

Softcover: UK

The high price of prosperity

John Kampfner argues that peoples around the world sacrifice freedoms and submit to repression in return for a measure of wealth and security

BY GEORGE WALDEN
BLOOMBERG

John Kampfner, a British foreign correspondent and former editor of the leftist *New Statesman*, is a man with a theory. The gist lies in the title of his new book, *Freedom for Sale: How We Made Money and Lost Our Liberty*.

His argument runs like this: Peoples around the world, in the democratic as well as the authoritarian camp, have a pact with governments whereby they sacrifice their freedoms and submit to selective repression in return for a measure of prosperity and security.

To prove his point, Kampfner roamed the world, from Russia, China, India, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates to Italy, the UK and the US. Though the circumstances differ, he says, the tendency to barter liberty for cash is everywhere the same.

In Russia he shows how, in the guise of the popular Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the country's historic taste for political brutalism lingers. In China, an autocratic Communist Party seems set to retain power while it produces the goods. And in India, a sense of community has been sacrificed to capitalist development and corruption, he claims.

Grim reading, though there are nice touches, such as Putin's un-modern remark that the relationship between governments and journalists resembles that between men and women: It's the government's role to make advances, and the media's to resist.

Kampfner is a fine reporter and a stylish writer, yet it's possible to admire the book and to disagree with his thesis. The snag is that he stretches it way too far Westward.

"The dividing lines between countries deemed to be authoritarian and countries deemed to be democracies are not as clear as people in the West believe them to be," he writes.

TWO PLUS TWO

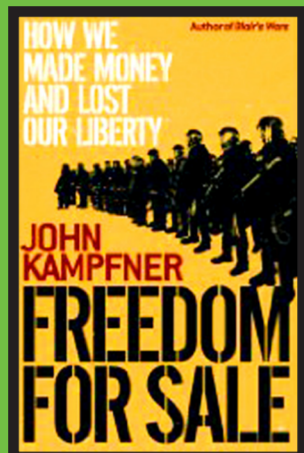
One is tempted to invoke a question posed by the anti-rationalist hero of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Notes From Underground*. What if, he asks, two plus two equals five? One possible answer: Stand your imagined five feet from the railroad tracks when an express train is passing and see how you get on.

So it is with this book. If freedoms in Britain and America have been eroded to the point where there's little to choose between them and authoritarian lands — an irrational view it seems to me — try writing volumes like this in Russia or China. See what happens.

Yes, the US and UK overreacted to terrorist attacks on their soil. But Kampfner overreacts in his turn, notably when describing America after Sept. 11, 2001.

"In the months immediately

PUBLICATION NOTES



FREEDOM FOR SALE: HOW WE MADE MONEY AND LOST OUR LIBERTY

BY JOHN KAMPFNER

294 PAGES

SIMON & SCHUSTER

after 9/11, some 80,000 people were rounded up in dragnets across the country. Most were of Middle Eastern origin, many of them "illegals," he intones. "The notions of guilt and innocence were discarded."

Sounds scary, but think about it. Why is it unreasonable to detain illegal immigrants from that region after terrorists from that region have incinerated almost 3,000 people in the Twin Towers, many of them, incidentally, from the Mideast?

As for the collusion of America's citizens in the trashing of their own rights, and their political apathy, how does that square with the millions of new voters who helped elect US President Barack Obama in a fine democratic race? Where is the similarity with Russia or China?

Kampfner is on firmer ground when he writes of the rising clout of authoritarian regimes, yet he fails to follow through. Most commentators, even Americans, nod sagely when it's suggested that the US should be cut down to size in favor of a brave new multipolar world.

But these tough, newly rich and nationalistic regimes are mostly the governments that Kampfner so eloquently chastises. If the US declines to deal with such regimes, it gets accused of being confrontational. If it does have truck with them, it is charged with sharing their cynical values: We're as bad as they are, the argument goes.

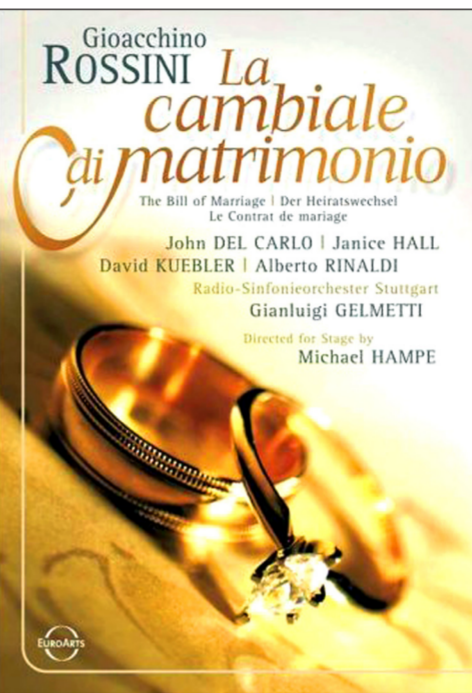
There's good stuff in this book, and the author is as well read as he is widely traveled. Too bad his bibliography doesn't include *The Case for Goliath*, a cooler, non-partisan look at America's place in the world by Michael Mandelbaum.



ROSSINI
La Pietra del Paragone
Ensemble Matheus
Naive V5089



ROSSINI
La Cambiale di Matrimonio
Conductor: Gianluigi Gelmetti
EuroArts 2054968



HINDEMITH
Cardillac
Director: Jean-Pierre Ponnelle
DGM 073 4324 1



La *Pietra del Paragone* (The Touchstone) is one of Rossini's earliest works. It was written when he was 20 and is now almost never performed. But the Chatelet Opera in Paris has come up with a groundbreaking version, using the ultimate in technology to create a truly bizarre stage — and now DVD — experience.

Split onstage screens are only the start of it. Characters and props fly through the air, are magnified or (most often) diminished, and the whole confection is served up as a chic, hi-tech, fey charade. The music is at times played very fast, and is fundamentally high-spirited anyway. But Rossini's youthful exuberance and the ubiquitous French penchant for chic combine well. If you want to be amazed, without bothering too much about fundamental artistic quality, you will probably love this ultra-luxuriously-packaged pair of DVDs.

The innovative director is Pierrick Sorin, an installation artist who caught Paris' eye with animated department store window-dressings that were apparently like theater themselves. He's relocated the opera to the 1950s, and the singers trot about wearing the brightest of ultra-chic costumes and carrying glasses of champagne as the music clatters and chatters away. The whole thing goes off like a champagne bottle, with a fizzy bang.

But, being French, the participants must, in addition to all this chic, analyze their creation with a serious, focused intellectuality, and so a second DVD is provided filled with that sort of bonus material. You may not want to watch all of it.

Musically, though, it's appropriately zestful, with the Ensemble Matheus under Jean-Christophe Spinosi combining with a cast vigorously led by contraalto Sonia Prina. The final effect is less of opera than of animation using live human beings.

It's sung in Italian but, inexplicably, has only English subtitles.

A contrasting example, of a Rossini opera performed entirely traditionally, is his one-act *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* (The Marriage Contract) directed by Michael Hampe for the Schwetzingen Festspiele in 1989 (issued on DVD by EuroArts in 2006).

This was Rossini's first ever operatic venture, produced when he was 18. A Canadian merchant in Europe looking for a wife, and the joke is that he treats it all simply as a business arrangement in a way that was apparently seen as typical of Americans and Canadians at the time. But the plot switches and, after he's been rejected, he saves the situation with his unaffected selflessness and goodness of heart.

It's arguable that musiclovers will in the event re-watch this affectionate portrayal more often than they will the eye-catching *Pietra del Paragone*. Novelty doesn't always win the day, even in France.

Paul Hindemith's opera *Cardillac* is, at 88 minutes, also short. It was something of a sensation when it was first produced in 1926, but then it largely disappeared from view, despite the composer issuing a revised version of the score in 1952. It was revived in 1985 by the celebrated opera director Jean-Pierre Ponnelle who staged it as far as possible in the "expressionist" style of its first production. Deutsche Grammophon then issued a DVD of Ponnelle's production in 2007.

Expressionism involves larger-than-life effects — masks, grotesque scenery and costumes, plus dramatic and non-naturalistic lighting. The style characterized early, silent cinema but has had a lasting influence on pop videos — far more so than the muted, atmospheric, unsensational "impre-

sionism" with which its name sets it in contrast.

The opera's story is set in 17th-century Paris and involves a mysterious jeweler, Cardillac, who commits a series of murders, each centered around a priceless artifact he has created. Fear and fascination are carefully balanced, however, and Cardillac's death at the end (lynched by the crowd) isn't entirely a cause for relief.

The cast is led by the veteran Wagnerian baritone Donald McIntyre (the Wotan in the 1976 Boulez/Chereau *Ring* cycle). The music is a great deal more dramatic and vigorous than might be expected from a composer often considered avant-garde, and the result is a strong DVD experience.

Finally, the Berlin Philharmonic has become involved in an interesting venture. It's now possible to watch all its concerts live, or as part of a digital archive. There's a catch, of course, in the form of a subscription — US\$213 for a year, US\$56 for 30 days, or US\$14 for a single concert (live or from the archive).

The live performances are not instantly attractive in Asia because of the time difference — they mostly take place in the early hours of our mornings. But the uptake has been strong in the region, with Japan accounting for 13 percent of all subscribers, second only to those from Germany itself. There are tours on the orchestra's Web site in Chinese, Japanese and Korean, and clearly a strong following from these population areas is anticipated.

Full details of the scheme are available on these two sites: dch.berliner-philharmoniker.de and dch.berliner-philharmoniker.de/#/en/prices/tickets.

The Berliners' next concert, featuring Haydn's *The Seasons*, is on Wednesday at 8pm Berlin time. It will be conducted by Simon Rattle, with soloists Thomas Quasthoff, Christiane Oelze and John Mark Ainsley.

Hardcover: UK

Biographer flinches at the dark side of William Golding

John Carey's authorized life of the man who wrote 'Lord of the Flies' doesn't fully capture the creative madness of its subject

BY PETER CONRAD
THE GUARDIAN, LONDON

We hear a lot about the death of the author, but William Golding is an author who was almost still-born. The man who wrote *Lord of the Flies* found that no one wanted to publish it. In 1953, his manuscript spent seven months being perused by publishers, who all promptly returned it. The Curtis Brown agency even declined to represent the would-be author, a dispirited schoolmaster who had written the book during classes and given his pupils, in lieu of an education, the humdrum task of totting up the number of words per page. A dead end seemed to have been reached when the Faber reader, picking through pages that were now yellow and grubby from handling, contemptuously rejected the submission as "absurd & uninteresting ... rubbish & dull."

Then Charles Monteith, a former lawyer hired as an editor by Faber only a month before, retrieved the book from the bin and persuaded his colleagues to buy it for the piffling sum of US\$98. As a set text for schools, *Lord of the Flies* went on to sell millions of copies, introducing

adolescents worldwide to the idea of original sin and the knowledge of their own barbarity.

My childhood reading life began, so far as I can recall, with R.M. Ballantyne's naively imperialist story *The Coral Island*; my innocence came to an end when I opened *Lord of the Flies*, which warps Ballantyne's tale into an allegory about the wickedness of our species and its rightful ejection from the happy garden. The novel, as the critic Lionel Trilling said, marked a mutation in culture: God may have died, but the Devil was flourishing, especially in England's elite public schools.

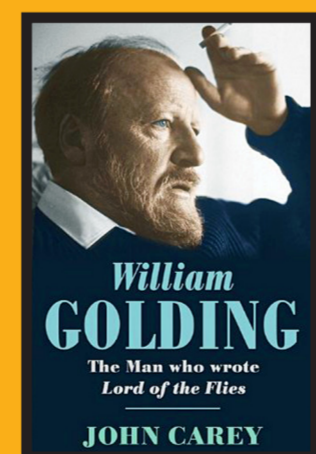
Yet the man who wrote *Lord of the Flies* spent the rest of his life regretting that he had done so. Golding considered the book "boring and crude." Its classic status struck him as "a joke" and he disparaged his income from it as "Monopoly money." And what right had it to overshadow later, better books, like his evolutionary saga, *The Inheritors*, his medieval fable, *The Spire*, or his solipsistic tragedy, *Pincher Martin*?

Towards the end of his life, he refused to reread the manuscript (much revised, on Monteith's orders, before publication): he

feared he'd be so dismayed he might do himself a mischief. Golding whispered the truth about these protests in his journal. He abominated *Lord of the Flies*, he confided, because "basically I despise myself and am anxious not to be discovered, uncovered, detected, rumbled." Discovery, uncovering, detection and rumbling are the appointed tasks of the biographer, about which John Carey, in this authorized life of a man he "admired and respected," evidently feels uncomfortable.

Golding called himself a monster. His imagination lodged a horde of demons, buzzing like flies inside his haunted head, and his dreams rehearsed his guilt in scenarios that read like sketches for incidents in his novels, which they often were. After dark, his mother became a murderous maniac, hurling knives, shards of shattered mirror or metal pots of scalding tea at little William; a girlfriend he had cast off returned as a stiffened corpse, which he watched himself trying to bury in the garden. At his finest, Golding paid traumatized tribute to the pain of other creatures, like the hooked octopus he once saw impaled by the "vulnerable, vulvar sensitive

PUBLICATION NOTES



WILLIAM GOLDING: THE MAN WHO WROTE LORD OF THE FLIES

BY JOHN CAREY

573 PAGES

FABER

flesh" of its pink, screaming mouth, or a rabbit he shot in Cornwall, which stared at him before it fell with "a combination of astonishment and outrage." But pity didn't prohibit him

from firing the shot. He understood the Nazis, he said, because he was "of that sort by nature." His sexual assault on a 15-year-old girl has been titillatingly leaked to publicize Carey's biography. More generally, his son-in-law testifies that Golding specialized in belittling others — if that is, he recognized them at all. As Carey notes, he chronically misspelled names because he couldn't be bothered with people and their pesky claim to exist.

Carey documents Golding's ogre-like antics, but is reluctant to speculate about their origins. "I do not know," he says, "why he thought he was a monster," and he concludes this long, loyal, conscientious book by admitting there may be a primal scene, a hidden obscenity, that still eludes him — "something I have not discovered." Should a biographer, I wonder, accept defeat with such good grace? Carey prefers to deal with the masks the monster wore in public.

His worst rampages occurred when he was drunk. Once, staying at a friend's house in London, Golding awoke in panic and dismembered a Bob Dylan puppet because he thought it was Satan.

Carey nervously makes light of the episode, referring to it as a "diabolic encounter." Religion and rationality, myth and science, fight it out in Golding's books as if Carey is too sane or puritanical to comprehend the creative madness of his subject.

He is tactful about Golding's relations with his children, both of whom suffered psychological upsets, or with his put-upon wife, who seems to have had her revenge by interrogating him at public lectures; at a gig in Lisbon, her voice from the darkened auditorium demanded to be told why there weren't more women in his books. Carey, a battle-scarred class warrior whose books include *The Intellectuals* and *the Masses*, sympathizes with the young Golding's embarrassments at Oxford, where interviewers wrote him off as "not quite a gentleman." He's strangely reticent, however, about the old man's desperation to gain admission to the establishment. Golding pestered well-placed acquaintances to nominate him for a knighthood, which he called "Kultivating my K," and when it was finally doled out he changed the name on his passport with

indecent alacrity and began to take pleasure in the sycophancy of hotel managers and head waiters.

The self-contempt that Golding defined as the clue to his character pays dividends for Carey the textual scholar, who here unearths a series of early drafts for published novels or extracts from projects unjustifiably abandoned — a "magnificent" but unfinished work of Homeric science fiction, a memoir that was self-censored because it was too raw, a film script about a traffic jam that rehearses the Apocalypse, a first version of *The Inheritors* that "cries out to be published as a novel in its own right" and a segment excised from *Darkness Visible* that is also "a masterpiece crying out for publication."

I suspect the cry Carey hears is that of unborn infants begging him to deliver them into the light and I hope he will do so. As a biographer, he may not have uncovered Golding's darkest, deepest secrets, but at least his detective work has grubbed up these intriguing, revealing relics. The man who wrote *Lord of the Flies* indeed wrote better things, some of which the rest of us should be given the chance to read.