

Digging Deeper IX: Connecting the Dots

For more than a year, United for Peace of Pierce County has been conducting “Digging Deeper,” a Monday night book discussion group, often in the form of a study circle around a group of books, copies of which participants read, pass around, and discuss. Topics have included peak oil, climate change, and the corporation, as well as abiding themes of war, peace, and social change. Continuing in this tradition, on September 12, 2005, *Digging Deeper IX* will begin a four-week study circle examining a number of diverse works touching on this theme: **The hidden connections among forces whose interaction is not always apparent but which may be crucial in determining outcomes.**

- **Matthew R. Simmons, *Twilight in the Desert: The Coming Saudi Oil Shock and the World Economy* (Wiley, 2005):** *Wall Street Journal*: “The Saudis claim to have huge oil reserves. Do they really? . . . Matthew R. Simmons, a Texas investment banker with a Harvard Business School degree and 20 years' experience in oil, has his doubts. . . . Mr. Simmons argues that the Saudis may be deceiving the world and themselves . . . First, Mr. Simmons notes, all Saudi claims exist behind a veil of secrecy. In 1982, the Saudi government took complete control of Aramco (the Arabian American Oil Co.) after four decades of co-ownership with a consortium of major oil companies. Since then Aramco has never released field-by-field figures for its oil production. . . . Mr. Simmons became suspicious of Saudi claims after taking a guided tour of Aramco facilities in 2003. To penetrate the veil, he turned to the electronic library of the Society of Petroleum Engineers, which regularly publishes technical papers by field geologists.”
- **Andrew Gumbel, *Steal This Vote: Dirty Elections and the Rotten History of Democracy in America* (Nation Books, 2005).** *Publisher's Weekly*: “[Gumbel] traces election fraud in America from the 18th century to the present. . . . The last 100 pages are devoted to the elections of 2000 and 2004. Gumbel rehearses the Florida mess and argues that those who care about voting rights should be terrified by Justice Scalia's argument in *Bush v. Gore* that the Constitution doesn't per se guarantee a right of suffrage. Gumbel shows that the confusion (at best) and cheating (at worst) that went on in Florida are not unusual.” Andrew Gumbel writes for the *Independent* (London).
- **George Lakoff, *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate — The Essential Guide for Progressives* (Chelsea Green, 2004; orig. ed. 2002).** *Publisher's Weekly*: “Lakoff, a cognitive scientist and linguist at Berkeley, believes he knows why conservatives have been so successful in recent years and how progressives like himself can beat them at their own game. This slim book presents a simple, accessible overview of his theory of ‘moral politics’ and a call to action for Democrats mourning November's election results. Lakoff's persuasive argument focuses on two ideas: what he calls ‘framing,’ and the opposition of liberals’ and conservatives’ concepts of the family. . . . In Lakoff's view, conservatives adhere to a ‘strict father’ model of family, in contrast to liberals’ ‘nurturant parent’ view, and he sees this difference as the key to understanding most of the two sides’ clashes.”
- **V.S. Ramachandran, *A Brief Tour of Human Consciousness: From Impostor Poodles to Purple Numbers* (Pi Press, 2004 [paper 2005]).** *Publisher's Weekly*: “What does an amputee who still feels a phantom limb have in common with an avant-garde artist, or a schizophrenic who claims to be controlled by alien implants, or an autistic child who can draw a hyper-realistic horse? According to neuroscientist Ramachandran (coauthor, *Phantoms in the Brain*), named by *Newsweek* one of the 100 people to watch in the 21st century, the answer lies deep in the physical structures of the brain, and his new book offers a thought-provoking survey of his area of research. Through examples, anecdotes and conjecture, Ramachandran aims ‘to make neuroscience . . . more accessible to a broad audience.’ In this he succeeds admirably. . . . The text is engaging and readable.” V.S. Ramachandran is prof. of psychology and neuroscience at UC San Diego.
- **William Engdahl, *A Century of War: Anglo-American Oil Politics and the New World Order*, revised ed. (Pluto Press, 2004).** *Back cover*: “This book is a gripping account of the murky world of the international oil industry and its role in world politics.” — William Podmore of London, England: “This fascinating book examines the huge role that oil played in the 20th century. The rival empires' struggle for the Middle East's oil was one of the causes of the First World War. Control of this resource was one of World War Two's great prizes. The oil price rises of the 1970s made the North Sea and Alaska fields profitable and led to the petrodollar monetary system, based on speculation not investment, profit not production. Oil money has always funded the environmental and anti-nuclear movements.” William Engdahl is a freelance economics journalist who has written on energy, politics, and economics for more than thirty years and has contributed regularly to publications like Japan's *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, Grant's *Investor.com*, and *European Banker*.

MEETING SCHEDULE — Mondays from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on September 12, 19, & 26, and October 3 at the Mandolin Café, 3923 S. 12th St., Tacoma, WA.

Books are available for borrowing or purchase; there is no charge for participation. Contact Mark Jensen at jensenmk@plu.edu or 253-756-7519, or Ted Nation at tedn5@yahoo.com or 253-983-8997.