Director’s Choice: 1
Book Reviews: 2-4
Hilbert History: 4

DIRECTOR’S CHOICE

End This Depression Now! by Paul Krugman

Paul Krugman, winner of the Nobel Prize for economics in 2008 and a frequent contributor to the New York Times, outlines in *End This Depression Now!* his strategy for turning around the U.S. economy quickly and efficiently.

Krugman begins by giving some background on how the U.S. got into the current economic crisis and the initial responses from both the Bush and Obama administrations. Krugman’s contention is that the responses from both administrations were and are inadequate to deal with the magnitude of the problems.

An admitted Keynesian, Krugman’s economic philosophy is, that in crisis situations, government needs to step in and assist the economy by whatever means necessary; be it lowering interest rates, moderating inflation, increasing the deficit, or even devaluation. He contends that part of Europe’s problem is that it has a mutual currency (the Euro), but individual economies. The mutual currency limits the options the Europeans have and inhibits many of the steps to recovery that are afforded the U.S. economy.

Krugman covers the topic well, but much of his information, charts, and tables are based upon his own research. Consequently, although it is convincingly written, it is still subjective; Krugman’s opinion (albeit and expert’s opinion) on the subject. Further, the work has neither a bibliography nor footnotes.

Therefore, although well written and researched by a noted expert in the field, *End This Depression Now!* should be read as one side of the argument with perhaps Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom* as a possible counterweight.

*End This Depression Now!*
Krugman, Paul
HB 3743 K78 20012
Reviewed by Director Wil Prout
BOOK REVIEWS

Black Irish: A Novel by Stephan Talty

A Crime Novel Set in Buffalo, New York

Talty harnesses his non-fiction skills to craft a novel that’s centered on a feisty female cop in a history-rich Irish enclave in upstate New York.

Absalom Kearney, adopted daughter of legendary Buffalo police detective John Kearney, has returned home to care for her rapidly declining father. Abbie, as she’s known, worked as a police officer in Miami. She’s been back for a year and has already established herself as the best homicide investigator in the BPD. When Abbie and her partner, “Z,” catch a missing persons’ case that turns out to be the tip of a serial killers’ iceberg, she gets a chance to prove how good she is.

The victim, Jimmy Ryan, a perpetual non-achiever who was tortured and left dead in an abandoned church, was discovered with a toy plastic monkey near his body. When someone tries to enter the home Abbie shares with her dad and leaves a similar toy on the doorknob, the female cop realizes that she’s up against more than simply a clever killer. She tracks members of a secret Irish organization while chasing the murderer across her county and into neighboring Niagara Falls, all the time putting herself in harm’s way. Talty shows his chops when recounting the area’s Irish roots, but the first half of the story is sluggish.

The relentless grimness of the setting, hopelessness of the local economy and general ineptness of other police officers combine to create a lackluster atmosphere populated by characters that lack both depth and vitality. That in itself could be forgiven if Talty’s plot revealed brilliant detective work, but it doesn’t. Instead, Abbie comes across as unreasonable, dismissive of her co-workers, and abusive to both other cops and suspects alike. Readers can be forgiven if they find Talty’s story stretches credulity a bit, especially in the bloody second half.

This Buffalo-based novel turns out to be more notable for its area history, moody setting and occasional smart turn of phrase than for the thuggish heroine.

Kirkus Reviews
January 1, 2013
Sin: The Early History of an Idea by Paula Fredriksen

In her characteristically brisk and engaging prose, Fredriksen (Augustine and the Jews) explores the evolution of the idea of sin in the first four centuries of Christianity, asking hard questions about what various ideas of sin tell us about the corresponding ideas of God and humanity.

Focusing on seven figures—Jesus, Paul, Marcion, Justin, Valentinus, Origen, and Augustine—she examines the ways that these bearers or writers of the early Christian message answered such questions as who is saved from sin, and how, as well as the ways that sin defines redemption. For Jesus and his hearers, sin is “Jewish” sin, such as breaking the commandments, and Jesus teaches that repentance, especially as practiced in the ideal teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, restores Jews to good relationships with their neighbors and with God. For Valentinus and Justin, though in different ways, sin is a function of ignorance; sinners sin because they do not know God’s will, both a cause and effect of not reading scripture with spiritual insight.

Fredriksen’s eloquent study traces the early development of the idea of sin, illustrating the intricate patterns woven by the many colorful threads of culture and religion and the ways that those patterns influence contemporary Christian religion.

Publisher’s Weekly
May 14, 2012

Desert Rose: The Life and Legacy of Coretta Scott King by Edythe Scott Bagley

A glowing portrait of Martin Luther King Jr.’s widow by her sister.

The daughters of a lumber hauler in Alabama’s Black Belt region who was constantly harassed by white employers for his enterprising ways, Coretta and Edythe Scott were both educated at the Lincoln School, a white-run missionary boarding school, and later Antioch College, in Ohio. Embracing the tradition of Christian service instilled by those establishments, Coretta attempted to student teach in the Yellow Springs, Ohio, public-school system in 1950, despite protests by white parents. However, Antioch did not support her, delivering a bitter lesson in the deeply entrenched discrimination that pervaded even the North.

A gifted soprano, she attended New England Conservatory in Boston on scholarship, where she met the Georgia-born King, then was a doctoral divinity student at Boston University. Impressed by her long, straight hair and evident intelligence, King sensed she would make the perfect wife. At the time, Coretta began her career as a successful singer, and from King’s first pastorate at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, to his last at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Coretta performed intermit-
tently on stage.

In 1965, she used a Freedom Concert tour to spread the message for civil-rights change. She was also committed to the antiwar group Women Strike for Peace, which attracted surveillance by the FBI. The author speculates about Coretta’s influence on King’s ultimate resistance to the Vietnam War, writing that the couple “shared vigorous and robust conversation about the issues they faced.” Steely, cerebral and unemotional, Bagley’s portrait reveals a remarkable character forged by harsh reality and unimaginable trial.

In an intimate glimpse, Coretta steps out from her husband’s shadow.

Kirkus Reviews
April 1, 2012

This photograph (right) taken from the Hilbert Archives shows (from left to right) Sisters Mary Edwina Bogel, Mary Arcadia, and Tiburtia Gorecki with Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, Bishop of Krakow. Cardinal Wojtyła’s visit to Buffalo in 1969 included a stop to Hilbert’s library on September 17th when he blessed the special collection of Polish literature, magazines, and artifacts.

Cardinal Wojtyła served the Catholic Church as Pope John Paul II from October 16, 1978 until his death on April 2, 2005.

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