

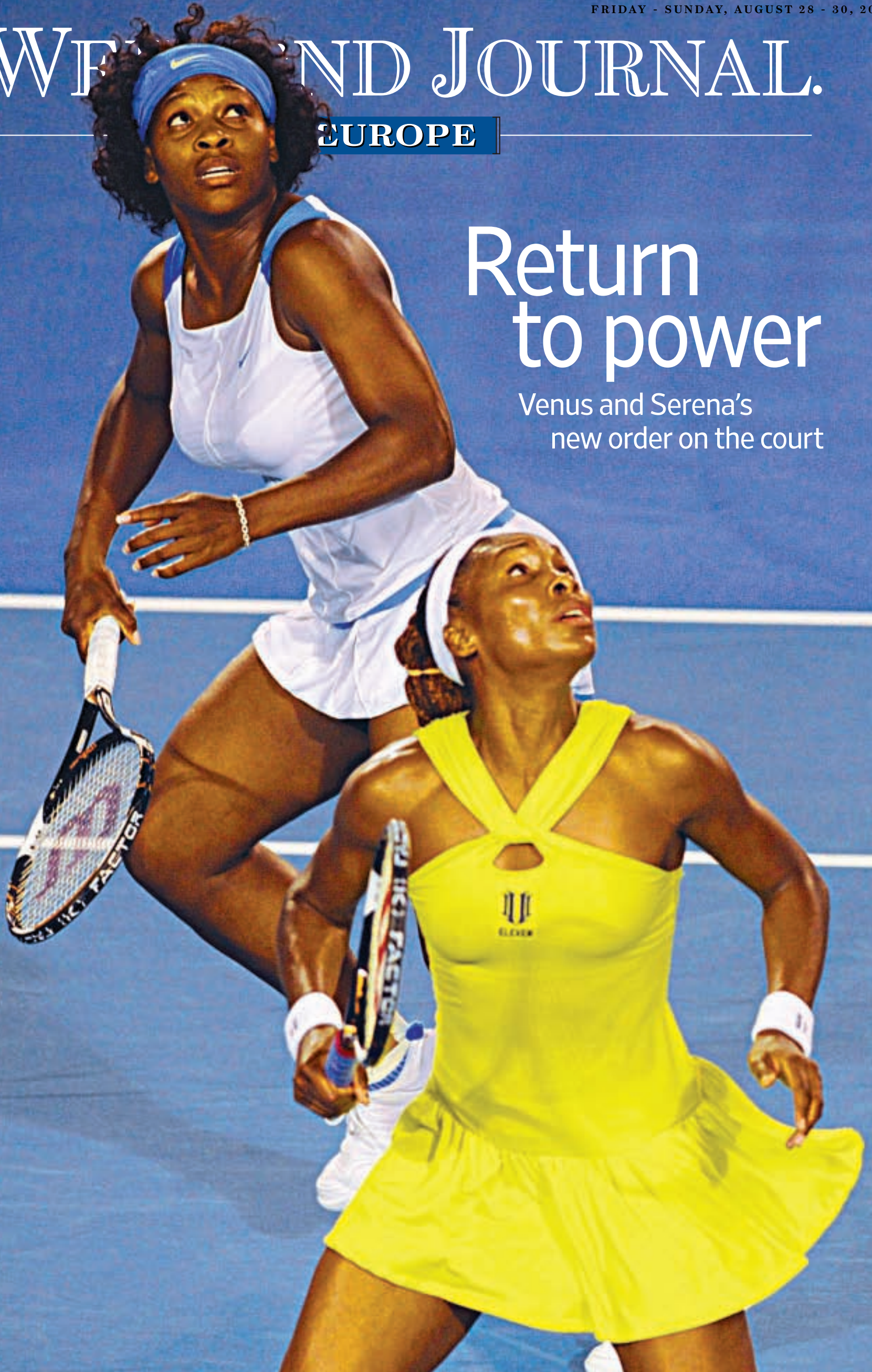
FRIDAY - SUNDAY, AUGUST 28 - 30, 2009

WEEKEND JOURNAL.

EUROPE

Return to power

Venus and Serena's
new order on the court



Fashion's eco-friendly frontier | A sneak preview of 'Avatar'

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Return to power

Venus and Serena restore order on the court



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EUROPE

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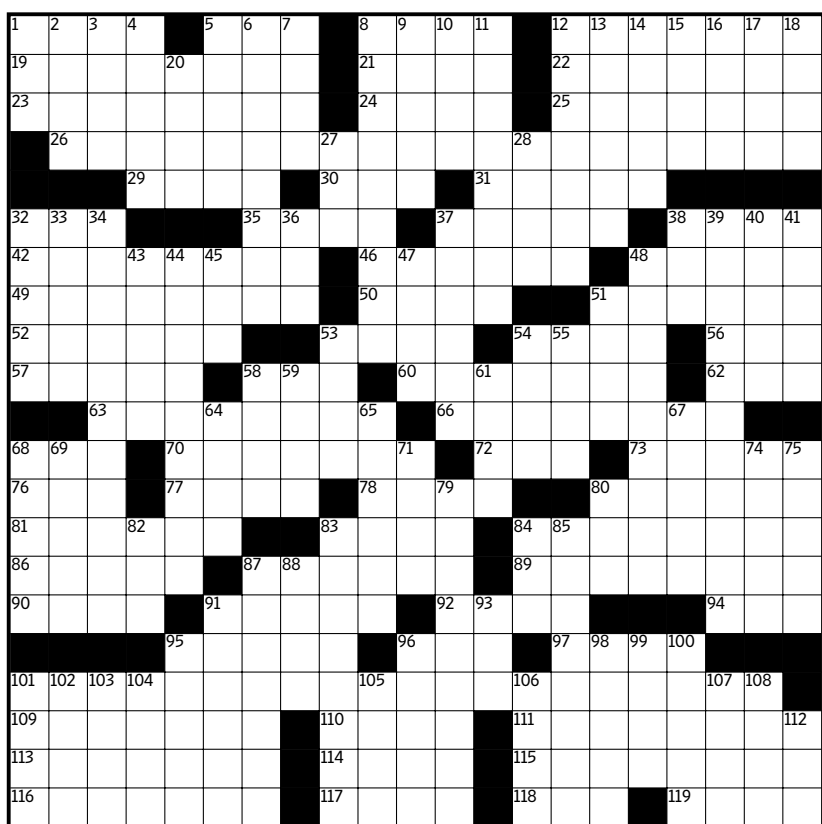
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Down

- Fleece
- NFL coach Jim

❖ Fashion

Is this style's sustainable frontier?

On design's cutting edge, Scandinavian designers aim for eco-friendliness and fair trade

BY VALERIA CRISCIONE

SOME NORWEGIAN designers will go to great lengths to grab the attention of the socially conscious—even if it means making a dress entirely out of milk.

Per Aage Sivertsen, winner of this spring's Oslo Fashion Week designer award (Naløyet) in February and creative mind behind the Norwegian "eco-lux" brand FIN, plans to make part of next year's spring/summer collection from a gauze-like fabric based 100% on milk proteins. Making fabric from milk frees up land that would otherwise have been used to grow cotton, a crop vilified for its intense water consumption and high pesticide use.

Mr. Sivertsen is one of many Norwegian designers now incorporating an ethical and social aspect into their fashion philosophy, one that goes beyond eco-labels. Three other nominees for Oslo Fashion Week's Naløyet award this year—Leila Hafzi, Elton & Jacobsen and iiS—have also prioritized issues such as workers' rights, fair trade and environmental impact in their collections.

Together, they are part of a growing social movement in the Nordic countries being led by NICE, the Nordic Initiative Clean & Ethical, created last November to promote the five countries as home to a sustainable and ethical fashion industry. It is the only one of its kind on a regional level and was a natural direction for an area known for its social responsibility.

"What we have in common as Nordic countries is the basic principle of behaving nice," says Eva Kruse, chief executive of the Danish Fashion Institute, one of the five Nordic partners in NICE. "It is in the core of our culture. So it's not that far-fetched to take the lead in this."

Nic Herlofson, one of FIN's founders, says the brand has always incorporated fabrics that have an environmental, social or ethical benefit, without compromising fashion. The company chooses textiles that are extremely soft and lend themselves to FIN's draped look, inspired by French sculptor Louise Bourgeois. Mr. Herlofson says Keira Knightley is a fan of FIN's organic cotton trench coats.

The company uses a wild nonviolent silk that spares the life of the silk worm. It takes organic yarn from Peruvian baby alpaca because the animal's small padded toes erode pastures less. It makes



Above, FIN's Olivia Dress, made of milk voile, priced at €569; at right, FIN's Slouchy Dress, made of organic cotton poplin, priced at €249.

days to a small mountain village near Tibet where they collect the nettles, cook it in ash, sun dry it on roofs and hand-spin it.

Elton & Jacobsen, another Naløyet nominee, says it does not use organic material in its collection, partly because it is hard to control if the materials are genuinely organic. Instead, its main concerns are workers' rights and shorter

transport routes to limit environmental impact. The company buys raw materials in Italy, produces in Bucharest, and ships its trendy ready-to-wear line to stores in Europe, such as Topshop in London.

"Being a small design company, it's hard to control what's happening in India, China or Bangladesh," says Aashild Elton Jacobsen, one of the two sisters behind the brand. "When we started the company, it was always part of our business plan to focus on sustainability, but not a way to market the company. It's just a way of doing business."

Norway has been at the forefront of the new initiative NICE. It was originally envisaged two years ago by Pål Vasbotten, leader of Oslo Fashion Week, and Tone Tobiasson as the Norwegian Initiative Clean and Ethical.

The transnational collaboration was actually the more happenstance result of a lunch in March 2008 between the Danish Fashion Institute and Oslo Fashion Week to discuss the Nordic Look event at Riga Fashion Week. The Danes immediately took to the idea of expanding NICE to include the other Nordic countries because of the coming United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, which will be held in December. The two Nordic fashion weeks, together with the Swedish Fashion Council, Helsinki Design Week and Icelandic Fashion Council, swiftly formed a Nordic Fashion Association and the "n" in NICE was swapped from Norwegian to Nordic.

The Nordic Fashion Association will hold a workshop on Sept. 1 in Copenhagen to kick-start the design competition that will take place during Fashion Summit 2009 on Dec. 9, timed to coincide with the U.N. climate change conference.

Afterward, the Nordic Fashion Association will travel in the autumn to each of the Nordic countries, along with the European director for Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), seeking feedback on a 10-year plan for the industry and Code of Conduct that will be signed at the Fashion Summit in December.

The question remains whether people are willing to spend more to wear less. It is cost intensive to develop new sustainable fabrics like milk gauze. Ensuring workers' rights usually means higher wages. NICE is hoping that costs will come down over time through collaboration, but it is not willing to wait until the market is there.

Nic Herlofson at FIN says he expects revenues will triple to \$1.5 million next year, but the company doesn't expect to have a net profit before 2012. "I do believe that in good time the cost of being sustainable will be marginal compared to the benefits," says Mr. Herlofson, adding that the brand is working on being as cost efficient as possible.

"One of the first things I learned [in my doctoral project on corporate social responsibility and fashion] was that people don't always do what they say," says Stine Hedegaard, Danish Fashion Institute development coordinator. "It's not going to come from the consumers. It's got to come from the designers themselves."

—Valeria Criscione is a writer based in Oslo



dresses out of bamboo, one of the quickest growing plants on the planet. And it buys carbon credits in projects that comply with the Clean Development Mechanism.

"It's not just an environmental thing, it's a social thing," says Mr. Herlofson. "It's the right thing to do."

Ms. Hafzi, an early Norwegian pioneer in ethical and sustainable fashion, started in the late '90s producing clothes in Nepal from wild nettles and recycled Saris. Now, her glamorous nettle gowns have been seen on red carpet awards ceremonies in Los Angeles on actresses like Katie Cassidy.

Ms. Hafzi's time in Nepal overseeing the workers inspired her collection, Equilibrium, featured at this past spring's Oslo Fashion Fair. The drapes on her evening gowns emulate Buddhist monks' robes. She has used a wild serpent and phoenix motif hand-painted on black silk dresses to represent the Ying and Yang, or equilibrium in nature, and an exotic palette of colors: delicate shades of purple and plum, fiery raspberry and deep, calm green.

She chose to work with nettle because it is one of the most sustainable raw materials and entails more handwork, and hence jobs, for women. The villagers walk seven



Above, several handpainters in Nepal work on Leila Hafzi's Peacock dress, made of 25 meters of silk and painted with Azo-free color pigments; at right, the final product, which takes six days to produce, priced at £2,400.



In Egypt's desert, an oasis blooms anew

BY CATHRYN DRAKE

LONG ISOLATED from everything but Bedouin caravans and the occasional conqueror, the Siwa oasis has all the hallmarks of a great escape: adventure, exoticism, history, relaxation—even great food.

This idyllic island of green is located in Egypt's vast Western Desert, where the powdery dunes of the Great Sand Sea begin. The desert contains some of the most arid land on earth, but this lush spot is home to about 300,000 date palms, 80,000 olive trees and four sapphire salt lakes.

Still known for its prized dates (a specialty often stuffed with almonds), Siwa seems to have changed little in the past 2,000 years, with torrid winds blowing up from the Saharan dunes to carve their story in its golden hills. But the oasis, visited by travelers as varied as backpackers and European royalty, is now being touted as a destination for ecotourism.

Mounir Neamatalla, a U.S.-educated Cairo native, hopes to make Siwa a model of sustainable development with private incentives and microfinance programs through his organization, EQI.

Captivated on his first visit in 1996, Mr. Neamatalla opened the Adrère Amellal ecolodge four years later. Built from the local material kersheef, a mixture of mud and salt, the compound blends into the landscape and requires no electricity. At night, the lodge is illuminated completely by candlelit lanterns. Organic gourmet meals, served under the shade of date palms near the swimming pool, are cooked using propane tanks with ingredients grown mostly on the premises.

A spring delivers water to the pool, garden and 40 rooms: Water flows from the pool to irrigate the garden and plantations, and from the showers to the wetlands, where the runoff is purified through a system of absorbent papyrus and three layers of rock salt, finally streaming into Birket Siwa, a large salt lake.

Near Egypt's border with Libya, Siwa is an eight-hour drive from Cairo unless you have a private jet and permission to land at the military airport 40 kilometers away. An asphalt road linking Siwa to Marsa Matruh, on the Mediterranean coast, was built in 1981, ending the oasis's centuries of isolation.

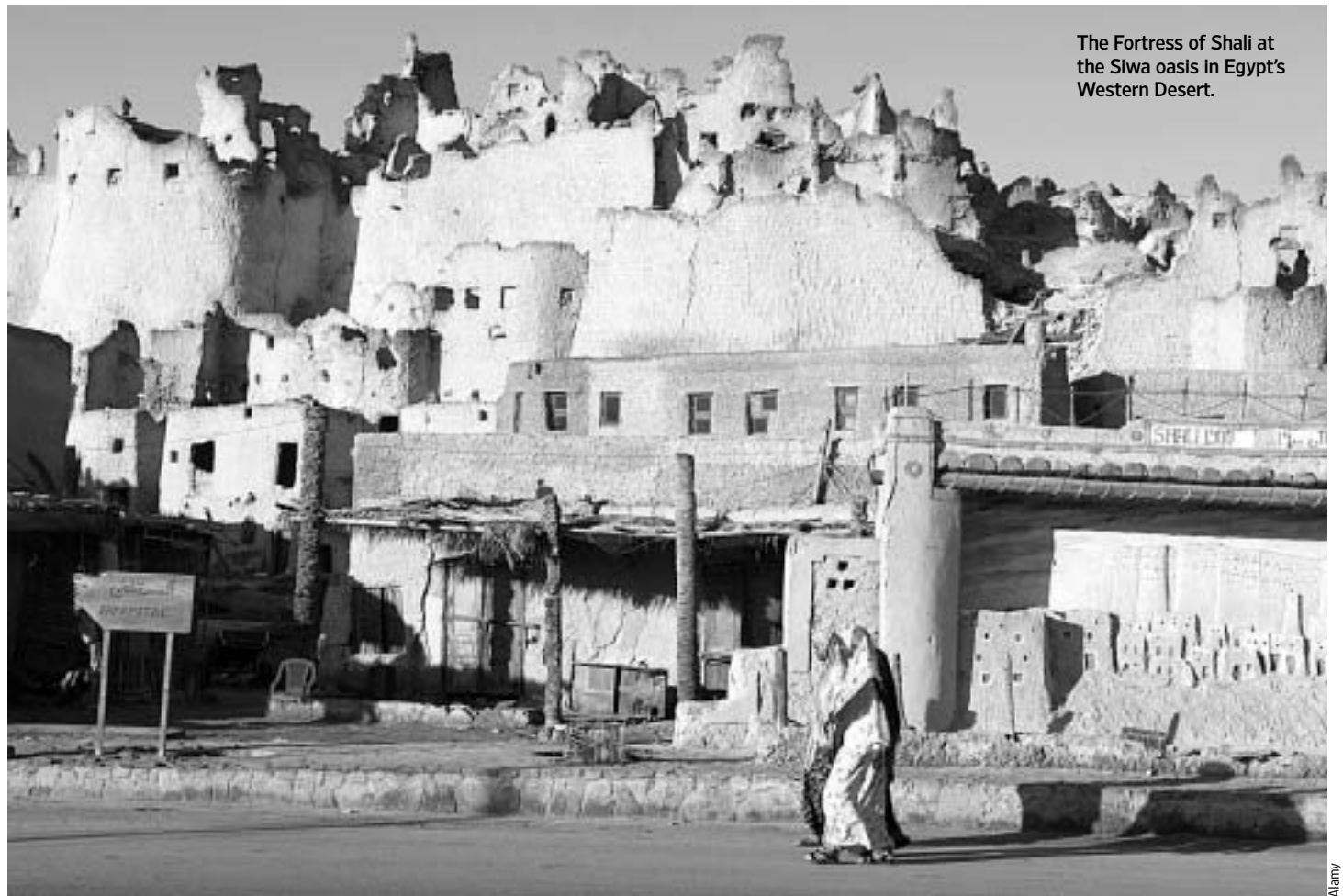
By the time I first visited Siwa in 1999, too many wells had already been dug, resulting in frequent flooding and the prospect of water supplies running dry. Rumors of a commercial airport were also on the horizon. But the memory from Siwa that remained etched in my mind was that of a courtyard piled with green and black olives, with a youth in a loose white tunic straining at an olive press in time-honored tradition.

Ever since, I had longed to return to see whether Siwa's timeless charm would be just a memory impoverished by the invasion of modernity and tourism, like so many former earthly paradises.

A flier from the Siwa Tourist Office dubs the oasis "the world's first and oldest tourist destination." The most remote oasis in Egypt, Siwa has also been inhabited the longest. Its Berber natives, who have retained their unique language and customs, are more akin to their tribal relatives in the Maghreb than to fellow Egyptians. Home to the Oracle of Amun, whose ancient temple is still partly standing, Siwa was first settled about 10,000 years ago and sought out for its valuable salt supply.

Over the centuries the remote palmed enclave has enticed many to brave the route through the scorching desert. In 524 B.C., an army of 50,000 Persian soldiers reportedly perished in a sandstorm on the way to sack Siwa. After establishing Alexandria nearly 200 years later, Alexander the Great headed south from the coast for an eight-day trek to get confirmation from the divine mouthpiece that he was a god, the son of Zeus.

Reaching Siwa is difficult enough that the arrival itself is part of the reward. As we turn south from the Mediterranean coast, the wind augurs the road by whipping up a minor sand-



The Fortress of Shali at the Siwa oasis in Egypt's Western Desert.

storm.

After about three hours of flat nothingness and an occasional military watchtower or oil-field track, we encounter giant flat-topped plateaus reflecting the geography of the former seabed (fossils of ancient mollusks can still be found among the wavy dunes). Soon, mud dwellings and palm trees spring up out of nowhere, culminating in the town center, announced by a few larger cement buildings and finally the medieval citadel and small market square.

Mr. Neamatalla recently opened two more modest hotels in downtown Siwa. The mud-brick Shali Lodge, a five-minute walk down a palm-lined road from the main square, is decked out in handicrafts and Bedouin carpets, with a large lounge area and lively terrace restaurant.

I stayed at Albabenshal, an 11-room bed and breakfast built into the ruins of Shali, the 13th-century citadel, which is being restored. Indiscernible from the ancient mud structure, which resembles a melting sandcastle, the hotel has a calming, spare aesthetic, adorned with carved palm-wood doors and shutters,



Clockwise from above left: entry of bed and breakfast Albabenshal at the ruins of Shali; resting at a desert spring; lunch at Adrère Amellal; the Adrère Amellal ecolodge.



cylindrical salt lanterns, and striped Bedouin carpets in earth tones.

The rooms are comfortably ventilated with a traditional cooling system: 50-centimeter-thick mud walls with three circular holes in a triangular arrangement near the ceiling. The highest one conducts heat out; the lower two, half the diameter, bring in fresh air.

About 12 kilometers southwest of Siwah is Bir Wahed, a hot sulfur spring discovered by oil prospectors, framed by palms and some tufts of grass, where one can take a dip and recline as the afternoon sun diminishes in intensity—followed by a refreshing swim in the cool spring nearby.

Closer to Siwa, it's easy to while away the day at the Adrère Amellal ecolodge, a short drive out of town and beyond the ancient necropolis Gabal al-Mawta, or Mountain of the Dead, a site with an impressive view and beautifully decorated tombs that locals believe to be haunted. Adrère Amellal is nestled between the tabletop White Mountain, for which it is named, and Birket Siwa.

At a small circular tower on the lakeshore we have green mud from Upper Egypt slath-

ered all over us. There is a small pool where you can rinse yourself after the mud dries. Our poolside lunch: pea risotto with stuffed beetroot leaves and iced hibiscus-mint tea, followed by crème caramel.

Mr. Neamatalla, whose hotels are managed by locals, has started a trend of historic restoration and is behind many of the microfinancing initiatives in the oasis, including organic agriculture, and training and employing local women to embroider clothes, part of a fashion business headed by his sister, Laila.

"There is no development without women's development," he says. Europeans are also buying and building houses around the oasis and stimulating employment.

British art dealer Michael Hue-Williams, who flies in with his private jet, has built a chic, airy residence in kersheef next to the resort. He facilitates major art projects for Siwa, such as Chinese artist Cai Guo-Qiang's 2003 collaboration with local schoolchildren to make and fly hundreds of kites in the desert, and a sailing ship constructed by Russian artists Ilya and Emilia Kabakov in 2005 with the help of local kids.

In her 1999 book "Pillar of Sand," fresh-water expert Sandra Postel observes, "It is impossible to talk about the history of human civilization without talking about water." In Siwa—a microcosm of our planet's environmental dilemma—one is constantly aware of both its presence and its dearth.

With the increasing population and influx of tourism requiring more wells, the issue of whether to open a commercial airport may be merely academic: It would likely only speed up the inevitable loss of the very character that draws visitors to the oasis.

I remember a romantic sunset at the thermal pool on Fatnis Island, in Birket Siwa, with a thatched café that the proprietor dubbed his "million-star hotel." But to avoid seeing anyone, go to the hot springs behind Gabal Dakrur, a sacred mountain, at midnight and soak under the cool light of the full moon, where you will feel utterly out of this world.

For now at least, although all that remains of the oracle of Amun is a ruined temple, Siwa is still one of the few magical places left on earth to relax and regenerate far from the globalizing crowds—and at least feel like a god.

—Cathryn Drake is a writer based in Rome.

The rise of antigolf populism

Is the game really to blame for the decline of Western civilization?

SINCE GOLF SEEMS to lack an antidefamation league, allow me to note the rise in 2009 of antigolf slurs and other inflammatory "incidents." In February, you may recall, the celebrity Web site TMZ provoked an outcry by revealing that banks that had received federal bailout funds were hosting clients at PGA Tour events. The resulting mini-movement, led by those most unlikely bedfellows, conservative Fox News pundit Bill O'Reilly and liberal Congressman Barney

Golf Journal

JOHN PAUL NEWPORT

Frank of Massachusetts, caused several corporate sponsors of subsequent events to take down the signs on their hospitality tents, even while the sinful hobnobbing continued inside.

In April, USA Today published an op-ed piece that pretty much blamed golf for getting us into the current economic pickle and for everything else "that's retrograde with American life." The author, sportswriter Robert Lipsyte, made hay of the fact that disgraced financier Bernard Madoff was a golfer and said that the world would be better off if vegetables instead of turf grass were grown on golf's "useless lawns." In July, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez joined the discussion by spending most of his regular Sunday television show denouncing golf as a bourgeois sport and ridiculing the use of motorized golf carts.

Then, two weeks ago, comedian Bill Maher on his HBO program lit into Barack Obama's affection for golf, in anticipation of the president playing several times this week (as has happened) while on vacation on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. "I feel betrayed. He campaigned as a basketball player," Mr. Maher said. The comedian followed with a few obligatory antigolf insults ("Golf says, 'I like Lipitor and white-collar crime'") before concluding with speculation that "Obama doesn't really wanna be golfing, he's just doing it because he thinks it will relax the white people. 'How could I be a socialist, I'm putting!'"

High-profile abuse like this is nothing but a positive for golf. It's a sure sign that the game is in good health, and a good, spewing antigolf rant enriches everyone. Robin Williams's profane riff about the stupidity of golf (check it out on YouTube) is a classic, as is "Caddyshack." That movie was a wicked, all-out send-up of golf at its most boobish, yet 29 years later it remains every golfer's favorite golf movie. For young assistant club pros, knowing the key "Caddyshack" passages by heart is practically a job requirement. So golf's got that going for it, which is nice.

As a longtime connoisseur, I've identified three dominant strains of antigolf rhetoric: the athletic, the political and the environmental. The last of these is the least fun because, though often exaggerated, environmental objections to golf have some actual basis in reality. (I intend to write more about this soon.) Cultural attacks, on the other hand, are almost always based on flagrantly unfounded stereotypes and

comic personal prejudice. One of my best friends from high school, for example, whose father played football with Davey O'Brien at Texas Christian University and whose grandfather was a mounted Texas Ranger, still cannot suppress a slight snigger at the corner of his mouth when the subject of my golf infatuation comes up. In his eyes, I might as well be skipping after butterflies with a net on the end of a dainty pole.

I regularly receive email from readers deriding the notion of golf as a legitimate athletic endeavor. A sport, they contend, properly involves leaping and running and the risk of physical harm, as well as mano a mano face-offs, in which one player or team reacts in real time to the actions of another. Golf, by comparison, is at best a game, like marbles or darts. That it should receive coverage in the sports pages alongside football and baseball, these readers say, is an outrage.

The clothes don't help. Few golf haters fail to mention golf's tradition of festive trousers, even though until recently such attire was in abeyance. All such sniping ignores the fact that baseball players historically wore little beanie caps, minus the propellers, and footballers wear stockings to this day. But no matter. The clothes shtick is not going away.

Neither, apparently, is the conviction among golf-haters that everyone who plays is a rich, fat, Republican male. The reality of that stereotype expired approximately in the 1920s, but it persists in part because in most cities the highest-profile private golf clubs do tend to attract a disproportionate share of rich Republicans, and partly because golf-haters need it to persist. Statistically, fewer than 10% of American golfers belong to private clubs, but that's an inconvenient fact if you're attempting to assert (to cite just one example from a quick wade into the antigolf literature posted online) that golf is an international conspiracy through which the rich seek to "utilize their strength in land and money to create a large footprint for themselves" and to financially enslave the world's caddies. The conspiracy also aims to promote obesity, for reasons that remain shrouded.



U.S. President Barack Obama's golf playing has provoked criticism.

It's probably safe to say that most virulent golf haters have never played the game, or at least not well. "There is no element of danger and adventure to make the sport character-building and provide participants with a sense of having overcome challenges and obstacle," one online antigolfer opines, eloquently capturing precisely the opposite of what golfers actually experience. When golf-haters drive past a course, shortly before yelling "Fore!" out the window, what they see are small knots of people pondering options with the grave demeanor of police squads defusing a bomb. If this looks absurd, that's because it is—as every golfer who takes the game seriously has long since accepted and moved beyond. In other words: We know, we know already! Golf is absurd, but what game isn't? It's the antigolfers, not the golfers, who could use some lightning up.

Email me at golfjournal@wsj.com.



Mitch O'Connell

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Return to *power*

Venus and Serena restore order on the court

By Matthew Futterman



Agence France Press



VENUS WILLIAMS sat across from her younger sister Serena in a hotel room in Bangalore, India, and told her enough was enough. Hours earlier, two little-known players from China had knocked the Williams sisters out of the doubles competition in the quarter finals of the 2008 Bangalore Open, a forgettable March stop on the Sony Ericsson WTA Tour. As the Chinese women celebrated, the Williams sisters stewed on the sidelines. "That was the beginning of the end of it," Serena Williams recalled during a recent interview in Washington D.C. "We didn't want to lose to people we shouldn't lose to anymore."

When you are a Williams sister, that means any player who isn't a member of your family.

The 2008 Bangalore Open was the turning point in careers marked by periods of brilliance but years of inconsistency, nagging injuries and even questions about whether the women were on the verge of quitting to pursue their various off-court interests. The Williams sisters are 29 and 27 years old (Serena turns 28 next month), late middle-age by women's tennis standards. Most of their former rivals and the players they came up with have retired. Yet Venus and Serena are now playing the best tennis of their careers, seemingly getting better at each major tournament—at least those not played on clay.

From 2004 to 2007, the Williams sisters won just four Grand Slam sin-

gles titles between them. Since the Bangalore Open in March, 2008, a Williams sister has won four out of six Grand Slams, and the sisters have met in the finals twice. Playing together, they have won three of six Grand Slam doubles titles, plus the Olympic gold medal in Beijing. They have faltered a few times at smaller tournaments this summer, such as in Cincinnati, where both lost in the round of 16. But as the year's final Grand Slam, the U.S. Open, begins Monday in New York, they are among the favorites to win in both singles and doubles, which would give the sisters 31 of the titles that matter most.

"We have our nice little tag team going," Venus Williams said in a phone interview earlier this month.

On paper, the Williams sisters aren't the strongest players. As of Aug. 24, they were at the top of only three of the 10 major statistical categories in the game. They don't crack the top 10 in winning points or games when their opponents are serving.

Lately, that hasn't stopped them from crushing the competition at Grand Slams. "There are certain athletes that are superior but then you also have to have the mind and the heart and the guts," said Billie Jean King, the former champion, who has been a mentor to the sisters since they were preteens. "Right now, these girls have all of that."

Serena Williams ended up winning the singles title in Bangalore in 2008, but she returned to the U.S. with her sister's words still fresh in her mind. At the recommendation of

her father and coach, Richard Williams, she traveled a week later to New Orleans for a consultation with a trainer named Mackie Shilstone. Mr. Shilstone had little experience with tennis—he is known mainly for his work with prizefighters—but his emphasis on discipline was something both Serena and her father knew she sorely needed.

Mr. Shilstone met Serena in her hotel room at the New Orleans Marriott and asked Serena for a tape of her playing at her best. She told him she didn't have one because she'd never played her best tennis. "She was dead serious," Mr. Shilstone recalled.

Serena says she has always been a terrible loser. As a child, whether it was a game of Uno or a tennis match, she would throw such terrible tantrums after she lost that finally her parents and her big sister started letting her win. "I always got my way because I was the baby," she says. "I don't think that helped me very much in the long run."

Another obstacle: Despite all her promise, Serena has never been a tennis junkie. She doesn't dislike playing, but she says she doesn't get out of bed reaching for her racket and yearning to get out on the court. Rather, what she loves is the spotlight the game shines on her.

"It's a stage," she said. "I'm a performer and I love to perform and being in front of the crowds and hearing them cheer for me." The problem is, there usually aren't any crowds at practices.

The Williams sisters have had the spotlight on them since they started coming up in the game as

teenagers, and by 1999 they had become two of the biggest attractions in a game where non-white champions are so rare. In September of that year, Serena grabbed the first of the family's Grand Slam singles titles, knocking off Martina Hingis to win the U.S. Open. The following July, Venus won the first of her five Wimbledon singles titles.

Serena won five out of six Grand Slams in 2002 and 2003—including four in a row—but the losses started piling up in 2004 as she struggled through a knee injury. Her focus drifted to acting and other pursuits in the years following the 2003 mur-

der of her older sister, Yetunde Price, gunned down in the crossfire of alleged gang violence in Compton, Calif.

Meanwhile, Venus was struggling with her own knee injuries and exploring her own outside interests. She pursued both a college degree and a career as a designer, launching her own company, Florida-based V-Starr Interiors.

Serena's ranking dropped into the hundreds in 2006. After an up-and-down year in 2007 that included a surprise win at the Australian Open, she was back among the top 20. But she also knew with her





Clockwise from far left: Serena (left) and Venus Williams in the Wimbledon doubles final last month; Serena returns a shot from Venus in a semifinal match in Florida last April; the sisters celebrate their Wimbledon doubles victory; Venus stretches for a backhand at the French Open in May; Serena and Venus at the Australian Open.



Icon Sports/Cal Sport Media



Getty Images (3)

30th birthday around the corner, if she didn't work harder her final years on the tour would be a missed opportunity.

Working with Mr. Shilstone, she developed a portable conditioning regimen using a system of tension cords that attach to a fence behind the baseline and provide resistance as she moves around the court and mimics her ground strokes. After years of struggling with her weight, she and Mr. Shilstone developed nutritional menus to help her avoid putting on pounds on the road.

Now, about a month before each Grand Slam event, Mr. Shilstone meets up with Serena for intense daily conditioning sessions after her two-hour on-court practices.

They include quick sprint drills designed to re-create the back-and-forth movement required during the long rallies with the machine-like Eastern European players.

After the sprints, he takes Serena through a series of strength exercises, many done with an oversized gymnastics ball to stabilize her core but maintain her flexibility. The Serena Williams that walks onto a tennis court today is a much different figure than the one from two years ago. Her lower-body is as toned as an NFL running back's and her arms are like thick pipes. Her torso rises in a wide V-shape from her waist to her shoulders.

Since that loss last year in Bangalore, Venus has also amped up her

conditioning, working with a series of trainers near her home in Florida. At 1.83 meters, she has struggled with knee problems since her childhood growth spurts, and from 2004 to 2007, she was sidelined often by a series of injuries that could be chalked up, in part, to poor conditioning. Now she begins her day with two hours on the court with practice partners or her father, and works on coming to the net, where her wingspan makes her nearly impossible to pass. "I'm good up there," she says with a laugh. Net play also gives her the chance to end points quickly, preserve energy and avoid the pounding of long rallies on the baseline. When she leaves the practice court, she heads to the gym

for two hours of strength training, then finishes her workout with 20 minutes of sprints.

Their mother and part-time coach, Oracene Price, said her daughters are now committed to getting everything they can from their gifts. "They'll keep this up now until their bodies say no more," Ms. Price said.

The Williams sisters decided to rededicate themselves to the game just as women's tennis itself was undergoing a transition. Larry Scott, who recently stepped down as chief executive of the WTA, led the WTA to tighten the hodge-podge schedule of international events played out over 11 months. In its place came a tighter roster of major championships, creating the kind of schedule the Williams sisters had been playing all their lives.

The competitive landscape was shifting as well. In May 2008, Belgian Justine Henin, the top player in the world, suddenly retired at 25. A year earlier, Kim Clijsters, another Belgian former number one, had retired at 23, though Ms. Clijsters recently started playing again. The 22-year-old Maria Sharapova, a 1.85-meter Russian who held the top ranking in early 2008, was beginning to suffer from shoulder trouble, an injury she continues to struggle with.

Now, in addition to a resurgent Ms. Clijsters, the Williams sisters' staunchest challenges come from the Eastern Europeans. At 27 years old, Elena Dementieva is a steady, powerful threat who knocked off Serena in the semifinals of the Rogers Cup in Canada last week. With a healthy shoulder, Ms. Sharapova will once again become a force. She reached the final of the Rogers Cup in Canada Sunday, her first final since her comeback began. Russian Dinara Safina currently holds the world's top ranking, but like former world number one Jelena Jankovic of Serbia, she has yet to win a Grand Slam.

Though the Williams sisters are among the favorites to win at the Open, victory is anything but guaranteed. Nick Bollettieri, the long-time coach who is close with the Williams family, said both Venus and Serena played passively in the matches they lost this summer, playing from behind the baseline where they tend to make errors instead of charging the ball and controlling the point. He was quick to add, though, that the sisters tend to perform at a completely different level at major events. "Something happens to these girls when they get in the Grand Slams," he said.

When asked about being knocked out of some of this summer's small competitions, the Williams sisters offered non-committal responses. "You can't be perfect every day," Serena Williams said. Whether these losses were the result of small-tournament apathy or were more serious signs of weakness in their games, they're not telling.

Venus Williams doesn't seem worried. Ask her if she has ever walked onto the court thinking her opponent may simply be too much to handle, and she laughs off the question.

"Do you think I ever come onto the court feeling that way?" she says.

An early peek at 'Avatar'

BY LAUREN A.E. SCHUKER

DIRECTOR JAMES Cameron wants to give movie marketing a Titanic-sized makeover.

Last Friday, Twentieth Century Fox screened—free of charge—excerpts from Mr. Cameron's coming sci-fi thriller "Avatar" four months ahead of the movie's release. More than 120 IMAX screens world-wide showed 16 minutes of footage from the 3-D film—an unprecedented event in Hollywood, where the studios rarely do early screenings of films for a mass audience.

The first feature film that Mr. Cameron has directed since "Titanic" and 14 years in the making, "Avatar" is saddled with high expectations from the studio, the filmmaker and the public. The story of a paraplegic soldier who travels to a distant planet called Pandora, the film is widely expected by Hollywood studio executives and others to do big business at the box office, push 3-D technology forward, and raise the bar for special effects.

But it's not just Hollywood that has a lot riding on the movie's shoulders: Fox has invested in excess of \$200 million just in the film's production cost. (Twentieth Century Fox is owned by News Corp., which also owns Dow Jones, publisher of The Wall Street Journal.)

Eclipsing all those challenges is the difficulty of launching an original film property at a time when Hollywood has become increasingly dependent on franchises based on pre-existing properties, such as "Harry Potter," "Twilight" and "Batman." "Avatar" creates an entirely alien world with a complicated history that hasn't been chronicled in books or comics (though Mr. Cameron is currently at work on a novel about Pandora).

The special screening was Mr. Cameron's idea; he says he wanted a way for his film to stand out among all the preformed fran-



20th Century Fox (2)

chises. "We just needed to plant it in the public consciousness," says Mr. Cameron.

Fox is hoping that what it has dubbed as "Avatar Day" will draw in the wider audience that the film needs to attract to become a hit. The studio also released the first theatrical trailer for the movie on the same day, and Ubisoft, a videogame developer, showed the first trailer for the "Avatar" videogame.

Jim Gianopulos, chairman of Fox Filmed Entertainment, says that the clips that Mr. Cameron selected for the screenings "were designed to make clear that this is a general-audience film."

When the tickets for the promotional screening became available via the film's Web site two weeks ago, Fox's servers crashed within minutes, owing to the hordes of fans who signed up online to retrieve their free passes to the sci-fi adventure. After the first 90 seconds, 17,000 out of the 68,000 available

tickets were gone—and then the site crashed. Fans grabbed most of the remaining tickets within hours after Fox rebooted the site, with five requests coming in every second.

Mr. Cameron says he realized that the unique visual and narrative aspects of "Avatar" were the movie's biggest strengths—and he couldn't showcase all of them with a regular theatrical trailer that didn't include the 3-D imagery or the special effects that make up the world of Pandora. By playing longer clips of the film on IMAX screens in 3-D, he can present the film in its most flattering format. "Trailers have great reach but shallow depth," he says. "People know that you can have a good trailer with a bad film, but by showing 16 minutes—you really allow audiences to fondle the fabric of a film." Some of the screenings are on regular-size screens, but all are in 3-D.

Mr. Cameron began writing the "Avatar" script about 14 years ago.

At the time, he already had images of 3-D animation in his head, and wrote the project specifically to push that technology. He spent the next 10 years refining and building on the technique of "motion-capture," which allows filmmakers to represent an actor's performance in animated form. In the film, motion-capture is used to transform actors such as Sam Worthington and Sigourney Weaver into animated alien hybrids and to place them in computer-generated settings.

Fox believes "Avatar" and Mr. Cameron's blockbuster "Titanic" are similar in terms of their narrative and box-office potential. "They both feature love stories and heroic journeys," says Mr. Gianopulos.

A sweeping epic that cost more than \$200 million when it came out in 1997, "Titanic" went on to win the Academy Award for Best Picture and gross more than \$1.8 billion world-wide. It will be tough for "Avatar" to rival that figure, especially in



Left, actor Sam Worthington stars in 'Avatar'; above, director James Cameron on the set.

an era when epics often don't attract audiences as much as franchise films. "Australia," for example, an epic love story that Fox released last winter, failed to compete with other holiday films.

The story of "Avatar" focuses on Pandora's indigenous population, called the Na'vi, and a war that erupts when humans invade their planet. Jake Sully (Mr. Worthington), a paralyzed marine, finds himself in the center of that battle after he volunteers to become an "avatar," a hybrid of Na'vi and human forms.

The seven scenes that Mr. Cameron chose to show in IMAX theaters as part of the free screening focus on that narrative, showing how Mr. Sully links with his avatar body and how he begins to explore Pandora.

Mr. Cameron says that it's the ambitious story of "Avatar" that will draw audiences, not just the motion-capture technique and special effects he used. "It's as if we got onto a starship, went to Pandora, and photographed all this stuff," says Mr. Cameron. "That's how it feels to us, and that's how we want people to see it."

Vintage posters recall the glamour of travel

AUCTIONS OF VINTAGE travel posters are happy events: plenty of color, striking images, glamorous people, sleek cars and memories of sunny holidays.

Christie's poster specialist Nicolette Tomkinson says travel posters are popular because they connect people to places, whether it's where they went on their honey-

Collecting

MARGARET STUDER

moon or where they went to university: "There are so many reasons to collect this or that destination."

On Sept. 9, Christie's in London will auction around 250 posters, mostly from the travel genre, which range in date from the turn of the 20th century to the 1950s. The posters were designed by great masters of graphic art, many of whom promoted tourist destinations for railways, airlines and shipping companies.

A highlight will be a group of works by France's Roger Broders,



'Calvi Beach, Corsica' (1928), by Roger Broders; estimate: £5,000-£7,000.

who worked for the Paris Lyon Méditerranée railway. His "Calvi Beach, Corsica" (1928) is a perfect pitch for the seaside resort. A bright orange towel envelops a

slim woman in black bathers, against the backdrop of a romantic town and its citadel. The requisite deep blue water and long, sand beach are in the distance (£5,000-£7,000).

"Southern California via United Air Lines" (circa 1955) by American illustrator Stan Galli is a striking, yellow poster featuring a tanned beauty with gleaming white teeth, swinging blond hair and large sunglasses. She stands tall against a background of beachgoers (estimate: £1,200-£1,800).

For elegance, it would be hard to beat "Festival International du Film, Cannes" (1939) by France's Jean-Gabriel Domergue. The centerpiece of the pink poster is a slender lady in a floating evening dress, whose hair, brushed high, frames the enjoyment on her face (estimate: £4,000-£6,000).

French artist and designer Jean Dupas's posters promoted the London Underground in the 1930s. Two rare posters from this period will be on offer. The first depicts a secluded garden peopled by lovely damsels. The second, which bears

the slogan "Thence to Hyde Park, Where Much Good Company, And Many Fine Ladies," is an advertising message telling proper boys where to meet proper girls. Each poster carries an estimate of £7,000-£9,000.

In "Grosser Preis der Schweiz" (1934), Ernst Graf captures the era's newfound fascination with speed in his image of two futuristic racing cars competing in Switzerland's first Grand Prix (estimate: £6,000-£8,000). In Alfred Reginald Thomson's "Liner, Take Me By the Flying Scotsman" (1932), a little figure standing on a railway platform looks up with awe at the powerful London-to-Edinburgh train (estimate: £4,000-£6,000).

Posters from several of the 20th century's most prominent painters are also included. "Paris L'Opéra" (1965) by Marc Chagall depicts lovers floating over Paris (estimate: £800-£1,200). On a poster celebrating Nice, Henri Matisse writes, "travail et joie," signaling that the town's Mediterranean inspiration is both work and joy for the artist (estimate: £800-£1,200).

Arbitrage



The price of a Harry Potter video game

City	Local currency	€
Hong Kong	HK\$365	€33
New York	\$53	€37
London	£41	€47
Brussels	€65	€65
Rome	€65	€65
Paris	€70	€70
Frankfurt	€70	€70

Note: Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince EA video game for XBOX 360; prices, including taxes, as provided by retailers in each city, averaged and converted into euros.

The champagne communist

BY RUPERT DARWALL

AS DOUBLE ACTS go, the names of Marx and Engels don't have quite the ring of Bonnie and Clyde or Laurel and Hardy, but celebrity wasn't ever the point. Revolution was.

It is often assumed that Friedrich Engels (1820-95), a prosperous mill owner, was a kind of patron to Karl Marx, and so he proved to be. But he was a formidable thinker in his own right. According to the late Leszek Kolakowski, the author of "Main Currents of Marxism," Marx's powers of abstract thought were superior, but Engels surpassed Marx at relating theory to empirical data. Tristram Hunt's admiring biography of Engels, "Marx's General," goes further to redress the balance, arguing on behalf of Engels's intellectual contribution and, along the way, showing him to be a more interesting and paradoxical character than the man who pioneered the mumbo-jumbo of dialectical materialism.

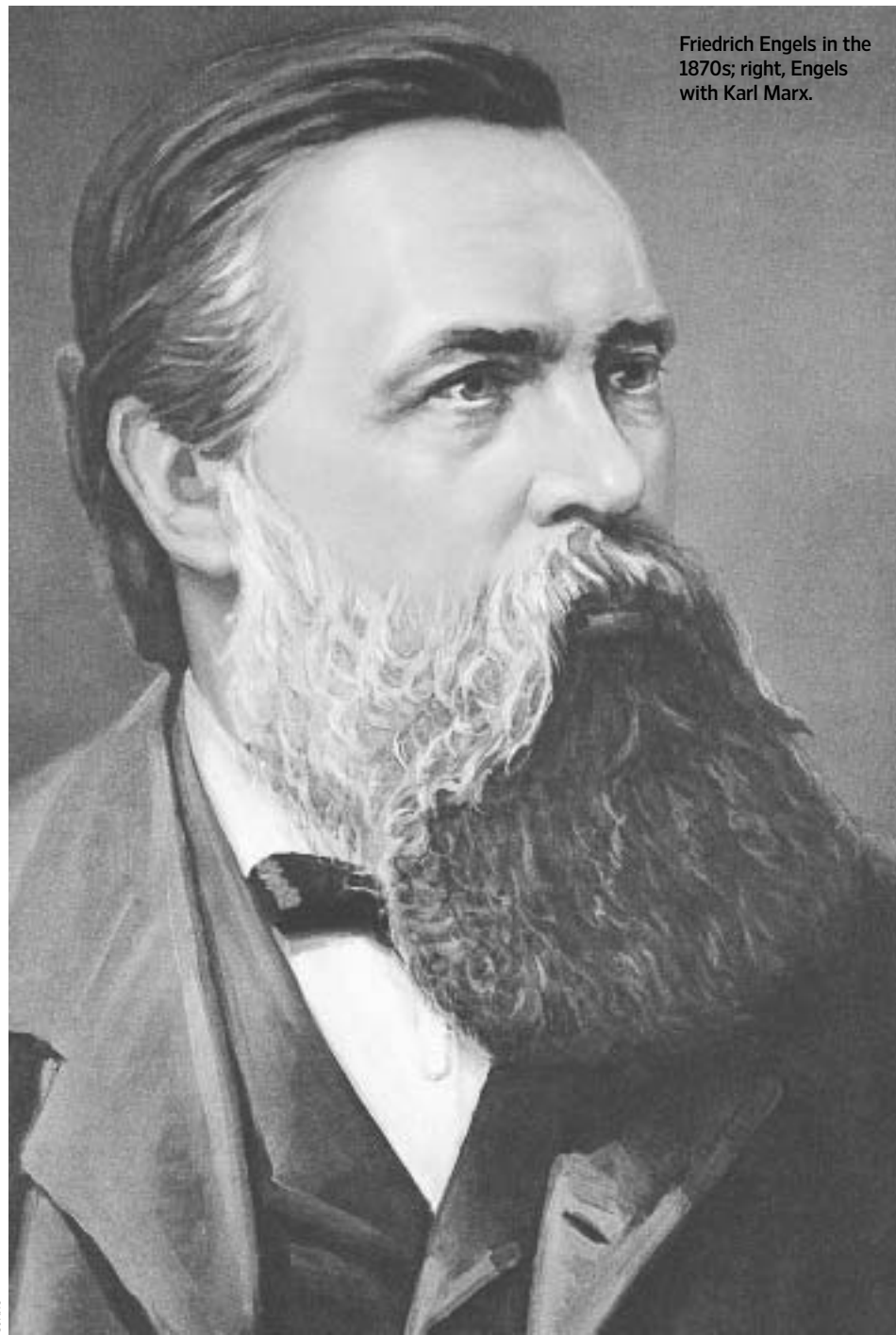


Mr. Hunt depicts a laughter-loving Engels, a "joy inspirer" to his friends—the original champagne communist. In later life, Engels said that his idea of happiness was a Château Margaux 1848. The year is an important one in non-vintage respects, too—it was the year of Marx and Engels's "Communist Manifesto" and of the revolutions across Europe that seemed to validate, for a brief moment, its road map to a socialist utopia.

At the time, Engels and Marx, who had met years before in Paris, were both living in Brussels, though soon enough they would end up in England. Born in Germany, Engels had spent part of his early 20s in Manchester, and he returned there when the 1848 revolutions failed.

For two decades he helped to run the mills that his family partly owned, sending part of his share of the profits (while helping himself to more) to Marx, who was in London writing "Das Kapital." Engels even hunted foxes with Cheshire's landed gentry, "the greatest physical pleasure I know," as he confessed. Eventually he sold his interest in the business to become a Victorian rentier, reading *The Economist* for investing tips and deriding the idea, proposed by some, that readers of a socialist newspaper should look to it for investment advice. "Anyone who does so will burn his fingers, and serve him right."

Mr. Hunt paints sympathetic portraits of communism's founding circle, enamored of Hegelian philosophy and other ideas floating around 19th-century Europe. We meet, for instance, the colorful Polish aristocrat August von Cieszkowski, who turned the hyper-abstract reasoning of German idealism into "praxis," an unlovely word for practical revolutionary activity. Then there is the ex-rabbi Moses Hess, "the first communist of the party," who argued that theology was anthropology and that anthropology was socialism: in short, that communism would bring about heaven on Earth, the fulfillment of religion by



Friedrich Engels in the 1870s; right, Engels with Karl Marx.



Agence France Press

its negation. Engels had a falling out with Hess and cuckolded him in an act of vengeance, writing to Marx about the exquisite sight of Hess brandishing his pistols and parading his horns before the whole of Brussels.

When Engels first arrived in Manchester, he was astonished to find a working class with, as he put it, "more knowledge than most 'cultivated' bourgeois in Germany." But when it came to writing "The Conditions of the Working Class in England" (1844)—described by Mr. Hunt as a tour de force—Engels airbrushed out the "cultivated" aspect of British working-class life. Instead he described urban industrial horror and talked of "the dissolution of mankind into monads."

Not that he celebrated the pre-industrial peasantry. Industrialization, Engels conceded, had pulled the working class out of a vegetative state "not worthy of human beings." By the 1860s, he was flabbergasted to see Manchester's workers electing Tories to represent them in Parliament, although he had previously observed with rising dismay that the working class in England was on the way to becoming bourgeois.

At times, reading Mr. Hunt's account, one wonders where Engels would have ended up on the ideological color chart without his association with Marx. He went through a phase of feeling vitriolic about the Slavs, even advocating (to quote Mr. Hunt) "a policy of ethnic cleansing in the service of progress and history." In a letter to a German socialist, Engels wrote: "I am enough of an authoritarian to regard the existence of such aborigines in the heart of Europe as an anachronism." More proto-National Socialist than Communist.

Mr. Hunt is remarkably good at distilling an epoch and conveying a sense of place, and he perfectly judges the pace of his narrative, illustrating what he is saying without burdening the reader with detail best left in the archives. In his preface and epilogue, he turns from historian to polemicist, claiming that Marxism, even today, can deepen our understanding of the current recession and of globalization's harsh effects. He seems to believe, naively, that a creed requiring the abolition of private property will not require the systematic use, or threat, of violence.

Fortunately for humanity (that is, the part of it living outside university campuses), Marxism is dead as a political force. Kolakowski once suggested that it was arguably not worth reading the works of a philosopher who never suspected himself of being a charlatan. Did such a thought ever occur to Engels? It's hard to tell. What can be said is that the ideology that he and Marx left the world ruthlessly crushed any such speculation.

—Mr. Darwall is writing a history of global warming.

Telling tales of stolen identities

BY CYNTHIA CROSSEN

DAN CHAON'S NEW novel, "Await Your Reply," begins with a boy being rushed to the hospital, his severed hand iced in a Styrofoam cooler beside him. This is classic Chaon (pronounced SHAWN)—grab the reader by the throat and dare him to stop turning the pages. In "Await Your Reply," three interwoven narratives explore the ways identity is invented, corrupted, bought and stolen. Mr. Chaon, 45 years old, is a professor of humanities and creative writing at Oberlin College in Ohio. In both "Await Your Reply" and Mr. Chaon's first novel, "You Remind Me of Me," a central character tries to come to terms with having been adopted. He has also published two short-story collections. In an interview, Mr. Chaon said he doesn't have a Kindle but he does enjoy Twitter. In a recent tweet, he wondered, "What if Twitter asked, 'Why are you doing this?' instead of 'What are you doing?'" That's the question Mr. Chaon's fiction asks and answers.

Q: Is identity really as malleable as it seems from your novels?

You're a different person when you're at work, at home, out with your friends. Over the course of your life, your sense of self and where you belong in the world changes. In my case, it was fairly radical. I started out in a fairly poor working-class home, my dad was a construction worker. Now I'm living in a nice suburban community, and I'm a college professor. Identity is a creation that we're all engaged in. We're all novelists, putting together the stories of our own lives.

Q: Were you a reader as a child?

I grew up in a really small town in Nebraska. I was the only kid my age in town. I learned pretty quickly to entertain myself, and books were a big part of that.

Q: When did you find out you were adopted?

I knew as soon as I was old enough to un-



Author Dan Chaon

derstand. My parents followed the philosophy of telling early and making sure the child knows, "We chose you because you're special." That's the line I remember. In my mind, I could vividly see my parents going to someplace like a pet store and looking at all these kids in bassinets and picking me.

Q: You'd think there would be more fiction about identity theft—it seems like such a juicy topic.

It's hard to write because the technology of identity theft is changing so fast that by the time you describe a specific process, it's already gone by the wayside.

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The divas strike back

Superstars Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey court a new generation

BY JOHN JURGENSEN

TWO OF POP music's biggest voices are attempting to reignite their careers this fall. Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey, who have each sold millions of albums and set the standard for female vocalists in the 1980s and '90s, are releasing new albums within a month of each other. These divas are resurfacing, however, in a music industry more geared toward beats and instrumental hooks than dynamic singing.

Vocal-driven pop music is "not the most popular genre of music right now," says producer Harvey Mason Jr., who has worked with artists ranging from Aretha Franklin to Britney Spears. He also co-produced several songs on Ms. Houston's coming album. He says the goal was to capture vocal takes that would remind listeners of Ms. Houston's range, and to create tracks that sounded fresh but not trendy.

Anticipation for the new albums is high among the singers' fans, especially those of Ms. Houston. After six years since her last album and personal turmoil that included a divorce from singer Bobby Brown, she is angling for a comeback. But it will be a challenge for either diva to score beyond their core audience.

Their music arrives at a time when the Day-Glo synthesizers and brittle drum machines of the 1980s have returned, often superseding the abilities of the singers who use them. Chugging dance rhythms—part Devo, part Euro disco—have spread across genres, driven by hits from newer artists such as Lady Gaga, a top-selling performer known for provocative interviews and outré fashions.

Mr. Mason says that young singers are recording fewer ballads, which can serve as showcases for vocal flair. And in recent years labels have called on him to rev up his beats to please radio programmers. The tempo of music by female pop singers has increased in the aggregate over the last decade, according to the online music service Pandora. Last year the median hovered around 135 beats per minute, up from about 115 beats per minute in 2000. Ms. Houston's hit ballad from 1992, "I Will Always Love You," clocked in at about 68 bpm.

"The traditional vocalist has been pushed aside or left out by what we call Top 40 radio," says Clive Davis, chief creative officer, Sony Music Entertainment, who has



Whitney Houston, right, is mounting a comeback; Mariah Carey, above, has a new album, and an indie movie.



worked with Ms. Houston since signing her to her first record deal in 1983. He led the three-year process of creating her new album, "I Look to You," due out Aug. 31 in the U.S. and later this fall in Europe.

The teams behind Ms. Carey and Ms. Houston argue that prevailing trends have only built demand for their sound. "Great doesn't get old," says Antonio "L.A." Reid, chairman of the Island Def Jam Music Group, who oversaw Ms. Carey's album, "Memoirs of an Imperfect Angel," scheduled for release Sept. 29.

Representatives said Ms. Carey, 39 years old, and Ms. Houston, 46, weren't available for comment.

The new music was produced primarily to flaunt their vocal chops. Ms. Carey is about to release a single, a version of a power ballad from 1984, "I Want to Know What Love Is," by the rock band Foreigner. But

the veteran divas are making some moves to cater to new audiences. One song chosen to introduce Ms. Houston's album is "Million Dollar Bill," a disco-flavored track co-written by Alicia Keys.

Ms. Carey has kept the sex appeal high while promoting her album, which will contain a "mini-magazine" of glamour shots of the singer and real ads placed by companies such as Elizabeth Arden. But she'll soon appear in a less-flattering light on the big screen. Ms. Carey donned a prosthetic nose for her role as a dowdy social worker in the somber indie film "Precious," due out in November.

Music-industry veterans praise a handful of powerful voices among the current generation of female singers, including Jennifer Hudson and Beyoncé Knowles. And next month, VH1 plans to relaunch its "Divas" series of specials, which had been mothballed in 2004. The new iteration will emphasize the work ethic of featured stars, including the young Disney-sponsored performer Miley Cyrus, among others.

In terms of raw vocal talent, though, some industry veterans say there are few young successors to Ms. Houston and Ms. Carey. "How can I put this tactfully?" says Stephen Hill, president of music programming and specials at BET Networks, "The range between the high and low notes has shrunk greatly."

Beck remakes the classics

BY JOHN JURGENSEN

BECK HANSEN, THE art-rocker who broke out in the 1990s by combining hip-hop and folk music, is in the midst of an ambitious summer project, and he's sharing it free of charge online. In lieu of a new Beck album, he's releasing a Velvet Underground album by Beck. Working with friends and musical peers, he reinterpreted the 1967 debut release by Lou Reed's edgy rock group. "The Velvet Underground & Nico" featured signature songs such as "Venus In Furs" and "Heroin."

It's the first installment in what Mr. Hansen is calling Record Club, which will include covers of at least two more albums. Instead of trying to reproduce familiar records note for note, Mr. Hansen's group took on a different challenge: to record their versions in a single day. While each album was produced in one go, they're being released in serial fashion on the Web, with a new song appearing each week on Mr. Hansen's Web site at beck.com/record_club.

To tackle the Velvet Underground, Mr. Hansen assembled in his home studio a group of about eight musicians, including actor Giovanni Ribisi (Mr. Hansen's brother-in-law) and frequent collaborator Nigel Godrich, a producer who has also worked with acts such as Radiohead.

Accompanying each Record



Beck's 'Record Club' re-interprets the Velvet Underground and others.

Club track, loosely edited black-and-white video footage provides glimpses of the session. On the lead-off song "Sunday Morning," a warm rendering of the Velvet Underground original, Mr. Ribisi gently strikes a glockenspiel as Mr. Hansen sways with his hands in his pockets and sings in a vocal booth. "I'm Waiting For the Man," a jumpy tune about trying to score drugs, unravels in a jumble of pounding keyboard and untuned guitar. And as Mr. Hansen strums an acoustic guitar and sings the lilting "I'll Be Your Mirror," Icelandic singer Thórunn Magnúsdóttir echoes Nico's original background vocals.

The titles of future Record Club albums have not been announced yet, but they will feature personnel such as singer-songwriter Devendra Banhart and the rock band MGMT.

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The Splendor and the Scandal

The first time I saw St. Peter's, I was 19, new to Rome and starting to panic. I was late for a papal audience. Rushing in the general direction of the Vatican, I arrived breathless and confused at the outer rim of Bernini's colonnade. I didn't realize where I was, until I burst through the Doric columns into the sublime surprise of St. Peter's Square.

In 1505 when the formidable Pope Julius II began planning a new basilica to St. Peter, he imagined a miracle in stone that would dwarf the epic constructions of the Caesars and proclaim the power and the glory of Christ and his church. How that dream was realized over a tumultuous century, at an incalculable cost, is a saga as convoluted and controversial as the Church of Rome. Conceived on a colossal scale, created from a confusion of ideas and consuming the genius of the greatest artists of the age, St. Peter's became both the splendor of the High Renaissance and a scandal of epic proportions.

Rome already had a basilica of St. Peter, erected 12 centuries earlier by the Emperor Constantine. It was a sacred site where every Holy Roman Emperor since Charlemagne had been crowned. When Pope Julius decided to replace the old church, he provoked such fury that his architect, Donato Bramante, was forced to adopt a novel approach. Instead of leveling the original basilica and laying a new foundation, he proceeded in sections, demolishing and then constructing piece by piece.

Bramante, a middle-age architect with no singular accomplishment, seemed an uninspired choice. (His *Tempietto*, or "Little Temple," the Renaissance architectural ideal in microcosm, was still under construction.) But Bramante's ambition was as extravagant as the pope's. He envisioned a large Greek cross, its four equal arms surmounted by an immense

saucer dome that rested on four discrete piers. It was a risky experiment. The dome was 142 feet in diameter, equal to the Pantheon, and, at 300 feet, more than twice as high. No one had ever vaulted such a broad expanse at such a dizzying height and balanced it on such dubious supports.

The story of St. Peter's Basilica, a miracle in stone a century in the making.

Bramante was so eager to raise his huge dome that he employed an unorthodox strategy. He built the basilica from the center out. By completing the crossing and the four giant piers and joining them with coffered barrel vaults, he ensured that the heroic scale could not be diminished.

When Bramante died in 1514, other architects began to question his plan. Although many artists, beginning with Raphael, tried their hand at building St. Peter's, no one dared to raise the dome. Years

Many architects followed Michelangelo, just as many had followed Bramante. More than 20 years passed. No one was able to build the dome or dared to suggest an alternative. The basilica drum towered over the city like a headless giant until 1585, when Sixtus V, another stubborn old man, was elected pope. Sixtus commissioned Giacomo della Porta to complete the dome, and he allowed the architect 30 months to do the job.

Della Porta, who had been Michelangelo's pupil, did the unthinkable. He redrew the master's design, creating a far bolder silhouette, and he raised the new dome in just 22 months. Dwarfing every other construction, the dome of St. Peter's soars 452 feet and spans a 138-foot diameter. It is three times the height of the Pantheon dome and 100 feet higher than the *Duomo* in Florence. The inner shell visible inside the basilica retained Michelangelo's rounded contour. The outer shell that fills the sky over Rome is a higher, more dramatic ellipse.

Della Porta died in 1602, having brought the new St. Peter's to the point of completion. All that remained was to add the façade. Instead, a new pope, the Borghese Paul V, and his architect, Carlo Maderno, returned to the drawing board. They extended one arm of the Bramante-Michelangelo-della Porta design, changing it from a Greek to a

Roman cross that would accommodate larger crowds. The flamboyant baroque genius Gianlorenzo Bernini would give the basilica a grand entry, enclosing a space the size of the Colosseum with his magnificent piazza and colonnades. But that would come later.

With the structure finally finished, on Nov. 18, 1626, 1,300 years to the day after the dedication of Constantine's basilica, the new St. Peter's was consecrated. It had been 120 years since Julius II broke ground. Over the decades of construction, Magellan's fleet had sailed around the world; Henry VIII had taken six wives and disposed of four of them; Shakespeare had made the world his stage; the *Mayflower* had landed at Plymouth Rock; and an extraordinary feat of architecture and engineering had emerged. Two million tons of stone were transformed into spirit, creating what Rome's preeminent historian, Edward Gibbon, called "the most glorious structure that ever has been applied to the use of religion."

Today, the visitor entering St. Peter's experiences unity as immutable as dogma with no hint of the conflicts and perils overcome. Human follies seem too petty to have ever played a part here. The heart stops. The soul soars. The power of the idea is transcendent.

Ms. Scotti is the author of *"Vanished Smile: The Mysterious Theft of Mona Lisa"* (Knopf 2009).



CORBIS

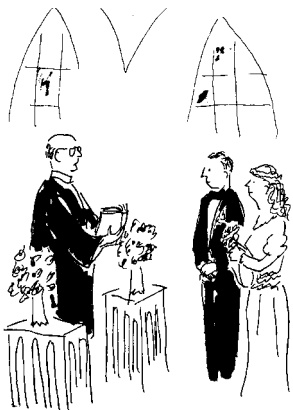
passed. Architects and plans changed, building costs escalated. To pay for them, succeeding popes peddled indulgences. Absolution was bartered for building funds, infuriating Martin Luther and other Reformation figures and culminating in the division of the Christian West into Protestants and Catholics. The Basilica project was abandoned. Sketches from the period show the husk of St. Peter's like a failed dream—an apt symbol, some thought, for a church that had lost its way, forgotten its purpose and forsaken its mission.

Resuming work on the basilica became a priority of the first Counter-Reformation pope. Paul III saw a glorious new St. Peter's as a metaphor for a reborn Church of Rome, and he turned to Michelangelo Buonarroti to realize it. At first, Michelangelo refused. The whims of popes infuriated him. Paul flattered, cajoled and ultimately commanded obedience.

Michelangelo was 70 when he assumed the grand enterprise "against my will." Although ambitious young architects complained that he was impossible to work with—he was too old and his faculties were failing—for almost two decades, through five pontiffs, Michelangelo worked with undiminished fervor. He completed the drum, erected most of the attic and designed a new dome. When he died in 1564, in his 89th year, he left a 15-foot scale model so that the dome of St. Peter's would be completed to his exact specifications.

Pepper . . . and Salt

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



D. Barstow

"And if you do get divorced, promise me you'll always be friends."

From Assimilation To Radicalization

By Salil Tripathi

When terrorists bombed London on July 7, 2005, killing 52 commuters, much of the country was aghast. The stoic British endured the Blitz during World War II and learned to take the IRA attacks in their stride. But the killings in 2005 were different. These terrorists were British-born or British-bred and seemed well-integrated. In the videos released after their death, though, they articulated their hatred for British foreign policy and society in a language straight out of the Middle East, albeit in an accent wholly British. As Princeton historian Bernard Lewis asked after 9/11: What went wrong?

This question is at the heart of Hanif Kureishi's 1995 novel, *"The Black Album,"* now a stirring play at the National Theatre in London, where it runs until October of this year, to be followed by a national tour in the U.K. The plot centers on the Rushdie affair. This year is the 20th anniversary of the fatwa that Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini declared on Salman Rushdie for his novel *"The Satanic Verses."* In that book, Mr. Rushdie had a prescient chapter about "a city visible but unseen," describing the undercurrent of Muslim restiveness, which the white, British middle-class failed to see, enchanted as it was by London's growing multiculturalism.

The Black Album

By Hanif Kureishi
National Theatre, London
Through Oct. 7

"The Black Album" reflects that tumultuous time, when British Muslims burned copies of the *"The Satanic Verses"* because Khomeini deemed the novel offensive to Islam. That burning—and Islamic radicalization—is where it all first went wrong. Some critics have wondered: why now? Hasn't the story been told before? Isn't it known now? In a conversation at his home in West London, Mr. Kureishi says: "My children didn't know why a book was burned in Britain, and there are many like them, who don't know what had happened. There is snobbery in suggesting that people know about the issues already."

As in his later work *"My Son the Fanatic,"* which was adapted into a film of the same title, *"The Black Album"* shows how young Muslims were being radicalized, adopting a hate-filled ideology critical of the west and dismissive of women. His look at that time reminds us where—and how—it all started. It also sharpens issues of our day, including the Left's fascination with radical Islam.

"I was fascinated by the idea of young Muslims in the West, and the issues of identity they faced," he told me. "If you remember, earlier, the Asian in Britain was comfortable being part of the larger 'black' community, or the 'left.' But something was

changing in the minds of Muslims in the West, who were adopting a hard-core religious identity, and I wanted to understand that."

Mr. Kureishi's laboratory was Hammersmith College, where, in the late 1980s, he saw young Muslims taking a deep interest in Islam. He invited them over, and had long conversations with them, particularly after the fatwa. He went to mosques where he was stunned by the image of fiery

'The Black Album' examines the roots of British Muslims' disaffection.

imams delivering frenzied sermons, railing against, as he puts it, "gays, Israel, and lipstick." He captured that restlessness in the *"The Black Album."*

The play's main character is Shahid, who arrives in London to study. He loves modernity and sees the departure

from his parent's house as his ticket to freedom. He dances to the music of the artist who was at that time still known as Prince, and wants to explore the post-modern literary world. Deedee Osgood is his professor, with whom he shares a passion for music, wine, and more. But other students around him are drawn to radical Islam under the influence of an older student. Osgood's anxious husband, Brownlow, is facing his own identity crisis. He is part of Europe's fashionable left, confused and rootless after the fall of the Berlin Wall, desperate for a new meaning in life. He is enchanted by Islam.

"The Left is always looking for Utopia, and radical Islam seemed to be just that," Mr. Kureishi says. The alliance between Islam and the left, which Nick Cohen dissects so skillfully in his book *"What's Left,"* has been on display in anti-American and anti-Israeli rallies since 9/11. But Mr. Kureishi shows how deep those roots lie. In one chilling scene, we see Brownlow utterly enchanted by his new Islamist friends, standing behind a burning copy of *"The Satanic Verses"* with a grin on his face, thrilled by the smell of burning paper.

Shahid tries to find meaning within his faith, but in the end his questioning individualism leads him to reject the Islamists and the fanatics continue without him. In the last scene a backpack is seen on the stage, then there is an explosion, confusion and death. The backpack—which once stood for the innocent quest of young Westerners exploring the world—has become the symbol of the young Islamist's quest for martyrdom.

Mr. Kureishi's play shows what happens when regressive ideologies clutter a cultural landscape under the guise of multiculturalism.

"When you end up burning a book in the name of a revolution, you think you are on the road to freedom, but in reality you are locking yourself inside a prison's gates. The revolution devours itself, its children." Mr. Kureishi wants a younger generation to learn from that past and choose freedom, not fanaticism. It is a message as relevant today as when he wrote the novel some 14 years ago.

Mr. Tripathi is a freelance writer based in London.

time off

Amsterdam

photography

"Fazal Sheikh" presents black-and-white images by American photographer Fazal Sheikh (born 1965).

Huis Marseille
Sept. 5-Nov. 29
☎ 31-20-5318-989
www.huisarseille.nl

Basel

art

"Monica Bonvicini/Tom Burr" shows works by Italian-born contemporary artist Monica Bonvicini (born 1965) and the American artist Tom Burr (born 1963).

Museum für Gegenwartskunst
Sept. 5-Jan. 3
☎ 41-61-2066-262
www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch

Berlin

art

"Art is Super!" juxtaposes modern art by Joseph Beuys (1921-86), Andy Warhol (1928-87), Cy Twombly (born 1928) and others with more contemporary works.

Hamburger Bahnhof
Sept. 5-Feb. 14
☎ 49-30-3978-3439
www.smb.museum

music

"Musik Fest Berlin 2009" stages classical works performed by 21 guest orchestras, ensembles and choirs.

Konzerthaus Berlin & Philharmonie und Kammermusiksaal
Sept. 3-21
☎ 49-30-2548-90
www.berlinerfestspiele.de

Bonn

history

"James Cook and the Exploration of the Pacific" showcases 500 original objects collected during three voyages by the British explorer (1728-79).

Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
Aug. 28-Feb. 28
☎ 49-228-9171-0
www.kah-bonn.de

Copenhagen

art

"Nicolai Abildgaard: Revolution Embodied" displays paintings, drawings, graphics and furniture design by Danish painter Nicolai Abildgaard (1743-1809).

Statens Museum for Kunst
Aug. 29-Jan. 3
☎ 45-3374-8494
www.smk.dk

art

"The World is Yours" exhibits contemporary art challenging modern consumerism by more than 20 artists.

Louisiana Museum of Modern Art
Sept. 5-Jan. 10
☎ 45-4919-0791
www.louisiana.dk

Dresden

art

"Crossing the Sea with Fortuna: Saxony and Denmark—Marriages and Alliances Mirrored in Art (1548-1709)" explores 250 art objects generated by a historical political alliance between Saxony and Denmark.

Residenzschloss
Until Jan. 4
☎ 49-351-4914-2000
www.sk-dresden.de



© amp-Vienna, 2009

Düsseldorf

art

"Danica Dakić" exhibits video and sound installations, photographs and objects created from 1998 to the present by Bosnian video artist Danica Dakić (born 1962).

Kunsthalle
Aug. 29-Nov. 8
☎ 49-211-8996-243
www.kunsthalle-duesseldorf.de

Göteborg

music

"An Evening with Brian Wilson" presents music by the composer and former Beach Boys bandleader.

Aug. 30, The Concert House,

Göteborg

Sept. 1, Concert Hall, Glasgow
Sept. 2, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool
Sept. 3, Roundhouse, London
☎ 44-0844-5765-483
www.brianwilson.com

Hamburg

art

"Roman Signer: Projections. Films and Videos 1975-2008" presents 33 film projections by Swiss artist Roman Signer (born 1938).

Hamburger Kunsthalle
Until Sept. 27
☎ 49-40-4281-3120-0
www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de

Hannover

dance

"Tanz Theater International 2009" is a contemporary dance theater festival with companies from Ghent, Brussels and Antwerp.

Tanz und Theater e.V.
Sept. 3-12
☎ 49-511-1684-1222
www.tanztheater-international.de

Leeds

music

"Leeds 2009" and "Reading 2009" are summer rock festivals featuring Radiohead, Kings of Leon, the Arctic Monkeys and others.

Bramham Park, Leeds
Little John's Farm, Reading
Aug. 28-30
www.leedsfestival.com
www.readingfestival.com

London

theater

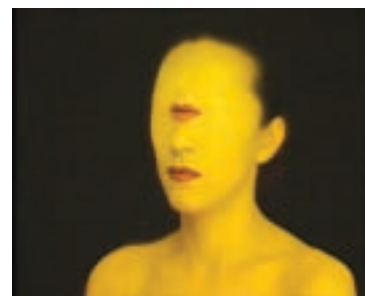
"Katrina" is a play centered on the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, composed of word-for-word accounts by both survivors and those responsible for the failed relief effort.

Bargehouse
Sept. 1-27
☎ 44-20-7922-2922
www.youngvic.org

art

"Dying to Know" reveals new images by 17 award-winning photographers on walls designed and created by the artists.

P3 Gallery
Sept. 4-9



© YGC Bild-Kunst, Photo: Egbert Trogemann

Left, 'Elf at the Brook' (1898-99), by Josef Maria Auchentaller, on show in Vienna; above, 'Self Portrait (1999), a video still by Danica Dakić, in Düsseldorf; above right, 'Sans parole' (2005), by Sammy Engramer, in Paris.

☎ 44-20-7911-5876
www.dyingtoknow.org.uk

Munich

art

"Hermann Obrist: Sculpture, Space, Abstraction around 1900" presents the complete oeuvre of the Swiss draftsman and sculptor (1862-1927).

Pinakothek der Moderne
Until Sept. 27
☎ 49-89-2380-5360
www.pinakothek.de

Paris

music

"Festival d'Île de France" stages music by Yael Naim, Nina Hagen, Sayon Bamba and others at a range of venues all over Paris.

Sept. 4-Oct. 11
☎ 33-1-5871-0110
www.festival-idf.fr

comics

"Vraoum!" approaches comic strips by

Hergé (1907-83), Winsor McCay (1867-1934) and Moebius (born 1938) as art and contemplates their influence on contemporary art.

La Maison Rouge
Until Sept. 27
☎ 33-1-4001-0881
www.lamaisonrouge.org

Rotterdam

music

"Gergiev Festival 2009" offers opera, concerts, films and a junior program as part of a classical music festival of conductor Valery Gergiev (born 1953) and the Rotterdam Philharmonic orchestra.

Gergiev Festival
Aug. 28-Sept. 6
☎ 31-10-2171-717
www.gergievfestival.nl

Venice

film

"Venice Film Festival 2009" showcases some of the world's great filmmakers, including premieres of



Courtesy Galerie Claudine Papiillon, Paris

"Baaria" by Giuseppe Tornatore, "White Material" by Claire Denis and "Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans" by Werner Herzog.

Venice Film Festival
Sept. 2-12
☎ 39-0412-7266-24
www.labiennale.org/en/cinem

Vienna

art

"Impressionism—Painting Light" exhibits impressionist and post-impressionist works, including works by Gustave Courbet (1819-77), Edouard Manet (1832-83) and Claude Monet (1840-1926).

Albertina
Sept. 11-Jan. 10
☎ 43-1-5348-3
www.albertina.at

art

"Pure Art Nouveau! Josef Maria Auchentaller (1865-1949)—An Artist of the Viennese Secession" presents paintings, drawings, studies, posters, designs, jewelry and photographs by and about the Vienna-born painter and graphic artist.

Leopold Museum
Until Sept. 21
☎ 43-1-5257-00
www.leopoldmuseum.org

Zurich

photography

"Michel Comte" presents the work of Swiss advertising, fashion and society photographer Michel Comte (born 1954).

Museum für Gestaltung Zürich
Aug. 30-Jan. 3
☎ 41-43-4466-767
www.museum-gestaltung.ch

Source: ArtBase Global Arts News Service, WSJE research.Amsterdam