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THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE AMERICAN MUSICAL
TERRY TEACHOUT

THE TRANSGENDER TRIUMPH

Identity politics über alles

BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN

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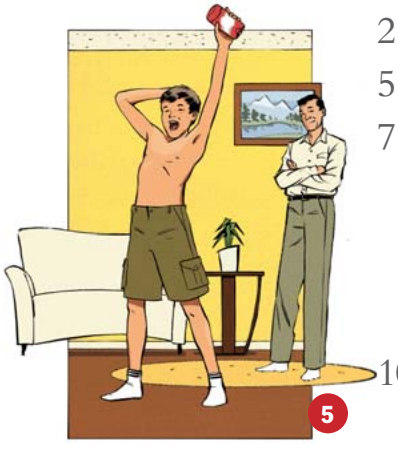

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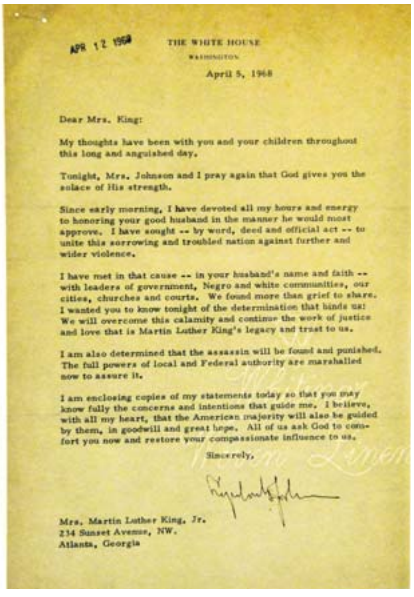
Condolences for Sale

Every now and then a minor news story manages to capture, in its details, some particle of truth about contemporary history and the state of the culture. Case in point: a story in last week's *Washington Post* entitled "Lyndon Johnson's letter to MLK's widow heads to auction after big fight." Our attention was drawn partly because The Scrapbook has an interest in historical ephemera—manuscripts, daguerreotypes, early recordings, what eBay calls "collectibles"—and stories about Martin Luther King Jr. artifacts are always intriguing.

It seems that, the morning after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968, President Lyndon Johnson sent a one-page, single-spaced, typewritten letter of condolence to King's widow, Coretta Scott King. As such things go, it makes for interesting reading. LBJ is not especially eloquent, but certain passages sound as if he might have drafted them himself—"we will overcome this calamity and continue the work of justice and love"—while others have a boilerplate quality: "I am enclosing copies of my statements today so that you may know fully the concerns and intentions that guide me."

In itself, the letter is of no great historical significance: It reveals nothing that isn't generally known, it is typed rather than handwritten, and the LBJ Presidential Library in Texas has a copy on file. But it is certainly a poignant artifact of a tragic moment in American history. Framed and stamped, with staple holes in one corner, the letter seems to have been kept by Coretta Scott King until 2003, when, for reasons unknown, she presented it to Harry Belafonte.



APR 12 1968

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 5, 1968

Dear Mrs. King:

My thoughts have been with you and your children throughout this long and anguished day.

Tonight, Mrs. Johnson and I pray again that God gives you the solace of His strength.

Since early morning, I have devoted all my hours and energy to honoring your good husband in the manner he would most approve. I have sought -- by word, deed and official act -- to unite this sorrowing and troubled nation against further and wider violence.

I have met in that cause -- in your husband's name and faith -- with leaders of government, Negro and white communities, our cities, churches and courts. We found more than grief to share. I wanted you to know tonight of the determination that binds us: We will overcome this calamity and continue the work of justice and love that is Martin Luther King's legacy and trust to us.

I am also determined that the assassin will be found and punished. The full powers of local and Federal authority are marshalled now to assure it.

I am enclosing copies of my statements today so that you may know fully the concerns and intentions that guide me. I believe, with all my heart, that the American majority will also be guided by them, in goodwill and great hope. All of us ask God to comfort you now and restore your compassionate influence to us.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr.
234 Sunset Avenue, NW.
Atlanta, Georgia

Of course, Belafonte, of "Banana Boat Song" fame, was a friend and colleague of the Kings in the civil rights movement. But not long after Mrs. King died in 2006 he shipped the letter to Sotheby's for auction—and the famously litigious King family swung into action. Mrs. King's surviving children not only sought to prevent the sale of the letter but claimed that it had been taken from the family's possession without permission. Whereupon Belafonte sued the King estate, a trial took place, and a settlement was reached last year allowing him to keep the letter.

Now, in turn, Belafonte has given the letter to his half-sister and brother-in-law, fellow civil rights veterans who live in the Washington area and recently concluded that, with publicity surrounding the theatrical release of *Selma*, this may be the ideal time to sell it. Accordingly, the letter is scheduled to be sold (along with other King mementoes) by a local auctioneer, which is taking no bids for the letter below $60,000. Thus far, the King family has raised no objection.

When the *Post* reporter asked Harry Belafonte's brother-in-law why he and his wife didn't leave such a treasure to their three sons, he laughingly replied, "My greatest worry was that we'd save this stuff for our children, and as soon as we'd die, they'd call someone in and say, 'How much will you give us for everything?'"

Which may well be true. But what a sad commentary on all involved. Of course, Coretta Scott King was within her rights to give the letter as a gift to her friend Harry Belafonte. But the undue haste with which Belafonte sought to sell it when Mrs. King died, and his relatives' valuation of the letter as cash, only cheapens the document's tragic significance. O tempora! O mores! ♦

Ex-Texan

Singer-songwriter Steve Earle was recently asked by the *Texas Standard* if he would ever move back to his home state, and he had a rather revealing answer:

> No way, and I hope that doesn't hurt anybody's feelings. I'll always be a Texan, I'll always be proud of that. I landed at the airport yesterday and I walked down headed for the rent cars and I looked up at that statue of Barbara Jordan—that's the Texas that I left in 1974. And I'm not sure it's that anymore. I need to walk out my front door and see a mixed-race, same-sex couple holding hands and not being afraid to do it to feel safe at this point in my life. . . . So there is something going on there is no doubt about it but there's some things in our DNA that I guess allowed this to happen eventually. But there had never been a Republican governor in Texas when I left here—nobody could even imagine there ever being one.

Where to begin! Is Earle seriously suggesting that Texas has become less culturally tolerant in the last 40 years? And his proof of this is that

the state is now electing Republican governors? Of course, in 1974 southern Democrats were still barely removed from advocating segregation—right next door, Orval Faubus was governor of Arkansas until 1967. Ethnically and politically, Texas's current congressional delegation is more diverse than it was in 1974. While we're sure you can find pockets of intolerance anywhere, a quick stroll around, say, downtown Austin or Dallas's Oak Lawn neighborhood would suggest that mixed-race, same-sex couples aren't a particular source of outrage in the Lone Star State, let alone enough to make a straight white guy feel "unsafe."

The Scrapbook is a fan of Earle's songs and commends him as a particularly gifted storyteller and musician. But the country-rocker's image is heavily tied up in his conception of himself as a balladeer of the common man, particularly given Earle's own past as a drug addict and convict. However, Earle's been wedded to liberal political activism for so long it's clouding his basic judgment. If Texas isn't liberal enough for Steve Earle and the Democratic party's liking, that's a reflection of how far to the left they have moved, not proof that Texas is going backwards culturally. And it's a shame Earle would slander a whole state rather than admit he's the one who's out of touch. ♦

New Hashtags for the White House?

Failing upwards is a Washington tradition, but even The Scrapbook was taken aback by the promotion of Jennifer Psaki from State Department spokesperson to White House director of communications. Psaki, along with her State Department colleague Marie Harf, had acquired quite the reputation for putting the "foggy" in Foggy Bottom.

When she wasn't being obtuse, Psaki was just plain embarrassing. After she accused Russia of not living up to the "promise of hashtag," her efforts to conflate diplomacy with silly social media stunts were roundly mocked. At one memorable press conference, she tried to articulate the U.S. Egypt policy. In response to her vapid and incoherent answer, the Associated Press's Matt Lee told Psaki, "What you said says nothing. It's like saying, 'we support the right of people to breathe.'" At another press conference, Psaki was asked about the deteriorating security situation in Iraq. "There have been, certainly, gains made by the Iraqi Security Forces in Iraq," she said. "I can go through some of those for you if that would be useful." Psaki then proceeded to riffle through a notebook and came up with no examples. One could go on in this vein at some length.

Of course, the second-term Obama White House doesn't exactly have a high bar for competence, let alone integrity. Psaki is replacing White House director of communications Jennifer Palmieri. Palmieri cut her teeth as John Edwards's press secretary during his 2004 campaign and as an adviser to his 2008 campaign. Speaking of failing upwards, with all of this experience furthering the career of a slick southern politician who publicly betrayed his much-admired wife, Palmieri is, of course, leaving the White House to work on the Clinton campaign. As one former Al Gore adviser said to *Bloomberg* about Palmieri joining the

Clinton campaign, "If you're looking to establish trust and credibility from the beginning, you couldn't do any better."

Yes, "trust and credibility" are exactly the words that come to mind when one thinks of the mouthpiece for John Edwards and Barack "If You Like Your Plan . . ." Obama.

We hesitate to give Psaki the benefit of the doubt in her new gig, but let's face it. If you were paid to go out every day and defend the Obama administration's disastrous leading-from-behind, "strategic patience" foreign policy, you'd probably end up sounding like an idiot, too. ♦

Arnaud de Borchgrave, 1926-2015

In an earlier life, The Scrapbook worked at the *Washington Times* under the storied foreign correspondent Arnaud de Borchgrave, whose long career at *Newsweek* was already the stuff of legend when he became editor in chief of the *Times* in 1985. As an underdog, upstart, scrappy competitor of the *Washington Post*, the *Times* had an eccentric newsroom in those days. There were some solid professionals surrounded by the very young (including this writer), and the very old, wannabes and has-beens, oddballs, obsessives, and even a brilliant crackpot or two.

Arnaud de Borchgrave

The ideal newsroom dynamic, in The Scrapbook's experience, can be compared to a nuclear reactor, with a little bit of fissile material, typically the aggressive young reporters out to make a name for themselves, surrounded by a lot of control rods, to keep the thing from blowing up or melting down.

Arnaud turned this relationship on its head: He was pure energy. If there was danger ahead, his instinct was to step on the accelerator, hard, and never hit the brakes. This could make for interesting editorial meetings, with the subordinate sometimes trying to figure out some politic way to rein in the boss.

The Scrapbook particularly remembers when Arnaud, in early 1989, scored an interview with the just-inaugurated President Bush and solicited questions from a few of us. Our ideas were so boring we don't recall them now; Arnaud, on the other hand, with a twinkle in his eye, said he was going to ask the president about German reunification. At the time—almost a year before the Berlin Wall fell—this struck us as pure fantasy, if not science fiction, and a waste of valuable time with the new president. We may even have rolled our eyes. Arnaud, being Arnaud, of course went right ahead.

After the Wall came down that November, we reminded him of his prescience, but he deflected all credit. He confided that Vernon Walters—an old friend of Arnaud whom Bush had named ambassador to West Germany—suspected that the East Bloc was about to come unglued and that the administration was not sufficiently prepared for such a momentous event. He had suggested to Arnaud that he ask Bush the question, in hopes of provoking more imaginative thinking within the national security apparatus about scenarios that, as it happened, became reality sooner than almost anyone had anticipated.

That was Arnaud to a tee—unbelievably well-plugged-in, with access to the highest levels of government, putting his access to maximum use. He died last week, at 88, not the last of a breed, as some of the obituarists put it, but one of a kind. ♦

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Young Spice

Over the holidays, I was at my sister's place. The youngest generation was racing about the house screaming "Not in the face!" as they shot each other with foam projectiles launched from colorful plastic rifles.

Their older cousins sat with the adults, eating hors d'oeuvres and chatting about finding apartments, landing jobs, and otherwise filling out their futures. What a change, I thought. I remember these people as newborns. Now they're on the verge of adulthood and talking about things I've done myself. And for a second I felt relevant. But only a second. Next I felt old, a feeling that was much less quick to pass.

My future, unlike theirs, is not a blank page. I left college 20 years ago and have been in the same line of work ever since. Rent I no longer pay because I have this other thing called a mortgage. And while I do give a lot of thought to how I want to live, I am aware that with three kids and a well-chosen spouse, I have already placed some major bets.

I retain many fresh-seeming memories of my twenties, but there's a good bit of stuff that happened after that decade and before the period I think of as, well, now. So, I cannot really be young, except in the not-true metaphorical sense.

Recently, I mentioned to a new acquaintance something that had happened to me around the age of 30. "And that was, like, what, two years ago?" she said with friendly sarcasm. Naturally, I took offense.

It doesn't happen a lot, but over the summer I was definitely distracted by my age. We had taken in a baseball player who was a pitcher in the local college all-star summer league.

Before he arrived, I made so many jokes about my wife Cynthia fawning over the handsome young jock in our midst. *Oh, do you need a fresh towel?* I had her saying, as she flung herself about the house, starry-eyed and eager to please. Which isn't at all like Cynthia, but never mind.

JORI BOLTON

Once I met him, however, the jokes no longer made sense. He was a total innocent. He drank milk by the gallon. When he was going to be late, he would text my wife sheepish messages to let her know. He played with our kids, winding up his southpaw with a wiffle ball to the howls of my boys before releasing slow fat ones right over the plate.

It occurred to me that he was closer in age to my children than he was to me. I once broached conversation by asking him about the average number of pitches he threw in a start, then instantly regretted it, realizing how dorky this sounded. He didn't actually call me "Sir," but I could tell he was thinking it.

For a few weeks the pitcher slept in our basement, which also happens to be where we watch television and keep all the children's toys. On the whole, Cynthia and I tried to discourage use of the downstairs while he was boarding with us. But our boys—especially the older one, Ben—could not be kept away from the pitcher or his things.

Ben is 8 years old and, incidentally, one person I can count on not to think of me as middle-aged. A while back, I took him to a park with some tennis courts. We practiced together, and then I told him to go hit against a wall while I worked on my serve. But he refused, yelling, "You just want to practice by yourself so you can become a big famous tennis player, and you won't play with me because you don't want me to become a famous tennis player."

He is wide-eyed about growing up, almost as much as he is confused by it. Recently he asked us to buy him deodorant—Old Spice, to be exact. Where had this come from? It turned out that Old Spice was the brand our pitcher wore. Being killjoys, Cynthia and I told Ben he didn't need deodorant. Undeterred, he bought some on his own, with saved-up allowance money, and began wearing it. "For the commanding man," the label says.

No amount of joshing would make Ben rethink his decision. Instead he answered his critics by marching around the house with his elbows high in the air and his underarms exposed, saying, "Smell my wrath."

It's a line usually associated with another kind of body odor. I know some very good parents who would have taken corrective action at this point, but not me. Fart humor, like childhood itself, is timeless, which must explain my weakness for it.

David Skinner

the weekly Standard

A Fire Bell in the Night

Dozing off as we pored through a raft of mostly meaningless polls this week, we were startled awake by one set of findings. The CNN/ORC survey released February 18 was The Weekly Standard's own little fire bell in the night.

What, you surely ask, alarmed us so?

We've been optimistic about 2016. After all, parties do seem to lose the White House after two terms. Since 1952, when one party has completed eight years in the Oval Office, voters have turned over the presidency at the end of that span to the other party in every case but one. We've tended to assume that 2016 would likely follow the pattern of 1960, 1968, 1976, 2000, and 2008—which of course would mean a Republican taking the presidential oath in 2017.

We were certainly aware of the skunk-at-the-garden-party observation that the elections of 1960, 1968, 1976, and 2000 were all very close. In each of these cases, even though the incumbent party had suffered all kinds of problems during its eight years in the Oval Office (a recession, Vietnam, Watergate, impeachment), it nonetheless came within a point or two of hanging on for a third term. Even in 2008, the McCain-Palin ticket was more or less even with Obama-Biden until the financial cataclysm hit in mid-September.

So perhaps a third term in the White House might not be as much of an uphill struggle as we wanted to think. And in 1988, George H.W. Bush defeated Michael Dukakis easily to secure a third GOP term in succession. We were already aware of the nagging possibility that Hillary Clinton could do in 2016 what George H.W. Bush did in 1988. The CNN/ORC poll elevated that unpleasant possibility to a clear and present fear.

The survey asked whether each of seven presidential possibilities better represented the future or the past. All four Republicans (Jeb Bush, Chris Christie, Rand Paul, and Scott Walker) were viewed by a plurality of respondents as representing the past more than the future. Jeb Bush fared much the worst: 64 percent of Americans considered him as representing the past, only 33 percent the future.

As for the Democrats, the good news was that Vice President Joe Biden had identically poor numbers to Jeb Bush. The not-so-great news was that Elizabeth Warren's future-vs.-past numbers were a strongly positive 46-37. The truly alarming news was that senior citizen Hillary Clinton, who has been at the center of the national stage for over two decades, managed a positive 50-48 result.

So voters (admittedly, by a small margin) think Hillary Clinton "represents the future." And they believe all the Republicans represent the past. Yikes.

What's going on? Well, it's true that Hillary Clinton would be the first woman president. That's something new, and there's not much any of the likely GOP nominees can do about that.

One thing Republicans could do is nominate someone like Scott Walker instead of Jeb Bush. Walker's numbers (39 future/42 past) at least put him within hailing distance of Hillary Clinton. Maybe one of the possible candidates not included in the poll (Marco Rubio? Ted Cruz? Mike Pence?) would do better on the past/future question. But the numbers that we have do suggest a deeper Republican problem.

Despite the beginnings of a reform conservative agenda, despite attempts to address populist concerns with Main Street economic policies, and despite the wish to liberate the GOP from the image that it's the party of Bush/Dole/Bush/McCain/Romney, none of these efforts seems to have really taken hold yet. Perhaps one will over the next two years.

Or perhaps it won't matter. Perhaps some new set of concerns in 2016 will overwhelm all the past/future talk. Given the state of the world, that's quite possible. We could easily have a foreign policy election in 2016. And then people might not mind a steady hand, even if one from the past (think Richard Nixon in 1968).

But would that be bad for Hillary? She'll have more foreign policy experience than any of the GOP candidates. And in the absence of a bold Republican foreign and defense policy agenda that really breaks from the status quo (think Reagan 1980), it's not so clear that the agenda of the GOP foreign policy establishment will be that much more attractive than that of the Hillary Clinton wing of the Democratic foreign policy establishment.

It's of course very early in the 2016 cycle. But it's never too early for some healthy alarm. Are we the only ones who are struck that many of the leading Republican candidates, whether moderate or conservative, seem to be planning stale and tired campaigns? Hillary will herself, it's safe to predict, run a stale campaign with tired themes. But the polls suggest she would prevail in a conventional matchup of boring campaigns.

We're all free to ignore the fire bell in the night, and hope for the best. But it would be a shame to have to explain in November 2016 how the Republican party decided to sleepwalk to defeat.

—William Kristol

The End Run

Who could be against submitting a nuclear deal with Iran to Congress for approval? If you guessed Barack Obama, you're right.

President Obama is not merely opposed to a role for Congress. He's ready to veto legislation providing for an up-or-down vote on any nuclear agreement with Iran, even if the vote is nonbinding. Why? "Because it would . . . negatively impact our ability to reach a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear program and to implement a future deal," White House press secretary Josh Earnest explained.

That's not all. "A congressional vote on a nonbinding instrument is not required by law and could set an unhelpful precedent for other negotiations that result in other nonbinding instruments," he said. Besides, "Congress has had its say," since members of Congress have been kept "in the loop on the status" of the talks with Iran.

Obama protests too much. There's something fishy about his insistence on stiffing Congress. He has no history of opposing congressional intervention in foreign affairs. On the contrary, it was Obama who pleaded for a congressional vote last year on whether to punish Syria with a bombing attack after it had used a chemical weapon to kill civilians. A congressional vote wasn't required or even contemplated until the president spoke up. After Congress declined to vote, Obama called off the attack.

In the case of Iran, the president and his State Department subordinates have a more serious fear than disrupted negotiations or bad precedents. It's that Congress would lay out the deal's flaws and unrequited concessions, then reject it outright. Even a nonbinding resolution of disapproval could make it politically impossible for Obama to move ahead to implement the deal.

Well-publicized hearings could be especially difficult for the administration. How do you explain the trajectory of the talks from the initial goal of dismantling Iran's nuclear facilities to settling today for an Iran on the brink of becoming a nuclear power? Arguing that the only alternative is war with Iran won't carry the day.

The idea of engaging Congress was introduced by Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee. He cosponsored a bill last year based largely on section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act. It mandates that any "significant" American nuclear cooperation with other countries comply with specific criteria and be submitted to Congress. It gives Congress 90 days to consider the agreement. If it fails to disapprove, the deal goes into effect. The Corker bill was never voted on.

But it's back in the new Congress, where Corker is now chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He's likely to introduce legislation similar to last year's shortly—and before Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses a joint session of Congress on March 3 on the Iranian threat.

The administration is already lobbying against Corker. At a Foreign Relations hearing in January, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken contended the legislation would trample on longtime presidential prerogatives and cause trouble with testing Iran's compliance with a deal.

Corker wasn't impressed, and for good reason. "Objections such as Blinken's are difficult . . . to take very seriously," Yishai Schwartz wrote in Lawfareblog. "Congress constantly weighs in on everything from trade deals to fishing agreements." The Atomic Energy Act is "ample precedent for mandating congressional discussion of the United States' most important agreements," Schwartz added.

"I want these negotiations to be successful," Corker said, "but just stiff-arming [Congress] . . . and saying 'no, we really don't want you to play a role, we want you to just trust us' is totally unacceptable from my standpoint. . . . I would just argue that having Congress as a backstop as you enter these final steps [of negotiations] would be somewhat of an anchor to keep us from continuing to move toward Iran's position."

Obama should know better than to think a deal with as treacherous and untrustworthy a regime as Iran's would be automatically accepted at home. Earlier presidents turned to Congress for help.

In 1972, President Nixon signed the SALT nuclear arms control agreement with the Soviet Union. It was a military agreement, not a treaty. So ratification by Congress wasn't necessary. But SALT was controversial, and Nixon asked for a vote in Congress. Once it passed, SALT was no longer a source of political conflict. In 1991, many of President Bush's advisers believed he should not seek congressional approval of the first Gulf war. Bush thought otherwise. War with Iraq was approved overwhelmingly in the House, narrowly in the Senate. The vote served as a vehicle for national acceptance.

Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser, is reported to have likened a nuclear accord with Iran to Obamacare. The health care act was Obama's greatest achievement in his first term, and the Iran deal would be the greatest in his second.

Rhodes missed something important. Obamacare is a matter of angry conflict because it was shoved through Congress. No Republican voted for it. Had Obama sought to compromise with Republicans, it wouldn't have taken much in the way of concessions. And Republicans—some of them anyway—would be co-owners of Obamacare today. And for all its malfunctions, it wouldn't have a party dedicated to repealing and replacing it. There's a simple rule: The bigger the issue, the more it needs bipartisan support.

Obama's mistake was to have negotiated an enormously consequential deal without congressional approval in mind. Or so it appears. He can veto Corker's bill allowing an up-or-down vote. But that will only make public acceptance of his Iran deal all but impossible.

—Fred Barnes

Putin's Long Arm

How Russia uses Interpol to harass opponents.

BY TED R. BROMUND

In Chechnya, Georgia, and Ukraine, Russia works through bribery, fear, and force to destroy its opponents. In the West, it works through Interpol and the U.S. Treasury. If Moscow decides to target you, being in the United States won't protect you from Russian harassment. In fact, it makes you a better victim.

Contrary to what you see in the movies, Interpol isn't an international police force. It doesn't arrest anyone. It's more like a global bulletin board for national law enforcement agencies. Every country is a member except North Korea. And one of the privileges of membership is that you can request that Interpol issue a "Red Notice," which asks other members to detain and extradite a wanted individual.

By the terms of its 1956 constitution, adopted in large part to assure Washington that the organization would not pursue asylum-seekers from behind the Iron Curtain, Interpol is not supposed to engage in activities of "a political, military, religious, or racial character." In other words, it's supposed to pursue only ordinary crimes. But in 2013, Interpol issued 8,857 Red Notices—about one every hour. At that rate, it's impossible for Interpol to be sure that it's only pursuing murderers, child molesters, rapists, and the like. It has to trust its member nations.

And that's the problem: A lot of Interpol's members aren't trustworthy. There is an appeal procedure through the Commission for the Control of Interpol's Files (CCF), but in 2013 the CCF issued only 122 conclusions. Most Red Notice requests are granted in hours, the process is electronic, and it requires no evidence: All you have to do is assert that a valid warrant exists. In Russia, this is a mere formality.

In his new bestseller *Red Notice*, U.S.-born British financier and critic of the Putin regime Bill Browder writes compellingly of his fight for justice for Sergei Magnitsky. Browder himself has successfully fought off three Russian requests for Red Notices. But he's more famous, and richer, than most of Vladimir Putin's adversaries. And, sadly, he was wrong when he wrote that, though a Red Notice might stop him from traveling, he was at least safe in Britain.

Browder was safe from extradition, yes. But he wasn't necessarily safe from the U.S. Treasury. On the form you fill out when you request a Red Notice, there's a box to check if you want to make the Red Notice public on Interpol's website. And once a Red Notice is public, there are consequences, even if the person targeted is a completely innocent victim of foreign persecution and is never extradited.

Ilya Katsnelson knows those consequences. Much of his harrowing story is public knowledge: A U.S. businessman living in Denmark, he was arrested in Germany in 2008 on the strength of a Red Notice issued at Russia's request as part of its politically motivated vendetta against Mikhail Khodorkovsky's Yukos oil company. Katsnelson was held for two months in a German maximum security prison.

What hasn't been revealed before is that Katsnelson wasn't just imprisoned. His account at Citibank was closed in late 2007—his investment banker told him privately this was because of his "problems with the Russians"—his assets sold at considerable loss, and a cashier's check sent to his attorney. Even today, his Red Notice asserts that he is wanted for fraud and money laundering.

Katsnelson isn't the only victim. Pavel Ivlev, a Russian lawyer and now a refugee in the United States, was also charged (as the Red Notice

GARY LOCKE

Ted R. Bromund is senior research fellow in Anglo-American relations at the Heritage Foundation's Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom.

puts it, with "large scale fraud") in connection with Yukos. In 2014, his cash accounts with Chase were closed and, as a letter from JPMorgan Chase put it, the firm found it "cannot continue to offer you brokerage services." Several other major banks have also rejected his business.

The same is true of Andrey Leonovich, the former treasurer of Yukos, now living in the United Kingdom and also accused, via a public Red Notice, of money laundering. His firm was kicked out of a prominent U.S. private equity fund, and a major U.K. asset management firm refused his personal business. Not only that, but Ivlev knows of two other cases in Britain and Spain where Yukos veterans were treated similarly, and I know of at least one other Russian-inspired case unconnected to Yukos.

Here's what's happening: Red Notices that nations want to make public are visible on Interpol's site and through LexisNexis. U.S. banks, and banks doing business in the United States—which is most of them—are subject to the due diligence requirements of the U.S. Treasury, including the requirement to know their customers. When specialist due diligence firms review new or upgraded customer accounts, one of the sources they use are the public Red Notices—and any hit, de facto, means a rejection from the bank. It's not worth the risk of a fine—which can run into hundreds of millions of dollars—to do anything else.

The irony is that the due diligence firms are seeing the abusive Red Notices that Russia, and other nations that use Interpol for political purposes, want everyone to see: This is an instance where openness, perversely, is part of the problem. A further irony is that the international system of know-your-customer requirements, created to stop money laundering, is now being used by Russia to punish the victims of the regime's thievery. What is not ironic is that the effects of being the subject of an abusive Red Notice, thanks to the way the notice reverberates through the financial system, are far more wide-ranging than merely preventing the victim from traveling without risking extradition to Russia.

It's not clear that the banks, or the due diligence firms, fully understand what they're doing. (All the firms mentioned in this article declined to comment or did not reply to a request for comment.) The banks are merely following orders—in this case, to avoid potentially risky customers. The due diligence firms may not appreciate the workings of Interpol's Red Notice system: Their interest, as a selling point to their clients in the banks, is in having the broadest coverage of potential risk.

Nor is it clear whether the financial impact of Russia's Red Notices is deliberate, or merely an unintentional side effect of their broader abuse of Interpol. But a former Justice Department official who specialized in Russian organized crime cases told me that he doesn't doubt that the Russians now know—even if they didn't when they started abusing Interpol—exactly what they're doing: They've committed enough crimes, and have had enough difficulties moving their own ill-gotten gains around, to know how to manipulate the West's systems.

The frightening thing about all of this is that it could happen to anyone Russia takes a dislike to. It's difficult to live in the United States without access to the banking and financial system, and together, Russia, Interpol, and the U.S. Treasury can take that away from you. When it happens, the U.S. government won't stick up for you, Interpol's processes are slow at best and useless at worst, and the Russians won't relent.

Late last year, Karen Dawisha, author of *Putin's Kleptocracy*, argued in the *New York Times* that the West's strategy of trying to shape Russia by including it in Western institutions had failed, and that those institutions now risk being undermined by Russian actions. In such cases, she said, the West should defend its institutions by kicking Russia out.

Interpol is a case in point. Russia was admitted in 1990. If Moscow had decided to use Interpol for its actual purpose—to pursue genuine criminals—admitting it would have been wise. For undoubtedly, Russia has genuine criminals, lots of them. But it so happens that the worst criminals

are sitting in the Kremlin, manning the hotline to Interpol, which does not have the time, the resources, or the inclination to sift the good cases from the bad before it acts. Since Russia won't respect Interpol's constitution, Interpol should apply its own sanctions and suspend Russia's membership.

Until then, the United States and other democracies should create a white list of targets of political persecution and put Putin's victims—and other victims of politically motivated Red Notices—on it, thereby shielding their ability to travel in the West and use the financial system. We can't save everyone from the world's autocrats. But we can at least ensure that, here in the United States, we don't do their persecuting for them. ♦

Friend and Foe in Syria

The enemy of my enemy is my enemy's enemy.

BY LEE SMITH

Last week, outgoing chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces Benny Gantz told an American audience that it's important the international community defeat both camps of regional extremists. The way Gantz sees it, on one side there are Sunni radicals, like the Islamic State, al Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Nusra Front, an al Qaeda affiliate. On the Shiite side are Iran and the Revolutionary Guards expeditionary unit, the Quds Force, as well as Hezbollah and Iranian-backed Iraqi Shiite militias.

In urging European, Arab, and, of course, American officials to band together to defeat Middle Eastern extremism of all varieties, Gantz was nominally tapping into a consensus position. After all, the White House convened a summit last week to "combat violent extremism," so surely the United States and its allies can agree that all types of radical violent actors—Shiite or Sunni, secular or otherwise—are equally bad.

The reality, however, is that the government Gantz recently served has made clear distinctions between extremist groups in the Middle East, and has backed its preferences on the ground for certain actors in the Sunni camp. The Obama White House has also signaled its priorities, acquiescing to, if not actively supporting, the Iranian-backed Shiite axis. Thus the United States and its longtime ally Israel have reached yet another point of strategic divergence over Iran, one that may soon widen.

The January 18 Israeli strike on a three-vehicle convoy in the Golan Heights carrying six Hezbollah fighters, a senior officer of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and as many as five other Iranian officials was the clearest indication yet of Jerusalem's top priority—Iran. It's possible that the IRGC/Hezbollah delegation was plotting an attack that Israeli officials deemed urgent. But the key point the strike showed is that Jerusalem will not allow Iran to open up a second front on the borders of Israel from the Golan, in addition to its Hezbollah stronghold in southern Lebanon.

Israeli artillery fire toward targets in Lebanon on the Israeli-Lebanese border, January 28, 2015.

The evidence that the Israelis have no such immediate concerns regarding the Sunni rebels fighting against the Assad regime is that this was the first time Israel targeted the region around Quneitra, Syrian territory that the rebels have controlled for a year. Presumably, for the present at least, the Israelis have turned a blind eye to rebel activities—even though those units surely include fighters from Nusra, one of the groups that Gantz says should be defeated.

"Israel has been reportedly working with rebel brigades in southern Syria for a while," says Tony Badran, research fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "Israel has provided medical treatment not just to Syrian civilians but also fighters. It's a channel of communication, then, they're talking to them, and likely sharing intelligence, in the full knowledge that these rebel units cooperate with Nusra against the Assad regime, Hezbollah, and the IRGC."

The issue, as Badran notes, is that Israel perceives the Iranian axis not just as the strategic threat, but also as the immediate threat. There may come a day that the anti-Assad rebels, especially Nusra, will be a serious problem for Israel, but at present Jerusalem's chief concern isn't nonstate Sunni militants with rocket-propelled grenades, but a state sponsor of violent extremism that is seeking a nuclear weapon. Moreover, as the regional press has reported, the IRGC campaign to retake Quneitra, with Iranian officers not simply advising Assad's forces and its Hezbollah allies but actually fighting, is apt to force a direct confrontation between Israel and Iran for the first time. It's hardly surprising then that Jerusalem sees a vital interest in keeping IRGC troops off its border, even if that involves coordination with rebel groups that include Nusra forces.

The Obama administration has a different set of regional priorities. First is to cut a deal with Tehran over its nuclear weapons program. Second is to prevent a terrorist attack on the U.S. homeland, with a watchful eye especially on the foreign fighters in the Syrian war who may be dispatched to an

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American city to conduct a *Charlie Hebdo*-style operation.

Both of these goals have brought the administration into alignment with Tehran. The White House believes that if it accommodates Iranian interests, from Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq to Yemen, then Iran will be more willing to forsake, or at least postpone, its nuclear ambitions. As for the second, the administration believes that Iran shares an interest in halting the spread of Sunni jihadism. Accordingly, the White House has partnered with Iran and its allies in Iraq to fight ISIS, shared intelligence with Hezbollah in Lebanon, and promised Iran not to attack Assad's dwindling forces in Syria.

The upshot is that the Obama White House has a very different picture of the region from Israel, and sees it almost exactly as Iran and its allies do. Where Israel's security needs require it to hold its nose and work with Nusra-affiliated groups to keep the Iranian axis at bay, the White House makes no distinction between the Islamic State and Nusra, which it designated as a foreign terrorist organization in 2012. Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah has the same picture of the world as former administration envoy to Syria Robert Ford. "Nusra Front is just as dangerous" as the Islamic State, Ford said last week. "And yet they keep pretending they're nice guys, they're Syrians." From Nasrallah's perspective, Nusra Front and the Islamic State "are essentially one and the same . . . [and] must be fought, without distinction."

One obvious question, which wasn't lost on Ford, was whether an active White House policy to bring down Assad, as Obama stipulated in August 2011, might have prevented the appearance of Nusra and other jihadist groups in Syria. As many analysts warned at the time, if the White House stood by idly while the war raged, the conflict might destabilize every U.S. ally on Syria's borders, including Turkey, Jordan, and Israel. Thus, it is largely the White House's negligence that has compelled U.S. allies, including Israel, to partner with potential enemies against what they perceive as an even greater threat.

Further, there's a possibility that some of those allies may be drawn into the Syrian war in order to defend themselves against the Iranian axis. For instance, if the anti-Assad rebels fail to hold what has become for Jerusalem a buffer zone on the Golan, that will put Iranian troops on Israel's border and make confrontation likely.

And there's an even more worrisome possibility. According to a *Wall Street Journal* report last week, White House officials are concerned that a U.S. attack on Assad's forces in Syria might lead Iranian-backed militias to begin targeting U.S. forces in Iraq. After repeated American assurances over the last few months that Assad won't be touched in the campaign against Islamic State, it's unlikely that the White House is about to call Iran's bluff. But Israel can't possibly give the IRGC carte blanche on its border. Obama's regional policy has made American allies as well as American soldiers hostages of Iran—and pushed us ever further from our chief regional ally. ♦

Doomed Diplomacy

There's no way Iran will ever help fight al Qaeda.

BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

Not long after his inauguration in January 2009, President Barack Obama penned a letter to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of Iran. As a presidential candidate, Obama had promised to conduct "tough, direct diplomacy" with the Iranians. And Obama figured, correctly, that all diplomatic entreaties would end up on Khamenei's desk. So, the newly elected president decided to write Iran's ultimate decision-maker directly. And he has written several letters since.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, which first reported on the correspondence, Obama sent his latest letter to Khamenei in October of last year. The president was hoping to find common ground with the Iranians in Iraq, where the Islamic State, an offshoot of al Qaeda, has made stunning advances since early 2014. Obama believes that the United States and the Shiite jihadists of Iran have a common interest in pushing back the Sunni jihadists of the Islamic State. If the two sides can just resolve the thorny issue of Iran's nuclear program, Obama reportedly thinks, that will pave the way for détente, and possibly a de facto alliance against our mutual enemies. Indeed, the president entertains the idea that Iran can be America's partner in combating Sunni extremism throughout the region.

President Obama's assumption is grossly mistaken. The president's own State and Treasury Departments have repeatedly exposed Iran's ongoing sponsorship of al Qaeda. Moreover, terrorists directly tied to al Qaeda's Iran-based network have plotted attacks in the West on three occasions since Obama took office.

Most recently, in September, the Obama administration launched missile strikes against al Qaeda's so-called Khorasan Group in Syria. The administration pointed to intelligence indicating that this cadre of "core" al

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Qaeda operatives was planning mass killings in the West, and possibly even in the United States. Two of the terrorists who lead the Khorasan Group formerly headed al Qaeda's operations in Iran. Tellingly, Iran allowed this pair to continue their fight against the West, even as they have battled Iran's chief allies in Syria.

Obama's Treasury Department first publicly recognized the relationship between the Iranian regime and al Qaeda on July 28, 2011. Treasury added six al Qaeda operatives to the U.S. government's list of designated terrorists. The principal terrorist among them is known as Yasin al-Suri, "a prominent Iran-based al Qaeda facilitator" who operates "under an agreement between al Qaeda and the Iranian government." Treasury described al Qaeda's presence in Iran as a "core pipeline" and "a critical transit point for funding to support al Qaeda's activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan." Treasury made it clear that other high-level al Qaeda members were actively involved in shuttling cash and recruits across Iran.

On December 22, 2011, the State Department announced a reward of up to $10 million for any information leading to Suri's capture. The reward is one of the largest offered by the U.S. government in its "Rewards for Justice" program, which is designed to help hunt down terrorists. "Operating under an agreement between al Qaeda and the Iranian Government, al-Suri moves money and al Qaeda recruits from the Middle East through Iran and on to Pakistan and Afghanistan," Foggy Bottom said in its announcement. "Iranian authorities maintain a relationship with al-Suri and have permitted him to operate within Iran's borders since 2005."

Just a few months later, on February 16, 2012, Treasury designated the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) a terror-sponsoring organization. "MOIS has facilitated the movement of al Qaeda operatives in Iran and provided them with documents, identification cards, and passports," Treasury explained. "MOIS also provided money and weapons to Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) . . . and negotiated prisoner releases of AQI operatives."

The Islamic State is the successor to Al Qaeda in Iraq and grew out of the organization. Obama, therefore, seeks Iran's cooperation against an entity the Iranian regime has supported.

The administration's public scrutiny of the deal between Iran and al Qaeda, especially Suri's role, likely had an effect, but it hardly ended the collusion. In late 2011, Suri was temporarily replaced as al Qaeda's chieftain inside Iran. But another veteran terrorist filled in for him.

On October 18, 2012, the Treasury Department announced another designation, saying it "further exposes al Qaeda's critically important Iran-based funding and facilitation network." Muhsin al-Fadhli, a Kuwaiti long wanted by the U.S. government, had replaced Suri, Treasury noted. Fadhli "began working with al Qaeda's Iran-based facilitation network in 2009 and was later arrested by the Iranians." But the regime "subsequently released" Fadhli in 2011, and he quickly assumed al Qaeda's top post in the country.

"In addition to providing funding for al Qaeda activities in Afghanistan and Pakistan," Treasury explained, Fadhli and his al Qaeda comrades in Iran are "working to move fighters and money through Turkey to support al Qaeda-affiliated elements in Syria." Treasury also named Fadhli's deputy in Iran, Adel Radi Saqr al-Wahabi al-Harbi, in the designation.

Fadhli's arrest and release is hardly surprising. This is how the Iranian government makes sure al Qaeda doesn't step out of line. In its October 2012 designation, Treasury explained how the deal works.

"Under the terms of the agreement between al Qaeda and Iran, al Qaeda must refrain from conducting any operations within Iranian territory and recruiting operatives inside Iran while keeping Iranian authorities informed of their activities," Treasury revealed. "In return, the Government of Iran gave the Iran-based al Qaeda network freedom of operation and uninhibited ability to travel for extremists and their families. Al Qaeda members who violate these terms run the risk of being detained by Iranian authorities."

Curiously, the Iranians continue to allow the al Qaeda terrorists operating on their soil to support the Nusra Front, which has been fighting Iranian-backed forces in Syria. The Nusra Front is an official branch of al Qaeda and openly loyal to al Qaeda emir Ayman al Zawahiri.

On February 6, 2014, Treasury designated yet another al Qaeda member working in Iran. "The [al Qaeda] network also uses Iran as a transit point for moving funding and foreign fighters through Turkey to support al Qaeda-affiliated elements in Syria, including the al-Nusrah Front," Treasury said at the time. And there was another new development: Fadhli had relocated to Syria, where he linked up with the Nusra Front.

Ayman al Zawahiri ordered a number of al Qaeda operatives from around the globe to move to Syria in 2013 and 2014. These terrorists, including Fadhli, formed the Khorasan Group, which was instructed to explore different ways to launch mass-casualty attacks in the West. The Khorasan Group is not a separate entity, but instead deeply embedded with the Nusra Front. When the United States launched missile strikes against the Khorasan Group in September 2014, officials pointed to Fadhli, in particular, as a threat to international security. It was rumored that Fadhli had been killed in the airstrikes, but his death was never confirmed, and he may very well have survived.

Another member of al Qaeda's Khorasan Group in Syria is a senior al Qaeda leader known as Sanafi al-Nasr. He, too, has been designated a terrorist by the Obama administration. Treasury added him to the government's list of al Qaeda terrorists on August 22, 2014. Prior to working with al Qaeda in Syria, Nasr "served in early 2013 as chief of al Qaeda's Iran-based extremist and financial facilitation network." Nasr relocated to Syria, paving the way for Yasin al-Suri to resume his role as al Qaeda's head man in Iran. Upon his arrival in Syria, Nasr posted multiple tweets on his popular Twitter feed

indicating that he could not wait to strike American interests.

The Iranians may or may not have known what al Qaeda's Khorasan Group was up to in September 2014, when the Obama administration decided military force was necessary to stop them. But the Iranian regime has long worked with the likes of Fadhli and Nasr. They almost certainly would not have been allowed to relocate to Syria in the first place if the Iranians had not blessed the move. And, according to the Obama administration, the Iranians knowingly allow the al Qaeda facilitators inside Iran to funnel support to Al Nusra, which houses the Khorasan operatives.

On at least two other occasions since January 2009, terrorists tied to al Qaeda's Iran network planned to lash out at the West. As first reported in these pages ("Al Qaeda's Network in Iran," April 2, 2012), American and European counterterrorism officials thwarted a Mumbai-style attack in the West in 2010. The international plot, which was likely the last one overseen by Osama bin Laden prior to his death, relied on European recruits who traveled to northern Pakistan for training. The cell traveled through Iran, relying on Yasin al-Suri and his subordinates to coordinate their movements. According to one of the would-be terrorists who was put on trial in Germany, they relied on the Iranian ratlines in order "to not get caught." After the plot was broken up, some of the cell's surviving members were given safe haven inside Iran for a time, even as they were hunted by the West.

And on April 22, 2013, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced that they had disrupted an al Qaeda plot to derail a passenger train traveling from New York to Toronto. Canadian officials said the plotters received "direction and guidance" from al Qaeda members in Iran. According to Reuters, investigators think that one of the suspects "traveled to Iran on a trip that was directly relevant to the investigation of the alleged plot." Citing "U.S. national security sources close to the investigation," Reuters added that the detained operative had met with "low- to middle-level al Qaeda fixers and 'facilitators' based in the town of Zahedan, close to Iran's borders with Afghanistan and Pakistan, that moves money and fighters through Iran to support its activities in South Asia." That description is entirely consistent with Treasury's summary of the network headed by Yasin al-Suri, who has maintained a base of operations in Zahedan.

Fortunately, none of these al Qaeda plots against the West has come to fruition. Western counterterrorism and intelligence officials intervened in each case. But a clear pattern emerges: Al Qaeda is using its Iran-based operations to export terrorism around the world. And the Iranians, according to the Obama administration, allow them to do so.

President Obama seeks a nuclear deal with Iran and hopes that this will pave the way for cooperation against our common enemies throughout the Middle East. He fundamentally misunderstands the situation. Even though Iran and its allies are clearly opposed to al Qaeda everywhere from Yemen to Syria, the Iranians still see value in supporting al Qaeda. For Khamenei, the United States is Iran's chief adversary, not al Qaeda.

The Iranians do not want to work with the United States against the Islamic State either. Khamenei repeatedly, and falsely, blames the United States for the Islamic State's rise in Iraq and Syria. The supreme leader consistently says the West, not the Islamic State, is the biggest threat to Iranian interests.

More than six years into his presidency, Obama is still seeking a deal with the Iranians. Meanwhile, al Qaeda has had a much easier time coming to an accommodation with Iran. ♦

But What Do We Know?

If you're curious about the future of farming, you might ask farmers. BY BLAKE HURST

I'm a dodo bird. Or maybe a passenger pigeon. As a corn and soybean farmer, a chemical spraying, fertilizer spreading, genetically modified-seed planter, I'm as passé as a phone booth. I may be walking around, but I'm actually dead. I'm a zombie farmer.

I came to this conclusion after spending a couple of days at the Food for Tomorrow conference last November, held at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, a farm, restaurant, and conference center a few miles north of New York City. Stone Barns is surrounded by a "working" farm, a self-described showplace for the "sustainable agriculture" that more than one speaker at the gathering referred to in reverential tones. The farm was built by the Rockefeller family and is now a sort of Potemkin village with geese. The first and most important rule of sustainable farming is to be sustained by one of the world's largest charitable foundations.

The *New York Times* was the lead sponsor of Food for Tomorrow. If the speakers—*Times* food writer Mark Bittman, food theorist and journalism professor Michael Pollan, professor of nutrition, food studies, and public health Marion Nestle, organic farmer and food philosopher Fred Kirschenmann, et al.—are correct,

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the kind of high-yield farming that I do can't possibly last. Although the speakers and those in attendance devoutly believe that Genus Farmer, Species Industrial has had its day, they presumably weren't calling for farmercide. They're confident I'm already obsolete. I'm a Kodak Instamatic in a GoPro age.

The last time I was in New York City, I was on a panel where I was accused of raping the soil. In an op-ed in advance of Food for Tomorrow, Bittman and his coauthors accused the American "food system" of causing hundreds of thousands of annual deaths. Bittman kicked off the conference with a "declaration of war"—his term, not mine. Rape, murder, war: All in a day's work if you're an industrial farmer. I'd thought the digestive elite in attendance (at $1,400 a head) might find it interesting to visit with an actual farmer, but I was sorely mistaken. After three conversations ended when fellow attendees told me to shut up, I just listened.

I listened to one very nice man who runs a large farm in Europe. He practices biodynamic farming, popularized by German mystic Rudolf Steiner, which among other practices buries zinc in a cow horn to gather cosmic forces and improve crop yields. This practice, strangely enough, never came up in any of my plant science classes at the University of Missouri.

I listened to Bittman explain that industrial farming "pollutes, sickens, exploits, and robs." He's also got a problem with the term "conventional farming." The only truly conventional farmers are "peasant farmers," who, according to him, produce 70 percent of the world's food with just 30 percent of the resources used in agriculture. Bittman is only considering off-farm inputs here, not the land and labor of those conventional farmers. His peasant farmers are certainly altruistic, working their fingers to the bone for dollars a day. That's not a bargain U.S. farmers are likely to appreciate, but what do the opinions, labor, and lives of actual American farmers matter, since we are merely tools of Monsanto and other corporate interests?

The hell with it. I'm an industrial farmer, proud to be one, and have no desire to return to my family's peasant roots, subsistence farming being wildly overrated by people who've never actually spent a day swinging a hoe or pulling weeds by hand.

One presenter, a young man of about 30, was there to plug his new investment fund. He's raised $50 million to start new farms that will raise food sustainably. He's recruited a stable of experts in all things agricultural to be on call to help the farmers doing the actual work. He promises to triple their returns over those of industrial agriculture and already has plans for more investment funds, spreading the wealth around the country.

Economic history is full of disruptive actors, entrepreneurs who totally change an industry from the outside, overthrowing entrenched regimes seemingly overnight. So anything is possible.

On the other hand, the Agricultural Extension Service was established by Congress almost exactly 100 years ago, and for a century it has collected the latest research from leading agricultural experts and disseminated it to farmers, courtesy of the American taxpayer. There are few secrets involved in the raising of food and very little proprietary knowledge, outside the laboratories of companies inventing the technologies that our hedge fund promoter will avoid like the plague in his quest for sustainability. So, unless current farmers are antiprofit, one must ponder why they aren't already farming sustainably and reaping triple their returns.

It's pretty strange, when you think about it. Bittman comes by his fame from trading recipes. Pollan teaches journalism. Most of the other speakers had little background in actually growing food. As I tried to engage the attendees in conversation, I was reminded again and again of the contempt the self-proclaimed leaders of the food movement have for industrial farmers. This disdain is counterproductive and shortsighted. The average farmer is 58. He's been farming for decades. He has knowledge both deep and wide of the land he farms, the animals he raises, and the climate in his small part of the world. Not only that, but he and his kind own or control most of our farmland, and they're making the decisions about what happens to that land. If your goal is to change agriculture from the ground up, it might be good to include the people who own the ground. Does our experience, the knowledge hard won through drought, flood, and pestilence, count for nothing?

Recently, the *New York Times* announced another 100 layoffs. The *New Republic* has essentially committed public suicide. *Rolling Stone* is enduring a rough patch. Subscription and advertising revenues are crashing all across journalism.

Perhaps those of us in agriculture could help out. Maybe convene a conference on the future of journalism? We could ask a few nutrition professors, a biochemist or two, maybe a plant breeder, some cattle feeders, a pig farmer, and, as our token journalist, the guy who gives the cattle markets four times a day on the radio. Our conference could call journalists names, damn everything they've done for the past 50 years as corrosive of the health of our culture, and recommend that the *New York Times* go back to using typewriters in a re-created newsroom from *The Front Page*.

It might be hard to sell tickets for $1,400 apiece to that event. I imagine the sponsors would be ridiculed. I sincerely doubt that any leading newspapers would send reporters out to Omaha or Des Moines or Kansas City to cover it. A confab like that, composed of people profoundly uninformed about the topic at hand, would not be seen as having anything constructive to contribute.

Well, to this industrial farmer, it was clear that the goal of the Food for Tomorrow conference was not so much improving agriculture as it was replacing revenues that have evaporated from conventional journalism with ticket and sponsor revenue from a two-day ritual sacrifice of today's agriculture. ♦

Spain 1936-1939; Ukraine, 2014-?

The perversity of not arming victims.

BY LEON ARON

Last week's Minsk agreement, by which France and Germany in effect codified the cession to Russia of Kiev's sovereignty over southeastern Ukraine, has temporarily taken the issue of Russia's aggression in Ukraine off the table and thus off the conscience of the West. But the question whether the United States and its allies should arm Ukraine (and later Georgia? Moldova? Estonia? Latvia?) is going to arise again and again in the months and years ahead.

And when it does—a whiff of moral perversity attending the debate over whether to help a victim of blatant aggression defend itself—the problem will conjure up the ghost of another deeply divided, chaotic, and near-bankrupt nascent democracy that fought for its life against insurgents who received huge supplies of weapons and "volunteers" from authoritarian regimes, while Western democracies imposed an arms embargo. That young republic was Spain, decimated by Hitler and Mussolini as the West stayed scrupulously out of the fray.

After fighting broke out between General Francisco Franco's "Nationalists" and the Republican "loyalists" in July 1936, the British government declared that "a strict and impartial attitude of non-intervention" was "essential if the unhappy events in Spain are to be prevented from having serious repercussions elsewhere." Without Western support and desperate for arms, the Republican government made a Faustian bargain with Stalin's Soviet Union, which was far more interested in hunting down Trotskyites and establishing a Communist totalitarian regime than defending the Spanish Republic.

From 1936 to the defeat of the Republic three years later, Nazi Germany spent an estimated $215 million—$3.6 billion in today's money—to provide the Nationalists with 600 planes and 200 tanks and to pay the salaries of an estimated 16,000 German "volunteers" of the Condor Legion. Encouraged by Germany, Mussolini sent the Nationalists 660 planes, 150 tanks, 800 artillery pieces, 10,000 machine guns, and 240,000 rifles. In addition to providing arms, Germany trained 56,000 Nationalist infantry, gunners, and pilots. The Luftwaffe pilots secured Nationalist dominance in the air, strafing Republican troops and bombing Madrid with impunity, while the Italian Navy controlled the Mediterranean and bombarded Malaga, Valencia, and Barcelona.

Although no historical parallel is ever precise, the strangling of the Spanish Republic suggests some lessons for today. First, one-sided embargos stop neither rebellion nor aggression, not to mention brutality. Will Mariupol, Debaltseve, or perhaps soon Kharkiv, devastated by missiles from Russian Grad rocket launchers, soon stain the reputation of the West as indelibly as Guernica, the Spanish town where in April 1937 the Luftwaffe's Condor Legion killed 200-300 civilians?

Second, while democracies usually seek peace, their opponents are always after victory. This is useful to recall in light of the arguments by the opponents of arming Ukraine that doing so would "pour gasoline on the fire" and "antagonize" Vladimir Putin into "widening the war." If only it were that easy! Where and when has "not angering" dictators bound on conquering or destabilizing their neighbors ever worked? Where and when have such aggressors been dissuaded from proceeding according to their own plans and timetables, shaped by ideology, cold geostrategic calculus, and opportunity? Name one dictator whose aggression has been prevented or even slowed down by noninterference. Was Mussolini? Was Saddam Hussein? Did "not angering" Hitler by not confronting him after Germany began to arm itself in violation of the Treaty of Versailles make him scale down his ambition? Did inaction help after Hitler violated another article of the Versailles treaty by moving troops into the Rhineland in 1936? Did ceding Czechoslovakia appease him?

No one is equating Putin with Hitler, but I am afraid the general paradigm fits. Like revisionist dictators of the past, Putin in his war on Ukraine is driven by a set of ideological, political, and geostrategic imperatives. A stable, democratic, and Europe-bound Ukraine is an existential threat to Putin's regime and his dreams of the "Russian World" and a "Eurasian Union." Punishing, humiliating, dismembering, and ultimately destroying such a Ukraine is necessary for him to survive—as he almost certainly intends—as Russia's president for life. Furthermore, after a year of deafening propaganda that portrayed the war as a proxy battle between Russia and NATO, anything short of a smashing victory—precluding Ukraine from ever attempting to recover its southeast—would subtract significantly, perhaps fatally, from the regime's domestic legitimacy, already imperiled by a spiraling economic crisis and double-digit inflation on many food staples.

Thus, noninterference and a unilateral arms embargo are not likely to be a match for the imperatives that propel Putin to continue his war on

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Ukraine, as he is very likely to do, Minsk accords notwithstanding, until the Europe-bound Ukraine is destabilized and replaced by another pro-Russian regime.

Would sending defensive weapons to Kiev force Putin to scale down his designs? Not right away. Putin has bragged of being able take Kiev in two weeks, which is probably not far from the truth. Thus, the Western strategy should not aim to force him out of Ukraine by securing a decisive Ukrainian victory on the battlefield. This is unlikely to happen any time soon. Instead, bolstering Ukrainian defenses would increase the domestic political price of Russian aggression. Any "widening of the war" by a Putin "enraged" by the delivery of Western defensive weapons would carry very real domestic political risks. Vast majorities of Russians interviewed by pollsters have consistently opposed a large-scale war with Ukraine. Soviet casualties in Afghanistan contributed mightily to the fall of the USSR, and Putin remembers the lesson. Hence the secrecy surrounding Russian losses; hence also the law creating a Russian "Foreign Legion," signed by Putin earlier this year to shift as much fighting as possible to non-Russian "contract" soldiers.

Denying Moscow a quick and decisive victory would raise the domestic cost of aggression. It would force the Kremlin—unable to borrow in the West because of sanctions—to choose between keeping hospitals open, paying pensions on time, raising the salaries of doctors and teachers to keep up with inflation, on the one hand, and spending on tanks, missiles, artillery batteries, and the fat salaries of *kontraktniki* mercenaries, on the other. Only if the Kremlin is confronted with these tough choices will Putin begin rethinking his endgame objectives in Ukraine.

Even in conjunction with sanctions, providing defensive arms to Ukraine would require time and patience equal to Vladimir Putin's resolve. But it is the only strategy that has a chance of working. The alternative is almost certainly to let yet another would-be democracy perish. ♦

From Russia with Love

Pyongyang and Moscow renew their friendship.

BY DENNIS P. HALPIN

Kim Jong-un, seeking to escape international isolation, has found a willing partner in Russia's Vladimir Putin and thereby revived Pyongyang's Cold War art of pitting Moscow against Beijing, perfected by his grandfather Kim Il-sung. The collapse of the Soviet Union just prior to Kim Jong-un's father's ascent in 1994 ended the game for a time. But Kim Jong-il tilted a bit back toward Moscow after the arrival of Putin, and his son is doubling down. From plans for a joint military exercise to an invitation to visit from the Kremlin, a series of gifts have recently arrived in Pyongyang marked "from Russia with love."

Russia's Sergei Lavrov with North Korea's Choe Ryong Hae, November 20, 2014

The three-year rule of neophyte leader Kim Jong-un has been marked by strained relations with Beijing, North Korea's sole patron for the past two decades. Beijing was unhappy when a defiant Kim Jong-un conducted a third underground nuclear test in early 2013, and the Chinese supported additional U.N. sanctions—as did the Russians, although in a less vocal manner. Sino-North Korean estrangement reached its zenith in late 2013 when Kim publicly purged and then summarily executed his uncle Jang Song-thaek. Jang, widely seen as Beijing's point man in Pyongyang, was condemned partly for economic crimes linked to Chinese interests. Beijing responded by continued snubbing of Kim. While Kim Jong-un has yet to be invited to Beijing, Chinese president Xi Jinping has been cultivating rival South Korean president Park Geun-hye, hosting her in Beijing and paying a return visit to Seoul.

Kim Jong-un, increasingly isolated, turned first to Tokyo. When repeated contacts with Tokyo in 2013 and 2014, including with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's special adviser Isao Iijima, failed to bear fruit, Kim then turned to Moscow. There he seems to have found a soulmate in Putin.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Russian president Boris Yeltsin chose to distance Moscow from North Korea, seeking to cultivate economic ties with South Korea. In a 1992 visit to Seoul, Yeltsin promised "to put pressure on North Korea to give up its effort to develop nuclear weapons," reported the *New York Times*. Yeltsin "wanted to change or abrogate part of a 1961 treaty between the Soviet Union and North Korea calling for the two countries to aid each other in a war." Pyongyang was left with Beijing as its sole ally.

Yeltsin used the occasion of a 1994 trip to Moscow by Kim Young-sam to present the South Korean president with 216 previously classified documents from the Soviet archives. The documents provided new evidence on North Korea's invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950, and close Soviet coordination of strategy with the North

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during the Korean War. (Kathryn Weathersby's translation and documentation can be found in the Spring 1995 issue of the Woodrow Wilson Center's *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*.)

Tellingly, a June 26, 1950, top secret report from Soviet ambassador Terenti Shtykov in Pyongyang to Soviet Marshal Matvei Zakharov contained the following:

> The concentration of the People's Army in the region near the 38th parallel began on June 12 and was concluded on June 23, as was prescribed in the plan of the General Staff. The redeployment of troops took place in an orderly fashion, without incident. The intelligence service of the enemy probably detected the troop redeployment, but we managed to keep the plan and the time of the beginning of troop operations secret. The planning of the operation at the divisional level and the reconnaissance of the area was carried out with the participation of Soviet advisers. . . . The attack of the troops of the People's Army took the enemy completely by surprise.

Documents such as this one largely laid to rest the revisionist interpretation of Korean War history put forward by leftist students and so-called progressives in South Korea. They had asserted that South Korean president Syngman Rhee, either singlehandedly or in consultation with his American ally, had conducted military probes that provoked a counterattack from the North. After Yeltsin released these documents, it was clear that Kim Il-sung, in collusion with Stalin, had launched an unprovoked attack on South Korea.

Yeltsin's resignation in December 1999 ended this episode in North Korean-Russian relations. Kim Jong-il reportedly welcomed the arrival of Putin with the comment that Russia now had a leader "with whom we can do business." A Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness and Cooperation was signed in February 2000, and Putin first visited North Korea that July.

North Korea's fear-of-flying leader Kim Jong-il reciprocated with two visits by train, traveling to Moscow in 2001 and to the Russian Far East a decade later. Russian military officials went to Pyongyang in August 2011 for talks that "would focus on the renewal of military cooperation between the countries, possible joint exercises 'of a humanitarian nature' and an exchange of friendly visits by Russian and North Korean ships," the Itar-Tass news agency reported at the time.

So Kim Jong-un will be reviving a family tradition if he makes his first overseas visit as North Korea's leader to Russia in May. Seoul's Yonhap news agency, quoting a Kremlin spokesman, reported on January 27 that Kim had accepted an invitation to attend celebrations in May commemorating the Soviet victory in World War II: "About 20 state leaders have confirmed their attendance, and the North Korean leader is among them."

Voice of America in a January 30 report speculated that the Russian trip is also a deliberate snub of Beijing: "The decision by the North Korean leader to go to Russia before visiting his chief ally China could indicate a breach in the Sino-Korean relationship." Some diplomatic sources have indicated that Beijing, while irked at Kim, has decided, given its vital interests in the Korean peninsula, to invite Kim to Beijing at some point after his Russian visit.

Kim was already seen as hedging his bets when he sent trusted adviser Choe Ryong Hae, secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, on an eight-day visit to Russia in November that included meetings with both Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Pyongyang reported that the talks were conducted in a "warm and friendly atmosphere."

Choe's mission may have entailed paving the way for the Kim Jong-un visit. According to Japan's *Asahi Shimbun*, Choe's visit made "significant progress in improving bilateral ties, suggesting that North Korean leader Kim Jong-un may visit Moscow for a summit, ahead of its longtime ally China." Choe was also there, according to diplomatic sources, to assure that Moscow would stand firm in the U.N. Security Council in opposing a resolution suggesting that North Korea's leaders be referred to the International Criminal Court for massive human rights violations. Russia, as expected, joined China in opposition to adding North Korea to the Security Council's agenda. Lavrov explained Moscow's opposition by stating that a U.N. organization should "not become a judicial and prosecuting body." Others saw Russia's U.N. support as payback for Pyongyang's opposition to a General Assembly resolution in March 2014 calling for nonrecognition of Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Various gifts, besides the invitation to visit, have been forthcoming from Putin. *NK News* reports a steady flow of crude oil from the Russian Far East into North Korea during the new year. Reuters reported on January 28 that "Russia has pushed ahead with plans for natural gas and transport projects with the North in the hope of boosting gas exports to Asia and exporting coal to South Korea through an experimental consortium based in the North." *NK News* on February 12 cited Vitali Survillo, chairman of the new Russian-North Korean bilateral business council, on Russia's interest in developing North Korea's roads, water, and electric infrastructure over the next 20 years in exchange for natural resources.

Military ties are also advancing. Voice of America reported on January 31 that Valery Gerasimov, chief of the general staff of the Russian Armed Forces, had announced plans to hold talks with North Korean Defense Ministry officials in order to prepare for joint military drills this year. Given the annual military exercises conducted on the peninsula by the United States and its South Korean ally, joint Russian-North Korean exercises seem intended to irritate Washington and reassert Russia's interests as a Pacific power. Cho Han-bum of the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul said, "Russia and the North have common interests in that Russia wants to resist U.S. pressure and the North opposes the joint South Korea-U.S. exercises."

As Kim Jong-un increasingly plays the Russian card, the message from Putin is loud and clear: Oil, coal, roads, infrastructure improvements, and joint military exercises all come from Russia with love. ♦

The Transgender Triumph

Identity politics über alles

By Charlotte Allen

Chicago

It was the skin—smooth and hairless as a newborn's forearm—that I fastened on when I saw Sara Andrews, the first "transwoman" I had ever met, at the Kit Kat Lounge & Supper Club in Boystown, on Chicago's North Side. The ambiance at the club was glitter balls, silver-leather banquettes, Busby Berkeley dance loops projected onto the walls, and as entertainers a bevy of dressed-to-the-hilt, lip-synching "divas," as the Kit Kat calls its drag lineup. The Kit Kat is a tourist destination as well as a locals' favorite, and it was packed, even on a Thursday night. The crowd had two distinct demographic components: at the tables, mostly heterosexual women on a girls' night out, including a raucous bachelorette party; at the bar, clumps of equally high-spirited gay men in a social world in which the heterosexual ladies on the periphery didn't exist.

Sara Andrews, in her mid-30s and wearing stilettos and a lush brunette wig, was quite frankly lovely: tall, elegant, and graceful as she wove among the tables so that audience members could tuck dollar bills into her skimpy cheetah-print bodysuit. My idea of a transgender woman had been Jeffrey Tambor playing the fiftysomething dad who puts on makeup and becomes "Maura" in the Golden Globe-winning Amazon series *Transparent* (modeled on the 2011 coming-out of *Transparent* creator Jill Soloway's own father)—or, possibly, 65-year-old Olympic medalist and Kardashian consort Bruce Jenner, who has had Adam's apple-reducing surgery and is reportedly undergoing the "transition," as transgender people call it. Neither the late-middle-aged Tambor (with his string of wives and five children) nor the late-middle-aged Jenner, both with robust physiques and pronounced manjaws, had struck me as especially convincing candidates for femaleness.

Andrews was different. I stared at her mesmerized, looking for signs that she had once been male. Skillfully cosmeticized facial features a shade sharp? Breasts perhaps too widely spaced on what was a very large chest frame? But it was really the skin. Some transgender women don't go all the way with genital surgery, and some don't bother with the daily estrogen pills plus injections of other hormones that suppress masculine secondary sex characteristics and encourage the growth of mammary tissue. But nearly all undergo extensive electrolysis or its laser equivalent to remove every last coarse hair not only from the face but from the body. Since even the most fair-complexioned women are coated with delicate down, the almost completely hairless skin of the transwomen I met that night was the tell: ever so faintly unnatural-looking.

My Virgil for this adventure was J. Michael Bailey, 58, a professor of psychology at Northwestern University who may be the most controversial scientist ever to study and write about the male-to-female transition, and certainly the most intensely loathed by transgender activists. His 2003 book *The Man Who Would Be Queen: The Science of Gender-Bending and Transsexualism*, its cover featuring a photo of a pair of muscular masculine calves terminating in large feet encased in a pair of high-heeled pumps, promoted a thesis that was controversial in 2003 and is even more controversial now, when there is a story about gender transition in the news nearly every day. Bailey, who has devoted his academic career to *outré* forms of human sexuality, argued that transgenderism (the new, politically correct word for what was called "transsexualism" a decade ago) isn't a matter of a mismatch between one's body and one's innate identity, as transgender activists and their numerous allies have been arguing. Instead, it's a matter of sexual desire and romantic yearning. "Those who love men become women to attract them," Bailey wrote. "Those who love women become the women they love."

Although published by the National Academy of Sciences with glowing blurbs from evolutionary psychologist David M. Buss, "gay gene" theorist Simon LeVay, and Harvard public intellectual Steven Pinker, *The Man Who Would Be Queen* was deemed "salacious bigotry" by Andrea

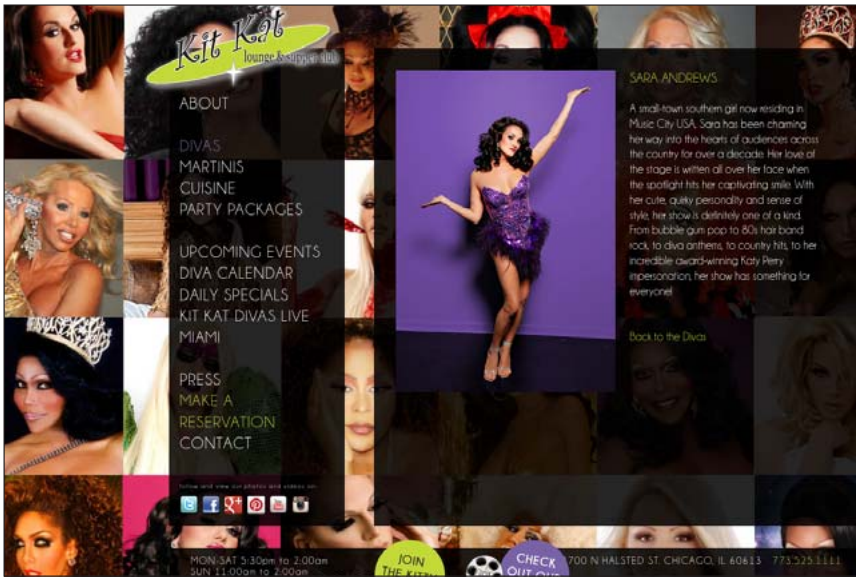
Charlotte Allen, a frequent contributor to The Weekly Standard, *last wrote on the 75th anniversary of* The Grapes of Wrath.

James, a 48-year-old Hollywood consultant who is the most persistently aggressive of the transgender activists. James spearheaded campaigns to have Northwestern censure and perhaps fire Bailey (unsuccessful), and to discredit Bailey as a credible academic expert on transgender subjects (extremely successful). Bailey, who had once chaired the psychology department at Northwestern, is now an academic near-pariah. His career wasn't helped when, in 2011, as an optional session in his well-subscribed undergraduate course in human sexuality, the ever-envelope-pushing Bailey hosted a live sexual performance (performed by nonstudent volunteers). Administrators at Northwestern were not amused, and the course was abruptly dropped from the catalogue, never to be revived. "It was the most popular course at Northwestern," Bailey told me. "We'd get 600 students taking it on average."

Bailey might have become an untouchable among transgender activists, but it was clear that evening that he remains on knowledgeable and even friendly terms with the real-life Chicago transgender community, at least in its drag manifestation. A large pink-skinned man attired in a blue cotton shirt overhanging a pair of loose-fitting jeans, Bailey isn't gay himself (he is a divorced father of two adult children), but he's lived near Boystown for many years. Gregarious and impulsive of gesture, he chatted up Kit Kat waiters and expertly jumped up to slip dollar bills from a stash he had brought into Andrews's catsuit with a practiced hand. Those bills seemed to have bought me a brief interview with Andrews herself, on one of her breaks. Bailey also helped me formulate questions. I didn't want to be another Katie Couric, slammed by transgender activists in January 2014 for asking Laverne Cox, the transwoman star of the hit Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*, questions about her surgeries. Unless Andrews was a master of optical illusion, it was obvious enough that time in an operating room had to be what enabled her to wear that scanty costume convincingly.

In person she proved to be shy and demure, very different from the extroverted persona she projected onstage and also in her verbally adept Twitter feed (@MissSaraAndrews). There, the topics cycle through clothes, makeup, her boyfriend (apparently some years younger), her crash diets (she is quite slender), her frequent changes of residence, and her tweeted digs at Republicans and "Bible thumpers" who presumably disapprove of the trans way of life. (Paradoxically, the now-politically incorrect phrase "drag queen" and the even less politically correct word "tranny" appear frequently in Andrews's feed and on her Facebook timeline.)

Andrews grew up in Tennessee, with a ramshackle childhood that included "10 or so foster homes," she recalled in a hoarse near-whisper that contrasted discordantly with the exuberant lip-synched cover of Katy Perry's 2013 hit "Roar" that she has posted on YouTube. Andrews had "two dozen foster parents," but "I'm not very close to any of them," she said. "I don't even like to talk to them." An outcast child living her entire young life with near-strangers, she "played with Barbies—I always thought of myself as a female." At 17, attired in a teddy, a cheap wig, and a paint can's worth of makeup, she sneaked into a Nashville drag club on amateur night. "I observed—what?—14 queens, and I observed what they were doing. I wasn't very good at first, but I got better. We all became like friends. We went out together, and we'd sleep at each other's places." Within a few years she had become a star diva on the Nashville drag circuit and had made the transition. But she also insisted on defying Bailey's sexual-desire hypothesis. "It's not a sexual thing," Andrews said. "It's who I am. Right now I'm dating a female-to-male transsexual."



Sara Andrews's web page from the site of Chicago's Kit Kat Lounge

THE MEDIA TIPPING POINT

Not that you would know it from the volume of headlines these days, but transgender people constitute a tiny sliver of the population: A 2011 study by the UCLA law school's Williams Institute estimated that there are only about 700,000 self-identified transgenders in the United States, with perhaps a third of those taking active steps to alter their physical appearance. That contrasts to the more than 9 million people—3.5 percent of the population—who identify as gay, lesbian,

or bisexual, according to the Williams Institute. Furthermore—Chaz Bono and Shiloh, the 8-year-old daughter of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie who now wants to be called "John," aside—transgenderism is an overwhelmingly male phenomenon. Three times as many men as women want to transition into the opposite sex, according to the American Psychological Association, and physicians confirm that the genetic males who visit their offices for hormones and surgery outnumber the genetic females by as much as three to one.

But despite the nearly infinitesimal percentage of transgenders in a country of more than 300 million, they have managed to secure an enviable status in recent years as subjects of lavish media, legislative, and professional attention. Before the Supreme Court issued its pair of decisions in 2013 that seem to have paved the way for universal recognition of same-sex marriage as a constitutional right, the focus of LGBT-centric news stories was typically upon gay and lesbian couples who wanted to marry but legally couldn't in many states, or upon their efforts to acquire and raise children. Those stories have all but vanished from the headlines, displaced by a raft of stories that either celebrate transgenders (*Time*'s May 29, 2014, cover story, "The Transgender Tipping Point"), ponder how to accommodate them ("When Women Become Men at Wellesley," *New York Times*, Oct. 15, 2014), or commiserate with them as victims, with emphasis on their having been bullied as children.

J. Michael Bailey

In 2012 the board of trustees of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) approved a set of proposed revisions to its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (the new version is the *DSM-5*), designed to remove the stigma of mental illness from the transgender classification. Earlier versions of the *DSM* had defined transgenderism as "gender identity disorder," which seemed to imply illness. The *DSM-5* changed that term to "gender dysphoria." The change paralleled the association's removal of homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1973. It signaled that whatever problems transgenders might experience were not due to a pathological misconception that their bodies and gender identities were mismatched but to the *fact* that their bodies and gender identities were mismatched. Hormones, surgery, cosmetics, and different clothes might still be the "cure" (enabling transgenders to qualify for medical reimbursement for a variety of procedures), but the APA was making it clear, as far as it was concerned, that the problem was not inside the transgender's head.

The medical evidence for a mismatch between brains and bodies is ambiguous. The two studies cited most frequently by transgender activists, published in 1995 and 2000, examined the brains of a total of seven male-to-female transgenders and found that a region of the hypothalamus, an almond-shaped area of the brain that controls the release of hormones by the pituitary gland, was female-typical in those brains. But those studies have been criticized for not controlling for the estrogen—which affects the size of the hypothalamus—that most male-to-female transgenders take daily in order to maintain their feminine appearance.

Accompanying the APA's change of classification was a change of vocabulary. Ever since the days of Christine Jorgensen (1926-1989), the World War II serviceman whose surgery in Denmark during the early 1950s brought transgenderism under the media spotlight for the first time, the procedure was known in popular parlance as a "sex change operation." Then in the 1990s, when the idea of one's "gender" as something distinct from one's biological sex began to take hold (thanks to the efforts of academic feminists and other postmodernists, who argued that gender is "socially constructed"), the preferred term became "gender reassignment surgery." Now the preferred phrase seems to be "gender confirmation surgery." The change in terminology renders more credible transpeople's claims to have always belonged to the gender to which they have transitioned.

The once commonly used word "transsexual" has thus become passé—even verboten in the most sensitive circles—just during the past decade. For example, *Washington Post* reporter Abby Ohlheiser issued a severe scolding to news media for using the word "transsexual" in reference to a 27-year-old male-to-female victim of a grisly murder and dismemberment at the hands of her 28-year-old male lover (who subsequently committed suicide) in Brisbane, Australia, in October 2014. "Although some individuals do identify as 'transsexual,' the term is often viewed as old-fashioned and not an appropriate umbrella word," Ohlheiser wrote in a column deriding the coverage of the crime as "transphobic." Ohlheiser also objected to media describing the victim, Mayang Prasetyo, as a "prostitute" (Prasetyo had been working as an escort before her death) and reproducing photos of Prasetyo's busty self clad in a tiny swimsuit that she had posted on the Internet. "Many of the articles covering the murder are laden with provocative photographs of the victim in a bikini, as if any story about a trans person is an excuse to view and scrutinize trans bodies," Ohlheiser wrote.

BRAVE NEW BIRTH CERTIFICATE

The paradigm of this new trend in effusively sympathetic treatment of transgenders—and outright hostility toward anyone who regards their condition as bizarre—might be the last story that *Rolling Stone* writer Sabrina Rubin Erdely filed with the magazine before her November 19, 2014, tale of a purported gang rape at a University of Virginia fraternity house, a one-sided narrative the magazine eventually retracted because it proved to have been unsupported by any facts. Erdely's July 14, 2014, story, "The Transgender Crucible," concerned a 26-year-old transgender woman and sometime prostitute, Chrishaun "CeCe" McDonald, who had pleaded guilty to voluntary homicide for stabbing to death a 47-year-old ex-convict during an outside-the-barroom brawl in South Minneapolis in the summer of 2011. Like Erdely's UVA story, her transgender article featured large quantities of broken glass, including a beer tumbler that was allegedly smashed against McDonald's face by the victim's girlfriend during the 2011 fight. Erdely also narrated McDonald's story (as she did the UVA story) entirely and uncritically from its protagonist's point of view, interpolating so many unrelated incidents of gruesome slayings of transgender women—"As the sisterhood is picked off one by one, each gets a chilling version of her own fate"—that a reader could easily forget it was McDonald who *committed* the 2011 homicide (and admitted it in court) and not the other way around.

Pvt. Bradley 'Chelsea' Manning, before and after

When Bradley Manning, the Army private sentenced to 35 years in prison for espionage after being convicted of turning over massive numbers of classified military and diplomatic documents to Julian Assange's tell-all website WikiLeaks, announced in August 2013, "I am Chelsea Manning, I am a female," reporters scrambled to denote Manning henceforth by the pronoun "she." No one laughed at a photo of Manning, who had not undergone any hormone or other therapy, wearing a blonde wig and lipstick. Manning subsequently underwent a legal name change and currently has a lawsuit pending to force the government to provide access to estrogen and cosmetics in the male-only prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Similarly, Michelle (née Robert) Kosilek, a 65-year-old inmate of a Massachusetts prison serving a life sentence for strangling her (genetically female) wife with baling wire in 1990, recently lost at the appeals level a long-running federal lawsuit to force the state to pay for surgery that would have cost taxpayers more than $50,000. Despite the disturbingly violent nature of the offense (the wife's nearly decapitated body was left naked in the back seat of a car), a 2013 article in the *New Republic* left no doubt as to where the writer Nathaniel Penn's sympathies lay:

> You inhabit a body that other people may regard as perfectly normal, even attractive. But it is not yours. That fact has always been utterly and unmistakably clear to you, just as the fact that she has put on someone else's coat by accident is clear to a third-grader. This body has hair where it shouldn't, or doesn't where it should. Its hands and feet are not the right sizes, its hips and buttocks and neck are not the right shapes. Its odors are nauseating. To describe the anguish . . . psychiatrists will allude to Gregor Samsa in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*: For Michelle Kosilek, the gulf between human being and insect is precisely as wide as that between woman and man.

Penn's Kafkaesque description of gender dysphoria could be criticized as melodramatic (men are to women as cockroaches are to humans?) but it summarizes the prevailing dogma that transgender people are women trapped in men's bodies and men trapped in women's bodies.

Any sort of biological or genetic evidence to the contrary is dismissed as "transphobic" propaganda, and the phrase "Transwomen are women, period" has become a mantra for those who would like to stay on the good side of transgender activists. In a September 29, 2014, article for the online magazine *Autostraddle* titled "Please Stop Saying That Trans Women Were Born Boys," male-to-female activist Mari Brighe argued that the mere description of someone as "genetically" or "biologically" male or female is bigoted. "I wasn't born a boy, and I've never been a boy, and it's like a knife to my heart every single time I hear that phrase," Brighe wrote.

Legislators, regulators, and school districts have duly followed the activists' lead. During the 2000s many states passed laws allowing people to change retroactively the "M" or "F" designations on their birth certificates if they had undergone transformative surgery—and a few states did not require even the surgery as long as the applicant had undergone, say, hormone therapy or some other secondary sex-altering procedure. In December 2014 the New York City Council passed a bill, subsequently signed into law by Mayor Bill de Blasio, eliminating even those requirements: As long as a licensed health care provider states under oath that someone's "assigned" sex as listed on

the birth certificate doesn't match his or her self-description, the birth certificate can be changed. "It won't be about your body. It's about how you identify," the law's sponsor, Democratic council member Corey Johnson, explained.

In 2013 California governor Jerry Brown signed into law a bill that allows K-12 students to use whichever restrooms and locker rooms they want. Seventeen states and the District of Columbia now have legislation in place forbidding discrimination against transgenders, including in access to public bathrooms (some of the laws exempt school facilities). The question of whether transgender students have a right to play on the gender-specific athletic teams of their choice has remained more troublesome. That's partly because transgender girls tend to be taller, stronger, and potentially more successfully on the field than genetic girls, and partly because of the locker-room problem: Genital-transforming surgery is almost never performed on minors, so naked transgender adolescents tend to look, despite their best efforts to the contrary, like members of the sex to which they say they don't belong.

A new restroom sign at the University of California at Irvine

The new California law requires school athletic teams to be "trans-inclusive," but elsewhere a culture war has raged. The PAC of a socially conservative organization, the Minnesota Family Protection League, ran two full-page ads in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* this past fall that threw a monkey wrench into a plan to issue guidelines in December that would have allowed transgender adolescents to play on whichever teams fit their gender identities. The second of the ads displayed a stock photo of an attractive teen girl in a softball uniform sitting disconsolately on the sidelines. The copy read: "Her dreams of a scholarship shattered, your 14-year-old daughter just lost her position on an all-girls team to a male . . . and now she may have to shower with him. Are you OK with that?" Alarmed parents flooded into a meeting of the Minnesota State High School League, a quasi-public entity that regulates high school sports in the state, and thousands of others sent protesting emails. The High School League delayed its vote, but several transgender-rights groups leaped into action to ensure—or try to ensure—that neither the *Star Tribune* nor any other newspaper that sought respectability would ever again run such an ad. "If they had published ads from the Nazi party about B'nai B'rith, or something from the [Ku Klux] Klan about race relations—the kind of editorial decision that makes you wonder," Christina Kahrl, a sportswriter for ESPN.com and a member of the LGBT Sports Coalition, an advocacy group, told the *Huffington Post*.

Advocates of trans-inclusivism in school athletics are resting their hopes on an April 29, 2014, statement from the Obama administration's Department of Education that interpreted Title IX, a federal civil rights law forbidding sex discrimination by educational institutions receiving federal funds, to include "discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity." The department issued a 36-page memo in December mandating that transgender students at public schools have access to single-sex classes serving the gender with which they identify, but hasn't yet made it clear whether sports teams, locker rooms, and restrooms would fall under that rubric.

END OF THE 'SISTERHOOD'

The most interesting aspect of what might be called the transgender triumph is the extent to which transwomen have managed to invade and occupy the niche called "women"—without many noticeable complaints from the occupants of that slot since time immemorial. For example, Martine Rothblatt, founder and CEO of the biotech manufacturer United Therapeutics (and also founder of Sirius XM), is celebrated as the highest-paid female executive in the United States (north of $38 million a year). But Rothblatt, now in her early 60s, was known as Martin Rothblatt for the first 40-odd years of her life, until she came out as a woman in 1994. Her pre-coming out years were marked by joint law and business degrees from UCLA, a stint at a top Washington, D.C., law firm, and high-level consulting in satellite communications. Rothblatt has been married to a woman since 1982 (two children, plus an adopted daughter), and before that had fathered a child by another woman. "I love when the good women get ahead!" was the online comment of one female reader of a glowing December 2014 article about Rothblatt in the *Washington Post*'s Sunday magazine.

The board co-chairman of GLAAD, a leading U.S. advocacy organization for LGBT rights, has been since 2013 the bestselling novelist/memoirist Jennifer Finney Boylan. Boylan, 56, had for most of her life been James Boylan, married to a woman since 1988 and the father of two sons. In 2000 she began taking Premarin, a form of estrogen typically marketed to post-menopausal women, and she completed genital surgery in 2003. Then known as the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, GLAAD was founded in 1985 to combat what its members perceived

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as inflammatory press coverage of the AIDS epidemic, but the organization turned the acronym into its official name in 2013, the same year it named Boylan to head its board. Last year Boylan, who had taught English for 25 years at Colby College, joined the faculty of Barnard College as the Anna Quindlen Writer-in-Residence, a position named for the onetime *New York Times* and *Newsweek* columnist, who has a reputation as a quintessential "women's" writer.

Working Mother magazine in 2014 named for the first time a transwoman—Meghan Stabler, a marketing and communications executive for CA Technologies—its Working Mother of the Year. Stabler would seem an odd choice. Another late-in-life transitioner, Stabler has an adult daughter by a long-divorced wife, and in 2011 she wed another woman. That union has produced a second daughter, now age 2. An October 15, 2014, article by Stabler in the *Huffington Post* spoke of the "glass ceiling" and of Stabler's desire to serve as a "mentor" for harried mothers trying to balance job and family demands. Stabler, however, has an advantage possessed by few other working moms: her very own stay-at-home wife.

A Minnesota Family Protection League ad from 2014

Most indicative of this trend is the ongoing transformation—perhaps the right word is "trans-formation"—of women's colleges, institutions that for decades had bucked economic and social pressures to go co-ed. In January, the elite 178-year-old Mount Holyoke College, one of the first institutions of higher learning for women in America, announced that its theater club would no longer produce *The Vagina Monologues*, the 1996 play by Eve Ensler that has become a feminist Valentine's Day staple on college campuses nationwide. Mount Holyoke's student-run Project: Theatre decided to retire *Monologues*, a representative stated in an email obtained by the conservative website Campus Reform, because it was not "inclusive" of people who identified as women but lacked vaginas. "Gender is a wide and varied experience, one that cannot simply be reduced to biological or anatomical distinctions, and many of us who have participated in the show have grown increasingly uncomfortable presenting material that is inherently reductionist and exclusive," the Project: Theatre representative wrote.

That was probably to be expected. During the fall of 2014 Mount Holyoke had announced that it would accept transwomen among its applicants. It's now one of four women's colleges to do so, along with Mills College in Oakland, California, Simmons College in Boston, and most recently Bryn Mawr, which declared on February 9 that the school's applicant pool will now be "inclusive of transwomen and of intersex individuals who live and identify as women at the time of application." Other women's colleges, such as Wellesley, alma mater of Hillary Clinton, allow transgender males who enrolled as women to stay on campus and graduate as men. At Wellesley the word "sisterhood" as all-pervasive bonding nomenclature is being replaced by "siblinghood." Wellesley professors who once took care to use feminine-gender pronouns in lecture hypotheticals out of deference to their all-female classrooms now find themselves scrambling for a more gender-neutral vocabulary.

TWO TYPES

J. Michael Bailey's book flies directly in the face of this prevailing notion of body-mismatch transgender identity. His theories about the essentially sexual substrate for transgenderism are not original. They first appeared in a 1987 scholarly article by Ray Blanchard, now 69, formerly head of clinical sexology services at the Clarke Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto and today a psychiatry professor at the University of Toronto. Blanchard is most famous for his now-widely accepted "fraternal birth-order" theory about why men with several older brothers are more likely to be gay than those without: Over the course of multiple pregnancies, their mothers seem to build up antibodies to the crucial hormones that affect a male fetus's development in the womb.

Blanchard, who had extensively interviewed about 200 transgenders, deconstructed the standard psychological taxonomy for categorizing people who are fascinated by the trappings of the opposite sex. Psychologists typically divide those people into three distinct categories: "fetishists" who are stimulated by objects of the opposite sex's clothing (men who collect women's underwear, for example), "transvestites" who like to dress up in opposite-sex clothing, and people who actually identify as members of the opposite sex—those "women trapped in men's bodies" of current nomenclature. The sexual interests of the first two groups fall into a category that psychiatrists and psychologists call "paraphilias": essentially unusual erotic obsessions. The third, at least since the rewriting of *DSM-5* in 2012, is regarded as simply an unfortunate

biological mismatch that causes misery to those affected.

Blanchard argued that this standard tripartite categorization was all wrong. "Transsexuals have tried to sterilize sex out of the picture," Blanchard said in a telephone interview. "But transsexualism can't be understood without reference to sex."

Blanchard's theory is that transgenders fall into two distinct categories whose sexual orientations, interests, choice of careers, and even, to a large extent, social class are violently different from each other. One of those categories he calls "homosexual" transgenders, whose sexual attraction, from childhood to death, is strictly toward members of their own genetic sex. Among males, they're the extremely effeminate boys who identify as girls in early childhood, play with dolls and other girls' toys, and shun the rough-and-tumble play typical of boys their age. Studies at Vanderbilt and the University of London have shown that 70 to 80 percent of those trans-children grow out of their trans-identity at puberty and become, simply, gay adolescents and, later, gay adult men. The 20 to 30 percent who do take formal steps toward transitioning, Blanchard believes, are a self-selected group who, thanks to their more delicate looks, can function fairly successfully as women. "They're people who might be unsuccessful as men," Blanchard said.

Jennifer Finney Boylan, above, and Jennifer Pritzker, below

Homosexual transgender men transition early in adulthood, typically during their twenties, Blanchard observed. They account for the vast majority of transgenders in the non-Western world: from the "two-spirits" of indigenous North American tribes, to the *fa'afafine* of Samoa, to the *kathoeys* of Thailand who can easily fool Western sex tourists into misidentifying them as women. In those societies there is typically a recognized and thoroughly integrated social niche for men who identify and dress as women. The *fa'afafine* typically work as secretaries, nannies, and housekeepers—stereotypically female occupations. In that respect, they're not unlike the flamboyant gay men of Western culture who carved out a recognized social niche for themselves in such occupations as hairdresser, dancer, makeup artist, interior decorator, couturier, and fashion consultant (*Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*). Boys and men in drag played women's roles on stage from classical times to the 17th century, and they continue to be popular entertainers for both gays and heterosexuals to this day, as the demographics of the Kit Kat Lounge attest.

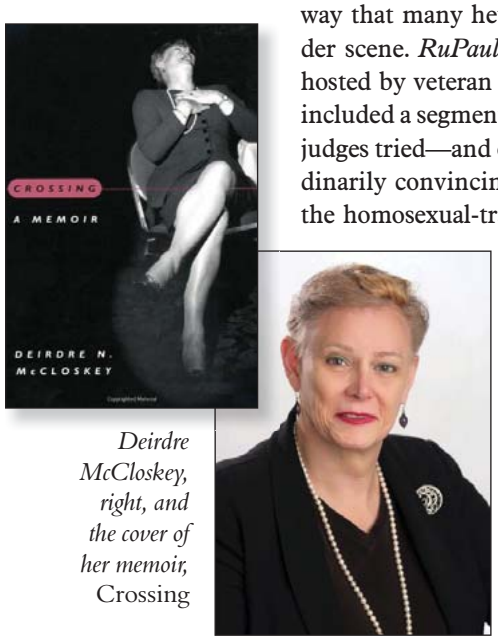
By contrast, Blanchard discovered that the predominant form that trangenderism takes in the West today involves men who, as men, have never identified as homosexual in their erotic attractions, but rather as heterosexual, bisexual, or asexual. Those men, his research revealed, tended to make their transitions in their mid-to-late thirties, or even later—at least a full decade on average after the homosexual transgenders did. Furthermore, many of those men were married and fathers before they came out. The paradigm might be travel writer Jan Morris, now 88, who spent the first 46 years of her life as James Morris, the journalist who covered Edmund Hillary's ascent of Mt. Everest and who fathered five children before undergoing transition surgery in 1972. And many in this heterosexual population—in contrast to the homosexual transgenders on the drag scene—worked in stereotypically hypermasculine professions: They'd been parachutists, Navy SEALs, engineers, policemen, firemen, and high school football coaches. The billionaire philanthropist James Pritzker, who became Jennifer Natalya Pritzker in 2013, in his early sixties, is a retired much-decorated U.S. Army lieutenant colonel with three children by his former wife. "They'll say that they chose those professions in order to suppress their feelings as females," Blanchard said. "But no one put a gun to their heads to choose those jobs." Many late-transitioning transgenders (Jennifer Finney Boylan, for example) insist, contra Blanchard, that they were aware from early childhood that they were born into the wrong body—but Blanchard thinks they aren't being honest with themselves.

Furthermore, late-in-life transitioners tended to be relatively well-off, not just to be able to afford the surgery, which these days can cost $50,000 and upwards (now covered to some extent under Obamacare and Medicare), but also to pay for a second step that many transgenders regard as mandatory: "facial feminization" surgery to alter hairlines, transfer fat strategically, and break down the jaws and overhanging brow-ridges that are typical of genetic men. That can add another $35,000 to $60,000 to the tab. The U.S. pioneer of facial feminization, 79-year-old Dr. Douglas Ousterhout of San Francisco, has grown so wealthy from his surgical work that he owns his own Sonoma County winery.

BOYLAN, AP / ANNIE HIGBEE

In another contrast to homosexual transgenders, who typically played with girls' toys and dressed up as princesses at early ages, this second group typically didn't start manifesting signs of transgenderism until adolescence—by becoming fascinated with their mothers', their sisters', and later, their wives' clothes, often their underwear, and sometimes donning those garments surreptitiously. Blanchard came to believe that, in contrast to the taxonomy that places fetishism, cross-dressing, and transgenderism into three separate categories, there was actually a continuum along which all three categories were points. Blanchard coined the term "autogynephilia"—men who fall in love with the idea of contemplating themselves as women—to describe this phenomenon. He believed that it is essentially an erotic response to the trappings of genetic womanhood.

One of the things Blanchard observed about the group he called autogynephiles was that they typically displayed little interest in such stereotypically female activities as crafts, gardening, cooking, or sewing. Their interest in female identity seemed limited to their personal appearance: clothes, shoes, makeup, nail polish, hairstyles, and mannerisms. And because they start their transitions when well into male adulthood—in contrast to homosexual transgenders who have been modeling femininity effortlessly since childhood—autogynephiles have to learn relatively late in life such basic matters as "Where does a woman cross her legs? Where does she put her hands?" Blanchard said.



Deirdre McCloskey, right, and the cover of her memoir, Crossing

Late-in-life transitioners' self-descriptions often reveal an obsession with "passing" as women. The exaggerated feminine postures and gestures that late-in-life transitioners sometimes adopt in response to those concerns can strike women as overcompensation. A recent photo of Jan Morris shows her with the back of her hand resting delicately against her cheek. The 1999 memoir *Crossing*, by Deirdre McCloskey, an economics professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago who was Donald McCloskey until transitioning during the mid-1990s, when she was in her fifties, contains a laundry list of the gestures she taught herself, at least some of which have probably never been made by very many women:

> Rest one elbow on the back of the other hand, laid horizontally across your middle, the free hand stretching vertically to frame your face from the bottom, palm out. In touching your face, which you should do frequently, hold the hand in a graceful pose. For situations such as display at the dinner table, learn the hand pose used in ballet—fingers arched and separated, middle finger almost touching the thumb. . . . When shaking hands—don't be the first to offer—use no strong grip, and place your hand sideward into the other person's. Check your hair frequently. Play idly with your jewelry.

The book-jacket photo of *Crossing* shows McCloskey with her hands modestly crossed over her chest (probably a play on the book's title) like the Virgin Mary in a Renaissance painting of the Annunciation.

Blanchard's two-type taxonomy comports with the way that many heterosexual outsiders view the transgender scene. *RuPaul's Drag Race*, the popular reality show hosted by veteran drag queen RuPaul, until very recently included a segment titled "Female or She-Male?" in which judges tried—and often failed—to guess the sex of extraordinarily convincing cross-dressers who were probably of the homosexual-transgender typology that Blanchard has posited. (The segment was dropped in April 2014 after activists from GLAAD complained that the word "she-male" was transphobic. Also terminated was a segment titled "You've Got She-Mail.")

By contrast, the male-to-female late-in-life transitioners whose condition Blanchard defines as autogynephilia often appear to outsiders as—well, men in dresses. Dr. Rachel Levine, a balding, bespectacled fifty-something doctor who transitioned five years ago and was appointed on January 27 by Pennsylvania's new Democratic governor Tom Wolf the state's first transgender physician general, can look to the uninitiated like Phil Silvers in a wig. "They'll look at themselves in the mirror, and they'll see what they want to see," Blanchard said. "It's not necessarily what you see."

And indeed, in real life, the two groups that Blanchard described seldom interact socially. Richard J. Novic (his pseudonym), a genetically male Southern California psychiatrist, husband, and father who becomes the lithe and stylish "Alice" every Friday night (Novic's 2005 book *Alice in Genderland: A Cross-Dresser Comes of Age* is a narrative about this double identity), describes the strict social segregation of the two groups on his website (he prefers the terms "started-out-gay" and "started-out-straight" to Blanchard's more clinical "homosexual" and "autogynephile"):

> We . . . fail to see the two types because, with rare exceptions, we love-to-be femmes run into only other

started-out-straights at support groups and conventions, and started-out-gays tend to see only their own kind at gay bars. Our tranny clubs in L.A. have typically hosted both, but even there, there's a striking qualitative difference between the "early night crowd" and the "late night crowd." Breaking out onto the scene in my early thirties I really hoped to associate myself with the younger, prettier started-out-gay DQs [drag queens] and TSs [transsexuals] but ultimately realized that the less fab, more soulful started-out-straight TVs [transvestites] and TSs were my true peers.

Like Blanchard, Novic observes that started-out-straight transitioners gravitate toward stereotypically male jobs, often "business and technical careers": IT geniuses like Martine Rothblatt, economists like Deirdre McCloskey, physicians like Novic himself.

Despite his belief that transgenderism is a matter of sexual fixation, not innate identity, Blanchard—along with Bailey, and for that matter, Novic—does not downplay the genuine suffering, the "dysphoria" over their hated genetic bodies, that can lead transgenders to feel like Gregor Samsa in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Novic relates that he longed to be a full-time woman, and that his Fridays-only as Alice (combined with therapy) was a compromise with his wife.

One of the people I interviewed for this story was a man I'll call "Seth" (he asked me not to reveal his real name), a married 43-year-old CEO of a thriving family business in California. Seth described to me the agonizing cycles of "binging and purging"—splurging on women's clothes, then cathartically dumping the female wardrobe into the trash, only to resume the cycle again—that the memoirs of late-in-life transitioners reveal as fairly common. "I've always been attracted to women," Seth told me—except that his preferred fantasies involved "having a female body," Seth said. "It's something that's completely consuming; you're completely compulsed," he added. "You feel like you can't take the stress and anxiety." He had told his wife about his compulsions early on in their marriage, and there was hope that wedded life would cure them. It didn't. To save his marriage, Seth underwent a surgical castration three years ago. "I still have a sexual function," he said, but his desire to be a woman, which he believes was linked to his production of testosterone, "is no longer part of my life. I felt like I was able to choose not to do it."

The fact that surgery seems to ease the misery of dysphoria is one reason why Blanchard—and also Bailey and Novic—have no problems with the expensive genital and other physical transformations that many transgenders undergo. "I believe it's a mental disorder, but I think that [surgery] is a reasonable palliative treatment," Blanchard said.

SCIENTIFIC MISCONDUCT?

Blanchard's two-type theory of transgenderism enjoyed a respectable minority place in psychological circles—until the publication of Bailey's *The Man Who Would Be Queen* in 2003. Bailey's book, pitched to a lay rather than an academic readership, was a sympathetic study of the transgender phenomenon and of gay men in general, pointing out the ways in which gays both resemble and differ from straight men. The book's enthusiastic endorsement by Simon LeVay, himself openly gay, could not be said to be surprising. Bailey's book followed the life-stories of "Danny" (all the names were pseudonyms), a cross-dressing little boy Bailey predicted would grow up to be a gay man; a cadre of homosexual transgenders who worked in a demimonde of prostitutes and escorts; and a transwoman Bailey called "Cher" (née "Chuck") who seemed to follow the paradigmatic autogynephilic pattern identified by Blanchard.

The Man Who Would Be Queen inflamed transgender activists. It did have certain inflammatory aspects. There was the jacket photo of the man in high heels. Blanchard's coinage "autogynephilia" (extensively used by Bailey in the book), with its connotations of fetishism, deviance, and mental disorder, has never sat well with transgenders. Bailey was even more adamant than Blanchard that autogynephilic transgenders often lied about their erotic fascination with cross-dressing. Furthermore, Bailey observed, drawing on his previous studies, that homosexual transgenders tended to come from lower socioeconomic classes than autogynephiles, and that they tended to have short time-horizons that often led them into streetwalking, shoplifting, and other petty crimes. "Prostitution is the single most common occupation," Bailey wrote. His book also, perhaps inadvertently, included details about "Cher" that made her real identity quickly discoverable to those in the know: Anjelica Kieltyka, a Chicago transgender woman who, although disagreeing with Bailey about his characterization of her as autogynephilic, had made frequent guest appearances in his classes and had introduced him to other figures in the city's transgender scene.

Bailey's book caught the immediate—and hostile—attention of Lynn Conway, now 77, a pioneer of computer-chip design during the 1970s, a longtime engineering professor at the University of Michigan, and a leading transgender activist who figured as one of *Time*'s "21 Transgender People Who Influenced American Culture" in its May 2014 cover story. Conway was close to Andrea James (both had been patients of Dr. Ousterhout and touted his facial-feminization techniques on their websites). James, best-known for counseling Felicity Huffman, the star of the film *Transamerica* (2005), on transgender

voice and mannerisms, underwent transition surgery in 1996. She and Conway teamed up with Kieltyka, and with Deirdre McCloskey, to make sure that *The Man Who Would Be Queen* would not receive a respectable academic hearing. McCloskey's participation in this enterprise seems odd. For one thing, her memoir, *Crossing*, describes her pre-transition self as having been "sexually aroused" as a young man by accounts of cross-dressing—a classic Blanchard-esque theme. Furthermore, McCloskey's writings have consistently displayed a moderate-conservative temperament, praising Western bourgeois values as responsible for the prosperity of the West.

Yet it was McCloskey, joined by Conway, who wrote administrators at Northwestern demanding an investigation of Bailey for scientific misconduct, asserting that he had violated campus and federal protocols for obtaining informed research consent from Kieltyka and others. (McCloskey agreed to an email interview with me, then did not respond to my questions. Conway did not respond to a request for an interview, and James, in a prolific series of Bailey-dissing emails, declined.) A transwoman featured in Bailey's book—whom he called "Juanita"—accused him of having had sex with her on a specific date in 1998. (Both Bailey and his ex-wife produced email correspondence indicating that Bailey had been caring for the couple's children at her home that evening.) Northwestern took no publicly disclosed disciplinary action against Bailey, although he did step down as chair of the psychology department in 2004. But at a July 2003 meeting of the International Academy of Sex Research, John Bancroft, then director of Indiana University's Kinsey Institute, declared that Bailey's book was not "science." The Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (now known as the World Professional Association for Transgender Health) declared that Bailey's "poorly referenced book does not reflect the social and scientific literature that exists on transsexual people and could damage that essential trust." The LGBT-centric Lambda Literary Foundation, whose board had earlier nominated *The Man Who Would Be Queen* for an award, withdrew the nomination. Bailey's own colleagues at Northwestern became reluctant to speak in his defense.

The most virulent of Bailey's attackers was—and remains—Andrea James. Her capacious website, Transsexual Road Map, contains an anti-Bailey page that James herself describes as "a very coarse and mean-spirited screed . . . a taste of his own medicine." The site originally included photos of Bailey's young children downloaded from Bailey's homepage, accompanied by sexually degrading captions and suggesting that both children might have been "sodomized" by their father. James eventually removed the photos. In addition, James attacked Blanchard and Anne A. Lawrence, now 64, a Seattle anesthesiologist-turned-psychologist and self-described autogynephilic transgender whose 2013 book *Men Trapped in Men's Bodies: Narratives of Autogynephilic Transsexualism* is a collection of case studies that seem to support Blanchard's theory.

In 2007 Alice Dreger, a bioethicist at Northwestern's medical school, released the results of an exhaustive investigation she had conducted of the charges against Bailey. Her 73-page study, published on the National Institutes of Health website in 2008, concluded that although Bailey's book contained flaws of tactlessness and overgeneralization, James, Conway, and McCloskey had conducted a witch-hunt against him. On her website James has repeatedly denounced Dreger as belonging to a genre of "kooks" and "academic nobodies" who engage in "intellectual dishonesty and media manipulation."

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The wrath of James (along with that of her numerous Internet allies) has made it difficult for anyone, either in the world of professional psychologists or outside it, to sympathize publicly with the Blanchard-Bailey theories, much less espouse them. Anne Lawrence, targeted on James's website for particularly harsh vilification, turned down several requests by me to interview her in person, on the phone, or by email. Richard Novic emailed this reply to my request for an interview: "I fear I just have too much to lose by participating in your article, not because of you but because of possible backlash by folks within my own (trans) community." Novic was clearly worried about his real name being outed by transgender activists—a not uncommon fate for those who disagree with them—with ruinous consequences for his psychiatric practice and for his high school-age children, who know nothing about "Alice." David Buss, the evolutionary psychologist who had praised *The Man Who Would Be Queen* effusively in his jacket blurb, also turned down a request for an interview, as did Carl Elliott, a bioethicist at the University of Minnesota and author of a widely read *Atlantic* cover story in 2000, "A New Way

to Be Mad," focusing on people who want to have their healthy limbs amputated—and sometimes find surgeons willing to do the job. Elliott had compared this fixation to autogynephilia as Blanchard categorized it, and had cited Blanchard and Anne Lawrence by name.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

The effective silencing by activists of anyone who disagrees, at least in public, with the "man trapped in a woman's body" theory of male-to-female transgenderism has created a regime of transgender political correctness that has been thoroughly embraced by both the media and politicians. Nowhere is this so evident as in a spate of sympathetic news stories about children who identify as members of the opposite sex at toddler and elementary-school age, and whose parents simply indulge them, buying their boys-turned-girls wardrobes of frilly dresses and glittery shoes, doing up their hair in elaborate arrangements, sometimes transferring them to schools where no one knows their genetic identity, and usually letting them pick out new names. (One little boy chose to become "Hannah," after Hannah Montana.)

The childhood transition that some parents have enthusiastically embraced also usually involves monthly injections of "puberty blockers," the most controversial—or at least what ought to be the most controversial—aspect of childhood transition. The aim is to help produce transgender adults who will look more like the gender they identify with, by suppressing the hormone-driven growth spurts that accompany adolescence, the body hair and masculinization of facial features among boys, and the breasts and menstruation of girls. The blockers suppress the signals sent by the hypothalamus to the pituitary gland, which in turn signals the gonads to produce the estrogen or testosterone that induce sexual maturity. The most common of the blockers is Lupron, a drug that is FDA-approved for slowing the growth of prostate cancers but one of whose long-recognized off-label uses has been delaying abnormally early puberty. Administering it to transgender children at the onset of puberty is supposed to give them breathing room to decide later in adolescence whether to continue their transitions via hormones and, ultimately, surgery, for which the minimum age is typically 18. The cost of the injections is high: $1,000 or $1,200 a month.

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Advocates of puberty-suppression insist that its effects are fully reversible and that youngsters who change their minds and stop the injections will grow to normal height and maturity. The results can be bizarre, though. A 2011 story in the *Boston Globe* described born-identical twins, Jonas and Nicole (née Wyatt) Maines. Jonas was all boy from birth, but Nicole, who by age 4 was favoring tutus, beads, and princess costumes, started on blockers at age 11. By age 14, according to the *Globe*, Jonas was midway through puberty, with broadening shoulders, a deepening voice, and mustache fuzz. He was 5 feet 6 inches tall and weighed 115 pounds. Nicole, by contrast, was a petite 5 foot 1 and weighed only 100 pounds. She fit into a girls' size 14 dress.

Nicole's lead endocrinologist at Boston Children's Hospital was the U.S. pioneer of transgender puberty-blocking, Dr. Norman P. Spack, a professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. Spack was inspired, he said in a phone interview, by what he believes is the success of blockers in the Netherlands, where more than one hundred young transgenders have used them since the 1990s. Spack agreed that up to 80 percent of genetic boys who identify as girls during childhood grow out of it naturally at puberty—but "we get the 20 percent," he said. At Boston Children's, he said, candidates for blockers must undergo six months of psychological counseling, obtain letters of referral, and have the consent of both parents. They must wait until they are about 16, when Spack believes they are old enough to know what they want, before they can start taking opposite-sex hormones. Spack is proud of the results. "My very first patient was a Miss England semifinalist," he said. She had been genetically predicted to grow to be well over 6 feet tall, but "I treated her starting at age 13, and we got her down to 5′11.″ (That patient was probably Jackie Green, a former Miss England finalist who in 2012, at age 19, gave an interview to the *Daily Mail* describing her treatment by Spack and her genital surgery in Thailand at age 16.)

Critics of puberty blockers, now administered in at least 37 locations in the United States according to Spack, point to the expense, the numerous side-effects associated with Lupron and its pharmaceutical relatives, and the possibility that parents and physicians might be pushing children who would otherwise grow out of their transgender identities into a lifetime of painful and costly surgery, dependence on daily doses of estrogen and other

hormones, and the difficulty of finding a place for themselves in a world in which their femininity will always be questioned. On top of that, taking large doses of the hormones of the opposite biological sex almost invariably renders the taker sterile.

One of the leading critics has been Kenneth Zucker, a psychologist and former colleague of Blanchard who heads the gender-identity clinic at Toronto's Clarke Institute. "One controversy is, how low does one go in starting blockers?" Zucker told the *Globe* in 2011. "Should you start at 11? At 10? What if someone starts their period at 9?" Zucker prefers a therapy regimen of trying to ease transgender girls into accepting that they will be happier in the long run by accepting their genetic maleness, since most of them will grow up to be gay men anyway.

Andrea James, as might be expected, has repeatedly attacked Zucker on her website as promoting "reparative therapy for gender-variant youth"—likening him to the often religiously motivated advocates of "curing" a gay sexual orientation. Several LGBT organizations have amassed more than 100,000 signatures on a petition for a federal law that would ban trans-conversion therapy on minors. The legislation would be called "Leelah's Law," for a teen named Leelah Alcorn in Ohio who committed suicide in December 2014 after reportedly being sent by her parents to a conversion therapist. It is not clear whether Zucker's style of counseling would be banned as well—although it seems quite clear that many activists would like it to be.

Another critic is Paul McHugh, psychiatry professor at Johns Hopkins University's medical school and former chief psychiatrist at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital. McHugh opposes gender-reassignment surgery and hormone theory, period, likening the position of their advocates to the theories of John Money (1921-2006), a longtime professor of pediatrics and medical psychology at Hopkins. Money believed that gender roles were learned, and he presided over a decision by Hopkins to persuade the parents of a boy, David Reimer, whose penis was lost in a botched circumcision in 1966, to raise him as a girl. The experiment was a disaster: Reimer rebelled from the beginning at his forced feminization and committed suicide in 2004. "In about 10 years these kids [subjected to intensive hormonal therapy as minors] are going to sue the hell out of those hospitals," McHugh predicted in a phone interview.

McHugh cited a 2011 long-term study by the Karolinska Institute in Sweden that followed the 30-year trajectories of 324 people who had undergone genital and other reassignment surgery. Beginning about 10 years after their surgeries, the study found, those people began experiencing increasing mental difficulties that their transitions were supposed to have cured. Their mortality rate from suicide turned out to be 20 times that of the nontransgender population. "This isn't some old study," McHugh said. "This is from 2011!"

THE WOMEN LEFT BEHIND

Right now, though, nearly the only people who seem not to have joined the general media and political euphoria surrounding the trans phenomenon are . . . women. Or rather, some of them: the wives and former wives of late-in-life male-to-female transitioners who resent being expected to go gentle into that good night of being "wife and wife" with the person they married, as Jennifer Finney Boylan described her relationship with her wife of 23 years in her bestselling 2003 memoir *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders*. Heterosexual women, after all, are attracted to men precisely because of their masculinity. In a 2003 article for the *Atlantic* (an excerpt of a book, *Normal: Transsexual CEOs, Crossdressing Cops, and Hermaphrodites with Attitude*), writer and psychotherapist Amy Bloom described a cross-dressing Caribbean cruise on which the wives of the cross-dressers tended to look either visibly miserable or stoically patient. For most of those wives, the husband's transition goes well beyond the "worse" in "for better or for worse," and the marriage ends in divorce.

I interviewed one of those divorced wives, Elizabeth Ellis, now 65 and a retired clinical psychologist, who discovered after 10 years of marriage that her husband had a trans identity when "a girdle turned up in the laundry. He told me that the girdle 'makes me feel relaxed,'" Ellis said. He had confessed to her when they were dating that he was fascinated by women's underwear, but after the girdle incident, he began growing his hair and fingernails long, started to cross-dress in front of the couple's young children, and "said he was considering a sex-change operation" (which he eventually underwent). After their separation, friends reported seeing Ellis's ex-husband in the supermarket, dressed to the hilt in stiletto heels, fishnet stockings, and dangling earrings as she pushed her cart. "But then, you read all these articles saying that a woman is supposed to stay with her husband, that she's not supposed to be angry," Ellis said. "But it's really: 'I'm going to do what I want, and I'm angry at you because you're not thrilled about it.'"

In *Crossing*, Deirdre McCloskey complained that her former wife and grown son and daughter had broken off communication with her after her transition: "But how am I to speak to my children? My grandchild?" Mike Penner, a *Los Angeles Times* sportswriter who transitioned into Christine Daniels at age 49 in 2007, reportedly told friends

that he hoped his wife, fellow *Times* sportswriter Lisa Dillman, would follow the lead of Jennifer Boylan's wife and accept the change. Dillman didn't; she filed for divorce the day that Christine Daniels made her first appearance in the *Times* newsroom. Daniels, at first ecstatic about her widely publicized new female identity, grew increasingly depressed and committed suicide in 2009 after transitioning back to Mike Penner.

Freelance writer Christine Benvenuto became the target of rancorous protests by transgender activists after the publication of her 2012 book *Sex Changes: A Memoir of Marriage, Gender, and Moving On*, in which she related her bitter divorce from her husband of 20 years, Yeshiva University professor Joy (formerly Jay) Ladin. Benvenuto described her husband as looking "creepy" in women's clothes and said that he had turned from a loving father into a "stranger" absorbed in his new gender and furious that his wife and children weren't happy for him. The *Huffington Post* and the *Guardian* ran an online excerpt from the book that was later severely truncated in the wake of hundreds of mostly hostile (and since-deleted) comments. Transgender activists also shouted down a reading by Benvenuto of her book at Hampshire College (police had to be called), and two Hampshire College professors wrote that Benvenuto's remarks about her ex-husband constituted "hate speech."

The other group of women to withhold their approval of the upbeat-or-else aura surrounding all that is transgender consists of radical feminists, mostly lesbians but also a handful of heterosexuals such as Germaine Greer and British leftist firebrand Julie Burchill, whose incendiary 2013 op-ed "Transsexuals Should Cut It Out" was withdrawn by the *Observer*, the newspaper where it originally appeared.

It's hard to think of lesbians as the new social conservatives, and it's hard to get one's mind around the fact that a group that first conceived the idea that gender is a mere social construct (and derided thinking to the contrary as "essentialist") now aligns itself with religious-minded people horrified by the idea that genetic males should be allowed to use women's restrooms or play on their athletic teams. Radical-lesbian opposition to transgender ideology dates to the early 1990s, when transwomen began trying to crash the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, an all-female (and lesbian-dominated) product of the feminist-separatist movement of the 1970s.

The main argument of the radicals—promoted on such lesbian-run websites as GenderTrender and Gender Identity Watch—is that both the feminist and the gay-rights movements have been co-opted by middle-aged male-to-females, who the radical lesbians insist are essentially heterosexual men. GenderTrender frequently displays unflattering photos of those transgenders towering over their wives. It also tracks the career of Fallon Fox, a 39-year-old mixed-martial-arts fighter who was a Navy man and father named Boyd Burton until undergoing genital surgery in 2006. In a September 3, 2014, cage fight that lasted just over a minute, Fox delivered an orbital bone fracture and a possibly career-ending concussion to lesbian fighter Tamikka Brents. GenderTrender commented: "[A] crowd gathered to watch something that happens thousands of times a day worldwide: a man battered a woman."

"It's a worship of masculinity," said Sheila Jeffreys, a political science professor at the University of Melbourne, in a phone interview. Jeffreys's 2014 book *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism* argues that "transgenderism" is a way for men subtly to impose male dominance via surgery and hormones upon traditionally female spheres, obliterating female identity and harming not just lesbians, by taking over their spaces, but the women who were once their wives, as well as the mothers who mourn the loss of their familiar children. This happens both when men decide they're women and when women decide they're men, Jeffreys argues. "Chaz Bono is a lesbian," Jeffreys said. "You can't become a man."

It goes without saying that Jeffreys and the other radical feminists are frequent targets of transgender activists and their progressive allies, derided as either dinosaur holdovers from the 1970s or as transphobic menaces. They have acquired their own derogatory acronym in transgender-activist circles: TERFs, for "Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminists." A 2013 article for *Salon* by Samantha Allen, a transwoman online columnist who frequently dispenses advice to women on feminist issues (and successfully crowdfunded a vagina for herself in 2013), was titled "The Hate Group Masquerading as Feminists" and pointed out that few mainstream feminists share their views.

That may be true enough given today's ideological climate and intensive language- and thought-policing, but there is something to be said for the radfems' emperor's-new-clothes view of the middle-aged male-to-female transitioners who now dominate the transgender scene. It does seem odd that someone who lived two-thirds of her life as a man is now lauded as America's highest-paid female CEO, or that people who weren't born female gripe on the Internet about "male privilege." It seems equally odd that a board co-chairman of a leading gay and lesbian rights organization is someone whose life experiences and even sexual orientation resemble those of neither gays nor lesbians. It's hard not to wonder whether such stereotypically male traits as aggression, competitiveness, and *libido dominandi* haven't played a role in late-in-life transitioners' thrust to the forefront of

feminist and LGBT ranks—and in their scorched-earth pushback against anyone who criticizes them.

And now it seems that even the drag scene that has traditionally provided employment and a recognized social role on the margins of society for the many transgenders in Ray Blanchard's homosexual category is in the process of being further marginalized by the more bellicose transwomen who dominate the progressive media's LGBT coverage. In March 2014, 30-year-old transwoman journalist Parker Marie Molloy, who had come out the previous year, launched an "I f—ing hate @RuPaul" Twitter campaign over RuPaul's "she-male" contest. Malloy also wrote an article for *Advocate.com* taking to task the 2013 movie *The Dallas Buyers' Club*, not only for having actor Jared Leto play a transgender woman, but for having that character be "a flamboyant, full-time crossdresser," in Malloy's words. "There's no need to repeatedly show someone putting on makeup in front of a mirror," Malloy scolded. Another transwoman journalist, Zinnia Jones, marshalled 100 signatures from other transwomen for an open letter published in the *Huffington Post* denouncing Andrea James, who had defended the movie, and Calpernia Addams, a Hollywood transwoman who had helped Leto prepare for his role. Elsewhere Jones tut-tutted: "Modern day drag hurts trans women and accomplishes little or nothing of value."

After we left the Kit Kat that night in September, Bailey took me to the Baton in downtown Chicago, which he had described in *The Man Who Would Be Queen* as the city's most famous drag establishment. That night, though, it seemed forlorn: six or so divas strutting and lip-synching in front of a handful of people sitting at tables in a cavernous, darkened room. The most talented, although clearly not the youngest, was Chilli Pepper, a redhead of medium height who favored mask-like stage makeup and Tallulah Bankhead-style pursed lips. She was covering Millie Jackson's "Love Is a Dangerous Game," a song that could be said to sum up many aspects of transgender life:

You'd better be careful every step of the way
Or you might turn out to be the one who plays the fool.

After the show was over, we talked to Pepper. No, she had never done the surgery, or the hormones, but yes, the electrolysis and, hence, the baby's-cheek skin. "We're not women," Pepper said bluntly. "We're bionic women." ♦

Clyde Alves, Tony Yazbeck, and Jay Armstrong Johnson in the current revival of 'On the Town' (2014)

The Song Is Ended

On the golden age of the American musical. BY TERRY TEACHOUT

What is America's greatest contribution to the arts? Time was when many, perhaps most, people would have pointed to the Broadway musical as the likeliest candidate for admission to the pantheon. Theatergoers around the world have long rejoiced in the delights of the genre, including some whom one might well have thought too snobbish to admit its excellence. (Evelyn Waugh, who had next to no use for anything made in America, saw the London production of Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate* a half-dozen times, pronouncing it, according to one biographer, "ingenious and admirable.") But big-budget musical comedy has been in increasingly steep decline since the 1970s, and 10 long years have gone by since *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, the last homegrown musical to be wholeheartedly embraced by audiences and critics alike, made it to Broadway.

Since then, we've seen a parade of what I call "commodity musicals," the slavishly literal throwaway stage versions of hit movies that now dominate Broadway, as well as a number of highly imaginative small-scale musicals that, to date, have failed to draw large-scale crowds. But the old-fashioned school of *Oklahoma!* family musical appears to be all but gone for good, killed off by the disintegration of the common culture that made it

American Musicals
The Complete Books and Lyrics of Eight Broadway Classics 1927-1949
edited by Laurence Maslon
Library of America, 800 pp., $37.50

American Musicals
The Complete Books and Lyrics of Eight Broadway Classics 1950-1969
edited by Laurence Maslon
Library of America, 800 pp., $37.50

Terry Teachout is drama critic of the Wall Street Journal *and critic-at-large of* Commentary. *His play* Satchmo at the Waldorf *will be performed in May at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills.*

JOAN MARCUS

possible in the first place. Now that Broadway-minded songwriters no longer have a universal musical language on which to draw, it isn't possible to write a show with genuine broad-gauge audience appeal. It says everything about the desperate state of the American musical that the last theatrical song to become an enduringly popular hit, Stephen Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns," was written in 1973.

That's what makes the publication of *American Musicals* so timely. These two volumes contain the unabridged scripts of 16 "classic" shows written between 1927 and 1969, the period now usually regarded as the "golden age" of the Broadway musical. The table of contents is itself a capsule history of the genre at its peak: *Show Boat* (1927), *As Thousands Cheer* (1933), *Pal Joey* (1940), *Oklahoma!* (1943), *On the Town* (1944), *Finian's Rainbow* (1947), *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948), *South Pacific* (1949), *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *The Pajama Game* (1954), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *Gypsy* (1959), *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *Cabaret* (1966), and *1776* (1969). Unlike their successors, these shows have retained their popularity. Twelve have returned to Broadway in the past decade, and two are playing there as I write. If there is a core musical-comedy repertory, this is it.

Laurence Maslon, the editor of *American Musicals*, has chosen the contents sensibly and well, and he has also supplied much useful supplementary material in his extensive endnotes. To be sure, one can quibble with certain of his selections, just as connoisseurs will doubtless wish that the notes had contained a bit more in the way of arcana (where is the sheet-music verse for "Lonely Town"?). For the most part, though, Maslon offers a representative snapshot—or, rather, a silent movie, since the music of these 16 shows is not reprinted here. That's not a minor omission. But it's also true that, except for Irving Berlin's *As Thousands Cheer*, their scores have been recorded and are easily available on CD or online, meaning that it isn't necessary to read *American Musicals* in silence. If you do, though, you'll likely come away with a new understanding of how and why Broadway musicals work.

The first thing that attentive readers will notice is that most of the shows included here were adapted from previously existing source material, all of which would have been familiar to their original Broadway audiences. This reliance on preexisting material is, however, entirely different from that of the commodity musical. None of these 16 shows is a literal adaptation of its source material. In most cases, the material is extensively, often quite radically, transformed; and even when the musical sticks fairly close to its source, it treats that source with creative freedom. You don't go to see *My Fair Lady* because it reminds you of *Pygmalion*, but because it is so imaginative a reconception of George Bernard Shaw's play that it has a fully independent expressive life of its own.

And that life is specifically theatrical. While all but one of the shows included in *American Musicals* were later turned into commercially successful Hollywood movies, most of the film versions are unsatisfyingly overblown, and, except for *1776*, none gives the viewer anything more than a general sense of how the shows "work" on stage. Almost without exception, the best movie musicals have been written directly for the screen, which demands a kind of inward-focused naturalism that is alien to the extroverted genius of the Broadway musical, whose "presentational" put-it-across-the-footlights style presupposes the actual physical presence of the performers.

As for the shows themselves, they are almost always sunny in tone. Even when the lives of the characters are touched by heartbreak and death, as in *Fiddler on the Roof* and *South Pacific*, the curtain invariably falls on a hopeful resolution of the dramatic conflicts that have driven its plot. This is a crucial part of what sets the golden-age Broadway musical apart from the 19th-century European opera of which it is a direct descendant: It reflects the fundamental optimism of the American national character, which does much to explain its enduring popularity.

Younger musical-comedy fans, however, are likely to be startled by certain features of the scripts reprinted in *American Musicals*, which are (as Maslon explains in his introduction) "presented in versions as close as possible to the form of each show as presented to its audience on its opening night." That's a much bigger distinction than is commonly realized. The vast majority of golden-age musicals, including many of these 16 shows, are now customarily performed on and off Broadway in altered versions, with books that have been extensively cut and occasionally sanitized (the first word heard in the 1927 version of *Show Boat* is "niggers"). On occasion, as in the cases of the most recent Broadway revivals of *Pal Joey* and *Porgy and Bess*, they are totally rewritten by other hands. Not surprisingly, most of these changes sharply diminish the effect of the original shows, but they usually go unnoticed and unremarked on since the original books are often difficult to find and are, in any case, unknown to younger viewers. Hence, the value of these two volumes to critics and scholars is enormous.

But what about everybody else? How much is the layman likely to get out of reading *American Musicals* in cold blood? Maslon appears to have his doubts, although he takes care to hedge his bets:

> A musical theater piece is particularly vulnerable in print, stripped of its music, its dancing, and its performance components. The musicals chosen for this collection had to absorb and move and delight the reader by their dramatic and lyrical qualities, even in the absence of those other theatrical elements.

And do they? Only up to a point. Scarcely any of these shows could be performed without their songs and have any value at all. But then, that's true of operas as well—and you can count on the fingers of one hand the number of operas whose arias have memorable texts. Not so American musicals, in which music and lyrics

are of virtually equal importance. And while there's never been a truly popular musical in which the lyrics were *significantly* better than the music, the best musical-comedy lyrics do come close to having an expressive life of their own. To flip through the pages of *American Musicals* is to be startled by how often you run across couplets that you already know by heart:

Fish got to swim, birds got to fly—
I got to love one man till I die.

He's a laugh, but I love it
Because the laugh's on me.

My time of day is the dark time,
A couple of deals before dawn.

I don't remember growing older.
When did they?

How many modern American poets have written lines half so memorable—and well-remembered—as these?

Therein lies the real value of *American Musicals*: It gives us a fuller appreciation of the brilliantly crafted dramatic contexts from which those quotable lines are uprooted whenever a musical comedy song is performed on its own. It goes without saying that if you *really* want to appreciate the brilliance of those lyrics, you should go see the shows from which they come, the best of which are as vital today as they were a half-century ago. But failing that, you can always resort to reading *American Musicals* with an original-cast album playing in the background. It isn't perfect, but it isn't bad. ♦

B&A

Science Under Siege

The politics of evolution in the Sunshine State.

BY WRAY HERBERT

This is a meticulous account of the 90-year debate over the teaching of evolution in Florida's public schools, and it is full of high drama and raw emotion. It is populated by dozens upon dozens of passionate culture warriors on both sides of the divisive issue. But unless you are a dedicated student of this strand of intellectual history, or a longtime resident of Florida's Gulf Coast counties around Tampa, you are unlikely to have heard of a single one of them.

Consider the Reverend Clarence Winslow. In 1971, Winslow was a 64-year-old retired minister from the First Church of the Nazarene in Clearwater when he launched a protracted and largely unsuccessful campaign to banish Charles Darwin's theory of evolution from public school classrooms. From then on, he was one of the leading creationist activists in the state, preaching that the schools' abandonment of the Bible amounted to official atheism, undermining traditional Christian values and harming Florida's children.

Going Ape
Florida's Battles Over Evolution in the Classroom
by Brandon Haught
Florida, 296 pp., $24.95

Or consider Raymond Shelton, the superintendent of schools in Hillsborough County from 1967 to 1989. Shelton staunchly defended the constitutional separation of church and state, an unpopular view among his conservative and devout neighbors. He believed that the teaching of faith-based theories of human origins violated this legal principle, and he tried his best to take a stand against preaching supernatural beliefs in the schools. He also tried, mostly in vain, to enlighten Floridians about the scientific method and natural laws.

There is a reason why Winslow and Shelton—and the dozens of other important figures in this drama—are not household names. These church leaders and educators fought (and still fight) their battles in obscurity, volunteering their evenings in school board meetings in dreary auditoriums, waiting for their 20 minutes at the microphone, tirelessly arguing and preaching their beliefs. Brandon Haught has pored over volumes of minutes of these often-tedious meetings, spanning decades, documenting the strategies of this cast of unknowns.

The creationists have been, by far, the more dogged troops: aggressive, relentless, strategic. They really had to be, since they were fighting an uphill battle against the foundational principles of science and the encroachment of the modern world. Haught (who volunteers for the anti-creationist Florida Citizens for Science) is as even-handed as he can be in telling his story, but there is no way around the creationists' hypocrisy and weak arguments. The examples are legion, but I will focus on two main points.

The Florida debate dates back to 1915, when William Jennings Bryan took up residence in the state. The politician would later be famous for his arguments in Tennessee's Scopes trial, but he began honing his anti-Darwin rhetoric in Bible classes and public lectures. From the start, creationists focused on the word "theory." Once they accepted that actually preaching the Bible in the schools was illegal, they switched their strategy to an attack on evolution, arguing that it was unproven—"just a theory." They wanted evolution to be taught (if at all) as "theory, not fact." Even Raymond Shelton conceded that Darwinian evolution should be taught only as theory.

But this wording, and the strategy it represents, reveal a misunderstanding of scientific theory, either intentional

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or unintentional. Scientists do not use the word *theory* in the everyday sense of the word to mean an unproven or speculative idea. To the contrary, a formal scientific theory is (according to the National Academy of Sciences) a comprehensive explanation of some aspect of nature that is "supported by a vast body of evidence." In other words, a theory—including the theory of evolution—is more proven than unproven. The NAS compares evolutionary theory to heliocentric theory (the idea that the Earth orbits the sun) or cell theory (the idea that living things are made of cells). These ideas are not guesses, and they are not going to be upended.

Animatronic dinosaur and human, Creation Museum, Petersburg, Kentucky

MARK CORNELISON / MCT / NEWSCOM

This is a crucial idea in this enduring debate, and it is not well understood, even by educated citizens. Which leads directly to a second point of misunderstanding: Throughout Haught's account of the Florida debate, creationists have argued for a "two-model" approach to the teaching of human origins. That is, they have tried to slip their version of Christianity—not Judaism or Islam or Buddhism or any other of the world's many religions—into the classroom by maintaining that evolution is merely one explanation for where we came from. The other, on at least equal footing, is the biblical creation story—Genesis, Adam and Eve, and so forth—which should therefore get equal time.

This is a fallacious argument: It is junk science, bad intellectual discourse, and bad journalism to assume that issues all have two sides of equal value and merit. The well-established theory of evolution, with a vast amount of evidence to back it up, is not just one side in a debate. It is the cornerstone of all biology—including all medicine, all drugs, and other cures—and precludes the biblical creation story. Of course, people are free to believe in any story they want, but they cannot claim equal footing in the world of science.

Yet the two-model argument has been part of a larger strategy by creationists to co-opt science and its vocabulary for nonscientific ends. What they really wanted was to have the schools be an extension of the church, where students would continue to be immersed in Christian beliefs and traditional values. But when they lost this battle in the courts, they regrouped, trying to use the scientific ideas of proof and certainty against evolution.

Some of the action in *Going Ape* takes place in Tallahassee, where state education officials and lawmakers use such rhetoric on behalf of religious agendas. Haught devotes considerable space to the efforts of state senator Ronda Storms, a former English teacher from Hillsborough County whose 2008 Academic Freedom Bill was far from what its title suggests. The stated purpose of the bill was to protect teachers and students from "discipline" or "discrimination" for discussing the "full range" of scientific views of evolution. In fact, the bill was intended to use the guise of academic freedom to protect teachers who preach the biblical story of creation in public schools. Similarly, creationists have argued that students should not only be permitted but encouraged to think critically—when "thinking critically" really means learning religious beliefs alongside, or in place of, real science.

Despite these scientific and academic charades, creationists continued to show their colors in the trenches when they argued for this or that textbook or law or resolution or standard, all intended to insinuate religious beliefs into local school curriculum. There were small victories, many of them; but over the long haul, there have been many more small defeats. It's almost a refrain: The effort fizzled, or was tabled, or died in committee, or disappeared unceremoniously. Local attempts failed on their merits, and, in the end, all these small failures add up to a big victory for scientific thinking in Florida and beyond.

And yet, as Brandon Haught warns, this victory is tenuous and most likely temporary. Creationist warriors always resurface, with new names and vocabularies and tactics. It's unlikely we've seen the last of them. ♦

B&A

The Morning After

Reflections of an architect of post-Communist Europe.

BY MARCI SHORE

"We do not like this world of ours today," Adam Michnik writes in *The Trouble with History*. "We feel bad in this world of ours. Why is that?"

Michnik, once a political prisoner under Poland's Communist regime, is today the editor in chief of a very successful major newspaper. He is well aware of what Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman recently explained in *Foreign Affairs*: namely, that 25 years after communism's fall, the transition to capitalism and democracy has proven a success. International trade, household consumption, and standard of living have all increased; per-capita car ownership is higher in Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia than in the United Kingdom. More East Europeans travel than ever before, pollution has been cut by more than half, and infant mortality has dropped.

The cheerful verdict reached by quantitative indices is in tension, though, with the impressions of Michnik and his fellow dissident Václav Havel. These two recent books by Michnik—one a collection of essays reflecting on the morality of revolutions, the other a book of conversations with Havel—reveal a thinker who is not content. Neither Michnik nor Havel is a self-satisfied Western-style liberal who has embraced Francis Fukuyama's "end of history." Nor is either a Marxist romantic or revolutionary fanatic. They are, rather, philosophical radicals who have insisted on the need for metaphysics in an age of consumerism.

Marci Shore, associate professor of history at Yale, is the author, most recently, of The Taste of Ashes: The Afterlife of Totalitarianism in Eastern Europe.

An Uncanny Era
Conversations between Václav Havel and Adam Michnik
edited and translated by Elzbieta Matynia
Yale, 264 pp., $25

The Trouble with History
Morality, Revolution and Counterrevolution
by Adam Michnik
edited by Irena Grudzinska Gross
translated by Elzbieta Matynia, Agnieszka Marczyk, and Roman Czarny
Yale, 208 pp., $25

The precocious son of Communists, Michnik was first arrested in 1965, before his 20th birthday, for adding his name to an open letter calling for a true workers' revolution against the privileged Communist party bureaucracy. In the following decades, Michnik returned to prison several times, including in 1968, for his role in student protests against censorship, and in the 1980s, for his role in Solidarity. In 1989, he was a key figure in the Polish Round Table Talks, which resulted in the first free elections in postwar Poland.

Havel's path to becoming a hero of 1989 was quite different. Born in 1936, Havel was never a Marxist, but, rather, a playwright inspired by Beckett, Ionescu, and Kafka. When, in 1976, the members of a rock band called The Plastic People of the Universe were arrested, Havel mobilized the Czech intellectual elite on behalf of the young, long-haired musicians. That was the origin of Charter 77, the most important act of dissent in Communist Czechoslovakia, an act whose ethos was captured by Havel's call to "live in truth." Thirteen years later, after having spent several years in prison, the absurdist playwright became the first president of post-Communist Czechoslovakia.

Since 1989, former dissidents like Havel and Michnik have grappled with the question: Why has there been no happily ever after? The fall of communism ushered in a period of robber-baron capitalism. Some people became very rich; others—the elderly on pensions, teachers and farmers, doctors and nurses, and others with pitiful state salaries—struggled to get by at all. The files in the secret police archives were exploited as a tool of vengeance against political enemies. Nationalism became a powerful political force. The sense of a collective moral project that had been present in Charter 77 and Solidarity evaporated: While 1989 had felt like a moment of "moral rebirth," writes Michnik,

> Today we ask: What had happened to us? Why have we changed the human rights charter into a credit card and why do we reach less willingly for Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* or Albert Camus' *The Plague*, the books of our dreams in those years, than for our own checkbooks, the books of our dreams in these times?

The story of "living in truth" involves urban intellectuals hiking up a mountain. In August 1978, four Charter 77 signatories (including Havel, who was not ordinarily much of a hiker) met with their Polish counterparts (including Michnik) on Sněžka Mountain on the Czechoslovak-Polish border. Havel pulled a bottle of vodka from his backpack. A lifelong friendship was not all that resulted from that first encounter between the two men.

On Sněžka, they spoke about the political resonance of seemingly insignificant moral acts. Michnik asked Havel to write down his thoughts. Three months later, an underground courier appeared at Michnik's Warsaw apartment with a manuscript entitled "The Power of the Powerless." Havel's essay introduced an ordinary greengrocer who, every morning, displays in the shop window a sign stating: "Workers of the world unite!" Neither

he nor his customers believe in the Communist slogan. Even the members of the regime no longer believe in it. All know it to be a lie.

Yet what else can the greengrocer do? If he were to refuse to display the sign, he could be questioned, detained, arrested—which suggests that displaying a slogan in which no one believes is of great importance. If, one day, all the greengrocers were to take down their signs, that would be the beginning of a revolution. And so the seemingly powerless greengrocer is not so powerless after all. He bears responsibility; by failing to "live in truth," people like the greengrocer "confirm the system, fulfill the system, make the system, *are* the system."

This is a diagnosis of post-1968 communism as a descent into inauthenticity, and it comes not from the comfortable classics of Western liberal (or conservative) thought but, rather, from Martin Heidegger. Havel was not alone among East European dissidents in having been misunderstood as a Western liberal. He was not a populist representing a good people against an evil regime; on the contrary, he thought that the people bore responsibility for the regime. He did not idealize the West. Havel described the Communist system as only one instance of "this general inability of modern humanity to be the master of its own situation." He saw "no real evidence that Western democracy . . . can offer solutions that are any more profound."

For Václav Havel, the ethical imperative was to reclaim one's authentic self. Adam Michnik called on Poles in the late Communist decades to live "as if" one were a free person—that is, to accept that their behavior was their own responsibility, regardless of constraints. For Michnik, the traditional political opposition—right versus left—no longer had meaning. The miracle of Solidarity was its transcendence of political, ethnic, social, and generational divisions. Even Charter 77, while it remained a small ghetto of intellectuals, brought together young and old, Marxists and Roman Catholics, former Stalinists and former victims of Stalinism. Havel described dissidence as an "existential attitude." He and Michnik were not alone in believing that Charter 77 and Solidarity were special, that they had things to teach the West.

One lesson for the West was about responsibility in conditions of moral ambiguity. In Havel's autobiographical one-act play *Audience* (1975), Havel's alter ego Ferdinand Vaněk is a dissident playwright working at a brewery. The secret police have demanded that the brewmaster file weekly reports on Vaněk. The brewmaster becomes nervous: He finds it difficult to compose the reports. Could Vaněk, perhaps, write them? "You could do that much for me, couldn't you?" he asks Vaněk. "It would be child's play for you! You're a writer, damn it, right?"

Vaněk appreciates the brewmaster's kind treatment of him; nonetheless, he refuses to write the reports about himself. For Vaněk, this is "a matter of principle." The brewmaster breaks down:

> And what about me? You're just gonna let me sink, right? You're just gonna say, fuck you! It's okay if I end up being an asshole! Me, I can wallow in this shit, because I don't count, I ain't nothin' but a regular brewery hick—but the VIP here can't have any part of this! It's okay if I get smeared with shit, so long the VIP here stays clean! . . . All I'm good for is to be the manure that your damn principles gonna grow out of . . .

In *Audience*, everyone is implicated: the regime, the brewmaster, Vaněk himself. The brewmaster is a variation of the greengrocer; he is both victim and oppressor.

For Michnik, among the disappointments of post-communism has been the rise of right-wing nationalist populism, accompanied by an official memory politics known as "historical policy." The essence of historical policy is a denial of moral ambiguity and a failure to take responsibility. It is an attempt to enforce a national historical narrative that presents "the thesis that all Polish disasters were the result of Polish benevolence, trust, and gentleness, and of the malice and cruelty of foreigners."

For Michnik, historical policy is absurd: Communism had not simply been a Soviet occupation; everyone had taken part. In order to do something good, one had to participate in a system that was evil. Between heroes and villains there were many shades of gray. This was among the reasons why "lustration"—the purging from government and public life of those who had collaborated with the secret police—was not a

ONDREJ NEMEC / ISIFA / GETTY IMAGES

Adam Michnik, Václav Havel in Prague (2011)

straightforward matter. Many were put on secret police lists of potential informers without their knowledge. Others found themselves on those lists because they had once met with an agent at a restaurant or had succumbed to threats to their children.

Moreover, those placed most at risk by lustration were those who had been in the opposition—after all, it was their circles the secret police had tried to infiltrate. Those safest under lustration were the greengrocers. The post-Communist antipathy towards the dissidents, Havel believed, had its roots in the dissidents' serving as people's bad consciences. He and Michnik were among those who, under communism, had sat in prison the longest. They were also among those most willing to forgive. For Michnik, historical policy and lustration reflected a Jacobin-like impulse to impose a politics of the sinless. And the problem with revolutionary purity was that it led to the guillotine.

The trouble with revolution, Michnik finds, is also its aftermath: the superficiality of the everyday. Once upon a time, East Europeans had stayed up all night copying censored poems by hand. Now, no one had time to read serious literature. The omnipresence of Communist propaganda had been replaced by the omnipresence of quasi-pornographic tabloids. The revolution had brought the end of censorship. Then, the market had taken over—and had proven to be tawdry. "Suddenly all great value systems are collapsing," Michnik observed.

"[A]long with the development of this consumerist global civilization grows a mass of people who do not create any values," Havel said during one of his last conversations with Michnik. For Michnik, this "axiological vacuum" was "a typical phenomenon of periods of restoration as described by Stendhal in *The Red and the Black*: this is a time of cynicism, intrigues, careerism." Michnik grew preoccupied with Julien Sorel, Stendhal's weak plebian hero who seeks authenticity in illicit love affairs: "Let everyone take care of himself in the desert of egoism called life," Julien says.

In 1989, Michnik's friend, the philosopher Marcin Król, was among those who had considered liberty to be the great priority. But individualism began to dominate all other values. "We were stupid," Król said in an interview last year. No longer does anyone pose metaphysical questions like "Where does evil come from?" The dramas of characters like Julien Sorel resulted from their awareness of the weight of their actions. The lack of an answer to the question of whether they behaved well or badly was the source of great suffering. "Today," Król said, "the lack of an answer does not hurt." And that is the problem: It *should* hurt.

After 1989, Havel still felt the need for an "existential revolution." Michnik agreed. "This is a civilization that needs metaphysics," he told Havel in 2003. During the winter of 2013-14, metaphysics returned to Eastern Europe on Kiev's Maidan. Like Solidarity, the Maidan protests were a miracle: Divisions were suddenly overcome, ideas mattered, moral stakes were high. The concept of human dignity became urgent, immediate, and palpable. People proved willing to sacrifice themselves. The existentialist moments of making a choice, taking responsibility, being shaken into authenticity were illuminated.

Václav Havel died in December 2011. He did not live to see the Ukrainian revolution on the Maidan. Adam Michnik did. And he appreciated that the solidarity of the Maidan was a fragile moment that most people never experience in their lifetimes. On February 22, 2014, having for three days watched Kiev burn and some hundred people killed, Michnik addressed the Ukrainians. He quoted the Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert: "*We stand at the border / we reach out our arms.* . . . We send our Ukrainian brothers words of solidarity." ♦

B&A

Domestic Tranquility

The family as incubator of well-being.

BY EVE TUSHNET

When the sociologist Timothy Nelson asked low-income men who didn't live with their children what the ideal father was like, eight of them spontaneously mentioned the same man: Ward Cleaver, the dad from *Leave It to Beaver*. That might make sense if Nelson's interviews had taken place in the 1950s-60s, when the show aired; but these men were interviewed in the late 2000s. Why did they hark back to a man old enough to be their own grandfather?

Maybe it is because the 1950s were the time when the Ward-and-June family model was most available to working-class men and women. In *Labor's Love Lost*, Andrew J. Cherlin, professor of sociology at Johns Hopkins, labels the period from the end of World War II to the 1970s as "the peak years" for the working-class family. During these years, income inequality was low and the "marriage gap"—the difference between marriage rates for working-class and upper- or middle-class adults—was narrow.

Today, the marriage gap is wider

Labor's Love Lost
The Rise and Fall of the Working-Class Family in America
by Andrew J. Cherlin
Russell Sage Foundation, 272 pp., $35

Eve Tushnet is a writer in Washington.

than it's ever been. "It is now unusual for non-college-graduates to have all of their children within marriage," Cherlin notes. Rich people still live like the Cleavers, in homes anchored in the institution of marriage, but low-income families are built around the much shakier quasi-institutions of cohabitation and single parenting. And middle-class families are starting to look more like the poor than the rich.

Cherlin uses a striking metaphor: casualization. This term describes the shift to temporary, often contractless or off-the-books labor, "stop-gap jobs" rather than "career jobs." Cherlin argues that the working-class family has also been casualized.

Instead of lifelong marriage, low-income and less-educated men and women enter into casual relationships that quickly become sexual. When the woman becomes pregnant, many couples pledge to stay together, and some may even marry; but their relationships don't last. Partners cycle in and out of children's lives.

Just as the solidarity provided by union membership has largely vanished from the workplace, the solidarity provided by marriage and extended-family networks is vanishing from the home. Cherlin even suggests that the decline in non-college-educated people's church membership represents a "casualization of religious belief," in which individualized spirituality replaces the institutions and obligations that once structured working-class religious life.

Cherlin's historical grounding and willingness to listen to actual working-class and less-educated people are the sources of this book's strongest points. And he explains that this is not the first time Americans have experienced a wide (and widening) marriage gap; it's actually the second time.

During the Gilded Age, the marriage gap widened as income inequality grew. But Cherlin notes that the more conservative sexual culture of the late-19th century meant that Mark Twain's contemporaries were much less likely than we are to cohabit and to enter consecutive, fleeting sexual alliances before marriage. So their marriage gap didn't create nearly as big a class of fatherless, or intermittently fathered, children. Economic upheaval and cultural change have reinforced one another.

Cherlin also finds that, in every age, the working class struggles to adopt the shifting mores of the upper classes. Upper-class norms regarding motherhood, parenting, marriage, and personal identity all "trickle down" to people who lack the economic resources to make such norms work for them. In an earlier era, for example, working-class men often wanted their wives to stay home, even when that breadwinner/homemaker model damaged the family's financial prospects.

The Cleavers at home, ca. 1958

EVERETT COLLECTION

Today, the same dynamic plays out with very different upper-class mores. Across the class spectrum, Americans believe that marriage is the "capstone," not the "cornerstone," of a good life: It is the reward for material success and personal stability. It's the last item on life's to-do list. To marry before you're financially and emotionally stable is considered irresponsible, and marrying "too young" is judged harshly in many communities.

The capstone ideal works for the rich. It doesn't work so well for the poor, who often long for marriage—and value it highly—but feel that it's out of their reach. And across the class spectrum, a new ideal of the "expressive self" is taking hold. This ideal self is openly emotional rather than stoic, favors autonomy over obedience, and focuses on building (or repairing) personal identity rather than entering pre-existing social roles.

Cherlin hopes this expressive self can strengthen working-class families. "[T]he therapeutic language being acquired by less-educated men today," he argues, "may make them better attuned to the emotional requirements for successful contemporary marriages. . . . Such a movement [of men adopting the expressive self] could reduce social class differences in the conduct of family life." He admits that "this development is still nascent," but what he means is that there is no evidence for these sunshiny "may"s and "could"s. Cherlin is curiously blithe about the expressive self, given that its rise has correlated with the working class's decline.

As Jennifer M. Silva found in *Coming Up Short: Working-Class Adulthood in an Age of Uncertainty* (2013), the expressive self can be harshly judgmental of oneself and others. She found that young working-class men and women understood their lives using the language of psychotherapy and addiction recovery. They focused especially on self-help and felt that people who couldn't improve their lives were burdens they had to leave behind in order to lead an independent life.

Andrew Cherlin's proposals for

economic and cultural change mostly follow the liberalism of lowered expectations. He suggests shifting from a focus on marriage to a focus on stability. He notes that teenage pregnancy rates have dropped noticeably in recent years, and he asks whether the young adult pregnancy rate (and thus the rate of out-of-wedlock childbearing) can be lowered as well. He explores improved early childhood education, "career academies," and apprenticeship programs.

One might also add that easing licensing requirements and regulations on small businesses could make it simpler for outsiders to break in. Moreover, it would be hard to improve the marriage and stability prospects of the poor without dramatically reducing the incarceration rate. Overcriminalizing, overpolicing, and oversentencing in poor communities removes men (for the most part) from these neighborhoods, and makes it exceptionally difficult for them to get jobs when they return.

One deeper change might also help. Obedience, hard work, and religious tradition were once part of how we tried to understand and accept hardship. The expressive, individualist self is a self with little patience for suffering. When suffering is viewed as avoidable if one tries hard enough, everyone who still has to suffer (including poor people) will bear the additional burdens of confusion and shame. And their neighbors, family, and church will judge them, further straining the bonds on which they might have relied for help.

The effect on marriage shouldn't be surprising. Marriage is an investment in a relationship for which we're willing to suffer. Otherwise, we'd pull out when the going gets hard. And the going gets hard much faster if you're poor.

Suffering isn't always a sign that you're doing something wrong. Sufferers should be helped by their community, not judged. Love that lasts will always be love that suffers. Restoring these beliefs—through preaching, service, storytelling, and counseling—would change both our economic debate and our family practices. ♦

B&A

Virtue Rewarded

Including the virtue of keeping a straight face.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

When I tell you that, in my opinion, the three novels now known as the *Fifty Shades Trilogy* are the worst books I have ever read all the way through, I am not telling you anything interesting. To criticize E. L. James's publishing version of winning the Irish Sweepstakes is to attack a cultural phenomenon entirely beyond the reach of criticism. These three books, originally published as a series of posts on a fan-fiction website, ended up earning their author $95 million in a single year. This suggests that James knows something about human nature—something very interesting.

It doesn't matter that the books are as dreadful as they are. Actually, the fact that they're so bad certainly played a not-inconsiderable role in advancing the phenomenon. Their artlessness clearly makes James's fantasies about wild sex heated up with dollops of violence—and the mixed emotions all this provokes in her 21-year-old heroine—far more accessible than anything even remotely literary would be.

I'm not sure the same can be said of the movie version of the first novel, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which is more artful and therefore less effective. The director, a woman named Sam Taylor-Johnson, takes the title literally: There isn't a ray of sunshine in the skies over Seattle and Portland, where the story is set, and the monochromatic color scheme of the movie is soberly beautiful in exactly the way E. L. James's incredibly clunky prose is not. Even the fact that the heroine is played strikingly by a 25-year-old actress named Dakota Johnson proves a hindrance in that respect. The Anastasia of the novel is almost entirely without characteristics except that she is skinny, and so she is a perfect blank slate. Johnson is anything but.

Because the books spend so much time inside Anastasia's roiling brain, and her growing obsession with a gorgeous 27-year-old billionaire named Christian Grey, there's a lot of heated melodrama even when there's nothing much happening. Grey wants her to enter into a sadomasochistic relationship with him in which he is the "dominant" and she is the "submissive." He has a special room in his penthouse apartment with whips and chains and

Fifty Shades of Grey
Directed by Sam Taylor-Johnson

E. L. James

JUSTIN NG / REX / REX / PHOTOSHOT / NEWSCOM

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

Dakota Johnson, Jamie Dornan

tables and all kinds of appurtenances.

He presents her with a contract that spells it all out. She thinks about it a lot. She fantasizes about it. Meanwhile, he does nice things for her, he sends her funny texts, and she falls in love with him. Hundreds of pages pass.

In the movie, this translates into about 45 minutes before we enter the "playroom." And even though I had less than no interest in actually seeing the novel's S&M scenes brought to life—I was actually anticipating them with the same level of dread I feel when it seems a child is going to be put in some jeopardy in a movie—*Fifty Shades of Grey* had grown so exhaustingly tedious that I turned to my wife and said, "They better get to the whipping already."

Christian Grey is played, very badly, by a Northern Irish actor named Jamie Dornan. As he shows Dakota Johnson around the playroom, they stop at a rack of hooks from which some sticks are dangling. "This . . . is . . . a flogger," Dornan intones with an expression that suggests he would rather be anywhere at that moment but in this scene in this movie. I collapsed into giggles—and for me, the rest of the movie positively flew by in a comic haze.

FOCUS FEATURES

The general line on *Fifty Shades of Grey* is that it's a mainstreaming of porn. I don't think this is right. The novels are very dirty, but the movie is far less so. Indeed, it struck me (sorry) as more suggestive and far less explicit than a great many R-rated films of the 1980s and early '90s. And thematically, both the novels and the movie couldn't be any more retrogressive on the subject of sex and sexual relations, which is how best to understand E. L. James's idiot-savant brilliance.

For the thing is, Grey's "playroom" is not a playroom at all. It's a prison, even for him. He is in an endless cycle of punishment and self-punishment, owing to a Gothic early childhood with a crack-addict mother and sexual abuse at the hands of an older woman during his teenage years. He's warped and traumatized; his hunger to control Anastasia is a torment to him. The movie ends with her commanding him to stop. She has entered his life not to be his victim but to be his savior.

That is the true fantasy fulfillment at the heart of James's fairy tale: Anastasia is the woman who must go through a very dark wood indeed to save her prince and take up residence in his castle. In this sense, *Fifty Shades of Grey* is a 21st-century update of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, published in 1740 and generally considered the first modern novel. Pamela is an innocent teenager being pursued and tempted and tormented by a lecherous older man known only as Mr. B whom she resists but does not entirely turn away, even after he nearly rapes her. Pamela's purity eventually purifies Mr. B, and they marry.

How to tell this story—which transfixed all of Europe in the 18th century and helped establish the preconditions for what we now call "Victorian morality"—after the Pill? The only real way is to raise the stakes, as they say. Pamela is guarding her sexual purity with her life; Anastasia must guard the destruction of her core being. Mr. B wanted to reduce Pamela to the level of a harlot; Grey wants to reduce Anastasia to the level of a sexual slave. Neither girl allows it to happen.

The subtitle of *Pamela* explains its appeal nearly 300 years ago just as it explains the appeal of *Fifty Shades* today: "Virtue Rewarded." For Pamela, the reward involves rising from the working class to the gentry, just as Anastasia leaves the 99 percent for the 1 percent. And—though in Richardson this is implicit while in James it's explicit—the reward for virtue is a satisfying sex life for both parties . . . with some kick to it. ♦

"Justice Ginsburg: Not '100% sober' at State of the Union"
—News item

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Ginsburg: 'Totally hammered when I wrote majority opinion'

OTHER WRITINGS UNDER REVIEW

'Oh, who gives a [expletive]?'

BY OLIVER CLOSOV

NEWSCOM

Ginsburg feels the buzz during the February 12 State of the Union address.

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg admitted last night that she was "[expletive]-ing hammered when I wrote that pension fund decision," referring to the majority opinion she issued in the case of Bay Area Laundry & Dry Cleaning Pension Trust Fund v. Ferbar Corp., a decision regarding the statute of limitations set in the 1980 Multi-employer Pension Plan Amendments Act.

Speaking at Barnard College as part of a panel on the role of women in the judicial system, a noticeably relaxed Justice Ginsburg didn't shy away from criticism of the decision. "Oh, who gives a [expletive]?" she asked from the lectern. "I mean, pension funds, shmension shmunds, do you know what I'm sayin'?"

The decision drew a great deal of attention in legal circles, not only because of its rambling tone and oddly personal style, but also because Justice Ginsburg made the unusual decision to read it aloud from the bench. "You guys over here [the plaintiffs] and you guys up in here [the defendants], just everybody just calm down over here, do you know what I'm sayin'?" Ginsburg began. "Now you guys up over there, laundry guys... I love you guys. You know that? I love you guys. Promise me, promise we'll still be friends after all this court bull[expletive], because I [expletive]ing love you laundry [expletives]." The mood soured quickly when Justice Antonin Scalia tried to interrupt the proceedings. "What ARE you, my MOM?" Ginsburg asked, before concluding, "Pfff, whatEVER."

After falling asleep briefly, Justice Ginsburg announced that the court sided unanimously with the plaintiffs, the Bay Area Laundry Pension Fund, offering a sweeping conclusion regarding the relationship between pension funds and the employers who set them up. "See, you Ferbar guys, you guys don't even know, you don't even know, you know what I'm sayin'? But this right here, this is how we do it up in here. Supreme Court [expletives]! Pshhh. I see you lookin' all at me like that. You think you're soooo much better than me, don't ya, yeah—

SHOTS CONTINUED ON A6

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