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COVER:

"ON THE STREET WHERE
YOU'LL LIVE"

HELI SWENSSON



"On the Street Where You'll Live"

Cover Design by Heli Swenson

The focus of this quarter's AMASS is the future, specifically the promise, the challenge, and, yes, the threat posed by AI. Since our staff consists for the most part of flesh-and-blood human beings, the original cover idea was to develop an image inspired by dystopian films like Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* and James Cameron's *The Terminator*. Something cold, soulless, relentless. As we brainstormed, we found ourselves descending deeper and deeper into darkness.

But as you can see, a brighter, more optimistic vision of the future ultimately prevailed. The cover now shows a friendly neighborhood scene beneath a clear, blue sky. True, it's dominated by assorted flying machines and an intimidating robot towers over the landscape—technological change can indeed be daunting—but everyday life goes on.

At least for the time being.

- Dan Marcus

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STOP WORSHIPPING THE AMERICAN TECH GIANTS

L I N A M . K H A N

When the Chinese artificial intelligence firm DeepSeek shocked Silicon Valley and Wall Street with its powerful new A.I. model, Marc Andreessen, the Silicon Valley investor, went so far as to describe it as “A.I.’s Sputnik moment.” Presumably, Mr. Andreessen wasn’t calling on the federal government to start a massive new program like NASA, which was our response to the Soviet Union’s Sputnik satellite launch; he wants the U.S. government to flood private industry with capital, to ensure that America remains technologically and economically dominant.

As an antitrust enforcer, I see a different metaphor. DeepSeek is the canary in the coal mine. It’s warning us that when there isn’t enough competition, our tech industry grows vulnerable to its Chinese rivals, threatening U.S. geopolitical power in the 21st century.

Although it’s unclear precisely how much more efficient DeepSeek’s models are than, say, ChatGPT, its innovations are real and undermine a core argument that America’s dominant technology firms have been pushing — namely, that they are developing the best artificial intelligence technology the world has to offer, and that technological advances can be achieved only with enormous investment — in computing power, energy generation and cutting-edge chips. For years now, these companies have been arguing that the government must protect them from competition to ensure that America stays ahead.

But let’s not forget that America’s tech giants are awash in cash, computing power and data capacity. They are headquartered in the world’s strongest economy and enjoy the advantages conferred by the rule of law and a free enterprise system. And yet, despite all those advantages — as well as a U.S. government ban on the sales of cutting-edge chips and chip-making equipment to Chinese firms — America’s tech giants

have seemingly been challenged on the cheap.

It should be no surprise that our big tech firms are at risk of being surpassed in A.I. innovation by foreign competitors. After companies like Google, Apple and Amazon helped transform the American economy in the 2000s, they maintained their dominance primarily through buying out rivals and building anticompetitive moats around their businesses.

Over the last decade, big tech chief executives have seemed more adept at reinventing themselves to suit the politics of the moment — resistance sympathizers, social justice warriors, MAGA enthusiasts — than on pioneering new pathbreaking innovations and breakthrough technologies.

There have been times when Washington has embraced the argument that certain businesses deserve to be treated as national champions and, as such, to become monopolies with the expectation that they will represent America’s national interests. Those times serve as a cautionary tale.

Boeing was one such star — the aircraft manufacturer’s reputation was so sterling that a former White House adviser during the Clinton administration referred to it as a “de facto national champion,” so important that “you can be an out-and-out advocate for it” in government. This superstar status was such that it likely helped Boeing gain the regulatory green light to absorb its remaining U.S. rival, McDonnell Douglas. That 1997 merger played a significant role in damaging Boeing’s culture, leaving it plagued with a host of problems, including safety concerns.

On the other hand, the government’s decision to enforce antitrust laws against what is now AT&T Inc.,

IBM and Microsoft in the 1970s through the 1990s helped create the market conditions that gave rise to Silicon Valley’s dynamism and America’s subsequent technological lead. America’s bipartisan commitment to maintaining open and competitive markets from the 1930s to the 1980s — a commitment that many European countries and Japan did not share — was critical for generating the broad-based economic growth and technological edge that catapulted the United States to the top of the world order.

While monopolies may offer periodic advances, breakthrough innovations have historically come from disruptive outsiders, in part because huge behemoths rarely want to advance technologies that could displace

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— Lina M. Khan

or cannibalize their own businesses. Mired in red tape and bureaucratic inertia, those companies usually aren't set up to deliver the seismic efficiencies that hungry start-ups can generate.

The recent history of artificial intelligence demonstrates this pattern. Google developed the groundbreaking Transformer architecture that underlies today's A.I. revolution in 2017, but the technology was largely underutilized until researchers left to join or to found new companies. It took these independent firms, not the tech giant, to realize the technology's transformative potential.

At the Federal Trade Commission, I argued that in the arena of artificial intelligence, developers should release enough information about their models to allow smaller players and upstarts to bring their ideas to market without being beholden to dominant firms' pricing or access restrictions. Competition and openness, not centralization, drive innovation.

In the coming weeks and months, U.S. tech giants may renew their calls for the government to grant them special protections that close off markets and lock in their dominance. Indeed, top executives from these firms appear eager to curry favor and cut deals, which could include asking the federal government to pare back sensible efforts to require adequate testing of models before they are released to the public, or to look the other way when a dominant firm seeks to acquire an upstart competitor.

Enforcers and policymakers should be wary. During the first Trump and then the Biden administrations, antitrust enforcers brought major monopolization lawsuits against those same companies — making the case that by unlawfully buying up or excluding their rivals, these companies had undermined innovation and deprived America of the benefits that free and fair competition delivers. Reversing course would be a mistake. The best way for the United States to stay ahead globally is by promoting competition at home.

Lina M. Khan served as chair of the Federal Trade Commission in the Biden administration. Reprinted permission of the *New York Times*.



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WILL WE SQUANDER THE AI OPPORTUNITY?

D A R O N A C E M O G L U

I was fortunate to participate in the recent AI Action Summit in Paris, where many discussions emphasized the need to steer AI in a more socially beneficial direction. At a time of increasingly loud calls for AI acceleration from Silicon Valley – and now from the US government – the opportunity to focus on what we want from the technology was like a breath of fresh air.

As I noted in my speech, we should start by asking what is valuable and worth amplifying in human societies. What makes us so special, or at least successful in evolutionary terms, is our ability to devise solutions to problems large and small, to try new things, and to find meaning in such efforts. We have a capacity not only to create knowledge, but also to share it. Though the human journey has not always been smooth – our capabilities, machines, and knowledge sometimes cause profound harms – constant inquiry and prolific sharing of information is essential to what we are.

For more than 200,000 years, technology has been central to this story. From the days of stone tools to the present, we have built the solutions to our challenges; and from oral storytelling and the invention of writing to the printing press and the internet, we have developed new and better ways of sharing knowledge. Within the past 200 years, we have also figured out how to experiment better and more freely, and we have communicated this knowledge, too. The scientific process gave us established facts, allowing each generation to build on its predecessors' advances. It also underpinned spectacular growth in most countries over the past two centuries. While economic development has created tremendous inequality between and within

countries, people almost everywhere today are healthier and more prosperous than they would have been in the eighteenth century. AI could invigorate this trend by complementing human skills, talents, and knowledge, improving our decision-making, experimentation, and applications of useful knowledge.

Some may question whether we need AI for this purpose. After all, we already live in an age of information abundance; everything one might want – and much that one does not want – is technically accessible through the internet. But *useful* information is scarce. Good luck finding what you need to address a specific problem in a particular context, in a timely fashion.

It is relevant practical knowledge, not mere information, that makes factory workers more

productive; enables electricians to handle new equipment and perform more sophisticated tasks; helps nurses play a more critical decision-making role in health care; and generally allows workers of all skills and backgrounds to fill new and more productive tasks.

AI, properly developed and used, can indeed make us better – not just by providing “a bicycle for the mind,” but by truly expanding our ability to think and act with greater understanding, independent of coercion or manipulation.

Yet owing to its profound potential, AI also represents one of the gravest threats that humanity has ever faced. The risk is not only (or even mainly) that superintelligent machines will someday rule over us; it is that AI will undermine our ability to learn, experiment, share knowledge, and derive meaning from our activities. AI will greatly diminish us if it ceaselessly eliminates tasks and jobs; overcentralizes information and discourages human inquiry and experiential learning;

empowers a few companies to rule over our lives; and creates a two-tier society with vast inequalities and status differences. It may even destroy democracy and human civilization as we know it. I fear this is the direction we are heading in.

But nothing is preordained. We can devise better ways to govern our societies and choose a direction for technology that boosts knowledge acquisition and maximizes human flourishing. We can also ensure that AI creates more good jobs and enhanced capabilities

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for everyone – regardless of their education and income level. But first, the public must recognize that this socially desirable path is technically feasible. AI will move in a pro-human direction only if technologists, engineers, and executives work together with democratic institutions, and if developers in the United States, Europe, and China listen to the five billion people who live in other parts of the world. We desperately need more thoughtful advice from experts and inspiring leadership from politicians, whose focus should be on incentivizing pro-human AI through policy and regulatory frameworks. But we also need more than regulation. One hopes that European AI companies and researchers can show that there are alternatives to the Silicon Valley model. To achieve this demonstration effect, European society must encourage the more socially beneficial direction of AI and European leaders will need to invest in the necessary digital infrastructure, design regulations that do not discourage investment or drive away talented AI researchers and create the kind of financing mechanisms that successful startups need to scale up. Without a robust AI industry of its own, Europe will have little to no influence on the direction of AI globally.

Daron Acemoglu, a 2024 Nobel laureate in economics and Institute Professor of Economics at MIT, is a co-author (with James A. Robinson) of *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (Profile, 2019).



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IN AI WE TRUST?

WILLIAM H. JANEWAY

“Ah,” the English poet George Meredith lamented more than 150 years ago, “what a dusty answer gets the soul when hot for certainties in this our life!” It’s a sentiment that lies at the heart of two recent books that offer unique insights into the existential challenge of living in an age of heightened uncertainty.

In grappling with the complexities of navigating an increasingly uncertain world, David Spiegelhalter and Neil D. Lawrence, both of the University of Cambridge, draw heavily on their extensive professional experience within and beyond academia.

Spiegelhalter, an emeritus professor of statistics, spent years with the UK Medical Research Council’s Biostatistics Unit, playing prominent roles in several high-profile public inquiries. Lawrence, a professor of machine learning, worked as a well-logging engineer on a North Sea drilling platform before completing his PhD, joining Amazon as director of machine learning, and ultimately returning to academia. The authors’ backgrounds enrich their analyses of the myriad ways humanity has sought to measure and manage uncertainty, from frequentist approaches – most effective when risk can be physically defined – to Bayesian analysis, which incorporates subjective risk estimates. Despite differing in structure, style, and emphasis, their books converge on several key themes. One common theme is the uniquely human capacity for trust and the pivotal role of reciprocal relationships. Spiegelhalter, for example, relies on philosopher Onora O’Neill’s concept of “intelligent transparency” to illustrate how policymakers can foster trust in the face of uncertainty. Similarly, Lawrence cites O’Neill’s 2002 BBC Reith Lectures, in which she argued that trust is not intrinsic to systems – whether legal, political, or social – but must be earned by the people operating within them.

Another major theme is the rise of generative artificial intelligence, especially large language models (LLMs), which have become the subject of intense and often hyperbolic debate since the launch of ChatGPT in late 2022. By processing vast reservoirs of human-created

content to generate textual and visual responses, these systems are seemingly designed to inspire trust. But if, as O’Neill contends, processes divorced from human oversight are not inherently trustworthy, how can we trust machine-operated algorithms? This question, central to Lawrence’s book, also emerges in the final pages of Spiegelhalter’s.

Lastly, Spiegelhalter and Lawrence both invoke the famous thought experiment known as “Laplace’s demon,” which they view as a mirror image of the unpredictability that defines our world. In his 1814 book *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*, the philosopher Pierre Simon Laplace wrote: “We may regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its past and the cause

of its future. An intellect which at a certain moment would know all forces that set nature in motion, and all positions of all items of which nature is composed, if this intellect were also vast enough to submit these data to analysis, it would embrace in a single formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the tiniest atom; for such an intellect nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes.” In many ways, Spiegelhalter and Lawrence’s books serve as a counterpoint to the deterministic universe envisioned by Laplace. While Laplace’s demon represents omniscience and perfect predictability, our reality is shaped by unavoidable uncertainties, aptly described by Lawrence as “Laplace’s gremlin.” Despite our best efforts to develop tools to mitigate the effects of blind chance, luck, and ignorance, these forces remain an inescapable part of everyday life.

Taming Uncertainty

Spiegelhalter’s

The Art of Uncertainty offers

a masterful account of humanity’s efforts to apply probability theory to prediction. Probabilities, he argues, are not objective, independent entities waiting to be discovered. Instead, our relationship with uncertainty is deeply personal, shaped by experience, resources, and other factors that influence how we perceive and approach a given problem. As he puts it, uncertainty is the “conscious awareness of ignorance.” Consider, for example, the simple act of flipping a coin and covering it with your hand. This scenario, Spiegelhalter explains, involves two distinct types of uncertainty: aleatory, which

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– William H. Janeway

reflects the inherent randomness of an event (in this case, a coin toss), and epistemic, which stems from a lack of knowledge about something that has already occurred (whether the coin has come up heads or tails).

Spiegelhalter uses the coin-toss example to illustrate how statistical analysis of past experiences can narrow the range of possible outcomes in less structured situations. While this process can be straightforward using frequentist methods, such as calculating the probability of a six-sided die landing on a specific number, it becomes much harder when outcomes are not clearly defined by physical constraints.

Exploring the concept of model uncertainty, Spiegelhalter points out that our models of the world, like maps, are useful abstractions but never complete representations of reality. While some may be more accurate than others, no model can ever be “true” in a metaphysical sense, especially when it comes to models that try to account for human behavior. Game theory has added rigor to this analysis, recognizing that humans respond not only to each other’s actions but also to their expectations of those actions. But, as the financier George Soros theorized and demonstrated, consciously reflexive behavior creates a recursive loop that pushes the boundaries of our predictive capacity. Spiegelhalter rightly emphasizes the pivotal role of Bayes’ Theorem in the development of probability theory. Formulated by the English minister Thomas Bayes and published posthumously in 1763, it gained widespread recognition only after Alan Turing and his team relied on it to break the German Enigma code during World War II. Bayes’ Theorem formalizes the analysis of uncertainty by relating the prior probability – the likelihood of Outcome A, given Evidence B – to the likelihood of the evidence being observed given the outcome (the likelihood of Evidence B, given Outcome A), conditional on the independent likelihood of separately observing the outcome and the evidence.

The output of the exercise is the posterior probability, which summarizes the analysis and is to be updated as new evidence is found. To bring Bayes’ Theorem to life, Spiegelhalter presents readers with a series of thought-provoking questions. For example, why would more vaccinated people die of COVID-19 than unvaccinated people? And what are the chances that someone flagged by less-than-perfect police imaging software is actually a threat? By guiding readers through the mechanics of Bayesian analysis, Spiegelhalter not only demystifies it but also underscores the role of subjective expectations in assessing evidence, particularly when probabilities are not a function of physical properties (like those of a coin or a die). Ultimately, as Spiegelhalter acknowledges, our ability to tame uncertainty is limited. This insight also underpins Cromwell’s Rule, which warns against assigning a probability of zero or one unless something can be logically shown to be false or true. Named by statistician Dennis Lindley, the rule was inspired by Oliver Cromwell’s 1650 plea to the General Assembly of



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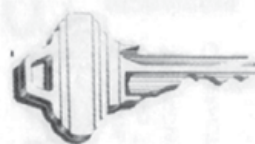


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the Church of Scotland: “I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, consider that you may be mistaken.” It serves as a reminder that outside the “small world” of formal logic, there is always room for doubt and reassessment.

The Trusting Animal

Even as he recognizes the limitations of human understanding, Spiegelhalter firmly rejects the notion of radical uncertainty advanced by Frank Knight and John Maynard Keynes. The idea that “we just don’t know,” as Keynes succinctly put it in 1937, gained prominence before subjective probability estimates gained widespread acceptance. But having rejected Knight and Keynes, Spiegelhalter offers little reassurance. His “personal conclusion” underscores the limits of formal analysis: “[A]s we increasingly acknowledge deeper, ontological uncertainty, where we don’t even feel confident in listing what could happen, we move away from attempts at formal analysis and towards a strategy that should perform reasonably well both under situations we have imagined, and those we haven’t.”

Such ontological uncertainty is inextricably tied to the fundamental nature of the world and universe we inhabit. As the second law of thermodynamics dictates, in a closed system, order inevitably gives way to randomness. The recognition that even our most carefully constructed systems and institutions remain vulnerable to unpredictable shocks connects *The Art of Uncertainty* to Lawrence’s *The Atomic Human*. As Lawrence observes, humans’ “natural intelligence emerged in a world where it was constantly being tested against the unexpected.” Our adaptability and capacity for reciprocal trust are integral to what Lawrence terms the “atomic human.” This concept is Lawrence’s answer to the core question driving his insightful history of AI: Is there a human essence that machines can never replicate? A master storyteller, Lawrence uses the example of General Dwight Eisenhower, the Allied commander in Europe and future US president, on the day before D-Day. Eisenhower had to synthesize all the intelligence available to him, then rely on his own judgment – or, as Spiegelhalter might put it, his personal relationship with uncertainty – to decide whether to launch the invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe. Having given the order, Eisenhower wrote a memorandum accepting full responsibility should Operation Overlord fail. In Lawrence’s account, this moment exemplifies the atomic human’s ability to reflect on a future he cannot foresee. Among the resources at Eisenhower’s disposal were the decrypts of German ciphers, cracked by Turing and his team of codebreakers. Lawrence uses their efforts to reverse engineer Nazi Germany’s increasingly complex encryption machines as a starting point for exploring the history of computing and, more specifically, the quest to develop computers capable of genuine intelligence. Tracing the evolution of computing from cybernetics and “expert systems” to generative AI, neural nets, and machine learning, Lawrence focuses on the scientific work that shaped these developments to show how advances in computational

concepts depended on corresponding technological breakthroughs. Notably, it took two generations of innovation to move from the perceptron of the late 1950s – the first system capable of interpreting a digitized image – to today’s LLMs, which use a similar architecture but rely on capabilities made possible by vastly more powerful systems.

The Great AI Fallacy

The Atomic Human’s greatest strength lies in Lawrence’s ability to weave together the history of technology with a profound exploration of human intelligence. Our intelligence, he explains, evolved through natural selection, embodying the persistence and adaptability inherent to organisms shaped by evolutionary processes. By contrast, artificial selection – whether of crops, animals, or computer systems – produces species tailored to specific purposes that are prone to failure when confronted with unexpected conditions. Lawrence contrasts humans’ “immense cognitive power” with the remarkably slow pace at which we communicate knowledge. Our cognitive ability evolved to help us survive in the unpredictable world of “Laplace’s gremlin,” and we share narratives to make what we know – or what we believe to be true – meaningful to others.

Recognizing that our understanding may be flawed, we second-guess ourselves and develop “theories of mind,” modeling other people’s thoughts to compensate for the inherent limitations of slow communication. But today’s AI models lack these essential qualities of human intelligence. When faced with conditions outside their training data, they falter. Nevertheless, these models perpetuate what Lawrence calls “the great AI fallacy:” the belief that we have created a form of algorithmic intelligence that understands us as deeply as we understand one another. In reality, LLMs are probabilistic prediction machines.

As computer scientist Judea Pearl, a leading expert on causality, explains, “Machine learning models provide us with an efficient way of going from finite sample estimates to probability distributions, and we still need to get to cause-effect relations.” Trained on vast troves of human-generated content available online, LLMs process expressions of human attempts to navigate an uncertain world. But unlike humans, these systems lack any awareness of their own deficiencies. Consequently, their remarkable ability to draw on training data to predict the next word in a text or pixel in an image is subject to errors they cannot detect or correct. Lawrence envisions a hypothetical hybrid intelligence arising from the interaction between a human and generative AI – a “human-analogue machine” (HAM), which he describes as a “control stick for the digital machine.” Such a system, he suggests, could augment and extend human capabilities in ways that LLMs cannot. But the risk of reinforcing the “great AI fallacy” remains ever-present: “The danger we face is believing that the machine will allow us to transcend our humanity.



ABOUT BEYOND BAROQUE

Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center is one of the nation's most successful and influential grassroots incubators of literary art. Founded in 1968 and housed in the original Venice City Hall building in Venice, California, it is a nonprofit public space dedicated to cultivating new writing and expanding the public's knowledge of poetry, fiction, literature, and art through cultural events and community interaction. The Center offers a diverse variety of literary and arts programming, including readings, workshops, art exhibits, and education. The Center also houses a bookstore with the largest collection of new poetry books on the west side of Los Angeles; the Mike Kelley Gallery, which specializes in text and language-focused visual art; and a 50,000 volume archive of small press and limited-edition publications that chronicles the history of poetry movements in Los Angeles and beyond.

Few literary spaces have done more to cultivate innovative art from cultural outsiders, or to shape emerging artistic movements. Across five decades Beyond Baroque has nurtured the Venice Beats, cradled the Los Angeles punk scene, and provided crucial support to a series of seminal experimental writers and artists that include Dennis Cooper, Wanda Coleman, Mike Kelley, and Will Alexander.

Its legendary free workshops have profoundly shaped Los Angeles literature by helping to launch a number of influential careers, including those of Kate Braverman, Tom Waits, Leland Hickman, Bob Flanagan, Eloise Klein Healy, David Trinidad, Jim Krusoe, Exene Cervenka, Amy Gerstler, Paul Vangelisti, Michael Ondaatje, Harry Northup, Brendan Constantine, Jenny Factor, and Sarah Maclay.

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... The atomic human is defined by vulnerabilities, not capabilities. Through those vulnerabilities we have evolved cultures that allow us to communicate and collaborate despite those limitations. Across our history we have developed new tools to assist us in our endeavors, and the computer is just the most recent. But that's all the computer should ever be – a tool."

Data or Drivel?

While Lawrence and Spiegelhalter celebrate the human capacity to process data to make informed decisions, they also highlight a fundamental challenge: data alone cannot convey meaning – context is crucial. The growing use of AI to recommend criminal sentences and evaluate parole applications in the United States is a case in point. When digital prediction systems are introduced into messy social environments, they inevitably mirror the biases and prejudices embedded in their training data. An even deeper challenge lies in the ontological uncertainty that Spiegelhalter identifies as a driver of the unexpected developments that have shaped human intelligence over millions of years. Simply put, can we trust the processes that generate the data we observe to remain consistent over time? If not, can we trust them at all? Economist Paul Davidson highlighted this issue in his 2015 book *Post Keynesian Theory and Policy*, pinpointing a critical flaw in mainstream economics: the assumption that past data can be used to generate probabilistic distributions that remain stable over time, allowing for statistically sound forecasts. "Since drawing a sample from events occurring in the future is impossible," Davidson observed, "the assumption that the economy is governed by an ergodic stochastic process permits the analyst to assert that samples drawn from the past or current market data are equivalent to drawing samples from future market data."

To understand the problem with this assumption, consider a young financial analyst at a French bank in 1913, tasked with producing a five-year forecast of Russian bond prices. For decades, France had been a major source of capital for Czarist Russia, providing our hypothetical analyst with ample data on Russian bond prices. But while these data may have captured the impact of Russia's defeat in the 1905 war against Japan, the subsequent popular uprising, and gradual industrialization, could any forecast have anticipated that by 1918, all Russian bonds would become worthless? Likewise, the 2008 global financial crisis shattered the long-held belief that uncertainty was under control. Strategies for hedging against ignorance, such as increasing banks' capital requirements, quickly became a top priority. These institutional responses were designed to address past crises and have done little to prepare for future ones.

Lawrence identifies another challenge: while "our imagination operates in tandem with the world around it and relies on that world to provide the consistency it needs," history is anything but consistent. Instead, it is marked by disruptions, regime changes,

and revolutions. With this in mind, economist Richard Zeckhauser developed a useful model illustrating how varying levels of knowledge about the state of the world correspond to different investment environments. His model categorizes decision-making scenarios into three distinct domains: risk, uncertainty, and ignorance. In this framework, "risk" refers to situations where both the possible states of the world and their probabilities are known, along with the distribution of investment returns. By contrast, "uncertainty" describes scenarios where the possible states of the world are known, but their probabilities are not. The third domain, "ignorance," applies to situations where even the possible states of the world are unknown and "the distributions of returns [are] conjectured, often from deductions about others' behavior." Zeckhauser's concept of ignorance echoes Keynes's notion of uncertainty. Recognizing that our ignorance often prevails, we understand that unknowable outcomes can become self-fulfilling prophecies driven by mass herding. And so, as in Keynes's famous beauty contest metaphor, we observe others closely, hoping not to be left behind or trampled. Spiegelhalter himself concedes this point: "sometimes we cannot conceptualize all the possibilities." Sometimes, "we may just have to admit we don't know."

Neil D. Lawrence, *The Atomic Human: What Makes Us Unique in the Age of AI* (PublicAffairs, 2024).

David Spiegelhalter, *The Art of Uncertainty: How to Navigate Chance, Ignorance, Risk and Luck* (UK: Pelican, 2024; US: W. W. Norton & Company, 2025).

William H. Janeway teaches economics at the University of Cambridge.

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J O H N O ' K A N E

Garbage, apparently, isn't what it used to be. Last week someone in a luxury van trolled my street, rifling the stretch of bins for items of value. He refused my refuse but found caches of worth in many of my neighbors' receptacles, spending close to a half hour in his pillage. Who knows how much he culled from block after block. If he went at it for an eight-hour day, perhaps he could buy a house in our neighborhood or buy stock in the post-election economic ripple. At least he'll be able to barter his survival for another day, even keep up the payments on the van.

Puerto Rico, that island floating in the ocean, was made garbage by the baggage of its colonial owners who've extracted gems from the detritus to support lifestyles elsewhere. The people of this lovely island are targeted—the victims berated—while the brutal policies are erased from public consciousness. The Trump campaign let this distortion slip through an SNL-like tasteless parody that most took as such, according to the election results. But Biden offered his own version of this illusion, instantly targeting Trump's people, the legions that voted for him from—mostly—the rural-red states, as garbage, slighting the policies.

The irony here is that the residents of the rural-red states are victims too of colonial-like policies. Poverty and inequality are much greater in the Republican controlled red states. They're deficient in medical care (many refusing Medicaid funds from the Federal Government), education, union representation, etc., from continuing to vote Republican.

But these deficiencies didn't lead to Democratic gains. The party refused to target the working class in the election campaign, believing it could win without it (an attitude in sync with Biden's vitriol toward Trump's supporters). And because it couldn't compete with the populist messages delivered by the perversely charismatic Trump through circumscribed bytes and images.

The Democrats were doomed at any rate. The glaring truth that surfaced from the election-night map was a striking disparity between blue-urban and red-rural America. This persistent divide—with us now for at least a generation—seems unbridgeable. There can be little progress in uniting the country and advancing democracy until steps are taken to reverse this fracture. The Republican victory will make this more difficult.

The real obstacle, however, is the brand of populism synonymous with the rise of Trumpism. It launched the MAGA movement proper and has kept it securely in place as Trump's base, especially in the red states. And its ideological power has served to counter the interests of the people it purportedly represents. Thanks to the commercial media, this distortion has become synonymous with populism generally, the more complex historical idea that encompasses the larger political spectrum.

Populist movements exist because of insufficient representation from the powers that be. People from diverse political persuasions excluded

from the social contract—validating the limits of existing democracy—battle to rectify their circumstances. These movements germinated in the late 19th century, after the Civil War, mostly in rural regions according to Catherine McNicol Stock in *Rural Radicals*.

The liberal version of populism derived from the Progressive Movement that formed in the 1890s—its catalyst the fledgling People's Party founded in 1892—and influenced politics through the first three decades of the 20th century. As a radical, reformist force it believed in busting the trusts and eradicating poverty. It was for immigration, the working class, and women's rights. It was strong on protecting the natural environment. And it advocated forms of direct,

popular democracy. It supported Prohibition, however, in the belief that this would help fight the epidemic of corruption during those years, a move which helped spawn organized crime. In short, it was “woke,” which explains why the left-liberal coalition in Congress, represented by Bernie Sanders, AOC, and the rest of the “squad” are labeled “progressives.”

There are similarities between the politics of the Progressive era and those of the progressive coalition in Congress today. The former surfaced at a moment of severe economic upheaval, when the gilded elites ruled and when capitalism was in constant crisis. There were yet no government structures in place to stabilize the

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— John O'Kane

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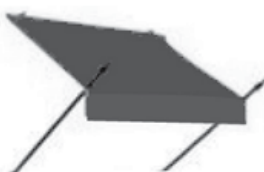
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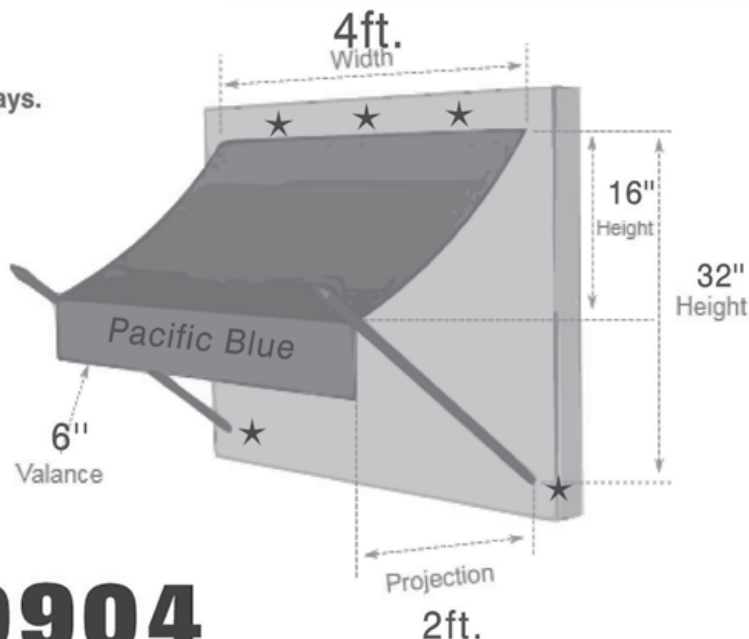


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economy, and the elite pigged out while immiserating the working class. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats of that day were willing to mount a sufficient corrective, opening a space for an alternative.

The progressives of today are a meager force compared to their predecessors, not formidable enough to begin fashioning a party. Though independently minded, they play on the fringes of the Democratic Party. They gained pre-eminence in the wake of the Occupy Movement in 2011, which focused its wrath on the excessive accumulation of wealth, the widening gap between the top one percent and the bottom ninety-nine percent. This theme vaulted Bernie Sanders into the national limelight and led to his run for the presidency in 2016. Bernie and his colleagues were critical of the mainstream Democrats for not acting on this crucial issue. And like their predecessors, they've been outspoken on the issue of deregulation—especially the spate of laws enacted under Clinton in the late 90s to spur the neoliberal economy—believing this lack has been responsible for this widening.

These current-day progressives have been unable to power their designs into a series of successes. Bernie and his colleagues continue talking about taxing the rich and breaking up the monopolies and oligopolies, but the numbers aren't there. The progressives' constant refrain about giving more representation to the working class has been effectively slighted by the Democratic Party's sizable bloc of corporate interests. In fact, it claimed a few months before the election that it was not targeting the working class in its campaign strategies. This made it difficult for the progressives to deliver on its rhetoric and secure gains with the working-class members of MAGA in the red-rural states where so many of the immiserated reside, like their predecessors did. The electoral map from 1900 reveals that the Democrats, the party the pre-Progressive progressives attached themselves to, secured a significant number of what we now label the red states. This party, unlike the Democratic Party of today, successfully captured working-class voters in both urban and rural areas.

Today's weak left populism pales before the conservative strain marketed successfully by the MAGA Republicans who control most of these immiserated rural spaces, especially since the demise of the Southern Democrats. They've been able to convince them to vote against their economic interests by appealing to deep-seeded prejudices and values. Like the long-standing hostility toward government and elites, a fixation ever since Tocqueville's study of the cultural habits of Americans in the 1830s. Religion has been a major force. The "Bible Belt" suffuses the red states, shaping the moral landscape and especially the values of family and personal responsibility which condition pro-life perspectives. These values have traditionally trumped social issues and even interfered with the people's ability to fully grasp their economic conditions and take charge of their lives. The fundamentalist fringes spurn issues of social justice, stressing the need to transcend worldly

circumstances. These opiates are formidable barriers.

But in our current election world Trump sold the issue of the economy to the red states. Exit polls revealed this was the main issue that drew voters to the Republicans. He convinced the people they were much better off in his first term than now, benefiting from polls showing a high degree of dissatisfaction with Bidenism on the economy. The issue he especially capitalized on was deindustrialization, the long-term process of gutting our industrial base from, mostly, the corporate escape to more wage-friendly regions overseas since the mid-1970s. The consequent loss of quality jobs hit the rural, red states—where many of the job-dispensing companies were located, as J. D. Vance and his Appalachian upbringing argued—particularly hard.

The Democrats partially addressed this issue with the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, the Infrastructure Bill, and the CHIPS Act. But they mostly targeted the future and not the immediate needs of the working class.

Trump and the Republicans struck a chord with the deindustrialization argument, thanks to the Democrats whose passionate commitment to globalization blinded them to this domestic crisis which has festered now for half a century. But even a cursory look at the Trump record during his first term reveals that little was done to seriously address the deindustrialization crisis. That his supporters in these areas remain undaunted, however, speaks volumes about his talent for capturing their hearts and minds, neutralizing the impact of the decaying economic conditions. The "garbage" people were apparently susceptible to a particular accent of garbage talk. The MAGA members, especially, are immune from ever even wanting to consider the slips, falsehoods, evasions, etc.

No one among the Democrats—and certainly the progressives—has stepped up to match wits with Trumpspeak and talk to the "garbage" people with the correct accent. So talking down to Trump's supporters is a guaranteed loser. Instead of bashing Trump as a fascist, they need to recycle the baggage that lets "garbage" people exist in the first place. And instead of writing the red-state nation off as racist, homophobic, etc., as Hillary did when she lost to Trump in 2016. No matter how culturally unacceptable, they need to convert his supporters to build a coalition that does more than just reverse the Republican victory.

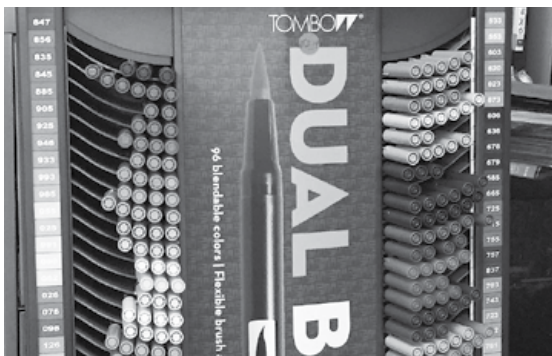
This will be a challenge to convert MAGA supporters who are so emotionally enveloped in Trumpspeak—so blind to what the Republicans have done to their social worlds that they vote against their own interests. Since many MAGA supporters—especially its working-class members—were former Democrats excluded from representation over the course of the party's corporatization, treat them as victims and not as enemies. Since the progressives can't force the necessary legislation to deal with issues of urgent concern through the corporate-dominated majority of the party, they should activate legions of civil society

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supporters—organic intellectuals in touch with the people they're hoping to change, not the PMC, the professional managerial class which speaks jargon from a distance—to match the efforts of the Republicans in the campaign in getting to these victims through their field organizing.

In other words, they should go right to the local arena and engage in a variant of direct action. Instead of sit-ins and the occupation of spaces reserved for whites that motivated activists in the Civil Rights era when Congress wouldn't act, they should bypass the local power structures and saturate localities with town halls to explain how the Republican programs go against the people's practical interests. They should connect the dots, make a better case for the radical perspectives that can change their lives. Many fear what "radical" means when it comes to practical options. Alleviate this fear by providing sufficient context for them to understand that these options are merely a correction to injustice.

In doing this, the progressives in Congress will have the opportunity to upgrade their approaches and ideology. They spare no flagrant rhetoric in criticizing the corporate faction of the party, but they've also compromised their positions too often. The rhetorical excesses have allowed the right to position them on the far left, even label them Marxists and communists. But the compromises in policy have alienated the legitimate left.

Bernie Sanders browbeats audiences with repetitive doses of working-class support and criticism of corporate America, but he offers very little analysis of how capitalism actually works so that the victims can understand. His social democracy is well shy of the northern Europe variety, which is marginally socialist, so his claims of being a socialist are suspect. Here again, he doesn't explain what socialism is, especially what it means for the victims. The main difference between social democracy and democratic socialism pertains to the issue of capital. The latter mandates the transfer of capital assets to those who lack them in the effort to make gains in equality. This involves establishing a legal basis for this transfer that helps to ensure the growth and permanency of these assets. Sanders and the other progressives fall short in pushing this alternative. As a result, the transfer of vast sums by the Biden Democrats to build up the post-Covid economy was mostly irresponsible liberalism, stopgap transfers lacking the potential for growth and the constructive redistribution of assets. The right's claim that their lavish spending constituted socialism is therefore utter fantasy.

The progressives need to renew their vision for change by modeling the populist goals and strategies from the Progressive era. Only then will the Democratic Party cease moving further away from its roots and finally morph into the one the working class has always hoped for.

John O'Kane publishes *AMASS* Magazine. His latest book, *The Accidental Jesus*, is a novel set in San Pedro, CA. It is published by Europe Books. It received fourth place in the international competition for literary fiction sponsored by the Pegasus Foundation in Rome.

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BOB DYLAN: THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST (FROM SEEGER TO CHALAMET)

P E T E R D R E I E R

The remarkable Bob Dylan biopic, *A Complete Unknown*, has been nominated for eight Oscars—best picture, actor, supporting actor, supporting actress, director, costume design, sound, and adapted screenplay. But the film, released in December, has already been drawing enormous attention over how true it is to Dylan's early career, relationships, and music, particularly the controversy over his performance of "Maggie's Farm" at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, backed up by an electric blues band. The film's arc leads us to this crucial final moment, when he steps on stage and sings, "I ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm no more."

In the first stanza, Dylan sings, "Well, I wake up in the morning, fold my hands, and pray for rain" and "It's a shame the way she makes me scrub the floor." Then he complains that Maggie's brother "hands you a nickel, and he hands you a dime. And he asks you with a grin, if you're havin' a good time." Dylan's protagonist clearly hates the backbreaking work, the low pay, and the lack of respect he gets from Maggie's family.

Where did those ideas and images come from? What does the song tell us about Dylan's personal and political transformation represented by his performance at Newport? And who was the real "Maggie"?

First some background.

Dylan was born Robert Zimmerman and raised in Hibbing, a mining town in northern Minnesota, in a middle-class Jewish family. As a teen he admired Elvis Presley, Johnny Ray, Hank Williams, and especially Little Richard, and taught himself to play guitar. In 1959, he moved to the Twin Cities to attend the University of Minnesota but soon dropped out. He stayed in the area to absorb its budding folk music and bohemian scene, began playing in local coffeehouses, and improving his guitar playing. A friend loaned Dylan his collection of Woody Guthrie records and back copies

of *Sing Out!* magazine, which had the music and lyrics to many folk songs. He read Guthrie's autobiography, *Bound for Glory*, and learned to play many of his songs.

By then young Zimmerman had changed his name (apparently after Welsh poet Dylan Thomas) and had adopted some of Guthrie's persona. He mumbled when he talked and when he sang, spoke with a twang, wore workman's clothes (including a corduroy cap), and took on what he believed to be Guthrie's mannerisms. At first Dylan seemed to identify more with Guthrie as a loner and bohemian than with Guthrie the radical and activist. Soon after Dylan arrived in New York City in January 1961 at age 19 he visited Guthrie, then suffering from Huntington's disease, in his New Jersey hospital room.

At the time, New York's Greenwich Village was the epicenter of the folk music revival, a growing political consciousness, and (along with San Francisco) the beatnik and bohemian culture of jazz, poetry, and drugs. The area was dotted with coffeehouses, some of which charged admission fees and others which allowed performers to pass the hat while customers purchased drinks and sandwiches.

Dylan made the rounds of the folk clubs, making a big impression. His singing and guitar-playing were awkward, but he had a little-boy charm and charisma that disarmed audiences. Dylan's initial repertoire consisted mostly of Guthrie songs, blues, and traditional ballads. At the time, he began weaving a myth about his past, including stories about being a circus hand and a carnival boy, having a rock band in Hibbing that performed on television, and running away from home and learning songs from black blues artists. He was, as he continued to do throughout his life, reinventing himself.

Dylan was never comfortable being confined by the "protest" label and being

called the "voice of his generation." He disliked being a celebrity, having people ask him what his songs meant, and being viewed as a troubadour who could represent American youth.

Between 1962 and 1965, Dylan wrote more than a dozen songs that reflected the turmoil of the period. These included "The Ballad of Emmett Till," about a fourteen-year-old African American who was beaten and shot to death in Mississippi in 1955 for whistling at a white woman. It was Dylan's first "protest" song. To this he soon added "Talkin' John Birch Society Blues" (poking fun at the right-wing organization), "Let Me Die in My Footsteps" (a critique of the Cold War

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— Peter Dreier

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hysteria that led Americans to build bomb shelters), “Oxford Town” (about the riots by white students after James Meredith became the first black student admitted to University of Mississippi), “Paths of Victory” (about the civil rights marches), and “A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall” (about the fear of nuclear war, which he premiered at a Carnegie Hall concert a month before the Cuban missile crisis made that fear more tangible).

In 1963, Dylan also wrote “The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll” (based on a news story from earlier that year about the death of a black barmaid at the hands of a wealthy white man), “Who Killed Davey Moore” (about a black boxer who died after a brutal match), “Talkin’ World War III Blues” (about the threat of nuclear annihilation), and “Masters of War” (a protest against the arms race).

Dylan borrowed the tune from “No More Auction Block,” an anti-slavery Negro spiritual, for what would become his most famous song, “Blowin’ in the Wind.”

Dylan recorded “Blowin’ in the Wind” on his second album, *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan*, released in May 1963, but it was the version released a few weeks later by Peter, Paul, and Mary that turned the song into a nationwide phenomenon. The single sold 300,000 copies in its first week. On July 13, 1963, it reached number two on the *Billboard* pop chart, with over a million copies sold. Millions of Americans learned the words and sang along while it was played on the radio, performed at rallies and concerts, and sung at summer camps and in churches and synagogues.

Unlike Dylan’s songs that were ripped from the headlines about specific events, “Blowin’ in the Wind” suggested broad themes. Dylan’s three verses achieve a universal quality that makes them open to various interpretations and allows listeners to read their own concerns into the lyrics. “How many times must the cannonballs fly before they’re forever banned?” and “How many deaths will it take till he knows that too many people have died?” are clearly about war, but not any particular war. One can hear the words “How many years can some people exist before they’re allowed to be free?” and relate them to the civil rights movement and the recent Freedom Rides. “How many times can a man turn his head and pretend that he just doesn’t see?” could refer to the nation’s unwillingness to face its own racism, or to other forms of ignorance. The song reflects a combination of alienation and outrage. Listeners have long debated what Dylan meant by “The answer is blowin’ in the wind.” Is the answer so obvious that it is right in front of us? Or is it elusive and beyond our reach? This ambiguity is one reason for the song’s broad appeal.

“The Times They Are a-Changin’” was also not about a specific event but broadly challenged the political establishment on behalf of Dylan’s youth cohort. The finger-pointing song is addressed to “senators, congressmen,” and “mothers and fathers,” telling them that “there’s a battle outside and it is

ragin’” and warning them, “don’t criticize what you can’t understand.” Dylan’s lyric “For the loser now will be later to win” sounds much like the biblical notion that the meek shall inherit the earth, or perhaps that America’s black and poor people will win their struggle for justice. Like “Blowin’ in the Wind,” “The Times They Are a-Changin’” became an anthem, a strident warning, angry yet hopeful. It came to symbolize the generation gap, making Dylan the reluctant “spokesman” for the youth revolt.

Dylan’s third album, also called *The Times They Are a-Changin’*, was recorded between August and October 1963 and included the song “North Country Blues,” which draws on Dylan’s Minnesota upbringing and describes the suffering caused by the closing of the mines in the state’s Iron Range, turning mining areas into jobless ghost towns—a theme that Bruce Springsteen would reprise years later. Remarkably, Dylan tells the tale from the point of view of a woman.

By 1963, Dylan was a superstar, aided by his manager Albert Grossman (who got him a recording contract) and other performers (including Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, and Peter, Paul, and Mary) who recorded Dylan’s songs and popularized them to wide audiences. Dylan, Baez, Peter, Paul, and Mary, Len Chandler, and Odetta were invited to sing at the August 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Martin Luther King delivered his “I Have a Dream” speech.

But Dylan was never comfortable being confined by the “protest” label and being called “*the voice of his generation*.” He disliked being a celebrity, having people ask him what his songs meant, and being viewed as a troubadour who could represent American youth. In 1963, before singing “Blowin’ in the Wind” at Gerde’s Folk City in Greenwich Village, Dylan explained, “This here ain’t a protest song or anything like that, ‘cause I don’t write protest songs...I’m just writing it as something to be said, for somebody, by somebody.” Dylan may have been being coy or disingenuous, but it didn’t matter. The song caught the wind of protest in the country and took flight. He later told Phil Ochs, who continued to write and perform topical songs and to identify with the civil rights and anti-Vietnam war movements, “The stuff you’re writing is bullshit, because politics is bullshit. You’re wasting your time.”

In 1965, the Newport Folk Festival invited Dylan to be the closing act on Sunday night, June 25. He agreed but insisted on singing a few songs backed by an electrified blues band. There is much controversy about what actually happened before, during and after his performance. *A Complete Unknown*—based on Elijah Wald’s 2015 book, *When Dylan Went Electric: Newport, Seeger, Dylan, and the Night That Split the Sixties*—shows Seeger agonizingly trying to persuade Dylan to stick to his acoustic music. When Dylan insists on performing with his rock-and-roll back-up band, Seeger is visibly upset, but it isn’t clear if he actually tries to pull the plug on the amplified sound or is mainly



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Director Emeritus,
Beyond Baroque

Won 4th Place in the yearly international competition
for literary fiction from the Pegasus Foundation

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angry that the sound system isn't adequate to blast such loud music. The person in the film who appears most shaken up by Dylan's performance is Alan Lomax, the eminent folklorist who played a major role in aiding little-known rural blues singers, mostly in the South, to gain more widespread attention.

Underlying the controversy is a debate about whether "folk" music mainly involves traditional songs by everyday people or newly-written songs about contemporary concerns by professional singers and songwriters. It also involves whether performers who use amplified electronic instruments are performing "folk" music. Even Seeger and Lomax were big fans of black blues musicians (like Howlin' Wolf and Memphis Slim) who played with electrified bands. In fact, the black Chambers Brothers and the white Paul Butterfield Blues Band, which backed Dylan, had already done electrically-amplified sets at Newport on Sunday afternoon with no complaints.

On stage, Dylan sang three amped-up songs—"Maggie's Farm," "Like a Rolling Stone," and a work-in-progress called "Phantom Engineer" (which would eventually turn into "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Lot to Cry," on his sixth album, *Highway 61 Revisited*). His back-up band included three members of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band (guitarist Mike Bloomfield, bassist Jerome Arnold, and drummer Sam Lay), Al Kooper on organ, and Barry Goldberg (who died on January 22) on organ and piano.

Some audience members were not happy with Dylan's new sound. A few even booed. After performing those songs, Dylan stormed off the stage. But Seeger and others persuaded him to return to the stage, where he performed two songs with an acoustic guitar, "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "It's All Over Now, Baby Blue." Many of those same audience members who had booed his first set and cheered his second set no doubt would eventually cheer for the upcoming wave of folk-rock music, like the Byrds' version of "Mr. Tambourine Man." But it was "all over now" between Dylan and the Newport Folk Festival. He refused to return to that venue for 37 years.

One aspect of the Newport controversy was Dylan's apparent rejection of politically-oriented music. That was certainly the direction he was heading. With occasional exceptions, he abandoned acoustic and political music for rock and roll, country, blues, and gospel.

But the back story of "Maggie's Farm"—and its double meaning—is missing from *A Complete Unknown* and from most tellings of the Newport brouhaha.

On different occasions, Seeger said he liked Dylan's song. That shouldn't be surprising. Seeger had recorded a traditional song, "Penny's Farm," on his first solo album (*Darling Corey*) in 1950. He often sang it at concerts. It is told from the perspective of a sharecropper protesting the working conditions on the farm.

It was originally recorded on Columbia records

as "Down on Penny's Farm" by the Bentley Boys, a duo from North Carolina, in October 1929. That was a few days before the Wall Street stock market crashed, triggering the Great Depression. But the rural south was already facing a depression, especially among sharecroppers.

Here are the opening lyrics to the Bentley Boys' song:

*Come you ladies and you gentlemen and listen to my song
I'll sing it to you right, but you might think it's wrong
May make you mad but I mean no harm
It's just about the renters on Penny's farm*

[Refrain]

*It's hard times in the country
Out on Penny's farm*

It continues:

*You go in the fields and you work all day
Way into the night but you get no pay
Promise you meat or a little lard
It's hard to be a renter on Penny's farm*

[Refrain]

It's hard times in the country

Out on Penny's farm

*Now here's George Penny come into town
With his wagon-load of peaches, not one of them sound
He's got to have his money or somebody's check
You pay him for a bushel and you don't get a peck*

*Then George Penny's renters, they come into town
With their hands in their pockets and their heads
hanging down*

*Go in the store and the merchant will say
Your mortgage is due and I'm looking for my pay*

It is likely that Dylan heard the Bentley Boys' version, which was reasonably well-known because Harry Smith had included it in his three-record *Anthology of American Folk Music*, issued in 1952, which helped spark the folk music revival during that decade. Dylan was familiar with the songs on the *Anthology* and recorded several of them on his first album.

The first stanza and chorus of Dylan's "Hard Times in New York Town," as well as the tune, are borrowed directly from the Bentley Boys' "Down on Penny's Farm."

Here are the opening words and the tune for Dylan's "Hard Times in New York Town":

Come you ladies and you gentlemen, a-listen to my song.



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*Sing it to you right, but you might think it's wrong.
Just a little glimpse of a story I'll tell
'Bout an east coast city that you all know well.*

[Refrain]

*It's hard times in the city,
Livin' down in New York town.*

So, whether he learned the song from Smith's Anthology or from Seeger's album, it is clear that Dylan drew on "Down on Penny's Farm" when he wrote "Maggie's Farm."

"Down on Penny's Farm" was based on previous songs. That's the folk tradition—borrowing and revising older songs. Woody Guthrie was a master of the craft. Others who recorded the song, after Seeger, include Jim Kweskin and Geoff Maldaur, Natalie Merchant, and Roger McGuinn of the Byrds.

There's another twist to Dylan's "Maggie's Farm." On July 6, 1963, Dylan traveled to Greenwood, Mississippi—in the heart of the Delta—to perform at a voter registration rally sponsored by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He was joined by Seeger, Theo Bikel, and the Freedom Singers. SNCC leader, and later Congressman, John Lewis was there, too. You can see a clip of Dylan's performance in the 1965 documentary about Dylan, *Don't Look Back*.

Dylan performed a new song, "Only a Pawn in Their Game," about the murder of Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers by a segregationist thug, which occurred only a few weeks earlier, on June 12. The song expresses Dylan's outrage at the assassination of the civil rights leader, but it also attacks the white Southern politicians and landed aristocracy, who used Jim Crow to pit black and white workers against each other to weaken both groups. In the song, Dylan revealed a sophisticated analysis of the white ruling class' divide-and-conquer strategy, something that Martin Luther King discussed in some detail in his March 1965 speech at the end of the Selma-to-Montgomery march for voting rights.

One stanza of the song captures Dylan's perspective:
*The deputy sheriffs, the soldiers, the governors get paid
And the marshals and cops get the same
But the poor white man's used in the hands of them all
like a tool
He's taught in his school
From the start by the rule
That the laws are with him
To protect his white skin
To keep up his hate
So he never thinks straight
'Bout the shape that he's in
But it ain't him to blame
He's only a pawn in their game*

The voting rights rally at which Dylan performed took place on a cotton farm owned by the

McGhee (sometimes misspelled Magee) family who were deeply involved with SNCC's local organizing work. The family included six sons, one of whom, Silas, who had organized to desegregate a movie theater, was shot in the face the following summer by someone whom many believed was a Ku Klux Klan member.

It is hardly a stretch to see that Dylan turned McGhee's farm into Maggie's farm.

But what did he mean that he wasn't going to "work on Maggie's farm no more"? He certainly wasn't referring to the McGhee family, whose courage Dylan surely admired. The words refer to his involvement in civil rights movement and politics more broadly.

At the end of the song, Dylan says,
*Well, I try my best to be just like I am
But everybody wants you to be just like them*

This is Dylan's way of telling his fans, and the broader public, that, having written many protest songs about civil rights and war in his still-early career, he was no longer going to be a protest singer and didn't like being pigeonholed that way. That was the message he was sending at Newport when he went electric and performed "Maggie's Farm."

In fact, Dylan wrote few politically oriented songs after that. By his fourth album, the aptly titled *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, he had decided to look both inward for his inspiration and outward at other kinds of music. He began to explore more personal and abstract themes in his music and in his poetry. He also became more involved with drugs, alcohol, and religion. His songs began to focus on his love life, his alienation, and his growing sense of the absurd. In subsequent decades, Dylan would reinvent himself several more times.

Even after 1965, however, Dylan occasionally revealed that he hadn't lost his touch for composing political songs. His "Subterranean Homesick Blues" references the violence inflicted on civil rights protestors by cops ("Better stay away from those/ That carry around a fire hose") but also reflected his growing cynicism ("Don't follow leaders/ Watch the parkin' meters"). The extremist wing of Students for a Democratic Society took their name—*Weatherman*—from another line in that song ("You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows"). Other songs, such as "I Shall Be Released" (1967), the Guthrie-esque "I Pity the Poor Immigrant" (1967), "George Jackson" (1971), "Hurricane" (1975), "License to Kill" (1983), and "Clean Cut Kid" (1984) indicate that Dylan still had the capacity for political outrage.

A Complete Unknown captures the mood and the music of the first few years of Dylan's ascendancy. Timotheé Chalamet as Dylan and Edward Norton as Seeger embody their characters, including their voices, playing, looks, and performance styles. If the film gets people to be more curious about Seeger, to listen to his songs and learn about his life and legacy—that alone would be enough.

The movie accurately portrays Dylan's two sides—a brilliant creative genius as a songwriter/poet

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and a narcissist who used and discarded people on behalf of his ambition.

Though based on Wald's extraordinary book, the film takes some artistic liberties that bend or distort the truth. It underplays the importance of his girlfriend Suze Rotolo, a committed leftist, in educating Dylan about both literature and the civil rights movement. It downplays the fact that Joan Baez was already famous when she met Dylan and helped jumpstart his career by introducing him at music festivals. Contrary to the film, Dylan never appeared on Seeger's homespun educational TV show, *Rainbow Quest*. Dylan did visit Woody Guthrie in the hospital when he first arrived in New York, but Seeger wasn't there. And Dylan's second visit with Woody, as depicted at the end of the film, is entirely fictional.

But perhaps most disappointing is what the

film left out—Dylan playing on McGhee's farm in Mississippi and at the March on Washington, both in 1963. Had those incidents been included, we could see that Dylan's commitment to civil rights and activism, however brief in the context of his long career, was more than rhetorical, and contributed to his image as a protest singer.

Peter Dreier is the E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics at Occidental College. He joined the Occidental faculty in January 1993 after serving for nine years as Director of Housing at the Boston Redevelopment Authority and senior policy advisor to Boston Mayor Ray Flynn. He is the author of *The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century: A Social Justice Hall of Fame* (2012) and an editor (with Kate Aronoff and Michael Kazin) of *We Own the Future: Democratic Socialism, American Style* and co-author of *Baseball Rebels: The Players, People, and Social Movements That Shook Up the Game and Changed America* (2022).



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UNDER TENEMENT SKIES BY PUMA PERL AND JOE SZTABNIK

RICHARD MODIANO

Puma Perl and Joe Sztabnik's *Under Tenement Skies* is a masterstroke of raw emotion, storytelling, and sonic atmosphere. This spoken-word blues album captures the gritty soul of urban life, blending Perl's evocative poetry with Sztabnik's hauntingly resonant musical compositions. Together, they create a vivid tapestry of love, loss, rebellion, and survival, set against the backdrop of a city that never stops moving.

Puma Perl's delivery is magnetic, her voice simultaneously tender and defiant. She paints her poems with sharp-edged words and an intimate vulnerability that draws listeners into her world of tenement walls, neon reflections, and late-night revelations. Her cadence is perfectly matched by Joe Sztabnik's bluesy guitar riffs, which shift effortlessly between mournful and hopeful, enhancing the emotional depth of

each piece.

Tracks like "Where I'm From" and "Something Better" encapsulate the album's essence, weaving narratives that feel as personal as journal entries but as universal as the human condition. The synergy between the spoken word and the music is extraordinary, with each element amplifying the power of the other. Sztabnik's

alchemy that feels both timeless and fresh.

What makes *Under Tenement Skies* especially compelling is its authenticity. It doesn't try to sanitize or romanticize its subject matter; instead, it embraces the raw beauty and chaos of the city and its inhabitants. There's a visceral honesty here, a sense of people and places that are alive with stories that demand to be heard.

Whether you're a fan of spoken word, blues, or simply appreciate art that resonates on a deeply human level, *Under Tenement Skies* is an album that should not be missed. Puma Perl and Joe Sztabnik have created something rare—a work that feels as though it's been pulled straight from the streets yet polished with undeniable craft and heart. It's a gritty love letter to life's complexities, set to a soundtrack as unforgettable as the poetry itself.

**She paints
her poems with
sharp-edged words
and an intimate
vulnerability
that draws listeners
into her world of
tenement walls,
neon reflections, and
late-night
revelations.**

— Richard Modiano

blues foundation provides a steady heartbeat to Perl's free-spirited, unfiltered poetic flow, creating an

Richard Modiano is the poet/author of *The Forbidden Lunchbook*, winner of the 2022 Joe Hill Prize for labor poetry, a Pushcart Prize nominee, and former executive director of the Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center. In addition, he's been named by the Huffington Post as one of 200 people doing the most to promote poetry in the

United States. (Modiano is featured on the cover of AMASS issue 70, which includes a full-length interview.)

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THEATRE

THE VIEW FROM THE FOURTEENTH ROW (A LOVE STORY)

DAN MARCUS

I couldn't think of a better way to begin this article in appreciation of playwright/lyricist Liv Cummins than by quoting Charlton Heston, the man who parted the Red Sea in *The Ten Commandments*, won a chariot race in *Ben Hur*, and piloted a Boeing 747 in *Airport 1975*. "Being a professional," he stated, "means doing what you have to do when you don't feel like it." That's the situation Liv faced several months ago when an opening date was proposed for the new musical she was writing with her collaborator, Rob Hartmann.

The title, "Ladies, How Dare You!" provides a clue to the nature of the show. It's a comedy—an historical comedy about the women's suffrage movement—but a comedy, nonetheless. Liv, meanwhile, was in a state of grief. She had recently lost her husband Sandy McKnight to pulmonary fibrosis—her irrepressible, irreverent, irreplaceable lover, creative partner, and consoler...except he was no longer there to console her. And now she was expected to take this show to the finish line in time for an opening that fall? It was a non-starter. Immersing herself in the writing and rehearsal of a musical comedy during this period of her life would be sheer madness, a bridge too far.

Of course, she would do it.

As a longtime friend, I was confronted with a decision as well, though mine involved a mere scheduling conflict. A songwriters convention was being held in Los Angeles on the same weekend as the play's opening. It was an opportunity

to rub shoulders with industry movers and shakers. Networking, baby! Billie Eilish didn't get to where she is today by sitting in her room. (Well, actually she did, but she's the exception to the rule.)

As my departure date approached, I packed up my carry-on suitcase and stuffed my shoulder bag with the items I would need on the plane—an empty water bottle to be

**We're supposed
to listen to
our gut
on these occasions;
this time,
however, my gut
wasn't talking.
Until, that is, I arrived
at the airport.**

— Dan Marcus

filled after passing through security, a book (*The Creole Incident* by John Hyde Barnard), a tablet with ten movies downloaded, a comfortable pair of slippers, and a box of Ring Dings (individually wrapped, of course). In addition, I'd designed a business card with a sexy QR code to pass around.

But, SPOILER ALERT, I ultimately did make it to *Ladies, How Dare You!* What it took was a trip to the airport and—more significantly—a trip from the airport. Truth be told, I did have certain qualms about the departure. I couldn't help wondering if this convention was as crucial as I'd made it out to be. Yes, it's important

to connect with key people, but I've learned from experience that I sometimes make a better impression when I *don't* show up.

We're supposed to listen to our gut on these occasions; this time, however, my gut wasn't talking. Until, that is, I arrived at the airport. Bottom line, the premiere of Liv's musical was top priority. My flight would be precisely one passenger lighter that day.

And I'm so glad it was. Based on what I observed from my vantage point in the audience, it shouldn't be long before everyone has a chance to experience this theatrical gem—the scope of the production, the Broadway-level performances, the inventive choreography by Director Kelly Minner-Bickert, the costumes, the sets, and the superb musical direction by Erica Dickson. And at the heart of it all were the songs.

Yes, the songs. As Liv was called to the stage after the cast had taken its bows, my thoughts drifted back nearly three decades to a weekly songwriting workshop in L.A. conducted by the late great Pete Luboff. There we were, a group of aspiring, perspiring songwriters critiquing each other's efforts. We were workin' it!

At least most of us were. Sandy McKnight, a visitor from a distant planet known as Brooklyn, New York, rarely bothered to revise his work. And truth be told, he didn't need to. Instead, what we got week after week was a stream of satirical comments and well-crafted songs presented with equal aplomb. It's been said that "writing is rewriting." Sandy apparently never got the memo. He held to a different credo: "writing is writing."

On night, a young, milk-fed woman from Minnesota showed up, bursting with talent and good cheer. Soon, Sandy's witticisms were invariably followed by the



Sandy Liv, and Elsie the cat. Los Angeles, circa 1993.

room-shaking sound of her laughter. In no time, the two of them were romantically involved and writing songs together. His main background was British Invasion rock; hers was musical theater with a side order of Joni Mitchell. At first, the more worldly and experienced Sandy assumed the role of guide and mentor in the relationship. But eventually she flipped the script, literally, convincing him to collaborate on a modest stage musical. Set in a songwriting workshop, the show was titled *The Big One*, which referred both to the endless quest for a hit

song and an impending California earthquake. One might say they were “meta” when meta wasn’t cool. Next came a screenplay, *Exploring Adam*. Then came more musicals, more screenplays, more songs, and more albums. These two over-achievers worked in tandem and at times branched off and worked apart... always supporting each other’s creative endeavors, regardless.

And now Liv is on the stage, accepting the applause and adulation of the audience. But the triumph is bittersweet—the love of her life isn’t there to share it. And there’s no point



Ladies, How Dare You!

telling her that Sandy was looking down on the event, that he was there in spirit. Not good enough for this girl from the Midwest. She needed the real deal...his puns more than well-intentioned platitudes.

But without sugar coating or dancing around it, Liv has established one thing beyond the shadow of a doubt by stepping up in the midst of sorrow: the story may be over, but the song goes on.

Dan Marcus is a songwriter, playwright, and curator of the Dan Marcus Gallery (YouTube).

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When the ocean was born, its mother told it a story.
You will be a pond for the skaters, a sip for the thirsty, a ballet for the boats, and a mirror for all the people's dreams.
The ocean was psyched and with the verve of a show tune said, I can be that.
So the ocean grew up and friended fish and mammals, one and all.
Scuba divers Scooby dooed, para sailors simply flew, and nature reflected off the sun like a glittery duet.
The ocean told stories to the moon whispering of seashells and rare birds gliding above.
The ocean was a fan of the weather reports, like baseball cards are to some.
The wind whooshed a piece of menu from a faraway restaurant into the ocean's eyeball.
The writing on the waves was clear.
This menu was the first of many.
Plastic bottles wooed their way onto the feet of the ocean.
When the first one came, the ocean didn't know if it was friend or foe.
It was shaped like a miniature Oscar, but transparent, and the ocean was a little on the trusting side so didn't know if it had won some bizarre treasure.
Then a fleet of bottles arrived like a colony of stones.
The ocean took out a whistle it kept for such occasions and sang a song to the bottles.
You do not belong to me.
You were meant to be free.
Not a lasting plastic print.
On Earth's greatest instrument.
The bottles were very sad that they had caused such misery.
They wept, they groaned, they turned their eyes away.
The ocean said it is simply not your fault you're here.
You are arms' length away from other tears.
The ocean said shape yourself into an animal guise, empathy is where everything thrives.
The ocean went humming like a singing bowl breathing in all that was there.
The litany was lengthy, way too much to bear.
The plastic bags are swirling in the water like a gigantic gridlock on the 405 that never ends.
The ocean said.
You do not belong to me.
But I belong to you.
Funny how duality sings a different tune.
There's a little me in everyone, a little me in you.
Right now my waters mingle and part of me is tomb.
The bags were sullen and drifting deeper into the askew.
But the ocean smiled a knowing smile and even laughed and said.
Like bags can turn inside out, the mind wanders along in its own dance.
There is knowledge, there is wisdom, the ocean is a library too few take time to read.
Things can get better and things can get worse but like an ocean ebbing and flowing, things can change, things can reverse.
That's the nature of nature.
That's the beauty of songs.
People can be every day heroes, people can write Earth's song, people can write the ocean a hook, it just takes willing to be open of heart, and diligent where to look.

- Ellyn Maybe, poet, musician, lyricist.

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Sweet Susie

A MONSTROUS SWINDLE PERPETRATED ON THE RESIDENTS OF A SMALL TOWN

JOHN HYDE BARNARD

The following story is based on actual events that took place in Franklin, New York, in April of 1865. The names, time, and location have been changed to protect the innocent.

In late August of 1865, the days laid around like an old dog, lazy and content but ready to growl if'n someone dare to come up to try to disturb or has a hankerin' for some chore. Some say that the sayin' "let sleepin' dogs lay" comes from these parts, but a lot of claiming is claimed here and about.

It ain't like we don't have any hankerin' for sophistication. Why, I recall when a Shakespeare play once was performed by a traveling troupe of actors that had come all the way from Cleveland. They pitched a tent in the city park and charged a nickel and for two nights performed *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* to a packed standing room audience. I have to admit, that talk that Mark Anthony fellow made did some changin' to my mind.

It was about a week after the troupe of traveling thespians had packed up and gone on to Buffalo that these two oil prospectors came into town, all greasy and oily but excited and shouting that they had struck a motherlode. It wasn't too long before word got loose like someone had left a pigsty gate open and all the little piglets went to scampering and squealing and raisin' all kinds of commotion. People got all up in the oil business like they had found religion and gone to being

baptized in crude.

The city fathers got together and convened a proper meeting and decided to go on up to this here oil well and have a look-see.

Bright and early the next morning the mayor and the city council, the city auditor, the fire chief, the chief of police, the chamber of commerce, the city attorney, the accessor, and even the city coroner, along with about half of the fine citizens of town, paraded up to this here oil well, located back up in the hills about five miles out the Dugan Road.

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— John Hyde Barnard

When they all got up to where the well was, they was all a bit sweaty and overheated at the exertion and the fact that the sun was beatin' down till the leaves turned down and all the buzzing had ceased cause even the bugs had gone to shade.

Nonetheless, when they saw that the well was a pumpin' and a gushin' sweet black crude, over a thousand barrels an hour, the crowd seemed to revive as they crowded around the derrick that piped off the crude into a large vat. The sight of all that oil being pumped into this large holding tank seemed to have a

hypnotic effect on the crowd.

Finally, the mayor turned to the two prospectors and gushed on as much as the well. "What a magnificent strike of good fortune, the quality of the crude and, that if the well kept deliverin' at the pace it was delivering, it would be worth more than Aladdin's Lamp, the Crown Jewels of the Queen of England, and the Treasure of Montezuma—combined!"

Being that the mayor was known for rhetorical exaggeration, he surely gilded the lily that afternoon.

Well, the two prospectors, who claimed to be brothers, said that it was a magnificent strike, but sadly might have to be—all in vain. It seems their mother, down river in Cincinnati, was doing poorly and they were afraid that she was nearin' the end. They claimed it would be best to sell the well as soon as a good offer was made. They would consider it and then make their way back to Cincinnati to comfort their dying mother. The possibility of becoming wealthy could not overcome their grief at the possibility of losing their mother.

That brought a pause to the giddiness of the crowd, that was until the mayor, in his infinite wisdom, came up with a solution that seemed to bring the temperament of the crowd back to its giddiness and went to easing the burden of sorrow being displayed by the prospectors as if they were a-playin' a part in one of those Shakespearean tragedies.

The mayor puffed himself up as he was wont to do whenever he had an announcement of paramount providence and spoke in his best oratory.

"We, the city, will make an offer to buy your stake."

He paused as the crowd applauded. The mayor put up his arms to cool the fervor and, with officious gravitas, continued: "I'll convene a city council meeting



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forthwith and will come up with an offer that may be suitable to you in your trying time of grief.”

Well, sir, with that the whole group of city officials and the crowd who pilgrimed out to the well paraded back into town, right down to city hall. After a brief consultation with a local oil man, some haggling back and forth, and a calculation on the return on the investment considering the gusher they had witnessed that day, coupled with the grief displayed by the brothers regarding their dying mother in Cincinnati, it was decided that the city would offer the two prospectors a princely sum of seventy-five thousand dollars. Cash.

The next day, the mayor, along with the city officials, met with the two brothers and made their offer. After a bit of sad reluctance and the thought of possibly losing out on a life-changing windfall, the brothers took the offer. In short order the papers were drawn up, signed, witnessed, notarized, and registered with the county clerk. It was official—the city was in the oil business!

There was some gladhanding, back slapping, and in short order a

bottle was produced as a toast was made, and another and another. This was soon accompanied with singing and laughter that emanated from the city chambers well into the night.

Well, sir, not all were of the opinion that this was a harbinger of good tidings. No, sir! I myself had my doubts. There just seemed to be something amiss but I couldn't quite put a hand on the matter until the next day. That was, when we all paraded back up the Dugan Road to the site of the well.

When we arrived, it was quiet and still. No one was about. The two brothers and their crew had lit out and the site was ghostly quiet. It didn't seem to bother anyone none as we all figured that the brothers were eager to get back to Cincinnati to comfort their dying mother. It was then that they went to getting the well fired up and it soon went to pumpin' and gushing sweet crude, as it had done the day before. That's when someone noticed that there might be a leak or something, because the level in the holding tank was not gettin' any higher! This set to an excavation at the base of the tank and after a short time a most

astonishing discovery was made.

Yes, sir, most astonishing!

A smaller tank was discovered just below the derrick, whose straw was drawing from this tank and depositing the crude into the holding tank. What was disquieting about this discovery was that a line from the holding tank bled back into the smaller tank at the base of the derrick that created a circular flow of oil. The dawning realization crept into the consciousness of all who came to the stark understanding that the well was only producing what it had already produced—on an endless loop.

The reaction was to hurry off the hill, down Dugan Road, back to town, only to find that the two brothers were nowhere to be found, along with the seventy-five grand—in cash.

And what a grand scheme it was!

John Hyde Barnard is a member of the board of directors of the Institute for Historical Studies, San Francisco, and the author of *The Creole Incident: The Beginning of the End of Slavery*. He can be contacted at ColdwellHyde@yahoo.com.



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HOW WILL TRUMP'S POLICIES AFFECT OUR ECONOMY (AND OUR RISING \$36.4 TRILLION NATIONAL DEBT)?

HAROLD ZIMMERMAN

As Trump takes office, he will continue his 21 percent corporate tax rate which was due to lapse this year while also implementing a new 15 percent rate for those corporations producing totally American-made goods.

Trump is a follower of Arthur Laffer—the father of supply-side economics. I'm sure everyone who's old enough remembers Reaganomics. Those were really Arthur Laffer's policies—word for word.

Basically, Laffer and Trump believe that if you lower the corporate tax, there will be more production of goods which, in turn, will produce more profit and more taxable income for the government. And beyond that, it will also produce more work and hours for employees (including corporate officers), possibly leading to the hiring of additional workers, all making more wages and more taxable income for the IRS. And with corporations that are publicly traded on the stock market, more dividends and capital gains will accrue to their stock and bondholders, all paying additional taxable income on their gains.

Following this train of thought, lower taxes will allow corporations and in fact any business to retain more income and use this extra income to produce more goods and/or to offer more services. These businesses are now going to have to

order more supplies, raw materials, and/or assembly parts that go into making their finished product (or services being offered), meaning that those businesses that produce these supplies, raw materials, and/or the assembly parts will also make more money and additional profit—in other words, more taxable income for Uncle Sam.

And as our finished extra products (say, TV sets) are shipped to/by their distributors to retail stores, these extra goods create extra profit and work for the shippers, distributors, retail stores and their

**With all
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employees and any extra workers they will need to handle this extra load and the extra merchandise sold in stores and by such companies will pay extra taxable income from their profits and their employees will, on their weekly paychecks, pay extra withholding tax. Again, more tax collected for the government.

Thus one tax break, as one can see, will potentially create opportunities for extra taxable income for any company (and their employees).

Sounds pretty promising, doesn't it? But if you recall, Trump in his first four years suffered an \$8.4 trillion dollar deficit! Now, was this

due to lowering the corporate tax from 35 percent to 21 percent or was it due to something else?

Well, let's look at Barack Obama (who was president for eight years before Trump took office). When Obama took office, our national debt was \$10.6 trillion and at the end of his presidency eight years later, it had grown to \$19.4 trillion—an \$8.8 trillion increase. This compared to Trump's \$8.4 trillion in ONLY four years and before the Pandemic began to take full effect.

To further analyze whether Trump's 21 percent corporate tax rate pays for itself, let's look more closely at Obama's presidency, when the corporate tax was still 35 percent. Again, in Obama's eight years, our national debt increased by \$8.8 trillion, with Obamacare being implemented in 2010 toward the beginning of his FIRST term. Then, taking Obama's \$8.8 trillion deficit and dividing by the eight years he was in office, we find an increase of \$1.1 trillion per year.

Now let's look at Trump. He incurred an \$8.4 trillion deficit in only four years, which is about \$2.1 trillion per year. That is, Trump on the average incurred an extra \$1 trillion dollars per year compared

to Obama—the only difference basically being Trump's 2017 corporate tax cut of 35 percent “slashed” by 14 full percentage points to 21 percent.

With all other things being essentially equal, what else then could that extra \$1 trillion dollar deficit that Trump incurred have come from?

Was it Obamacare? No, because Obamacare, as explained, was signed into law and began in 2010 near the beginning of Obama's FIRST term, meaning that any extra Obamacare costs were fully factored into Obama's \$8.8 trillion deficit “overrun.”



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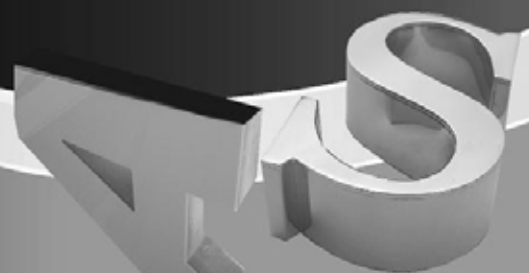
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THEREFORE, Trump's extra \$1 trillion per year budget deficit increase had to come substantially from his 14 percent corporate tax break—from 35 percent all the way down to 21 percent.

Could this have been avoided? Yes, maybe, if you analyze based on the "law of diminishing returns." Perhaps Trump wouldn't have suffered such a huge \$8.4 trillion dollar deficit had he only lowered the corporate tax rate halfway, say to 28 percent. That is,

each additional percentage point of tax break would have produced less and less taxable income compared to the tax revenue had there been no tax break for that particular one percent.

Either way, Trump surely knows in the back of his mind that to avoid any further budget deficit increase, he will have to (1) TARIFF NATIONS to generate extra revenue for the government (while causing inflationary spikes in prices to the consumer) and (2) DISMANTLE FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES left and right (despite

bringing extreme hardship to many) just to cut government spending so that (1) there's NO (or little) FURTHER DEFICIT INCREASE and (2) Our GNP (Gross National Product) goes up!

That's the legacy Trump dreams of and those are the HEARTLESS lengths he will go to achieve it!!!

Harold Zimmerman is an attorney and former auto mechanic/repair shop owner. His current passion is developing creative solutions to problems involving the U.S. economy.



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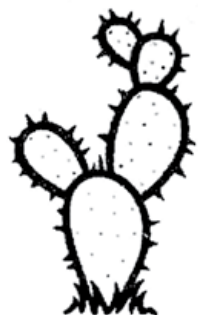
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Chez Bacchus remains a destination for its beloved weekend afternoon teas, which are served every Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Guests can enjoy a curated selection of fine teas, accompanied by a tower of sweet and savory treats expertly prepared by Chef Danny Le. This elegant ritual now takes on an exciting new twist with the option to enjoy tea alongside a refreshing cocktail or a glass of champagne, further elevating the experience.



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