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WORD WORTH

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COVER

GREETINGS

EDITORIALS

LETTERS

COLUMNS

ARTS

LINKS

NEXT

Issue
coming out
on the 1st

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Word Worth's Site of the Month
[Hilton Pond Center](#)

In This Issue:

M H Perry receives the 2008 Apex Grand Award

[Alastair Reid](#) [Classic Readings](#)

“You're No...”

To paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen in response to Dan Quayle, vice presidential candidates twenty years ago: We've followed Senator Clinton through fifty states; we've witnessed her grace in defeat as well as in victory; we've watched her endure through deep personal disappointment; we've seen her dedication to those she represents; we've observed her indefatigable spirit. Sarah, you're no Hillary Clinton.

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by Anna Seymour *in* [Editorials](#)

My Life Without T.V.

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In the absence of canned entertainment, children had to get imaginative with their time between homework and school. We organized cultural shows and fetes, invited the adults and charged them for 'tickets.' We investigated our fields and forests. We raided fruit orchards. And we read – voraciously, competitively – competing for the number of books we read, how fast, and how big the words were.

by Rita Banerji *in* [Columns](#)

Photography



by Leslie Marks *in* [Arts](#)

You're No...

by Anna Seymour

“Hillary left 18 million cracks in the highest, hardest glass ceiling in America, but it turns out the women of America aren’t finished yet and we can shatter that glass ceiling once and for all,” gushed Sarah Palin.

To paraphrase Lloyd Bentsen in response to Dan Quayle, vice presidential candidates twenty years ago: We’ve followed Senator Clinton through fifty states; we’ve witnessed her grace in defeat as well as in victory; we’ve watched her persevere through deep personal disappointment; we’ve seen her dedication to those she represents; we’ve observed her indefatigable spirit. Sarah, you’re no Hillary Clinton.

The idea that a woman is a woman, and any woman will do if there has to be someone female is both misogynistic and insulting. Suppose men were regarded in that light—

Well, George wants to stay down on the farm, so why not let Benedict Arnold be president instead of Washington—or Aaron Burr?

Gee, Lincoln’s kind of homely. He’s got a wart on his face. Let’s let Jefferson Davis be president of the Union instead. Or how about Robert E. Lee. He’s really good looking. He even could have been runner up in a beauty contest. If they had those then. And for men.

Of course, this presidential candidate traded in one wife for another soon after he returned from Viet Nam. The old model had done enough hand wringing while he was a prisoner to make her “not the woman I married.” The new model was much younger and far, far wealthier. All right, maybe that’s unfair. Still, his vice presidential pick lends credence to it.

This selection after hurling “unqualified” accusations at Obama leaves one dumb-founded. Granted, Senator McCain seems quite healthy at the age of seventy-two, and his mother is still living in her nineties. His father, however, is not. Senator McCain is knocking at the door of a man’s current life expectancy in this country. Only a fool can ignore the fact that McCain has a greater than typical chance of leaving the presidency before his term would expire.

So we need to consider the kind of Vice President—and possibly President—we would have in Sarah Palin. Her national experience is nil, and her international is less. She

became governor of Alaska as a result of redistricting after serving as mayor of a small town. She got the reputation as a reformer. After getting into office, however, she has been accused of cronyism—which is certainly a type of corruption. In addition, she fired a public safety commissioner reportedly for refusing to fire her former brother-in-law. She apparently believes in using public office for personal revenge. This is a serious form of corruption. She earned the epithet “Sarah Barracuda” for her willingness to attack those she resents. She has been an opponent of sex education in the schools, and now her seventeen year old daughter is pregnant. The daughter and her baby’s father will marry, Palin claims. When? Obviously not at the age of sixteen when the child was apparently conceived. At seventeen? Or when her baby is five years old? And what difference does this make to those who truly respect family values rather than giving lip service to them?

Governor Palin maintains that this is family business and no one else’s. When one brings a child into the world, however, one does just that. A child is not a gift to oneself nor to the parents and grandparents. Once the child is born, it is of the world. The parent doesn’t have the right to smother him or torture her.

Governor Palin stated that she and her husband were proud of their daughter’s decision to keep the baby, and well they should be. The key word there, however, is **decision**, and Sarah Palin belongs to a group of people who want to take the right of decision away from women. One member of this group was willing to slink around Dr. Barnett Slepian’s home and shoot him in the head endangering his children as well. This is not **pro-life** as those who advocate legislating the decision would have us believe. It is an anti-women stance, and it is an anti-life stance.

Before abortion was a legal choice, an unmarried woman who was pregnant was ostracized and shunned. She was considered to be a fool who “got herself pregnant.” It ruined her life, and it ruined the “bastard’s” life. I know someone who became pregnant in the 1950s when she was fifteen. The father was sixteen. There was no doubt at the time that it would destroy her life to give birth. The four prospective grandparents arranged for an illegal abortion. The girl was luckier than most: it was a safe abortion. Neither the girl nor the boy ever got over that event. It wrecked their lives in ways no one could have predicted. They were sent in separate directions, and each path was tough. After thirty years and marriages and different children and divorces, they got together again. The abortion was a big thing that was forced on them by parents who knew that in the 1950s it was the only viable option. Each was the love of the other’s life, but their history with the abortion was a chasm between them. Governor Palin’s daughter is very lucky that it is now a decision that she can legally make, and because of that and that alone, the stigma is gone.

As governor, Sarah Palin put government money toward building great trails—good—but she cut funding to the local museum and library. This suggests that she has little respect for our culture and history.

Palin’s barracuda nickname, which she earned at two different points in her life—she was nearly recalled as mayor—indicates that she is temperamentally incapable of diplomacy. As we deal with the wars we’ve jumped into in the Middle East and dwindling support from former allies, diplomacy is what we are going to need the most.

I have been registered as a Democrat, and I have been registered as a Republican. In the voting booth, I consider loyalty to party (or gender or religion or anything) rather than to country to be tantamount to treason. I very much wanted to vote for Senator Clinton for president. Several months ago, I was seriously considering voting for McCain. He is a fine and heroic man, but he has subverted his best ideology. This last fiasco is way over the top. Any woman is in no way as good as the right woman.

Sarah Palin is very charismatic, but she is in no way currently appropriate for the position of Vice President of the United States. If elected, she will make Dick Cheney look like Santa Claus.

Interesting information: <http://sarahpalinexposed.com/>

[\[Cover\]](#) [\[Greetings\]](#) [\[Editorials\]](#) [\[Letters\]](#) [\[Columns\]](#) [\[Arts\]](#) [\[Links\]](#) [\[Classifieds\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)



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COLUMNS

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My Life Without T.V.

by Rita Banerji

A childhood without television may be inconceivable today – but that’s how I grew up.

And no, I wasn’t a deprived child; none of the inhabitants of the small Indian towns I grew up in owned a T.V. Until the early 80s, television in India was state controlled, and the low tech broadcasts reached only a few big cities. Even then a T.V. was luxury that few could afford.

In the absence of canned entertainment, children had to get imaginative with their time between homework and school. We organized cultural shows and fetes, invited the adults and charged them for ‘tickets.’ We investigated our fields and forests. We raided fruit orchards. And we read – voraciously, competitively – competing for the number of books we read, how fast, and how big the words were.

However, we did live one year in a city where there was T.V. My mother, concerned it would overshadow school, set a T.V. time-slot for us between 6 and 6.30 p.m. It coincided with a program called ‘Krishi darshan’ (The Farmer’s Vision). The program was perfunctory since most Indian farmers then had neither T.V. nor electricity. A band of poker-faced men sat around and discussed seeds, tractors and cow-dung with intense gravity. Not surprisingly, the novelty of watching live people squashed into a box, moving their lips and emitting sounds, soon wore out on us, and we opted for our more rambunctious outdoor activities.

My next encounter with T.V. was in the U.S. where I attended college in the mid 80s. Every dorm on campus had a large television set in the living-room, which the students would attack after dinner each hoping to get their choice of channel in first. When my roommate realized that I didn't know who the Simpsons were, she literally dragged me for a preview. However, what to her was mandatory entertainment, to me was a techno midget that I expected would impress me with some phenomenal, out-of-space displays. And a bunch of one-dimensional cartoons seemed even less impressive than 'The Farmer's Vision.'

Perhaps the only occasion where I felt inadequate because of my lack of T.V. culture, was the summer I volunteered as usher for the commencement of the graduating class. By popular vote, Glenn Close was the guest speaker that year, and the campus was in a buzz as this was in the wake of her much talked about film- 'Fatal Attraction.' I had been posted at the entrance to the building where the faculty were to gather, with strict instructions that 'for security reasons' everyone's name was to be checked against a list. My dilemma, which I was too embarrassed to state, was I didn't know what Ms. Close looked like. But I figured she must arrive with a gaggle of paparazzi trailing her. She arrived with one other faculty, both in academic gowns. It was only when I politely requested her name—and she shot me a look like I was demented—that I knew.

But what I found to be most impertinent was people's response to my T.V.-less state. When I moved into my apartment in Washington D.C., friends visiting would inevitably ask where my T. V. was. I wondered whether that was because my company was unexciting, or whether it was just a reflection on how they surveyed their surroundings. Perhaps it seemed as astounding to them as a house without a roof or furniture! Why would I need a television when the city with its umpteen concert halls and museums provided enough to keep me satiated?

But nine years after I moved to the U.S., I did get a television set—a cast off from a friend who was leaving the country; it was one of those antiquated models with a turning knob. "If you get cable it works very well," he promised. I never got cable, and the only channel I received on it was a slightly static view of PBS, which I must admit had some programs that I grew to relish.

But the anti-climax of my T.V. saga would happen only when I returned to India. In a little over the decade that I was away, India had made a remarkable technological leap. The T.V. was now more a household necessity than a luxury item. Even in slums, families with half a dozen children who were sent to labor in factories, would pool their incomes and first invest in a large colored T. V. And T.V. broadcasting was no longer state controlled. There were more than eighty private

channels, beaming ruthlessly, 24 hours a day. And the Indian audience, voracious, looked to the U.S. for mentorship. I was eagerly quizzed on updates on the latest episodes of ‘Friends,’ ‘ER,’ and ‘Sex in City’—episodes yet to broadcast here that I should have already previewed there. And when I drew a blank, I was viewed suspiciously. Was I really living where I said I was? “Well, what did you see?” they’d demand to know. ‘Are You Being Served?,’ ‘Masterpiece Theater,’ and ‘Inspector Morse,’ I’d respond recounting my PBS previews. And they’d listen to me, squinting like one does when trying to decipher a foreign language, and nod, like when people do when they patronize the fantasies of children.

[\[Cover\]](#) [\[Greetings\]](#) [\[Editorials\]](#) [\[Letters\]](#) [\[Columns\]](#) [\[Arts\]](#) [\[Links\]](#) [\[Classifieds\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)



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[COVER](#)

[GREETINGS](#)

[EDITORIALS](#)

[LETTERS](#)

[COLUMNS](#)

[ARTS](#)

[LINKS](#)

Leslie Marks

Photography

of African Birds

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