

governments into waging a vigorous campaign against the cartels. Asking the Andean governments to adopt such a course is roughly akin to pressuring Japan to eradicate its electronics industry. The State Department's annual narcotics control strategy report, released in March, confirms the ongoing failure of Washington's supply-side strategy: The amount of cocaine coming from the Andean region is at unprecedented levels.

Despite a record of futility extending over two decades, the Bush administration seems determined to escalate the drug war in Latin America. Most ominously, it is adding a new and dangerous component: an expanded role for the U.S. military.

It was indicative of the administration's growing obsession with drug trafficking as an alleged threat to national security that several spokesmen portrayed the invasion of Panama as a victory in the drug war. Even before that episode, Washington's actions pointed to the increased involvement of the military. The Andean Initiative, announced in September, included the dispatch of U.S. military advisers to assist the Andean governments. Two months later the Justice Department issued a ruling authorizing the military to apprehend suspected drug traffickers overseas even without the consent of the host governments.

In the heady aftermath of the Panama operation, the Pentagon proposed stationing an aircraft carrier group in the waters off Colombia to intercept drug shipments. Although it abandoned that scheme following an outcry not only in Colombia but throughout Latin America, the administration's handling of the proposal is symptomatic of its reckless prosecution of the drug war in the Western Hemisphere. Washington apparently did not even consult the Colombian government until planning for the blockade was in its final stages. Despite the longstanding antipathy of Latin American governments and populations to U.S. military intervention in the hemisphere, administration officials seemed surprised at the vehemently adverse reaction to the proposal.

U.S. insensitivity to Latin American concerns repeatedly surfaces in other

phases of the drug war. Washington continues to pressure the Andean governments to adopt aggressive spraying programs to eradicate coca and marijuana crops, despite being rebuffed on numerous occasions. Similarly, the United States demands that the Colombian government extradite accused traffickers, even though the overwhelming majority of Colombians regard extradition as an affront to national sovereignty.

Washington is playing a dangerous game in attempting to conscript its hemispheric neighbors into waging the war on drugs. At the very least it will, as Lee

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suggests, "exacerbate tensions in U.S.-Latin American relations." Indeed, it may prove far more destructive. Colombia and Peru both harbor powerful left-wing insurgent movements that are adept at exploiting pervasive public opposition to drug eradication programs and portraying the incumbent governments as Yankee puppets.

That is not to say that there exists a nefarious "narco-communist" alliance, as some right-wing elements in the United States have argued. Indeed, one major achievement of *White Labyrinth* is that it effectively debunks such simplistic conspiracy theories. Lee marshals considerable evidence to show that the narcotics traffickers and leftist guerrilla groups have a wary and sometimes even adversarial relationship. Nevertheless, by insisting that Latin American governments wage an unpopular war against entrenched political and economic constituencies, the Bush administration may undermine fragile democratic systems

and inadvertently pave the way for the emergence of Leninist successor regimes.

*White Labyrinth* offers trenchant warnings for U.S. policymakers that the supply phase of the drug war is inherently unwinnable. Lee's exhaustive research and his familiarity with Latin American societies gives this account an especially high degree of credibility. The book is not without flaws. Lee sometimes exhibits an annoying tendency to draw back from the implications of his own analysis. Although he accurately summarizes the many arguments for the legalization of drugs, for example, he declines to endorse that strategy, opting instead for a vaguely defined "demand-reduction effort" that he concludes can achieve "much the same benefits as legalization."

Lee's refusal to embrace legalization, while dubious from the standpoint of logic and his own evidence, should actually cause U.S. officials to take his warnings about the perils of Washington's Latin American drug war more seriously. They cannot accuse him of harboring the hidden agenda of drug legalization. He reaches his conclusions about the failure of U.S. policy with considerable reluctance, but the evidence to support his pessimistic assessment is overwhelming. Washington is damaging its relations with its hemispheric neighbors and undermining fragile democratic governments to wage a crusade that cannot possibly be won.

*Ted Galen Carpenter is the director of foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute.*

**Pricing the Priceless, by William D. Grampp, New York: Basic Books, 288 pages, \$19.95.** William D. Grampp's book on art, artists, and economics will probably offend virtually everyone. Artists, museum curators, and collectors will find his analysis disrespectful and obnoxious. He treats the art market like the markets for autos, perfume, and dishwasher soap. Economists, while more sympathetic, will be troubled by the occasional lapses in economic theory, which may simply be due to careless writing.

Critics of the attempt to clamp down

## is Alive and Well!

on the National Endowment for the Arts' funding of controversial exhibits should read this book. Grampp convincingly demolishes the main arguments for subsidizing the arts. But he does not address the reasons why artists themselves should oppose government involvement. Whatever the merits of a given project, political considerations inevitably play a role in funding decisions involving public money. So long as the government has to allocate funds among competing projects, there will be complaints that such decisions endanger artistic freedom.

Grampp argues that art is subsidized because artists, museum officials, executives of performing arts institutions, and government officials concerned with the arts lobby successfully for taxpayer support. Polls indicate that taxpayers do not favor subsidizing the arts, but they remain blissfully unaware of how politicians are spending their money. Subsidies for painters are identical in this respect to subsidies for tobacco farmers.

As Grampp reveals, patrons of the arts and especially of museums are mainly prosperous and highly educated, often with professional interests in painting. Teachers are over-represented. The concentration of theater in New York is at least partly explained by the concentration of the advertising and broadcast industries in that city. In other words, subsidies for painters, performers, and producers support the pleasures and professions of the upper middle classes.

Subsidies are often justified by arguments that the arts produce better citizens, create a more congenial environment, and provide benefits that extend beyond those who experience art directly. Grampp notes that there is no evidence, or any logical reason to believe, that visiting a gallery will make an individual a better citizen, provide benefits to those who do not frequent museums, or improve the social environment.

Subsidies do permit museums to be major buyers of art, which helps artists both directly and indirectly. (Having works exhibited in a prestigious gallery or bought by an influential collector enhances the value of an artist's other pieces.) Despite a strong role in the art

market, museums, as nonprofit institutions, often fail to take good care of their collections (their capital) and typically warehouse more of their art than they exhibit.

On the basis of what museum officials say and do, Grampp deduces that they are indifferent to increasing attendance, improving revenue from admissions, or minimizing costs. They are usually motivated to please their peers in the museum world; to increase their unrestricted funds from gifts, donations, and subsidies; and to acquire more oils, lithographs, and watercolors, even though they cannot display all they possess. Although many museums never exhibit much of the work they own, they still oppose selling any of it.

Information about products, services, and conditions is valuable in any market, including the art trade. Intelligence about the painter, changes in the work, restoration, and previous owners is precious. With a few lively illustrations, Grampp shows that the value of a work depends crucially on its attribution. If pictures were valued simply by what is on the canvas, an excellent reproduction would be as valuable as the original.

It may come as a surprise to some, but artists are dedicated to enlarging their earnings, as this book demonstrates with a number of well-chosen examples. Painters depict those subjects which will sell best. Moreover, artists are not above attempting to monopolize the market. Guilds have often sought to restrict entry in order to preserve or enhance the prices of established artists' oils. The best-known example was the French Academy's refusal to show the work of the Impressionists. Like most cartels, this attempt to exclude newcomers failed.

This book is often fascinating. Unfortunately, it is occasionally marred by infelicitous writing, careless economics, and references that will be obscure to noneconomists. While the book is replete with relevant anecdotes, hard empirical data are largely drawn from other studies. Nevertheless, one hopes that *Pricing the Priceless* will prove so irritating that it will be widely read.

—Thomas Gale Moore

Every age has its political absurdities, and every age has its classic satire to expose and refute them, from *Gulliver's Travels* and *Candide* in the 18th century to *Animal Farm* in the 1940s. Now, at last, the welfare state gets its comeuppance in *Princess Navina Visits Malvolia*.

Like Gulliver and Candide, Princess Navina is a traveller. In Malvolia (mal = evil, volio = wish) she encounters a government that would horrify the heirs of John Stuart Mill. The magog of Malvolia proudly rules to bring about "the greatest misery for the greatest number." Starting from this premise, he has devised programs which... look *strangely familiar!*

Illustrations show the delightfully vexing Malvolian conveniences: beds, doors, wagons, and, of course, the dugeball. This tale is simple, yet spotting all the hidden meanings will keep the astute reader tantalized for years.



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# RACISM, PRO AND CON

THOMAS W. HAZLETT

In Miami, an African-American commissioner named Miller Dawkins has shelved the nomination of a Harvard-educated lawyer, Mario Williams (nominated for a post on the Bayfront Park Management Trust). Why? "He's a Hispanic, he's not black," thunders Dawkins. (You figure it out.)

In Harlem, an 85-year-old black social worker has won widespread praise for her hard-hitting inner-city school programs by telling black students: "We didn't come here because we wanted to be here. We were happy in Africa. Get it straight. They do everything in the world to us to make it harder for black people. They're mean." The *New York Times*, noting that Mother Hale has been "honored by Presidents and Governors and Mayors," summarizes her self-help approach thus: "Beware of what crack and white people can do to you." (Good advice in any neighborhood.)

In California, the Rev. Jackson looks out on his audience of minority state legislators and speaks against a reapportionment-reform initiative directing retired judges to draw district boundaries, on the grounds that "there are no persons sitting here whose grandfathers are retired judges." How does he know?

Hey, call me naïve, call me irresponsible. But characterization of an entire race of folks on the basis of their pigmentation is...*progressive*? Where the hell did this double standard come from? Where it will lead, the esteemed Rep. Gus Savage already seems to know.

The Chicago Democrat gained fame last year as the author of one of the great lines in all of Gropedom, when he gravely notified a black Peace Corps-ette that, in deflecting his unwanted advances, she was in danger of becoming "a traitor to her race." That she pried herself free (enough to file criminal assault charges) in the face of such incredible wit and charm is no reflection in the slightest on the vast resourcefulness of this stud muf-

fin from the second district of Illinois.

But at least the antics of the aptly labeled Mr. Savage manage to cross our social tripwires; both the law and Conventional Wisdom have been hostile to the congressman. Similarly for Louie Farrakhan's vicious Jew baiting. Yet this is a very high threshold, underneath which much racial loutishness traverses freely. And the double standard defines the terms. Whereas Campanis, Watt, and The Greek all ended up with quick trips to Bigots' Hell, and famous Harvard historians are sentenced to "sensitivity" reeducation camps for letting slip references to "American Indians" ("Native Americans," puh-leez), far bolder ethnic generalizers indulge their foibles freely.

Take Jesse Jackson, a man who is not afraid to define people by the richness of their tan. (This Jackson is amaaazing. He can tell your ancestors' job status just by the color of your skin.) Jesse's color-delineated (Rainbow Coalition) politics, his Hymietown slurs, his differential expectations for a black journalist vs. his white counterparts (revealed in his outrage that a black *Washington Post* reporter would dare breathe a word of the Hymietown rap to his readers), bring him no shame. Why? You see, Jesse's an angry black man, and while he may be a bit prejudicial, that's OK. He may be *technically* racist, but he's got one helluvan excuse (legacy of slavery, and all). So *super* technically he's entitled to a wider margin for error here than, say, Andy Rooney.

Now, that's racism squared.

The greatest single fuel rod propelling the civil rights movement, as Shelby Steele recently observed, was the powerful human impulse of fair dealing: Who could look at the cruelty of the crackers in Little Rock or Jackson or Selma and not be revolted by the ferocious unfairness of epidermal indictments? The sym-

pathy so many white Americans felt in their gut was utterly nonracial; it was an instinctive brotherhood with an underdog getting the shaft. By locking onto the specifics of the black-white struggle—the *colors*—today's rhetoric often lets loose of the general *principle*: equality before the law. But that guiding vision, so marvelously embedded in our Constitution, and so nobly unearthed by the efforts of an American King, was the motive force both defining and driving civil rights.

Depreciating the full market value of the deeply compelling argument of simple human fairness—a bond across color lines—took much effort and many convolutions. It has not been easy to squander the moral advantage that the civil rights movement was handed by the likes of Lester Maddox, Bull Connor, and Gov. Faubus. But the socially accepted ideas that blacks—as a group—have views, that color determines politics, that "reverse discrimination" isn't as bad as other discrimination, that racism isn't racism if it's the right color of racism... That poisons a once-vast reservoir of good will with the toxic wastes of hypocrisy.

To say that our standards for public behavior cannot be colorblind due to past injustices is to give bitter legacies an eerie sort of life after death. More important, the underlying assumption of racial inequality (which oozes from the double standard) unilaterally disarms the fight for civil rights. Because there is an incapable symmetry in justice. In fact, that's just what Lady Justice tries to show with those unbiased scales. Blindfolded, oblivious to all but the merits of the *individual* case, she makes law. But not even with her blinders on, Gus—don't even think about it.

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