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The left want to convert Britain to veganism; no meat, no eggs, no animal products whatsoever. Industry is only too eager to assist. Hellman's are already producing egg-free mayonnaise and dairy-free margarine. In many of our biggest restaurants you can order four types of vegan burger along with almond milk and cruelty-free cheese.

There is huge public sympathy for the movement. Vegan food is called 'food with a conscience'. Which means if you refuse to eat your dandelion pie at a vegan dinner party you are a holocaust and climate change denier, a fascist, belong to UKIP and the English Defence League and follow the hounds on foot. You might even be a Sky TV subscriber .

Yet many conservatives are sympathetic to the idea of becoming vegetarians now that 80 per cent of animals are so cruelly slaughtered by Halal butchers. However giving up meat is not enough for the Vegan lobby, a Trotskyist movement intent on food absolutism. Vegans hate vegetarians and have obtained huge financial backing to fund adverts on buses showing a chicken announcing 'Vegetarianism isn't good enough for him, all male chicks are killed at birth.' A picture of a cow demands we ban milk, cheese and butter. Humans can be killed however, few vegans object to abortion.

Which is why becoming a vegan would be no longer be a pleasing eccentricity. You would be joining a far left political movement, intent, like the transgender lobby, on confusing and disorientating the public. No women or men anymore, just an infinitely expanding register of freaks. No choice of food, only that which defines your politics. Uncooked lettuce fronds good, Big Macs, a war crime.

The weirder the diet the further left the politics. 'Clean' eating, stepping off the industrial food chain altogether to become a vegan grazing on 'fresh' vegetables direct from the earth, comes with a set of far left political beliefs – open borders, the commandeering of private homes for immigrants, the seizure of all property by the state and no private schools. But if, like many socialists, you are a home-owner yourself with children at private school, does clean eating put you in an awkward position? No, think of Diane Abbot and eat up. It's the gesture not the belief that's important. Once the media cameras are turned elsewhere you can step down to the local MacDonald's without fear.

The food industry has had it coming. For years its factory farms, fertilisers sprayed by helicopter gunships, testosterone-injected chickens and genetically tortured Frankenstein foods, swept all before. Then the public proved sentimental, took against battery farms and began munching muesli. We are entering a winter of puritan eating.

Vegans have set their sights on criminalising the eating of meat. Give it ten years and we will see the first trials of battery farm owners accused of historical cruelty to animals, just as we now have historical sexual abuse trials. As in medieval times – to which we are rapidly regressing – there will be counsel for the dead chickens, porkers, lambs, and Maisie the cow with the court proceedings being suspended as jury members faint at the sight of an early 21st century butcher's window.

There will be resistance, the smell of meat is in our genes. We can expect flying right wing dinner parties, hunted by vegan patrols, with the consumption of bloody steaks in cellars, Polish sausage (no to Syrian Immigrants) Hungarian Tokay (mined borders) and toasts to the memory of 'Trump over the Water' (assassinated by a radical Vegan in 2021). But they will soon become a memory as animals are given a subsection under the Human (and non Human) Rights Act 2025 EU Reg 567/nc4. (We will be back in 2019)

Will the mid 21st century ever see a meat pie, a plate of cod and chips, or a Big Mac again? I am afraid not. It's dandelion pie for ever.

But M'lord. 'What about the rights of dandelions?'

England's Suicide

Paul Weston

The Grenfell Tower tragedy seems to have quietly slipped into Britain's historical past. The immediate aftermath certainly excited many scribblers within the liberal media, but as some of the issues raised were hugely embarrassing to both the government and the BBC, so the Grenfell inferno was consigned to Orwell's Memory Hole.

One of the main embarrassments was the inability of the establishment to actually establish how many poor unfortunates had died and how many had survived. This was because large numbers of the Grenfell inhabitants were ethnic minorities of dubious paperwork. Some were legal migrants, some illegal. Many were unknown to the authorities despite being in receipt of government welfare. The numbers of inhabitants seemed markedly out of proportion to the number of flats. Flats were let and sub-let and then sub-sub-let before falling off the state radar and entering such murky depths as only to be detected by sonar.

"I was so pleased to get a place on this BBC graduate training scheme."

Grenfell Tower, in point of fact, serves as a microcosm of modern, progressive Britain with regard to controlled immigration and controlled welfare. By which I mean there is no control at all. If the British state is unable to track the state-financed inhabitants of a single building, how on earth can it track the gargantuan numbers of people entering porous Britain? The answer of course is it cannot, and it really is high time we stopped believing a single thing the government tells us about migrant numbers and national population figures.

Social housing has become a huge issue for our politicians, albeit for quite the wrong reasons. We need more and more subsidised housing we are told, in order to satisfy the demand of a cheerfully ever-expanding population. This sounds quite healthy from a demographic point of view, until one discovers the native British constitute a rapidly declining population whilst the migrant population is exponentially exploding.

This disastrous demographic disparity is clearly visible in London, where according to Migration Watch the majority of children born are the progeny of foreign born parents. This ethnic minority majority becomes even larger when the number of children born to first and second generation immigrants is factored in.

One inevitable consequence of the rise in foreign numbers is the inevitable demand they subsequently make on the long suffering native British tax-payer. We are told immigration is a cultural and economic boon to frowsty, pale old England, but this is a lie easily evidenced in the clamour by foreigners for subsidised housing. According to the Muslim Council of Britain almost one third of British Muslims live in social housing and it is the Muslim community which is growing far faster than any other migrant demographic.

Perversely, even as the numbers seeking social housing increased by 60 per cent since 1997, the number of social housing units actually declined by half a million between 1997-2007 and has since declined even further. The higher percentages of ethnic groups seeking social housing are as follows: Nigerians 29 per cent, Bangladeshis 41 per cent and Somalians 80 per cent. Needless to say, all these groups represent high unemployment statistics and average at least four children per couple.

The government predicts Britain will have to build five million new homes over the next two decades in order to house newly arrived migrants and the children of historical migrants. They don't couch it in quite

those terms of course, but that is what it amounts to. All the new build houses you see going up in rural areas are not for immigrants *per se*, but they are for native Brits fleeing the multicultural cities, after which their houses and flats are then taken over by new arrivals from Somalia and Eritrea.

London is a most peculiar place these days, home to the global rich and the third world poor, but no longer home to many native British blue or white collar workers, unless they had the good fortune to buy a property before the insane price rise frenzy made England's capital city off limits to England's young. And whilst London is the most extreme example of an ever growing housing demand and supply issue, much of the rest of the country is following suit.

Here we come to the crux of this article, which is – as it so often is in my depressing ramblings – about the end of Western civilisation. But how can housing or social housing possibly exacerbate the fall of the West I hear you cry! Well, here's how: In 1997 Tony Blair opened Britain's doors to the world's poor, and in they jolly well came. But Tony neglected to build more social housing in which to ensconce them, thus manufacturing a screeching demand on the one hand whilst simultaneously failing to satisfy it on the other.

Clever Tony knew exactly what would happen, and proceeded to buy as many houses as he possibly could, safe in the knowledge the prices could only go one way, which they duly did. Between 1997 and 2017 house prices tripled. This is where the ubiquitous end of Western civilisation comes into play. Over the last fifteen years, home ownership fell from 60 per cent to 35 per cent among 25-34 year-olds – the key childbearing demographic.

No responsible young native adults want to think about starting a family before they can securely house them. And as they could not afford to buy a house they delayed procreation, but the longer they delayed procreation the faster and higher and dizzier rose the house prices until finally they disappeared over the financial horizon along with the non-existent pitter patter of tiny feet within non-existent walls.

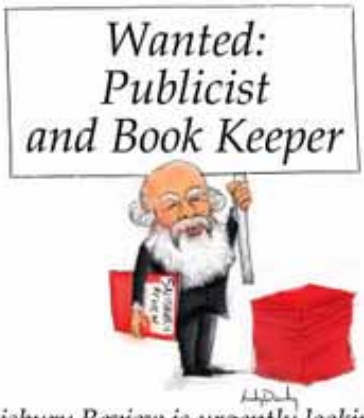
This is not to say there is a dearth of pitter pattering tiny feet in Britain. Quite the opposite is the case. The pitter pattering has now swelled to an ominous rumble in the multicultural cities; a rumble even the most half-witted of half-witted rural liberals has starting to notice.

We find ourselves in a catastrophic dilemma. We have, at great expense as a country, gifted properties to poor people from the third world whose main qualification for subsidised housing is based entirely on their possession of minimal saleable skills coupled with at least four children – thus leap-frogging their way to the front of the social housing queue.

And while they remorselessly advance demographically, our young native generation, who should in turn be providing Britain's next generation, find themselves too poor and too exhausted to do so, working all the hours God sent in order to pay their rent and taxes – taxes which are then spent on housing, feeding, educating and medicaiding foreigners who are having children. Lots and lots of children. Huge numbers of children, many of whom will grow up with little appreciation of their good fortune and will quite probably harbour a certain antipathy toward the infidels and kafirs whose hard work, sacrifice and altruism will merit scant thanks or appreciation by the New British as they contemplate the dawning of the Anglo-Caliphate.

What strange times we live in. Perhaps they are Epochal End Times, but this is something we have yet to find out. All we can do today is to highlight the absolute insanity in encouraging our childless native adults to flog themselves near to death in order to pay for the housing and children of an imported demographic which regards this country with envious eyes and slowly and surely draw their plans against us.

Paul Weston is founder and chairman of Liberty GB, a political party set up to counter the destructive ideologies of the Left and Islam. His articles are archived at http://gatesofvienna.net/authors/paul-weston and his website is: https://libertygb.org.uk



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Coming Out as a Tory Teacher

Jane Kelly

Everyone has their views on Brexit but Secondary teacher Calvin Robinson was surprised to see the referendum result treated by his school as a national catastrophe. Notices went up saying, 'We are all unhappy about this. If you need to talk about it come to the Chapel.'

'It was as if they required pastoral care to deal with it,' he says. 'Some children wanted us to leave the EU but they kept quiet in case they were chastised by the teachers. One pulled me aside the day after the result said, 'We are all upset so don't mention it in front of staff or students bearing in mind we have a lot of European children here.'

This was not the first time Calvin had rubbed up against the ethos of British schools.

'I 'came out' as a Tory before the 2015 election,' he told me this week. 'When I confessed my politics to other teachers I was met with hostility. There are so few Conservative teachers, I felt very isolated and oppressed.'

Despite his political allegiances he remains a successful teacher, Head of computer science at St Mary's & St John's C of E School in Hendon, London. His smiling face and recherché Afro hairstyle is now on show to millions on posters, newspaper advertisements and internet promotions as part of the Department for Education's 'I Chose To Teach' drive to recruit more teachers.

'The ad agency reached out at the end of March,' he said. 'I can't remember if it was a phone-call or a tweet, but they asked me to email them back if I was interested. They were looking for six young teachers who love what they do and want to share their early experiences in the profession.'

'There is a desperate shortage of teachers because state schools can't compete with the private sector. Now that all teachers have to be graduates they head off to Goldman Sachs instead.'

He thinks this lack of teachers is connected to a disastrous lack of skills. 'I was in industry for seven years in computer science,' he says. 'I saw how we outsourced everything we did to East Europe and Asia. That is wrong. We should have the skills here. When local talent did come along they often lacked knowledge and basic skills. The new National Curriculum introduced computer science, which includes coding and developing soft-ware, but they don't have anyone to teach it.'

After a phone interview and a Skype session he was chosen for the campaign at the end of April.

'I ticked a certain box of course,' he says, 'being mixed race. They wanted representatives of each ethnic group, including a Northerner.'

They can hardly have been prepared for his views about the current teaching profession. Three years ago he got a bursary to become a teacher, determined to increase his students' skills, then discovered that his main challenge was not going to be his ability in the classroom, but expressing his political views in the staff-room.

'After I "came out" as a Tory,' he says, 'people would say to me, "how can you vote Tory when they are destroying education?" But Michael Gove started to tackle the digital skills deficit and he is the only education secretary to take on the teachers' unions. They have forgotten that they are there to support teachers rather than undermine the government.'

He was deeply worried by the effect of left wing indoctrination on the children he was teaching. On the Conservatives For Liberty website, he wrote that schools were training kids, 'Into a lefty way of thinking... from a very young age...pretty much throughout their entire educational career, young people are being trained into a lefty way of thinking. I've seen this first hand on too many occasions and it leaves me constantly concerned.'

Even in supposedly 'open' debates he says he saw questions always coming from a left leaning stance. Twelve year olds were presented with, 'Should Israel exist?' He went on a trip with his school class to political hustings during the London mayoral election, an outing organised by Citizens UK, a left wing group which calls for 'Citizen powered action across the UK'.

Supported by the Institute of Education, it has just joined forces with NASUWT, a teaching union with 300,000 members, to accredit schools which have welcomed the most refugees. It has recently also launched a 'Refugee Awareness Plan' for schools.

'Most of the children assumed that everything they were told that day was the truth,' he says. 'But it was totally biased towards Sadiq Khan's agenda. One student was uncertain about it and spoke to me privately. He'd also been worried by our left leaning assemblies.'

He is disgusted by what he sees as a basic lack of tolerance in the politics of most teachers. 'I'm not talking about the obvious party political biases of Labour = Good,

Tory = Evil', he says, 'although that does happen. But most teachers take a less obvious approach along the lines of tolerance being a good thing, so long as you agree with their way of thinking.'

'Many British people seem obsessed by tolerance, but they don't really understand what it means. In my first school I was shocked to find all the food in the canteen was Halal even though Muslim children there were in the minority. The 'full English' had no bacon and no sausage, and it wasn't a Muslim school. I saw a teacher beating herself up because she had offered a child some cake during Ramadan. For me tolerance is about accepting others but doesn't mean a wholesale taking on of their views.'

He says the kind of indoctrination he saw is now 'systematic'. 'Heads are writing letters against the government. I've seen children out protesting with their teachers. Schools are part of the public sector ethos and I don't know how we can separate them. They are about hatred for anything right of centre, there is the assumption that only Left-wing people care. You can only teach if you subscribe to one set of beliefs.'

Due to this intolerance he resigned from one of the first jobs he held in west London. 'I nearly quit teaching,' he says, but he was offered a temporary job at St Marylebone School which he calls, 'A truly tolerant school.'

'I loved it there as there was a proper learning environment,' he says. 'Children turned up ready to learn.'

He still attends an Anglican church nearby and is comfortable and successful in his present job where the head is supportive. But it is surprising that he has survived the animosity of the British school staff room thus far. Just as being mixed race might have helped him get the promotional contract, he admits it might also have constrained his oppressors. At least it often made them patronising rather than aggressive.

'They had to be a bit careful,' he says. 'But as a BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) they also thought they could help me. Corbyn says he will, "Unlock the talents of the ethnic minorities," but I will unlock my own talents, thank you.'

He was born and brought up in Mansfield, east Midlands, and attended a comprehensive. He has a white mother and black British father who left when he was two.

'As a mixed race boy I felt I lacked role models,' he says echoing what many in the black community say, usually as an excuse for failure. But there is no self-pity in Calvin.

'I was a geeky boy,' he says, 'the only BME in my school and I was bullied for being, "a Paki" by white working class lads who were very ignorant. I didn't fit in at all. The teachers said I wouldn't pass my GCSE's. They assumed I was stupid. They did focus on me, but in the wrong way, with low expectations. I did well in my exams and I left school at sixteen as soon as I could to go to college.'

After A Levels he got a BTEC National Diploma in multi-media and an Honours Degree in Computer Science from Westminster University. His sister now works in Buckingham Palace, while a half sister has a Masters in Psychology.

Being a bright, ambitious 'BME' has given him an astringent view of British life. 'I grew up with a Mum who had to do two jobs to support us, while her friends were getting more on benefits. I saw that there was something wrong with the system; if she had stayed at home on benefits I dread to think what my life would have been like.

'She started out as a nursery nurse and ended up a lecturer. I believe in hard work, a hand up not a hand out. British people used to be known as hard working and polite. We dropped our standards somehow, but if you raise expectations people will live up to them.

He sees his role as teacher as crucial for changing attitudes towards work and politics. 'Academia used to be about thinking,' he says. 'We need to take that back, forget about safe-spaces and drop the fear of giving offence. I want to be the kind of teacher I never had in Mansfield.'

In July the Government announced it plans to spend £10 million on hiring 600 hundred foreign teachers, due to arrive in September 2018. Many of them are likely to have conservative, traditional ideas about teaching. Perhaps Calvin Robinson will feel more comfortable in their company, but aged 31, it's likely that he will leave the profession before then, for politics.

He is youth officer for Hampstead and Kilburn Conservatives. He founded 'Conservative Friends of the Caribbean,' to get more members of the Afro-Caribbean community interested in the Conservatives, and he is also part of 'Conservative Way Forward,' a group dedicated to the ideas of Margaret Thatcher. It espouses small government, strong civil liberties and independence both individual and national.

'In teaching you can help thirty people,' he says. 'But if I get the opportunity I will go to Parliament to try to change things. We need teachers and MPs who have had proper jobs in the real world to be truly representative.'

Jane Kelly was a celebrity interviewer for the Daily Mail.

Down Mexico Way

Jay Treiber

In March of 2010 a southern-Arizona rancher named Robert Krentz was shot to death by a suspect presumed to be an undocumented immigrant. Though the perpetrator fled back to Mexico and was never caught, evidence would have it that the killer in the remote San Bernardino Valley of southern Arizona had perhaps feigned distress in order to lure Krentz and his dog into a trap. Robert Krentz was shot multiple times. His dog was killed a few seconds later, probably trying to protect its fallen master.

This heartbreaking story made national news and reignited an ongoing debate over illegal immigration, an issue on fire for years, unresolved then as it is now. The porous nature of the United States' southern border is inarguable. Thousands of people cross illegally from Mexico every week, and our border enforcement agencies purportedly catch only a small per centage of those crossers.

According to one retired Homeland Security Special Agent, 'We called it a good day if we determined we had caught about ten per cent.' The agent points out that traffic 'ebbs and flows, so it's hard to put a solid number on it,' but most border crossers are not apprehended. And so our President, Donald Trump, has inherited a problem handed down through several administrations. Mr Trump promises 'A Wall,' a physical barrier, but for many, like me, who live along the Mexico border, the idea is largely symbolic. We want something done, but it will take more than brick and mortar to do it.

I have lived in southeast Arizona along the Mexico Border most of my life. When I was growing up, border crossers, people looking for honest work, were just part of life here. My family lived in the ranch country a few miles north of Douglas, a copper-smelting town that merges into Agua Prieta. Sonora, I recall many times, as my brother and I worked on our small ranch, watching groups of two to five braceros (workers) walking up to our place from the south. They had crossed from Mexico before daybreak and were visible from our back porch before eight a m. Most often, my brother and I had filled water bottles, and my mother had made sandwiches before they arrived. We also kept close at hand a loaded pistol, rifle, or shotgun. Circumspect was only common sense. Always, these crossers were looking to work. Occasionally, my father hired them to muck corrals, dig fence post holes, or string barbed wire, labor unspeakably hard in the southern-Arizona heat.

That was in the early 1970s. Circumstances are now quite changed. Groups of two to five crossers have now become bands of twenty to fifty people, and not all of them are looking for honest work. 'Since NAFTA and the escalated involvement of the cartels, I've seen the violence increase,' says this special agent, who chooses to remain anonymous. He explains there stood something of 'an honors system' between Customs and commercial trucking. Customs agents who, understandably, could not search every vehicle 'tended to wave them on through. The drug cartels caught on to this quickly.' A large percentage of illegal narcotics are thus smuggled through the port of entry, but much of it is crossed along the more remote corridors of the Border. Along with these braceros are often the mulas, 'mules' or drug runners. What used to be a somewhat amicable relationship between border crossers and the nearby rural Americans has now become fraught, with antipathy.

One of the issues, gone all but ignored by our mainstream news media, is the damage to the environment.

People travelling on foot, and often hundreds of miles on foot, carry many supplies, the most weighty of which is water, the American Southwest's most precious resource. Along with gallons of water, they carry duffles and backpacks stuffed with clothes, and toiletries, and packaged foods. A person can hike even the most remote areas in the Sky Islands (small mountain ranges) of southern Arizona and find entire trash dumps in the stream beds of the Chiricahua or Peloncillo mountain ranges. One comes across discarded reading material, dirty diapers, empty canvas packs, food tins, cracker boxes, all manner of clothing, and always the empty plastic water containers. Not even the most pristine areas of our beautiful Cochise County have gone untouched. Trash discarded by migrants is strewn everywhere.

Property damage is also an issue. According to Garry Bennett, who has ranched forty years in southern Arizona, these large groups of migrants frequently cut fences, punch holes in water pipes, take down holding corrals, and kill livestock and dogs. Open-ranged cattle, horses, and mules are sometimes slaughtered for meat; dogs are shot as they naturally try to protect livestock and property. Bennett says this stands to reason with these larger groups. 'More mouths to feed, more people to get across boundaries.' Bennett claims as well that trash left by illegal crossers is also a hazard to livestock: 'Cattle will sometimes ingest pieces of fabric from clothing or packs or bits of plastic from water bottles. It gets in their gut and kills them.' Many area ranchers lose livestock in this way.

The irony here is striking. Environmentalists cry foul over fracking for natural gas and rolling back regulations of coal mining industries, measures that actually put potentially taxable American citizens to work, but try to find any news story on the negative environmental impact of travelling illegal aliens. This is to say nothing of the illegal contraband and what in essence could be called slave trade. The southern border of the United States is a veritable crime jungle, and it stands as one of the 'Elephants in the Room,' and one of the larger elephants, for our government and the main-stream news media.

Many of the folks who cross from Mexico are desperate, and this makes them vulnerable to evil doers. Crossers often pay thousands to contractors called coyotes. These coyotes accept payment as guides to the land of opportunity. Few, as evidence would have it, are humanitarian philanthropists. They are, as common sense would indicate, opportunists and criminals, at the ready most of the time to exploit any situation. They often rob or betray their clients, leaving them stranded in the desert. Robert McGinty, a former officer for Arizona Department of Corrections, says, 'These coyotes would sometimes point to the lights of the prison' about ten miles north of Douglas, where McGinty worked, 'and claim to these crossers it was Phoenix.' According to McGinty, once these coyotes have been paid, they are looking for the most expedient way possible to rid themselves of their 'clients.' Another former Customs officer claims, very often, these coyotes are tied in with the drug cartels and accept large payments for ushering drug carriers as well as workers across the Border to the US.

Border crossers are most often uneducated and sometimes in dire enough straits that they are quite vulnerable. The criminal element among these illegal crossers is sometimes experienced, though often these are young people in bad situations, desperate enough for the infamous cartel ultimatum: Plata o Plomo, meaning one can be paid in silver or in lead, the contemporary equivalent of Don Corleone's 'An offer you can't refuse.' The Customs officer, who chooses to remain anonymous, explains that large groups of crossers 'are sometimes rounded up at various points either side of the Border. Two or three from a group are picked to mule drugs across. They have no choice. Their lives are at stake.' The practice minimizes risk to the drug lords in Mexico because if the runner is caught, the cartels stand to lose only an unskilled agent and a small amount of product. But only some of those unskilled runners, say thirty per cent at most, are caught. It is a profitable enterprise.

Would the promised 'Wall' stop this? In itself, probably not. Not all of it, at least. 'Show me a ten foot fence, and I will show you an eleven-foot ladder,' as many people are fond of saying. Certainly, a better more impenetrable physical barrier would be a place to start. A wall, however, might prove ineffective in some ways. By definition, one can't see through a wall, and border enforcement agencies can monitor more effectively if they can see through to Mexico, as with a fence. A better fence than the one we have now. The current border fence is plumb to the earth and badly broken down in places. One proposed structure is a double fence, which angles about fifteen degrees to the south, and built with vertical metal slats. The design on paper looks impossible to climb, but I'm sure it can be scaled or tunnelled under as can any such edifice. As the earlier mentioned special agent points out, when a very poor and desperate country stands adjacent to a very rich country, the dispossessed will go to any lengths to cross.

Management of border enforcement is much of the problem. A good part of the Border Patrol's energies are focused on what are often called 'Pinch Points', which are enforced stops along major highways. They are check booths in which every north-bound vehicle must pass, manned by several green-clad border agents who for the most part wave the unsuspicious through with a smile and 'Have a good day.' Certainly, it would be impossible to thoroughly check every vehicle. These check points are often thirty to sixty miles north of the

Border, placed strategically along roadways thought to be the only access north. This practice has proved for the most part ineffective. Many advocates of better enforcement are calling for more 'boots along the Border'. Certainly, common sense would suggest that more manpower closer to the problem would help. Government bureaucracy, however, being what it is, has been caught up in its own sludge for some time now. To find a compromise between Republicans and Democrats in our Congress on some manner of immigration reform feels almost like an impossibility at the moment.

Our Homeland Security agents, the 'boots on the ground,' are hindered by a number of factors. One of those is lack of cooperation from city and state law enforcement. They are often reluctant to carry out 'due diligence' when stopping people for things like routine traffic violations, for example. They sometimes don't take the steps of checking the backgrounds of those they've stopped. The Customs officer reports many are afraid of being accused of discrimination, of being called 'racist' for pulling over anyone of Latino descent. The fear is real, for jobs have been lost, law suits filed, as recent history shows.

'I once processed a guy,' the former Customs officer explains, 'and this perpetrator had used probably twenty different names and dates of birth over the years and had never been caught. And this guy had been indicted on a murder count.' He had been pulled over by a state police officer and cited for not having a driver's license. Tucson, Arizona, about ninety miles north of the border, 'has become basically a sanctuary city,' according to the former officer. If the city's policy is to not cooperate with Homeland Security, criminals, like the one mentioned above, are much more difficult to catch.

Many progressives in this country harbour a dream of comprehensive global socialism, and that agenda is carried forward by many Democrat representatives on The Hill. Much of the mess with our border agencies can be credited to presidential administrations and the long-standing dream by many liberals for an open-border policy. Harboring flagrant double standards and a contempt for the rule of law seems almost integral to the left and its agenda. I am certain many progressives smile and wink at dinner parties: 'Ten per cent get through? I wish they would all get through!' Many are following an impossible egalitarian dream. As laid out by Roger Scruton in his book *Fools, Frauds, and Firebrands: Thinkers of the New Left*, for progressives, like their neo-Marxist predecessors, revolution is the end game; there seems no plan beyond overthrowing the power. 'Let us subvert the "fascist" element and open up the border! Allow everyone through, and we will figure it out from there!'

It is perhaps because of the ambiguity in policy that border enforcement practices have become somewhat opaque. Operatives in the fields and offices of our Border Patrol and Customs agencies well understand this. Homeland security could be more secure, but the policy of a given Presidential administration can make their job all but impossible. Take for example the massive influx of alien children and teenagers crossing the Texas border three years ago. Many of these kids were encouraged to cross by their native Latin American countries as a direct result of the Obama administration's policies. Many knew how to claim asylum, which leaves border officials no choice but to harbour and process them. Field agents were so busy, tangled in this bureaucracy, that few boots were left on the ground to man the Border itself. There weren't enough fingers to plug the holes, and the dam broke.

The above is an extreme example, and the influx of aliens has measurably declined since Donald Trump took office. It is perhaps his position on the Border in itself that has caused would-be crossers to be apprehensive. Still, Google 'Border Crossers' on the internet and one can see videos of groups of migrants casually ducking through holes in our inadequate barrier. It is simply understood by everyone that many get across and are never caught. Any system that lacks transparency is doomed to corruption. The ambiguity, the 'No Man's Land' of border policy over the decades has created a quagmire, a swamp in itself that will be difficult to drain. A structure tantamount to the Great Wall of China is not going to fix it.

We need to stop people from illegally crossing the Border, and our goal, our overt and completely transparent goal should be stopping 100 per cent of those people. Whether we allow more work visas, create cleaner, less bureaucratic pathways to citizenship, re-institute something like The Bracero Program of the 1940s is a separate issue. Fix the leak, clean up the mess first. Then, only then, can we begin to organize an equitable, efficient, and humanitarian means to deal with the desperate and dispossessed who wish to participate in this thing we call America.

Certainly a better physical barrier, according to our President's campaign promise, is a place to start, an initial step in quelling many of those named evils. A good fence is one thing. It will be an expensive and large-scale enterprise, but the real devil will be where you can always find him – in the details.

Jay Treiber, a new contributor to Salisbury Review*, lives and writes in Bisbee, Arizona, 4 miles from the US Mexican border. His novel* Spirit Walk *was published in 2014.*

Adam's Rib

Lindsey Dearnley

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.'

Genesis 2:22

A baby born in Canada, Searyl Atli, has become the world's first 'genderless' child, having its gender marked 'U' for unspecified on the baby's health card instead of male or female. This is not because the baby was born with an intersex condition, but because the mother, Kori Doty, believes that assigning a gender to her baby would be a violation of its rights.

Doty herself claims to be neither female or male and insists others address her not with the pronouns 'He' or 'She', but 'They'. Having read several articles which do precisely this, it becomes clear how unworkable and confusing so-called 'non-binary pronouns' make everyday communication, especially in written form, as does Doty's insistence on being referred to as 'the parent' of Searyl, rather than the mother or father.

'I do not gender my child' the long haired, slightly bearded Doty said in an interview 'It is up to Searyl to decide how they identify when they are old enough to develop their gender identity. I am not going to foreclose their choices based on an arbitrary assignment of gender at birth based on inspection of their genitals.'

So convinced is Doty that state appointed gender is oppression, she even arranged to give birth at a friend's house ensuring no authority was present to declare the child a boy or a girl. As a result, Searyl has yet to be issued with a birth certificate, and although the genderless health card is being hailed as progress by trans and feminist activists, a genderless birth certificate is the real goal.

We have arrived at a very crucial battle over gender – its legal definition, and it is worth examining the radical left's ideology surrounding this issue because a claim that 'state assigned gender is oppression' cannot simply be allowed to colour the public consensus, and creep into the law books without refutation, regardless of the smokescreen accusation of bigotry and transphobia aimed at anybody who dares to challenge them. This is not a trans issue, this issue affects everybody.

A brief look at Doty's website reveals her to be a self described 'non-binary gender queer transperson', a community educator well versed in trans and sexual activism and networked into of wider collective of individuals and organisations who all share the same radical left agenda, namely that of destroying the 'patriarchy' by destroying the systems that support it – gender being one of those supposed impositions.

With the support of the Gender-Free ID Coalition, and others, Doty will be going to court against the Vital Statistics Agency to present her argument that a gender marker violates Searyl's rights as a Canadian citizen. If she wins on the grounds that assigning a gender at birth is an act of discrimination, then surely this would lead to all newborns having their gender removed from Canadian birth certificates. After all, what is oppressive to one must be oppressive to all. Such changes are unlikely to stop at Canada, there are currently numerous international challenges to gendered birth certificates.

What's at stake when gender ceases to be legally definable? Baby Searyl can expect to live in a world where any reference to the physical body as a dimension of their gender will be treated as taboo. If Searyl is a boy, he can expect to have his natural masculinity labelled toxic and shamed for it. If Searyl is a girl she can look forward to a world where any man can simply declare himself a woman and enter female spaces, including changing rooms, toilets , prisons and refuges. She will find herself unable to compete against a stronger sex that masquerades as female one day and switches back to male the next. Not all on the left are happy about this; indeed the feminists who disagree have found themselves labelled with their own pariah name – *terfs* – trans-exclusive radical feminists, who suspect, not without good reason, that the whole trans-

movement, which is 80 percent male with a median age of 42, to be nothing more than a backdoor attempt to do away with them. Many transgender people themselves are unhappy about the challenges to the law, and speak out publicly about what is being pushed in their name.

Ultimately what lies behind these court cases is an attempt deconstruct our traditional understanding of male and female, and replace it with their own gender-studies Frankenstein – the gender spectrum. It is difficult for new comers to this crazy debate to understand how it is that we have arrived at this point, where stating the obvious, that there are only two genders, is seen as bigoted and oppressive. Their reasoning goes something like this:

The conventional concept of the Gender Binary recognises two genders only – male and female based on a person's biology. The opponents of this concept take no stock of the weight of science behind this because it was created by biased white men. They believe gender is a feeling, and as the gender binary leaves no room for the existence of those who feel they were the born into the wrong gender, it can only mean that the idea of their being only two sexes is not only false but oppressive to those who do not identify as either sex.

The Gender Spectrum, on the other hand, treats gender as a sliding scale of ideas and feelings about oneself, and elevates the innate feeling of gender above that of physical reality. Even more conversely recognises that some people are also 'gender fluid' in that they may feel feminine one day, and masculine the next.

But far more destructive than the legal implications, is the loss of truth from the world. A scientific truth that says there are only two genders, that biology strongly correlates to ones innate feeling of gender in 98 per cent of the population, and that we live in a gendered world which we are limited in our attempts to alter.

It also comes with a loss of a kind of spiritual truth. By denying only two genders exist and asserting that gender is a feeling not a fact means the next generation will be unable to experience a healthy relationship with their own bodies. There is a lot at stake here. Children will be raised to regard their own bodies as something subordinate and alterable, objects for the gender surgeon's knife and the genetic engineer's DNA probe. All manner of things will flow from this. In the coming age of human/machine hybrids, we will not know ourselves as human, only an assemblage of parts so we can say with Frankenstein's monster, 'Hateful day when I received life!'

Lindsey Dearnley is a cartoonist, artist and journalist.

The Left's Narcissism

Daniel Frampton

To be accepted into polite society one must generally submit to the artful etiquette that is generally known as 'virtue signalling'. Those people who belong to an older generation might not be familiar with this term. In a sense, they do not have to be. If you find yourself over the age of, say, fifty-five, you should recognise that you have already been written off by your youthful subordinates as a wholly irredeemable, financially solvent, fuddy-duddy with a cottage in the Cotswolds – completely beyond the pale. You probably voted for Brexit too. You are a naughty fellow. Virtue signalling is therefore not for you. You clearly don't care about what people think about you. Actually, this is the entire point of virtue signalling. The old have been spared the presiding millennial misery: the need to think well of yourself.

We must understand that virtue signalling is not so much a matter of expiation as it is a matter of parading one's inherent righteousness for all to see. Since 1968 the young have tended to view themselves as God's elect. Within the bosom of every millennial today beats the heart of a raging Calvinist. Those German princes in the sixteenth century have much to answer for. The Reformation has not entirely run its course, it seems. But now even God is out of the picture. We have been taught by our professors that God is merely a pathology, a figment of an equally imaginary imagination. Not believing in God is now virtuous in itself. So we are simply 'the elect'. This is what makes millennials so insufferable. We nominate ourselves for canonisation. Out goes humility, in comes the #hashtag.

It may be that the greatest snobbery of all is the belief that you have been saved. Today this holier-than-thou verbiage is most obvious on such websites as Facebook and Twitter. Social media allows any person to announce their virtue in any number of politically correct decrees, often employing a hashtag. The hashtag is important here since it is the nail that fixes the note to the door. Martin Luther would have made much use of social media: @MartinLuther95 #grievances. Today the hashtag certainly serves to empower the serially conceited millennial. But virtue

signalling is also subtle. Such conceit must never be admitted to. One must not appear vain. In order to achieve this, you must therefore indicate rather than explicitly declare your fundamental piety. This may be done by singleing out the 'other'. In so doing, your own goodness is contrasted, and thus accentuated, against a backdrop of general Tory ghastliness.

So in one or two sentences you may make some glib commentary on the enemy of the hour. For it is vital that you should tailor your condescension to the contemporary. Vilifying Charles Gordon-Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond, for his opposition to the repeal of the Corn Laws will not have the desired effect. This is 2017. You must appeal to the times. Virtue signalling usually works best when applied in conjunction with the present-day. Again, it is no good going on about how Caligula was a bit of a bad egg. The young are not historically informed. The cut-off point, in terms of knowledge of the past, is usually somewhere around 1939. You may appeal to history, but only so long as it is recent history. In this sense, then, there are the classics. Bashing Thatcher always works. Enoch Powell is a sitting duck. Then there are the more cultural objects of abuse. Avowals of disdain for the *Daily Mail* and *Fox News* go down a treat. Of course, Donald Trump is very much in the right now. George Bush no longer carries the same weight. Nevertheless, so long as you make august protestations about how awful so-and-so is you will be fine. You will have established that you are not an awful so-and-so, which is what this is really all about.

Jacob Rees-Mogg for Prime Minister

Since signallers believe that they inhabit a world that is essentially fallen, where we are always one right-of-centre election victory away from *Kristallnacht.* They generally take the position that everyone else is guilty until proven innocent; you absolutely must demonstrate that you are not sexist, racist, homophobic, Islamophobic or anything else that has even the slightest chance of skewering the sacred cow of equality and diversity, and of course, universal niceness. This is obviously exhausting; having to litter any statement with a relentless sequence of caveats forestalling any charge that you are in any way deficient in virtue. This makes for a great deal of throat clearing. There is no escape from this for the millennial. And since a millennial still has much of their life to live, and of course a social circle to maintain, they must either genuflect or prepare themselves for a world of woe.

I cannot think of anything more morbid than a culture that is absolutely determined to think well of itself. This is the underlying motivation of virtue signalling. It is vanity, it is all vanity. And the problem is that such vapid protestations, as well as condemnations, are really too much about the signaller and not enough about the subject itself. We are all prone to vanity in its myriad forms, it is true, but never has such self-regard been so prominent as a means of social and political pontification. In a world where social justice has joined with social media in a sort of unholy alliance, where the slightest ideological indiscretion so often results in an electronic mob baying for some poor soul's blood, it is perhaps not so surprising that society now seems divided between the signallers and those who simply do their damnedest to keep quiet.

There is, indeed, a culture of intimidation at the heart of modern society that enforces an identifiably Leftist set of opinions. Stray but a little from the narrow confines of accepted orthodoxy – the orthodoxy of the BBC, the *Guardian* and the faculty lounge – and one is liable to receive some form of censure. The 2015

'controversy' surrounding Sir Tim Hunt's remarks about female scientists, and his subsequent treatment by a howling, hashtag-wielding horde of keyboard warriors, is a key case in point. Twitter rebounded with images of female scientists accompanied by the hashtag #distractinglysexy; in fact, many of these scientists were actually quite sexy. Nevertheless, what happened to Sir Tim Hunt was, and indeed remains, disturbing. The aftermath very much resembled the plot of Milan Kundera's 1967 novel *The Joke*, when Ludvik, also a scientist, makes an ill-advised joke about the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. His life is ruined. Now it is of course true that free-thinking has traditionally been a dangerous occupation. One would like to think, however, that the West has progressed somewhat since Athens murdered Socrates for his lack of piety. Philosophy took notice; we have taken notice, indeed. Virtue signalling is the mark of a society that is fundamentally afraid of betraying a single speck of true feeling. In this sense, vanity and fear now work in tandem to dismantle the Western ethic of free speech that is the bedrock of philosophy.

It is worth remembering the Christ was crucified for bearing 'witness unto truth'. Indeed, it might be said that Christ was killed by the human condition. That condition is laid bare for all to see, to an astonishingly direct degree, in a painting housed in the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent. That painting is 'Christ Carrying the Cross', a work bearing the hallmarks of a follower of Hieronymus Bosch. Here Christ remains curiously serene at the centre of an unsightly, jeering mob. It is a reminder that if we are to endure the throng and 'bear witness' we must learn to remain serene and in doing so transcend the ugly truth of the human condition that we must all ultimately combat.

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'A Night Discharged of all Care'

Michael Warren Davies

Last Thursday, it being a cool and slightly drizzly afternoon – the best kind for walking – I decided to go for a little march around town. There's nowhere in the world quite as lovely as Boston's Back Bay. The uneven red brick sidewalks that invariably cause one to trip every block or so… The badly-laid cobblestone streets, which must have knocked over more stagecoaches than Black Bart… The cosy breakfast nooks, antique shops, art galleries, chocolatiers… It's like stepping into an idyll of 19th century America, which is why all of Boston's elite liberals live there.

Well! I was enjoying my walk, musing innocently about God or something, when a young woman turned up a side-street and came charging toward me, her face wholly obstructed by a bright pink iPhone. I decided to do a conduct a little experiment: I would keep straight on and see how long it took for her to notice. The short of it is, she didn't; eventually we crashed into each other. The young woman looked up at me with horror and awe, as though I'd appeared Mephistophelistically from the earth beneath her feet.

The incident put me in a more pensive mood. We have now spent the better part of two years talking about Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Theresa May, and Jeremy Corbyn. We're told by the media that – through no fault of their own, of course – the Left and Right have never been more hostile toward one another. Yet I think we could all agree that there should be more breakfast nooks emptying into red-brick sidewalks and fewer girls charging down them with iPhones covering their eyes. What's more, I'd wager the population of our major cities would be happier by a thousandfold because of it. I bet it would make them happier than any wall Mr Trump might build, or any railway Mr Corbyn might nationalise.

My mind began fluttering rapidly from one grievance against modernity to the next. Ford Fiestas, Shawn Mendes, *The Big Bang Theory*, Tinder, adult colouring-books, Ikea, people who say 'lol' out loud… Why do we tolerate these things? Why do we spend our lives walking down ugly streets and past ugly buildings, making wilfully stupid small-talk with wilfully stupid people? Even if we didn't spend our dinners trapped behind our phones, there's always loud music to drown out conversation. People spend hundreds of dollars on ripped jeans, designer t-shirts, hoodies, and sneakers; it's not actually more cost-effective to dress badly than it is to dress well. William F. Buckley once said, 'Life can't be all bad when, for ten dollars, you can buy all the Beethoven sonatas and listen to them for ten years.' Well, now they're 100 per cent free, and (pending Y3K) will be available forever. Yet people still don't listen to them.

Now, you don't need me to tell you that social conservatism in its cruder form has lost all its political capital. Take the most obvious and least pleasant example: same-sex marriage. As expected, Mrs May didn't reverse David Cameron's aggressively Leftist approach to the issue. And Mr Trump, a lifelong Democrat, acquiesced graciously to the Supreme Court's ruling on *Obergefell vs Hodges*. I was shocked in 2012 to read that Peter Hitchens was henceforth refusing to participate in any gay-themed discussions. How lost must a cause be if that great champion of British Leyland abandons it?

But this really only a case of bad marketing. When folks think of 'social conservatives', they think of clean-shaven, melanin-deficient Anjem Choudarys. It seems to them a miserable, arbitrary, and irrational doctrine – a shameless neo-Puritanism, no more feasible in 2017 than Jacobism. (Alas.) Nothing, as we've seen, could be further from the truth. True social conservatism – what's more often called *traditionalism* – can be summed up neatly in J S Mill's unusually sensible quip: 'It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied.' Or, in the vernacular: 'Life's too short to waste on a planet that's ugly and crass and trivial and lonely.'

The fact of the matter is, virtuous people are happier than un-virtuous people. Those who don't abuse drugs have better health than those that do. People who watch pornography find it more difficult to enter into and sustain real-life relationships. And it hardly needs saying why people who practice temperance – in eating, drinking, gambling, shopping, etc – enjoy life more than those who don't. Even something as trivial as keeping a reasonable bedtime has been proven to make one less irritable and negative. Calling it 'common sense' is an overstatement.

Naturally, in this free and democratic utopia of ours, everyone is free to be shallow and peevish if they choose. Most of us do just that. But there's no point pretending that both 'lifestyle choices' – the wholesome and the unwholesome – are equally valid. They're not. It's just objectively untrue.

Aesthetic beauty, too, is crucial to one's wellbeing. A *Sunday Times* survey taken in March shows that, of the 20 places in Britain voted the best in which to live, the outstanding feature of them all is a preponderance of Georgian architecture. Classical music is known to stimulate brain activity, with measurable differences between one composer and the next. (Mozart apparently makes you cleverer than Beethoven, presumably because Mozart was a punctilious nong (a foolish or stupid person) and Beethoven a windswept sex-god.) And, according to a study conducted by California State University – that bastion of High Toryism – 'putting on formal clothes makes us feel powerful, and that changes the basic way we see the world,' as well as bolstering our abstract processing.

So people who surround themselves with beauty are happier, smarter, and more self-assured than those who wallow in physical and intellectual squalor. Again, it's not a question of which lifestyle is right and which wrong. We already know the answer to that, and we have the data to prove it. It's only a question of which you, the individual, choose. Simply put, there's not one good reason to throw off traditional mores – except, of course, a total unwillingness to delay gratification.

While I could never officially endorse such a notion, methinks a government devoted to breaking our addiction to cultural refuse would be a smash hit. Just imagine: a country where men could be pilloried for appearing in public without a necktie, and all music more lowbrow than *The Magic Flute* is completely banned. A modest tax increase pays to erect facades, Georgian or earlier, over every building erected after Armistice Day. All cordless phones are heaped in a pile and burnt. Folks might be grumpy at first, but after a year or so they'd surely say, 'Why did we ever choose to live otherwise?'

Of course, that is not actionable, especially from a conservative standpoint. For one, it would be a grossly hypocritical. Lord Hailsham said rightly that liberty is secured by 'the diffusion of power, the splitting up of political and legal powers into different parcels.' Still, the Right has become far too myopic about liberty. We are so terrified of Cultural Marxism that we've fallen back on the ethos of 19th century liberalism: do as thou wilt. Our best hope now (we reason) is to stave off public floggings for straight white males and hold income-tax rates below 90 per cent. We probably can't reverse the Cultural Revolution, but we might be able to keep its death-squads out of our homes. This is why you saw American conservatives becoming even more deranged over the so-called Alt-Right than the Left.

Which is fascinating, in a morbid kind of way. I can't tell you how many young traditionalists I've met who complain that they can't land a job in right-wing politics or journalism because they are too hung up on things like Western civilization, Christendom, the natural family, the monarchy, etc. Industry veterans don't want to hire twenty- and thirty-somethings that agree with them too closely or share too many of their values. Come to think, all of my *Spectator* articles inevitably draw comments from some wrinkled, grey-haired oldie complaining that I'm too right-wing for modern 'yufs'. I'm twenty-three!

I remember reading about a hoaxer who submitted *Pride and Prejudice* to a publisher under his own name to see if they would recognise the text. Not only

they didn't but the publisher rejected the manuscript. Likewise, I'm not sure Sir Roger Scruton could get a job as a sub-editor at *The Telegraph* if he were a recent uni grad.

There could be a large, vigorous traditionalist movement among under-40s if only the over-40s would let us build one. My generation knows better than any how intolerably empty our lives are becoming. We know the values, culture, and mores we inherited from our parents are all duds. We want what our grandparents had: self-respect, a 'till-death spouse, well-mannered children, a quiet neighbourhood, a cosy church, a steady if unglamorous career, a modest library, a bit of art, a little good music, and decent men in public office. 'True wisdom joined with simpleness; The night discharged of all care,' as the Earl of Surrey put it. Once they have seen the alternative, who wouldn't?

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The Six Day War – Fifty Years On

Christie Davies

It is now fifty years since the Israelis spectacularly defeated the armies of Egypt and its Arab allies in less than a week's fighting. The Israelis drove the Egyptians out of Sinai and reached the banks of the Suez Canal. They expelled the Syrians from the strategically important Golan Heights and occupied the West Bank that had been ruled by Jordan. They took control of the whole of Jerusalem. It happened so quickly that the promised Arab reinforcements from Iraq and warplanes from Algeria never made it to the battlefield.

I can still remember vividly how fearful my Jewish colleagues had been in the weeks leading up to the war when Arab leaders shouted into microphones and their mob followers howled in response that they were going to drive the Jews into the sea. The Arabs compared Israel to the ancient crusader kingdoms that had crumbled under Muslim pressure centuries before, leaving only ruined castles behind. Some of my Jewish colleagues were the children of those who had had to flee here from continental Europe to escape the Nazis and they dreaded another round of genocide. In Britain at that time they were safe but it was unbearable for them to think that Israel, their last refuge in the face of danger, might be eliminated. Except for a few old Arab hands and Third Worldist lefties the British people feared for the Israelis.

My purpose here is not to explain why the Israelis won but why the Arabs lost, and lost in such a total and humiliating way, even though they had more men, more tanks and more combat aircraft. Much of their brand new kit had been provided by their Soviet backers. Facing destruction the Israelis felt able to make the first strike and they destroyed the Egyptian air force on the ground. Those who are desperate know that the real high ground is more important than the moral high ground. But why did the Egyptians in particular recklessly provoke the encircled and beleaguered Israelis into striking first?

After their defeat by the Israelis at the time of the Suez war in 1956 the Egyptians had had to scale back the size of their forces in Sinai and UNEF peacekeepers were stationed there. The Israelis were also now able to send ships up the Gulf of Aqaba to their Red Sea port of Eilat, which was important given that their main source of oil was a Persia then ruled by the Shah. But now the belligerent Egyptian dictator, Nasser, unilaterally reversed the concessions he had been forced to make several years before. The UN had to leave and Nasser blockaded the strait of Tiran cutting off Israel's access to the Red Sea. It was a threatening gesture that he knew would alarm the Israelis to the point of war, particularly since he had also been allowing and encouraging and assisting armed incursions into Israel by Palestinian militants from the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip. The people of Gaza were treated abominably by Nasser. They were poor and unemployed, lacked citizenship and could not visit Cairo to find work. Their sole purpose for Nasser was as a pretext for renewing hostilities with Israel much as the Sudetenlanders had been for Hitler.

Nasser may well not have cared whether the Israelis went to war or not. If the Israelis did nothing despite being blockaded and threatened, it would have been

a propaganda victory for him confirming that he was the great charismatic leader of the Arab world with gleaming teeth whom nobody dared defy. If the Israelis did attack first, he was sure that he could defeat them easily and that since he was the one who had been attacked, no one would come to Israel's rescue. He had now trapped himself into a position where he could not back off because he had raised the expectations of the mob, both in Egypt and in other Arab countries, so high that retreat would mean downfall, something that had recently forced the otherwise cautious King Hussein to align himself with Egypt.

This was, of course, the great era of the post-colonial Third World buffoons, notably Nasser in Egypt, Nkrumah in Ghana and Sukarno in Indonesia. Nkrumah and Sukarno had wrecked their country's economy and ruined the lives of ordinary people; in compensation the latter were offered rallies and a wild rhetoric of anti-western unity – pan-Arabism, united Africa and the 'New Emerging Forces'. It was a good way of hiding local failure. The sons asked for bread and were given stones to throw at imagined enemies. These governments were in many respects similar to the fascist regimes of Mussolini in Italy and Juan Domingo Peron in Argentina, but no one was willing to point this out because these latter day buffoons happened not to be white. Each of them had absurd grandiose ideas about the power and importance of their own impoverished country and of their ability to manipulate international consortia of the like-minded. But all this was concealed from the mob who could be relied on to rally to the man through whom they exercised power over the whole world, despite their inability to exercise power over their own lives. Nasser could not disappoint the mob. They had raised each other up. After his army had marched in triumph through Cairo on its way to Sinai, Nasser had no choice but brinkmanship.

Nasser also believed that if the Israelis did attack he would win an easy victory even though his army had not performed well when intervening in the civil war in the Yemen. Behind his confidence lay an old-style Arab anti-Semitism, the belief that the Jews were an inferior and cowardly race of mere traders and hagglers who could never match the martial ardour of the Muslim Arabs. You would think that after the Arabs' failure to crush Israel in 1948 and the Israeli victories over Egypt in 1956 that he would know better, but he had an immense capacity for self-deception and special pleading. The great Arab sociologist, ibn Khaldūn (1332-1406 AD), had had a similar low opinion of Jewish fighting capacity but he had ascribed it to the fact that at that time the Jews did not have a country of their own. Now they did. It was the Egyptians who lacked morale and cohesion.

Like all armed forces, the Egyptian army was recruited at two levels – officers and enlisted men. The enlisted men were at best barely literate. The officers badly neglected their duty to take care of their men and unlike the Israeli officers, were reluctant to lead from the front. There was no properly organized stratum of NCOs to bridge the gap and, as Kipling reminds us, 'The backbone of the Army is the Non-Commissioned man'. The ordinary Egyptians were under no illusions about their officers, as we can see from the jokes that circulated in Egypt after they had lost the Six Day War, something that Nasser was still trying to deny.

A mother had a baby who could only crawl backwards. She took him to a doctor and said 'What's wrong with my child – he only crawls backwards?' The doctor said 'Nothing's wrong – he'll just become an officer.

Some Egyptian troops were on their way to the Sinai border. A Sa'idi, a man from southern Egypt, is on the train with the men. He keeps asking 'Are we at the border yet?' The others answer 'No, no, not yet'. In a few minutes he asks again 'Are we at the border yet?' Again the men answer 'No, no, not yet'.

Another five minutes pass and he asks again the same question and receives the same reply. The Sa'idi asks every five or ten minutes, many more times, until someone finally says 'Why are you so worried about getting to the border?' The Sa'idi replies

'Because I am going to have to run all the way back.'

The Egyptian radio station Voice of the Arabs spewed out lies and fantasy through the cheap transistor radios that were the sole source of news for the ignorant and illiterate masses, even claiming the destruction of the Israeli air force and that Arab tanks were pouring into Israel. Nasser loyalists marched to the pyramids dancing and chanting to celebrate these imagined victories. As in the Soviet Union truth and reality were only to be found in the forbidden jokes.

The Israelis were and are better educated and trained than their Egyptian counterparts because they do not rely on rote learning, but are able flexibly to adapt and take responsibility. As a young lecturer in the north of England, I found teaching Israeli students exhausting because they would argue and argue and argue. But the real revelation came when a few years after the 1967 war I was called in to be grilled by a committee that was hearing the appeal of an Egyptian, Mohammed G, a man with a degree from Cairo, against his failure in an MA examination. He had failed every single paper. He then came back the following year for a re-sit and failed all over again. On both occasions an external examiner had read his papers and confirmed the results. There were no real grounds for appeal but the procedures

had to be followed and racial-equality lawyers were wheeling in the sky. His argument as he sat there in his circular hat was that he had included exactly the same factual information in his answers as another student who had passed. He was probably telling the truth, but in a respectable university examiners expect far more from a sophisticated answer than crude fact. 'Why then do you think you failed?' we asked him. 'Because one of the examiners, Dr Seymour, was a Jew,' he replied. I pointed out that Dr Seymour had not been involved in marking any of his papers and that anyway he had moved to another university before the re-sits. 'Yes,' said Mr G, 'but Mrs Montague was on the Board.' 'Mrs Montague is a Roman Catholic' I replied. 'Maybe so,' riposted G triumphantly, 'but her husband is a Jew.' I realised that a newer conspiratorial anti-Semitism was alive and well in Egypt. They had quite possibly learned it from the Germans in World War II when not only the Mufti of Jerusalem but also many Egyptian army officers wanted the Nazis to win. This Nazi style anti-Semitism supplemented the traditional Muslim variety and now both were inflamed by defeat.

One of the problems that confronts us today is a consequence not of Egypt's defeat but of Jordan's. The Israelis had pleaded with King Hussein to keep out of the war but he was fearful that if he stayed out, he would be overthrown by the forces of radical Arab nationalism stirred up by Nasser. For all their love of the ancient part of Jerusalem, their holy city, the Israelis had not coveted it before the war, nor had they sought control over Judaea and Samaria, the ancient heartland of the Jews that gets called the West Bank. Deceived all along the line by Nasser who claimed he was winning, Hussein chose to attack Israel, and it was this decision, not the Israeli strike on the Egyptians, that led to the difficulties we face today. Neither the occupation of the West Bank nor the incorporation of old Jerusalem are likely in the long run to prove helpful to the security of the state of Israel.

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From Walden to the Bronx

Mark Mantel

The man with the ruddy beard threw some logs against the chalky hill intent on a tranquil life in a cabin. He was a far-sighted fellow who judged correctly that he would find no better land to plant on. He swiftly built a fence and made room for pastures and took a sturdy wife. But soon the wannabees came, a village formed, and the forest was gentrified. The land was tilled, a schoolhouse was built, and plump merchants rushed back and forth across the dirt streets. The village built its own church and folks lived by the annual cycle of the never-ending seasons.

Many years passed. The village prospered and became a serious-looking town. The largest building at the center was a store that sold animal feed, various staples, and fertiliser if you weren't ashamed to buy it. There was a dreary main street with nothing much to do. The next town over was remote and offered no reason for a sensible person to visit. There was also a graveyard behind the church where sociable souls went if they didn't want to end up beneath a damn patch of their own land, far from everything on earth.

Then the first man died in something resembling peace.

The town carried on for generations. It grew and grew. Still, you couldn't pass anyone without exchanging some pleasantry. Everyone knew what everyone else was doing and why. There was Mr So-and-So going to get his morning shave, no doubt emerging from a drunken sleep. Here was Buddy or Billy buying seeds for his pops. Even an animal couldn't keep an embarrassing ailment or harmless vice private. And if you came to somebody's house, soon a big plate of cold meats would emerge and maybe cakes, and before long it was time for supper.

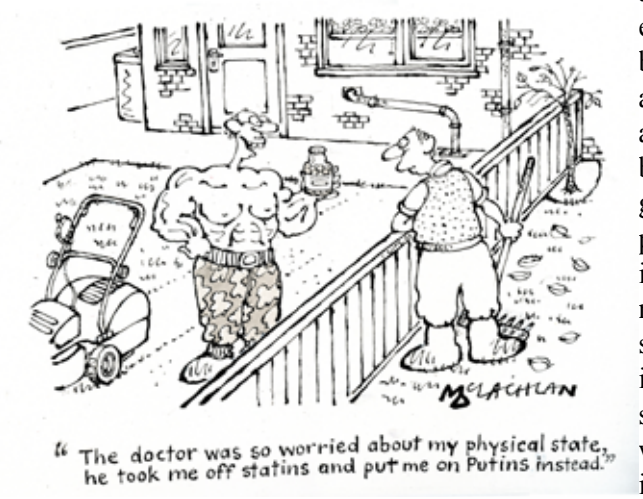
Not everyone was equal in the hubbub of the town. Some people refused to be useful no matter how much you did for them. Others became rich and you had to act a little different with them, tipping your hat and stuff. However, our better-off folks got bored if they kept to themselves too much, since there weren't many of them, so they too would glance around looking for someone to talk to. Even the richest one, this man with lemon-yellow hair, would curtly ask a question or two, if only to pass the time. Sometimes the better citizens would build a park or a wobbly bridge; everyone was expected to remember forever that they did this.

Then the second man came.

He had a drooping mustache and arrived at the outskirts of town. He had mean eyes and was intent on erecting a factory that would build crooked steel

trinkets. He wasn't all bad, and gave the town a lot of useful advice. Still, from the start, his relations with everyone was uneasy. Many farm hands went over to drudge in his shiny factory. And after a while, 40 families depended on him for their bread. He squeezed them tightly, but never enough to get the preacher mad or the town folk gossiping. Wafts of stink drifted over from the factory and everyone who worked there, and everyone who didn't work there, had to smell it. Sharp rackets replaced bird song and you had to pull your earlaps to hear a thing. Everyone started talking louder and louder.

The second man was followed by others and they all made pals but also aimed to outdo each other. Soon, there weren't enough labourers to pack the factories and those that did come grumbled if a little steam blew in their mugs. So, the proprietors gathered their wits and came upon the idea of summoning big bands of yellow and brown labourers who never whined. They heartily praised each other for this exploit, and piously called it freedom of labor. If you didn't like the foreigners, people would hiss and flare and call you rustic and xenophobe. Many people didn't care to be called xenophobe, but everyone was terror-stricken beyond measure to be called rustic.



"The doctor was so worried about my physical state, he took me off statins and put me on Putins instead."

The proprietors also built gardens and orchards for their dainty wives to sit and talk in. The wives conjured up all sorts of funny ideas, since they were bored to their stomachs amid the flowers. They caused the town more trouble than anything because they felt bad to be chattering while the other wives toiled and toiled. They set about ruining all the wives in town so they could be useless and no-good all together. This caused domestic fights in every house that still haven't quit.

Before long, the townsmen too got cleverer and cleverer. With shrewd deliberation, they dealt with delinquent debts, and lawsuits between neighbors were no longer unheard of. All the vices danced and played near the monotonous gray houses were the laborers dwelt. Faces got unfriendlier. In time, a college was built and young people learned to jeer intelligently at the old ways. Some students discovered how pleasant it was to create an artificial melancholy to wallow in and others picked one sector of town to feel sorry about over all the others.

Yet the old life, tied to nature's changes, somehow carried on too. Common memories still passed down from parent to child, though the stories were told with a new ironical look. That was the best way left to tell them. Feasts and wedding were celebrated and the gates to the yards were still unlocked. Recollections of a common past were not entirely lost, but the new brown laborers always had a quick reply when the past was told, since they were back where they came from when all that happened.

More years passed. Businesses changed hands from fathers to sons. But often now a son paid a business-like manager to govern the business, because he found the accounting books too tedious. Sometimes the son wanted to do something altogether different and sometimes he didn't want to do anything at all. The managers, intent to clutch their new positions, incessantly cultivated a shrewd discipline in everyone. Everything became hustle and bustle and it got hard to distinguish a house from an office building. Some people grew exhausted by it all and preferred to be altogether idle. Others adopted to the new conditions, but these shrugged their shoulders if a plan didn't make a speedy profit. Soon there was not any empty space in the town to offer the eye some relief. When a man came home from work, he looked at his children as if he didn't know where they had come from. It was pointless to try and teach the young anything because soon everything would be different anyways.

Since the empty spaces got all filled up it was no use to try and build a shop. There were no farms left even if you could figure out what a farm did. The expansive sort of man no longer had room to stretch his chest. He became embarrassed of himself and made others uneasy too. But the scraggy kind of fellow who could snake though winding streets and hurriedly use his oily fingers got by fine. Only those fragments of the past persisted which did not interfere with commercial aims. Still, so long as workers made it to work on time, they could go to church afterwards, or have a drunken binge, or even kick a cat. When a child entered the world or a grandfather dropped dead, the managers tolerated it, more or less. Profits were steady, laborers and managers heartily cursed each, life went on.

That was when the third man came. He was the bastard son of a factory owner. He did not own a factory, and there was nothing new to build that anyone

needed. He thought long and hard about what to do. He needed to change everything if he was to earn an honest buck. Everything! But he couldn't come out and say it. He resolved to sell people a whole new life. He would sell things no one had heard of. He would search out desires in every sanctuary, every private nook, and even into the recesses of the heart. And he would do it in the name of liberation: Who says a workman can't have pretty boots? Who says no delicacies at Lent? Who says you aren't to shop on Sundays? Who says a woman is to cook in a grease splattered shirt? Who says you are to sit home with your wife? Go! Climb! Eat! Spend! Dance! You are free!

Now, not only the face of the city changes by the minute, but our own faces too. A street comes to an end, is followed by another just like it, and another after that. Yet somehow one never knows what to expect. People do what they like, but you never can guess what it will be, and even they don't know. It's as if all the hidden fonts of personality have dried. You see people chattering, but if the old feelings persist in their secret hearts, they won't say a word about it. A tunneled electrical underworld drifts in cyberspace. But something human remains that won't disperse into the cloud. He combs for it. If he finds it, he's resolved to snatch it. He'll call it liberty to play with our DNA and change men into women then back again to men. Or liberty to connect with data streams through our inner fibers. Or liberty to change into goats. Have your pick.

Mark Mantel is a lawyer in Ricmond, Virginia.

The Left's Grief

Penelope Fawcett Hulme

As presenter of the BBC's Any Questions, David Jacobs once worried that women panellists were not always strong enough to deal with tough debate. He'd seen them sometimes close to tears. What would he have made of Jack Monroe who describes herself on Twitter as, 'Chronicler of things, mother, queer.' On Saturday (July 1st) she managed to sob her way through most of the programme, not due to the debate but because topics raised by the audience in Hungerford filled her with so much emotion.

Asked about the Grenfell fire she was rendered almost inarticulate by grief. When the policy of austerity came up she was barely able to speak she was so choked with anguish, but finally managed to describe it as a policy of wilful murder. Finding language so difficult under her tide of emotion she resorted to adjectives such as, 'crap,' 'bugger,' 'frigging,' and 'bollocks'. Later, on Twitter she said she was puzzled that such words, 'still counts as swearing on Radio 4'.

The BBC and those who think they do are a step behind; she and the audience know that language is now all about feeling and the expression of a demotic consciousness rather than opinion based on facts. To be seen as genuine it must come from the street and sound more like a teenage temper tantrum rather than anything thoughtful or nuanced. Grief in particular, with its inherent rage and sense of bewildered injustice, is no longer something private. It is now a public statement of political intent and its expression now defines our country.

We seem to have two acceptable types of mourning: 'Keep Calm & Carry On,' which although it was used in the war under the emblem of the crown, is now channelled through social media, the virtual infinite public square. It means we will cope in our own way with support from our countless virtual friends. Then there is use of the real Agora, probably constructed from concrete blocks sometimes in the 1970s, home to Argos, Aldi and most appropriately Clintons the purveyor of greetings cards who go by the slogan, 'Life celebrating Life'.

These secular temples are now frequently strewn with sacred offerings of nylon teddies wearing cheerful scarves, fragranced tea lights and balloons.

Linda Woodhead, Professor of the sociology of religion at Lancaster University, spoke on R4 recently about the 'democratisation of grief'. She delighted in it and 'the new place of women and young girls playing a leading role in it'. She seriously calls them 'the ritual leaders,' and believes they are 'expressing our values of love, kindness, solidarity, and celebration of diversity, in a very impressive way'.

Professor Woodhead applauds this new communal grief enacted in 'the public space' as a way of empowering women, the young and minority faiths. Or as she put it, sounding like an educated Max Bygraves; 'It's all about heart. There are hearts everywhere, on signs, balloons, there is a lot of creativity there (in),

the expression of emotion.'

There has been a profound change in the nature of our public mourning. The memorial for the children and adults who died at Aberfan in 1966 took place in a public space, a hillside overlooking the town but the service, led by Christian ministers from all denominations, lasted thirteen minutes and was attended by 12,000 mourners. Other services were held in churches and chapels all over Wales.

The service for the Hillsborough victims in 1989 was in a Cathedral, the Catholic Church in Liverpool still had influence, but at memorials held every year since in the stadium, that most public space, flowers and scarves are left by a million people. Princess Diana's funeral in 1997, after the Royal Family had been forced to bow to popular will and lower the royal standard for her, marked the apogee of the new mass emotionalism. The stiff upper lip and British sense of decorum was gone for ever. As the editor of the *Daily Mail* once said to me in a lift: 'I don't know what's happened to the country I used to know.'

British people still die tragically from accidents and disease, but they are increasingly likely to be murdered by British-born Muslims, communicating through the Internet's private dark spaces. The rise of organised Islamic terrorism has coincided with the rise of grief as a communal mass movement. But this populist mourning is no longer just filling a gap left by religion or a form of entertainment attracting grief tourists, the public response to sudden death and loss is now an adjunct to interest politics; rocking up to lay your flowers at the sight of a massacre now signals other allegiances.

The BBC describes Jack Monroe as a 'journalist and activist'. Her public tears and those of many gathered around the Grenfell Tower may not have been entirely about personal pain but discontent with the government, the nation state and capitalism.

By the time we get to the memorial service for the victims of the London Bridge atrocity this year, the politics is plain; there was a bit of the *Keep Calm & Carry On*, with photos on social media of a lad escaping the attack with his beer intact, but in the non-digital public space of Borough Market, as in Paris, Westminster and Manchester, grief was used to celebrate multi-culturalism, if not open borders. It was all about sharing 'solidarity,' with what or whom is never spelled out, and our values together against 'those who would divide us'. We heard that a lot, yet, as someone said on *Any Questions?*' on Saturday, in a question about Trump asserting 'our values,' 'Britain has no values because so many different cultures live here'.

The church was not central to those recent memorials. It was left to 'curate' the bit of public space left to them. Their job was clearly to help the vast crowd who attended to do what they wanted to do. Faith leaders have become facilitators of emotion, using the event to further a multi-faith agenda. I am stealing that word from the Left.

The services were led by civic leaders, and in Manchester, Tony Walsh, a popular street poet. He read his poem about Manchester:

We make brilliant bands
We make goals that make souls leap from seats in the stands
And we make things from steel
And we make things from cotton
And we make people laugh, take the mick summat rotten
And we make you at home etc etc

The cotton and the steel are long gone and Manchester is famous for violent crime rather than hospitality, but in this world of greeting card affections reality is out of place.

As Professor Woodhead put it, 'The people held the grief. People don't have to ask permission, they are doing it themselves.'

With the church safely dethroned, they are doing it the way she and others on the liberal left like very much; celebrating diversity, the new post-Christian religion of Britain. The Church of England which is also passionate about diversity has decided to join in this public babble, ('narrative' in the new language) and connect with the British public through pink balloons, flowers and condolence card mottos.

They have become part of this labile culture, of thinking without thought and grief without feeling. Any number of issues can now be supported by calls to public emotion; the sad fate of Oscar Wilde, the untimely death of Alan Turing, the ruthless racism of Cecil Rhodes, accusations of rape and abuse against famous men, the sexist language of Donald Trump, preventing long term feminists such as Jenni Murray and Germaine Greer speaking, after they've offended trans-gender people. One of them told me broken heartedly that Murray shouldn't speak because she had created an 'atmosphere in which people were regularly attacked and murdered'.

The righteous are seen grieving and lamenting, those who don't cry hard enough are regarded with suspicion.

Surprisingly though, with the church discarded, there are increasing injunctions to pray. After the Grenfell fire no politician could appear on TV or radio without holding up the discussion while he or she claimed to be praying for the victims and their families. After the London Bridge attack one hospital had a notice up about praying for the victims. Usually the only

religious notices allowed in NHS buildings indicate the way to the Muslim prayer room. Christian chaplaincies have usually been renamed to disguise their faith origin. One where I used to work is now known as 'The Sanctuary'. The name was changed so that it could be used by Muslims.

But this sort of popular praying has nothing to do with going down on your knees and exhorting God or Allah. Dr Bex Lewis, a senior lecturer in marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University, with an interest in how the digital world affects belief, told the BBC recently that some people were disturbed to think the repetition of that word at scenes of public grief might be some kind of order. 'It cannot be an instruction,' she said. She needn't have worried. Professor Linda Woodhead says it no longer means that people believe in God, its ubiquity is 'all about inclusivity,' and that mysterious thing 'solidarity'.

After all the noisy outpouring and wild signalling of communal fellowship, what happens to the people who are actually getting up each day to face the loss of daughter, son, father, leg, arm, speech, eye? After the popular catharsis and the celebration of solidarity are they visited by the public mourners with more balloons and bears, consoled by digital friends? Perhaps their church ministers call round, but that is rare these days as there aren't enough vicars to do such work.

As the Christian idea of the Resurrection and life after death have faded and are no longer taught, genuine grieving must be very hard and lonely these days. It is much more important to be alive and healthy enough to get out into the market place to help 'curate the space'. By doing so you are empowered to declare your allegiances whatever they are, express your anger at perceived injustice, and hold on to the idea of Britain as a nation united by its values, even if those values are different for each individual. If none of that is to your taste, or you feel genuinely incapacitated by grief, better stay in bed, or get on with your work like they did in the old days, well away from the party going on outside. No one knows how to deal with having a miserable face around.

In the condolence book in Manchester an eleven-year-old girl wrote: 'We are together, no one is alone.'

She doesn't yet know it yet, surrounded by balloons and teddies, but in our bitterly divided society where we no longer even have a common language, her words have never been more untrue.

Penelope Fawcett Hulme is a journalist and political commentator.

Hippocrates Spills the Beans

Theodore Dalrymple

When I was about 26 years old, I suffered an illness from which the death rate within five years was between 25 and 50 per cent. I did not know this and did not care to know it, for I have been incurious about my own health all my life: and ignorance in this case was definitely bliss. If I had known it, I might have spent five years (or more) either needlessly or uselessly worrying.

When my mother had cancer at the age of 66, she made me swear I would tell her every last detail of the result of her operation; she wanted nothing hidden from her. After the operation, I spoke to the surgeon whose memory I honour. The prognosis was very bad, an 80 per cent chance of recurrence within a year. I spoke to the surgeon – in those days, it was still assumed that information could be given to the closest relatives, which would nowadays be considered a violation of confidentiality. I told him what my mother had made me swear.

'In my opinion,' said the surgeon, 'your mother is not the kind of woman who would react well to a bad prognosis.'

He was right, and I was impressed that someone, albeit very experienced, should after only a handful of encounters have formed so accurate an impression of a person's character. I told my mother that the surgeon had cut out all the cancer, which was true as far as it went that is, as far as he could see with the naked eye. She asked for no further information, though she must have been perfectly well aware that this was insufficient to furnish a proper prognosis, and she lived another nineteen years.

Has either of us, my mother and I, had access to our notes as a matter of right, we might have been tempted to ask for them, to the detriment of our own well-being. It would have been folly to be wise.

Hard cases make bad law, however, and on the whole it is a good thing that patients should have access to their medical records, their blood and x-ray results, indeed everything in their notes except for the time being, their doctors' little hand-written comments about them. There are practical advantages to this, since it is an old tradition in British, and no doubt other hospitals to lose records just when they are most needed. A duplicate in the possession of the patients themselves will sometimes obviate the baleful effects of this tradition. And for every patient who is alarmed by reading in his notes that cancer was considered as a possible diagnosis in his case, thereby awakening the sleeping demon of hypochondriasis, there will be ten who will be relieved that it had been excluded and that therefore there is nothing to worry about.

Soon, however, patients will have a right to the doctors' hand-written comments as well, and, as we know, a right once granted becomes at once inalienable, as well as all other medical information about themselves. From a purely selfish point of view I rather regret this, for it means that doctors will no longer write anything not strictly medical in the notes, but nonetheless revealing and sometimes vital. In the past, these little comments could be purely derogatory, for example *NFN* (Normal For Norfolk) or the postcode for Barking, with the implication that the patient was mad in the colloquial rather than the psychiatric sense, the doctor getting his exasperation off his chest, but sometimes they added, or at least implied, useful information about the patient. *Here again!* would imply that the patient was an enthusiastic attender of the doctor's surgery without strict medical cause. And this in turn implied that the patient's life, or perhaps character, was unsatisfactory. It was no more than a hint, but a useful hint.

From my rather peculiar perspective – that of someone preparing medico-legal reports, I regret the passing of hand-written notes which might have included some slight commentary. The notes were much more interesting to read than purely computerised ones, and often one was able to form some kind of idea of the patient's character from them. Nowadays they tend to read in a purely impersonal way, as if they were about a mechanical object, or a farm animal at most. We pay lip service to treating the whole person, of which character is surely a part, indeed an important part when so many diseases are the consequence of habits and inclinations, but it will be rigorously excluded from medical notes in future, for there is nothing so contestable in the courts as a comment that could be regarded as derogatory. We are all made of psychological eggshells now and the slightest thing may ruin our lives for ever, especially if there is the prospect of compensation if we claim that it has.

Besides having certain advantages, the possession by patients of their notes is indicative of an important cultural shift. Gone are the days when a patient could be told that his operation was to be performed next Tuesday, without having any clear idea why it was to be performed at all. The population is better-educated and much less deferential to medical authority than it once was. It has access to a huge amount of information on the internet at the touch of a button: medical knowledge has been democratised.

We of the educated classes probably all know of someone whose life has been saved by having searched the internet and thereby having implicitly challenged his doctor's authority. Many doctors, however well-informed, find this intimidating, because while they are expected to know many things on many subjects, the patient with a particular illness has only to know many things on one subject, namely his own illness, and may easily come to know more about it than his doctor.

Among the less-educated, however, or the well-educated who are psychologically inclined to crankishness, a surfeit of information may lead to refusal to take good advice or to obey a treatment regime, to their own detriment. They are inclined to forget that even true information, much less false information, is not knowledge, and more is required to make a wise decision than mere data.

Access to the internet arrived just as medical authority, though still greater than other forms of authority, was under challenge. The excessive trust in doctors was no doubt superstitious in nature, though it must also have had a strong placebo effect, but it was replaced by an almost paranoid stance, in which people felt that doctors, and all others in authority, were engaged in an effort to do them down in some way.

This attitude has affected the medical profession itself. Junior doctors now have the right to see the references written about them as patients have the right to see their records, a right granted on the presumption that, if they could not see it, unfairness, injustice and prejudice would prevail. Comments unfavourable to the person about whom a reference was written became actionable, and it is hardly surprising that all frankness soon disappeared from references. This illustrates a basic principle of modern society: it is better the mealy-mouthedness should prevail than that anyone should suffer what he perceives as injustice.

Theodore Dalrymple was a psychiatrist

Poggers, Elves and Baby Barbara Windsors

Sarah Jane Searle

On a recent trip to sunny Shropshire it was relaxing to leave behind the London-centred, southern bubble of anxiety about tortuous sexual politics, currently flooding our cultural world, led by the National Trust, Tate Modern with its six month long 'Queer British Art,' the BBC disporting its TV 'Queer season,' which even managed to get into the trenches of World War One, no white men are spared, the perkily insistent LGBT series on Radio 4 and 'Gay Brittania' on 4Extra.

'Very few people bother about those things here up here,' said a friend laughingly. 'Most people get on with their lives and don't give a second thought to stuff like gender politics'.

I was about to believe him when I saw the current programme for the Birmingham Rep. A visiting National Theatre production of *Jane Eyre* showed meek little Jane and her cowed school friends, played by people in their thirties, standing shoulder to shoulder, apparently marching, fists raised in defiance. They looked as if they'd stomped in from *Les Mis*, or a Momentum rally. The programme said little Jane 'Asserted her right to live the way she wished.'

I suppose she did in the end, but that wasn't really what the book was about. Another page advertised a production of Euripides's *Medea*, the great tragic Greek heroine played by a man covered in red lipstick. There was also something called, *The Rest of Me*, sponsored by the 'Big Lottery Fund,' a public body which distributes funds from the National Lottery, for 'good causes'. In this case the cause was spreading the word about trans-gendering in particular, 'the way in which gender' is 'questioned and violently policed'.

So that is where all the policepersons are these days, out violently policing gender. You couldn't really say they were 'out policing sex' as that might suggest the bad old days of apprehending gay men in public loos. The word sex is dead in this context, replaced by the new political concept of 'gender'.

The programme said those impertinent police interrogations include such questions as, 'What was your original name?' and 'How are you going to solve the toilet situation?'

A good question perhaps, along with the situation of changing rooms, hospital wards, prisons and competitive sport. A US female boxer was recently badly flattened by a male boxer who had decided he was a woman. But you'd have to be brave to ask those practical questions because sex which used to be about pleasure is now all about conflict; not just man v woman, but well, I'm not sure, it seems almost as complicated as the Syrian civil war with angry feminists such as those led by Sandi Toksvig, founder in 2015 of the 'Women's Equality Party,' frequently pitted against men who call themselves women.

There can be no public analysis of this dispute because anyone who tries to, such as Germaine Greer, who said that men calling themselves women don't automatically become female, or Jenni Murray who said much the same, are immediately 'no platformed,' 'violently policed' one might say, and asked to shut up in case, as one transgendered protester put it to me, they, 'create the environment in which harm can be done'.

That dispute began as far back as 1973 at the 'West Coast Lesbian Conference,' in LA, where a furious row broke out over a performance by a folksinger called Beth Elliott. Formerly Bill Elliott, he was what was then called a transsexual. That word is no longer allowed. Try to keep up.

At that gathering, Robin Morgan, a feminist speaker, declared: 'I will not call a male 'she'. Thirty-two years of suffering in this androcentric society, and of surviving, have earned me the title 'woman'. One walk down the street by a male transvestite, five minutes of his being hassled (which he may enjoy) and then he dares to think he understands our pain? No, in our mothers' names and in our own, we must not call him sister'.

Such views are shared by some feminists now, but not by radical sisters who have found themselves in an acrimonious battle with Trans people and their allies. Trans women i.e. men, say that they are women because they feel female. As some put it, they have women's brains in men's bodies. Radical feminists reject the notion of a female brain believing that if women think and act differently from men it's because of a social construct, a caste system, requiring them

to be sexually attractive, nurturing, and deferential.

In the words of Lierre Keith, US 'food activist' author of *Deep Green Resistance*, and a founder of, 'Feminists Against Pornography,' femininity is 'ritualized submission'.

Anyone born a man retains his privileges as a man, even if he chooses to live as a woman, and that can't be right. It's not just sex or rather gender which involves this kind of bitter struggle. Keith is also seen as leader in a new 'Vegan war'. In 2010 protesters pelted her with meat pies laced with red peppers at an Anarchist Bookfair in San Francisco. Then there is the increasingly bitter conflict between gay men and the 'Bi-sexual' community. A Bi person on BBC Woman's hour this week said her community did not receive the same amount of 'support' as other minority groups and were always regarded with suspicion as people who engage in 'three-somes'.

Food and sex are no longer anything to do with pleasure or relaxation, quite the opposite. At least for people in the know, they're about marching and overthrowing the capitalist, corporate state. Axe-grinding identity politics of this kind now fills the gap once occupied by Anti-Apartheid, Vietnam, nuclear disarmament, and what used to be called in sexist times, 'Women's Lib'.

There was no rest from these London/BBC issues by getting sixty miles up the M6. Nowhere escapes from the new thinking on sex renamed 'gender'. On the way home some of my confusion about who is who and what goes where, and what is acceptable now, was confirmed by two newspaper stories on the same page.

The first one reported that Richard Broughan, a councillor from Stoke in Staffordshire had caused grave offence by passing comment on a female Elf he saw in a grotto in November 2015. He foolishly quipped: 'I wouldn't mind her sitting on my knee'.

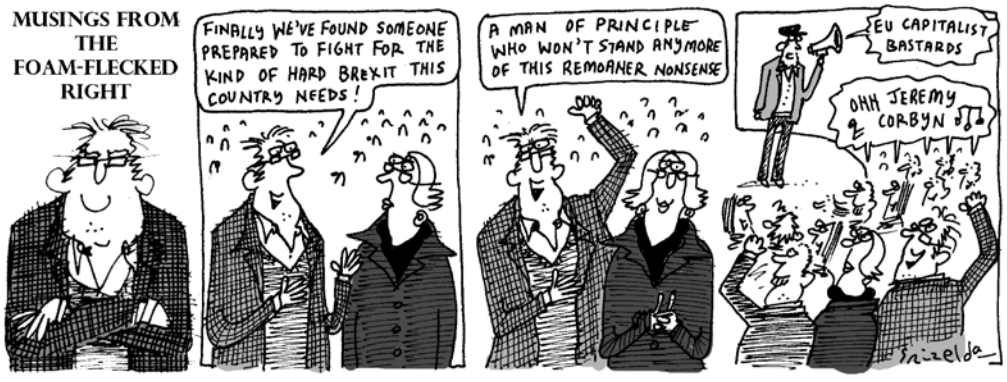
Broughan who has obviously chosen to keep 'identifying' as a red blooded male in a way which is now quite unacceptable, obdurately remaining a bit of a cheekie chappie, was too stupid to realise or refused to accept that such behaviour is no longer allowed.

If he wanted to get involved in green issues, he was going about it the wrong way. His comment may have been reaching for the old idea of children sitting on Santa's knee in the fairy grotto at Christmas, a practice now completely outlawed. His weak attempt at fun has also been banned, and so has he. He was immediately reported to the police. Staffordshire Police Sgt Wayne Flowers, anxiously protecting the public, told the press he'd made 'inappropriate jokes'.

Broughan denied all charges, he hasn't gone to prison but has been investigated for two years, and suspended from the council. To get his job back, he has to undertake 'additional training'. Presumably on how to treat members of the Elf community with due respect.

That issue I could trace back to the kind of feminism, which arrived here from the USA forty years ago; women, even female elves cannot be remarked on, even with a compliment as that objectifies them as sexual rather than anything else. The structure of that thinking is identical to the strictures on race, as if women are deemed to be a vulnerable minority in need of protection from dangerous, stigmatising language, which might 'create the environment in which harm can be done'.

In the light of that now firmly entrenched ideology the feature below was very puzzling. Single mum Jenna Eastland of Co Durham, has reportedly spent thousands of pounds on make-up, fake tan and sexy outfits for her daughter Layla Thompson, stage name Layla Belle, aged seven. The little girl has been covered in make-up and applying her own mascara since she was two years old. She looks like a cross between Grayson Perry and Barbara Windsor in *Carry on Camping*. The child regularly stars in beauty pageants and will represent the UK in 'Miss Superglobe' in September.



We cannot speak about sex as to get it wrong will bring down a charge of sexism or homophobia as damning as the charge of racism, tantamount to the cry of 'Heresy' in a previous age. A mistaken joke, even by such a distinguished Nobel Laureate as Professor Tim Hunt can lead to social obloquy and international disgrace. It is apparently now against the law in the UK for a heterosexual man to compliment even a female pixie; yet tiny female children can be garishly and overtly sexually objectified.

I've lost the thread of it as I can no longer recognise the patterns of thought, speech and thinking that existed when I was young. Sexual politics, now a component of the race equality and possibly the Green lobby as well, have now merged into one disturbed malcontented lump, chiefly united in their desire to destroy free speech in the belief that it leads to some nebulous harm that only they can see.

Some like me are staging a retreat from the scene of battle. It seems many young heterosexual men are now doing the same, 'hiding in plain sight' as rubbish TV crime dramas say. It has just been reported that the sales of razors has dropped by three percent this year as men start signalling their continued maleness by growing big, bushy beards. Fifty two percent of UK men are now pogonophiliacs, sporting impressive bristles if not mutton chops. Nothing like it has been seen since the mid 19th century.

Hiding behind great bushes of hair, appearing to view the world over the top of a hedge, increasingly hairy straight men obviously feel safe from scrutiny and attack. As beards are also worn by trendy gay men and non-trendy devout Muslims, they allow straight white men to hold onto their male sexuality without giving offence by specifically declaring their identity.

I intend to look for the straight male behind the cloud of whiskers. When I meet a pogger we'll smile at each other briefly, tip our caps and walk on, like characters in Orwell's *1984*, recognising that there are secret resisters out there, defying contemporary dogmatism, holding onto moral judgements, sharing the knowledge that there was once an age of freedom, a time of jokes, which can just about be remembered, and you never know, might one day return.

Sarah Jane Searle is a social commentator

Enoch Powell's Wedding

With Ted Curtis as his best man and the Macleods in the congregation, (Powell) married Pamela Wilson at Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, on 2 January 1952. Each year he would mark the anniversary by a gift of red roses – one for each year of their marriage – and a poem. 'They will be your pension,' he often told her. Writing to Strachan – who could not be present – on the morning of his wedding, Powell said he had sat up the previous night 're-reading Ovid's Ars Amatoria. This and Catullus have already stood me in good stead'. The honeymoon was spent driving through France and Spain in Gabriel (his car), with a small excursion to Majorca. Never one to dilute his standards, Powell submitted to having a paddle in the sea, but declined to remove any part of the three-piece suit he was wearing at the time. There were no plans, once they returned to London, to move from Earl's Court Square, and Powell went to an auction and bought the marital bed – a four-poster. […]

Simon Heiffer, 'Like the Roman'

The Latch Key Generation

Niall McCrae

John Bowlby, if he could be resurrected, would say: 'Told you so'. The famous psychoanalyst, who treated disturbed children at the Tavistock Clinic after the Second World War, emphasised the maternal bond in early childhood as the key to healthy psychological development. His book *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, originally a report for the World Health Organisation in 1951, explained why children raised in institutional settings generally fared worse in emotional nurture than those raised in impoverished homes. Maternal deprivation was a common factor in the distress of Bowlby's young patients. Is widespread use of full-time nursery care contributing to the current rising tide of mental health problems in adolescence?

In *Attachment and Loss*, his three-part *magnum opus* completed over two decades, Bowlby introduced attachment theory. From infancy the child develops a secure, anxious or avoidant attachment style: the first enjoys intimacy, the second fears rejection, and the third is dismissive but with hidden anguish. Bowlby warned of enduring harm: attachment insecurity does not necessarily persist, but latent anxious or avoidant styles might erupt anytime in the life span, from a failed teenage romance to the bewilderment of dementia.

Today, women are encouraged to return to the workplace as soon as possible after giving birth. The subtly condescending phrase 'stay-at-home mother' is used not only by feminists on BBC *Women's Hour* but also by government policy documents. Political parties compete to pledge the most wads of free childcare vouchers. Some mothers take a full year of maternity leave and then work part-time, and there are small but growing numbers of women running business from home and husbands taking parental leave. But a very common arrangement, at least in the middle class, is full-time nursery care.

We are beginning to see the legacy of the great childcare experiment. Since the 'new dawn' of Tony Blair, gender equality in the workplace has trumped the fledgling's need for maternal love. Partly to keep up with escalating house prices, parents in professional spheres continued working while their 1.8 offspring was dispatched to Bumble Bees. Long days – the working hours of the parent plus travelling time – were endured by Jack and Chloe in the care of nursery assistants. Now Generation N is coming of age, and the long-term impact may be discerned.

Let us consider the immediate effects of separation. Standardised questionnaires are the bread and butter of psychology, but there is a reliably objective tool in the 'hard science' of biology. Stress can be measured by saliva samples of cortisol, a hormone that regulates our circadian rhythm of alertness. Cortisol volume is normally highest after waking, then gradually declining over the day until its nadir at bedtime. Secretions are also spurred by a stressful situation, potentially activating the 'fight or flight' response.

Studies measuring cortisol show that placing children in full-time nursery care induces stress.

A systematic review by Vermeer and van Ijzendoorn included seven studies comparing the same children in domestic and day care settings: cortisol levels followed a normal daily rhythm in children at home, but spiked throughout the day during nursery attendance. This is not merely a temporary reaction to a new environment. One study covered the period from children being at home until 10 weeks after starting day care, and the biochemical pattern persisted.

Correlation between childcare and cortisol is strongest in children under three years of age. A child aged four or five is likely to derive benefits from being among peers, as this enhances social and cognitive development. But for the toddler, nursery can be unsettling: as well as separation from the primary carer, the environment is impersonal and noisy compared to the sanctity of home. While acknowledging limitations in the research, Vermeer and van Ijzendoorn noted that the larger the batch of children in a day care setting, the more exposure to socially threatening situations. Exuberant or aggressive children gain most attention from staff, while the shy and fearful may be overlooked. For some children, nursery is so traumatic that psychologist Steve Biddulph likens it to a war zone.

Prolonged emotional difficulties in early childhood are likely to increase future vulnerability to stress-related illness. Indeed, maternal deprivation might have significant impact on adolescence, which is arguably the most challenging stage of life. Various phenomena could explain the surge in mental health problems in this age group, but 'battery hen' nurseries and resulting attachment insecurity probably play a part. A high proportion of adult psychiatric illness emerges in late teenage years, and experts such as Mary Dozier in Delaware and Richard Bentall at University of Liverpool have found persuasive evidence of underlying attachment insecurity in patients with schizophrenia.

Investment in child and adolescent mental health services has been promised by the government. In the recent general election campaign, Prime Minister Theresa May promised a mental health adviser in every school. The mass media portray an epidemic of psychological problems in young people, although higher incidence may arise from increased mental health awareness and changing diagnostic practice. More and more children are being labelled and treated for psychiatric conditions, with prescriptions of Ritalin (for attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder) and antidepressants steadily growing.

The internet is often seen as the culprit, with problematic behaviour such as compulsive use, sexting, body-shaming, cyber bullying and trolling. However, the worldwide web should be understood as the medium, not the message. Most young people do not suffer psychologically from Internet activity. Nonetheless, studies suggest that those with insecure attachment styles are particularly susceptible to adverse experiences. Teenagers who were deprived of maternal presence at a tender age might subconsciously act out their past trauma on social media, which provide an outlet for all kinds of emotional expression. The link between Internet use and attachment may be observed at a younger age, as children learn that if parents are remote, security must come from elsewhere, and digital devices soon become a crutch. By puberty a whole social world is lived in rootless cyberspace, while family relationships, so important in the emotional minefield of adolescence, are weakened.

Feminists oppose attachment theory, seeing it as a pale, male and stale view of the family that overlooks patriarchal oppression (notably, Bowlby interpreted domestic violence as a symptom of maternal deprivation). Fiona Buchanan, in the journal *Critical Social Work*, derided attachment theory for undermining or blaming mothers, and warned against its assumptions:

> *It is easy to see why time-poor social workers and inexperienced students may be seduced by expert driven, individualized approaches, which offer prescriptive assessment and therapeutic solutions. However, in doing so women and their children may be disadvantaged rather than empowered. Further, the role of social workers to challenge systems, which undermine social justice, may be obscured if social workers take an uncritical view of attachment theory and family violence.*

Buchanan argued that Bowlby and co-theorist Margaret Ainsworth were limited to a white middle-class outlook. Yet it seems that the white middle class is the segment of society most exposed to the hazards of nursery care, while families of migrant or lower-class background are less devaluing of full-time mothering. Laura Perrins of *Conservative Woman* website argued in the *Daily Mail* that the supposed mental health crisis 'is driven by anxious middle-class feminist mothers in the media, who have stressed-out, over-pressured yet brittle middle-class girls who are cracking up'. Nonetheless, psychological angst certainly exists, as sadly illustrated by self-harm and eating disorders.

From the evacuees of the London Blitz emerged the 'Angry Young Men' of the 1950s. The tertiary-educated Generation N may be characterised not as aggressive but as needy and narcissistic, with a certain moral rectitude expressed in virtue signalling and platitudes about tolerance and diversity. They emote on social media, which serves as an echo chamber and a powerful regulator of social norms; anyone stepping out of line from correct opinion might be ostracised. Worryingly, the millennial generation seems less appreciative of fundamental values of post-Enlightenment society such as freedom of speech. Perhaps this is because they are anxious, and contrary argument makes them angrily defensive.

I should say that my students are a credit to their generation: bright but also resilient – a necessary trait for their chosen carer in mental health. But political opinion across this age group is extremely skewed to the left. This may be understandable because of student debt and the prohibitive housing market which is compounded by liberal immigration, which Labour would encourage rather than control. With an overweening sense of entitlement, the younger electorate idealises a benevolent state, a surrogate parent who will iron out the odds in the lottery of life.

Meanwhile the institutionalisation of childcare gathers pace. In a rapidly growing industry fuelled by free childcare allowances, nurseries and after-school clubs are extending their hours. Bowlby wrote presciently: 'One must beware of a vested interest in the institutional care of children.' Like adding lanes to the M25, supply creates demand. Many mothers have been forced to work by economic reality, with little disposable income after paying the mortgage and nursery fees. As parenting costs are increasingly transferred to the taxpayer, inevitably the child's time in nursery will lengthen.

The family home should not be romanticised: strife may be worse than separation. Childcare is sometimes necessary not primarily for the parents' lifestyle but for the interests of the child. This was the rationale for

the Sure Start programme. However, the majority of pre-schoolers need contact rather than protection from their mothers. Other options may be less destabilising for young children. A childminder is able to perform a similar role to that of a primary carer, looking after a few children in a domestic setting. Furthermore, childminders typically charge no more than the large nursery, which has substantial overheads. Many parents are helped by grandparents or other relatives. Nurseries vary in size and quality, and those that afford plenty of personal attention may provide a stimulating environment.

Contemporary critics of nurseries such as Oliver James draw ire from feminists, while politicians run scared of accusations of sending women back to the kitchen. But flexible employment rights allow mothers the fulfilment of continuing to work part-time and spending cherished time with their young children. The social pressure on women to go back to full working hours is causing unhappiness, as illustrated by copious commentary in the popular press and Internet on the guilt of mothers and the impossibility of 'having it all'. Maternal instinct is suppressed at a cost to mother and child.

I am not blaming individual parents for the compromises they make in busy lives. The problem of maternal deprivation should be addressed by society. In his conclusion to *Childcare and the Growth of Love*, Bowlby acknowledged that childcare reforms depend on people of influence understanding rather than denying the link between mental health and maternal care. Where do we start?

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Nowt Oop North Cocker

Tom Nolan

Towards the end of 1999, after a twenty-five year absence, I returned to my hometown of Blackburn in Lancashire. My family, tired of the unrelenting rain and the dismal urban environment, had left for Australia in 1975, and ever since Blackburn had been an emblem of failure for me. In the intervening years I had lived in a lot of different places – sunnier, happier, more interesting places. But I always suspected that Blackburn was where I most truly belonged, that this was where the sicklier elements in my own character felt most at home. A town of gutted mills, abandoned chapels, and square mile after square mile of dwarfish terraced houses; a town penetrated by a hundred years of damp, with mould creeping over its slate-roofs and paint peeling off its door- and window-frames.

I came back with very little to show for my thirty-seven years: no job, no property, and almost no money – just a couple of hundred pounds. My father's widow, who had a house in a village not far from town, was kind enough to let me stay with her for a week or so, but I could not further impose on her hospitality, and so left one morning intending to find more permanent accommodation. I went to the Salvation Army Hostel in Heaton Street, where, however, I did not expect to be taken in. I had been homeless on several previous occasions and knew that SA accommodation was usually in short supply and high demand. On the other hand, I was expecting them to give me some advice as to where else I might get a bed for the night. Sure enough, the lady behind the glazed reception counter told me that all their rooms were currently occupied, that no vacancies were expected any time soon, but that there were various bed-and-breakfast places, specializing in benefit-claiming guests, which might take me in.

While the receptionist was busy writing out telephone numbers for me to try, the Captain in charge of the Hostel appeared. Like many men in his position, who must daily face-down the emotionally disorderly, he was physically imposing, but his eyes were lively and penetrating. He asked me a few questions. Where had I come from? Germany… That was interesting. And why had I come back to England? To get a job which would allow me to put my languages to good use… Mmm. He then had a word with the receptionist. The man who had been living in room number 9, the man who had gone to Blackpool, had he been in touch since last Thursday? No? The Captain gave me a last shrewd look, as though to assure himself that he wasn't making a catastrophic mistake, and told me that a room had been found for me, and that I might move in that afternoon.

People who end up in Salvation Army Hostels sometimes talk about 'hitting rock bottom', but the implications of the phrase are not necessarily clear to them. To hit rock bottom is to feel, at last, something solid beneath one's feet, something that will serve as a base camp or as a point of departure. Blackburn had lurked in my imagination, its melancholy resonating with my own, for more than twenty years. Now here I was,

an inmate among inmates, sitting in a narrow cell of a room, with a sense of the town's rained-on dereliction stretching away beyond the walls. On the bed was a little pamphlet for new arrivals illustrated with clip-art. One of the images was of a man puzzled by a sign-post pointing in all directions, and under it was the caption: 'Which way will you take? What will your future be?' In other circumstances I might have sneered at the question as naïve or pointless, but sitting in the winter twilight as it faded into night, and refusing to turn the light on, I took it both seriously and cheerfully. Yes, I was on my uppers and not a young man anymore, but I was physically vigorous, mentally alert, and had no dependents to disappoint, a free man after my fashion. Over the next few weeks I came to a resolution: to take the first job available, be it never so humble, and to have a crack at making a life for myself in England, though not necessarily in Blackburn. And even Blackburn, even the Salvation Army Hostel, began to seem less oppressive, and more interesting. They were still grim places, but they had no purchase on my increasingly optimistic frame of mind.

The Hostel was an extensive complex of low buildings, with a men's wing, a women's wing, a suite of rooms for the aged, a dining room, and a lounge, which doubled as a chapel. The oldest inhabitants were relics of a vanished age, having been born during the First World War, having started work at a cotton mill in the 1930s, and having fought in the Second World War, they spoke an archaic, impenetrable form of the Blackburn dialect. They were sweet enough people to talk to, though their conversation made clear that the last decades of the twentieth century had passed them by completely. Younger inmates were more problematic: illiterate, addicted to drugs and alcohol. Mentally ill, they depended on the Salvation Army's help but would quickly grow tired of the regulated existence it sought to impose. Their impatience would culminate in periodical explosions of violence or bad behaviour, which resulted in the culprits' expulsion from the Hostel. A flat or room somewhere else in town would be found for them, but left unattended they would fall prey to their addictions and psychoses and, after the police or social services had intervened, they would reappear at the Hostel for another stint. During my nearly two years' residence there I saw many of these hopeless cases leave, return, leave and return again.

After completing a few agency assignments round town, I eventually got a job as a 'Resettlement Worker' at the Salvation Army itself. This mostly consisted of clerical duties – filling in forms for housing benefit claimants, that kind of thing – but occasionally involved 'pastoral' work: a little bit of literacy teaching, occasional visits to former residents living outside the Hostel. So long as was one of them myself, I had been wary of other inmates, but as a Resettlement Worker I was obliged to ask them questions, compile dossiers, and do my best to find out what people were really up to. Beyond their addictions and mental problems, their greatest handicap was the lack of worth while aspiration. Some of them might, by an extraordinary effort, have taken the first steps to moderate achievement: functional literacy, a non-skilled job and so on. But most of them viewed menial success of this kind with disgust, and the only success they could 'relate to' was that of extreme wealth and celebrity. One young man, urged to improve his writing skills to apply for jobs, would respond with incredulous sniggers – but he none the less set high standards for himself. He could not abide cheap clothes, wearing only the designer tee-shirts, jackets and jeans to be found among the jumble occasionally consigned to the Hostel. I did not have the heart to reproach him, though, nor the middle-aged men and women who kept the bitter reality of their lives at bay with alcohol. If I had been able to persuade them to swear off the bottle, would I have been doing them a favour? With failed marriages, failed relationships, failed prospects in one's wake, how dreadful to come fully to one's senses in Blackburn, of all places, with twenty years of disillusioned sobriety still to live.

I, by contrast, was cheered by the assurance of imminent departure. I had, in the ten years I had spent in continental Europe before finally returning to Blackburn, learned good Italian, French and German and spent a lot of time reading the classics in each of those languages. A friend suggested that such hands-on familiarity with foreign languages might, my complete lack of A-levels notwithstanding, induce certain universities to let me study for a BA. Not altogether persuaded, but with nothing to lose, I sent an essay on *The Magic Mountain,* written in German, to the modern language fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, who granted me an interview, which in turn led to an offer: I might study for a BA in German and French. By the autumn of 2001, when the course was due to begin, I had also secured the necessary funding – so the sense of resolve I had discovered on first returning to Blackburn never really flagged. Nothing fortifies the spirits like a distant (but rapidly approaching) prospect of ivy-clad academia.

Meanwhile, I observed how the town sapped the will of anyone bound to live in it for long. The Salvation Army residents were no doubt some of the sorriest cases, but the whole town was miserable, dysfunctional and susceptible to bouts of random violence, and the future was as a bad as, or worse than, the present. In retrospect, it seems that I spent those two years holding my breath, like a snorkel-diver exploring a black, hulking wreck on the sea's bottom. I won't be going back.

Tom Nolan is now teaching in China.

Multiculturalism's Holy War

Tobias Gerrard-Anderson

Islamist violence is now common in European societies. In the last three months alone, the UK has experienced three terror attacks, while intelligence services claim to have prevented five planned attacks since the Westminster massacre of 22 March. In early April, a failed asylum seeker from Uzbekistan hijacked a truck in central Stockholm which he deliberately drove into pedestrians. He managed to kill five and injure seven more, among them a seven year old girl. In France, which has suffered many terrorist attacks, a police officer was shot dead in April while in June an unsuccessful suicide bomber drove an explosives-packed car into the Champs Elysees. In the same month, a Moroccan national unsuccessfully attempted a suicide bombing in the Brussels metro. All these episodes occurred in the first half of 2017. The records from 2015 and 2016 are no less grim, including the Berlin Christmas market massacre, the Wurzburg train attack, and the Ansbach explosion carried out by asylum seekers who entered Germany under Angela Merkel's unilateral open door migration policy.

How many of these terror attacks can people recall, even vaguely? The sustained violence perpetrated by a minority of Muslims against their host societies has blurred into an indistinguishable backdrop of recurring brutality. European governments respond to these attacks in similar ways, issuing reassuring statements that Islam is essentially a peaceful faith and that we must all learn to live together. There are also warnings that these outrages may provoke an Islamophobic backlash, either in the form of growing support for right-wing parties or right-wing retaliatory violence, both of which have so far failed to materialise.

The narrative follows a predictable pattern – a common call for interfaith unity, visibly exemplified by tokenistic gatherings of different faiths and 'community leaders'. From the right, there will be demands for cosmetic measures, ranging from the banning of burqas and madrassas to the internment of terrorist suspects. Attempts at any form of civilisational self-recognition, such as President Trump's speech, which praised the historical achievements of the West, are met with derision and contempt by the liberal Left. Within a few weeks, the crimes that actually occurred are forgotten. Indeed there almost seems to be a concerted effort to engage in collective amnesia. In the wake of the Manchester bombing the online *Independent* declared 'There's only one way Britain should respond to terror attacks such as Manchester. That is by carrying on as normal'. The Prime Minister delivered a speech saying 'We will never waver.' The attacks are blamed on 'intolerance' and 'hatred' rather than attributed to a clear religious and ideological worldview.

In practice, the Islamist worldview contrasts sharply with the European enlightenment conceit that all people, cultures and faiths are essentially good and equal, that all cultural and religious conflicts can be overcome. The Islamists believe that there are irreconcilable and insurmountable differences between the west and the Islamic world. Faced with such beliefs, the liberal enlightenment view seems naive and dangerous. It universalises and over-projects a cultural disposition towards religious tolerance not currently shared by Islamists. Europe, demographically anaemic and apathetic, faces a self-assertive and proselytizing faith in its midst. Michel Houellebecq's satirical dystopian novel *Submission* (2015) – ironically published just hours before the Charlie Hebdo attack – predicts the eventual Islamification of Europe from the perspective of a France which has been spiritually gutted by liberalism and the cultural revolution of the 1960s. Ironically, in *Submission* it is the liberal humanist professors who most willingly embrace the nascent Caliphate, which offers them a renewed sense of social purpose and also a restoration of their patriarchal status.

What makes Islamist fundamentalism so potentially dangerous is the recent demographic transformation of Europe. Within the last few decades, a continent previously made up of culturally homogenous nations built on a shared religious heritage, has become infinitely diverse. It is possible that within half a century, while there will still be geographical areas called Germany, France, Britain or Sweden, there will be nothing as tangible or as cohesive as a German, French, British or Swedish nation. Instead there may be heterogeneous states, absorbed into a supranational European state. The threat of terrorism, which is present in Europe today, is solely the consequence of large-scale Muslim immigration. While it is obvious that not all Muslims are terrorists, domestic terrorism today overwhelmingly stems from second and third generation Muslim immigrants. And while the great majority of Muslims will not support terrorism against the majority of the population, there is a minority of Muslims willing to either morally justify, or directly engage in, political violence against the country in which they were born.

The tedious canard 'not all Muslims' is hardly reassuring to those worried about the growth of Islamism and its capacity to change our society. Being told to 'keep

calm and carry on' seems to many like placing a sticking plaster on a gaping wound. Are we witnessing a European Intifada, analogous to a domestic Islamist insurgency, as opposed to a few isolated acts of violence? The evidence of this is very strong – a communication network of unprecedented sophistication by which the disaffected are inspired and mobilised. If so, the terror threat which Europe faces is historically unprecedented. Is there an end in sight? It seems, at times, that there cannot be, because we are faced with an ideology which is religious in nature and has extreme aims. Moreover, Islamists now have a demographic reservoir from which to draw recruits, a reservoir which is growing at an exponential rate. Between 2001 and 2011 the Muslim population doubled to 2.71 million according to analysis of the 2011 census conducted by the Muslim Council of Britain. The Muslim population of the UK currently stands at 5 per cent while according to research from the Pew Research Centre in 2015 the Muslim population is projected to be 10 per cent by 2030. As the Muslim population grows what will be the impact upon the threat of terrorism? And what will be the wider social and cultural effects of such a demographic transformation?

We are standing at a crossroads. Will we have to live in societies which will be more heavily policed, under greater surveillance, with greater restrictions on what we can say and write? Will we live in societies which are more diverse but which will simultaneously be less free and less secure? The Mayor of London seems to think so. His comment that the threat of terrorism is 'part and parcel' of living in a major city seems now to be a common belief.

It is difficult to accurately predict the future of Europe. We know that the West will continue to change at an unprecedented rate and that Europe, as it historically existed, will come to an end within the next few decades. What replaces the old Europe, what comes after, is unknown. Multiculturalism, which has emerged partly by design and partly by accident, was always based on the underlying assumption that a state, a defined geopolitical entity, could contain within it multiple cultures, ethnicities and religious groups with no serious effect on political stability or social cohesion. The future of Europe does not necessarily have to be that of other diverse societies, such as Brazil, afflicted by racial segregation, low levels of social trust and political corruption. Nor do I think the fate of Lebanon or Bosnia awaits the nations of the west (although a country like France in which the demographic change is most advanced, and which has a recent history of political violence, may prove different). However, even if the most apocalyptic scenarios don't come true, such as Houellebecq's entirely Islamic Europe, or a complete collapse into ethno-religious civil war, there are no particular grounds for optimism. The cultural and religious separation evident in the banlieues of France, the post-industrial mill towns of the north, and the ghettos of Malmo, will not somehow magically disappear. And the religious violence, which is ultimately the product of such places, the suicide bombings, and the knife attacks, aren't going to abate any time soon either.

Tobias Gerrard-Anderson is a new contributor.

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Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies (2009) David Bentley Hart

Daryl McCann

David Bentley Hart's *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* was published in 2009 as a direct response to the phenomenon of militant atheism that, at the time, caught the imagination of the book-buying public in the Anglosphere. Prominent amongst these 'fashionable enemies' were the so-called 'Four Horsemen of New Atheism': Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens. All of these atheist fundamentalists were, in their previous intellectual endeavours, either brilliant or at least notable figures. Experts on religion, alas, they never were, and Hart relishes the opportunity to expose their shortcomings.

Hart confines himself, here, to a defence of the Christian faith, and more specifically its revolutionary role in the making of Western civilisation. Christianity, in the opinion of the 'Four Horsemen', is a singularly bad idea, nothing short of an irrational impulse or antiquated superstition foisted upon each new generation by means of indoctrination. Anyone in full possession of their faculties of reason would not be Christian. The Age of Reason, as distinct from the Age of Faith that preceded it, ought to have cured all educated people of the folly of Christianity, religion and reason being antithetical. The time had long passed

for a movement of atheists (or 'Brights' as Richard Dawkins called them) to criticise, counter and liberate deluded believers ('Dims') from the fetters of their supernatural fantasies.

Hart, nevertheless, takes issue with the assertion that Christian belief can be dismissed as no more than a supernatural delusion. A central idea in Daniel Dennett's *Breaking the Spell* is that all 'religions' are a natural function of humanity and, as a universal natural impulse, this fatally undercuts the supernatural pretensions of religious belief. It does not 'logically follow', though, that 'simply because religion is natural it cannot be the vehicle of divine truth'. Besides, Christians, according to Hart, 'are not, properly speaking, believers in religion'. The question for Christians is not loyalty to religion as an abstract concept, in the sense of a 'natural desire for God' as articulated by Dennett, but fidelity to an historical personage: 'Jesus of Nazareth crucified under Pontius Pilate, rose from the dead and is now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, present to his church as its Lord.'

If Dennett's atheist polemic represents 'something of an embarrassment', the 'doctrinaire materialism' of Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* fares little better. It constitutes no more than a subcategory of modern scientific positivism, which Hart classifies as 'an illogical, inflexible and fideistic certainty that empirical science' should serve not only as 'the sources of factual knowledge' but as 'an arbiter of values or of moral and metaphysical truths'. We might call this 'scientism' and it asks scientists, our new priestly class, to arbitrate on matters 'unencumbered by archaic Christian mystifications about the sanctity of every life'. Peter Singer's support 'for the right to infanticide for parents of defective babies' and James Rachels' advocacy 'for more expansive and flexible euthanasia polices, applicable at every stage of life' are likely portents, warns Hart, of the brave new post-Christian world we are entering.

In the case of *The End of Faith,* David Bentley Hart claims that Sam Harris not only betrays 'an abysmal ignorance' of almost every tenet of Christian belief, from Christianity's view of the soul to its moral doctrines, but proves totally prejudiced in his treatment of both the bad and the good that have occurred since the advent of Christianity. All acts of violence and injustice are a direct consequence of Christian doctrine, while the 'unmatched moral triumphs' in Christianity's twenty centuries, including alms-houses, hospitals, medical missions and charitable aid societies, are 'simply expressions of normal human kindness with no necessary connection to Christian conviction'.

The subtitle of Christopher Hitchens' *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* follows the same jaundiced path as the other New Atheists. Hart wonders how, if Christian sensibility is so toxic, do we makes sense of the music of Bach and Michelangelo's *Pieta*, not to mention 'the abolitionist movement, the civil rights movement, and contemporary efforts to liberate Sudanese slaves'? Hitchens's militant atheism demands that he characterise Stalinism as a 'political religion' and an abuse of the principles of militant atheism, while condemning 'any evil that comes wrapped in a cassock' as 'an undiluted expression of religion's very essence'. The hypocrisy and incoherence of the argument should be self-evident. Only the 'relative vapidity of our culture', contends Hart, permitted Dennett, Dawkins, Harris and Hitchens to get away with their 'thoughtless complacency'.

There was once such a thing in the West as 'unthinking religious conviction', but this has been superseded by 'unthinking irreligious materialism'. *Atheist Delusions* goes beyond demolishing the 'thoughtless complacency' of the 'Four Horsemen' and attempts to make sense of what the New Atheism experience tells us about our world. David Bentley Hart laments the 'facile simplifications of history' that embody so much 'fashionable' thinking. The Christian Revolution, and its association with the age of Constantine, utterly reconfigured Western civilisation in ways that we moderns scarcely understand. The Christian Revolution might now be an ancient insurgency but it made us anew, delivering the West from melancholy and tribalism of paganism to an unprecedented kind of optimism, freedom and reason. It has informed almost everything about the West. Even the Age of Science, *contraire* the New Atheists, was not a rebellion against Christian culture but a product of it.

Atheist Delusions ends on a pessimistic and ominous note. The decline of Christianity, the faith that shaped the West's social, intellectual, metaphysical, moral and spiritual landscape, leaves us unmoored and diminished. That is the final aspect of the 'thoughtless complacency' of the New Atheists. If Christianity along with its 'transcendent aspiration' departs Europe, will not Nietzsche's prophecies about the 'Last Men' finally come to fruition? David Bentley Hart expresses his 'morbid despair' in a post-Christian vision of an ageing Europe, obsessed with the banality and trivia of narrow, materialistic interests, milling around 'the glorious remnants of an artistic and architectural legacy' that 'sprang up under the sheltering canopy of the religion of the God-man.'

Daryl McCann is an Australian journalist. He has a blog at http://darylmccann.bigspot.com.au.

Reputations — 56

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Scott Grønmark

When Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn rose to deliver his Commencement Address at Harvard University in June, 1978, he was arguably the world's leading cultural figure: a globe-bestriding literary giant in the tradition of Tolstoy; an implacable, grim-faced Old Testament prophet in the mould of Jeremiah; a heroic, seemingly indestructible truth-teller who survived imprisonment, exile and cancer to bear witness to the horrors that ensue whenever Communism is put into practice.

The audience at Harvard that day was probably expecting praise for publishing Solzhenitsyn's books which were banned in the USSR, for repeatedly criticising the Soviet leadership for persecuting him, and for offering him unstinting adulation and a safe, comfortable haven after he was unceremoniously bustled out of Russia following the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* in the West. Instead, they heard this:

> *A decline in courage may be the most striking feature which an outside observer notices in the West in our days. The Western world has lost its civil courage, both as a whole and separately, in each country, each government, each political party, and, of course, in the United Nations. Such a decline in courage is particularly noticeable among the ruling groups and the intellectual elite, causing an impression of loss of courage by the entire society.*

It got worse. Having bitten the hands of those who regarded themselves as his saviours, Solzhenitsyn proceeded to tear into Western liberalism, the very system this unwilling refugee from totalitarianism might have been expected to celebrate: 'Destructive and irresponsible freedom has been granted boundless space. Society appears to have little defence against the abyss of human decadence…'

Denied an opportunity for self-congratulation, the West's left-liberal elites reacted with outrage. President Carter snubbed the writer. Even the First Lady, Rosalynn, publicly repudiated the speech. *The Washington Post* and the *New York Times* produced outraged editorials. The West's reaction was satirised by *Private Eye* in the *Sun*-style headline: 'Sod off, Solly!'

Faced with the inescapable fact that Solzhenitsyn was a deeply conservative Christian traditionalist who thought them cowards, western intellectuals huffily turned their backs on him and followed the example of the Soviet authorities by virtually reducing his status to that of a non-person. This suited him fine: he wasn't much interested in the West, never bothered to learn spoken English (although he could read it), and, despite his mistaken belief that the democratic powers were too weak and self-indulgent to overthrow the Soviet regime, remained 'inwardly convinced' that he would return to his homeland one day. It would be 18 years before that day arrived, most of which were spent in seclusion on his Vermont estate working on *The Red Wheel,* a multi-volume fictional work about the Russian Revolution. He continued to grant media interviews to admirers such as Bernard Levin and Malcolm Muggeridge, with whom he sometimes allowed the mask of the stone-faced apocalyptic visionary to slip sufficiently to reveal the engaging, good-humoured, vital human being behind it; on occasion, he positively twinkled.

When Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia in 1994, I experienced a pang of guilt, realising that I hadn't read anything new by him since his enthralling memoir, *The Oak and the Calf*, published in 1980, and nothing substantial about him since Michael Scammell's splendid 1985 biography. I had been expecting English translations of the various volumes of *The Red Wheel* to appear regularly accompanied by fanfares of publicity throughout the 1980s, but there didn't seem to have been a peep. Between 1994 and his death in 2008, news coverage consisted mainly of disapproving items about Solzhenitsyn's Russian nationalism and his support for Vladimir Putin, and charges of anti-Semitism following the publication of *200 Years Together*, a history of Russian Jewry which remains– as does much of his later work – unpublished in English. French and German translations of his writings have appeared regularly since the mid-1980s, but English translations have been rarer. An American edition of *November, 1916* – the second part of the four-volume work, *The Red Wheel*– received some respectful reviews when it was published in 1999, but sold poorly. An expanded, restored version of the classic 1968 novel, *The First Circle*, published in America in 2009 (retitled *In the First Circle*), was similarly well-reviewed and fared somewhat better in terms of sales.

Apart from what was widely regarded as

Solzhenitsyn's ingratitude to the West, his extended bouts of self-imposed isolation, and his espousal of unfashionable political and religious beliefs, how to account for this literary giant's fall from grace? For a start, the sort of people who keep literary reputations alive in Britain and America don't much like the essentially conservative quartet responsible for the defeat of Soviet Communism: Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Pope John Paul II – and, of course, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Neither are left-liberal literary types much interested in the sort of books Solzhenitsyn wrote. In many ways, he was a traditional 19th Century novelist whose work doesn't readily lend itself to modish critical analysis: you don't need to be an intellectual to 'get' *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* or to have an intellectual explain it to you. Then there was the inescapable fact that the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the Soviet system – and his choosing the Russian Revolution as the main focus of his later fiction – made Solzhenitsyn's work seem less burningly relevant to a contemporary audience. One suspects that a novel about life in Putin's Russia might have generated more excitement than *The Red Wheel.* But, then, one suspects Solzhenitsyn wasn't much interested in appearing on 'Best Summer Beach Reads' lists.

Finally, does the quality of Solzhenitsyn's books, as literature, rather than as historically-significant documents, justify revisiting his reputation? I suppose it depends on whether, like me, you consider *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, *Cancer Ward* and *The First Circle* to be three of the finest novels of the 20th Century, which deserve to be read as long as *Crime and Punishment* and *War and Peace* are read.

As I write this, the final two volumes of *The Red Wheel* remain unpublished in the West. As recently as 2010, the author's son, Ignat, doubted they ever would be: 'I don't even think the sales would pay the cost of the translation.' I'm delighted to report that he was wrong, and that the University of Notre Dame Press will be publishing an English translation by Marian Schwarz of the third volume, *March 1917*, later this year. This would present an ideal opportunity for a revival of interest in one of the 20th Century's greatest writers: his books deserve it.

Roy Kerridge

My criticisms of National Health Hospitals are often themselves criticised by fervent supporters of the sacred NHS. I now realize that the catch-all phrase NHS, when referring to hospitals, is misleading. Hospitals deserve praise or blame individually, usually thanks to the person in charge, who sets the tone – as in schools and police stations. Apparently an early dream of Welfare State socialists was that of a complete equality of hospitals, the destruction of nests of specialists, the end of Guy's and Bart's and the spreading thin of brilliance over the whole land. That is, away from London.

After a great deal of disruption, the dust has settled and good, bad and indifferent hospitals can once more easily be recognised. This is the proper nature of things, regardless of higher planning. Since the quality of a hospital depends on the personalities of those in charge, it follows that a good hospital can quickly become bad, and vice versa, as people come and go. You can tell a bad hospital as it usually acquires a local nickname, like 'The Death House'.

When I was a boy, in an English Communist home, a trade unionist visitor would sometimes pop in for tea. It was this man's ambition to have his workplace declared the home of a productive industry. Since he worked in the wrapping department of a great store, much thought was needed here.

'A parcel-wrapper is a productive proletarian as the product he produces is a parcel!' he suddenly exclaimed one day, inspired. (Try saying it quickly.)

From a different point of view, the new 'market forces' managerial teams put in charge of NHS hospitals have reached a similar conclusion. These managers have come to the NHS from industry, and appear to look on hospitals as factories.' The product we are striving to produce is an empty bed', seems to be their simple creed. Every patient who leaves a hospital is a success story now, whether he leaves on his feet or feet first.

***

Creatures of the forest floor, such as fawns and woodcock, are hard to see even when they are crouching by your feet. Brindled feathers and white-spotted fur perfectly resemble a sun-dappled background of

fallen leaves. It is often pointed out that white spots and stripes on baby woodland animals such as deer, wild pigs and tapirs must once have been the adult colouration also. Red deer fawns may have white spots, but the only spotted adult red deer are the Barbary stags of North Africa. Perhaps the Atlas Mountains are the original home of the red deer tribe, which now ranges across the entire northern hemisphere.

A baby Indian elephant is covered in auburn fur, like its supposed ancestor, the mammoth. It seems that the Indian elephant, along with the tiger, came down to the tropics from Siberia. Both Indian elephants and tigers suffer from the heat and spend much of their time in the water. Brown bear cubs have white patches on their chests and shoulders. They too lose most of these markings in adulthood, except for a few bears in Alaska who stay patchy. These animals may have interbred with arctic polar bears and so represent not the past but the future.

ETERNAL LIFE

Holy Cross Day, 14th September, is one of the lesser known of the church's festivals, perhaps because it usually occurs on a weekday. Roman Catholic and High Anglican churches celebrate it with colour and panache, but I'm puzzled as to why the day is not much commemorated in Protestant churches, for the Cross is at the heart of evangelical preaching and the theme of so many magnificent verses and tunes in *The Methodist Hymnbook.*

By accident I have found myself closely associated with the feast of the Holy Cross. For fifteen years I was Vicar of St Helen's Church, Bilton, in Yorkshire – a church dedicated to the woman who discovered the original Cross in Jerusalem in AD 326. Helen found the Cross on the site of what was to become the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, called the *anastasis*, the Resurrection and for fourteen years I was priest-in-charge of St Sepulchre's Church in the City of London.

Because the Cross is rightly the most important image in the Christian faith, we may find that its familiarity blinds us to the recognition of its shocking image – an instrument of torture. Imagine the guillotine or the thumbscrews taking central position in all our churches. G K Chesterton preferred the Crucifix because it directly draws our attention to the Saviour rather than to the means of his execution.

There is something shocking also in the very name of this Feast Day: *Holy* Cross. The crucifixion was the extreme mark of curse and shame – the very opposite of holiness, but the word *holy* has a much older derivation according to which it means *strange* or *awesome*. And the Cross is certainly that.

There are churches where the Cross is nowhere to be seen, places where the prohibition on the making of images is taken too literally and therefore misconstrued. But there is a surmounting reason for images, for Christianity is not a mere series of theological propositions. Since the Incarnation, the faith is embodied, and we have images as we have Sacraments. God chooses to reveal himself in *things*. All images have something of the icon about them in that they are not merely symbols but embody the meaning which they present.

When we wish to approach as closely as we can, or as we dare, to the mysteries of God, we not only *say* something but we *do* something. The doing necessarily involves objects and these objects are the essence of our actions: water at baptism; the ring at the marriage; the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Images and Sacraments are at the centre of all divine revelation. This is because an image can do what words cannot do very well; images can express complexities within a single unity and opposites directly. And we need them to do this, for religious truth is paradoxical.

Even the best explanations can only take us part of the way. I'm sorry to say that that I once upset a modern theologian by telling him that when anyone tried to explain religion to me I wanted to be sick. But the image, under the constant gaze of meditation, reveals to us the paradoxical depths of our faith. So the bread and wine, the Body and Blood, are signs of death; but in the Sacrifice of the Mass they are life itself. And Our Lord's Cross made him accursed, but by it we are blest.

We should make a habit of going into church quietly and kneeling before the Cross. When you contemplate the Cross you don't just see it: you enter into the very process of your redemption in a way that is deeper than words of devotion, in a way that bypasses and surpasses words of any sort.

Christ died to save the world. And so the imprint of his Cross is found everywhere in the world to remind us and reassure us. As John Donne exclaimed ecstatically:

Who can deny me power and liberty
To stretch mine arms and mine own Cross to be?
Swim, and at every stroke thou art thy Cross;
The mast and yard make one where seas do toss;
Look down thou spiest out crosses in small things;
Look up, thou seest birds raised on crossed wings;
All the globe's frame and spheres is nothing else,
But the meridians crossing parallels.

Contemplate the Cross then and know what Our Lord did there, what he did and suffered for us. Paradoxes and ironies are at the centre of the Crucifixion. The carpenter is nailed to the wood. God who made the world is murdered by means of the material of his creation. And the worst suffering was not the nails. Urs von Balthasar tells it straight:

The real essence of Christ's passion consisted in the two things we least like to bear and suffer: fear and disgrace.

By his disgrace, Grace to us is made palpable. And his agony and disgrace was very prolonged as Lancelot Andrewes makes us understand:

He must die by inchmeal – not swallow his death at once, but taste it.

The paradoxes persist. The Cross is the supreme sign of God's love for us. And it is also a weapon of war. We have been known to sing: *with the Cross of Jesus going on before.*

The Cross, which saves us from hell, itself went to hell on Holy Saturday. This is called the *Harrowing of Hell.* And *harrowing* is derived from the military terminology which means *to make predatory raids and incursions.* But our Christ made more than a guerrilla attack: he took his Cross and planted it in the middle of the kingdom of evil. In an apocryphal gospel gospel it says:

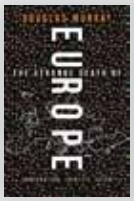
And the Lord set his Cross in the midst of hell, which is the sign of victory. And Adam was there and he cast himself at the Lord's feet, then rose up and kissed his pierced hands and shed abundant tears, saying, 'Behold the hands that formed me!' And he said unto the Lord, 'Thou art come O King of Glory, to set men free and gather them to thine everlasting Kingdom.' Then our mother Eve also in like manner cast herself at the feet of the Lord and rose up and kissed his pierced hands and shed tears abundantly and said, 'Behold the hands which fashioned me; testifying unto all.'

The gates of hell are the portals of death. Our Saviour, carrying his Cross, storms the gates of hell and delivers us from the power of sin and death. Hell is harrowed and the Devil is cowed. Christ has plumbed the depths, entered hell, as Balthasar says *with a thud* that resonates through all time and eternity. He has done this for us and for our salvation. That is why his Holy Cross Day is a Feast.

Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? Even the Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory.

Peter Mullen

ARTS AND BOOKS



Mother Merkel's Chickens

John Jolliffe

The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam, Douglas Murray, Bloomsbury, 2017, £18.99

Last year good Mother Merkel, in many ways a responsible and admirable character – opened the flood gates of her country to three million refugees who had good reasons to emigrate. Whether they were political or economic refugees, or a bit of both, it was often impossible to tell. Sometimes welcomed for their various skills, sometimes bitterly resented, they increased their hosts' self distrust and feelings of guilt. Generalisations, and even hard and fast distinctions, are impossible.

In practice, what is to become of the refugees? The author points out convincingly that we Europeans cannot turn ourselves suddenly, or even gradually, into Indians or Chinese.' Yet we are expected to believe that anyone in the world can move to Europe and become a European.' Is this to be a matter of racial characteristics, or about 'values'? If the latter, what *are* European values, to which incomers 'must' become acclimatised? Are they based on so called human rights, an elastic term if ever there was one? They have nevertheless been invoked to justify armed interference first in Afghanistan (failure), then Bosnia (largely successful) and then in Iraq, Libya and Syria (disaster every time.)

The result is that millions of people from other backgrounds are moving into what Murray calls a self-blaming, jaded and moribund culture. That, of course, is not the whole story, especially as regards this country. However, one measurement of the effect on the population of Britain is that in 2014 women who were born overseas accounted for 27 per cent of all live births in England and Wales, and no less than 25 per cent of new babies had at least one immigrant parent. How many of these are in civilised, hard working, Polish and other families who make a huge contribution to our country and fully deserve the benefits they receive; and how many are solitary knife wielders, murderous van drivers and other convicted criminals, all very difficult to expel, thanks to their 'human rights' and the insatiable lawyers who look after them? Nor are they always friendly to each other. A boatload of over fifty sub-Saharan Africans set off from Morocco for Spain; the Cameroonian Muslim captain blamed the bad weather on a Nigerian Christian pastor who was praying on board. He was beaten up and thrown overboard, followed by others who were identified as Christians.

Other waves entered Greece and Italy, countries already suffering from unprecedented economic problems, and regarded Germany as their ultimate promised land. In the New Year of 2015 Merkel announced that 'It goes without saying that we help' these people, many of whom had recently escaped death, 'and take in people who seek refuge with us.' The German Interior Minister soon had to revise the number of expected arrivals for 2015 up to 800,000, more than four times the total number of arrivals in 2014. In the EU, borders had come down and 'freedom of movement' had arrived. In 2015, about 400,000 migrants moved through the territory of Hungary alone. Conversely, in the middle of the exodus of refugees from Syria, Saudi Arabia refused to allow the use of 100,000 air-conditioned tents that are erected there for only five days a year for pilgrims on the Hadj. Instead, the Saudis offered to build a further two hundred mosques in Germany…

At home, there is the disgrace of the exploitation and enslavement of girls in Rotherham by 'Asian' gangs, perhaps of less recent immigrants. Other notorious crimes have been exposed in Rochdale. When the Labour MP Ann Cryer rightly took up the issue, she was shouted down with the usual parrot cries of 'Racist!' which of course missed the point by a mile. On the other hand, the Swedish Minister of Integration, Mona Sahlin, speaking at a Kurdish mosque back in 2004, stated that many Swedes were jealous because the Kurds had a rich and unifying culture, 'whereas the Swedes only had silly things like the Festival of Midsummer Night'. Another with even more courage was the Moroccan-born Muslim Mayor of Rotterdam, the son of an Imam, who recently declared on television, 'If you don't like this freedom, for Heaven's sake pack your bags and leave.' If they don't do so, Murray warns, in the foreseeable future there will be more Muslims in Europe than indigenous Europeans.

In France, with its long history of racial conflict, the number of Muslim-inspired anti-Semitic attacks doubled in the year 2013/4, to 841. A Muslim murderer had already shot three children and a teacher at a Jewish school in Toulouse, and an Imam speaking at a mosque in Berlin urged God 'to destroy the Zionist Jews. Kill every last one of them'. Overall, those who protested against Muslim blasphemy of this kind had at first been ignored, then sacked, and finally killed.

No less bewildering is the habit in Belgium, and England too, of public encouragement and assistance for dangerous suspects. The Bolton greengrocer Tiger Hanif, having arrived illegally in 1996, had received more than £200,000 in legal aid from British taxpayers to avoid repatriation. And Salah Abdeslami, chief surviving suspect of the Paris attacks in November 2016, had collected €19,000 in unemployment benefits, the last of them paid only weeks before the attacks.

This uniquely important book, while it can no doubt be accused of using selective quotations and examples, has the great advantage of being written in lucid English, intelligible to everyone, instead of the semi-Americanised, stodgy sociological jargon which has crept, like ground elder, into so much writing on current affairs.Do not just read this review. Read the book.

Inside the Skull

Anthony Daniels

Admissions: A Life in Brain Surgery, Henry Marsh, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2017, £16.99.

Henry Marsh's first book about his life as a neurosurgeon *Do no Harm,* was so good that one feared that he might be a one-book man: that nothing he wrote would approach its quality. But if his second book is not quite as good – there are passages of travelogue in it which, if pleasant enough to read, lack the tension of his clinical narratives – it is still very good indeed.

Its title suggested, apparently, by his wife, captures the ambiguity of Marsh's reflections on his own career and activities. The admissions of the title are the patients who enter the hospital for neurosurgery, but they are also the author's confessions of his own shortcomings, both professional and personal. Clearly a very gifted man, one learns that he was not a particularly good son, father or husband to his first wife; and he dwells more

on those cases in which he failed than on those in which he succeeded. This confessional memoir, one feels, is not mere exhibitionism, the extravagant expression of a guilt that is often actually a disguised form, or mirror-image, of self-praise or self-congratulation; the author does not expect the reader to conclude from his confessions that he is, underneath it all, a saint. When he says he is a difficult man, one believes him. Such honesty is a little disconcerting: and one ends by respecting more than liking him.

As may be gathered from this, his second book is not altogether a cheerful read, though it is never a dull one, and he retains from his first book his ability to tell a clinical story so that one is breathlessly impatient to learn its end. Marsh is an angry man, however, and in my view justifiably so. He is angry about the way in which our hospitals are now run, the insane bureaucracy which now entangles them, such that (for example) surgeons often allowed by managers to operate only one day a week. This is terrible from more than one point of view; and in the process, junior doctors have in effect been turned into shift workers on a production line, so that they soon lose all sense of vocation, or feeling that their profession is a special one. The most senior doctors like the author have lost their autonomy, power and prestige, and must now often defer to people of lesser ability, training and commitment to patient care than themselves. No doubt the power of the Sir Lancelot Spratts of the world was greater than it should have been, and was often abused, but such men were at least not apparatchiks and usually had the good of patients, the profession and their institution at heart.

Marsh recounts a telling little story. He and his colleagues decided to disobey a central instruction for doctors not to wear suits and ties in hospitals: officially in the name of infection control, but actually to proletarianise doctors, to let them understand that they are no different from any other workers. This is Maoism by management.

Marsh and his colleagues wanted to dress smartly out of respect for their patients, but soon found themselves upbraided by the management for doing so. Low morale is what managers of the NHS really like, for a demoralised profession is all the easier to control. That is why doctors are given ever more numerous and time-consuming meaningless tasks to perform; low productivity requires even more management to solve it.

Our author does not present himself in a heroic light, far from it. On one occasion, he instructed that the nasogastric tube be removed from one of his patients, which had been inserted on the orders of speech therapists, who also specialise in problems of swallowing, but which he had never needed. The nurse refused to remove it, telling Marsh that he required the permission of the speech therapists to do so. Exasperated beyond endurance, Marsh actually assaulted the nurse in front of the patient. As he freely admits this was unprofessional, but the division of authority, so that no one is absolutely sure who has the authority to give orders, is another means by which conflict requiring conflict-resolution by managers is generated.

For many years Marsh travelled both to Nepal and Ukraine to assist with neurosurgical operations beyond the skills of local surgeons, and also to train local staff. His account of his efforts, again he dwells more on his failures than his successes,is somewhat melancholy. He must have helped, indeed saved the lives of, many patients, but he is uncertain in the end whether his efforts have really made much of a difference to the welfare of those countries. It is a commonplace of modern wisdom that public health measures save more lives in poor countries than all the surgery performed put together. Neurosurgery, with its often equivocal results, would be especially low on the list of priorities.

A thread of disillusionment runs through the book. Marsh loved his work; he found it absorbing, exciting and gratifying, though also nerve-racking considering how catastrophic mistakes could be in its performance. But now that he is at the end of his career, he looks back on it with something approaching bitterness. The profession is no longer what it was; functioning institutions have lost their *esprit de corps* and been replaced by hypertrophied organisations that seem to have taken Chaplin's *Modern Times* not as a warning but as a model; trust and authority are much diminished; his devotion to his work came at a cost to his personal life; and, as a French surgeon once remarked, all surgeons carry a cemetery with them in their minds, a cemetery filled with their mistakes.

The end of the book is a reflection on the author's own mortality. As a neurosurgeon who has all his professional life witnessed the neurophysiological connection between mind and matter, he has no belief in personal survival after death. He writes of his own physical deterioration with an unusual degree of candour, at once admirable and disconcerting. His two books are his memorial, of which he and his descendants may be justly proud. But I hope he writes more.

A Gallery of Grotesques

Jane Kelly

A Very English Scandal, John Preston, Penguin, 2017, £9.99.

Who could have thought that a man's ruin, an attempted murder and the shooting of a dog could be amusing, but John Preston's book about 'The Thorpe affair' is a cross between Evelyn Waugh and an Ealing Comedy, drawing on English character at its worst, and most hilarious.

Take Peter Bessell, Liberal MP, Methodist lay preacher and Lothario, also Thorpe's adoring lackey with a 'fondness for mohair which caused him to shimmer slightly when he stood near an electric light'. Preston gives us Bessell's view of Thorpe: 'We were both wilful, quick to take offence, capable of arrogance and incurably sentimental.' 'And each in his own distinctive way was a colossal chancer.' adds Preston pithily.

With that introduction to the two men we are into a work which has the pace of a racy crime novel. The cast of English grotesques is enchanting: 'The Honourable Brecht van de Vater,' who in 1961 procured the stable lad Scott for Thorpe. 'With his tweed suits, club ties, Land Rover, horses and spaniels, he gave the impression of being a well-heeled English gentleman. In fact everything about him was a carefully constructed charade.'

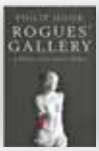
That description fits almost everyone in the book. There is a photograph of Thorpe on a campaign bus being squashed by Cyril Smith. The Rochdale MP was seen as a northern buffoon, his paedophilia concealed for another twenty years. Thorpe comes over as a witty, charismatic egomaniac. On Princess Margaret's marriage to Lord Snowden, he quipped; 'What a pity. I hoped to marry one and seduce the other.' He realised he had to marry to look convincing in public life. There's a wedding photo and under it a quote from Thorpe: 'If it's the price I've got to pay to lead this old party, I'll pay it.'

Preston relishes the rich absurdity of the situation which led Thorpe, an MP and Privy Councillor, to the Old Bailey accused of the attempted murder of his gay lover Norman Scott. Scott never used blackmail but tried endlessly to get Thorpe to acknowledge him and return his missing National Insurance card. He whined to people about how badly he had been treated, claimed to have letters from Thorpe but hardly anyone listened to him. When his claims finally made it into the press in 1976 Thorpe panicked and formed a cunning plan.

Enter more unlikely characters: John Le Mesurier, known as 'John the Carpet,' who ran a cut price carpet company, Dennis Meighan a dealer in antique guns, Roger Deakin, a millionaire from renting out slot machines, and Andrew 'Gino' Newton, also known as 'chicken brain', a small time pilot from Blackpool. They were all approached to help solve the problem of 'A nuisance who had to be silenced', as Preston adds mischievously, 'for the good of the Liberal Party'. On October 23, 1975, Scott already scared by mysterious death threats, met Newton who was posing as a minder hired to protect him. Newton drove him on to Dartmoor, shot Scott's dog, Rinka, then allegedly tried to shoot Scott but the gun jammed and Scott ran away. His words when he met an AA patrolman: 'Someone's shot my dog and tried to shoot me', led to what became known as the trial of the century.

Preston's detailed descriptions based on thorough research create a picture of an England that has probably vanished. Thorpe's homicidal desperation originated in the time before 1967 when homosexuality was illegal. But Preston notes that after his first appearance in court he tucks into 'steak pie and jam roly-poly', like any good public school chap. Probably Judge Sir Joseph Cantley 'with a face almost as red as his robe', was having the same. Preston suggests that The Lord Chancellor, Elwyn-Jones, a close friend of Thorpe's, appointed Cantley who had remained a virgin until the age of fifty six when he married the widow of another judge, still espoused 19th century sexual morality and would see lewd allegations from the lower orders as intolerable impudence. In his farcical summing up Cantley called Scott, 'A crook, fraud, sponger, whiner and a parasite.' Before adding: 'But of course, he could still be telling the truth.' He didn't say much about the men accused of attempting to murder him, except that Newton probably never paid his income tax and Deakin was the sort who had a cocktail bar in his living room.

One wonders if characters like Thorpe, Bessell and Cantley are still out there. They have probably been homogenised out of our now puritanical culture, which may be just as well for justice, but is a sad loss for the gaiety of public life.



Flogging Art

Andrew Wilton

Rogues' Gallery: A History of Art and its Dealers, Philip Hook, Profile Books, 2017, £16.59.

Philip Hook has been involved in the world of selling art for many decades, associated with both Christie's

and Sotheby's in London. He has advised for *The Antiques Roadshow* on television, and written several works of fiction, so his survey of art dealing over the last four centuries is a pleasant, not to say enthralling read. The suggestion in the subtitle that this is 'A History of Art' is hardly substantiated, though there is a brisk summary of the economics of art up to the Renaissance, into the age of mercantile Holland and the eighteenth century, taking in the astonishing collections of Charles I and his courtier the Duke of Buckingham, with their fluently persuasive Dutch agent Balthasar Gerbier. But his story really begins with the Grand Tourists of the late eighteenth century, their agents and mentors in Italy, and those who profited from the nexus of acquisition and education generated by them.

Hook doesn't go into detail over the numerous jobbing artists and antiquaries who proliferated in the Grand Tourists' path; his method is to concentrate on a representative figure in each of the periods he covers. His first important example is the Scot William Buchanan, whose methods and techniques foreshadow many that were to become standard practice. It was Sir Walter Scott who said 'I fear picture-buying, like horse-jockeyship, is a profession a gentleman cannot make much of without laying aside some of his attributes.' The activities of Buchanan involved, as Hook says, 'ingenuity and occasional duplicity that have remained serviceable in the international art trade ever since'. The modern pursuit of 'trophy art' was already a well-established phenomenon in the early nineteenth century. Buchanan was not above offering bribes to Royal Academicians to speak in favour of pictures he wished to sell. He was alive to the merits of bringing potential buyers into competition with each other, and could be viciously vindictive if another dealer or collector outwitted him. He knew that a beautiful nude female body might enhance the price of a work, and was responsible for importing the famous Velázquez Venus acquired by John Morritt of Rokeby in North Yorkshire. He claimed a key role in the founding, in 1824, of the National Gallery where the Rokeby Venus now hangs.

Hook discusses some Victorian figures, notably the Belgian Ernest Gambart who settled in London and marketed the Pre-Raphaelites and other leading painters of the mid-century. Gambart exploited two strategies that had been developed in the late eighteenth century, usually by artists themselves: the exhibition of a large 'important' picture, and the sale of reproductions of it. He vigorously marketed Holman Hunt's *The Light of the World* and *Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, and bought the copyright of Frith's *Derby Day;* he made a fortune out of that, even though he didn't own the painting itself. He wanted to be on record as having paid more than any other dealer for a picture or the engraving rights. And it was with Gambart that the idea of a dealer 'branding' his stable of artists began, making their fortunes as well as his own.

The first of the great Parisian dealers in contemporary art – the Barbizon School and Impressionism – was Paul Durand-Ruel, a good deal more honest than Buchanan (he was a devout Catholic, which may have helped); Hook speculates: 'Perhaps in the end God doesn't know much about art, but He knows what He likes, and He likes the Impressionists.' Durand-Ruel adopted Gambart's policy of establishing his artists as 'brands', and presenting pictures as luxury objects. He was the first to become an educator, explaining to his clientele the profundities of the art he sold. But in these strategies he was soon outshone by more ruthless practitioners, like the Wildenstein family, Ambroise Vollard, and the Duveens.

Vollard pioneered the selling of expensive art to wealthy but ignorant and earnest Americans; the famous Albert Barnes of Philapdelpha was his client. At the same time, he could spot and support a new talent, like André Derain, or the young Picasso with his 'distinctly Spanish gusto'. Picasso, however, moved beyond Vollard's comprehension when he invented Cubism; that was a development appreciated and promoted by another dealer, Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler. When Vollard's buyers began to acquire work for investment, he lost his enthusiasm: if they could turn a profit on the pictures he sold them, why shouldn't he do the same simply by hanging on to them? He gave up dealing and became a writer.

Writing was equally important for Kahnweiler. 'There is no doubt,' writes Hook, 'that Kahnweiler was very, very closely involved in the development of Cubism. There are few instances of a dealer in modern art being as central to a new and revolutionary movement as he was. He elaborated the intellectual basis of what Picasso, Braque and Gris were developing instinctively. His writings on the subject are crucial.' What is most striking in this survey is the extent to which the dealers came actually to determine the history of art; and in particular, how they forged and maintained in prominence the whole of the Modern movement. Give the salient role of Modernism in the history of twentieth-century culture, this is an issue of central importance.

We now enter the age of hilarious stories: the wily dealers (and sometimes artists too) staging all sorts of charades to impose on insecure plutocrats in the presence of potentially enormously pricey pictures. Hook rightly commends S N Behrman's life of Joseph Duveen, 'one of the funniest books ever written about art', for its succession of wonderful anecdotes, and

he supplies a good number himself, quoting Kenneth Clark's memory of Duveen struggling (with the help of a much better-informed handler) to pronounce the names of Baldovinetti and Pollaiuolo. He discusses the perennially questionable relationship between Duveen and the art-historian Bernard Berenson, who made a fortune from providing the dealer with authentications, and recounts the ruthless stratagems employed in the assembling of the Frick and Huntington collections, now among the glories of the American museum constellation.

Another Paris dealer, René Gimpel, kept a diary that preserves numerous good stories. He visits Léonce Rosenberg in the Rue de la Baume, where Rosenberg has displayed 'Puzzles composed of patches of flat colours, interwoven and yet sharply differentiated. … The sculptures are the most curious. I stopped in front of a marble ball cut like a Dutch cheese. I asked Léonce what it represented, and he replied: "It's a woman's head." I gazed, astonished, and then he added: "Only the form counts: it makes any representation of accessories – the mouth, the eyes, the nose – quite superfluous." We see here emerging the impressive jargon that has become the curatorial gobbledegook of today; the frightening thing being that it is no longer dealers only who invent such nonsense but museum authorities, whose responsibility it should be to clarify, not to obfuscate in the interest of money-making.

The story progresses – or regresses – through the rest of the twentieth century, helped along by Americans and Germans, Irish and English. Hook devotes a long final section to the Sotheby's chief Peter Wilson, who in characteristically aristocratic style brought the whole culture firmly into the auction house. The latest phases in London can be witnessed now in the takeover of the grand old houses of Sotheby's and Christie's by businessmen who seem interested only in appealing to the young and ignorant, to the excessively rich (and equally ignorant) of the developing world, who have created a market in which the variety of the Old Masters of all schools and periods is marginalized. Where it could have been said that art salesmanship did involve at least a modicum of genuine knowledge and education, it has become largely a machine for transferring the latest fashionable nonsense to a gullible public. Readers who would like to be kept abreast of this depressing tale should subscribe to *The Jackdaw*, a sharp-eyed and witty, if wonderfully scurrilous quarterly newspaper dedicated to the subject, and to the visual arts in Britain generally.

The Curse of the Quaint

Celia Haddon

The Village News, The truth behind England's rural idyll, Tom Fort, Simon & Schuster, 2017, £14.99.

What is a village? Before railways, bicycles and cars, the typical village had a church, a mill, a Manor House, some farm workers' cottages, a shop, a pub, a school perhaps, a mill and a blacksmith's forge. Nowadays the forge, the mill and manor house have been bought by rich incomers, the workers' cottages have been sold off to the middle classes as weekend cottages, and the shop closed years ago. The council house estates of the l950's and 60's, and the later private estates from developers have sprouted in the fields surrounding the old village core.

Is this aggregation of houses still a village? Tom Fort, a travel writer probably best known for his eccentric book (and TV programme) on the A303, thinks they are. Not for him, the usual lament for a lost English village, the hierarchy of happy peasants working on the land under the village squire. He believes that village life is alive and well in places like the red brick settlement of Sonning Common with its seafood bar, Indian restaurant, Chinese takeaway, supermarket, bank and other shops.

In pursuit of what makes a village work, he visits twenty-one villages, many of which have been the subject of popular books about village life. The village of Lower Bourne, just outside Farnham in Surrey, for instance, was the subject of *Change in the Village* by George Sturt. The open fields had been enclosed fifty years before and his book published in l912 was a lament for the 'genial, steadfast, self-respecting' peasants of the past, now 'impoverished people living provisionally from hand to mouth'.

'Simple, honest, God-fearing folk' is how Joseph Arthur Gibbs saw (from a great social height) the villagers of Bibury. He was the squire of nearby Ablington Manor and wrote *his* book, *A Cotswold Village*, in 1898 when he had time left over from fox-hunting, trout-fishing, and cricket. Bibury's cricket field still exists but there is no village team, since the village is now given over to tourists, being a must-see place for coach loads of Japanese (who also have a weird predilection for the unpleasing village of Kidlington in Oxfordshire). Fort calls Bibury a sham village and blames its lack of village life on 'the curse of the quaint', its status as a conservation area. Chelsfield in greater London is another of the villages he examines. Split into two by a by-pass road and

bordered by Chelsfield Park, a pre-war housing estate of modest detached houses with large gardens, it was once the childhood home of 'Miss Read,' the *nom de plume* of a freelance writer who rarely if ever visited her childhood village, except when commissioned to write an article for a newspaper. Her series of novels about Fairacre, based on Chelsfield, portrayed stories from a timeless village without feuds, vandalism or poverty. Nowadays the original Chelsfield Park houses, like her childhood bungalow, have been replaced by Georgian-style mansions. However the village (if it is one) is still alive, if not kicking, with a primary school, pub, village hall and a Chelsfield Ladies Group.

While the unplanned expansion of the pre-war period may have blighted villages, the planners themselves have a lot to answer for. The pit village of Chopwell, in Tyne and Wear, was a settlement of 400 miners' bins-at-the-back cottages built by mine owners. It really was a close-knit community, united in unforgiving vengeance on all strike breakers and scabs. Indeed, after winning the Northern Football Alliance League in 1920, its football club asked for permission (not granted) to change its name to Chopwell Soviets! Yet when the pit closed in l967, the planners of Durham County Council put Chopwell on a D list, a list of mining villages doomed to demolition or slow death by starvation of funds. Now it's a dumping ground for ex-prisoners and undesirables and almost every single village organisation from the colliery band to the WI has closed. With a late change of heart Gateshead Council's plan for the village is now to 'build upon its inherent strengths and link this to spatially and thematically linked interventions'. 'Who in God's name writes this stuff?' asks Fort.

Tom Fort has a good eye for quirky detail but his visits to the villages are quick ones. He has no time to uncover the deep resentment of local families against incomers, the disconsolate vandalism of bored teenagers, the unending gossip and the quickly ignited feuds that exist in country communities. Because he is looking for the positive signs of village life like youth clubs, WI meetings and sports, he ignores the less pleasant side of country community life: the hidden alcoholism, the visible drug taking and the takeaway containers and empty bottles bordering all the country roadsides.

The transformation of village life that Fort discovers is that of relentless gentrification. Take Pitton, a Wiltshire village now mainly inhabited by retirees and executives, rather than the shepherds and forest workers of the nineteenth century. The surrounding sheep country has given way to arable cornfields dependent on artificial fertilisers, the pub is now gastro, and the social cohesiveness is middle not working class. Pitton's historian was Ralph Whitlock, a farmer's son and tireless journalist, who wrote about not only the church fetes and village hops, but also recorded the traditional pleasures of killing wildlife, shooting rabbits and blackbirds, and even netting sparrows in the hedgerows.

They don't slaughter wildlife like that in Sonning Common, where Tom Fort lives. Indeed Sonning Common wasn't even a village in the nineteenth century, just a cluster of houses with one pub. Now it has two schools, a dentist, doctor, a library and even a youth club as well as many useful shops. It also has a village plan, available on the internet, with data from a 'community survey' 'structured site, landscape, and character' surveys: 'housing needs report business survey;' and much more verbal garbage (who in God's name would read this stuff?).

So is this is the future of the village – to become a suburb full of middle class inhabitants running the village in the place of the squire's and vicar? Perhaps Tom Fort is right to welcome many of these changes. He's a delightful writer and the book is a very enjoyable read. But if villages have to become like Sonning Common to thrive, I am going to move back into town.

Fitted Up

Christie Davies

Ludo and the Power of the Book, Ludovic Kennedy's Campaigns for Justice, Richard Ingrams, London, Constable, 2017, £20

Richard Ingrams has provided us with a fine tribute to Ludovic Kennedy and to the impact of his books which sought to overturn a series of convictions that were clearly not just wrong but wrong-headed. Ingrams also warmly recognizes the tremendous contribution made by Tom Sargant, the secretary of the organization *Justice*, who from 1957-1982 was responsible for freeing twenty-five innocent but convicted men. Unlike many of his co-workers in *Justice*, Tom Sargant had the advantage of not being a lawyer and could see very clearly the problems that arose from a system that emphasized procedure rather than outcomes.

Ingram's book provides, among many other cases, a detailed account of three British murders in which the wrong people were convicted leaving the real murderer free to commit yet more offences. The first and most famous of these is that of Timothy Evans, a sad, illiterate, weak-minded chap who was hanged in 1950 for a murder that was in fact one of a string of serial murders committed by John Reginald Halliday

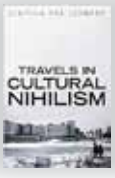
Christie who lived in the same house as Evans. Christie was the main witness for the prosecution but Evans was too weak to withstand robust police questioning and made a false confession; no significant forensic evidence was produced at Evans' trial. After Evans' death Christie went on strangling women whom he hid under the floorboards, where their corpses were found by a later tenant after he had moved out. Christie was now convicted and executed and it was obvious to any person of sense that an innocent man, Evans, had been hanged. This was a matter of much embarrassment to the Home Secretary, the former Nuremburg prosecutor, Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, who had said in the House of Commons two years earlier: 'There is no possibility of an innocent man being hanged in this country and anyone who thinks there is, is living in a world of fantasy.' Maxwell Fyfe now commissioned the Scott Henderson Report which was so muddled and self-contradictory that Maxwell Fyfe had to ask him to produce a second report. Enter Ludovic Kennedy who wrote *Ten Rillington Place,* 1961, which completely demolished all Scott Henderson's work and dissected the case in great detail. In 1966 Evans was granted a posthumous pardon, but even then the matter was fudged. There was an enormous reluctance to admit that the legal system was fallible.

I would add one more point to those made by Kennedy and Ingrams. By 1950 only just over a half of those sentenced to death for murder were actually executed. The others had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. Evans was not in any sense a threat to public order and probably was a case of diminished responsibility. Why did that body of subterranean Home Office gnomes, those Richard Wattis look-a-likes, who really decided such matters, not recommend that Evans be reprieved? Somewhere deep in the dank cellars of the Ministry of Justice there sits a file that holds the answer, but we are never going to see it. Indeed it may have been made to disappear or carefully weeded to remove all trace of incompetence. In the 1990s I asked the Home Office to let me see the files of those who had been pardoned after a criminal conviction during the period 1920-1930. Surely seventy years on all the main actors would have died. The Home Office refused on the grounds that the files might contain matters that would embarrass the grandchildren of those pardoned. On the contrary, they would have been delighted but the Home Office was fearful of the mistakes I might uncover and anyway they are obsessively secretive.

In 1959 the Conservative MP, Nicholas Fairbairn, drew Kennedy's attention to another murder case in which there had been a miscarriage of justice, and Kennedy wrote a further book, *The Presumption of Innocence: the Amazing Case of Patrick Meehan.* I will not spoil the story for the reader, but merely comment that Kennedy savaged the comments of the trial judge and suggested considerable police malpractice. There followed a detailed and expensive report on the case, which proved to be one more cover-up. Incidentally the book also revealed the very high level of murderous violence among Scottish criminals. The murder rate is considerably higher in Scotland than in England and Wales. Glasgow is the murder capital of Europe.

The third of Kennedy's crusading books Ingrams discusses in detail is *Wicked Beyond Belief,* 1980. The wickedness referred to was the perjured evidence given by the actual murderer that led to the conviction of innocent men for the crime he had committed. The key organiser of the stitch-up was the evil Commander Kenneth Drury of Scotland Yard who later was sentenced to eight years for corruption in another matter. Yet the case revealed the unwillingness of judges ever to admit that the police are capable of distorting and fixing the evidence in order to get the conviction they want. On this last point I am afraid that Kennedy, and following him Ingrams, are telling the truth.

In fairness I do not think that judges are any more likely to go to undue lengths to pretend that their institutions are the true embodiment of all that is true and excellent than others covering up for humanly flawed organization. Politicians, generals, bishops, trade union bosses have the same weakness. And so do left-wing lawyers. Look at how they all rallied to the defence of the dodgy human rights solicitor Phil Shiner who faked Iraq War cases against our gallant troops; to the dismay of the leftist-rightists Shiner was struck off by the Law Society. There ought to be a best-selling book praising our dogged Ministry of Defence for unmasking him. I notice too that Ingrams is still saying that 'James Hanratty was wrongly executed'. The subsequent DNA evidence showing that Hanratty was guilty is conclusive but will Ingrams ever admit he was wrong? But never mind, he has written an excellent book about Ludo.



Nothing Comes of Nothing

Brian Eassty

Travels in Cultural Nihilism, Stephen Pax Leonard, Arktos, 2017, £15.95.

Despite the title, this is not a travel book but a polemic in the form of a collection of essays. In his introduction, Leonard makes much of the various places to which

he takes us: we visit a Russian Orthodox Church, a village in northern Sweden and an Oxford college. Their atmosphere is delineated with clarity but there is no interaction between Leonard and the people in any of these places. Only once does he have what could be described as a conversation with anyone, an Inuit called Ibbi, who from his isolated standpoint in northern Greenland, views with considerable alarm the cultural suicide of Western Europe, the theme of Leonard's book. More interactions would have lightened the tone of the book without betraying its purpose.

Multiculturalism has stripped Western Europe of its bedrock of shared values and created a vacuum which Islam, possessed of an assertiveness about its values which the West has lost, is all too willing to fill. Perhaps the most unfathomable paradox of life in Western Europe today is why a liberalism which claims to be inclusive and open to diversity is so accommodating to an authoritarian Islam which is the opposite of all that it stands for. It sometimes seems as if history is now being played out as a battle to be Top Ideology, akin to the struggle to be Top Nation in Sellar and Yeatman's *1066 And All That*, with Secular Materialism and Islam both drawn against the Judaeo-Christian tradition in the semi-finals before playing each other in the final. If that is not the multiculturalists' game plan then the lack of logic in their choice of friends is frighteningly illogical as Leonard makes clear.

Leonard spends much of his time in Sweden and his occasional earnestness can be forgiven as his first hand experience of multiculturalism comes from that country which seems to be more tightly in the grip of the disease than one can imagine Britain being, even in one's most pessimistic moments. Sweden has been subjected to an experiment in mass immigration which has been far more severe than that visited on Britain. In 2014-15, more than a quarter of a million refugees arrived in Sweden to join a country of 9.6 million people. That is the equivalent of a population the size of Leeds arriving here every year. One would expect this to raise some concerns among the indigenous electorate of Sweden and indeed it does but the party which has taken on the job of voicing those concerns, Sverigedemokraterna or SD, is subject to such harassment, with newspapers refusing to take their advertisements and postal unions boycotting their leaflets, that it has been suggested by some of the leading political parties in Denmark that Sweden needs observers from the Council of Europe at its elections. Shockingly Sweden does not even have what we would understand as a secret ballot. One can only speculate on how the European Court of Human Rights has let that pass. For SD still to be the third largest party in the country with a steady 20 percent of the vote in the face of such obstacles is surely an indication of how much its message resonates with those who hear it.

They do not find it in the Swedish media, however. Swedish newspapers are largely state-funded and wedded to covering up and making excuses for the failings of the multicultural project. Reading Leonard's description of Swedish radio even makes one forgive the BBC for its shortcomings. P1, the equivalent of Radio 4, is described as something akin to an endless edition of Woman's Hour with discussions on topics such as 'Does God Hate Women?' and 'Are Farmers Homophobic?'. One cannot turn for relief to P2 (the equivalent of Radio 3) in the two hours a day in which it broadcasts in Somali.

Leonard's experience of how political correctness operates in Sweden should act as a warning to us to be on our guard here. Sometimes he seems to overstate his case. For example, his assertion that 'the British government is introducing legislation to prevent anyone speaking at a higher education institution whose views may somehow be considered 'radical' is presented without evidence and seems to go against the widely reported statement by the Higher Education minister Jo Johnson in March ordering universities to protect freedom of speech and drop safe spaces and no platform policies. The BBC may not be far from adopting the worst banalities of Swedish radio, but we do still have diversity of opinion in our print media. Even at the time of the EU Referendum, despite the widespread tendency to Establishment group-think, there were still several national newspapers in favour of Brexit. Of course there are some intolerant liberal activists who would like to end this state of affairs, as the Stop Funding Hate campaign with its attack on the *Daily Mail's* advertising revenue showed last year, but for the moment our newspapers are much more open to a wide range of opinion than those in a country like Sweden.

Leonard believes that both Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump are misrepresented by the European media – and with reason. His interpretation of the motives for Putin's actions over the past few years is very instructive. and Leonard admires him for unapologetically making his own indigenous culture first among equals while in countries like Sweden and to a lesser extent Britain, political correctness would make it last.

Elsewhere this book is highly pessimistic and understandably so as it deals with the extinction of so many freedoms by an all-powerful multicultural hegemony. But it might be that political correctness has within it the seeds of its own destruction. It relies on people in its defined victim groups being willing to take the roles allotted to them. That did not work last

year when many women refused to let Hillary Clinton assume victim status for them and voted for Trump. Political correctness also has a propensity to eat itself. A culture that thrives on being offended needs to find ever more offenders until it makes bogeymen of its own darlings: Peter Tatchell, Germaine Greer, Jenni Murray. The most pious members of the Salem congregation eventually have to account for their actions at the witch trial, until we are left perhaps with just Polly Toynbee and Laurie Penny eyeing each other suspiciously from opposite ends of the room and saying: 'Everyone's racist except you and me – and I'm not sure about you!'

That might be a faint hope but the alternative is a bleak one, as bleak as this book's cover photo – a harsh landscape battered by freezing weather and by the brutalist architecture of the building which dominates it. At one point, Leonard writes of the reaction of many people in the West to the overwhelming power of the forces of globalism: they 'have privatised their lives, turned in from society, dragged down by a defeatist sense that they cannot do anything about it'. It is the same weariness one imagines Winston Smith feeling in *1984* as he finds every route to improving his life blocked off. Such a man might live in such an environment and Leonard goes on to describe it further for us. 'Sterile 'anywhere-in-the-world' housing estates and identikit soulless shopping centres full of outsiders trapped in their own cultural bubbles. Places are becoming homogenous and perhaps ultimately interchangeable – a horrendous thought.' When everywhere is everywhere, nowhere is anywhere. Welcome to Nihil City Centre.

Spooning with Marx

Martin Dewhirst

Labour and the Gulag: Russia and the Seduction of the British Left, Giles Udy, Biteback Publishing, 2017, £30.00.

This amazing study is the first detailed account of the Labour Party's support for, flirtation and collusion with, and appeasement of the tiny group of *international* socialists, the Bolsheviks, who illegally seized power in Petrograd during the First World War. Udy takes up the story in unprecedented detail, concentrating on the period before the *national* socialists took power in Germany some 16 years later, compelling some people to decide which sort of socialism was the greater or lesser evil. Here is a quotation from a typical (1931) speech in the House of Commons by a Labour government minister (with Liberal inclinations) in the coalition then running the country. The Soviet people 'are engaged in a vast and very remarkable economic experiment, and what we have always said is that they are entitled in their own way to pursue that experiment without outside interference… I say, let the experiment continue. Let us give all the co-operation we can.' 'Experiment' is a word cropping up frequently in the quotations in this book.

The leaders of the Petrograd coup and subsequent revolution in Russia believed fervently not only in socialism and communism but also in atheism. Any sort of 'Christian socialism' was repugnant to them. As the Bolsheviks represented only a tiny minority within a large, mainly religious, population, they had to use force to remain in power, illegally closing down the legitimately elected Constituent Assembly, and also try to impose their faith in the inevitability of 'progress' by indoctrinating the masses not only in dialectical materialism (*diamat*) but also in the even more pernicious 'historical materialism' (*istmat*), based on the allegedly 'scientific' laws of history. Despite the horrific slaughter of the 'Great War', which some people thought would end all wars, many non-Russians also believed that, just as capitalism had replaced feudalism, so socialism would gradually and *inevitably* replace capitalism. Whether communism would ever supersede socialism was not relevant. Many 'progressive' people outside Russia thought it was vital to give the Bolsheviks the benefit of any doubts and help them stay in power. Increasing *trade* (another key word then – and now) with Russia would help to 'mellow' the Soviet regime and reduce its intolerance towards various religious beliefs and other outdated and disapproved of phenomena. This resulted in well-meaning, if naive, attempts, and not only among members and supporters of the Labour Party at *co-operation* with official Moscow, often leading to ill-judged *collaboration* with the Soviet regime.

Very few of the British supporters of the great Soviet experiment, or their critics and opponents, found the time to learn Russian, so the writings and opinions of those who had fled from the 'new civilisation' had very little impact. Russian was taught in very few British schools and universities, and 'Soviet Studies' as an academic project only began in the UK after WWII. What *is* surprising, to judge from the contents of Udy's research, is that British supporters as well as opponents of the Bolsheviks displayed so little interest in, let alone sympathy and support for the more Westernised Russian socialist parties, the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionaries, which the Bolsheviks had ruthlessly crushed after seizing power. The British Labour Party in the 1920s and 1930s had no qualms about fraternising with the leaders of the one-Party state especially as the Bolsheviks were

international socialists and therefore more acceptable than the German national socialists whom Udy hardly mentions.

At the end of the 1920s, widespread non-political criticism in the UK of the Bolsheviks was first focused on the virulent anti-religious campaign in the USSR, led by a remarkable clergyman, Alfred Gough, but it morphed into protests about British connivance with the widespread Soviet forced labour policies, intensified during Stalin's decision to collectivise agriculture. Millions of the more effective and hard-working peasants were banished to forced labour camps and colonies in remote parts of the USSR. Udy concentrates his attention on Karelia. Thousands of inmates were put to work as lumberjacks in Russia's North-West – the Northern Territory, including the Solovetsky Islands, where the first Soviet concentration camp had been established shortly after the October Revolution. Most of the 'prisoners' (the camps were not officially called prisons) were forced to work as lumberjacks to provide timber for sale to hostile capitalist countries, which in exchange provided their socialist enemies with technical equipment, needed for the industrial revolution in the Soviet Union. A good example of the art of the deal: just business, nothing political! But Britain, like several other countries, could have bought the timber it needed from states that did not use forced labour. However, both the Labour Party hierarchy and key people in the Foreign Office were very reluctant to accept the evidence of the use of forced labour in Soviet Russia and only too willing to believe the denials of plausible scoundrels like Ivan Maisky, the long-time Soviet ambassador in London. I think Udy may underestimate the importance of the 1924 'Zinoviev Letter', regarded by many experts, almost certainly correctly, as an émigré forgery. Perhaps, these doubters may have wrongly thought, the abundant evidence of Bolshevik atrocities in the Far North Russian labour camps also lacked credibility

This weighty volume, the result of much reading and of many years of research in a variety of archives, is particularly relevant now, both in Russia and in the West. Just as the book was being launched in London, a historian, Yury Dmitriev, was being held in a Russian pre-trial isolation facility for trying to identify as many as possible of the victims and the people who sent them to the Karelian forced labour camps. The current regime in Russia would like us to believe that all this business is over and done with, just history, with little if any relevance for the present, unlike the Holocaust. However, the links between 'then' and 'now' in Russia are much stronger than a superficial study might suggest, as there has been only 'token' repentance for the mass crimes of the Stalin era, and Stalin himself is again becoming popular in today's Russia. Dmitriev has even been accused of traumatising the descendants of some of those he named as having helped to run the Gulag. What good could that possibly do?

But, alas, Udy's book is also very timely for his own country. The Labour Party has recently taken another lurch to the far left, and the Conservative Party is not only in disarray but reluctant to dig into the background and activities of dubious wealthy Russians among many others. Some Conservatives are even using the same simplistic arguments of the Labour Party in the 1920s when calling for more trade with Russia, closer relations with the Kremlin, but not with the Russian opposition and even a reduction or end of sanctions. Such people may think, after the implosion of the USSR, socialism no longer has a future, because Putin and the Russians are now building capitalism, albeit of the state-controlled-oligarchic variety. Western gullibility in understanding the Kremlin's strategy seems to be as prevalent now in some 'right-wing' circles as in the 'left-wing' community. Only very slowly is it being realised that today's nuclear-powered Kremlin is even more dangerous than Islamic terrorism. One wonders who the next Prime Minister might be….

Ballot Rigging

James Monkton

The New Totalitarian Temptation: Global Governance and the Crisis of Democracy in Europe, Todd Huizinga, Encounter Books, 2016, £15.99.

The Brexit referendum of June 2016 elicited the largest democratic expression of will in British history. This has been too much for some Remainers. Particularly repellent has been the conveniently timed 'democratic' Damascene conversions of many Europhile MPs; having contentedly ignored the democratic deficit and lack of accountability in EU politics for over four decades, many suddenly rediscovered parliamentary sovereignty and especially parliamentary procedure in a brazen but ultimately, so far, anyway futile attempt to block the implementation of the referendum vote. Meanwhile many vociferous Remainers, often hugely significant figures within the establishment, display a woefully poor grasp of mathematics as well as of democracy, thinking that 17.4 million leave votes represents a lesser value than their 16.1 million remain votes. 'We are the 48 per cent' they righteously declare on their car stickers. Yes you are – and you lost. The clue is in the percentages. When Barack Obama won the 2012 American election with a margin narrower

than the UK referendum's 52 per cent – 48 per cent, did these liberals complain that the president did not have a democratic mandate to govern?

These overnight converts to parliamentary sovereignty now wish to use the cloak of democracy to diminish it, a trick of totalitarian parties through history. Many Europhiles have demanded another referendum in classic EU mode: keep voting till you get in right. As Huizinga says of the EU's reactions to referendum results that reject its *grand projet*: 'clearly the verdict of voters could not be allowed to stand'. The multi-lingual academic Huizinga offers an important slant on the EU and democracy. As an American diplomat, between 1992 and 2012 he toiled in Luxembourg and Brussels, as well as in Dublin, Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg. Back in the States, he worked at the European Union Desk at the State Department in Washington. He therefore shows the acute perceptions of an informed observer. The result is an important book, as well as a readable one. *Encounter* also deserve praise for producing a clearly designed book free from errors.

Huizinga argues that the EU is a major proponent of the dangerous plans of 'global governancers', idealists who want an utopian world order of peace based on legality and conformity, but not genuine democracy. Such a cause is more likely to cause conflict than end it. The new political order is to be underpinned by a new social one, based not on tradition and the reality of human nature, but on human rights and 'unfettered individual choice'. Huizinga's counterblast is solidly based on a clear-headed understanding of diplomacy, politics and power and how they actually work, and not how the deluded followers of the EU's 'soft-utopian ideology' think these should operate in their perfectibilarian fantasy world, which 'puts politics before people'.

Huizinga convincingly argues that the Treaty of Rome's call to 'ever closer union' is deliberately open ended and imprecise; 'this vagueness is strategic', designed to allow – indeed, encourage – any manner of emasculations of the nation-state while permitting the emerging EU to evolve into 'something that will ultimately subsume within itself the sovereignty and independence of its member states'. All the while democracy is deliberately eroded. Huizinga shows how the EU simply ignored anti-EU integration referendum results in Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Ireland (the last twice). The disastrous Eurozone has wrought misery on southern Europe, as predicted by Eurosceptics and many economists, but of course ignored by the ideologues in Brussels in their hope that it 'would ultimately force Europeans to accept a politically integrated EU'.

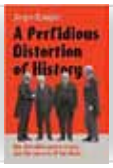
As a Christian American conservative, Huizinga laments the watering down of Europe's religious roots in its constitution as a rewriting of history by the ruling secularist elites and questions what he sees as the disproportionate priority the EU gives to LGBT rights and Islam over traditional values. Here he reveals his faith-based sensibilities and his argument becomes more subjective. However, his role as an American diplomat offers extremely valuable insights into the implications of the EU's global governance plans for its relations with the US, as already experienced in frictions between the two entities over the International Criminal Court. Huizinga is anxious about the potential clashes that lie ahead between two increasingly different mind sets.

Lest some readers of this book dismiss it as just another grumbling diatribe from the disaffected right, his critique is quite similar to that of the radical left-wing politician and Greece's former minister of finance, Yanis Varoufakis. In his recent book *And the Weak Suffer What They Must?* he writes:

> *A European union very much like the one administered by the Brussels technocracy is not incompatible with totalitarianism…. The slide into totalitarianism is not to be prevented by technical means applied by faceless bureaucrats primarily concerned with their own banal careers.*

Jean-Claude Juncker has spoken of how European integration was being pushed forward by the governing elites: 'We decide something, and then we just throw it out there and wait to see what happens. If there are no big howls of protest and no uprisings, because most of the people don't even understand what was decided, then we just go on – step by step, until there is no turning back.' Huizinga later cross-references this to the 'Monnet Method', explained by EU founding father Jean Monnet: 'Europe's nations should be guided towards the superstate without their people understanding what is happening'.

Huizinga concludes that 'we have a choice between self-government and the slow suicide of liberal democracy'. He rightly warns pragmatists – those that believe that the EU is a leopard whose spots can be changed – that they are 'too complacent. They seriously underestimate the power of ideas, dreams and word views, especially if they seem unrealistic or logically incoherent.' Nonetheless, he remains optimistic that it is not too late to save Europe from a mortal fate. I'm not so sure. If full Brexit really happens there is hope that democracy has some life left in it yet, but the Europhile forces marshalled against it in this country, never mind on the continent, are hovering around the hospital bed waiting to turn the life-support off.



An Invitation to War

Sara Moore

A Perfidious Distortion of History: The Versailles Peace Treaty and the success of the Nazis, Jürgen Tampke, Scribe Publications, 2017, £20

Retired associate History Professor of the University of New South Wales, Jürgen Tampke, is twenty years older than Professor Christopher Clark, Professor of History at Cambridge in England. Both men are Australian, even though Tampke was born in Germany. However their views on modern history are light-years apart.

In his new book, Tampke takes issue with the assertions Clark makes in his latest book, *The Sleepwalkers, How Europe went to war in 1914* (2012) insisting: 'Some of his arguments are dubious, others are plain wrong. Other historians support Tampke's claim that Clark has ignored modern evidence.

Tampke asserts that the two historical legends, that 'we all slithered into war' in 1914, and that Germany was subjected to an unfair Treaty at Versailles afterwards, were in fact internationally agreed in the early 1950s, before all the information was available. 'The reality' of Germany's war guilt, Tampke says, 'was laid bare in the 1960s when the History Professor at Hamburg University, Fritz Fischer, published his blockbuster books. Fischer and his disciples' evidence was so overwhelming that 'attempts to counter it 'could garner little credibility.' Tampke's racy narrative claims that Bismarck enjoyed such a success on the battlefield that an ugly admiration of militarism became widespread after his fall from office.

Tampke supports Fischer's evidence that the German leadership took advantage of a crisis in the Balkans to give Austria a 'Blank' cheque to take military action against the Serbs, even if this resulted in a 'showdown' with France and Russia.' He also supports Fischer's assertion that Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg portrayed himself as a man of peace. Yet he actually used what he realised was the defensive mobilisation of Russia's troops to rally the German Social Democrats behind what he claimed was 'a defence against aggression from the barbarian east'.

Tampke claims that Germany's victorious army in the East raped Russia and charged her an indemnity of six billion marks under the Supplementary Brest-Litovsk Treaty of August 18th 1918. On the western front, however, the German army 'undernourished and physically and mentally exhausted,' was on the verge of collapse, prompting General Ludendorff to seek an armistice. Tampke says that American President Woodrow Wilson had wanted 'Peace without Victory' in 1917 but gave vital military support to the allies in the summer of 1918. Yet he omits that Wilson's suspicions of 'imperialist' Britain and France returned before the armistice.

France lost 1.5 million men by 1918 and her devastation was completed by the retreating German army. 'Industrial plants were removed to Germany, factories blown up, railway tracks torn up, and coalmines … flooded. Although two million Germans also died, Tampke explains that 'no foreign soldier had set foot on German soil, no villages were razed, no industrial compound dismantled or blown to pieces. Europe's largest coal mining and steel producing area was still able to work at full capacity.'

Wilson wished to retain Germany as a viable state so decided to retain the German-speaking parts of Bismarck's Reich intact (including the ancient state of Bavaria) and refused to listen to French pleas to confine the German borders to east of the River Rhine. However, he was horrified by the insulting, lying and intransigent behaviour of the leader of the German delegation, Count von Brockdorff Rantzau, at Versailles, and supported returning to war if Germany did not sign the Treaty. Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles but America never ratified it so it proved difficult to enforce.

News bulletins only commenced in 1920, and films were also brand new, so it was easy for German News Tsars to blame the German people's post-war tribulations on foreigners. Yet, to assert, like Keynes, that the Treaty 'was one of the most outrageous acts of a cruel victor in civilised history' 'is a perfidious distortion of history' according to Tampke, who discloses that only 2 billion of the 21 billion marks, or under £100 million, was credited in 'actual cash' reparations between 1919 and 1933.

By 1925, according to Tampke, Germany was heading for 'industrial hegemony in Europe;' by 1928, her industrial output had surpassed pre-First World War levels. Yet the allies are still blamed for the rise of Hitler and the Second World War because of their heavy reparations demands. Tampke blames Germany's unemployment squarely on German Chancellor Heinrich Brüning's 'austerity' policy. 'Public servants had their wages reduced on three occasions during 1931, by a total of 23 per cent' he declares. Taxes were also increased. 'In the two years of Brüning's government, unemployment rose from 2 million to 6 million'. Yet, as America absolved Germany from paying reparations between June 1931 and June 1932, Tampke's assertion that Germany herself was to blame

for her unemployment, rather than the 'iniquitous' reparations, rings true. The Germans called Brüning the 'hunger chancellor' and a short time later the Nazis swept to power.

The Sleepwalkers became a media sensation in Germany and Clark became a cult-figure on their ZDF television programme. Nevertheless, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* dismissed Clark as an old-fashioned know-all, while the historian Hans Ulrich Wehler objected to Clark pushing the blame for the outbreak of the war upon Britain.

Tampke reveals that on the 90th anniversary of the Treaty of Versailles the German magazine *Der Spiegel* headlined an article: *The giveaway peace – Why a Second World War had to flow upon the first One.* This acknowledged that that the German delegate at Versailles, Brockdorff-Rantzau, still held dreams of German world-domination in 1919, and that Germany's hyperinflation in 1923 and that her austerity policy of the 1930s were self-inflicted wounds. Will Britain echo Keynes accusation that the Treaty of Versailles was 'abhorrent and detestable' when the Centenary of the Treaty of Versailles arrives in 2019 or will the country agree with Jürgen Tampke assertion that the legend of the iniquitous reparations was *A Perfidious Distortion of History*?

That will be the moment when the Germans start to admire us again!

Uncertain Frontiers
Penelope Tremayne

Border: A Journey to the Edge of Europe, Kapka Kassabova, Granta publications, 2017, £10.49.

This book which deals with at least three borders, is neither an autobiography nor a travel book; it is simply an account of the author's return to Bulgaria, her homeland, after its occupation first by Nazi then by Soviet conquerors. Unsurprisingly she finds the country still beautiful and the population warmly welcoming; nevertheless the impression her story leaves is of a deep homesickness, unalloyed and probably unallayable. Kassabova was born in Sofia and must have been seventeen when her father, a professor, moved with his whole family to England for two years and then to New Zealand. As an adult and a journalist she returned many times to Bulgaria, though not to Sofia – or not much, but to regions still unspoiled in the mountains of the Rhodope, where she felt at home, or on the shore of the Black Sea, devastated as it was by conversion into luxury holiday resorts for rich Russians, drug smugglers, public sex activities, armed police with Alsatians and electrified barbed wire fences.

Kassabova is intelligent, perceptive and courageous, and her English is near perfect, with only the occasional small slip in grammar. She often shows a happy knack of choosing just the right word in descriptions: 'a flock of cyclists', a 'broad woman like a royal frigate', 'the alarm was raised by a hedgehog in the middle of the night'. 'We had to go and liquidate it in case it was a capitalist hedgehog'. One cannot help admiring the spirit that can laugh even under armed occupation.

There are rather too many accounts of Balkan folk-lore and descriptions of hostile esoteric manifestations one or two of which she says she has experienced herself. She also cites a theory of a possible link, via caving and tunnelling, between western Thrace and Tutankhamen's tomb in Egypt. As an experienced journalist she will know the importance of a 'story' but readers may baulk at evil eminences from caves or flying balls of flame. She also leans at times towards philosophical discourse but comes up against the difficulty that it does not really fit in with the rest of the book. Much more telling is her exposure of the appalling treatment to which her countrymen were subjected by Communist officialdom during forty years.

It could be argued that this is an old story by now, but parts of it are a good deal less known than they ought to be. She tells us of a process carried out in the 1980's which began with the compulsory changing of all Bulgarian personal names of Turkish or Arabic origin into Slavic versions. This was called 'the Revival Process' and was followed by the forced expulsion from Bulgaria of all Muslims (an estimated 340,000 people, men women and children), abandoning all property except what they could carry. She does not say outright that what communist officialdom did to the Bulgarian people was as bad as or even worse than what their Nazi precursors did, but she provides ample evidence. It has been referred to as the 'Red Riviera', which sounds menacing but the Black Sea has, and seems always to have had a menacing quality which remains unaffected by people or politics. Perhaps a tourist trade to the mountains might be more successful and less destructive than over-building the sea coast. During the last half century there have been one or two exhibitions in London of excavated Balkan treasures of very high quality, including a great deal of Bulgarian carved gold jewellery. Such things can attract the interest of travellers who have grown tired of more accessible destinations. Kassabova makes it quite clear that Bulgaria itself is still very beautiful. Long may it remain so.

A Christian Mystic

Peter Mullen

David Jones: Engraver, Soldier, Painter, Poet, Thomas Dilworth, Jonathan Cape, 2017, £25.

David Jones, of Welsh descent, was born in Kent on All Saints' Day 1895 and died in 1974. He possessed one of the most penetrating minds of the 20th century and displayed his genius in both visual art and literature. As a painter, engraver and designer of inscriptions, he is reminiscent of William Blake. His writing is characteristic of the great Modernists and he was much admired by Eliot, who was occasionally envious of his inspired talent while Auden said of his *The Anathemata* – meaning 'gifts dedicated to the gods', that it is … the finest long poem of the century. Quite an accolade when the competition includes *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets*.

Jones was a Christian mystic from the days of his childhood with an instinctive Catholic imagination. This did not please his father who was an extreme Protestant. One day when David was about six, he heard the Good Friday story and immediately went out, fixed together two pieces of wood and carried his home-made cross around the garden in solemn procession. He was chastised severely by his father. In the First World War, he served 117 weeks in the trenches on the front line, longer than any other British writer or artist and he actually enjoyed his time there. Similarly, he liked to wander the London streets at the height of the Blitz and called it 'real life'. In the Mametz Wood, he observed an open-air celebration of Mass by an army padre, a mystical experience which was a defining influence on the whole of the rest of his life and his work. His first book *In Parenthesis* is, in a mesmerising prose poem, an account of his wartime experiences which Eliot called a work of genius.

He suffered from shell-shock – what is now called post-traumatic stress disorder – for the rest of his days and this damaged his life and his capacity for making human relationships. He was highly sexed, always in love (with women) but could never get past kissing and cuddling. He said of himself that he had the characteristics of a homosexual, but that he was not of that persuasion. He probably died a virgin.

David was not helped in his efforts at self-understanding by having been introduced by Fr John O'Connor, the model for G K Chesterton's *Father Brown*, to the odious sex maniac, the artist Eric Gill who regularly had intercourse with his sister Gladys. Gill referred to his own perverted sexual activity as something, 'akin to godliness'. At least the pagan mystic and advocate of 'free love' William Blake did not go quite that far. Gill was a dishonest and unscrupulous man and he asked Jones to 'ghost' some pictures which Gill would then retouch and pass them off as his own. David refused.

All his work expresses the truth of the Incarnation, so he said, 'Art is not ideas but *things*.' He was pure in heart in Kierkegaard's sense who defined such purity as 'to will one thing' – that is to have incorruptible singleness of purpose. He had no false piety. Though he believed the Christian faith implicitly, he said of the institutional Catholic Church, 'It's almost as bad as the Royal Academy but that the Tridentine Mass is the supreme creative achievement of the human mind.' David was sublimely intelligent but completely disarming. He would describe in great detail an intricate aesthetical and metaphysical problem he had set himself and then add, 'It's a bugger to get it right.'

He was once resting on a bench in the gardens of Charterhouse when a monk approached and asked if he was comfortable. 'Yes, thank you.' The sanctimonious monk said, 'I don't think Our Lord was ever comfortable.' David shrugged, 'I'm off to the pub!' He knew everyone but courted no one. Of Kenneth Clark he said, 'His art criticism is faulty because he lacks religious experience.' When asked for a comment on the fashionable Swinburne types and Aubrey Beardsley, he said simply, 'I'm not interested in these decadent chaps.' Stravinsky came to see him and remarked afterwards 'It was like visiting a holy man in his cell.'

This is a competent biography but its author irritates now and again – not least in his acceptance of a Freudian understanding of Jones' personality. You might as well suggest we psychoanalyse St Paul. He says Chesterton wrote *Orthodoxy* as 'an amusing defence of Roman Catholic theology.' But in fact Chesterton published that book in 1909 while he was still an Anglican. He thinks there is a place in Gloucestershire called 'Pinnash.' It's Prinknash, but Dilworth's book is worth buying for the gold mine of quotations from Jones himself.

I've never come across anyone quite like David Jones who wrote: 'It is all about how everything turns into something else and how you can never tell when a bonza is cropping up…and how everything is a balls-up and a kind of praise at the same time.'

Ransom

Directed by Ron Howard, starring Mel Gibson, Rene Russo, Gary Sinise

Scott Grønmark

The 1996 film *Ransom* may not be the best right-wing film ever made, but it is one of the *most* right-wing films to come out of Hollywood since the 1950s. If it hadn't been directed by Ron Hoard and hadn't starred Mel Gibson, both of whom were flying high at the time, I somehow doubt that it would have received the necessary funding from executives in one of the world's most left-liberal industries.

The plot is simple enough. A New York-based airline owner's young son is kidnapped and a ransom demand is duly received. The FBI is called in. When the father, played by Gibson (in blistering form), follows their advice and tries to pay the ransom, he realises that the kidnappers have no intention of releasing his son. When another ransom demand is made, Gibson, on his way to the drop point with a suitcase stuffed with $2 million, changes his mind. He drives straight to the nearest Fox affiliate TV station and addresses the kidnappers directly on live TV. In a speech that will have had right-wingers roaring in approval, he lays all the money out in front of him, and then delivers the following message:

'Two million dollars in unmarked bills, just like you wanted. But this is as close as you'll ever get to it. You'll never see one dollar of this money, because no ransom will ever be paid for my son. Not one dime, not one penny. Instead, I'm offering this money as a reward on your head. Dead or alive, it doesn't matter. So congratulations, you've just become a two million dollar lottery ticket... except the odds are much, much better. Do you know anyone that wouldn't turn you in for two million dollars? I don't think you do.' Gibson suggests that the kidnapper releases his son at once, and then does his best to disappear: 'You still have a chance to do the right thing. If you don't, well, then, God be with you, because nobody else on this Earth will be.'

As he packs his money away following the broadcast, Gibson becomes aware of the disgusted, accusing stares of the TV production team. Outside, an angry crowd shouts insults as he leaves the studio. His wife is appalled by what he's done, as are the members of the FBI team working on the case. The whole world is against him. But he's right and they're wrong.

What makes this such a quintessentially right-wing film? First, the hero is a rich businessman without any discernible humanitarian urges, and with a distinctly dodgy commercial past – he's been involved in criminal deals and has been investigated for corruption. There are no rich businessmen heroes in liberal films, unless they've seen the progressivist light and are now determined to make the world a better (ie more left-wing) place.

Second, it's society's agents who are in the wrong here, to such an extent that the main kidnapper turns out to be a serving NYPD detective, a brilliantly malevolent performance by the conservative actor, Gary Sinise. The message is clear: don't trust experts. Left-wingers display an almost religious reverence for experts, especially those appointed by the state. Gibson decides to ignore the corporate 'wisdom' of wider society – especially its enthusiasm for compromising with evil, and instead relies on his own street-fighter's brains, guts and instincts. A man's gotta do, etc.

Third, the hero uses his ill-gotten gains to defeat his chief enemy by appealing to the greed of the other members of the gang. He doesn't try to appeal to the criminals' better nature, because he knows they don't possess one; they're unredeemable scum. And because the kidnapping is essentially a criminal business deal, Gibson feels he is better able to conclude it successfully than the earnest, well-meaning, touchy-feely government experts who are supposedly helping him to recover his son. In a telling exchange, the lead FBI agent tells Gibson, 'Tom, you've got to play the odds, man. I've been doing this for eighteen years, and if I were a betting man, I would bet on the people who pay every time, out of the gate.' To which Gibson replies, 'Did you bet on the ones where you got back a corpse?'

Ransom was a remake of the 1955 film, *Ransom!*, which benefitted from the typically glum intensity brought to the role of the businessman father by the staunchly Republican actor, Glenn Ford. If anything, *Ransom!* is even more of a hymn to right-wing, don't-rely-on-the-state, stand-on-your-own-two-feet individualism than its successor. It's left to the frazzled Chief of Police to expose the namby-pamby gutlessness of the centrist, corporatist state: 'How long do you think I'd hold my job in this community if I went around doing what I thought was right…What do you want, Charlie, a criminal code with guts?... This

is the USA, for Pete's sake – we're a very humane people.'

Ransom was the sixth most successful American box office film in 1996. Right-wing films tend to perform well commercially. Hollywood should make more of them.

ART

Sargent: The Watercolours. Dulwich Picture Gallery 21st June–8th October 2017

Jane Kelly

A young woman lolls beneath a gigantic white parasol. Her exquisite face is so flushed and she is so abundantly swathed in fine fabrics, her billowing skirt taking up over half the painting, that she seems about to faint or fall deeply, blissfully asleep in the summer heat.

It's almost a shock to find that this vibrant image of feminine languor is only a watercolour, a medium long consigned to Sunday painters who pride themselves on rigid accuracy and visual cliché. John Singer Sargent painted this portrait of his niece Rose-Marie in the Simplon in 1911 and for him the use of watercolour marked a radical change in his life.

Born in Florence in 1856 to peripatetic American parents of modest means, by sheer talent and graft he had become the leading portrait painter of his generation. He was internationally famous for his remarkable technical facility displayed in full length images of aristocratic women such as Lady Agnew of Lochnaw and their children, and dynamic portraits of men such as Lord Ribblesdale, Auguste Rodin, Robert Louis Stephenson and Henry James.

He completed about fourteen works a year for the equivalent of a million dollars a piece with clients travelling from the US to Europe to sit for him. In 1900, aged forty-four, he put down his oils and gave up portraits, exhausted by the stress of taking commissions. He escaped outdoors, travelling with friends and family around the Alps, Venice and southern Europe, far from the salons of the rich. The normally docile medium of water-colour became his conduit for freedom, comment and experimentation.

This exhibition in south London, the first in a hundred years to show his works on paper, has been curated by Richard Ormond, CBE, the grandson of Violet Ormond, Sargent's sister, and Elaine Kilmurray an expert on the painter. They have divided eighty works into four groups. The first room, 'Fragments,' means in the modern sense, close-ups. It shows how completely he had abandoned the large, grand image for small overlooked details, shapes and shadows, his 'translucent moments.'

His fragments are as strong as finished works; a tiled section of patio somewhere in the Alhambra, an architectural slice through a column in Rome, the green slimy steps of a palace in Venice, the brilliant 'Spanish Fountain,' 1912, cropped on four sides so he can concentrate on what really interests him; spouting arcs of water making reflections in the pool below. The cherubs holding up a large basin seem almost alive and everything is modelled entirely through tone and reflected light. We also see his intense interest in fishing boats and rigging, for he creates an armature of bowsprits and masts, in long, confident streaks of wash. It seems that he was accidentally making great work whilst searching for a subject.

Section two is Cities. In Venice, which he visited every autumn, he often painted in gondolas, literally fluid as he sketches iconic buildings obliquely as he floats past, giving as much worth to side-canals and industrial sites. Everything he paints seems to shimmer, nothing is still, with light fizzing off every pillar and solid shape. Then we move on to Landscapes. Painting outside in the countryside became a fashionable Edwardian pastime, but in small images he seems to have challenged himself to depict the effect of light on Alpine streams, boulder strewn valleys and olive groves. Many people at that time could paint accomplished watercolours but here we see a painter using strong bold colour, wax and white body colour, and moving into abstraction in the struggle to capture light. This section includes is an exquisite little painting of Mar Saba, an Orthodox monastery in the Kidron Valley, east of Bethlehem, given by the Ormond family to Sir Edward Heath.

Rightly or not, his figure paintings in the final room are really the ravishing climax of the show; Bedouin women, blind Spanish musicians in Granada, Spanish convalescent soldiers broadly washed in with extreme fluidity, and his sister Violet, painted in 1883, then a slender teenager. There is a particular poignancy about them for the modern viewer. Many of his beautiful young subjects (including many of the little boys in

his earlier oils) are about to die, their world of leisure and refinement with them. In 1914 Rose-Marie's young husband was killed in action. Four years later she died when a German shell hit the church of Saint-Gervais where she was listening to a concert.

Sargent's most famous war painting, 'Gassed,' a large oil now in the Imperial War Museum, was begun shortly before Rose-Marie died. He readily took his watercolour palette to war. It proved excellent for making quick, lively sketches such as war weary Scottish Highlanders shown at the front in France, resting on bales of hay. He used his skill to show the machinery of war such as equipment in a shell smashed mill in Arras, northern France, and a tarpaulin flung over a dug-out nearby. Even in that mundane subject the fabric painted with washes of violet, grey and pale yellow, is treated with as much exuberance as the folds in Rose-Marie's skirt.

He found relief from the stresses of war in watercolour life painting. Delicate male nudes, freely painted demonstrate his acute skill as a draughtsman. In Nude Man Lying on a Bed, 1917, which looks post-coital, the shape of a swimsuit still shows on a boy's relaxed tanned body, suggesting a brief interlude of pleasure. Sargent was despised by The Bloomsbury Group and seen by their critic Roger Fry as a relic of a bygone age, but these small works on paper are worthy of any expressionistic, modernist painter. He painted relentlessly all his life and here we see the fruits of that honest labour and his quest for truth.

IN SHORT

Meet Mr Jedda, Roy Kerridge, Custom Books, 2017

Nobody writes about our multicultural society with greater authority than Roy Kerridge. Not only has he experienced it at close hand longer than any other writer, but he has that rare ability to combine great sympathy for individuals with a clear-sighted view of what happens to them when the society that receives them as immigrants has lost all faith in itself and its own culture, to the extent either of denying that its culture ever had any virtues or even that it ever had a culture at all. There is no longer anything to integrate people into.

Kerridge is also blessed with a fine sense of humour, and I laughed heartily several times in this memoir of befriending and teaching, or trying to teach, Indian immigrants and their children in the early 1990s. The Mr Jedda of the title is the head of a household, nominally Moslem but of deeply syncretic beliefs, consisting of himself, his wife, four children and a Hindu woman called Pushpam, lodger, friend, exploiter and swindler.

Mr Jedda, who like his wife is illiterate, works for years in the kitchens of a tandoori restaurant in Maida Vale, where most of the workers are illegal immigrants. The law of the land means absolutely nothing to the people in Mr Jedda's milieu, other than, occasionally, for the securing of some personal advantage or other. The state offers immigrants, especially illegal ones, every possible perverse incentive, and illiterate and totally uneducated as such immigrants may be, they are easily able to run rings round the entire state apparatus, with all its graduates and trained personnel. Not surprisingly, the immigrants end up with complete contempt for the host country – a contempt that, I am sorry to say, is now almost justified.

Kerridge lived close to the Jeddas, clearly has affection for them, and shows that they had considerable charm. In their way, they are enterprising. Their children, however, receive at the hands of the state an education so utterly useless, mealy-mouthed and rotted by political correctness, that it is hardly surprising that they end up attracted to Anglo-Jamaican street culture, hardly one of mankind's civilizational peaks. Their eldest son's greatest ambition on leaving school at sixteen is to receive housing benefit.

Kerridge's unique ability is not only to avoid disdain or disgust, since it is human beings he is talking about, but also romanticisation. What, however, is the future of a country in which what he describes is not marginal to its national existence but now almost central to it?

Anthony Daniels

Close but no cigar, A true story of Prison Life in Castro's Cuba, Stephen Purvis, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2017, £18.99.

This book should be a compulsory read for all those deluded souls who spend holidays in the socialist tropical paradise and can't or won't recognise that Cuba is still a cruel corrupt dictatorship, in spite of reforms and international reconciliation. In the new century the regime was forced to let foreign businessmen into

the country and allow foreign investment. Stephen Purvis, an architect, helped to build factories, luxury hotels, a container port and a multi-million pound golf and real estate development but then was threatened with a fifteen-year sentence for his pains. Around 2012 President Raul Castro had began an anti-corruption drive on the people who had been invited to help build the economy, making Purvis's company Coral Capital Group one of the targets.

Five month before Purvis's arrest, his boss was arrested and the office was closed. He was advised to leave but naively thought he could salvage some of his company's assets. He first endured shocking conditions in the interrogation centre, Villa Marista designed by the KGB and the Stasi. He tells us that if you get into trouble abroad, you will not get any help from HMG and crooked governments like that of Cuba are adept at manipulating international agreements. Any diplomatic pressure on his behalf came from his network in the Havana diplomatic community and his formidable mother. An exception was one British lady Ambassador who sent him food from her own kitchen.

After eight months in a weakened and skeletal condition he was moved to La Condesa, a Stalag in the country. His lawyer told him that nobody is found innocent at trial after they have been sent there and will make sure he is guilty of something. In this prison he discovered the advantages of being at a second rate London comprehensive school in the seventies: that unless you could get along with most people 'you would get your head kicked in sooner or later'. Among the hordes of murderers and gangsters there were a few confused businessmen like himself so he formed an association with some of them. At least here he was able to go outdoors, enjoy better food and even a tennis court. There were even some education courses although the marketing course was run by a Canary who had got fifty-three Cubans and several foreigners arrested, probably including Purvis's boss. English was taught by an Equadorean drug dealer, notorious in the prison because the BBC's documentary about the penal system repeated verbatim his observations about the wonderful food and the liberal treatment.

His release came suddenly. The prosecutor Ivan said 'We thought you were a mountain but you were only a mouse', and he was told later after an Alice in Wonderland trial that he could leave. 'I hope you have enjoyed your stay in Cuba', piped Ivan.

Back home he tired of being produced at dinner parties as a curiosity and found a job in Myanmar where unlike Cuba the government had at last listened to the population and is making reforms. An even poorer country than Cuba, he saw more positive change in a month than he did for years in Havana. Roads and bridges are being built properly not just patched up. Purvis's engaging narrative is full of amusing anecdotes and cameo portraits so he should write about his experiences in Myanmar as well.

Merrie Cave

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