engraved title page which graced the first edition of the book, displaying a colossal figure, wearing a crown and carrying a sword and crozier, looming above a town. The body of the giant consists of hundreds of smaller individual citizens, simultaneously ruled and represented by the sovereign. This was a powerful image of the concept, and reality, of social authority. Malcolm goes on to detail the book’s initial printing, the translations, and its reception by critics. Though the questions raised in the book are – like all the best philosophy – enduring, it was also a work of its time. Malcolm’s text drives this home, locating *Leviathan* in its proper intellectual and social context. Hobbes was a Royalist in the crises that accompanied the Civil Wars and the Protectorate, and repeatedly warned that any yielding of essential powers by the king would entail a fatal weakening of sovereignty. And yet in the conclusion to *Leviathan*, Hobbes seems to have been concerned to persuade defeated Royalists to submit to the new regime on the grounds that, as the conqueror, it was now the legitimate power in the land. Hobbes had been in exile in France, and this acceptance of the new state of affairs across the Channel may have been motivated by a desire to return home.

The second and third volumes in this set reprint the text itself. The English and Latin editions are published side by side (with the English on the left hand side of each facing page, and the Latin on the right) in order for Hobbes specialists to trace the changes in argument from one edition to another. Textual variants are recorded and explained. The result is by far the most comprehensive and detailed, yet user-friendly, scholarly edition of *Leviathan*. Given its price and scale, the set will not replace Richard Tuck’s wonderful – and cheap – 1991 Cambridge University Press edition as the best version of the book for students and non-specialists. But it is not intended to. This work is a full critical edition of *Leviathan* and, for scholars,

is certain to remain the definitive version for many decades to come. Malcolm's devotion to Hobbes is apparent throughout – the three volumes have clearly been lovingly and carefully assembled. The result does the great man justice, a spectacular achievement by a scholar at the height of his powers. [back to contents page](#)

Chinese Whispers

Jonathan Story

China's Silent Army: The Pioneers Traders, Fixers and Workers Who are Remaking the World in Beijing's Image, Juan Pablo Cardenal, Heriberto Araujo, London, Allen Lane, 2013, £25;

China Goes Global: The Partial Power David Shambaugh, , Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, £20.

Both these books refer to Jacques Martin's bestselling book, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order: China's Silent Army*, written by two Spanish journalists with experience of reporting out of Beijing, essentially corroborate Martin's thesis; David Shambaugh demolishes it. Since they both deal with the same subject, an explanation would seem in order.

China's Silent Army has two sets of protagonists: hardworking Chinese who build the dams, construct the oil and gas pipelines, complete the railway projects, build the houses and buy into Bordeaux wines or the UK and US property markets. These are the pioneers, workers and fixers. Overshadowing them is the Chinese autocratic state, which is on the way to becoming a superpower, without any effective resistance by the western powers, absorbed by the enduring depression in their debt-ridden economies. What we are watching is a tectonic shift suggesting a new world order in the early stages of its evolution.

The authors have conducted over 500 interviews, and travelled around Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, eastern Siberia and the Gulf states to feel the pulse of this extraordinary explosion of Chinese activities abroad. As they observe, the common theme is to ensure Chinese access to raw materials and to open new markets. The party state has a monopoly control over financial flows within China, and underwrites international expansion. Towards the end of their readable essay, the authors raise some questions about who benefits: the broad conclusion is that local élites benefit as partners of the CCP, particularly the governments of Burma, North Korea, Iran, Sudan and Cuba. And Chinese corporations, lacking the rule of

law at home, set no limits on their practices abroad.

And there lies the problem in the book: it states that China is about to take over the world, but it also suggests that its conduct is rapacious.

David Shambaugh, one of the world's leading authorities on China, explains why such a thesis is wide of the mark. He accepts, of course, that China is the most important rising power, but he challenges the view that China will rule the world. China, he argues, has a long way to go before it becomes, if it ever does, a global power.

The common denominator to China's global activities is its own economic development. Not surprisingly, China's impact is felt most in trade, investment, energy and raw material prices, in global sales of luxury goods, in global real estate markets and in cyber-hacking. But its foreign policy is essentially passive, and designed to protect the party state's definition of its national interests.

Our danger, Shambaugh writes, is to overestimate China. By no means does China enjoy the panoply of attributes required of a great power: its economy is growing, but has multiple weaknesses; its cultural footprint is expanding, but China is not a cultural magnet; its military efforts focus essentially on Taiwan, and its own immediate vicinity; China is a member of the society of states, but is a loner, with hardly any friends. It is welcomed by local élites in Africa but is viewed with mixed feelings around the world.

Why this is so, Shambaugh summarises in one paragraph: 'Underlying China's inconsistent behaviour' are an odd combination of contradictory attitudes towards the world: confident but insecure, assertive but hesitant, occasionally arrogant but usually modest, a sense of entitlement growing out of historical victimization, risk averse but increasingly engaged, a cautious internationalism combined with strong nationalism and deeply embedded parochialism, truculence combined with pragmatism, a regional power with a global sense of itself, a China that wishes to be left alone but finds itself dependent on the world, and an increasingly modern and industrialized but still poor and developing country. In short, China is a confused and conflicted rising power undergoing an identity crisis of significant proportions. We should expect these multiple international identities to play out simultaneously on the world stage'.

The danger, he implies, is that China underestimates the western powers, just as much as the western powers overestimate China. China is not about to rule the world, but it is helping to transform it, and by doing so, transforming itself. My conclusion from this excellent book is that China should continue to be modest and learn from the rest of the world, while we should

continue to learn from China's own experience. The world is too dangerous for anything else.

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A Scandal in Bohemia

Nigel Jones

An English Affair: Sex, Class and Power in the Age of Profumo, Richard Davenport-Hines, Harper Press, 2013, £20.

On 14th December 1962 a series of pistol shots disturbed the night in the quiet street of Wimpole Mews, in central London. If the fusillade did not quite have the global impact of those bullets fired by Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo in June 1914, they were certainly enough to mark a decisive watershed in the history of post-war Britain. Richard Davenport-Hines, in this entertaining and informative history of what still remains Britain's premier class political and sexual scandal, rightly identifies the shots that cracked the Profumo affair wide open as the chasm between an England of deference, class consciousness, moral earnestness and austerity, and the very different place we know today. Largely owing to the Profumo Affair, we now live in a culture where anything goes, where the wildest perversions are merely an alternative lifestyle choice, and we cynically but realistically expect our rulers no longer to be our betters, but our seedy inferiors.

The gunman that cold winter night was Johnny Edgecombe, a West Indian migrant from Antigua, who, since arriving in Britain, had made a gainful living as a drugs dealer, pimp, and manager of illegal drinking dens. Through working for the notorious rack-renting landlord Peter Rachman, Edgecombe had got to know the 'showgirl' Christine Keeler, and had slashed a fellow West Indian rival for her affections, Aloysius 'Lucky' Gordon, with a knife. Keeler had gone to ground in an effort to escape the violent feud at the flat of her mentor and minder, Stephen Ward, the central figure in the Affair and, apart from Profumo himself, its principal victim. Edgecombe had pursued Keeler to the flat, and, frustrated at not being admitted by a terrified Keeler, peppered its doorway with his pistol. Since gunfire in central London was a rarer event in the early 1960s than it has since become, the Police investigated the shooting; and lo! what a can of worms was revealed.

It turned out that Keeler and Ward were the spider and the fly (though it is still hard to tell which was which) at the centre of an exceedingly sticky web of toxic

scandal involving high politics and society, (very) low life and crime, and still shady elements of espionage and the world of spying. And the sticky stuff holding it all together was sex. Keeler was the young but already sexually experienced woman whose erotic magnetism drew men like flies to ordure, Zola's Nana *après la lettre* from the lower depths. From a childhood in a converted railway carriage, Keeler was drawn up to the dizzy heights of being a guest at Cliveden, snootiest of stately homes, while simultaneously screwing the War Minister Jack Profumo and the Soviet military attaché Eugene Ivanov (and this at the height of Cold War spy mania) – alongside Edgecombe, Gordon and a host of other *beaux* – thanks to her peculiar relationship with Ward.

Stephen Ward, like so many creepy people the son of a clergyman, had two great talents which brought him at first a long list of top drawer patients, and finally brought him to a premature grave when they dropped him and turned on him to save the skins that he had once so profitably rubbed and kneaded. Ward was an osteopath, an unorthodox practice then in its English infancy, and a gifted portrait artist too. His healing and sketching hands brought him a host of clients, ranging from Sir Winston Churchill, and his son-in-law, the Tory politician Duncan Sandys, to the Hollywood stars Ava Gardner and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. Ward also associated with and drew members of the Royal Family and, just as dangerously, knew people from the secret world like Anthony Blunt and MI5's suspect Chief, Sir Roger Hollis.

The society connection that brought Ward down and blew the whole affair into the open was with Lord Astor, the well-meaning but effete squire of the Cliveden estate. Richard Davenport-Hines is rather obsessed with this dull and dim man, judging by the amount of space he devotes to him, his parents, and his wives. For Astor was only the unwitting catalyst that brought Ward and Keeler together with Profumo. This notorious encounter happened in July 1961 at Cliveden's swimming pool when the Minister and his actress wife Valerie Hobson were weekend house guests of Astor, while Ward and Keeler had the run of the place where Ward rented a Thames-side cottage in gratitude for his skill in relieving Astor of various ailments. Smitten by the sight of the naked Keeler frolicking in the pool, the notoriously susceptible Profumo lost no time in beginning a brief dalliance, apparently abruptly broken off after fewer than half a dozen copulations when he was warned by MI5 of his new squeeze's more *louche* connections.

It was Profumo's bad luck that his brief encounter with Keeler came at precisely the wrong moment for his hopes of keeping it quiet, hushing it up, moving

on and allowing his political career to carry him perhaps as far as 10 Downing Street itself. A whole congeries of ostensibly unrelated events: the Cold War, then moving towards a sort of climax in Berlin and Cuba; the country's rising impatience with a stuffy Establishment presided over by the ageing figure of a walrus-moustached Harold Macmillan; and a salacious Press then, as now, resentful of a tired Government's attempts to gag it, conspired to make it inevitable that news of the Minister's fling with the showgirl would eventually emerge.

When it did, maliciously inspired by a repellent and hypocritical Labour MP George Wigg (who would later be exposed as a frequenter of prostitutes himself), Profumo first lied about his involvement to MPs, and was then forced to resign when his lie was exposed. With the Government and Establishment tottering, a scapegoat was needed. The Police were instructed to manufacture a pathetically flimsy case against the hapless Ward, whose only real crime was a fondness for the company of pretty girls, and who may well, Davenport-Hines believes, have been an impotent voyeur rather than the rapacious lecher portrayed by the prosecution in the tissue of lies that formed the case against Ward. Charged with living off the immoral earnings of call girls (in truth, his girlfriends lived off him), and aware that he was being set up by an Establishment caught with its pants firmly down, Ward took a fatal overdose during his trial.

Of the other *dramatis personae*, Astor never recovered his reputation after another Ward moll, Mandy Rice-Davis, famously said when told that he had denied sleeping with her 'Well, he would, wouldn't he?' (Davenport-Hines is inclined to believe his hero Astor's denial). Macmillan followed Profumo and resigned within months. Edgcombe and Gordon both followed careers as jazz musicians and promoters. Ivanov was recalled to the Soviet Union, and Keeler, her youthful allure gone, returned whence she had come, to a penurious existence in the lower depths, assisted by the regular issue of ghosted autobiographies. The Establishment dusted itself down and carried on much as before, aided by a mendacious official whitewash in the report by Lord Denning, a particular hate figure to Davenport-Hines. And it is true that the vindictive and ruthless glee with which the Police and judiciary, prompted by a political class in full moral panic mode, hounded the amoral but essentially harmless Ward to his death leaves a very nasty aftertaste. The Establishment up against it is capable of anything.

As for the man who gave his name to the affair: precluded by his inherited Italian riches from the necessity to earn a living, Jack Profumo did his

penance at the Toynbee Hall social centre in the East End. After a brief stint symbolically cleaning the lavatories, he soon found himself running the whole thing and tapping his wealthy friends for donations. His marriage to the tolerant Valerie Hobson survived, but he remained an incorrigible womaniser into his dotage. Profumo's writer son David recalls putting his elderly father on a train and asking if he could get him some reading material for the journey, to be answered with a request for a clutch of girlie magazines. But, always an officer if not a gentleman, at least Profumo kept quiet about the episode that defined his life, politely declining with dignity all requests (including one from this reviewer) for interviews or kiss-and-tell memoirs.

Davenport-Hines shows how the affair crystallised huge changes as the swinging Sixties got underway. Not only the obvious shift towards sexual license, political irreverence, cool music, and recreational drugs provided by new immigrants, but the passing of political and economic power from the old aristocracy and war generation to a new class of meritocrats, entrepreneurs, spivs and crooks. One of the strongest chapters features a cast of Jewish new money men headed by Charles Clore, but including the odious Rachman, for whom Davenport-Hines is inclined to make excuses because he had such a hard time during the Holocaust in his native Poland. Another London property squillionaire proudly added the son of the last Austrian Emperor, Archduke Otto von Hapsburg, to his board of directors – though it's not clear whether this was from snobbery or a desire to humiliate the old order. In the new Britain that was emerging it was men like these, not the Astors and the Profumos, who would call the shots and men like Johnny Edgcombe who would fire them. [back to contents page](#)

Englishness

James Bryson

Our Church: a Personal History of the Church of England, Roger Scruton, Atlantic Books, 2013, £12.

Like anyone deserving the title 'philosopher', Roger Scruton is profoundly engaged with the business of self-discovery. Confessional and eirenic, Scruton's personal history of the English Church is a work of Christian *oikophilia* (love of home). This book develops a number of the prevailing themes of Scruton's writings, especially the idea of home. Scruton sees home as the basic building-block of any civilization, since it is having a home that fulfills the spiritual needs of people who raise culture to the plane of civilization. The English have made their country a

home in large part through the rituals and institutions of the Church, most notably *via* the sublime liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer, that majestic translation, the King James Bible, and of course by making their sovereign the head of the Church.

Scruton tells the story how, after the Reformation, the English ultimately kept the most important religious gifts of the Roman Church, the Apostolic succession and the sacraments, whilst domesticating the Christian religion through a process that culminated in civil war. By the eighteenth century, though the English became less zealous in their faith (Scruton describes this as an attitude of ‘loyal indifference’), the sacramental heart of the church remained intact, ready to heed the call of the nation in times both peaceful and war-torn.

At both the literal and spiritual heart of the book stands a chapter titled ‘My Church’. Scruton’s way into Christianity is aesthetic rather than metaphysical, putting religious experience ahead of theological abstraction. Scruton shows how his local parish church of Garsdon makes itself sacred by participating in the national life of England through its music, architecture and liturgy. Scruton’s Christianity is the Christianity of John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan and T S Eliot, but he admires the Anglican Church for accommodating churchgoers of a less spiritual kind, ‘who only fleetingly feel the presence of God in their lives, and who wish to be on the right side of him with the minimum of effort’. Whilst a parish like Garsdon once stood as reflection of the English national spirit, in our present post-Christian age, churches have become another kind of home, not reflecting the feelings and commitments of wider society, but serving as ‘a place of refuge from the undisciplined world’.

Scruton takes care to express his ambivalence about ‘rational theology’, pre-dating the Enlightenment thought of Immanuel Kant, a discomfort that, in turn, might sit uneasily with the conservative Christian theologian. As Scruton is well aware, the liturgy of the Common Prayer Book depends as much on the content of the metaphysical truths discovered by the Greek and Latin fathers, inherited from Hellenic philosophy, as it does on the beauty of its linguistic form, the rituals it prescribes, and the liturgical calendar it keeps. The God of the English Church is the God of Greek philosophy. As the first of the thirty-nine articles of religion makes clear, God is ‘without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness’. There is no reason that a Christian should make Kant’s epistemological assumptions his. Indeed, they are an anathema to the true Anglican Church, whose life-blood is Christ’s mystical body made manifest through his appearance in the sacraments and liturgy, as Scruton himself makes abundantly and beautifully clear. Nor is

Enlightenment philosophy the inspiration for Scruton’s beloved *Four Quartets*, where Eliot meditates on the relationship between eternity and time by drawing on the pagan philosophy of Plotinus, whose writings were the occasion for the conversion of the greatest of the western fathers to Christianity, St Augustine.

Like the African Bishop, Scruton has the unique ability to make his personal history express universal truths. In our culture of relativism, Scruton is not afraid to speak of truth. Much of what makes Scruton so attractive to readers is his pious devotion to the things, places, and people he loves, whilst, for his part, counting himself a humble trustee of them. Scruton sees it as his duty to defend the traditions that have made English culture what it is, all of which have grown up within, or in close, if oppositional, relationship to, the Anglican Church. This book is a must-read for any modern person who has forgotten who the English were, are, and might continue to be, as well as for those who already know, but rejoice in, the exercise of self-discovery through recollection.

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No More War War

John Jolliffe

World War Two. A Short History, Norman Stone, Allen Lane, 2013, £16.99.

As it turned out, the Peace Conference of 1919 guaranteed total disaster for Europe. Of the Big Three, Woodrow Wilson’s lofty moralising could never be harnessed to the intricate problems of faraway territories of which he knew even less than Chamberlain later on. The fabrication of new countries with frontiers based on straight lines, (especially in the Middle East) ignored dangerous ethnic and tribal differences. Stone, who now lives chiefly in Ankara, points out that Turkey is the only ‘new’ country that has survived from that time. Lloyd George’s ignorance of Europe ran deep; and Clemenceau was hell bent on revenge against Germany, unsurprisingly considering the vast number of deaths in action, and the destruction of the mines and factories in *les régions dévastées* of the north-east of France carried out by the retreating Germans, to prevent their competing after the war with a German industry that was undamaged. One far-sighted French politician observed that the Peace Terms guaranteed another war in twenty years’ time. He was spot on.

When it came, English people considered that ‘we’ won it since Hitler was destroyed. But ‘our’ war, however destructive and weakening it was for us, was

only a sideshow compared with the far greater scale of death and destruction that raged on the Eastern Front: Russian casualties amounted to twelve million; nevertheless they eventually succeeded in driving back Hitler's armies, which included some Italian and Romanian divisions. Field Marshal Manstein ruefully observed that the Red Army was a hydra, which grew two heads when one was lopped off. Hitler's stated war aim had been to reclaim the territories that Germany had lost in Poland and Czechoslovakia, which contained very large German minorities. It was providential that he decided that this could best be achieved by attacking Russia, forgetting the fate of that other megalomaniac Napoleon's attempt in the same direction.

In 1940 we stood alone. Without America's help, and Hitler's invasion of Russia, we would not have stood a chance. But as in the alliance against Napoleon, the allies often had completely different aims, and looking back it is surprising that they cooperated to the extent that they did. Details of the various campaigns have been chronicled elsewhere: North Africa, Italy and France, and the crucial and tragically costly battle against U-boats in the North Atlantic, which saved us from starvation. The war in the Far East, triggered by Pearl Harbor, is probably less well-known in detail to most English readers. All the theatres of war are summarised here with skill and penetration, though sometimes compressed to the point of obscurity. Indeed, there are a few passages that read as if they had been rather hastily dictated.

Churchill made some hideous mistakes, but without his unique ability to summon up the blood and inspire our survival, some disastrous compromise might have been forced on Britain. And his diplomatic skill with the Americans was triumphant, in spite of his nostalgia for the British Empire which was by no means to their taste. Once it got going, the American war effort was formidable. In 1944 it produced thirty times more aircraft than in 1939, with spectacular improvements in quality; though of course America was never bombed or seriously short of food. In their shipyards the story was similar. When D-day came in 1944 the American contribution, though often clumsy and sometimes misdirected, was overwhelming. Surprisingly, given the Germans' great reputation for efficiency, we learn that for some time German factories produced fewer aircraft than Britain; their managers, though often brutal and stupid, were less effective than ours. Many of the sins of Lord Beaverbrook, the Minister of Aircraft Production, can therefore be forgiven since he galvanised his factories into such crucial achievements.

All in all, this short book is a miracle of compression. Stone's style is refreshingly genial, especially by

comparison with some of his more solemn forerunners. This is how he describes Hitler's rise to power. 'He spied on the National (meaning anti-foreign) Socialist (meaning stealing) German (meaning anti-Semitic) Workers (meaning lower middle class) Party.' The style is exhilarating, and thoroughly effective in grabbing his readers' attention, and inspiring them to follow up this splendid introduction by moving on to more detailed texts; but one can almost feel the shudders of more prissy professional followers in his footsteps.

More and better maps would have made the story easier to follow. (Sometimes, especially in the East, the detail is virtually impenetrable, and a good editor could easily have ironed out these occasional faults.) But it is the clarity and verve of the narrative as a whole, even if it is inevitably disjointed in its leaps across the world, that makes this book such an excellent starting point for those coming to the subject for the first time, and also for those who want a bracing refresher course. Whatever happens in the future, World War II will have been the last of its kind. [back to contents page](#)

Monkey Business

Celia Haddon

The Bonobo and the Atheist. In Search of Humanism Among the Primates, Frans de Waal, W W Norton, 2013, £18.99.

Do we need a God in order to have a society with ethics? Or did morality antedate religion and, if so, what are the implications? Frans de Waal, who has studied chimpanzees and bonobos and is best known for his discovery that chimpanzees have a process of reconciliation after fights, has turned his attention to the question of whether morality occurs in animals. He is not the first to do so. Others have looked at the behaviour of animals and seen what seems to be a sense of fairness among them, and in dogs what could be called the rules of play.

De Waal's main area of study was chimpanzees, a species capable of aggression not just to other animals, but to members of their own group. But another primate, the bonobo, is noticeably more peaceful. Once called pygmy chimpanzees, bonobos were only recognised as a different species from chimps about 80 years ago. They are more slender and have longer legs than chimps. Most bonobo groups are led by females, sons remain with their mothers throughout their lives, and the bonobo way of reconciliation is sex, lots of it, both female/male and same/sex.

Frans de Waal is one of several zoologists and

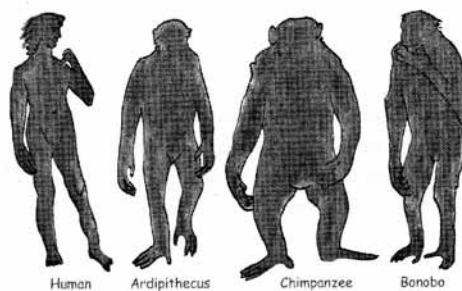
neuroscientists to come to the conclusion that animals have feelings like ours. Moreover it is also becoming clear that humans, themselves, do not think their way through life by pure reason. Humans have an emotional brain, with an intellect which is embedded in feelings. There is an emotional continuity between us and other animals, something that Charles Darwin also believed.

In De Waal's latest book he looks at the empathy, cooperation and altruism shown by apes, and in particular by bonobos. In the 1970s there was a Thatcherite view of evolution, that it was a selfish struggle for existence by genes not individuals. What appeared to be altruism was merely a device to pass on the family genes by helping relatives. Female animals that sacrificed themselves for their young appeared unselfish but were merely selfishly ensuring the survival of their genes. Altruism between unrelated animals was reciprocal, a contract to ensure that if 'I'll scratch your back, you'll scratch mine.'

Thus writers like Richard Dawkins saw altruism as just another device in the relentless struggle by genes to perpetuate themselves. Others went further claiming that morality among humans was an unnatural accretion, hiding the true nature of human life, which was nasty and brutish, as Hobbes had put it. Biologist George C Williams, whose ideas were built on by Richard Dawkins for his best selling book, *The Selfish Gene*, claimed that human morality was 'an accidental capability produced in its boundless stupidity'. Frans de Waal calls this the Veneer Theory, that kindness and altruism are merely a thin veneer over evolutionary selfish tendencies.

This now seems unlikely. Altruism and empathy are an inherent part of the life of warm-blooded mammals and birds, starting with the need for care given to their young, writes De Waal. This altruism and care for others then extends into the social life of mammals, including the great apes and us. It becomes part of our emotional heritage. We, and the apes and perhaps other species, help others because it inherently pleases us to do so.

He gives numerous examples. Apes will open a door to offer food to a companion, even if it means less food for themselves. Capuchin monkeys will barter for tokens that reward both themselves and another, rather than the tokens that reward only themselves. Chimpanzees will console a distressed chimp with hugging and kissing. In the Yerkes Primate Center in the USA, where de Waal works, an elderly arthritic female chimpanzee is helped by the other chimps up



the climbing frame. If altruism was merely a trick by the selfish gene to promote itself, there would be no mercy for the infirm elderly unable to breed or help their relatives.

Neuroscience is helping us see what is going on in the brain, when we feel for others. There's a brain cell known as a spindle cell, once thought to be solely human, involved in empathy and self awareness. Now we know that this same cell is found in apes too, as well as whales, dolphins and elephants. This suggests that we, and at least some of the other animals, are wired for altruism.

It is this natural empathy and altruism among the primates (we humans are primates too) that leads Frans de Waal to propose that humans do not need God to impose morality from above. He does not fall for the simplistic idea that we should all make love not war like the hippie bonobos. (The Haight Ashbury 'summer of love' in California that ended in a squalor of drugs and crime suggests that doesn't work for humans.) Moreover, chimpanzees are capable of killing each other, giving the lie to the idea that only humans war on their own species. We wouldn't need morality if we were naturally always peaceful and good.

Can atheism fill the God gap? De Waal looks at the new neo-atheists (his phrase not mine) like Dawkins and the late Christopher Hitchens who attacked religion as a source of evil. 'I consider dogmatism a far greater threat than religion *per se*' he writes and wonders whether the evangelical atheists have a background of trauma which makes them so dogmatic. He himself is, as you might say, a sort of Church of England atheist, not concerned with attacking the beliefs of others.

He does not believe that morality can be safely left to science and the scientists, recalling the doctors' trial, after World War 2, in which various Nazi doctors were brought to court for their cruel experiments on the humans in the death camps. Nor can atheism, whose followers included Stalin, Pol Pot and Mao Tse-tung, claim any moral high ground over religion.

The Bonobo and the Atheist is a book combining zoology with philosophy and a bit of autobiography thrown in. Frans de Waal is a tolerant atheist and a civilised scientist whose view of the world leaves room for wonder and art and music. I learned a lot about bonobos, and Hieronymous Bosch, and the religion versus atheism controversy by reading it. An enjoyable book with some telling digs at the dogmatic Mr Dawkins.

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A Handbook for Kim Jong II?

Keith Hopkins

The Dictator's Learning Curve, William Dobson, Harvill Secker, 2012, £18.

If a dictator exercises authority beyond the law and embodies the law as a 'kind of God among mortals' (Aristotle), then the state becomes a collective subject to dynastic power. Only the supremely wise person can rule. A Dear Leader, in fact. Able to rewrite not just history but even the language itself. In North Korea, children are taught to conjugate verbs: 'We have killed Americans, We are killing Americans, We will kill Americans.' The arrow of the Party and of the Revolution point one way. Sandinista Nicaragua, Enver Hoxha's Albania and Ceausescu's Romania all interpreted the past as a launch pad for a pan-socialist future. But even Stalin could not entirely excise Lenin's contribution. The USSR collapsed in 1991, proving that it is only the locals who are tortureable.

Dictators and dictatorships emerged in the chaotic postcolonial period. In Latin America, dictators arose after central authority had collapsed. These were the caudillos, or self-proclaimed leaders, who usually led private armies and established control over an area before marching on an enfeebled national government. Two notable dictators – Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna in Mexico and Juan Manuel de Rosas in Argentina – became powerful caudillos through a combination of force and guile. More recently, Latin American dictators have been national rather than provincial leaders, like Juan Peron. In Africa and Asia, after 1945, states quickly morphed, owing to local traditions of autarky and the absence of a middle class, into one-party states, like Hastings Banda's Malawi or military juntas such as Nigeria.

Do dictators and dictatorships have a learning curve? That is, can dictators learn from their mistakes so that in future they do better? Or vice versa? That is the interesting question posed by William J Dobson in his new book. In one sense the book is a plea for dictators to be, well, less like dictators and to join the rest of the world. The lesson, for them, is clear. If you do not begin to behave, and free up your societies, then the full demotic power of the Internet and social media will be unleashed against you. The curve that Dobson identifies is no figment.

Where Dobson falters, often, is in his uncritical assumption that movements that say they are democratic and popular really are. He consistently

fails to define democracy, which might be thought to be a fairly significant defect in a book that reads like a primer for the Occupy Movement. He assumes that any popular movement, anywhere, on whatever scale, and whoever is behind it, must, necessarily, be an unalloyed good and praiseworthy thing. He is generally optimistic about the 'Arab Spring' but does not say whether he thinks the same way about the explosive growth of radical Islam, a popular movement if ever there was one, that is interchangeable with it. He is excellent on Chavez and Venezuela and the way in which the socialist conman entrenched himself in power, enriched his friends and subverted the election process.

Like many liberals, Dobson is keen on China. It would be wrong to say he is unaware of its violent injustices, but nevertheless the place clearly holds him in thrall. China is, still, and by a huge margin, the most repressive dictatorship on earth, a vast police state of both coercive and permissive powers. The Communists operate a system of semi-forced labour that has caused the greatest dislocation within the country since the Cultural Revolution. Chinese labourers have not 'opted', to use Dobson's vocabulary, to move away to the towns, they have been swept away by the greatest dirigiste industrial revolution in human history. We do not know who takes the decisions in China and to whom the wealth (largely) accrues, but we do know that the gulags await dissenters from China's unique brand of state capitalism and communist tyranny. The country has been turned into a moonscape of eco-biological devastation, its rivers and water supply contaminated, its infrastructure laid waste. So far, the Central Committee has shown itself adept at climbing the dictator's learning curve, giving a little here, relaxing a little there, whilst retaining a steel grip on power. But the Party has yet to face its existential crisis. When it does, history suggests, the world may yet hold its breath.

This is a readable book, which has the virtue of appearing at just the right time, when the dictators' curve may take a sharp swerve upwards or down. It's a feel-good book so I can imagine Obama liberals enjoying it as they sip their Starbucks lattes in Boston or Seattle but it is far too simplistic. When considering democratic behaviour, Aristotle made the distinction between behaviour that democracies like and behaviour that will preserve democracy. So which one is it to be? A map or two would have been useful, as well. Dictators, after all, rule over geographical areas. And at a glance the misery index of the world's most repressive regimes might also have helped him to think a bit about the history of these turbulent countries. Other people's culture, language and history are notable by their absence in Dobson's world. But not for him. Far too

often US liberals have made the political movements of the last 20 years or so resemble nothing so much as a Hollywood version of the children's crusade.

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Intelligence Warfare

Christie Davies

Intelligence, a Unifying Construct for the Social Sciences, Richard Lynn and Tatu Vanhanen, London, Ulster Institute for Social Research, 2012, £30.00.

This is the latest in a series of books by Lynn and Vanhanen showing the importance of IQ, measured intelligence, as an explanatory variable, not just for psychologists but for economists, sociologists and indeed, anyone who wishes to understand the contemporary world free of the imprisoning blindfolds of political correctness. In their earlier books, Lynn and Vanhanen have demonstrated clearly that measured intelligence is the best single predictor of how well an individual will succeed at complex tasks, that there are very large differences in human ability between individuals and that these are in substantial measure innate and inheritable. The average intelligence of different ethnic and religious groups and social classes also differs markedly in the sense that one group can contain a much larger proportion of highly intelligent individuals than another and a correspondingly lower proportion of those of low intelligence. Intelligence is thus an independent master variable that enables us to explain, and to predict with reasonable certainty, the fates of groups as well as individuals.

Such a proposition produces irrational rejection and resentment and great bitterness of spirit among ideological egalitarians. But the relentless accumulation of data to support it and the ability of Lynn and Vanhanen to make testable predictions that are later confirmed is something the egalitarians cannot provide on the basis of their own theses. The obtuse refusal to confront this reality by those in the grip of egalitarian prejudice has long hindered social science research, mainly because it is espoused by the powerful gatekeepers who control patronage, research funding and indeed who gets published. Lynn and Vanhanen have punched a hole in this constraining wall of power. One day it will fall.

Their method in this book is straightforward. They have obtained or estimated the average IQs of many countries and plotted them against other variables such as educational attainment, per capita income, democracy, corruption, health, crime rates and a variety of indices of the human condition. The conclusions of this regression

analysis are most easily understood by readers by looking at the many scatter diagrams they provide. The strong relationship between higher IQ and a variety of positive social variables is shown by drawing a straight line on a graph on which each country has an IQ position and a position on some other social or economic variable. The line is the one that, it has been calculated, best fits the data. In general most countries lie close to the line showing that average IQ strongly predicts national achievement. Where a particular country is, so to speak, way off line, Lynn and Vanhanen ask why this is the case. Where a country's economic position is higher than predicted by its IQ, the reason is nearly always an unearned wealth based on natural resources, such as oil or a good climate and pleasant setting that attracts tourists. Intelligent foreigners can be imported to help these essentially rentier countries exploit their resources. Such countries are like a dim-witted nineteenth-century laird with coal or other minerals under his inherited barren moors; these have been discovered by intelligent geologists and extracted by skilled mining engineers and he has become rich. Even more interesting are those countries with high IQs and poor performance – they tend to be ex-socialist countries artificially held back by that dire social ideology and only now beginning to thrive. That China is highly intelligent but poor and now growing fast is proof that high intelligence is *not* the result of economic success but the driving force that produces that success.

What jumps out of Lynn and Vanhanen's tables is that the highest IQs in the world, significantly higher than for Europeans, are to be found in Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, countries greatly differing in economic position and social structure but all inhabited by people of North-East Asian ancestry. The high ranking of Korea, a country that uses an alphabet (Hangul) and not characters in its writing, is important because it disproves the false claim that the high mathematical ability of the Chinese is simply a product of the skills needed in or acquired by learning to read and write using Chinese characters. One of the frustrations of my youth was to have been forced to read or listen to the inane spoutings of Gunnar Myrdal (cumulative advantage theory) or Immanuel Wallerstein (world system theory) to the effect that the economic dominance of the peoples of North-West European ancestry was because the global capitalist system fixed it that way and kept everyone else out. It was a system that allowed for no possibility of the emergence of new strong economic centres. I never believed their nonsense and regarded their attempts to explain away the importance of Japan's very rapid rise after the Meiji restoration or again in the 1960s and the remarkable achievements of the overseas Chinese as downright dishonest. What Lynn and Vanhanen

have shown is that the past dominance of North West Europeans was in part due to their superior intelligence and that they are now being overtaken by the even more intelligent people of North East Asia. Human intelligence, not arbitrary domination of markets, has proved to be the master variable, the unifying construct.

Assuming Lynn and Vanhanen are right, it is likely that we will see the further rise and rise of China, since its thriving economy is and will be more and more based on high intelligence and is not just the product of a temporary advantage derived from cheap labour. Like South Korea the Chinese are now exporting very sophisticated products. The only thing that may frustrate this is a culturally induced lack of creativity stemming from strong pressures to conform to the wishes and norms of groups and hierarchies. Intelligence is a necessary condition for creative work but not a sufficient one, which is probably why those of European ancestry rather than North-East Asians continue to gain most of the Nobel prizes in science and medicine. The Confucian tradition has drawbacks as well as merits. It is not in any way the source of the remarkably high intelligence of the Chinese but it probably did account for the four hundred year long stagnation of China, which had been the most advanced country in the world until the sixteenth century. The early adoption of a meritocratic bureaucracy was to China's advantage but it became a self-interested, fossilised monopoly, unable to adapt for fear of producing social changes that might destroy the monopoly.

I would bet on the continuing economic success of the Chinese and their domination of countries geographically distant from China, notably in Africa. That is clear from Lynn and Vanhanen's demonstration of the underlying forces behind the success of the North-East Asians. We had better accept what is going to happen and adjust to it. You can't beat those who possess innate intelligence; you have to work with them.

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The Quiet Garden of the Introvert Alistair Miller

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World that can't stop talking, Susan Cain, Penguin, 2012, £8.99.

Susan Cain's *Quiet* is excellent therapy for anybody who suffers from the socially debilitating condition of being quiet and thoughtful in a world seemingly dominated by the confident assertive gregarious team-

player who thinks out loud and acts on impulse. It also has profound implications for education, for business and for parenting. The central message is that the prevalent cult of extraversion (the 'extravert ideal') is profoundly damaging to the third to half of people who are by nature 'introvert', and whose qualities are cast 'somewhere between a disappointment and a pathology'.

It has long been believed that our behavioural dispositions or 'personality traits' have a physiological and ultimately a genetic basis; studies of identical twins have provided the clearest evidence of this. But it is only in recent years that the nature of the physiological basis for introversion and extraversion has begun to be revealed. It turns out that introverts and extraverts have very different 'optimal levels of arousal' – something Hans Eysenck had suspected back in the 1960s. Introverts are much more sensitive to a whole variety of kinds of stimulation – to sights, sounds, smells, pain, coffee and even lemon juice (they salivate more when it is placed on the tongue) – and they therefore avoid too much exposure to them. They are more sensitive to the subtleties of their surroundings and to the mood changes of others; their emotional responses are stronger; they tend to have unusually strong consciences; and they are more affected by surprises. And this heightened sensitivity, apparent from early infancy, has physiological correspondence in the functioning of the human brain. Quite simply, introverts are *physiologically different* to extraverts.

It is therefore a matter of concern, Cain argues, that a deep-seated social and cultural bias has arisen against the personality traits that are characteristic of the introvert – the traits that, in a profound sense, define who a large section of the population are. Before the twentieth-century, it was the character of a person that counted, and the character virtues – courage, temperance, kindness, modesty, humility and so forth – were things that all could admire and strive for. But over the course of the last century, the ideal of a good character was displaced by a new ideal: *personality*.

Cain links the rise in America of this 'culture of personality' to the growth of industrial society and the perceived need for 'a new kind of man – a salesman, a social operator, someone with a ready smile'. Dale Carnegie, a lowly farm boy who had learned the art of charismatic public speaking, penned *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (still a staple of airport bookshops) and so began a new breed of self-help manual, a whole motivational industry promising the keys to success. By the 1920s, people had to be 'visibly charismatic' and exude 'personal magnetism' – just like the movie stars.

Though Jung, who originally coined the terms, had

considered both extravert and introvert personality types normal, psychologists came to see introversion as something more akin to a pathology, associating it with social submission and even the dreaded ‘inferiority complex’. Naturally introverted children were now ‘maladjusted’ and urged to become more outgoing, to develop the personality of the ‘healthy extravert’. Some parents even discouraged their children from solitary or serious hobbies that could make them unpopular.

The belief that the charismatic extravert – confident, outgoing and vocal – has the qualities needed for leadership and success is still pervasive. The Harvard Business School, of which George W Bush is a graduate, is notoriously ‘predicated on extraversion’. Even our subconscious has been infiltrated, and in experiments involving two strangers meeting over the phone, the person who speaks more is generally considered ‘more intelligent, better looking and more likeable’. However, the notion that leadership requires charisma is, argues Cain, a myth. The ranks of chief executives of the highest performing companies are ‘filled with introverts’, with people described by those who work with them as unassuming, quiet and self-effacing. Their soft demeanours conceal, it turns out, a fierce resolve. They lack charisma but possess ‘intense professional will’. Above all, they *listen* to the ideas of others. And though extraverts prove to be better at leading and motivating employees who are passive, introverts ‘are uniquely good at leading initiative-takers’. Gandhi, who was crippled by shyness, exemplified the quiet strength and courage that comes of being able to persist and focus on some ultimate goal. This same quiet persistence also explains why introverts often excel intellectually. Introverts are better at solving more complex problems, not because they have a higher IQ, but because they ‘think before they act, digest information more thoroughly, stay on task longer, give up less easily, and work more accurately’.

Another myth Cain explodes is that people work better in collaboration with others. Of course, teamwork is important. The problem is that collaborative endeavour has been made into a fetish. In business, teamwork is elevated above all else, so that employees work in open-plan offices, meet to brainstorm ideas and are sent on team-building courses. In education, it is widely believed that children learn and work best in cooperation with each other rather than independently. In an American classroom visited by Cain, one of the rules for group work is ‘You can’t ask a teacher for help unless everyone in your group has the same question’. This is positively Orwellian.

That many of our greatest ideas, inventions and artistic achievements have been produced by people working alone (often by introverts like Newton, Darwin

and Einstein) ought to have alerted us to an obvious truth. But instead, adults, and, even more worryingly, children who work best in solitude have been forced to become group players. Interestingly, research into the effectiveness of group brainstorming (the concept, it turns out, was invented by an advertising man back in the 1940s) has shown that it simply does not work. People produce better ideas when they work alone. And the strongest predictor of exceptional achievement in a whole range of fields has been found to be ‘serious study alone’ involving intense concentration and hours of practice.

There are also implications for parenting. Introverts who have had adverse experiences of childhood are especially vulnerable and are in danger of developing chronic and genuinely disabling forms of shyness; but given a nurturing home environment, introverted children actually grow up to have fewer emotional and social problems than their extravert peers. It is not that introverts are unsociable or do not need intimacy; simply that their ‘style of social engagement’ is different.

Though some readers will find her Americanisms irritating, Susan Cain, a former lawyer, writes well; and though it is ‘popular psychology’, the book is meticulously researched. The implications for education, where the ‘social constructivist’ view of learning still reigns supreme (at least in the Anglophone countries), are profound. The chapter entitled ‘when collaboration kills creativity’ should be required reading for all involved in education.

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A Belgian Divorce

Lindsay Jenkins

Au revoir, Europe, What if Britain left the EU?
David Charter, Biteback Publishing, 2012, £14.99.

David Charter has done an excellent job of pulling together and presenting an instant picture of the UK’s relationship with Brussels today. It is very ‘point and shoot’. He has come to the only conclusion possible, that the UK is drifting towards the door marked exit. Charter’s starting position, like many others, of wishing to believe in Europe, took constant knocks when told that there was no alternative, that the only answer was Europe. He asked questions and in this book has presented a range of answers. Here then is a practical work which not only informs but is also a useful reference.

This book is not original research but reporting in the best traditions of *The Times* while displaying

options in a clear, balanced way. Indeed after five years reporting from Brussels and now from Berlin, Charter is excellently placed to reflect on recent events.

Perhaps where Charter's review shines brightest is his analysis of the current costs of membership of the European Union. None of this is easy to assemble, but he does a good job of informing even a mathematically allergic reader helped along by shocks such as the third largest recipient of EU structural funds is the richest country in Europe, Germany.

There are plenty of excellent spotlights too in a chapter entitled the EU's 'Direction of Travel'. Here is Charter on Mario Monti's clarity of thought when he signalled 'right from the start what so many British politicians ether cannot, will not or do not want to grasp - that the Single Market is not viewed anywhere on the continent of Europe as a simple economic trading system, but rather as a complicated political construct involving many social checks and balances in order to function acceptably.'

Charter is equally good on the UK's options on leaving the UK. Should we go down the EEA route, be like Norway or Switzerland or even Turkey. At the end of his exposition it would be difficult to conclude that any of those would hold great advantages for a country long used to trading with the world.

There is however a 'but' in this analysis of 'Au revoir, Europe' and it is quite a big one. Charter, in the manner of a journalist measured by the rhythms of daily copy deadlines, of the next story, of the near instant, has not come to grips with the overwhelming question of why the UK is so largely governed by the EU. Understanding history lends clarity to answers. That is what Charter lacks in this book.

While he comments in clear and unambiguous language on Edward Heath's duplicitous presentation to the British people of the supposed advantages of the UK's entry to the then EEC, there is no reference to the legal opinion Heath asked for and received.

Heath was briefed in 1972 by the Law Lords, Wilberforce, Diplock and Simon, on the supremacy of the European Court of Justice. Lord Wilberforce informed Heath that joining the EEC and coming within the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice would mean a total loss of sovereignty. Had Charter delved deeper he would be unlikely to write a chapter about the UK sharing sovereignty, a concept that was challenged at the time in the Houses of Parliament, let alone many times since.

Charter mentions the February 1970 White Paper on the supposed economic advantages of joining the EEC. But did he read it? The Government's best try to justify the UK joining the EEC was shallow, vague and meritless. Had such an assessment been used by

a business it would deserve to go bust. There were no economic advantages which could be spelt out. That is rather a big point to miss.

Perhaps Charter has taken too much note of Hugo Young, author of *This Blessed Plot*, to which he quite reasonably refers with the caveat that he was a European enthusiast. Nonetheless he calls Young 'a paramount chronicler of Britain's entry into the EEC'. Yet Young was writing from a markedly left wing point of view and his omissions are at least as large as his commissions. It would be a serious mistake to rely on Young's book, and others deriving from it, as Charter appears to have done.

The difficulties caused by skating over the earlier history of the UK and the EU are especially evident when Charter comes to assessing the benefits of an independent Britain. Because he has not set out what was lost when the UK joined the EEC, his assessment of what can be gained by breaking free is severely lacking. A classic example is fishing. When the UK agreed to the Common Fisheries Policy we lost over 150,000 jobs, fishing villages were decimated and we were no longer masters over 65 per cent of what became EU waters. The fishmonger on every high street became an endangered species.

Another critical absentee from this assessment is the wider world. Britain was not acting alone when joining the EEC. The international context, especially the role of the USA, is essential and will have a bearing on future action.

In sum, Charter is excellent on the here and now, the instant. But if this were a government briefing, he has not produced a sufficiently rounded assessment from which to make strategic decision on the future of the UK. Readers come to this book hoping to find exactly that, an easy to read balance sheet to help their own decisions on where to put their cross should they face a referendum, or which party to support at the polls. On that Charter falls short. [back to contents page](#)

Malignant Egalitarianism

Mark Wegierski

Leo Strauss and the Conservative Movement in America: A Critical Appraisal, Paul Edward Gottfried, Cambridge University Press, 2012, £60.

Paul Gottfried is a leading analyst of conservative movements in the modern Western world, who coined the term 'paleo-conservative.' He has published many books that provide an extended critique of 'the managerial-therapeutic regime' – which he regards as a dystopia that

has engulfed most Western societies. Gottfried is also a polyglot humanist, like Strauss himself, and therefore qualified to write an insightful critique of Strauss and Straussianism; and he does so partly as a defender of an intellectual Right that the Straussians continue to ignore.

Strauss's German-Jewish origins, his exile from Nazi Germany, and his life-long ardent Zionism are central to understanding his ideas and the attraction felt for them by his disciples. After a youthful flirtation with such figures as Nietzsche, Heidegger and Carl Schmitt, Strauss recoiled from what he understood as the revolt against modernity, and this particularly after the onset of the Nazi regime. Even before his exile, Strauss' critique of certain aspects of modernity was closely related to his Jewish identity. When he reached America, his efforts were directed toward preventing the emergence of radical anti-Semitic politics in America.

Strauss became an intellectual superstar in America, especially because of a favourable confluence of events in the 1950s. In his attacks on relativism, historicism, and positivism, Strauss sounded profoundly conservative to American readers, and he appealed in particular to American Catholic intellectuals, who were seeking some kind of grounding for their view of Natural Law. They were drawn to Strauss, who praised American democratic values, although there was much in what he wrote and said that would indicate that he was sceptical about the very ideals that these admirers saw him as defending.

Gottfried maintains that Strauss and the Straussians have never been men of the Right. They were, in American parlance, 'Cold War liberals', moderate social democrats, who opposed the Soviets. Strauss elevated liberal democracy to a touchstone of political decency that was to be defended against totalitarians of the Left and of the Right. But Strauss, and to an even greater extent his acolytes, have stressed equality as one of the central principles of liberal democracy. Thus, they supported many developments of the 1960s, with which some conservatives disagreed. They combined an enthusiastic support for the Civil Rights revolution and welfare state measures at home with a passion for war-making abroad, aimed at protecting Israel and remaking other countries to fit a certain image of America. There are obviously connections between Straussians and neoconservatives, and Gottfried discusses them while trying to recognize the differences as well as overlaps between the two groups.

The Straussians are highly political. They support their own brand of patriotism which they deem appropriate for America as a liberal democracy. It roughly corresponds to and may have inspired the neoconservative idea of 'propositional nationhood,' an image of America as held together by a universal, egalitarian ideology.

Because of their appetite for military adventures, in which others are to fight and die, Straussians are regarded

as right-wing militarists. What Gottfried stresses is that this militarism is driven by leftist ideals. Ironically, the isolationist Old Right in America, or what is left of it, would be more peaceful than the global democratic Straussians who now sit at the head of 'conservative' foundations and publications. Although Gottfried never says this, we may infer it from his commentary.

Much of Gottfried's book is devoted to a careful unpacking of the term 'political philosophy' which was one of Strauss' favourite terms. Gottfried argues that the phrase unduly privileges the political at the expense of metaphysical and epistemological questions. It also allows the Straussians to present political advocacy hiding behind a bizarre interpretation as a philosophical undertaking.

The Straussians, while willing to engage in debate with such left-wing critics as Shadia B Drury, and according them high respect, have not responded to criticisms from the intellectual Right or from established scholars in political theory who disagree with them. They treat such criticism as being beneath contempt. Indeed, Gottfried's book has not been considered in intellectual debates since its publication.

Gottfried also makes a comparison between Marx and Strauss as figures who have been considered canonical by their respective schools of thought. Although Straussians may react to this comparison with annoyance, it is not made in a mean-spirited way. There is nothing in the book that would suggest that Gottfried is hostile to either Marx or Strauss. He is simply reacting to the excesses of their followers. He is more than generous in praising some of Strauss's early (German) work, and treats an essay that he wrote on Martin Heidegger with effusive admiration. What he deplores are those aspects of Strauss's thinking that his mainstream disciples have glorified. Gottfried also finds some good points in the Straussians that he elaborates on in the later chapters: that they have re-stimulated interest in classical political writers; that they believe in a humanistic study of politics; and that they defend political study from being reduced to an imitation of mathematics.

Gottfried does note, however, the increasing migration of Straussians from the academy into neoconservative think tanks and foundations. He thinks the group is becoming less 'bookish' and more 'political'. He also suggests that the Straussians may be challenged by the rise of libertarianism on the American Right, and unlike the Old Right, this opposition, particularly in the matter of foreign policy, may be harder for the Straussians and their neoconservative allies to deal with.

Gottfried's work may be the best short study of Strauss by a non-Straussian that has appeared to date. It is a balanced introduction to Strauss' ideas which shows their impact on the work and politics of his disciples.

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FILM

Lincoln

Director Steven Spielberg

Ralph Berry

Lincoln is history as hagiography. It shows a weary titan in the final stages of the war, delaying peace so that he could get his grand project through Congress. This was the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery, to which Lincoln bent all his political arts, and the climax is the passage of the amendment. The film is unsparing in its exposure of the dark underside of politics, the fixers, the jobbery, bribery, use of state money to buy off recalcitrant votes. As an analysis of Congress at work, *Lincoln* is illuminating, and the cast (Tommy Lee Jones as Thaddeus Stevens is outstanding) does what it can to make sense of an often confusing (and sometimes barely audible) political process. Lincoln is portrayed as a man with domestic difficulties to add to his state burdens; his wife is still grieving for her dead son, and his surviving son wants to enlist and wear a uniform like everyone else. Through all his problems he remains focused on his goal, the abolition of slavery. But had he not achieved this with his emancipation proclamation? No, says Lincoln, in a notably legalistic defence of his policy: emancipation, a wartime measure, was not enough and could not be guaranteed to remain in peace time. Hence the need to ram through the amendment. He succeeds, and the final scene is reminiscent of the rabble-rousing final movement of a Soviet symphony, with cheering crowds on the steps of Capitol Hill welcoming the dawn of a slave-free land. Curiously, the assassination of Lincoln in Ford's Theatre is reduced to a public announcement from the stage of another theatre. Spielberg may have felt that John Wilkes Booth, with 'Sic Semper Tyrannis,' could leave the audience with inappropriate thoughts.

A little history is a dangerous thing. In August 1862 Lincoln had written to the Editor of the *New York Tribune*:

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy Slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

This of course makes nonsense of the film's thesis, and is nowhere touched on. The word 'secession' is absent from the script, even though the North went to war on the inviolability of the Constitution's integrity. Yet Edmund Wilson, in *Patriotic Gore*, acknowledged that the Confederacy had a perfectly legal claim to leave the Union; the Founding Fathers never believed that they were signing a 'world-without-end bargain', and indeed Connecticut and Massachusetts, whose trade had been hit hard by the British blockade, talked seriously of secession in 1814. Had they done so nothing could have stopped them. But 'Union' was the prevailing doctrine of 1861, with force to back it. By January 1865 Lincoln had achieved his 'paramount object'; the war was in its final, attritional phase, and only a composition with the Confederate leaders remained. Lincoln had won. But what was it all for? He wanted more, and held off the Confederate surrender until he had his amendment. In its final stages, the war is reduced in the film to a single shot of soldiers writhing in mud. Directors like mud; it reminds them of Passchendaele. The war could never however have been fought on the slavery issue: the North would never have accepted it as the dominant war aim, and the great majority of Confederate soldiers were poor men who could never have dreamed of owning a slave. (In 1863, after the publication of Hugo's novel, they spoke of themselves as 'Lee's Miserables'.) They fought for their State and its laws. They would deal with slavery their own way. The war itself came down not to a high moral point, but to a simple demonstration that the stronger crushes the weaker. The Confederacy was finished at the spot on the Old Plank Road in Chancellorsville where Stonewall Jackson was mortally wounded by his own picquets, in the dusk of his great victory. He would have made the difference at Gettysburg, six weeks later, and Lee reckoned that victory there would have tipped the balance, with England and France recognising the Confederacy as a legitimate nation. That would have been that. 'Thus on small agate points,' said Churchill, 'do the balances of the world turn.'

And they would. Slavery was an anachronism, and a victorious South would have followed the British way, pioneered thirty years earlier in the West Indies: emancipation coupled with compensation for the slave-holders. The only acknowledgment of Britain here is a gross anecdote told with lip-smacking relish by Lincoln. Spielberg evidently goes along with a fine

old Hollywood tradition: never give a Brit an even break. Compare *Argo* on the same point. The British had peacefully reconciled the just claims of legality and morality. And the money, for the Confederates? Easy. A bond issue of what the Southerners with characteristic chutzpah could have called 'Liberty Bonds,' say 3.5 per cent over ten years, would have been snapped up by the world's rentiers (including Northerners). A country that had seen off the Federals was safe for investment, while the Northern states could never have sanctioned that immoral use of the people's dollar.

The film does allow itself a brief musing on the future. What does the amendment mean for the blacks? Mrs Lincoln's black seamstress says that the main thing is to get past slavery. After that, things will have to be worked out in their own time. They did. A century after Appomattox, the colour bar was still doing the work of slavery. Anyone who saw the South before the reforms of the 1960s will remember the rest room signs: 'MEN (White) WOMEN (White) COLOURED.' History did not exactly endorse the triumphalism of *Lincoln's* conclusion.

Nor has it been allowed to make much of the forgotten voices of the South, the men and women who had their own values too. Of the silenced voices, I select one that appealed to the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII. It is by Major Innes Randolph, a Virginian on J E B Stuart's staff:

*Oh, I'm a good old Rebel,
Now that's just what I am;
For this 'fair land of Freedom'
I do not care a damn.
I'm glad I fit against it--
I only wish we'd won.
And I don't want no pardon
For anything I've done.*

Lincoln went to war on the Constitution as it stood, and ended it by altering the Constitution to suit his altered priorities – and his posthumous reputation. The War for Southern Independence saw the greatest mission shift in history, and it led to Lincoln's legacy project. This film celebrates one version only of history: that of the winners. [back to contents page](#)

Music

A History of Singing, Cambridge University Press,
£60, 2012
Robert Hugill



Writing about singing is difficult; except for modern recordings, singing leaves no trace. Even recordings do not always reflect what the singers live performance might have been like, and still in much of the world singing is recorded, if at all, only in the written record. So writing about singing means interpreting what others have written about singers. You need to develop a set of metaphors, which means that reading past descriptions of singers can be frustrating. John Potter and Neil Sorrell have bravely taken on the challenge in their densely written 350-page book which takes us from pre-history through to the present day. Both writers are well qualified for the task. Potter is a singer and writer; he was for many years a member of the Hilliard Ensemble and has a very eclectic discography. He was also the editor of *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*. Sorrell is a lecturer in music at York University who specialises in Asian music and is the co-author of *Indian Music in Performance: A Practical Introduction*.

The book opens with a chapter on singing in pre-history, followed by four chapters which take singing in Western music from the beginnings of written texts to the moment when voices are recorded. There then follows a chapter which takes us from pre-history to the present day in Indian classical singing. We move on to singing in the 20th century, with consideration of

the effects of recording on the history of the voice. A trio of omnium-gatherum chapters fill in the gaps, one on aspects of non-mainstream singing which includes the early music scene and the contemporary music scene, one on the varied aspects of the popular voice in 20th century singing and finally a quick canter through the other varieties of world music. A lot to take in, in just 294 pages of text.

The opening chapter is rather densely written in an academic mode full of references to papers on the subject. The authors are at pains to demonstrate what we do and don't know about pre-historic singing and demolish a number of myths, but it does not make for easy reading.

However, once we start on the history of Western singing, then the writing is admirably lucid though inevitably the pace is rather fast. I found these chapters, just over 100 pages, some of the most fascinating. These are a history of writing about singing, as the authors attempt to discern what the singers might actually have done. They have a nice ear for anecdote, so that the writing draws you in and does not degenerate into a series of lists. That the teaching of singing in Western Europe essentially stuck to the same tenets from the late 17th century to the 19th is illuminating in itself, but more so was the way that the authors show how singing differed so much from singing today.

I am a composer and a singer, with a strong interest in baroque

opera and early music, so that these chapters were shedding light on areas that I knew about, and was interested in. But I am not certain what a less knowledgeable reader would make of them. This problem was emphasized when I reached the chapter on Indian classical music. I know nothing about it and it was simply too difficult tying up the music I was reading about with any sort of aural image. Perhaps this book should have a set of CD's to help the unwary.

The section on Adelina Patti's recordings made in 1950 when she was over 60, which to a modern ear can sound eccentric and wayward, is put into the context of 200 years of singing. The revelation is the subsequent chapter on the development of Western classical singing in the 20th century, in the light of recorded sound, and how we have developed modern traditions of singing which bear only slight relationships to the singing of the past. The use of recordings of Schubert's *Ständchen* to demonstrate this, revealing how singers' attitudes change and how techniques like *portamento* which were essential to an 18th and 19th century singers' repertoire have almost disappeared.

The later chapters feel a bit rushed, attempting to include as much material as possible. At times it feels so disparate that perhaps it might have been better to write an encyclopaedia rather than a narrative history. As you move from chapter to chapter you can get rather jolted, as when we move from

the end of the 19th century in Western classical music to the beginning of singing in the Indian classical tradition.

However the writers' sheer breadth of knowledge gives the book its strength. When discussing late 19th century Jewish cantors they describe them as repositories of 18th century singing techniques. Or when talking about the singing of the first crooner, Al Bowlly; they link his technique to that of the 17th century singer/composer and author of a famous treatise on singing, Giulio Caccini.

For anyone interested in the development of the voice, this is an essential book. Whether you like popular or classical singing, it helps define how the voices we hear today developed. What was particularly surprising for me was the discovery that many modern singing techniques were invented in the 20th century, so that what we hear today is so very different to the past. There is an extensive set of notes and bibliography for further study.

The idea behind this book was to have 'a single-authored volume by a singer, giving a broad historical overview of singing in a global context'. Even though that metamorphosed into a collaborative volume, I am still not quite convinced. A volume dealing with just Western music would have been more coherent. As it is the book results in a patchwork, albeit one made from some highly illuminating material.

Robert Hugill is a composer.

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Apart from that Mrs Lincoln?

Ralph Berry

Theatre criticism was born of the Romantic era. Before that there was nothing systematic. Dr Johnson, a close friend of Garrick's, went often to the theatre but published nothing on his experiences there. He did however speak of them, as Boswell (in the Isham papers) records in his un-bowdlerized version, and Agate quoted: 'I'll come no more behind your scenes, David; the white bosoms of your actresses excite my genital organs.' The first man of literary distinction to undertake proper theatre criticism was Leigh Hunt, and for a quarter of a century he regularly wrote on the theatre of the day, mainly for *The Examiner*. Hazlitt joined him, and his account of Kean's Richard III in *The Morning Chronicle* has become a classic. 'He fought like one drunk with wounds; and the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out, after his sword is taken from him, had a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed...' Their subject, as with all other theatre critics for many years, was acting.

Leigh Hunt had an eye for the finer points of acting, and an appreciation of the acting style. Mrs Faucit, playing Volumnia, was told that 'A Roman matron

did not think it essential to her dignity to step about with her head thrown half a yard back, as if she had a contempt for her own chin' (an odd pre-echo of Hillary Clinton's style). For most of the nineteenth century, the given principle was that actors and acting was the supreme subject of criticism. When the French actor Charles Fechter amazed London with his Hamlet – delivered in English – G H Lewes and others rose to the challenge. Fechter, a friend of Dickens, inaugurated the international Shakespeare, for Ristori and Salvini acted Lady Macbeth and Othello in Italian. The nineteenth century ended with the first theatre reviewer of genius, George Bernard Shaw, the three volumes of whose *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (1895-1898) marked the beginning of modern times.

Shaw was a reformer and activist. He was the first theatre critic who sought to change the stage, not merely to record it. With Shaw begins the great line of Causes, which extends to our own day (if rather feebly, latterly). His great cause was Ibsen, the most admired and controversial dramatist of the time, much celebrated in Shaw's reviews. (Had Shaw continued into the twentieth century, he would have taken up

Chekhov.) Shaw's reviews have immense vitality and verve, and are often extremely funny. *True Blue*, 'a new and original drama of the Royal Navy' (March 1896) will reduce the reader to helpless laughter. But then the general yearning of critics is to rid the stage of rubbish. They always fail, of course.

The Cause of the early twentieth century was the stage excesses of Beerbohm Tree, and his 'upholstered Shakespeare'. Critics had become collectively aware that Granville Barker was the coming man, with the simplicity and severity of his staging methods. Tree was the last representative of a staging tradition destined to be overthrown by film, as he must have known, having filmed *Macbeth* (1916) in Hollywood under the great D W Griffiths. But the 1920s saw a highly conservative English stage. Its keynote came in 1919, when Nigel Playfair's *As You Like It* at Stratford had the audacity to dispense with the stuffed stag which since 1879 had been borne solemnly through the stage Arden. The cast was cut in the streets. One woman walked up to Claud Lovat Fraser, scene and costume designer, and shook her fist at him: 'Young man, how dare you meddle with Our Shakespeare!' That was the existential resistance to change, much less reform. The chief critics of the interwar years were Charles Morgan, of *The Times*, and James Agate, of *The Sunday Times*. Agate was the critic as panjandrum, a writer who beat his readers into submission with much learning and quotations from the French. His theatre criticism now seems to me unreadable, though like Alistair Cooke I find his *Ego* volumes excellent bedside reading. The type is now extinct.

The conservatism of the interwar years extended to the 1950s, but revolutionary change was in store. The subject matter of reviews moved beyond acting to include directors and designers. The age's John the Baptist was Kenneth Tynan, as clearly as Shaw the theatre critic of his century. His lodestar was 'great performances', high-definition performances. No mere critic, he led campaigns to abolish theatrical censorship, and paved the way, with *Oh! Calcutta!* to greater permissiveness. As literary director of the National Theatre, he was the state's dramaturge. And he directed stage taste away from the assumptions and conventions of the 1950s. His most memorable review was of *Look Back in Anger* (1956), which launched the 1960s. Tynan loved the play, and saw its revolutionary impact at once, with Jimmy Porter's complaint that there were no good, brave causes left. He was ahead of his time. Within a decade, the good, brave cause had arrived: Vietnam. And it was commemorated in Peter Brook's production, *US*, a title that encapsulates Dr Heinz Kiosk's 'We are all guilty'.

Tynan's reviews were the wittiest since Shaw's. From

a host of examples, I select 'Diane Cilento, fetchingly got up in what I can only describe as a Freudian slip.' He, for *The Observer*, and Harold Hobson, for *The Sunday Times*, were the twin champions of theatre reviews in what Jimmy Porter called the 'posh Sundays.' When they agreed, as they did with Harold Pinter, the nation sat up and took notice. When they did not, the nation marked the debate. The story goes that at the height of the Cuban missile crisis, Hobson leaned across the theatre aisle and said to Tynan: 'If the world ends tonight, Ken, I want you to know that I have never thought anything of Brecht and never will.'

The present generation of theatre reviewers (unlike film) shies away from cuttingly adverse criticism. Power has drained away from the role, and no reviewer resembles George Sanders's Addison De Witt in *All About Eve*. The Butchers of Broadway find no counterpart in London, and our critics are on the whole a herbivorous lot. They pull their punches. Actors, who have complained of their bad reviews since the Flood, have gained the upper hand. I have heard Jane Lapotaire say in a public lecture that the nature of acting should absolve its practitioners from criticism: they lay their beings on the line with every performance. One does not hear this defence made of plumbers and financial advisers. A weedy, human rights miasma surrounds actors these days, and reviewers fear to disperse it. They know their *Zeitgeist* and are reluctant to inflict pain. Their licences might just be revoked.

The climate of opinion will have to warm up for critics to flex their muscles. The bullies have been neutered. I would welcome their restoration to rude health, but doubt it's coming. Today's theatre critics are well aware of constraints that did not exist for Tynan. They merely offer mildly phrased consumer recommendations or discreet warnings (film reviewers are much more outspoken). As for jokes, they are now governed not by the Lord Chamberlain but by the Director of Public Prosecutions. Overall, there's a distinct lessening of reviewer prestige to account for. Reviewers are symptoms of society, not mirrors, either to it or to the theatre. They are panellists, jurymen, not gurus. I do not think a new Kenneth Tynan is about to emerge from Oxford to join them. He would be smarter than that.

Ralph Berry spent most of his teaching career in Canada. He has written extensively on Shakespeare.

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IN SHORT

The Liberal Delusion, John Marsh, Arena Books, 2012, £12.99.

A quick quiz question: who first used the term ‘political correctness’? The answer is one of the many facts which surprised me in this expertly researched survey of liberal ideas and the horrific uses to which they have been put from the Enlightenment to the present day. It is hard to square with the claim often made by liberals that PC is only politeness – as if twenty-first century man had anything to teach earlier generations about common courtesy – for it was coined by Lenin in 1922. It seems that, while presiding over a bureaucracy engaged in the exile or murder of those who disagreed with him, ‘*toujours la politesse*’ was his primary consideration.

Such mangling of the language is a frequent feature of the misguided liberal project of human perfection, as John Marsh’s compact and highly concentrated history of the idea makes clear. I doubt if Marsh would claim to be a great original thinker but the breadth of his reading in every aspect of his subject is impressive. He is particularly adept at finding quotations which catch those one thinks of as clothed in the most impeccable liberal attire, from Trevor Phillips to Joan Bakewell to Rowan Williams, in a momentary state of *deshabille* as the impossible ideals of the philosophy they espouse come face to face with reality.

Though crediting liberalism with undoing some injustices in society in the middle of the last century, Marsh pinpoints ten delusions in answering the question he poses at the outset: ‘Is western society based on a mistake?’ Sadly, it is not a mistake which seems likely to be rectified soon. Marsh provides much evidence of the success of the ‘long march through the institutions’ in entrenching liberal ways of thinking in every aspect of our public life, whichever government is in power. Much attention is paid to the BBC but Marsh could as easily have focussed on academe or the quangocracy or much of the civil service, which, if not openly disruptive of conservative policies, is not unduly upset if they fail. Perhaps the most salutary effect of this book, at a time when Margaret Thatcher is so much in our minds, is to remind of us of what happens, when making public appointments, if one does not ask her famous question: ‘Is he one of us?’

It is a sad and unintended irony that such an excellent book which says so much about declining standards should itself be an example of rock bottom standards in not to have been proof read at all.

Brian Easty

Love Charm of Bombs, Restless Lives in the Second World War, Lara Feigel, Bloomsbury, 2013, £25.

Many people have observed how danger heightens sensibilities, particularly sexual passion. This was certainly true of the Blitz. Hasty marriages took place, for those under arms wanted to leave someone behind if they died. Elizabeth Bowen wrote that ‘Existence during the war had a mythical intensity, heightened for dwellers in cities under attack. War is a prolonged passionate act, and we were involved in it.’ Although Bowen spent much of the war at her family estate in Ireland, her novel *The Heat of the Day* captures the horror of the Blitz experience better than any other. She herself experienced an intense affair, also described in her book. Both she and Graham Greene were ARP Wardens. Henry Green (Yorke) was a fire fighter and Rose Macaulay drove ambulances. The other writer described here was Hilde Spiel who had been a successful novelist in Vienna, but with her husband Peter de Mendelssohn was now a refugee. Her experiences were quite different from the other four who all enjoyed successful literary reputations. Like many other exiles she suffered from the strangeness of a foreign land and the prejudices of unenlightened folk who didn’t understand difficulties about work and living.

Group biographies have become popular but this one suffers from incoherence, for the main protagonists do not meet each other. Except for the first two or three chapters the book isn’t about the bombing or life in the Blitz, and a third of the book describes the writers’ lives in the fifties. The narrative runs around the ideas and lives of a small group of upper class people whose ‘lives are shaped by their experiences in the Second World War and its aftermath,’ but this was true for everyone else. The wonderful Mass Observation survey, *Living through the Blitz*, is not mentioned and one tires a little of the endless ramifications of Greene’s selfish love affairs. Ordinary people wouldn’t have had the time.

Nevertheless there is plenty of interesting material about the writers and their books useful for those unfamiliar with them. Rose Macaulay wrote perhaps her most celebrated book, the *Towers of Trebizond*, in the fifties. Because of the Blitz she had become fascinated with ruins and clambered around the ruins of London, listing the flowers she saw. *The World my Wilderness* is about the ruins of love and set in post-war London.

Merrie Cave

Providence Piety and Power: Biblical government and the modern State, John Petley, Roper Benberthy. 2012, £14.99 pb.

The title of this book might put off potential readers; this is a pity as the subject matter is important. It skims through the development of Socialism from Rousseau through Marxism, Leninism *et al*, spread from Europe through Asia and the Americas. Each revolution installed another bloodstained dictatorship, each hailed as a new dawn of peace and brotherhood, each bringing violence, economic and moral collapse and enslavement of populations to an encephalitic State, in the name of conferring Freedom on the People. Much of the book would be new ground to many young readers, for it recounts the gradual destruction of the main religions, and most particularly Christianity, by Left wing intellectuals.

The weapon first used in the undermining process was revolutionary fervour; then in the last 100 years, the teaching of a doctrine that Socialism is not only a political concept but a moral one and by implication imperative. Socialism is civilisation, the message ran; to be right wing is ignorant and embarrassing. Religions, especially Christianity, are a yoke designed by the rich for control of the poor, and are therefore immoral if they exist at all. Monarchy went out with the ark. The sexual revolution is essential to establishing the full equality of women. The author could have added more about the current use of a more sophisticated method of undermining faith than mere mockery: the implanting of the idea that all religious

ideas are equal: that the Fetish Bong-wa deserves the same consideration as Mohammed or Isaiah or St Peter. This under-cover operation has been the most successful exercise in black propaganda of our times.

What has emerged in the last half-century as the foundation of modern Socialism is not Liberty or Fraternity but Equality, which obviously can never be achieved by raising the roots, only by felling the tops. Petley emphasises the effect this has had in this country not only on religion, but on education, reminding us that the abolition of good schools has in no way raised standards for the poor; it has only lowered them for the aspiring.

Petley was not brought up particularly piously and tells us straightforwardly that what he learned about politics in the last ten years has turned him into an Evangelist. I doubt if many people will risk turning against big Government because they read that God has advised against it. This book contains a lot of information and hard thought, condensed with a practised skill so that it is short, easy to read and never boring. His sources for every statement are meticulously listed in footnotes at the end of each chapter, making them easily accessible. This is a rare luxury in modern books, so I forgive the deplorable typeface and the proliferation of typos. Some readers may be irritated by the number of quotations from the Old Testament, but if so I hope they will read Tim Congdon's excellent preface, grit their teeth and press on.

Penelope Tremayne

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