

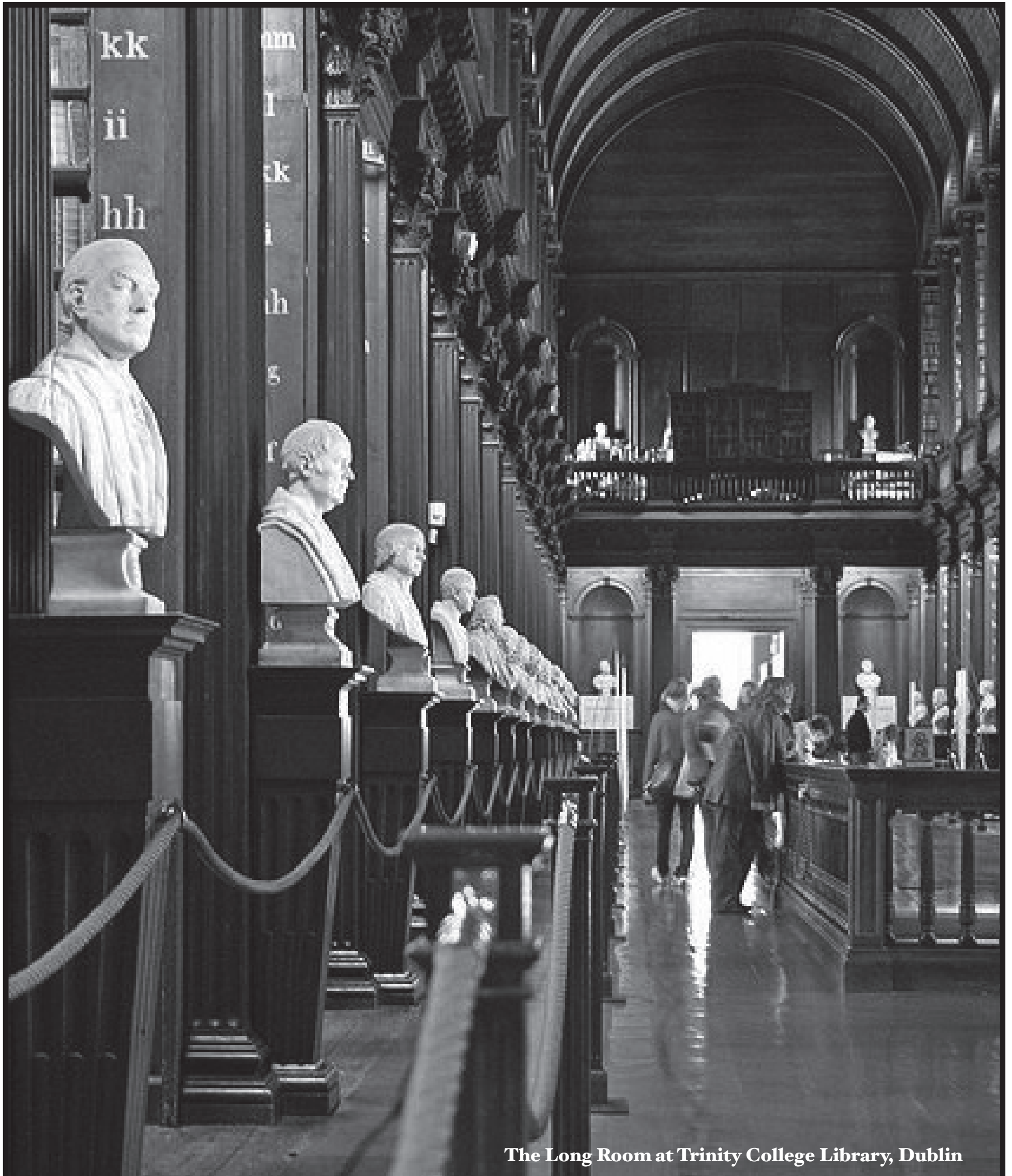
# The Dartmouth Review of Books

Dartmouth's Only Independent Newspaper

Volume 30, Issue 6  
January 21, 2011  
The Hanover Review, Inc.  
P.O. Box 343  
Hanover, NH 03755



*Nemo me impune lacessit*



The Long Room at Trinity College Library, Dublin

# Twain: Well Worth the 100-Year Wait

By William D. Aubin

Appropriately (if my readers will bear with me, you will see just how appropriately), my attempts to obtain, read, and review the *Autobiography of Mark Twain, Vol. 1*, make for an entertaining and illustrative tangent of their own. As I am wont to do this time of year, I answered the editorial call to review a book over Christmas break by quickly scanning the list of the year's bestsellers online, and the *Autobiography* leapt out as one whose author I recognized by name and for whom that distinction did not cause an immediate sour feeling in my stomach. I like Tea Party manifestos and ghostwritten memoirs of pop stars as much as the next guy, of course, but it's part of my New Year's resolution to stop being part of the problem. So, having made what I considered a safe selection, I announced my choice and planned to pick up the foreboding tome — 750 pages, hardcover — when I got to

**H**e is a man in love with the churning nature of living, of throwing oneself into ventures and seeing the world, and of truly learning by seeing what the people of Europe, the West, the North, and many other more distant locales were really doing.

let me instantly download the entire book for a third of the price and no trip to the shady black-market book peddler who hangs around the loading dock of my local Books-A-Million, always promising that he can get me the good stuff. (At least I've always assumed he was a book dealer. What else could he keep in that van?) I could fill the rest of the article extolling the Kindle and its alleviation of this and others of my woes,

but that kind of emphasis on bourgeois technology cheapens a publication like this one, and I've never believed in giving undue (uncompensated) advertisement. So I set to reading.

The above is not a review of an auto-

biography, but neither is *The Autobiography of Mark Twain* an autobiography, exactly. The former is a (hastily composed and comparatively vulgar) story from a specific memory, and the latter is an astoundingly long, impossibly gripping collection of the same, from one of the most beloved storytellers to ever live.

freedom to be as straightforward on paper for the masses as he was with those he knew in life. Anyone who takes the time to crack open (or download) these memoirs will feel grateful that Twain took whatever precautions he needed to feel secure enough to produce such a delightful work, and lucky that our lives line up with his planned centennial publication

## Book Review

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK TWAIN,  
VOL. 1

Mark Twain  
University of California Press, 2010

schedule.

The allure of the book to some may be the revelations of an American hero, revealed after a century of silence to an awestruck populace — the *Times* and others have gotten themselves into a tizzy about what Twain's opinions of the Spanish-American War tell us about how he would have stood on Iraq and Afghanistan, for instance. But that is not the strength of this volume, which its editors estimate contains only about 5 percent previously unreleased material. Most of the people singled out for scorn by Twain have indeed passed into obscurity, and the roasting he gives them are some of the strongest parts of the books not because he 'names names', but because the humorist is allowed to unload with both talented and impeccable barrels. The description of an Italian countess that wronged the Clemens family is one of the best pieces of comedy ever written, and has been rightfully singled out by other critics.

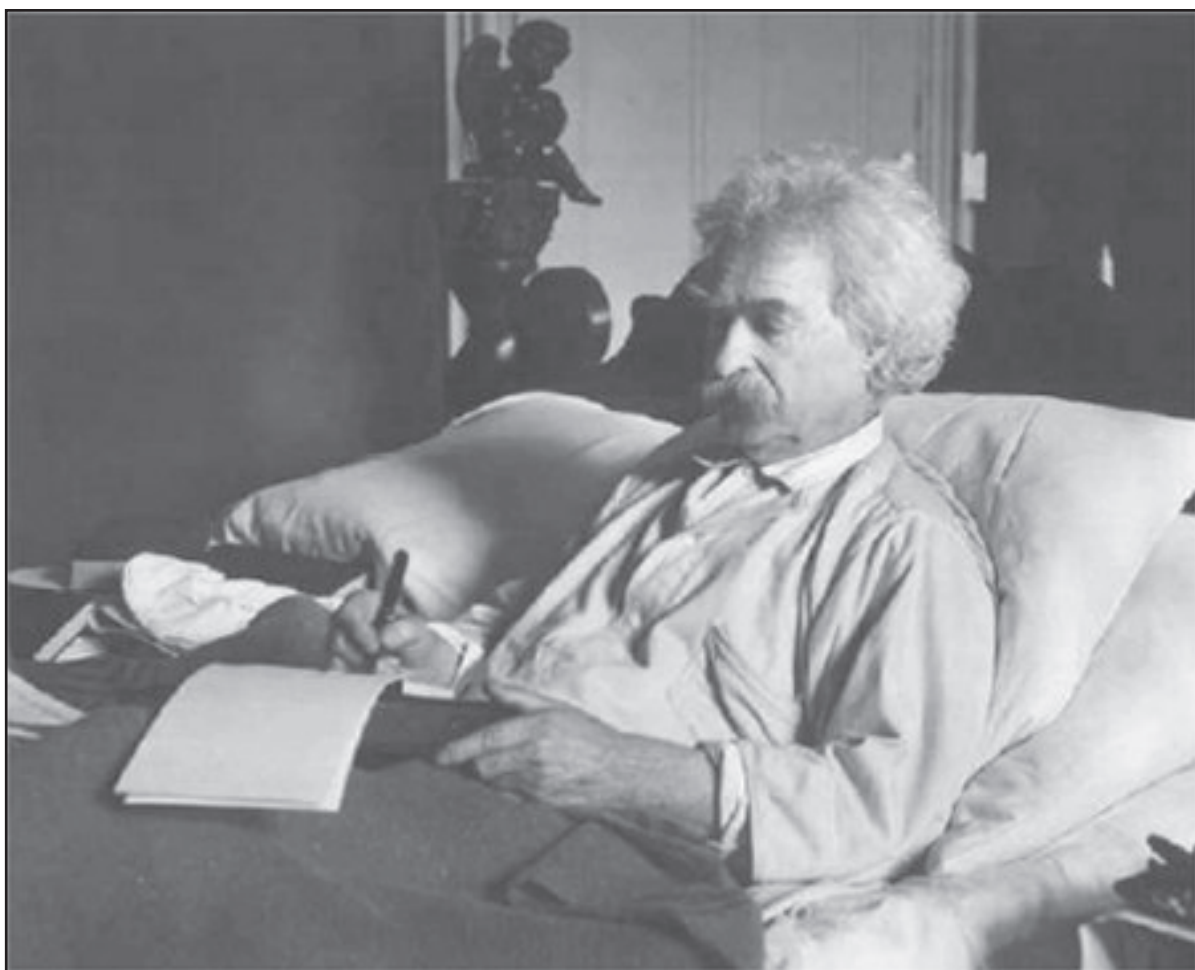
Twain is deadpan, sardonic, and playfully misanthropic in his final years, but it is his insistence that the best jokes be self-deprecatory that ensures the writing never feels like the dated complaints of an aging humorist, truly transcending the context of his lifetime. Twain strikes the reader immediately as the man who would happily admit that he had failed at almost everything he tried, from investing in a printing machine to managing a publishing company to a lifetime of missed social cues. He can share these stories, and delights in doing so, because he is a man in love with the churning nature of living, of throwing oneself into ventures and seeing the world, and of truly learning by seeing what the people of Europe, the West, the North, and many other more distant locales were really doing.

Twain wrote so many cherished books and stories because he met those characters and rode on those rivers; grew up on those farms and toured that countryside. Readers get the chance to meet the elderly slave from Twain's childhood that was the inspiration for Jim from *Huckleberry Finn*, and they get to revisit the cave where Injun Joe met his demise. It didn't matter to the Twain of 1906 that he had been swindled by a conman or hopelessly tangled the family's finances, because he never forgets his gift for drawing stories out of real life, and recognizes that no matter the costs of his failures, he has turned their retelling into books that more than made back the losses.

In a month where we are learning that a publishing company is releasing a censored version of *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*, it could not be a better time to revisit the man who took great pains that his true feelings be known to all who cared to read them, uncorrupted and unapologetic. But don't read the book exclusively for the allure of dusty old gossip. Read it because its author isn't trying to sell you for or against Sarah Palin, Iraq (no matter what the *Times* says), gay marriage, Barack Obama, or his new show on Fox or MSNBC.

Mark Twain is selling you on living life and observing it go by, because he had a tremendously fulfilling time doing so himself. If you can ever find a copy, don't let the size of this volume — or the two slated to follow it in twenty-five and fifty years, respectively — deter you. Fans of topics as far ranging as historiography, the evolution of the American lecture circuit, and the final years of Ulysses S. Grant's life will be intrigued by the extra addition of memos and notes on these topics.

More importantly, anyone who remembers what it was like to laugh at an unrefined, no-strings-attached, American joke; anyone who wants to go back to those log buildings in Hannibal, Missouri that part of us all remember in a distant memory, from this life or a past one; all readers that want to fill up their shiny new e-book reader with the rediscovered words of an old legend rather than the pop-politics of the day: you will not be disappointed.



—The great man himself, composing part of his memoirs—

the mall bookstore for my Christmas shopping.

This is where the plan fell apart: editors at the University of California Press had massively underestimated the popular appeal of the first release of the unabridged memoirs of the man who was the international literary giant of his day and who remains at the top of the American canon today, a hundred years after his death. There were no copies available at my Barnes and Noble, nor any bookseller I was likely to stumble across, nor even from Amazon or any other online retailer. Initially merely irritated, I became horrified to the point of despondency when I received as gifts (from people that claimed to know me) the latest hardcover offerings of two cable news pundits.

Would I be reduced to writing that most tired of cop-outs, the ironically enthusiastic review of this year's list of which Democrats are Destroying America? Had I come so far, and soared so close to the Promised Land, only to be forced to revisit the boilerplate politics of my sophomore year in high school?

As has happened more times than I give her credit for, I was rescued by my mother, who gave me the early and insightful gift of an Amazon Kindle, an e-book reader that

Twain grappled with the best method by which to write his own story for decades, eventually hitting upon what he proudly called the "Final (and Right) Plan" in the last six years of his life: a series of dictations and manuscripts that catalogue whatever recollection entered into Twain's thoughts during that particular sitting, which took place predominantly between 1905 and 1907.

**I**n a month where we are learning that a publishing company is releasing a censored version of *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*, it could not be a better time to revisit the man who took great pains that his true feelings be known to all who cared to read them, uncorrupted and unapologetic.

The result is a nonfiction short story collection refreshingly devoid of the restraints of chronology and filled with equal parts beloved phrasings of Mark Twain and controversial political and personal opinions of Samuel Clemens.

This controversy is the overwhelming narrative in critical reviews of the *Autobiography*, and ties in nicely to the intriguing curiosity of an autobiography that was stalled from publication by the order of its author for a century. Twain states quite clearly in the text that he wanted more than anything the freedom to write as if he were dead, without having to worry about soured relationships that would come with his very frank appraisals of friend, acquaintance, and enemy. He further reasoned that the first, second, third, and fourth editions would have to be devoid of all "sane expressions of opinion" to protect his heirs and the living subjects of his ruminations or their recent decedents. Twain had no desire to seek revenge through words from the grave, but wanted the

Mr. Aubin is a senior at the College and Executive Editor of The Dartmouth Review.

# The Dartmouth Review

## Founders

Greg Fossedal, Gordon Haff,  
Benjamin Hart, Keeney Jones

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win great triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat."

—Theodore Roosevelt

**Charles S. Dameron**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Mostafa A. Heddaya**  
President

**William D. Aubin**  
Executive Editor

**Blair E. Bandeen**  
Vice President

**Sterling C. Beard • Ke Ding**  
Managing Editors

**David I. Ruffal**  
Sports Editor

**Blake S. Neff • Benjamin M. Riley**  
Week Editors

**Chloe Teeter**      **Katherine J. Murray**  
Photo Editor      Arts & Culture Editor

**Thomas L. Hauch • Joshua Riddle**  
**Coleman M. Shear**  
Associate Editors

## Contributors

Svati Narula, Michael Marcusa, J.P. Harrington, Kirk Jing, Mene Ukueberuwa, Lillian Wilson, Michael Klein, Stuart Allan, Harry Greenstone, Jeff Hopkins, Melanie Wilcox, Mike Edgar

**Mean-Spirited, Cruel and Ugly**  
Legal Counsel

## The Review Advisory Board

Martin Anderson, Patrick Buchanan, Theodore Cooperstein, Dinesh D'Souza, Michael Ellis, Robert Flanigan, John Fund, William Grace, Gordon Haff, Jeffrey Hart, Laura Ingraham, Mildred Fay Jefferson, William Lind, Steven Menashi, James Panero, Hugo Restall, Roland Reynolds, William Rusher, Weston Sager, Emily Esfahani Smith, R. Emmett Tyrrell, Sidney Zion

"Zubrow!"

Cover image of Trinity College Library, Dublin courtesy of Nic McPhee via Wikimedia Commons.

Special Thanks to William F. Buckley, Jr.

The Editors of THE DARTMOUTH REVIEW welcome correspondence from readers concerning any subject, but prefer to publish letters that comment directly on material published previously in THE REVIEW. We reserve the right to edit all letters for clarity and length.

Submit letters by mail, fax at (603) 643-1470, or e-mail:  
[charles.s.dameron@dartmouth.edu](mailto:charles.s.dameron@dartmouth.edu)

THE DARTMOUTH REVIEW is produced bi-weekly by Dartmouth College undergraduates for Dartmouth students and alumni. It is published by the Hanover Review, Inc., a non-profit tax-deductible organization. Please send all inquiries to:

**The Dartmouth Review**  
P.O. Box 343  
Hanover, N.H. 03755

**Subscribe: \$40**

**The Dartmouth Review**  
P.O. Box 343  
Hanover, N.H. 03755  
(603) 643-4370

Fax: (603) 643-1470

**Contributions are tax-deductible.**

[www.dartreview.com](http://www.dartreview.com)

# Editorial

## Building a Community of the Mind at the College

One of the strangest rituals of the Dartmouth experience is Convocation, that exercise at the start of the year whereby a new class is welcomed officially into the community. I say strange not because of the ritual, but because of where it is: in Leede Arena, a basketball court with terrible acoustics and bleacher seating, a space in which one often has to strain to make out what a speaker is saying. It's a poor place to have the event, but it is the only one on campus that can hold the requisite number of people. It is in Leede that one is meant to experience the first full communal gathering of his class.

And nearly the last: there are only three events in which an entire class is brought together during its Dartmouth years: Convocation, the freshman Homecoming bonfire run, and Commencement. That's it. You're born into the Dartmouth community; you consummate your relationship with the College; and then, three and a half years later, you're shunted out on the Green, trying to remember where all that time went.

The moments in between the freshman bonfire and graduation are filled with a kind of constant churn: friends and romantic interests come and go on off-terms and study abroad programs; in sophomore year, new friendships are formed and old ones left to fray as people join fraternities and sororities; in junior year, a merciless unity is formed as half the campus goes through the motions of corporate recruiting; then, too, many see their social circles broaden once again as they are inducted to senior societies, yet another source of social shake-up.

There is, of course, sophomore summer — hailed by all as a magical time, which it is. But it's only a common experience in the broadest sense: we share — except for the poor '12s who were denied it — the same blessed swimming dock at the river and the same sun-kissed Green, though we aren't all brought together in any way (Fieldstock being an unpopular replacement for its more Bacchanalian predecessor). As fast as it comes, it is gone, and the class is once again split up for another few terms. Seniors, you will notice, do everything they can to squeeze the nectar out of the Dartmouth community in their final year. But they must look back on a Dartmouth experience that is defined by its highly *individualized* and *segmented* nature.

This is especially true of the Dartmouth academic experience, which in a certain sense is walled off from the rest of Dartmouth life. We are not fond of talking about *classes*, about *schoolwork*, outside of class. To do so is often seen as boorish at best. Even when talk of such things intrudes on our free moments, we are apt to focus on the paraphernalia: the amount of work we have, the structure of our class schedule, the relative difficulty of a given course. To venture into the realm of ideas — to actually talk with your friends about the things that you are learning — is quite a rare phenomenon at Dartmouth.

And really, why shouldn't it be? I'm a Government and History major — haven't taken a biology class since my freshman year of high school. So how much might I have to talk about intellectually with a Biology major, who may well not have taken a history class since high school? Indeed, we may share a great deal of intellectual overlap. But, having taken a completely different set of classes in college, we don't share much *experiential* overlap. Even if we were to strike up a conversation about our learning, we would lack the set of guideposts — the common language and the common reference points — necessary to sustain mutual interest in our conversation.

This is all by long way of introduction to the Teagle Foundation, which recently co-hosted (with the Tucker Foundation) a small workshop at Dartmouth devoted to exploring

the academic experience of the secular liberal arts college. I was lucky enough to be in on this workshop, along with about a score of other students, a handful of faculty members, and a few administrators.

The workshop's purpose was to get a handle on what motivating moral purpose might drive the academic experience at Dartmouth; the consensus among students and faculty, it seemed, was that no such purpose existed. And indeed, when one participant from the Dean's Office was asked to explain the mission (any mission) of Dartmouth College, she found herself nearly at a loss for words. She wasn't sure what it was.

One might explain the absence of a motivating moral purpose behind the Dartmouth education as a simple and straightforward consequence of our own relativistic era, in which all of us are fearful of setting moral terms that might

somehow exclude a group or an individual. As a result, we are unable to make most any moral statement except for the following: we are against *exclusion*, and we are a community open to all people and all ideas.

Our well-intentioned ethos of inclusion — which is a mile wide and an inch deep — deserves some blame, but I would also posit that a big part of the problem derives simply from our physical and experiential separation from one another. We are not brought together enough to have any sense of common purpose.

One of the striking features of the Old Dartmouth was its commonality of experience. In years past, students benefited from a uniform

curriculum and an array of other com-

munity activities, among them mandatory chapel attendance. Those shared experiences were what provided meaning in education. In their feature article from the fall on President William Jewett Tucker ["The Chronicle of William Jewett Tucker," November 12, 2010], Ke Ding and Thomas Hauch included a quote from Tucker's official biography, which read, "[Tucker's] greatest achievement for Dartmouth, after all, must forever be declared to be the influence of his ten-minute chapel talks at Sunday vespers. Here, in a *union* of spirituality, common sense, and pithiness, week after week and year after year, he struck straight home to the moral element in the undergraduate mind."

President Dickey also understood the power of this concept of shared ex-

perience, and it's why he introduced the Great Issues courses to Dartmouth. In his oral history, available at Rauner Library, Dickey explained that his experience with a core curriculum in his freshman year at Dartmouth gave meaning to his education. "This was one of the great features of the Dartmouth education in those days which stayed with me," he said. "The common experience of having had the same subject. Indeed, I didn't get that after my freshman year again until I got to Harvard Law School. I never forgot it, and it was part of the experience that went into the Great Issues when I came back on the job in 1945."

It is probably too much to wish that Dartmouth could introduce something resembling a core curriculum for freshmen. But it's not unreasonable to suggest that Dartmouth is desperately in need of a major and sustained course of reform that would renew the College's institutional purpose and rebuild the connection between our social lives and our intellectual advancement as members of an academic community. A revived Great Issues curriculum — seriously planned and undertaken — could be the first major step toward that goal. At the very least, it would chip away at the specialization and fragmentation endemic to Dartmouth and all major universities, and resurrect our unity of purpose, the most admirable piece of our college's heritage.



Charles S. Dameron

**To venture into the realm of ideas — to actually talk with your friends about the things that you are learning — is quite a rare phenomenon at Dartmouth.**

# Lackluster Focus for MLK Keynote

By Benjamin M. Riley

For a small liberal arts institution in the woods of New Hampshire, Dartmouth College is quite committed to the idea of social justice. Then what better way for the College to highlight its commitment to social justice than to engage in a month-long celebration of the life and values of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Or so the College seems to think. I cannot count how many blitzes I have received detailing the numerous (read twenty plus) events connected to the celebration.

Which is not to say that Dartmouth should not celebrate the life and values of Dr. King. Indeed, there is much to be learned. It is to say that it hardly seems appropriate for a school whose mission entails “educat[ing] the most promising students and prepar[ing] them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership, through a faculty dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge” and providing what it calls the “best possible undergraduate education” to spend an entire month in celebration of a single man’s achievements. Any man’s. Whether that man is Martin Luther King, Jr., or Daniel Webster. George Washington or Gandhi. The liberal arts demand the exploration of multifarious perspectives and assorted subjects. To spend a month with much of the administration’s programming focused on a single man is to sacrifice the gift of the liberal arts. Nobody ever accused the administration of being focused on the right things anyway.

Taking place annually on the day of Martin Luther King’s birth, January 21<sup>st</sup>, a federal holiday, is the keynote address of the College’s celebration. This year’s speaker was the estimable Bryan Stevenson, a social justice lawyer who has devoted his life to ending discrimination in the Deep South. As founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, Stevenson has fought ceaselessly for fairness within the legal system for those who he believes are disadvantaged due to race and poverty. A recipient of myriad awards, including the famed MacArthur Foundation “Genius” Award, Stevenson is a graduate of Harvard Law School, as well as its Kennedy School of Government and currently also serves as a professor at the New York University School of Law.

The event was held in the Hopkins Center’s Moore Auditorium and, unlike most administration-run events, began right on time. After a brief introduction by the current president of the College’s Afro-American Society (which included an egregious implied reference to the evil that is the Greek System), President Jim Yong Kim was introduced. Kim’s

*Mr. Riley is a sophomore at the College and week editor of The Dartmouth Review.*

remarks were of the standard variety and included, naturally, a reworking of what must be his favorite quote; that is, John Sloan Dickey’s remarks about the making the troubles of the world your own.

Following that, Kim lauded former President James Wright’s work towards diversity on campus, citing statistics about the doubling of the percentage of minority students enrolled from the beginning of Wright’s tenure to the end. President Kim also gave nods to increased economic diversity, as well as Wright’s spearheading of the campaign to bring

merely related often-heartwarming anecdotes of the humanity of his clients, the essential ways that these convicts are ‘just like us.’ While it is undeniably true that most convicts are more like citizens without records than not, it is also true that many who commit heinous acts are rightfully shut away so they cannot pose further danger to law-abiding society. By deliberately refusing to mention these cases and appealing to base emotional sympathies, Mr. Stevenson is subverting actualities for his own gain. By that I cannot abide.

Ironically enough, much of what Mr. Stevenson has to say is on point. He spoke of the general trend in these United States of over-incarceration — a massive fiscal burden and in many ways an exercise in futility. He decried the lack of available lawyers for those on death row, and a system that denies their constitutional right to a fair trial. These are issues that all Americans, regardless of political or moral affiliation can stand behind. So the speech was not entirely off the mark.

Unfortunately Mr. Stevenson could not keep his momentum going through his conclusion. Every time he offered a compelling argument, he would seek to bolster it with a rehashed anecdote about the wonderful people with whom he works. His argument seemed to be that not only was it necessary to evaluate context in criminal cases but that context is a necessarily mitigating factor. As I said before,

engaging in this sort of behavior leads one down very dangerous paths of justification.

His final sentiment was perhaps the most disturbing. Asking, “Why do we kill all the broken people?” he suggested that there is a great, institutionalized conspiracy in this country to do away with those deemed unfit.

This is mere fantasy. The justice system, while not unbiased, is not a puppet of some grand string-pulling organization set on removing the “broken” [whatever that means] from out society. For Mr. Stevenson to suggest such a thing is for him to belie and indeed deny his own intelligence. While many of his points were worthy, this type of shocking statement left a sour taste in the writer’s mouth, made worse by the speaker’s constant justifications for convicts. Altogether, these stories and that final audacious statement (touted immediately on the administration’s Twitter account) did the speaker more harm than good. No doubt much of Mr. Stevenson’s work is important. There do, however, seem to be better ways to get the point across.

While Mr. Stevenson was eloquent, engaging, and enjoyable to listen to for the hour he spoke, his choice of words presented unavoidable problems. Though his work is virtuous, his willful naïveté is troublesome.

Here’s hoping next year both the Celebration’s keynote speaker and its duration as a whole are better suited to the goals of a liberal arts college.



—Bryan Stevenson, this year’s MLK Day keynote speaker, is a MacArthur Fellowship grant recipient and a professor at the NYU School of Law.—

veterans to campus. Following what came across as a paean to the virtue of President Wright, President Kim also delivered kind remarks for Mrs. Wright, and after a brief shake of both their hands, Mr. Stevenson was introduced.

The theme of Mr. Stevenson’s speech was to be identity. That is, his thesis is that every human should make it part of his identity to oppose social injustice and fight for social justice. Using anecdotes from his casework as well as statistics, Stevenson attempted to show that every single human being, including murderers, rapists, and criminals of any and every sort, deserves fairness and compassion. To hear him tell it, you would think every convict he has ever had the pleasure of working with is, if not innocent, at the very least excusable in some manner. Whether the reason was abuse as a child, mental illness, a harmful social environment, or countless other reasons, Mr. Stevenson made it seem that he had never worked with a client who was a mere base criminal. Perhaps it is because he hasn’t. Perhaps all the clients he chooses to take on are fallen angels. Having not had the opportunity to work with Mr. Stevenson, I cannot say. His argument, though, that many of those incarcerated cannot be blamed for their actions because of outside disadvantages over which they have no control is not far from the ‘they were just following orders’ argument. Mr. Stevenson did not say this, of course. He



## Stinson’s: Your Pong HQ

### Cups, Balls, Paddles, Accessories

(603) 643-6086 | [www.stinsonsvillagestore.com](http://www.stinsonsvillagestore.com)




# Spears's Departure Triggers Questions

By Blake S. Neff

No sooner did Dartmouth's scattered children return for Winter Term than the College announced the formation of a committee to conduct a nationwide search for a new permanent undergraduate dean. Almost simultaneously, it was announced that current acting dean Sylvia Spears would not be applying for the position and would instead leave the office when the end of her term arrived in June. Somewhat peculiarly, Spears indicated that she would be willing to remain at Dartmouth in some other capacity, although she was not sure just what that would be.

In Spears's tenure as acting dean, and her previous role as the head of the Office of Pluralism and Leadership, she has weathered a not-inconsiderable amount of student criticism, some of it from this newspaper. In the spring of 2009, barbs were directed at OPAL over its overreaction (along with much of campus) to the scandal of AsianStereotypegate, where a student's ill-advised jokes following the selection of Jim Kim as president triggered a campus firestorm. Last summer, the *Review* was similarly disappointed by the school's unilateral closing of the Connecticut River, where Spears dutifully played her role in the bureaucratic stonewalling of student and alumni opposition ("Dock Blocked," August 23, 2010).

The most notable controversy with which Spears is associated, though, is the torpedoing of the Alcohol Management Policy shortly after she assumed office as acting dean in the Fall of 2009 ("Sylvia Spears Keeps it SEMPLE," October 15, 2009). The AMP, while certainly not anyone's first-choice policy, had the general support of Greek leaders as well as previous dean Tom

Crady, and would have replaced the Social Event Management Procedures, which originated with the widely hated Student Life Initiative and were due for retirement. It also would have fixed the festering sore of keg policy, the lack of resolution of which has forced fraternities to inefficiently rely on dozens of cases of Keystone Light for parties. Given the short timeframe which Dartmouth students operate within, the decision to start from scratch was an unfortunate move which only further prolonged the far too drawn-out process of reforming College alcohol policy.

Nevertheless, Spears, by all accounts, cares deeply about the College and its students, and her personal friendliness and openness towards students (among whom she remains broadly popular) are excellent qualities for any dean to have. Additionally, whatever her personal opinions may be, she has not attempted to fundamentally alter Dartmouth's identity like a certain former president who shall not be named.

Furthermore, Spears has had several accomplishments that even the notoriously hard-to-please *Review* can appreciate. In the wake of the College's massive budget shortfall last year, she led a reorganization of the Dean's Office that saved the school several hundred thousand dollars per year. Not only that, but to do so she actually eliminated her old job, a bold and unusually austere move for the notoriously inflated Dartmouth bureaucracy. Additionally, she has recognized the need to do more than "raise awareness" about the College's scandalous sexual assault rate, and has taken actual action to address the problem.

Following the announcement that she would not apply for the permanent deanship, Spears spoke with the *Review* to reflect on her tenure and offer some advice to her successor. When asked to name the accomplishment for which she was most proud, Spears stayed student-focused. She cited her "totally surprising" reception of the Green Key Award at the 2010 COSO Awards for outstanding outreach to students as a particular high point, and in general felt that she had great success in communicating with and understanding the student body.

Spears also frankly discussed instances in which her communication with students broke down. She was willing

*Mr. Neff is a sophomore at the College and week editor of The Dartmouth Review.*

to admit that the closing of the Connecticut River docks could have been better handled.

"Regretfully...information comes to us in a time that's not convenient... and we're in a position where we have to make a decision," she said, referring to the abruptness of the announcement of the River's closing. She expressed hope that some "good news" could be announced for the 13's prior to their own sophomore summer, but unfortunately left it at that.

Spears continues to offer little clarity regarding her personal future, perhaps because she herself is not sure what she wishes to do. She cannot return to her previous post at OPAL, since as Dean she downsized the position. In her interview with *TDR*, Spears reiterated earlier comments to *The Daily Dartmouth*, stating that her future remains up in the air but that she would love to have some sort of future with the College.

But Spears is also eager to show her determination to focus

**Although the addition of more members to the search panel may indeed ensure that a more representative range of student voices are heard, it bears pointing out that this particular demand lends itself to constant expansion.**

on those agenda that remain to be done before her tenure ends. The reorganization of the dean's office is still ongoing behind the scenes, an effort she says she would like to have completed before leaving.

She's also, she says, looking forward in particular to the graduation of this year's class, whose members were all freshman when she first arrived at the school.

In discussing the demands that will be placed upon her successor, Spears emphasized the need to remain open and available to the student body. She took pride in her self-imposed rule that all emails from students be responded to by the end of the day — the author got his response to an interview request in under 20 minutes at 8:30 in the evening — as well as her practice of attempting to directly help students who email her even when the student should technically have approached a subordinate dean.

While not explicitly stating the new dean should follow the same practice, she clearly implied that her ideal replacement should have a similar commitment to students.

Spears also mentioned Dartmouth's unique nature even within the Ivy League, and emphasized that the new dean absolutely must understand and respect these traditions. She also noted that the dean must always do his or her part to further President Dickey's ideal of cultivating a strong body of student ready to change the world.

With Dean Spears entering the home stretch of her tenure, the attention of those deeply interested in college politics is shifting towards the search for her replacement.

This search would appear to be a mundane matter, with the usual committee of faculty members, administrators, and a handful of students established to draw up a list of finalists for President Kim and Provost Folt to evaluate.

However, in a twist that will no doubt leave Dartmouth veterans completely unsurprised, an open letter published by eight students on January 16th has raised a stink over the issue. The letter, which was emailed out to campus on January 17th with a formidable 354 cosignatories (and which has since gathered another 300 signatures), begins by praising

the work of Spears as both dean and as OPAL head, before proceeding to criticizing the College for an alleged lack of transparency and an insufficiently diverse dean search committee.

**The reorganization of the Dean's Office is still ongoing behind the scenes, and Spears says she is determined to finish it before her tenure is out.**

Questioning the manner in which Spears announced her decision not to seek a permanent position as Dean, the email asks, "What efforts were made to convince Dean Spears to opt in to the selection process? What were the circumstances around which she came to her decision? If Dean Spears is open to staying at Dartmouth in a different position (as she stated she was) what caused her not to throw her name in the



— Acting Dean of the College Sylvia Spears said in an interview that she is particularly proud of her accessibility to students—

hat for the deanship?"

These seem to be odd questions to address to the Dartmouth community at large. It's up to Spears to elaborate on why she did not choose to pursue the permanent deanship, and so far she has decided to remain mostly mum on the behind-the-scenes decision-making process. Students who are appreciative of Dean Spears ought to express this appreciation and encourage Spears to apply for the permanent post. However, they do not serve her by deliberately sparking a controversy, which is apparently what the letter aims to do.

As for the search committee itself, the letter laments not its current membership, but the lack of non-Greek students, "students of color," and of course, those "from across the sexuality spectrum."

Although the addition of more members to the panel may indeed ensure that a more representative range of student voices are heard, it bears pointing out that this particular demand lends itself to constant expansion. Even going beyond which "students of color" warrant a panel spot, one could naturally ask what other groups warrant inclusion to avoid being "voiceless." Must every major (or minor!) religious faith have its designated representative? What about the political spectrum? Should the *Review* get a token committee member as well?

As undeniably amazing as that sight would be, this all strikes us as a bit too much politicking over what should be a brisk and disciplined search for a permanent dean who will, it's worth remembering, ultimately be chosen by the president and provost anyway.

# I Know It's Only Rock 'n' Roll, But I Like It:

By Georgia Travers

Keith Richards came from the most humble circumstances – an impoverished boy from the London factory slum of Dartford – to become the infamous lead guitarist of the Rolling Stones, and one of the greatest Rock n' Roll stars of all time. His modestly titled autobiography, “Life,” gives us a raw, brutally honest glimpse into the tumultuous and euphoric reality of that experience.

In many ways, Richards paradoxically exemplifies the American Dream. Nevertheless, his inescapably British slang and sensibility lend the book a particularly enchanting and personal tone. For instance, while his life-blood is, in every way, music, Richards nonetheless dearly fancies what I suppose

## Book Review

LIFE

Keith Richards  
Little, Brown and Company, 2010

could be considered “British Cuisine.” It is evident that the only thing that could rival Richards’s guitars for his affection would be a classically prepared, steaming Shepherd’s pie. Richards thoughtfully goes as far as to include “My Recipe for Bangers and Mash” in the book. While it may have (along with considerable quantities of Merck cocaine and amphetamines) fueled some of the greatest musical compositions of the last century, I nevertheless find the deep-fried mush of sausage, “spuds,” and peas to be highly suspect.

I truly enjoyed reading “Life.” I’ll begin with the negative, because it is only marginal. The book’s length, almost 550 pages, could be called gratuitous and certainly causes the narrative to drag. Richards also repeatedly uses the device of “but more about that later” to prolong the reader’s gratification from and create suspense around his most outrageous stories. That being said, “Life” is only so long because Keith Richards has enjoyed such a rich, dynamic existence. Due largely to his consumption of cocaine, Richards explains, “For many years I slept, on average, twice a week. This means that I have been conscious for at least three lifetimes.” His autobiography is certainly much less than three times a reasonable length, and thus it truly is an action-packed narrative.

While reading “Life,” I initially reacted to Richards’s litany of delinquent-rockstar anecdotes with a bemused lack of surprise. However, it is important, and staggering, to remember that Keith Richards both invented, and perfected, this phenomenon years before it became a cliché. But he was not always an international celebrity badboy. Born in 1943, the youthful Richards was appointed Beaver Patrol Leader of the Seventh Dartford Scouts in the early ‘50s, and excelled as a local choirboy.

Too poor to afford the bus fares both to and from school, Richards resigned himself to getting beaten up as he walked home every day. Frustrated and defensive, he soon got kicked out of technical school and began

to obsess over music, his “one true love” and, as it turned out, his extraordinary talent. He began listening religiously to American Rhythm & Blues artists such as Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, John Lee Hooker, and Muddy Waters.

One fateful day, Richards struck up a conversation at the Dartford Train Station with a wealthy-looking boy of about his age who was carrying a pile of records by Waters, Berry, and other Chicago bluesmen. In those days, records were prohibitively expensive (especially for a working-class boy like Richards) and somewhat of a novelty. Richards, obsessed with music, craved new songs, and as he explains, “got to hear a new single every few months at best, if [he] could bum an LP off someone on the street.” The young man, Mick Jagger, came from an upper-class background, and as a result could afford to buy new American records, which he eagerly shared with his new friend.

Keith Richards describes his music taste at the time as “completely identical to Mick’s,” and as a result the two hit

it off. Their passion centered around the schools of Rhythm and Blues developing informally in Chicago and the Mississippi Delta. Both boys also loved the powerful simplicity of Elvis Presley. Richards describes these seminal musical influences as follows:

John Lee Hooker; most of his songs are on one chord. Howlin’ Wolf stuff, one chord, and Bo Diddley. It was listening to them that made me realize that silence was the canvas. That’s what I think “Heartbreak Hotel” did to me. It was the first time I’d heard something so stark. Or listen to “Mystery Train,” another Elvis. It’s one of the great rock-and-roll tracks of all time, not a drum on it. It’s just a suggestion, because the [listener] will provide the rhythm. Rhythm only has to be suggested. Doesn’t have to be pronounced. It’s got nothing to do with rock. It’s to do with roll.

After Richards was kicked out of school, his oppositional attitude to mainstream culture began to develop considerably. While his personal style included shockingly tight pants and infrequent haircuts, Richards crafted his musical identity primarily around the influence of African-American bluesmen that “defied the Royal Academy’s definition of the Blues.” The term “Rock n’ Roll” was used as a derogatory term for music that “contradicted too many of the Academy’s rigid rules defining the Blues.” Thus, the Stones emerged as anti-establishment musicians who both rebelled against British class hierarchies and embraced many aspects of American culture. Richards believes that the Stones sound fundamentally American in a lot of ways, saying, “[The] chord sequence for ‘Midnight Rambler’ was pure Chicago blues... ‘You Can’t Always Get What You Want’ was primarily influenced by our experience playing with black gospel singers in America.” He explains how blues purists in Britain “wanted a frozen frame, not understanding that whatever they were listening to was only part of the process; something had gone before and it was going to move on.”

In many ways, the flexibility and mobility of the American cultural expanse provided the perfect canvas for the musical innovations that Richards and his compatriots were developing in the early 1960s. First of all, the development of recording began in the US, a phenomenon that Richards describes as “the emancipation of music.” He explains: “Being able to hear recorded music freed up loads of musicians that couldn’t necessarily afford to learn to read or write music, like me.” Jazz, Blues, and ultimately Rock n’ Roll became great musical levelers because, according to Richards, “they started to take over the world the minute recording started, within a few years, just like that. The blues is universal, which is why it’s still around.” Richards describes the enchantment that Dartford’s one jukebox, located in Old Dimashio’s Ice Cream Parlor, had for him as a child: “There was this jukebox there, so it was a hang. Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard... it was our only access to music, the one little bit of Americana in Dartford.”

Technological innovations developed in the US also allowed poor, aspiring musicians (such as the 1964 Rolling Stones) to record almost anywhere on cheap cassette machines. Richards explains “We did ‘Street Fighting Man,’ ‘Jumpin’ Jack Flash,’ and half of ‘Gimme Shelter’ just like that... made on

rubbish, made in hotel rooms with out little toys.” Richards emphasizes the importance of other seemingly minor bits of American life as well. For instance, the ubiquity of car radios. He describes the bliss of the Stones’ first American tour as follows:

You couldn’t believe it after England! Sitting in a car with its radio on was beyond heaven. You could turn the channels and get ten country stations, five black stations, and if... they faded out, you could just turn the dial again and there was another great song! Listening to car radios through a thousand miles to get to the next gig. That was the beauty of America. We used to dream of it before we got there.

Richards also attributes his famous five-string guitar “open-tuning” technique to country music popularized in rural America in the mid-20th century. “When Sears, Roebuck offered the Gibson guitar in the early ‘20s really cheap... cats would tune it, since they were nearly all banjo players, to a five-string banjo tuning. Most of rural America bought their stuff from the Sears catalogue... copying them, I got to relearn the guitar, and it was fascinating.”

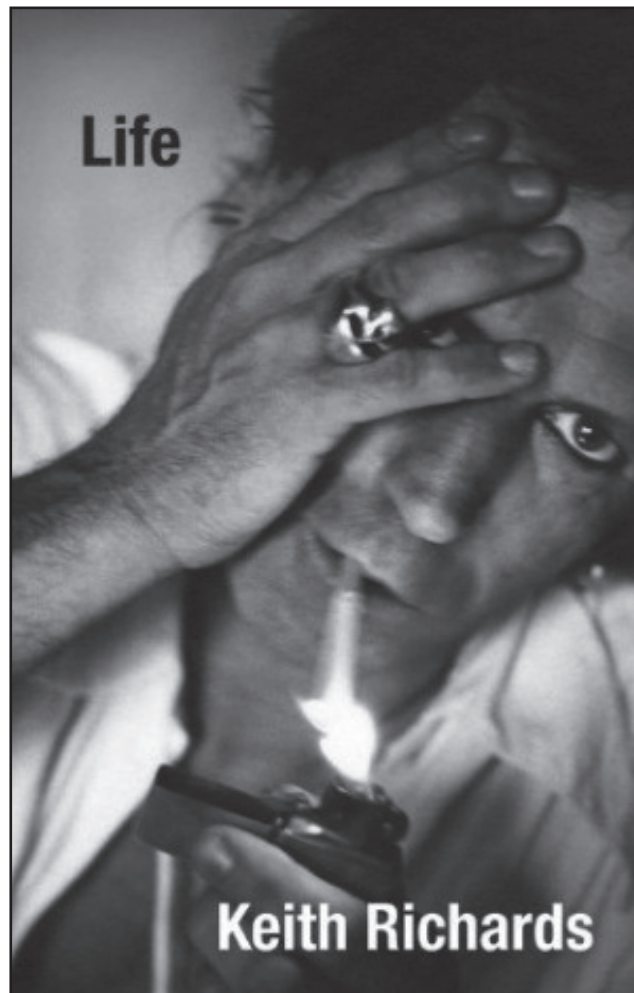
America reciprocated the Stones’ affection, and the songs they composed in the late Sixties were heavily influenced by the oppositional culture developing in the US at the time. “Think about the title ‘Get Off of My Cloud,’” Richards notes. “It’s why you have ‘Satisfaction’ in Apocalypse Now. The lyrics and the mood of the songs fitted with the kids’ disenchantment with the grown-up world of America, and for a while we seemed to be the only provider, the soundtrack for the rumbling rebellion, touching on those social nerves.” Similarly, class in the UK was a tremendously divisive factor in Keith’s life, and music was the obvious way for him to transcend that social structure. America, in true form, eagerly embraced a sound that was both a rejection of traditional authority and ultimately, was just plain fun. Liz Phair describes the

Stones’ earth-shattering first trip to America as an intoxicatingly provocative contradiction:

Nineteen sixty-four was also a year of great cultural shifts: the burgeoning youth culture, the civil rights movement and the early antiwar protests all intersected in the irreverent personas of the Rolling Stones. They were white, but sounded black. They played American music, but came from England. They dressed like women and didn’t cut their hair, yet everyone’s wife, girlfriend or daughter went mad for their raw sexuality.

Alexander de Tocqueville famously remarked in his 1831 ethnography, “Democracy in America,” that American vitality is intrinsically linked to its vulgarity. The Rolling Stones’ experience confirms the accuracy of his impressions, even 150 years later. Rock n’ Roll was only able to

defy mainstream culture because of its irresistible popularity, and as a result, became a powerful vehicle for capitalist cultural liberation. This quintessentially American phenomenon, unfortunately, also produced extremely destructive behavior, much of which is scrupulously documented by Richards in “Life,” because it did, ultimately, transform and define so much of his life. The extreme wealth, rebellious defiance, and ubiquity of illicit drugs due to America’s volatile cultural climate in the late



Alexander de Tocqueville famously remarked in his 1831 ethnography, “Democracy in America,” that American vitality is intrinsically linked to its vulgarity. The Rolling Stones’ experience confirms the accuracy of his impressions, even 150 years later.

While reading “Life,” I initially reacted to Richards’s litany of delinquent-rockstar anecdotes with a bemused lack of surprise. However, it is important, and staggering, to remember that Keith Richards both invented, and perfected, this phenomenon years before it became a cliché.

# “Life” and Keith Richards’s Addled Times

Sixties had a profound impact on Richards. Most notably, he developed a severe addiction to “smack,” a.k.a. heroin, that killed many of his friends and ruined many of his relationships.

Richards describes his struggle with heroin in detail, as well as his long-term relationship with Anita Pallenberg, sometimes called the Yoko Ono of the Rolling Stones, which was defined, and ultimately destroyed, by the drug. After Richards fell for Anita, girlfriend of bandmate Brian Jones at the time, the two became “junkies” and the habit distanced Richards considerably from the band. Richards and Anita had three children, although she ended up falling for Mick Jagger somewhere in between, which Keith believes had a permanent impact on the close relationship between himself and Mick, “the Glimmer Twins.”

However, Richards explains that his relationship with Jagger had more profound problems. The two come from extremely different class backgrounds, and Richards believes Jagger, who grew up quite well off, was more prone to airs and vanity. In response to the overwhelming pressure of international celebrity and stardom, Richards explains, “Mick chose flattery, which is very like junk — a departure from reality. I chose junk.” Richards was horrified at his friend’s acceptance of knighthood, for instance. “You’re going to accept an honor from a system that tried to put you in jail for nothing? Mick’s class-consciousness had become more and more evident as we went along, but I never knew he’d fallen for this shit. It may have been another attack of LVS (lead vocalist syndrome).”

Richards’s voice showcases a tremendous dynamism, both personal and musical. He defines himself and his music as profoundly both American and British. “America was exhilarating because it was so extreme, veering between Quaker

and the next minute free love, and it’s still like that,” he says. “Still,” Richards explains, “our mood had a distinctly English idiom, despite being highly American influenced. We were taking the piss in the old English tradition.”

Despite its modesty, “Life” cannot help but awe readers with its description of the technical perfection and innovative, comprehensive musical mastery that truly distinguishes the Rolling Stones as one of the greatest Rock n’ Roll bands of all time. Richards’s detailed descriptions of the composition process, as well as humorous, informative digressions entitled “Keef’s Guitar Workshops” shed light on the Stones’ unparalleled musical genius, fueled primarily by spectacularly successful collaborations between Richards and Jagger. And while Richards obviously intended to portray himself positively, reading “Life” has undeniably augmented my appreciation for the Rolling Stones vast oeuvre, in fact, I find I can hardly stop listening to the band I thought I knew so well, discovering dozens of underappreciated “b-side tracks” that are truly, unquestionably, brilliant.

Yet while that newfound appreciation is extremely satisfying, reading “Life” is honestly a pleasure unto itself, and for much more than all the juicy, shocking, and outrageous stories. Richards tells his story with a charming elegance that is irresistible, and it’s impossible to ignore that he is a

genuinely down-to-earth, likeable guy. He makes fun of his own disobedience to the police, saying, “even Elvis said, ‘Yes, sir’.” He laughs about his bad boy image, reminding us,

“Some of my most outrageous nights I can only believe actually happened because of corroborating evidence. No wonder I’m famous for partying!” Richards relishes in the freedom at the heart of Rock n’ Roll. He considers one of the greatest moments of his life to be when “at the end of the Steel Wheels tour we liberated Prague, or so it felt. One in Stalin’s eye. We played a concert there

soon after the revolution that ended the communist regime. ‘Tanks Roll Out, Stones Roll In’ was the headline. And we were glad to be part of it.”

After Richards fell out of a tree in 2006 and spent a number of weeks in the hospital, Tony Blair wrote him a letter with the opening line: “Dear Keith, you’ve always been one of my heroes...” Surprised, Richards reacted, “England’s in the hands of somebody who I’m a hero of? It’s frightening.” But honestly, after relishing all 547 pages and countless details of Richards’s life, I’ve got to say that Mr. Blair’s comment does not surprise me a bit. The electricity of Keith Richards’s story resembles that of his music, and I have no doubt that both will continue to be loved around the world for years to come.

## Google: Storing our Minds in the Cloud?

By Svati Narula

The Shallows is based off a cover story Mr. Carr wrote for *The Atlantic* magazine a while ago, titled “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” This question resonated with many, I suspect, because so many of us have probably asked it ourselves at some point or another, whether silently or aloud.

The question of whether Google makes us stupid or not

### Book Review

THE SHALLOWS

Nicholas Carr  
W.W. Norton, 2010

is merely a springboard for a larger debate about life in the digital age.

Who has only one window open in his internet browser at any one time these days? Who can resist checking Facebook or Blitz while studying? Many nights I have been slogging through reading for a class—stopping between paragraphs to check Blitz. If there aren’t any interesting Blitzes, I’ll check Facebook; then I’ll migrate to Twitter or the *New York Times* online or a blog. Constant stimulation is what we crave.

If this reminds you of your own life, then you should think about the argument Carr makes in *The Shallows*. He claims that the internet is screwing up our brains—rather than simply provoking or reinforcing behavioral changes, the World Wide Web is physically rewiring the intricate networks of our brain cells.

It’s a scary proposition, and one I was eager to read about. If my Blackberry or my Facebook account is to blame for my weakened concentration skills, then I better read this, I thought. However—and perhaps we can blame this on my internet-rewired brain—I just could not sustain an interest in this book.

The first chapter, in which Carr describes the way he can no longer read long articles without getting distracted, the way he has become used to information overload from the web, is great. In this chapter, he articulates what so many of us have

experienced but perhaps failed to acknowledge. He writes that when he first began worrying about his “inability to pay attention to one thing for more than a couple of minutes,” he figured the problem was due to his aging—“middle-age mind rot.” But, he continues, “my brain, I realized, wasn’t just drifting. It was demanding to be fed the way the Net fed it—and the more it was fed, the hungrier it became. Even when I was away from my computer, I yearned to check email, click links, do some Googling.”

The story Carr tells in Chapter 1 is my story, and it’s probably your story too (minus the middle-age mind rot thing). But when it comes to delving into the problem, he goes almost too deep for us readers to follow along. In order to explain the way the classic “linear thought process” of the past is being reshaped and turning us all into “chronic scatterbrains,” Carr relies heavily on neuroscience terms that require lengthy explanations. Also, he goes off on tangents that neither add anything essential nor are particularly interesting; nearly

**R**ather than simply provoking or reinforcing behavioral changes, the World Wide Web is physically rewiring the intricate networks of our brain cells.

six pages are spent detailing the history of Gutenberg and his printing press, for example. The argument in *The Shallows* is so exhaustively researched and thor-

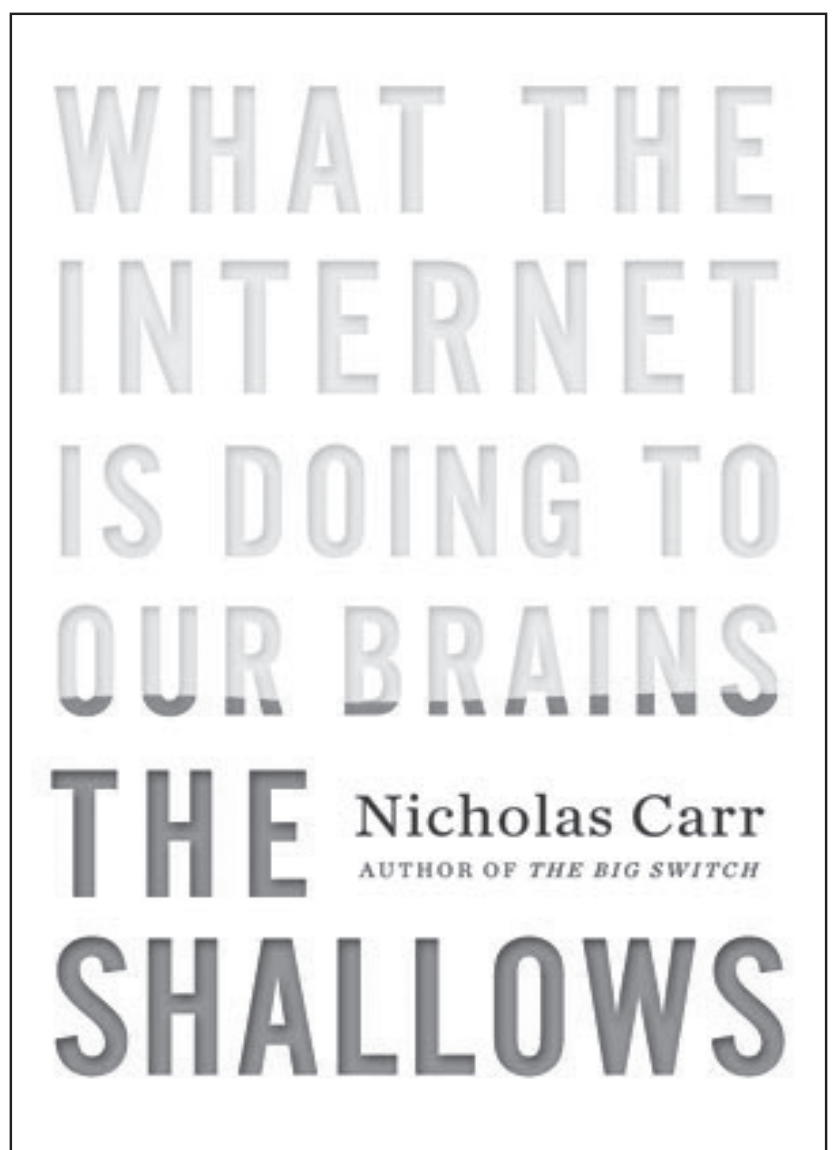
oughly explained that it reads more like an academic study than a popular non-fiction book.

One bright spot is when Carr mentions his days as a Dartmouth undergrad, in which he played computer games at the Kiewit computing center between partying on frat row and doing research in the stacks. Sadly, as a member of the Class of 1981, Carr was at the College before the advent of Blitz.

Once the Dartmouth references were gone, though, so was my attention. I turned to a much better read that tackles the same topic called *Hamlet’s Blackberry: A Practical Philosophy for Building a Good Life in the Digital Age* by William Powers. I was able to read through the entire thing in just a few hours, without even leaving the bookstore. Powers frames our current

situation in the context of many other points in history when technology changed—and frightened—people. His discussion of the Gutenberg printing press has more purpose and makes more sense than Carr’s. *Hamlet’s Blackberry* is a more lighthearted and fun read than *The Shallows*, but it is equally thought-provoking.

I do recommend at least skimming, or, if your brain is capable, reading either of these books or the aforementioned *Atlantic* article. We are members of what Carr calls “Generation Net,” and there is no doubt that the way we think and operate has been heavily influenced by the technology we



— Carr ’81, a bestselling author, split his time in Hanover evenly between the library and Webster Avenue —

Miss Narula is a sophomore at the College and a contributor to *The Dartmouth Review*.

# Sam Harris's Arbitrary Moral Vision

By Blake S. Neff

When I was growing up, one kernel of wisdom I heard from my parents was, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." This is pretty sound advice, so I'll at least take the time to say the following: This book did not give me cancer. Now, the negatives.

## Book Review

THE MORAL LANDSCAPE: HOW SCIENCE CAN DETERMINE HUMAN VALUES

Sam Harris  
Free Press, 2010

In *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*, bestselling author Sam Harris continues his interminable crusade against all things religious from a new angle. His previous works, *The End of Faith* and *Letter to a Christian Nation*, were standard attacks on the reasonability and utility of religious faith, but garnered enough attention to place Harris alongside Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, and Daniel Dennett as one of the "Four Horsemen" of

scientific terms. Our moral attitudes are, at their roots, attempts to produce certain mental states that we like while avoiding those we dislike. Therefore, Harris's thesis is that morality itself should be treated as a branch of scientific inquiry no different from fields like astronomy. By this, Harris means to say that we can apply the scientific method towards moral questions in order to provide objective answers. Just as we might study natural phenomena to find the density of zinc, we may use the same standards to decide whether something like the death penalty is morally justified. With this argument, Harris is directly opposing the popular opinion of David Hume, who argued on the unbridgeable divide between questions of fact and ones of value.

It's an argument that at least some have found persuasive already. The back cover contains an array of advance praise from the likes of Richard Dawkins and Steven Pinker praising this "thrilling, audacious book" for its "tremendously appealing vision" which will turn moral philosophy "upside down."

Those outside of the "bestselling atheist author" niche may prove less credulous. As one friend put it upon hearing this book's title, its natural opposite would be a book subtitled

some race of superbeings? Harris says the answer is "clearly" yes, and leaves it at that. Should average wellbeing be held in highest esteem, or aggregate wellbeing? This is mentioned and then goes unaddressed.

The fact that Harris is simply skipping past what is supposed to be his book's central argument is bad enough, but the situation is made worse by the fact that Harris seems aware of this. There is already a rich array of philosophical literature dealing with issues like moral realism and skepticism, and Harris would do well to work the arguments of this literature into his book as a means to bolster his position or rebut criticisms. Instead, though, Harris makes the almost unbelievable claim that he can jump past all of this because the "views and conceptual distinctions" in

academic discussions of morality are simply too boring to warrant inclusion in a book for popular audiences. For such an ambitious book, such outright laziness on the author's part is appalling. If Stephen Hawking can write a well-reviewed bestseller on black hole physics, was it truly impossible for Harris to find a compelling, accessible way to write about the details of moral philosophy?

Aside from the fundamental issues with Harris's thesis, plenty of other problems abound. Harris's thesis really only requires that he articulate his viewpoint, offer reasons to support it, and counter any possible objections. However, Harris frequently embarks on tangents which stray quite far from the supposed theme of the book. Some, like lengthy ventures into the neurological bases of belief or an argument against free will, loosely pertain to the topic but seem mostly to reflect subjects that Harris is interested in (he got his Ph.D. only last year and seems intent on showing it off). The more common culprit, though, is the subject of Harris's previous two books, religion. Although there is really no need for Harris to address religion much at all in his book, he can never resist the opportunity to bash it. Since Harris has put ink to dead tree twice already on this matter, it is rather depressing that Harris still frequently fails to understand what he is attacking. Minor mistakes such as not understanding Catholic excommunication combine with larger ones like implying that all religions require free will to work, forcing the informed reader to endure uncomfortable passages where a very certain man is also certainly wrong.

While snide remarks about the vengefulness of the God of Abraham or the inherent violence of Islam can be seen as innocent if annoying attempts to appeal to his target audience, the problem becomes far greater when Harris allows his religion-bashing to consume about half of the book. Harris devotes one of his five chapters to religion-bashing, and works it in to all of the others. Sometimes, he comes off as outright deranged, as when he goes on a two-page rant in the endnotes in which he calls the Catholic Church "a criminal organization devoted... to the sexual enslavement of children."

The best example of Harris's inability to stay intellectually focused, though, is the long attack he makes against Dr. Francis Collins, former head of the Human Genome Project and evangelical Christian. In a blistering 13-page critique, Harris accuses Collins of intellectual dishonesty, self-deception, and outright stupidity, essentially stating that Collins cannot be both a Christian and a scientist in good standing. To build upon this, he attacks the editors of *Nature* for praising Collins's writings, the scientific community at large for not making him a pariah, and the Obama Administration for allowing this asylum escapee to head the NIH.

What does this intellectual mugging do to advance Harris's advocacy of scientific morality? Nothing. What relationship does it have with possible criticisms of this thesis? None. The entire effort is a personal attack against a man Harris does not like which fits in with a general hatred he has for religion. Not surprisingly for an attack of such venom, Harris's beloved reason is often left by the wayside. For example, his "rebuttal" to Collins's appreciation for scientist and theologian John Polkinghorne is to simply take a random passage from a Polkinghorne book, provide no context, and observe that it is not easy to understand with a cursory read.

This tangent, combined with the oppressive weight of so many others, reveal the book for the sham that it is. Harris seeks (or at least, claims to seek) to write a book of profound moral philosophy, but instead winds up with a half-baked mixture of philosophy and the anti-religious polemic he is so used to serving up. This mixture serves no one. Philosophy deserves better ideas, atheists a better advocate, and readers a better book. For the love of God and science, read something else.



— Sam Harris, a newly minted neuroscience Ph.D. and veteran polemicist, argues that science can arbitrate all questions of right and wrong —

modern atheism. *Landscape*, though, goes beyond the goal of arguing that religious belief is superstitious nonsense and instead tries to alter the beliefs of many who would identify as "non-religious" as well.

One of the major bulwarks that supporters of religion have relied upon is the argument that theism is essential to providing any sort of objective morality in the world. For some, a concern over the alleged amorality of atheism is enough to prevent a lapse of faith, but on the other end of the spectrum are many atheists who also accept this claim. Harris himself opens his book with an account of the great many people he has met who profess that there are no absolute moral principles, just the diverse and equally valid principles of each society and each person.

To Harris, such beliefs are simply intolerable. Does any supposed relativist really believe, he says, that the worldviews of the Taliban and that of the liberal West are equally valid ways of viewing the world, and that disagreements over which to follow emerge simply from intractable preferences? Harris says the answer is a definite "no."

To Harris, moral worldviews should be framed in neuro-

Mr. Neff is a sophomore at the College and a Week Editor of The Dartmouth Review.

"How Religion Can Conduct Experiments." The obvious absurdity there serves to highlight the patent failure of Harris's book.

Harris is blazing a bold path with this assertion, but his case starts to fall apart almost as soon as he leaves the gate. First

**Harris still frequently fails to understand what he is attacking. Minor mistakes such as not understanding Catholic excommunication combine with larger ones like implying that all religions require free will to work, forcing the informed reader to endure uncomfortable passages where a very certain man is also certainly wrong.**

of all, Harris's "moral science" is less using science to determine values than it is using science as an evaluative mechanism for what Harris has already deemed to be moral. For instance, without any science in sight, Harris baldly asserts that "the only thing we can reasonably value" is "maximizing the well-being of conscious creatures." Far from using science to determine human values, Harris simply assumes as a first principle that his version of utilitarianism is correct. By making this assumption,

Harris skips entirely past where his argument should be. Even those whose knowledge of philosophy is limited to high-school debate can list the many potential flaws with a utilitarian worldview, but Harris brushes them aside with a single sentence where he bothers with them at all. Why, precisely, should individuals value the good of the collective whole or of future generations over their own immediate personal wellbeing? It is never precisely made clear, although Harris boldly implies that everybody prefers a fair world to one that favors them. Would it be right for our species to be sacrificed towards the unfathomably immense happiness of

# Sorkin's First Rate Wall Street Autopsy

By Coleman Shear

The strength of Andrew Ross Sorkin's blow-by-blow account of the financial crisis as it unfolded from 2007 to 2009 is that it reads more like a fast paced novel than a textbook on the financial crisis. Sorkin benefits the average lay reader, who most likely has no experience understanding financial terms, by explaining complex financial instruments in a way that even the most financially illiterate can understand. *Too Big to Fail* brings the reader into the boardrooms of Wall Street's biggest firms and into the halls of the Fed, enabling the reader to get inside the heads of Wall Street's CEOs and major decision makers at the height of the crisis. Sorkin weaved this complex tapestry of interrelated events by interviewing over

## Book Review

TOO BIG TO FAIL

Andrew Ross Sorkin  
Viking, 2009

two hundred people and logging in over five hundred hours of interviews with those who were involved in the crisis. As such, *Too Big to Fail* is currently the definitive count of the financial crisis from the views of those in power who tried to contain it, and insofar as it worked, helped to prevent the destruction of the entire US financial system.

Understanding the crisis requires a basic knowledge of derivatives, and Sorkin spends a large amount of time exploring

savings. Bankers felt heavy pressure to continue underwriting these CDOs, fearing that they would fall behind if they didn't. Compounding this malicious cycle of incentives was one more: bankers' bonuses became increasingly dependent on issuing more CDOs.

The firms that went under in the financial crisis were those firms where the highly leveraged CDO issuance was extremely strong. Sorkin discusses in heavy and entertaining detail the corporate cultures at both Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch that created this mess. Both banks wanted to emulate Goldman Sachs' example, and to do so how they leveraged themselves to the hilt, going so far as to lend 30 dollars for every dollar in reserve. Both banks began to develop a culture that rewarded risk, and Sorkin describes how Lehman and Merrill's motivation to enter this new kind of derivative was driven by a sort of Goldman envy.

These banks had their confidence further buoyed by AIG, which helped the investment banks manage the risk of a default on their CDOs by selling them credit default swaps (CDSs). A CDS is a form of insurance where the buyer pays a premium protecting him from the risk of default on the asset that he holds; in this case, the underlying asset was a CDO.

The problem, Sorkin makes clear, was not the derivatives themselves, but the underlying assets. Similarly to how Lehman and Merrill leveraged themselves to the hilt, AIG did not provide enough collateral to protect itself from impending defaults on these toxic assets. By the time major changes were made at the top levels at both Lehman and Merrill, the warnings given by AIG to get more collateral were largely too late.

The reader sees a similar scramble throughout Wall Street when the banks were in the midst of the crisis to find greater liquidity. Sorkin provides amusing anecdotes of Wall Street executives going as far as South Korea in pursuit of new investors to shore up their liquidity, and shares the story of how the US Treasury attempted to get Warren Buffett to endorse Lehman in order to give it more time to shore up its balance sheets.

The virtue of *Too Big to Fail* is its even-handed approach when looking at the titans of Wall Street. Sorkin — contra media trends — does not portray the banks' CEOs and employees as greedy twenty-first century robber barons, but as men and women who have been given the responsibility to handle large amounts of risk and capital and who, by managing this risk, have created a better, more integrated worldwide economy. Sorkin enables the reader to marvel at the benefits of this new worldwide financial integration, but he also allows you to look back in horror at how this same integration enabled bankers in Iceland and sovereign wealth funds in the Emirates to bet on the US housing market, making this financial crisis's consequences more global than any panic seen before.

Sorkin is not an economist, and his greatest contribution is not his financial analysis, but his complex psychoanalysis of the men in power on Wall Street. In addition to his exami-

Richard Fuld, one comes away from *Too Big to Fail* with a real appreciation for Fuld's tenacity and toughness. Sorkin's biggest complaint about Fuld (and the one that sticks) is that as Fuld ascended Lehman's ladder, he began to value loyalty over ability, surrounding himself with sycophants rather than Lehman's most competent experts.

Sorkin's thumbnail sketches of the government officials who tried to contain the crisis — Treasury Secretary Hank



Paulson, then-head of the New York Fed Tim Geithner, and Federal Reserve chief Ben Bernanke — are also especially memorable. Sorkin's book is full of admiration for Paulson, from his time at Goldman through to his tenure as Treasury Secretary. Sorkin's portrayal of Paulson's entrance into public service and his reluctance to take over the Treasury under Bush almost makes Paulson into a kind of Cincinnatus of finance,

**Sorkin's portrayal of Paulson's entrance into public service and his reluctance to take over the Treasury under Bush almost makes Paulson into a kind of Cincinnatus of finance.**

the exemplar banker. Lacking the ego and excess that many other CEOs are accused of, Paulson's character is treated by Sorkin in an affectionate way, as he hands out anecdotes of Paulson's college days at Dartmouth, where he sat in the SAE basement drinking non-alcoholic beverages. We also get a clip of Paulson's odd social presence in Washington: when Paulson's wife offers glasses of water

to visitors from the Treasury Department, Paulson butts in that they don't want anything to drink. Nevertheless, Paulson's simple lifestyle — particularly in comparison to other CEOs — is constantly referenced as a positive quality.

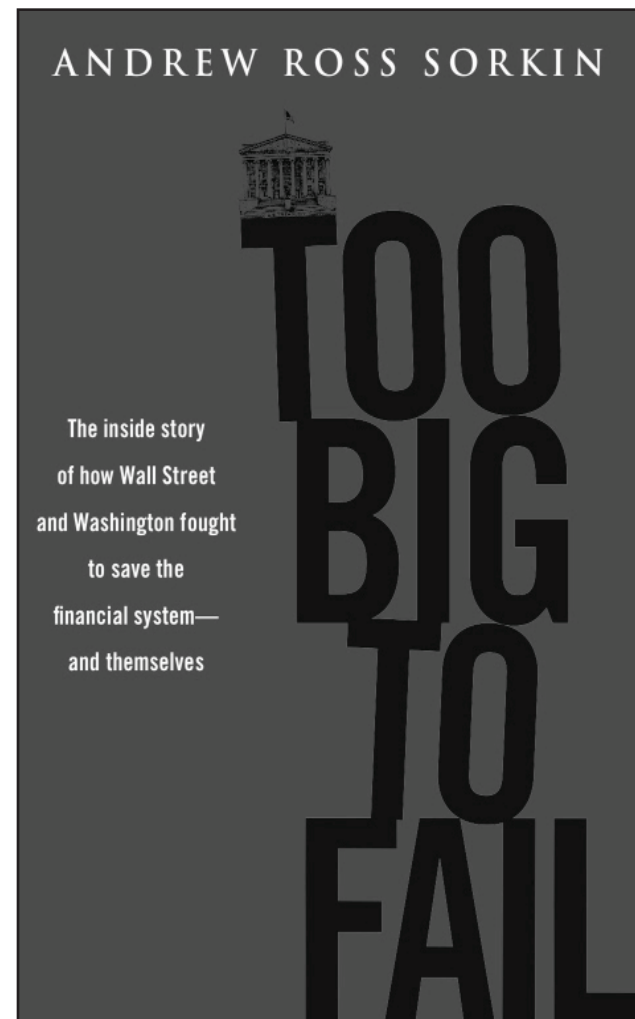
Similarly to Paulson, JP Morgan's Jamie Dimon is portrayed as a CEO that Americans should identify with. Dimon worked closely with Paulson to stave off the financial crisis, and Dimon emerged later as one of the first American CEOs to accept money from TARP, a move that was essential for making smaller banks throughout America accept relief from the federal government.

If anything, *Too Big to Fail* is a story on leadership as much as it is an account of the collapse. Sorkin's greatest ability is his knack for getting inside the heads of the leaders of these financial institutions. He analyzes them and understands their actions, looking at them from several points of view. Sorkin follows the rise and fall of each CEO, highlighting their abilities to rise from humble beginnings even as he shows how power and wealth corrupted many of them and shielded them from reality.

In the reality-evasion department, nothing beats O'Neal's private elevator at Merrill, which allowed him to avoid interacting with Merrill employees. Many CEOs are portrayed as living in particularly privileged ivory towers, unaware of the hell breaking loose underfoot. The takeaway of *Too Big to Fail* is that internal politics can destroy any great company, especially when leaders fail to allow themselves to be challenged.

But Sorkin also makes clear that there isn't necessarily cause to storm Wall Street quite yet. While highlighting clear examples of corporate excess, Sorkin points to CEOs such as Jamie Dimon or Vikram Pandit who aren't caught up in the culture of excess, and who genuinely seem more concerned in running their companies for the shareholders ahead of their own well being.

What *Too Big to Fail* will be remembered most for is not its analysis of the financial crisis, but its ability to spin interlocking stories of these powerbrokers into one. Sorkin accomplishes this so well that by the end of *Too Big to Fail*, all of these stories — from the regulators to the CEOs — are intertwined into a giant, compelling, and nightmarish whole.



the development of two new derivatives in particular: collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) and credit default swaps (CDSs). He relates the advent of these new derivatives to the incentive problems that bringing about Wall Street's current crisis. Using layman's terms, he explains that CDOs are a collection of payoffs from mortgages put into a security (the CDO). This CDO is then split into various tranches based on levels of riskiness, the safest being those with "triple A" ratings. Before the advent of CDOs, the lenders participating in a mortgage often issued it with the expectation that they would be collecting the money paid by the holder of the mortgage. CDOs enabled the issuers of mortgages to simply sell off a mortgage after issuing it, thereby transferring away the entire risk of issuing a bad mortgage to some other lender or financial institution. Now, the investment banks that underwrote the CDOs had an incentive to continue packaging mortgages into CDOs and selling them to other financial institutions, all of which held in trust the average American's retirement

**Sorkin discusses in heavy and entertaining detail the corporate cultures at both Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch that created this mess. Both banks wanted to emulate Goldman Sachs' example, and to do so how they leveraged themselves to the hilt, with Lehman going so far as to borrow 30 dollars for every dollar it had in equity.**

nation of the problems of the corporate culture of excess, he explores the minds of several CEOs in particular — Richard Fuld of Lehman Brothers and Stanley O'Neal of Merrill Lynch — and shows how they became increasingly isolated from the day-to-day happenings of their companies. In his fair-minded way, Sorkin highlights these leaders' character flaws even as he points out the attributes that brought them to the top. For all the nasty things that have been said about

# Lewis's "Big Short" Long on Entertainment

By Ke Ding

Since the fateful and stunning collapse of Bear Stearns in 2008, numerous books have been written on the why, who, and how behind Wall Street's troubles. You've got, for example, *Too Big to Fail* by Andrew Ross Sorkin, *The House of Cards* by William D. Cohan, and most recently, *The Big Short* by Michael Lewis.

Lewis was a former bond salesman at Salomon Brothers later made famous by his autobiographical book *Liar's Poker*, which chronicled his experiences on Wall Street and the kind of characters that thrived there. As ethnographies go, it was a priceless account of an unspeakably unusual subculture. After the collapse of Stearns, Lewis, who had long since quit finance and was working full time as a writer and journalist, was amongst the many who tried to figure out, well, "What the hell happened?"

As Lewis describes it, *The Big Short* is about the build-up of the housing and credit bubble of the 2000s, from the perspective of the people who had bet on its bursting — the people who were right. (Hence the shorting referred to in the title — a way to make money off of a drop in an asset's price.) And the number of people who had bet that this would happen was surprisingly small. After an interview with Meredith Whitney, an analyst who first issued a pessimistic report on Citibank in 2007 and had risen in fame as she became one of the first to go bearish on the banks, Lewis wrote that by 2008 "...there was a long and growing list of pundits who claimed they predicted the catastrophe, but a far shorter list of people who actually did. Of those, even fewer had the nerve to bet on their vision..."

The book then goes on to explore in detail the stories of these people who had bet upon the upcoming implosion and why they did so. Lewis weaves a story that manages

*Mr. Ding is a sophomore at the College and a managing editor for The Dartmouth Review.*

to talk about some of the fundamental problems behind the financial crisis through the lens of those who are most qualified to tell us what that problem may be: namely, those who

## Book Review

THE BIG SHORT

Michael Lewis  
W.W. Norton, 2010

were prescient enough to make money betting on it. People such as Steve Eisman, a sometimes callous former corporate lawyer with a populist streak and an almost pathological, sometimes justified, and perhaps even ironic (considering that he works for Morgan Stanley) hatred of Wall Street and oligarchy. Upon listening to the CEO of a savings and loan called Golden West Financial Corporation explain, off the record, free checking as really a tax on poor people (who were more likely to overdraft), Eisman says "That's when I really decided the system was really, 'Fuck the poor'." There's a few more of these shorters, including a Michael Burry, who Lewis characterizes as a kind of savant, an anti-social former medical student in California who had a talent for sitting in a room for days reading companies' financial books.

While taking us through these characters, Lewis also provides a running explanation of the way in which the shorters made their big bet: they invented the credit-default swap, where one party (the people who wanted to short) would pay another (large banks) a certain amount of money up until there were defaults in the mortgage-backed collateral debt obligations (CDOs). At that point, the banks would pay the par value of the bond to the protection buyer (the people who wanted to short). It was a smart way for people like Michael Burry and Steve Eisman to bet directly against CDOs, and something that in the end, made them a lot of money.

And after the read, here's what I would say: *The Big Short* is very entertaining and does a good job of being as informative as it can be without being too academic, but is ultimately somewhat flawed in its narrative style, and perhaps, in its partisanship as well. Michael Lewis obviously doesn't like the banks, and this sometimes means that interesting ideas that don't jive with his philosophy don't get explored. For example, in the beginning of *The Big Short*, even Lewis admits that CDOs were initially invented to make the credit markets more efficient: to extend credit to people who otherwise wouldn't have any and to allow creditors who were willing to bear this kind of risk do so.

The question then begs to be asked: is there a way to regulate them, to continue to ensure that the credit markets are as efficient as possible through CDOs? But this topic isn't explored, as throughout the rest of the book, CDOs, and the banks that deal with them, are roundly vilified. In addition, one has to wonder about the central conclusion of the book. It's certainly no lie to say that Wall Street acted greedily: there was undoubtedly a huge systemic problem there.

But what about those Americans who were willing to sign mortgages that they had no chance of paying off? Wall Street made it easy for them to do so, true, but are we so infantile a nation that we can't accept at least partial responsibility for the fact that at the end of the day, it was ordinary Americans who put their signatures upon the dotted line and then weren't able to pay?

However, despite all this, to the average reader and to this reviewer, *The Big Short* was still very informative. *The Big Short* is, after all is said and done, a good read, and, in a book tackling murky topics like credit-default swaps and collateralized debt obligations, this is clutch.

Anecdotes that at times were frustrating or seemingly irrelevant — other than, perhaps, to further a political point — were at other times also what made *The Big Short* read like a story; a flawed and biased story, perhaps, but a fun one nevertheless.

# Franzen's False Cry in "Freedom"

By Melanie Wilcox

Critically acclaimed American author Jonathan Franzen gained widespread attention from his 2001 novel, *The Corrections*, which earned him a National Book Award. His latest novel, *Freedom*, released in August 2010, earned him a place in Oprah Winfrey's Book Club and landed him on the cover of Time. The success of *The Corrections* heightened

## Book Review

FREEDOM

Jonathan Franzen  
Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2010

anticipation for its successor, an Updike-like, literary realist story of a troubled Midwestern family. *Freedom* recalls the author's perceptions of America's problems during the Bush Administration; it is a novel with a left-wing feel that showcases Franzen's political convictions in the form of fiction.

The book's plot is convoluted, and attempts to capture as many domestic and global social issues as possible. It begins by introducing a dysfunctional, liberal middle-class family, the Berglunds, who live in a nosy, gossipy, everybody-knows-everybody neighborhood in St. Paul, Minnesota. The central characters are Patty Berglund, an all-American basketball player in college and later exemplary homemaker, and Walter Berglund, a passive-aggressive environmental lawyer and anti-growth, anti-population advocate. They have two children, Jessica and Joey. Joey displays an independent, entrepreneurial spirit at an early age, and upsets his family by moving in with the Reaganite next-door neighbors, the Monaghans. He has a fling with their daughter, Connie, whom he later marries. Patty, a "nice" person who can only say that rude behavior is just "weird," has a repressed, angry edge that is revealed when she slashes the Monaghans' tires after finding out about Connie and Joey's relationship.

The characters' upbringings influence their moral and political views, and there are conflicts between the two. For instance, beginning in his teen years, conservative-minded Joey struggles with his liberal family by moving in with

*Miss Wilcox is a sophomore at the College and contributor to The Dartmouth Review.*

the next-door neighbors, and into his adult years by selling defective auto parts to the military for use in Iraq. Swarmed with guilt, he eventually reconciles with his father and gives funds to support Walter's environmental efforts. Another conflict occurs when Walter struggles with his decision to cooperate with a coal mining company in an attempt to save an endangered songbird. Franzen effectively sets up strong tensions between political views, moral convictions, and familial upbringing, and these tensions drive the novel.

Franzen also uses the lives of this dysfunctional and complicated family, to paint a picture of a world that is unjust on domestic and global levels. It is a world where freedom does not bring happiness; in fact, too much freedom can create problems. The characters struggle to find their freedom and then (more problematically) to handle their freedom.

In that vein, Franzen suggests that the United States' abundance of freedom can be dangerous. Too much freedom on a personal level, as demonstrated by the characters' decisions, and too much democracy in America can present problems. How people deal with their freedom determines their fate. In a world abundant with options and free will, political and moral beliefs can clash, as shown with Walter struggle to work with the coal mining company in efforts to save the endangered songbird. It is a world where a person has to sacrifice his or her freedom by committing to things, whether it is the environment, relationships, political involvement, and other passions. Freedom can only be attained through self-acceptance: acceptance saves Patty and Walter's marriage since they forgive each other; Patty's mother resolves issues with her daughter when she recognizes her failures as a parent.

In a world where differing political worldviews constantly clash, Franzen seems to point out that people can never be free because compromises are always being made. The author presents political commentary on both sides of the aisle with a liberal tone. Often, *Freedom* is a thinly

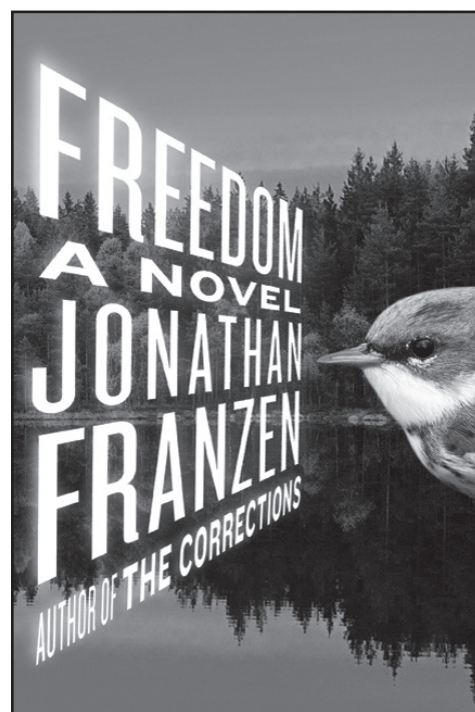
veiled political commentary masquerading as fiction. It is the same, overused, liberal, "blame George Bush" approach. His bitterness regarding conservative politics can be seen by Joey, who rebels from his parents to "connive with monster trashing the country for their personal enrichment" and wishes for a "simpler world in which a good life could hardly be at

nobody else's expense." Granted, he has a few positive comments about the Republican Party, but it is insignificant compared to the rest of the 562-page novel.

Moreover, Franzen casts America in the most negative of lights in *Freedom*. Lest he leave any room for literary interpretation, in a recent interview with *The Economist*, the author stated, "I'm at pains not to endorse any interpretation of my book but, believe me, this isn't grating on my ears what you're saying. In the last decade America has emerged even in its own estimation as a problem state. There are many criticisms one could make...like the treatment of the Indians...it goes way back...and our long relationship with slavery...and then the Cold War where we were certainly culpable, but the degree to which we are almost a rogue state and

causing incredible trouble around the world in our attempts to preserve our freedoms to preserve our SUV's." It seems as if Franzen is conveying his political viewpoints through Walter, the nature conservationist.

This is a celebrated author whose characters say things like "F\*\*\* the pope," and who writes, "9/11 had been orchestrated by Halliburton and the Saudi royal family." He sends this message to the reader through Walter's perceptions and the hippie fans and the media who support Walter's Free Space campaign. The fans of Walter's campaign shame West Virginia for "its high birth rates, its ownership by the coal industry, its large population of Christian fundamentalists, and its responsibility for tipping the 2000 election in George Bush's favor." Franzen's ceaseless heavy hand is bad enough, but his political intolerance makes it all the more appalling that the word "Freedom" should grace the cover.



# Hillenbrand Delivers Profile in Courage

By Thomas Hauch

“All he could see, in every direction, was water. It was June 23, 1943. Somewhere on the endless expanse of the Pacific Ocean, Army Air Forces bombardier and Olympic runner Louie Zamperini lay across a small raft, drifting westward.”

In the opening lines of *Unbroken*, author Laura Hillenbrand paints a desperate image. It has been 27 days since Zamperini’s plane suffered a mechanical failure and crashed into the Pacific. He has since floated hundreds, perhaps even

## Book Review

UNBROKEN

Laura Hillenbrand  
Random House, 2010

thousands, of miles on a yellow survival raft. Across from him sits the plane’s gunner, and on another raft lies the pilot. Their bodies have been ravaged by the elements and withered by starvation. Just a month before, Zamperini had been America’s best shot at breaking the four-minute mile. Now he was just hoping to survive, and as every day passed, it seemed more and more improbable. Suddenly, Zamperini hears the roar of an engine above; a plane appears from the mist. But then another sound emerges: not the steady hum of pistons, but the ferocious roar of machine-gun fire. With no other option, Zamperini dives into the shark-infested water, forced to wait between a rock and a hard place.

But just then, Hillenbrand doubles back. Hillenbrand leaves Zamperini clinging to his raft, his fate unknown, and takes us to his childhood home of Torrance, California. She introduces the reader to a young Louis Zamperini: a pick-pocket and a thief, a delinquent child who seemed destined

*Mr. Hauch is a sophomore at the College and an associate editor for The Dartmouth Review.*

to do nothing. But through the guidance of his older brother, Zamperini mended his ways and grew into a star. He learned to channel his strong will and stubborn disposition towards performing at the highest level on the track.

As a teenager, Zamperini excelled, becoming the fastest miler in high school history and earning a scholarship to the University of Southern California. According to his coach at Torrance High, “the only runner who could beat him was Seabiscuit.” Still in college, he earned a chance to compete in the 1936 Olympics, running the 5000m. He failed to make much of an impact in Berlin (at 19, he was one of the youngest competitors in an event that favors experience). But his final lap sprint did earn the praise of Adolf Hitler, who insisted on shaking hands with Zamperini.

Whatever the outcome, he returned in high spirits. He continued to train and improve, but by the time he graduated from USC, Zamperini was no longer dreaming of the 1940 Olympics. The German menace had shown its true colors, and Japan (the host of the 1940 games) seemed bent on conquering the East. The world was headed down a dangerous path. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Zamperini enlisted in 1941, and he was deployed to Hawaii the following year as a B-24 bombardier. After dozens of successful operations, Zamperini’s plane went down over the Pacific. He survived the crash, along with two others from his crew, and they set off drifting west on a pair of yellow survival rafts.

The incident on the 27<sup>th</sup> day, which Hillenbrand foreshadows in her brief preface, is just one of many trials that Zamperini would face. In fact, he would ultimately drift more than a thousand miles on his raft, only to wash upon the shores of enemy territory and spend the next two years in a Japanese prison camp. Knowing this, however, does nothing to spoil the drama of *Unbroken*. It does not ease the pain that Zamperini endured, and that Hillenbrand describes in searing detail.

Her prose is clear and to the point. There is no hint of hyperbole, pretension, or self-indulgence. She allows the incredible story of Louis Zamperini to simply tell itself.

*Unbroken* is a success, not for its literary flourish, but for its absolute dedication to its subject. As in her 2001 bestseller *Seabiscuit*, about a champion thoroughbred that emerged at the height of the Great Depression, Hillenbrand captures not only the life but the atmosphere that surrounded her protagonist. The story of *Unbroken* begins in that same period of history. In fact, Zamperini and Seabiscuit often shared headlines in the 1930s.

It was a dark time for many. But Americans placed their hope in people like Louie. They rallied behind the athletes who rose above their circumstances. Perhaps Hillenbrand can relate with them. For most of her life, Hillenbrand has suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome, forcing her to remain at home. According to the author, writing about physical paragons like Seabiscuit and Zamperini is her own unique way of living vicariously. Whatever the case, it is clear that Hillenbrand has done her research. And with her clear and simple prose, she skillfully captures the spirit of the times.

In fact, to label *Unbroken* as a mere biography is to ignore the sheer scope of Hillenbrand’s work. True, it is ultimately the story of Louis Zamperini, but Hillenbrand seems capable of describing an entire generation. With the same attention that she gives to her protagonist, Hillenbrand weaves together the lives of countless individuals. Of the soldiers who fought with Zamperini, we learn about their homes and livelihoods. We share in their dreams and understand their fears. Even more remarkable, Hillenbrand describes Zamperini’s captors with the same exacting detail. It would be all too easy to write them off as faceless criminals, but Hillenbrand gives each one a life and story of his own.

To put it simply, *Unbroken* is a triumph of storytelling. In her sophomore effort, Hillenbrand has crafted yet another masterpiece, a blend of sport and history that catalogs a truly improbable life. The trials of Louis Zamperini, though not unknown, have been largely untold until now. Hillenbrand has given his story a well-deserved and lasting place in literature.

Hillenbrand seems capable of describing an entire generation.

# Updike’s Grand and Tantalizing Final Act

By J.P. Harrington

A wrinkled, weathered face staring off into the distance – waiting for the inevitable end to approach across a sea of memories. That is the image that John Updike’s most recent posthumous collection of poems conjures within the mind of the reader. *Endpoint and Other Poems* is a Janus-faced work, continually looking back to the sunrise and forwards to the sunset at the same time. In this web of the past and the future, Updike ensnares himself – and his country.

The book begins, fittingly at the end. *Endpoint* is a mini-collection of poems including a series written by the author on several of his own birthdays. These poems bemoan the death of American culture, the death of reading and the death that he calmly awaits.

Technology appears as a central part of this new world, so far from that of his youth. Yet, Updike displays a poet’s distrust of electronics. He muses about how his watch battery will last for ten years, ticking on even when his own flesh decays in the grave. In another poem, entitled “Birthday Shopping,” Updike and his wife wander through Best Buy surrounded by strange displays of flashing lights: “The geeks in matching shirts/talked gigabytes to girls with blue tattoos/and nostril studs, and guys with ropey arms/packed pixel-rich home-entertainment screens.” Alone in a brave new world of ever-evolving mind-rotting entertainment technology, Updike and his wife feel lost in the plastic environment. In the middle of this frighteningly Huxleyan vision of the now omnipresent big-box store, Updike comes across a young Chinese girl, abandoned by her adoptive mother to stare at a television screen. The screen becomes her newest parent in Updike’s mind, absorbing the “transfixed little pixie here/ among the pixels, stiller than if asleep.” Updike points out that technology has slowly transformed from a mere tool to the defining part of our culture. He directly contrasts modern technology with the invention of the printing press that led to the democratization of knowledge and eventually, freedom of thought.

Later, Updike reveals his contempt for the new technology in a sardonic poem entitled “The City Outside,” written

*Mr. Harrington is a freshman at the College and a contributor to The Dartmouth Review.*

from his hospital bed in Boston. He scoffs “Strontium 90-is that a so-called/heavy element? I’ve been injected./and yet the same imbecilic stuff-/the babble on TV, newspaper fluff./the drone of magazines, banality’s/kind banter...” On the one hand, science saves his life, but on the other it has made life not worth living.

## Book Review

ENDPOINT AND OTHER POEMS

John Updike  
Random House, 2010

At this point, this end, however, Updike does not concern himself only with the culture that is dying around him, but instead depicts the approach of death within him. Surrounded by dying friends, acquaintances and family members, he grows alternately afraid and angry. On one page he damns age, writing about retirees’ pale withered skin sizzling in the harsh light of the sun, but on the next, he quietly describes the panic he felt when he forgot how to pump gas, gently and sadly questioning: “What’s up? What’s left of/me?” Emotions about death bubble under the surface of each understated poem where a single word tinged with regret can dominate an entire line. Even those poems written on his birthday emit waves of sadness. The question that Updike leaves us with at the end of this first part of the collection is not how to think of death, but “how not to think of death?”

Yet, the supposedly lighter poems that follow are also caught between the past and the future, the beginning and the end. Old diners filled with teenagers drinking Coca-Cola and milkshakes appear briefly before fading to visions of the Appalachian Mountains collapsing into the Atlantic Ocean. In a poem called simply “Waco,” televisions in a brand new Hilton hotel “befuddle breakfast eaters with a feast/of twitching imagery, the news gone mad” only a few miles away from the now empty and quiet land where the Branch Davidians lived and died. History of pain pops up throughout the poems, as if Updike cannot see the difference between what happened

and what will happen. Perhaps, he is right, perhaps there is none. His sonnets do not deal with women or love, but rather with sites of historical pain and with the decay of his own body.

Honest to a point, Updike holds no punches when it comes to himself. An acidic wit pervades the darkly comic “Colonoscopy” and he praises his left hand for its service in past episodes of self-gratification.

Yet, it is his descriptions of Irish civil war, Cambodian genocides and Soviet starvation that linger in the mind. Sadly, it seems that Updike alone remembers the pain while the youngest generation has forgotten the hardships. In “St. Petersburg,” he writes of “Lean girls/in tall and pricey boots now stalk soft prey/where their grandmothers starved on hard Seige-bread.”

Updike has produced a brilliant and incisive collection of heart-wrenching poems. While they certainly are far from uplifting, they serve as a warning – that death and pain approach us. No one is safe. You can’t help but feel uneasy when Updike juxtaposes the following phrase next to descriptions of the intense suffering of the Irish, the Cambodians, and the

His sonnets deal with the decay of his own body.

Russians: “What have we done/to earn eternal youth? Nothing so great-/been born American, put in our time.” Updike points out the amazing luck of those born American, but at the same time the possibility for that luck to change. As a prophet of doom, he certainly prefers to focus on the individual, on the darkness that sits waiting for us all, but occasionally he ventures to speak of America’s future.

At the end of the collection, one is only left wishing – wishing that Updike had had a few more years and that this would not be one of the last of his works. A great mind has been lost – all that is left are these words on frail pages. His incisive social commentary will be missed along with his unique viewpoint. It is not difficult to find someone standing at the end of his life looking back, but to find someone who sees the past and future as inseparable is a trying task indeed. His final poems are worth the read – if only so that you attempt to share his unique way of looking at the world. Perhaps this attitude is best seen in what he wrote on his 69<sup>th</sup> birthday:

“Birthday, death day–what day is not both?”

# Tory Truth-Telling From Across the Pond

By Sterling C. Beard

I first became aware of Daniel Hannan a little under a year ago. A fellow from Edinburgh was doing a transfer quarter here at Dartmouth and we happened to share the same acting class. We became quick friends, often chatting over lunch or dinner about the special relationship between Britain and the United States and politics in general. He was a Liberal-Democrat, a member of what is essentially the centrist party in Britain that appears to be in the process of self-destructing as of this writing, but he told me about one conservative politician who was, as he said, “the closest thing Britain has to a Republican.” He then showed me Daniel Hannan’s blog on the *Daily Telegraph* and several YouTube videos.

## Book Review

THE NEW ROAD TO SERFDOM: A LETTER OF WARNING TO AMERICA

Daniel Hannan  
Harper, 2010

He was right; Dan Hannan would get along quite comfortably with Congress’ soon to be dynamic duo of Ron and Rand Paul. A native of Lima, Peru, he’s been South East England’s Member of European Parliament since 1999, when he was elected at the age of 27. He’s tri-lingual, a graduate of Oxford, a journalist, Eurosceptic, Atlanticist, well reasoned and when he speaks he’s so eloquent he’s almost mesmerizing. One only has to view the YouTube video in which he expertly takes Gordon Brown apart, declaring the then PM to be the, “devalued Prime Minister of a devalued government” to see what I’m talking about. In other words, he’s a member of the species of statesmen who’s supposed to be long extinct. As you can imagine, I was ecstatic when I received his newest book, *The New Road to Serfdom: A Letter of Warning to America*, for Christmas.

Don’t let the title fool you, it’s not intended to be a sequel to the original *Road to Serfdom*, an important, albeit thick and difficult tome. I slogged through F.A. Hayek’s classic during my off quarter in the spring and, though it’s an interesting book, nobody can accuse Hayek of being a riveting writer. It’s not his fault; his purpose wasn’t to entertain but to explain in measured terms why control of markets was inferior to keeping them free.

Hannan’s book isn’t concerned with markets in the abstract at all. Instead, the book is not based nearly as much in economic arguments, though they are a part of his thesis: for America to become more European—more socialist, more jaded, more deferential to unelected elites—it must necessarily become less confident, less hopeful, less, well, American. To alter the United States thus would be a betrayal of America’s

*Mr. Beard is a junior at the College and a managing editor for The Dartmouth Review.*

history and our ancestors.

Unfortunately, Hannan writes, that process has already begun. As he writes in the introduction, while he stood in the Jefferson Memorial on his most recent trip to the States, “I fancied I heard a clanking noise. Doubtless it was Jefferson’s shade rattling his chains in protest at what is being done to his country... The characteristics that once set America apart are being eliminated. The United States is becoming just another country.”

To argue his position, Hannan hits a broad number of topics in a short amount of paper (counting the introduction, the whole book checks in at 198 pages), but concerns himself the most with the culture and size of government. Most of what he has to say are things American conservatives are familiar with already: the government is growing too large to the detriment of freedom, federalism is breaking down, Europeanizing the economy will lead to disaster, etc.

Chances are, you’ve just yawned and snarked that you could get the same points if you watched a week of Fox News, Glenn Beck or Hannity.

The difference between *The New Road to Serfdom* and any other conservative TV show or book flying off the shelves these days is the perspective Hannan writes from. Rather than being just another red-state, “angry white guy” that liberals on both sides of the pond can dismiss out of hand, Hannan views things through a British lens grinded by Burke, Locke and other classical liberals from the Isles. The more skeptical out there might assume that this is just some intellectual façade put on to appeal to American readers, but his Atlanticist feelings and beliefs on the proper role of government, both in the European Parliament and his blog, are entirely consistent with what he has written. He believes in devolving power back to the people in the States every bit as much as he believes it in Britain.

It’s a nice change of pace to read someone defend small government, American exceptionalism and culture who isn’t American himself, especially against European anti-Americans and Americans who seem to be most interested in proving to you that they didn’t vote for Bush. The introduction is devoted to dispelling certain myths about the United States, namely that Americans are crass and rude, that we have no culture and that we are a young country amongst other things. Soon after, in a brief anecdote, he relates meeting a lady from Jersey City in the French Basque country who repeated, “we don’t have anything like this in the States” so often that he finally snapped and retorted, “Yes you do: they’re called restaurants for heaven’s sake.” How refreshing!

Because of this, Hannan’s rhetorical punches launch from unusual angles and connect with force. After all, how many

books by British politicians begin with a quote from Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*? He manages to avoid sounding trite while talking about the Tenth Amendment, the Constitution, even something as blasé as voter turnout. This isn’t to say that he doesn’t come across as admiring. In fact, he marvels at so many aspects of the United States that it is difficult to think of something he *doesn’t* hold in high regard. One shouldn’t mistake this for simple naiveté, of course; he qualifies his

admiration by acknowledging early on, “Like every nation on Earth, the United States can behave selfishly and hypocritically. It doesn’t always live up to the ideals of its constitution. Then again, occasional failure is part of the human condition. To say that the American dream has not always been realized is no more than to say that perfection is not of this world.” He isn’t blind to America’s faults; he just believes that the country’s strengths outweigh them. It’s a lack of cynicism, a sort of

“guileless enthusiasm” as he puts it.

The book is a short read, not only because of the low page count, but because Hannan can write just as well as he can speak. There are occasional graphs and charts throughout, but the book’s conversational tone and steadfast refusal to get too bogged down in statistics or jargon will keep almost any reader turning its pages. Assuming you have a couple of hours to kill, you could easily finish the book in one sitting and they’d be hours well spent.

This is, in fact, the book’s only real flaw. I finished far before I was ready to. One gets the sense that Hannan could write at great length on the subject but decided to keep the book small in order to maintain its clout and the reader’s attention. It works, but I imagine that many readers will be left wanting something a little thicker. Another hundred pages could hardly have hurt. Hannan’s a sheer pleasure to read.

Despite its small size, I still had a few moments of déjà vu while tearing through; some portions can be easily recognized as modified text from blog posts he has made, such as the beginning of chapter two. For the vast majority of readers, however, this will be irrelevant. His blog posts are well written and flow smoothly enough that, unless one has been reading him for the past nine months, one would never know they weren’t originally written for the book.

Overall, *The New Road to Serfdom* is a fine book. Tightly written and readable, it admires the United States and our governing document without drifting into starry-eyed idealism or unreasoned love. While it isn’t the next *Conscience of a Conservative* or even a call to arms, it instead functions exactly as its subtitle suggests: a letter of warning to America. “I am living in your future,” he writes. “Let me tell you a few things about it.” We would do well to listen. •



— Mr. Hannan is a member of the European Parliament —

# Glenn Beck’s “Progressive Problem”

By Michael L. Klein

“We are perhaps too much inclined to think that [external invasion] is the only way a civilization can die,” writes Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*. “If the lights that guide us ever go out, they will fade little by little, as if of their own accord... Some peoples may let the torch be snatched from their hands, but others stamp it out themselves.” Glenn Beck takes this idea to heart in his latest work, *Broke: The Plan to Restore Our Trust, Truth and Treasure*. According to Beck, America has never been closer to losing its way of life — unalienable rights, unquestionable freedoms, and unimaginable wealth — than it is now.

The United States is financially broke, with the national debt currently estimated over \$14 trillion and growing, but Beck argues that this debt is just a symptom of our nation’s “broken spirit, our broken faith in government, the broken promises by our leaders, and a broken political system that has centralized power at the expense of individual rights.” Beck attacks politicians on both sides of the aisle for decades of fiscal irresponsibility and reforms that have made Americans

*Mr. Klein is a freshman at the College and a contributor to The Dartmouth Review.*

reliant on a growing centralized government. His criticism is mostly directed at “progressives,” who like Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon B. Johnson championed expanding government entitlements and created an American

## Book Review

BROKE: THE PLAN TO RESTORE OUR TRUST, TRUTH AND TREASURE

Glenn Beck & Kevin Balfe  
Threshold Editions, 2010

society dependent on government spending the way a user is addicted to drugs.

While *Broke* can be characterized by Beck’s overly dramatic and sensationalist personality that has brought him to national fame as a syndicated radio and Fox News television show host, Beck’s work provides strong evidence to support many of his claims regarding the broken state of the nation. His (and his co-writer Kevin Balfe’s) writing style is energetic and easy to read. This well-researched 406 page

book includes reputable opinions, facts, figures, and charts to make the sad decline of the American nation and the disastrous state of the nation’s budget as enjoyable a read as possible. He divides the book into three parts: first, a history of how America progressed into this chaotic state; second, an assessment of what’s currently going on with this nation’s financial situation and how it’s been covered up; and finally an eight-step plan Beck devises that would help set the country on the right course of action.

Beck’s historical analysis opens with an overview of why great civilizations of the past failed, and then moves to the vision given to us by our founding fathers. He explains how America’s early leaders founded the country on the basis of certain “unalienable rights,” limited constitutional government, and a conservative financial plan to eradicate debt. He then explains how the nation established its superb credit rating by avoiding debt and keeping government limited until “progressives,” initially led by Woodrow Wilson, worked to “destroy the bedrock that America was built on” and “did more damage to the fabric of America than anyone who’s come before or after.” While Beck has strong, valid evidence to explain how Wilson harmed America, Beck looks

*continued on page 13*

# Steve Martin Eyes the New York Art World

By Benjamin M. Riley

It is oft repeated that certain things happen ‘only in New York.’ And often the phrase doesn’t really mean anything. Maybe in the past, before globalization, before the internet and instant connectivity, there were things that could happen only in that most important, that most elite city. But today, owing to the aforementioned, nearly everything can and does happen everywhere. There are, of course, exceptions. Like the art world. And although the art world has globalized (just look at the burgeoning Chinese market), it is very much a New York thing. In this same vein, Steve Martin’s newest novel, *An Object of Beauty*, is very much a New York book. And a good one, at that.

Notice I say ‘good.’ There are so many adjectives at my disposal, so many more florid words I could have used. And yet none would so aptly describe the work. For what it is – a quintessential story of New York striving set amid a breezy survey of the contemporary art scene – it is probably more than just merely good. Judged within the greater context of American literature, however, good seems to be the word.

Not that it really matters; I doubt Martin set out to write the great American novel and we readers and critics should be able to evaluate the work at face value. And at face value, the novel is highly enjoyable, written in a style befitting its subject matter. The plot is engaging, but Martin gives the story room to breathe. That is, while the plot is there, always nagging between lines, hinting subtly, moving languidly, it is essentially secondary. The spotlight is thusly thrust upon the characters, who, although trending towards caricatures in places, are unbelievably amusing. We are treated to a rotating cast of personages, all to a degree comic if not quite comedic.

Comedian that Martin is, it’s hardly a surprise that he is able to imbue the novel with comic flourishes. What is possibly surprising is the light handedness that he applies in this pursuit. See, the Steve Martin I know is the slapstick movie star, whose act relies on gags that err on the side of obvious. There are few, if any, obvious jokes in *An Object of Beauty*. And yet its sense of humor subtly shines through, peeking out just far enough to keep a smile on the reader’s face, but not too far as to ever incite any untoward audible laughter. This subtle humor is perhaps the novel’s second greatest coup, behind how Martin simultaneously pinpoints and skewers the naturally absurd New York art scene.

It seems I cannot go any further without getting into specifics and maybe that is for the better, as some of the book’s most impressive qualities lies in its individual characters and occurrences. The book follows the career arc of one Lacey Yeager, a recent college graduate and current employee at the lowest level of Sotheby’s. The book is narrated by college friend Daniel Chester French Franks, an aspiring art journalist

*Mr. Riley is a sophomore at the College and week editor of The Dartmouth Review.*

who opines in the opening page that although he is “so very tired of thinking about Lacey Yeager” he feels that unless he “write[s] her story down, and see[s] it bound and tidy on [his] bookshelf, [he] will be unable to ever write about anything else.”

A bold claim to say the least, but not all that surprising when one really gets to know the character of Lacey, through her travails in the art world. Lacey is, in a word, alluring in the way that only those who have willingly transplanted themselves to New York can be. Native New Yorkers are a known entity, with similar predilections and tendencies.

## Book Review

AN OBJECT OF BEAUTY

Steve Martin  
Grand Central Publishing, 2010

Those who choose to come to New York, those who choose to embrace the machine, however, are a different species altogether. And that species is a most interesting one. Willing to do anything to succeed in the high-stakes game that is New York, transplanted New Yorkers routinely make the most interesting stories and the story of Lacey Yeager is no exception.

The story is essentially an *Entwicklungsroman*, literally ‘development novel,’ documenting Lacey’s growth from a raw post-grad stuck in the drudges of entry-level work at Sotheby’s to a Chelsea gallery owner and art world persona. In many ways, however, this development is secondary, merely a showcase for Martin’s spot-on critique of the world Lacey so desires to infiltrate.

While Lacey’s ascendance in the art world is necessary as plot, it is even more necessary to allow for the exploration of the various interconnected New York art scenes. At Sotheby’s Lacey meets Patrice Claire, a European bon vivant, who like nearly all who cross Lacey’s path, becomes enamored with her. Patrice follows her even after her departure from Sotheby’s, wooing her with room service dinners in his suite at the Carlyle and gifts of Russian paintings.

But Claire, just like Jonah Marsh, Lacey’s first New York boyfriend and later a famous contemporary artist, men are merely entertainment in Lacey’s life. Fulfillment comes from career advancement. When Lacey gazes upon de Kooning’s grotesque *Woman I*, she identifies. “This painting was not an attack; this was an acknowledgment of her strength. de Kooning painted women not as horrific monster but as powerful goddess. Lacey felt this way about herself every day.” Like de Kooning’s vicious, bare-chested, snarling woman, Lacey exudes sexuality and is not afraid to use it. Which is not to

say she sleeps her way to the top. No, Lacey unleashes her prowess selectively and really only when necessary.

Furthermore, her exploits are not just exercises in social climbing; Lacey’s sexuality is a source of great pleasure to her and she makes it clear that she wouldn’t be doing it if she didn’t enjoy it. Ultimately, although Lacey has the requisite good looks of her other young colleagues at Sotheby’s, she wants more than just to be the arm candy of a moneyed collector. That life is too banal. She wants, needs, craves success and is willing to bend ethical laws to have it. Saying any more on that would ruin the plot, so I will be mum on the specifics.

But as I said, the plot is merely a vehicle through which the New York art world is exposed, a vehicle by which the characters that make that world so very interesting are exposed. We have the pleasure of meeting Barton Talley, the quintessential Upper East Side gallery owner, and later employer of Lacey, who both only sells and at the same time metaphorically represents the old guard. There are the Albergs, bigwigs in the contemporary game, with husband Hinton having a strange habit of smelling everything.

The greatest character of all, however, is the New York art scene itself. The uptown galleries on Madison, the basement vaults at Sotheby’s, the downtown happenings and plastic cup wine mixers in Chelsea – Martin dissects these disparate scenes, which ultimately coalesce to form a character more interesting than anything human.

A collector himself, Martin is well versed in the world about which he writes, and it shows. His knowledge of both the actual artists that dominate

discussion (often aided by beautiful reproduced plates interspersed in the text) is only surpassed by his knowledge of the social interactions which comprise that abstract concept of ‘the art world.’ The boozy dinner parties, the receptions with passed hors d’oeuvres, the casual gossip about who’s buying what, Martin clearly draws upon his own experience in this rarified cultural sphere. Having worked at one of the ‘Big Two’ auction houses in New York this summer, I can say confidently that while the names of the characters in *An Object of Beauty* may be fiction, these characters do exist, if not in individuals then at least as parts of a whole. Martin wholly captures the alluring absurdity of both the individuals and the world they inhabit. Yes, the New York art scene is a ludicrous thing, with money floating in an out on a whim, and populated by real characters who are stranger than fiction, but at the same time it is a ludicrously interesting scene.

The novel, for those who have not lived in that world, is a piece of escapism, allowing the uninitiated to soak themselves in a cultural bath. For those who do have ties to the New York art world, however, the book is even more entertaining, for Martin subtly says everything that we think but cannot say because it is both impolite and bad for business to do so. As such, it seems that anyone can enjoy *An Object of Beauty*. It must be said, however, that those who have ties to the art world, whether in New York or not, will probably enjoy it more.

**Those who choose to come to New York, those who choose to embrace the machine, are a different species altogether.**

## An Eight-Step Program for Recovery

*continued from page 12*

to further vilify the former president by introducing him as an unreconstructed racist and elitist. This helps further tarnish Wilson’s reputation, and make the reader prone to be predisposed to dislike Wilson before knowing what he did wrong as president. This sensationalist style is occasionally employed throughout Beck’s works, and slightly undermines Beck’s argument if he can’t condemn Wilson solely on Wilson’s fiscal actions as president.

From Wilson to Obama, Beck leaves almost no rock

turned as he analyzes nearly every presidential action that caused America to let its debt get out of hand, and expand the size of the government beyond anything the founders would have wanted. While Beck attacks most presidents for their fiscally irresponsible programs and initiatives, he also takes issue with the reliance that the American public has on the government. By creating programs like Social Security

and Medicare (which Beck attacks throughout the book) the government has effectively bought out a significant group of Americans and made them dependent on government spending, effectively undermining the nation’s founding principles.

This reliance of individual Americans and their families on the public purse has created a downward cycle of increasing debt and dependence on the government for everyday life. Through FDR’s New Deal and LBJ’s Great Society, a new social contract was struck that guaranteed the people rights that our founders would have never promised.

The second part details the “crimes” that “progressive” politicians have committed by expanding government and how they’ve covered-up the truth from the American people. Beck goes into detail about the nation’s budget, detailing how the government allocates funds and uses accounting procedures to veil the truth. He argues that if the government were a private entity, its behavior would be categorized as criminally negligent. This

section includes a lot of data, and goes into painstaking detail to explain exactly how the government has committed “the crime of the century.”

Beck ends his book by putting forth an eight-step plan to fix the country. While I’m still not sure if its closer to insightful or doctrinaire, Beck does provide tangible steps and actions for the nation to correct itself. He explains not only how the budget needs to be reformed, but argues for a deeper reformation of the American social contract. He looks for ways to take meaningful action by carving out certain departments and functions of government. He frequently insinuates that Medicare is a huge part of the problem, but by the time he gets around to correcting it he waters down his proposal to the point that it is clear he is unsure of the right course of action. While the first two sections had been based on facts and tangible criticisms, this last section seems heavier on speculation than anything else.

Overall, *Broke* is worthwhile reading for anyone interested in the sorry state of the American economy and understanding how it came about. Beck’s ability to historically contextualize the problem is insightful and entertaining, and his sources give him a level of credibility his daily shows frequently lack. This fierce work of fiscal conservatism is highly critical of our current government, and makes for an interesting read.

# D'Souza's Rage: A Middling Psychoanalysis

By Elizabeth Reynolds

Barack Obama's first book, a memoir published in July 1995 called *Dreams From My Father*, has become quite the success-story. It has topped best-seller lists and is now available in an abridged, youth-oriented version. As Obama has ascended in the political world in recent years, his book has increased in popularity, becoming more and more of a necessary read for all Americans; in fact, it was added to the required reading list for the high school senior class of my alma mater just this year.

## Book Review

THE ROOTS OF OBAMA'S RAGE

Dinesh D'Souza  
Regnery, 2010

*Dreams From My Father* tells the story of Obama's early life – highlighting the figure of his father – beginning with the current President's birth in Honolulu, Hawaii and ending with his admittance to Harvard Law School. Within his narrative, Obama weaves his considerations on race relations and what it means to be biracial in America – a concept reminiscent of Jean Toomer's *Cane* and other works of the Harlem Renaissance.

The American public and media have given *Dreams From My Father* an overwhelmingly positive reception. Columnist Joe Klein of Time Magazine claimed that the book "may be the best-written memoir ever produced by an American politician." The audio book edition of the book even received a prestigious Grammy Award in 2005 in the Best Spoken Word Album category.

One man in particular had an impassioned reaction to *Dreams From My Father* – Dinesh D'Souza.

In his recent release, *The Roots of*

Obama's Rage, D'Souza, an ultra-conservative member of the Dartmouth Class of 1983 (and former editor of *The Dartmouth Review*) used the framework of *Dreams From My Father* and turned it around, using the story of the president's father as a cudgel with which to attack the Obama Administration.

D'Souza takes the title of Obama's memoir to heart; the thesis of *The Roots of Obama's Rage* is that Obama is currently running the country not by pursuing his own aspirations for America, but by striving to achieve the goals of his African father. In other words, Barack Obama's dreams are literally derived from his father's. What the junior Obama inherited from his father was a sense of rage against colonialism, Western supremacy, and the power of the United States.

Is this the work of another extreme right-winger proclaiming that Obama is a terrorist and a socialist? Perhaps. D'Souza's analysis, based on what D'Souza considers facts, deserves careful consideration.

Although a staunch conservative, D'Souza points out that he actually has much in common with our president.

Like Obama, D'Souza is a

nonwhite American who grew up in another country; the two were even born in the same year, graduated college in the same year, and got married the same year. While D'Souza did not vote for Obama in 2008, he explains that the sight of him taking the oath of office was a moving symbol of the possible end of racism in America. In short, D'Souza has some level of empathy with President Obama, and concedes that, sym-

bolically, the value of his elevation to office is profound.

However, this does not stop D'Souza from criticizing the direction in which Obama is steering the nation. D'Souza seeks to provide at least a partial answer to the question: who is Barack Obama, and what has driven him to the presidency? All presidents – not least Obama – tend to spawn this kind of contemporary enquiry, both friendly and hostile. D'Souza's work might thus be lumped in with others of its type: David Remnick's *The Bridge*, James T. Kloppenberg's *Reading Obama*, and Jacob Weisberg's *The Bush Tragedy*, among others.

Many (including the aforementioned Remnick) believe that Obama is driven by race, but D'Souza is quick to debunk this notion. His thesis is that Obama has almost nothing in common with the majority of black America. He is not a descendent of slaves; instead he is the child of his Harvard-educated, African immigrant father and his white mother. He lived a privileged life growing up in Indonesia and Hawaii, attending a prestigious prep school, the Punahou School. His story does not emerge directly from America's own history of segregated water fountains and lunch tables that some Americans, including in the media, are quick to place him in.

**It is completely unreasonable to say that our president is trying to steer our country into poverty**

D'Souza writes that the true essence of Barack Obama is that he, like many in American society, is his father's son. This is most evident in the fact that Obama, who went by Barry for this first part of his life, changed his name to Barack

as a young man, matching his father's name. Even though Obama Jr. never really knew his father – he abandoned the family shortly after President Obama was born – he identified with his father the most. Barack Obama Sr. was a selfish alcoholic, yet the son chose to undertake the vision of the father. D'Souza explains, "In changing the world into the image of his [Obama's] father, he would complete the task



– D'Souza '83 is currently the president of The King's College in New York –

that his father couldn't, and thus he would become worthy of his father, a real African and a real man."

D'Souza's idea that Obama has literally taken up the ideals of his father, which were anti-colonial ideals, is – whatever else you say about it – original. D'Souza presents a theory that, correct or not, demonstrates a fresh perspective on the president, who is so well known for his detachment and reserve.

But D'Souza doesn't just introduce a new theory; he also strives to verify his hypothesis by using it to explain Obama's

current policies and perhaps his plans for the future. To do so, D'Souza examines the life and work of Barack Obama Sr. D'Souza understands Obama's father primarily as an anti-colonialist. Growing up under British rule in Kenya, Obama Sr. rallied against European rule and adopted a set of understandings about imperialism: that empires are produced with violence, colonial regimes are racist, colonialism is a system of piracy, and that the United States is the new leading colonial power.

According to D'Souza, the anti-colonial legacy of his father deeply resonated with Barack Obama. As a young boy, Obama was made to believe that America was destructive and imperialistic, and the bully of the world. Obama's mentors as a young adult – Frank Marshall Davis, Edward Said, the infamous Reverend Jeremiah Wright, and Roberto Mangabeira Unger (who, on his own, admitted that his association with Obama could be a liability to his presidential campaign) – only solidified the President's anti-colonial tendencies.

D'Souza argues these beliefs are still held close to Obama's heart, and goes so far as to say that our President's main goal today is to destroy the neocolonial, dominating nature of our country by restricting our military, diminishing our consumption of global resources, punishing the rich, and putting industries like health care and the banks under government control.

Hold on a minute before buying a one-way ticket to Canada. The validity of D'Souza's argument is up for discussion. On one side of the aisle, big-name Newt Gingrich has called *The Roots of Obama's Rage* "the most profound insight [he has] read in the last six years about Barack Obama." Democrats, however, have named the book "a mess" and criticized the "tissue-thin" research. I think D'Souza's book is worth reading, but I would place D'Souza's theory somewhere in the middle of these two extremes – giving his work a B- in my grade book.

While I applaud D'Souza's thoroughness and originality, the conclusion he reaches should certainly be taken with a large grain of salt. It seems unlikely that Obama, an intelligent and respected man, would base his decisions solely on what his father would have desired. The anti-colonialism of his father indubitably had an impact on Obama's worldview, but it is completely unreasonable to say that our President is trying to steer our country into poverty; D'Souza claims that "Obama's economic policies are actually designed to make America poorer compared to the rest of the world." D'Souza also alleges that Obama believes Republicans are evil, and "he has no desire to work with the enemy [the Republicans]." This statement is simply false, especially in light of the President's recent deal with congressional Republicans to extend Bush's tax breaks.

Perhaps D'Souza's anti-colonial theory does help explain, as the *Weekly Standard* put it, Obama's omnipotence at home and impotence abroad. It is a matter of the reader's opinion. Regardless, D'Souza brings something new to the table with his latest book. It seems clear to me that D'Souza has done his research, with his extensive history of colonial Africa and insightful background information on Obama's early life. His concept of investigating the impact of Barack Obama's father had potential, but I'm afraid that D'Souza's conclusion, that Obama is trying to essentially destroy America, ultimately takes it too far.

Miss Reynolds is a sophomore at the College and a contributor to The Dartmouth Review.

# “Dumb and Dumber” with a Jihadist Face

By Sterling C. Beard

There are many things I expected to do at Dartmouth. Laughing at a *jihadi* sprinting through the streets of London attempting to evade law enforcement while dressed as a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle was not one of them.

All right, let me back up. “Four Lions” is a film by British satirist Chris Morris that falls into the rare genre of jihad satire. It follows a collection of radicalized British Muslims as they attempt to carry out a bombing attack and make themselves into martyrs. Unfortunately for them, they’re as competent as most Darwin Awards candidates.

The film begins with the dim-witted Waj sitting in front of a video camera with a toy AK-47 in his lap. His compatriots berate him for using such a ridiculous miniature, objecting to its size. His solution? Move closer to the camera, thereby obscuring his head. Bickering immediately results and the audience is practically told right up front what they’re in for. Yes, this is a film about terrorism. Moreover, it’s a film about idiots attempting to carry it out. It’s the Keystone Cops as Al-Qaeda.

The cell—such as it is—is composed of four members: the everyman Omar, the aforementioned Waj, the explosives “expert” Faisal and the fanatical Barry.

Omar, the group’s leader, seems to have all the trappings of a modern British lifestyle: a nice home, a loving wife and kid, a concerned brother, internet, television, et cetera. One night during his shift as an afterhours security guard at a mall, he receives an e-mail from an “uncle in Pakistan” and he and Waj swiftly find themselves in a training camp,



— Waj, an aspiring martyr, gets ready for his close-up with a toy AK-47 —

*Mr. Beard is a junior at the College and Managing Editor for The Dartmouth Review.*

dodging American drones and wearing out their welcome. Meanwhile, Barry, a white convert who is naturally the most bloodthirsty member of the group, has recruited Hassan, a student with a fondness for poorly constructed jihad themed rap.

Waj and Omar return from Pakistan, fleeing after accidentally launching a rocket into a large group of their compatriots. What follows from there are the cell’s attempts at bomb making and a series of moronically dreamt up plots. Barry wants to bomb a mosque in order to radicalize the moderates and speed up the end of days. Faisal thinks he can create a squadron of kamikaze crows.

What you’re getting here is a fairly standard “bunch of guys” comedy, a halal version of “The Hangover.”

That’s not a bad thing; all of the actors possess excellent comic timing and deliver their lines in the fine tradition of deadpan, British black comedy. Here, Nigel Lindsay is a standout, playing the paranoid convert Barry with a wild-eyed mania, replete with streams of profanity and crackpot theories on how to avoid surveillance—eating his cell phone’s SIM card, for example—to why his car keeps breaking down (“The parts, they’re Jewish!” he screams when his vehicle gives out on the way back to their headquarters). Still, odds are you’ve

seen this show already.

The familiarity with the formula allows you to sit back and observe several things about their environment: these men aren’t what most of us picture when we think of terrorists. Instead of a group of deadly murderers running around the mountains of Afghanistan, you have a crew of casually dressed fellows from Sheffield who sing along to “Dancing in the Moonlight” while driving down the motorway to

London. These men fully understand British culture, have no problem enjoying its fruits, but have rejected it to martyr themselves. It’s hard not to think about the Times Square bomber Faisal Shahzad (the movie premiered in Britain



— The world needs more jihad parody —

months before his attempted attack, leading to the ironic coincidence that Shahzad was arguably more incompetent than the character).

Another thing that pops up throughout the film is how positively thick the regular Brits are. No matter how suspicious the crew acts, no matter how many dumb stunts they pull, the common folk seem oblivious. Omar’s fellow night shift guard sees nothing odd about the group sprinting through the streets like ducks, carrying thick bags. Most egregious is Alice, the woman who lives next door to their HQ. The cell returns to find that Hassan has let her in and both are singing along to a song. When asked to leave, she comes to the inexplicable conclusion that they’re all gay. Mind you, this is in full view of the bomb making materials spread throughout the room. One wonders if they’re just as stupid as the erstwhile heroes or if they just don’t want to see the obvious.

The world needs more of this, more jihad parody. We used to have cartoons where Bugs Bunny bested Hitler but nowadays we have only Jeff Dunham and “Achmed the Dead Terrorist.” If you can laugh at something, you rob it of its power. Here’s hoping this is just the beginning of a wave. •

# MVP Doug Jones Leads Indian Ice Hockey

By David I. Rufful

The Indian men’s hockey team traveled to Manchester last Saturday to face off against its formidable state rival, the University of New Hampshire Wildcats, for the RiverStone Cup. New Hampshire has defeated the Indians six out of the



— Junior Doug Jones, the RiverStone Cup’s MVP —

last nine contests for the RiverStone Cup. Division I men’s hockey rankings on USCHO.com place New Hampshire at seventh while the Indians stand at eighteenth. Although UNH was favored going into Saturday’s contest, the Indians outlasted the Wildcats in a 5-4 victory and their first RiverStone trophy since 2008.

Dartmouth junior Doug Jones pushed the Indians to victory as he scored with just over a minute to play in the final period. With two points and the game winning shot, Jones was awarded Most Valuable Player in the Battle for the RiverStone Cup. Despite his spectacular individual effort, Jones modestly played down his performance after the game, saying, “Everyone contributed and the end result was

*Mr. Rufful is a junior at the College and Sports Editor for The Dartmouth Review.*

a bonus to our hard work.” His work helped boost the Indians to a 10-5-2 record, while New Hampshire fell to 12-4-4.

“All year, we have harped on keeping the game simple and playing with consistent energy for 60 minutes.” Jones said, “We did this for most of the game against UNH by getting pucks out of our zone, into theirs, and finishing hits.” Saturday’s game was an exciting 60 minutes with nine goals scored, 68 shot attempts and five lead changes.

The Indians and Wildcats traded goals during the first two periods. After New Hampshire took a 1-0 lead at 5:07 in the first period, Dartmouth senior Scott Fleming responded with a goal at 18:55. Rob Smith ’11 scored early in the second period to give the Indians a lead, but New Hampshire’s John Henrion hit back at 9:30 to tie the score 2-2.

Going into the third period, neither team was in full control. Jones ’12 says the game plan did not change. “Even more so in a tight third period, we wanted to keep pucks out of the middle of the ice, get shots on net, and keeps shifts under 45 seconds to sustain the high temp.” And the Indians were able to sustain that tempo with goals from Joe Stejskal ’11 and Dustin Walsh ’13. The Wildcats seemed unable to find an answer for Indian goalie James Mello ’12 who ended the contest with 34 saves.

This win marked the last non-conference game of the season for Dartmouth as they return to league play this upcoming weekend. Jones said, “The mind set for this week in practice is get better everyday and stay focused on the present. We are playing

two good teams this weekend and need to have a good week of preparation.”

On Friday, the Indians travel to play the Union College Dutchmen, who recently defeated Colgate 2-1 and moved up in polls on USCHO.com and USA Today/USA Hockey

**A**ll year, we have harped on keeping the game simple and playing with consistent energy for 60 minutes.”

—Doug Jones ‘12

Magazine. The Dutchmen are led by sophomore forward Kyle Bodie, named MLX Skates ECAC Player of the Week for his recent performances against St. Lawrence and Clarkson. Union is currently ranked in 3rd in ECAC standings, which is one up on Dartmouth.

The Indians are simultaneously preparing for the Rensselaer Red Hawks, who stand at 8th place in the ECAC conference, four behind Dartmouth. Like Union, the Red Hawks recently defeated Colgate 2-1 as senior forward Chase Polacek scored on a penalty shot in overtime. This season, Polacek has racked up 11 goals, 19 assists and 30 points. In conference play, the Red Hawks waver with a winning percentage of .500 while the Indians stand at .650.

This weekend is an opportunity for the Indians to improve their record and increase their standing in conference play. Senior Scott Fleming ’11 has led the Indians this season with 8 goals, 12 assists and 20 points while senior Adam Estoclet ’11 has also tallied 8 goals, 8 assists and 16 points. Meanwhile, Mello ’12 has guarded the net with 349 saves and maintained a .936 save percentage. Indians fans will look to the leadership of these upperclassmen as a major advantage going into this weekend’s contests. •



— The Indians celebrate Saturday’s major win —

*A beautiful literature springs from the depth and fullness of intellectual and moral life, from an energy of thought and feeling, to which nothing, as we believe, ministers so largely as enlightened religion.*

—William Ellery Channing

*Be less concerned about the number of books you read, and more about the good use you make of them. The best of books is the Bible.*

—Christian Scriver

*Thou mayest as well expect to grow stronger by always eating, as wiser by always reading.*

—Thomas Fuller

*From the moment I picked up your book until I laid it down I was convulsed with laughter. Someday I intend to read it.*

—Groucho Marx

*The covers of this book are too far apart.*

—Ambrose Pierce

*Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.*

—Francis Bacon

*Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.*

—Francis Bacon

*Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counsellors, and the most patient of teachers.*

—Charles W. Eliot

*Show me the books he loves and I shall know the man far better than through mortal friends.*

—Dawn Adams

*Never read any book that is not a year old.*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Books won't stay banned. They won't burn. Ideas won't go to jail. In the long run of history, the censor and the inquisitor have always lost. The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas.*

—Alfred Whitney Griswold

*When a book and a head collide and there is a hollow sound, is that always in the book?*

—Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

**gordon haff's**

## the last word.

Compiled by Ke Ding

*The love of learning, the sequestered nooks, And all the sweet serenity of books.*

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

*How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book.*

—Henry David Thoreau

*There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written.*

—Oscar Wilde

*The oldest books are still only just out to those who have not read them.*

—Samuel Butler

*A room without books is like a body without a soul.*

—Marcus T. Cicero

*Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree.*

—Ezra Pound

*Readers may be divided into four classes:*

1.) Sponges, who absorb all that they read and return it in nearly the same state, only a little dirtied.

2.) Sand-glasses, who retain nothing and are content to get through a book for the sake of getting through the time.

3.) Strain-bags, who retain merely the dregs of what they read.

4.) Mogul diamonds, equally rare and valuable, who profit by what they read, and enable others to profit by it also.

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

*Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.*

—W. Fusselman

*I don't believe in colleges and universities. I believe in libraries.*

—Ray Bradbury

*Manuscripts don't burn.*

—Mikhail Bulgakov

*The decline of literature indicates the decline of a nation.*

—Goethe

*I hold that a writer who does not passionately believe in the perfectibility of man has no dedication nor any membership in literature.*

—John Steinbeck

## Barrett's Mixology

By Benjamin M. Riley

### Kirschwasser

#### Kirsch

*Serve neat and at room temperature.*



*The heart may be a lonely hunter. But it is not the loneliest hunter. That distinction belongs to the man shivering on a Zurich street corner desperately seeking something to warm his freezing throat. Or rather, belonged.*

*Let me backtrack. How did I get on that corner in the middle of the coldest December in recent memory? Weather, mostly. Snow grounded me at the Flughafen just outside the city and thus I was left to scramble. Shouldn't have been a problem. These kinds of things happen all the time. Less frequent, however, is being the victim of a mugging in the streets of Durban. Or at least I hope that is what happened. Regardless, I woke up without my wallet. Thank heavens my passport had been left in the hotel. So I was able to catch my flight. But then I was stuck. Now, one might think that of all places to be stuck in winter, Switzerland would be among the best. And normally it would be. Wonderful playground that Zurich is, it is not much without a single franc in my pocket. And so I stood there, and realized there was only one thing that could salvage this night. Of course I speak of kirsch. Wonderfully bitter and burning through the throat, it would immediately sting the cold out of me. But still, the issue of how to purchase some remained. Luck must have been in that glacial air, for not ten minutes into my refrigeration, my deus ex machina pulled up. You have undoubtedly heard of the warmth of the Swiss people. And you undoubtedly know of the universal warmth of grandmothers. She drove an old mustard colored Mercedes with screeching brakes. Not that it mattered. Rolling down the window, she said, "Sind Sie kalt?" "Ja, natürlich" was the reply. Then she motioned with her hand and barked the most welcome words: "Dann kommen Sie mit." And so I climbed into the car and was transported to exactly where I needed to be. She bought me dinner and all the requisite kirsch and for that I was eternally grateful. But by the end, a nagging question remained. I asked her, in my best Schweizerdeutsch, why she would do all this for a stranger like myself. Without missing a beat and in perfect English she replied, "Because you looked cold."*

# EBAS.com

**EBAS** (proper noun):  
Everything But  
Anchovies, a Hanover  
culinary institution which  
delivers pizza, chicken  
sandwiches and other  
local delicacies until  
**2:10 A.M.** every night.  
The ultimate in  
performance fuel.

# 603-643-6135