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HILLARY AND CAMPAIGN FINANCE
JAY COST

SEX HAS CONSEQUENCES

Even on college campuses, human nature cannot be wished away

BY PETER WOOD

WEEKLYSTANDARD.COM

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COVER BY JASON SEILER

It's All About the Willas?

No one really knows why, in 1928, Andrew Jackson supplanted Grover Cleveland on the $20 bill. It may be because that year was the centennial of Jackson's election as president. Or perhaps it was because Congress, very much controlled by Republicans at the time, thought that honoring Old Hickory would be a harmless bipartisan gesture to the Democrats.

Anyway, while the reasons for Jackson's appearance on the twenty are obscure, the arguments for his disappearance are explicit. In the mind of the party of which he once was patron saint, Andrew Jackson, the old Indian fighter and Manifest Destiny man, is now anathema. Senator Jeanne Shaheen, a New Hampshire Democrat, has introduced a bill to remove Jackson from the twenty and replace him with a woman; Rep. Luis Gutiérrez of Illinois has done the same in the House, and with these memorable words: "If this is a country that truly believes in equality, it is time to put our money where our mouths are, literally, and express that sense of justice and fairness on the most widely used bill in circulation."

Truth to tell, The Scrapbook is generally indifferent to such matters. Our nation's currency has tended to feature Founders and certified national heroes—Thomas Jefferson, Ulysses S. Grant, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, etc.—and in fact, The Scrapbook is just old enough to remember when there were dimes in circulation that did not feature Franklin D. Roosevelt. Times change, life goes on, reputations rise and fall, and The Scrapbook has never found it necessary to count how many men, women, Republicans, Democrats, German-Americans, or transgendered persons are featured on bills and coins.

On the other hand, on those rare occasions when Congress has risen up to demand statistical balance—the Susan B. Anthony dollar comes to mind—the project has been an embarrassing failure. For whatever reason, Americans tend to be creatures of habit, and as proponents of the metric system and the Sacagawea dollar coin can attest, we often resist attempts to impose what Rep. Gutiérrez calls "justice and fairness" in realms of life where such terms don't apply.

Nor is this tempest in a teapot without irony. A left-wing organization called Women On 20s has taken the lead in publicly excoriating Jackson and demanding his replacement with someone from its own list of candidates. But of course, up until very recently, Jackson was the great hero of the Democratic party: The champion of what some might call "everyday Americans" in his time, Jackson was the sworn enemy of bankers and aristocrats, a proponent of the Union and strong central government, and the subject of an Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. hagiography (*The Age of Jackson*, 1945) before Schlesinger discovered the Kennedys. All across America, state Democratic parties would kick off their campaigns with Jackson Day Dinners.

Now, in the manner of the old Soviet encyclopedia, Women On 20s has rendered Jackson a nonperson, and its list of nominees is a tale in itself: Alice Paul, Betty Friedan, Shirley Chisholm, Sojourner Truth, Rachel Carson, Rosa Parks, Barbara Jordan, Margaret Sanger, Patsy Mink, Clara Barton, Harriet Tubman, Frances Perkins, Eleanor Roosevelt, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Wilma Mankiller. Anyone detect a trend? One environmentalist, one abortion advocate, two career feminists, one Indian "activist," one Democratic cabinet member, one Democratic first lady, three Democratic congresswomen—and so on and so on.

A tribute, as it were, to the philistinism of the left. For if it were up to The Scrapbook, we would save the expense and leave poor Jackson alone. And yet, why must the honor be reserved for politicians? A $20 bill featuring, say, Mary Cassatt or Emily Dickinson or Maria Mitchell or Leontyne Price or Willa Cather seems more appealing to us. Especially, of course, since Willa Cather was a Republican. ♦

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION, THE WEEKLY STANDARD

Hillary's Enablers

Now that the presidential race is heating up, we're getting our quadrennial lesson in the hopeless and perennial nature of media bias. Hillary Clinton is proving to be the most obviously corrupt major presidential candidate since her husband, and before that, you'd probably have to go back to Nixon to find someone worse. And yet, every damning new revelation about her conduct—from possibly illicit financial dealings to private spy networks to document destruction—is not so much reported as it is contextualized (a word we usually hate) by a sympathetic media. The context is sadly predictable: Here's one more opening for Hillary's cranky right-wing opponents to go after her.

Newsweek, for instance, recently reported that the largest individual donor to the Clinton Foundation is a shady Ukrainian billionaire who profits off of trade with Iran and may be in violation of U.S. sanctions. Here's the revealing first sentence of *Newsweek*'s story: "Enemies of Hillary Clinton waiting to discredit her bid for the White House are likely to seize on news that one of the biggest benefactors to the Clinton Foundation has been trading with Iran."

Why on earth should such a story be focused not on the scandalous news itself but on whether Hillary Clinton's supposed "enemies" would use it to discredit her? If she has, in fact, done something wrong or unseemly or inappropriate by taking this money—well, then, she deserves to be discredited.

As far as Hillary's troubling finances go, this is just the tip of the iceberg. The Hoover Institution's Peter Schweizer has a book coming out called *Clinton Cash* full of reporting that suggests money was being funneled through the Clinton Foundation by donors hoping for favorable treatment while Hillary was running the State Department. The *New York Times* has dutifully reported Schweizer's discoveries, but also felt compelled to provide the requisite

Democratic party-loyalist context. This is from the first paragraph of the first *Times* story on *Clinton Cash*: "The book does not hit shelves until May 5, but already the Republican Rand Paul has called its findings 'big news' that will 'shock people' and make voters 'question' the candidacy of Hillary Rodham Clinton."

In case that didn't provide ample warning to the *Times*'s liberal readers, the report goes on to note, "conservative 'super-PACs' plan to seize on 'Clinton Cash,' and a pro-Democrat super-PAC has already assembled a dossier on Mr. Schweizer, a speechwriting consultant to former President George W. Bush and a fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution." Schweizer's facts aren't really in question, and he has also pulled no punches in going after GOP congressional corruption in the past, but liberal *Times* readers have been once again alerted that the bigger picture is that critics might "seize" on these discomforting revelations.

Naturally, all of this signaling is leading liberals to an inevitable conclusion. The *New Yorker*'s John Cassidy spells it all out under the headline "'Clinton Cash' Attacks Could End Up Aiding Hillary." This, despite the fact that there are so far only a few published revelations from *Clinton Cash*, Schweizer's book isn't out yet, and Cassidy admits he

hasn't read it. Nonetheless, *Clinton Cash* "could end up benefiting Hillary. With [Fox's Sean] Hannity and other conservative media figures piling on, the Clinton campaign will be able to portray questions about the Clinton Foundation and the family's finances as a political witch-hunt rather than a legitimate exercise in vetting presidential candidates," he writes. Cassidy is suggesting that the GOP is overreaching without even a pretense of weighing what kind of reaction might be warranted to the reporting done by Schweizer.

Apparently the media have uncritically bought into Hillary Clinton's self-serving fantasy that there's a "vast right-wing conspiracy" out to get her. With coverage like this, it's going to be a long 18 months. ♦

No Need For Speed

Police and city officials in the District of Columbia must be downright giddy these days. Over the past year, D.C. drivers exceeded the speed limit on fewer occasions than the year before, meaning they were less likely to get into serious accidents. At least this is what we can extrapolate from the decrease in the number of speeding tickets issued by the 127 or so cameras planted throughout the District.

As the *Washington Post* noted last week, "Cash from speed-camera tickets dropped by 55 percent in fiscal 2014, after the city took in almost $76 million the year before." Ticket revenue for 2014 was a paltry $37,472,385. And while some attribute the decline to inclement weather and nonfunctioning cameras, it's a good guess drivers have simply become more aware of the various hot spots (or more adept at using technology like the Waze app, which alerts drivers to camera locations). The Scrapbook has noticed how, on a trip through the K Street underpass, the flow of traffic now predictably falls to 25 mph as cars pass the camera's watchful eye.

But that's the whole point of the cameras, isn't it? To get us to slow down? It can't possibly be the piles of cash filling city coffers, which since 2007 have totaled close to $357 million, can it? We'd like to think the District's bureaucrats will be celebrating this great victory for public safety—but there seems to be no time to celebrate.

Again according to the *Post*, "The District was set to began issuing tickets from six new speed cameras just past midnight Wednesday after a 30-day warning period at locations where the police said speeding has been a problem."

God bless 'em. Their concern for our safety is never-ending! ♦

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The Issue Issue

I have an issue with *issue*—with the word, that is. It pops up everywhere, meaning everything and meaning nothing. One hears of a pitcher who has rotator-cuff issues, of a landlord who has issues with pets in his buildings, of a bill up before Congress that poses jurisdictional issues. A weather reporter informs me that dressing warmly in a snowstorm is the main issue. The issue over reinstating the draft is whether soldiers serving only two years can be of serious military use. Can a word having so many different meanings, capable of being plugged into so many various contexts, finally have any useful meaning whatsoever? That, you might say, is the issue, though if you did you would be misusing the word.

I first became aware of the proper use of the word *issue* sometime in the late 1960s. I was a senior editor at *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, sitting in lengthy, often goofy meetings presided over by Mortimer Adler, who was redesigning—and not at all by the way destroying—the old *Britannica*, turning it from the world's best straightforward reference work into a Rube Goldberg device of monstrous complexity. Mortimer was many things—clown, tyrant, force of nature—but he could also chop logic finer than they chopped liver at the old Ratner's Delicatessen on Second Avenue. In one of these meetings someone described an item up for discussion as an issue. Mortimer, his always-racing mind causing him to stammer, shot back: "That's not an is-is-issue. It's not even a qu-question. It's a problem. The difference is a problem calls for a solution, a question for an answer, and an issue, an issue is something in the fl-fl-flux of con-controversy. Got it?"

As the only useful thing I ever learned from Mortimer, I not only got it, but I have never forgot it. Being in the flux of controversy, an issue doesn't allow for an easily settled conclusion, even though one might have strong opinions about it. Whether the federal government should fund abortions for the poor is an issue, at least if one is not morally opposed to abortion. Whether there should be a Nobel Prize for the dubious science of economics is an issue. Whether the

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news can be presented over television in a bipartisan way and still gain high viewer ratings is an issue.

The crucial distinction is among question, problem, and issue. Whether Jay Cutler will start at quarterback next year for the Chicago Bears is a question. Whether the team can afford to cut him loose and forfeit the cost of his enormous salary is a problem. Whether they ought to keep him at all is an issue.

"'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'

"'The question is,' Humpty Dumpty said in a scornful tone, 'when I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.'"

The problem (not the question or the issue) is that, according to the Dumptian school of language, which just now is dominant in the world, fairly soon all words will mean everything, and no word will mean anything—at least fewer and fewer of them will mean anything with the precision required to get a purchase on reality. Let one word after another lose its meaning, its common usage, its precision, and soon everyone becomes his own Tower of Babel.

Dictionaries, those cowardly institutions, prefer to describe the way people use words instead of setting out the core meaning of those words. Here and in England dictionaries increasingly define *issue* as something that people are thinking or talking about—so that an issue becomes a hot topic, little more. People meanwhile pick up the new meanings of words with cheerful readiness. Something pleases them about saying that they have foot issues rather than trouble with their feet; issues somehow seem more elevated than troubles. A happy vagueness resides in the loose use of the word *issue*. Remarking that one has issues with one's children is much to be preferred to ranting about one's kids' unreasonableness, the result, doubtless, of one's having spoiled them in the first place. Better to have issues with children than to have, what is more likely, wretched children.

Need anyone but a proud pedant give a rat's rump about keeping in mind the distinction among a question, a problem, and an issue? The likelihood of convincing many people of the importance of doing so is less than that of the return of Prohibition and vaudeville on the same weekend. The only argument I can think to mount, apart from that of a taste for precision in language, is based on political correctness. Misuse the word *issue* and you are likely to offend members of a small but touchy minority group, some would call them an endangered species—I refer, of course, to the educated.

Joseph Epstein

the weekly Standard

Empowering Iran

Last week, the Obama administration urged Saudi Arabia to halt its air campaign against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels who have wrested control of the Yemeni capital Sanaa. The White House's professed concern was that Riyadh's Operation Decisive Storm was killing too many civilians. Unfortunately, that's hardly surprising since Iranian proxies, like Hezbollah and Hamas, typically stash their missiles and rockets in civilian areas. Presumably, the Houthis have read from the same playbook. The effect of the administration's diplomatic efforts, then, was to protect Iranian arms in Yemen. And this, in turn, the administration no doubt believes, protects Obama's nuclear agreement with Iran.

Houthis rally against Saudi Arabia, April 1.

NEWSCOM

In public, Obama is eager to show that the United States still stands by its traditional allies, like Riyadh. But behind the scenes, it's clear that the White House's real priority is partnering with Iran. Sure, the White House dispatched an aircraft carrier to the Arabian Sea, but this was not to stop Iran from shipping arms to the Houthis. As Obama himself explained, America's blue-water Navy was present to ensure freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf. The notion that the White House really intended to interdict Iranian arms shipments beggars belief. For more than four years Obama has done nothing to stop Bashar al-Assad from killing nearly a quarter of a million people in Syria, lest he endanger his nuclear agreement with Iran. With a deal so close, Obama is certainly not going to risk what he sees as the capstone of his foreign policy legacy by disarming Iranian allies in Yemen.

The problem is that by protecting his nuclear agreement with Iran, the president has protected and empowered the Islamic Republic. Tehran may boast of controlling four Arab capitals, but the reality is that its regional position is a house of cards. Pull out one of those Arab capitals, or the nuclear program, and Iran's burgeoning empire quickly collapses. It's Obama who is propping it up.

It's interesting to imagine how these last six years might have gone for the Islamic Republic had the White House not been so determined to have a nuclear deal. Perhaps the Tehran regime would have been toppled when the Green Movement took to the streets in June 2009 to protest a fraudulent election if the American government had decided to back the opposition early, openly, and resourcefully. Perhaps another administration would at least have seen that uprising as an opportunity to gain leverage over the Iranian regime. Not Obama. He wanted a nuclear deal with the existing regime.

Another White House might have backed the Syrian rebels in order to bring down Assad. Indeed, a good portion of Obama's cabinet counseled as much. To topple Tehran's key Arab ally would have been the biggest strategic setback to Iran in 20 years, said Gen. James Mattis. Obama chose to leave Assad alone, and even ignored his own red line against the use of chemical weapons. Instead of the airstrikes he threatened on Syrian regime targets, Obama made a deal to ostensibly remove the chemical weapons that Assad is still employing.

As Assad's position became weaker, Hezbollah entered the Syrian war to prop him up. The Iranian-backed militia was stretched thin between Syria and Lebanon, but the Obama administration helped the terrorist organization cover its flank by sharing intelligence to keep Sunni car bombs out of Hezbollah strongholds in Beirut. Another administration might have understood this as an opportunity to weaken Iran's position in Damascus and Beirut, but not Obama. He had his eyes on the prize.

In sum, over the last six years, almost all of Iran's advances in the region, including its move into Iraq to fill the vacuum in Baghdad after the American withdrawal from that country, has taken place with either the overt or tacit assistance of Obama. The White House brags about it. Israel might have attacked Iranian nuclear facilities, as one administration official told the press, but we deterred Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from striking. If the

Iranians strut with confidence these days, that's because they understand who has their back.

The nuclear deal, as the president has explained, means that within a little more than a decade, Iran's breakout time will be down to zero—which is a nice way of saying the clerical regime will have the bomb. The likely result is that the agreement will ensure Iran's regional position long after Obama's presidency is around to safeguard it. It will strengthen the hand of the hardliners. It is not Rouhani or Zarif or other so-called moderates who hold the nuclear file, but Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guard Corps. And in the future, American policymakers will have a vital interest in ensuring there are no internal regime fights over who controls the bomb.

In other words, Obama's foreign policy legacy will be to have tied America's fortunes to an imperial and nuclear Iran governed by an ambitious and ruthless anti-American regime.

—Lee Smith

A Dark Gulf

Churchill in London, 1938

As always, Winston Churchill said it best. Here he is on March 24, 1938, less than two weeks after the Anschluss, the Nazi annexation of Austria:

> For five years I have talked to the House on these matters—not with very great success. I have watched this famous island descending incontinently, fecklessly, the stairway which leads to a dark gulf. It is a fine broad stairway at the beginning, but after a bit the carpet ends. A little farther on there are only flagstones, and a little farther on still these break beneath your feet. . . . That is the position—that is the terrible transformation that has taken place bit by bit.

Churchill didn't resign himself to this transformation: "Now is the time at last to rouse the nation. Perhaps it is the last time it can be roused with a chance of preventing war." But the nation was not roused. Six months later was Munich. A year later, war.

This week, for the first time since President Obama abandoned the bipartisan and international policy of pressuring Iran to give up its nuclear weapons program, the Senate will have a sustained debate on the administration's Iran policy. For the first time! The op-ed pages and the journals have been full of arguments about the path the administration has gone down. A remarkable number of serious observers, including many sympathetic to the notion of a negotiated deal with Iran, have been critical of the administration's repeated cascades of concessions.

But Congress? No. The administration has succeeded in averting votes on various pieces of legislation, and therefore in preventing a real and sustained congressional debate on its Iran policy. So the elected representatives of the American people haven't weighed in.

Now they have a chance to do so. The occasion is the Corker-Cardin bill, reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which establishes a process for congressional review of whatever deal the administration reaches. It's a toothless bill, setting up a process that allows Congress, in reaction to a deal, to stop the president from waiving or removing sanctions on Iran—which is of course something Congress could already do in any case, at any time. So the bill sets up a process that allows Congress to do something it can do without that process.

There is no reason to think passage of this bill, as it now stands, significantly increases the chance of reversing a deal once it is agreed to. There is every reason to think, if the bill passes without serious debate, that it will have the opposite effect—giving the illusion that Congress is doing something to stop or slow down a bad deal when it really is not.

So as it stands, the bill is at worst misleading, at best toothless. But there will be efforts on the floor of the Senate to give it teeth. Various senators are planning to offer amendments specifying what provisions would need to be in a deal to make it worthy of congressional support. These amendments range from requiring that Iran stop denying international inspectors access to certain sites, to insisting Iran stop spinning centrifuges at such sites, to making sure that sanctions relief is gradual and based on Iranian behavior rather than immediate and based only on Iranian promises, to requiring that Iran stop engaging in terror against Americans or supporting attempts to destroy Israel.

AP PHOTO

Some of these amendments will be more important or more useful than others. But each needs to be considered, and debated, and voted on. Such a Senate debate, and votes, could put the administration—and the Iranians—on notice as to what Congress would and would not accept. And Congress would not be in the position of having to overturn later an agreement entered into by the executive branch with a foreign government because of objections that had not been clearly stated in advance. It could also clarify what is at stake in this deal—not just the status of Iran's nuclear program and the sanctions on Iran, but the broader question of Iranian hegemony in the Middle East and the likelihood of a regional nuclear arms race. It could rouse the nation to a serious consideration about the stairway we are descending under the guidance of the Obama administration.

Nothing would be more natural for the U.S. Senate than to have, over the next few weeks, a full and detailed debate about our Iran policy. But nothing is more impressive than the forces now arrayed against such a debate. Not just the Obama administration but the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the leading establishment pro-Israel lobbying group all prefer quiet acquiescence to a toothless bill rather than a serious debate and series of votes over our Iran policy.

The administration would of course be unhappy with such a debate. Some in Congress have invested so much in the process envisioned by the legislation that they care only to have the process ratified, something they think would be endangered by a substantive debate. Some outside Congress think it crucial to have an overwhelming vote for a toothless bill; it will, they seem to believe, be easier to rally support against a bad deal later by minimizing congressional debate about what would constitute a bad deal now.

We disagree. It is very much in the nation's interest to have a full and free congressional debate. Amendments should be considered carefully, debated thoroughly, and voted up or down. If this takes more than a few days, so be it. There is no urgency to pass the current version of the Corker-Cardin bill—even were it to deserve passage. Nothing in it takes effect until after a deal is inked, which is at least a couple of months away.

What is urgent is a congressional debate on the substance of an Iran deal. Perhaps the nation can be roused. Perhaps a nuclear Iran can still be prevented without military action. Perhaps future wars in the Middle East can be made less likely. A determined Congress might still halt our descent down the broad stairway that leads to a dark gulf.

—William Kristol

I, Carly

The other woman with her eye on the White House. BY MICHAEL WARREN

Ashland, N.H.

The Pemi-Baker Valley Republican Committee's monthly all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner isn't the kind of place you expect to see a crowd. Especially one that includes college students, and on a Friday night, no less. But the American Legion on Main Street is hopping. Greeting guests at the door is Omer Ahern Jr., the committee's round-faced, mutton-chopped executive vice president. And he's ecstatic.

"Everybody's excited," Ahern says. "We've never had this many people here."

The spaghetti is delicious, but the 100 or so people have really come for the evening's guest speaker, Carly Fiorina. The former chief executive of technology giant Hewlett-Packard is quite a draw among Republicans these days. The woman who once graced the covers of business and tech magazines is now more likely to pop up on Fox News. More recently, she's becoming a familiar face here in New Hampshire as she prepares to run for president of the United States. Sources close to Fiorina say she'll make that announcement on May 4.

You get the sense candidates don't often make their way north past Manchester, Concord, and Lake Winnipesaukee to this little town in the foothills of the White Mountains. And Ashland is a long way from Palo Alto, California, where Fiorina attended Stanford and, from 1999 to 2005, ran HP. But she seems right at home here, sidling up to an empty seat in the middle of the hall with her plate of spaghetti and meatballs, chatting with the locals. At one point, a loud burst of laughter erupts from her

THOMAS FLUHARTY

table as Fiorina regales the folks with a story between bites.

In her speech, she mentions working shortly after college as a temporary secretary. "Some of you will know what I mean when I say that the big technology breakthrough at that time, which we appreciated as secretaries, was the IBM Selectric typewriter." Half the room, nearly all women in their sixties, looks at each other, nodding and clapping in recognition.

The people here eat up her personal journey, from medieval history major and law-school dropout to high-powered tech executive. They gasp in sympathy when she mentions the death of her stepdaughter to "the demons of addiction" and Fiorina's own battle with cancer. They listen raptly as she identifies a "sense of disquiet" among Americans over the future of the country. Fiorina ticks the problems off—a stagnant economy, an out-of-touch federal government, a "web of dependence" that has captured too many citizens—building up to what's supposed to be her most profound diagnosis.

"I think the American people also fear that we are missing something. I think what they think we're missing is leadership." She says it solemnly, but the Republican audience begins giggling at the most obvious assessment of Barack Obama ever uttered. Fiorina rolls with it. "Why, does that sound like an understatement?" she deadpans.

It's an understatement to say that Fiorina has a difficult path to the White House. She's never held public office, and her only political experience is losing the California Senate race in 2010 to Barbara Boxer. *Real Clear Politics* includes 12 current or likely GOP candidates on its average of primary polls, and Fiorina's not one of them. That's because most polling outfits don't even ask about her. A Quinnipiac survey in late April found her support among primary voters at 1 percent, the same as two-term Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal—and the generic "someone else." More than one Washington journalist I've talked with dismissed her candidacy before I could finish saying her name.

But there's something intriguing about Candidate Fiorina. She's a veteran of big business who rails against crony capitalism. She's a modern, independent woman who's unabashedly pro-life. Carly, as everyone

Michael Warren is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

knows her, is less Sarah Palin and more Ronald Reagan, a natural storyteller with a quick wit and an ear for emotional narratives.

"I fully expect I'll be underestimated. I have been all my life," she says in an interview. "What I need to do is perform."

For the past several months Fiorina's been performing nonstop. She wowed observers in January at the Iowa Freedom Summit, the first major event of the 2016 presidential cycle. While most possible candidates stuck to the biographical, Fiorina went after the big target: Hillary Clinton. She was a hit.

"Like Hillary Clinton, I too have traveled hundreds and thousands of miles around the globe, but unlike her, I've actually accomplished something," Fiorina said, in what's become a staple applause line. "You see, Mrs. Clinton, flying is not an accomplishment. It is an activity."

Sometimes, Fiorina doesn't even have to make the comparison herself. In New Hampshire, a male voter says he can't wait to see Fiorina face off against Clinton, *womano a womano*, in a general election debate. "I just think that would be awesome," Fiorina replies, and the crowd agrees.

"What Hillary Clinton desperately wants to talk about is that she gets to be the first woman president. What she desperately wants to talk about is there's a war on women. What she desperately wants to talk about is playing the gender card," Fiorina continues. "If I am standing next to her on a general election debate stage, she can't talk about any of those things. You know what she's going to have to talk about? Her track record."

True, but so would Fiorina, specifically her record as CEO of Hewlett-Packard. Books have been written about Fiorina's tumultuous tenure at the top of one of the world's largest technology firms. Fiorina says she'd run on her performance at HP, not away from it. "We doubled the company from $45 billion to $90 billion," she told Fox News's Bret Baier recently. "We went from market laggard in every product category to market leader in every product category and in every market in which we competed."

Critics—and there are legions of them, from Silicon Valley to Wall Street—say her six-year term at HP was a disaster. Falling stock prices and massive layoffs dominated her last years at the company. A controversial 2001 merger with Compaq, which was nearly killed by a shareholder uprising led by the son of cofounder Bill Hewlett, irreparably damaged her image within the company. After several quarters of disappointing stock performance, the board fired Fiorina. HP's stock recovered considerably in the following years, though, while competitors like Dell and IBM struggled, suggesting Fiorina's strategy may have paid off after all.

Despite her ugly exit from HP, Fiorina's time there figures large in her campaign pitch. She reminds crowds that as the leader of a multinational corporation, she's met with dozens of foreign leaders. "I've sat across the table from Vladimir Putin," Fiorina often says. Heading a large company attuned her to the inherent problems of large systems. "Virtually everything I spent my time on was 'How do we bust up this bureaucracy?'" Fiorina says of her CEO days. That sounds like a presidential campaign theme.

"This is a government that has become so big, so powerful, so costly, so complex, so corrupt, it no longer serves the people," she says. "It is the weight of government, the power of government, the complexity of government that literally now is crushing the potential of this nation." A Fiorina administration, she promises, would "reimagine government" for the purpose of "unlocking potential" in the American people.

Some of the details of "reimagining government" are easier to pin down than others. Fiorina espouses an "influence through strength" view on foreign policy, arguing that rebuilding the Navy's Sixth Fleet and restarting our missile-defense programs in Eastern Europe would "send a message" to Vladimir Putin and other bad actors in the world. The Obama administration should abandon its nuclear talks with Iran, and Congress should do everything it can now and in the future to maintain the sanctions regime until Tehran gets serious about stopping its nuclear ambitions. She supports female soldiers in combat roles—"Israel's been doing it for years"—but also says standards shouldn't be lowered.

To cut domestic spending, she says, Congress should adopt zero-based budgeting to eliminate bad and duplicate programs. But on entitlement spending, she's less urgent. "When we are satisfied that we don't have hundreds upon hundreds of billions of dollars of waste, abuse, and corruption, then let's start talking about raising the retirement age for Social Security," she says. Tax reform should simplify the code and help reduce the deficit, but Fiorina is wary of plans like Marco Rubio's that increase the child tax credit. "If you're a single person or a young married couple, and you're trying to work your way up, you're going to be hit with a big tax bill," she says.

On immigration, Fiorina says she prioritizes border security and reforming the worker-visa program. She also draws a line when it comes to illegal immigrants. "If you have come here illegally, and you have stayed here illegally, you never get to earn the privilege of citizenship," she says. "It's not fair. Maybe you get to earn legal status, maybe your children can become citizens, but citizenship is a privilege to be earned."

Her positions put her smack dab in the mainstream of the Republican party. That can mean one of two things. Fiorina will get lost in the noise, overtaken by the better known, more politically experienced options. Or, as Fiorina's strategists have put it, she can take the role of consensus conservative, exceed expectations in Iowa and New Hampshire, and gather enough momentum to contend for the nomination. Then again, many assume she's actually angling for the number-two spot on the Republican ticket. Is Fiorina running for vice president?

"People ask that because I'm a woman and I'm not a politician," she says. "I'm running to be president."♦

What We Don't Know About 2016

Almost everything.

BY FRED BARNES

In 1974, Nobel Prize-winning economist Friedrich Hayek criticized those who believed they could measure the real-world impact of economic theories with scientific precision. They were wrong, Hayek said in his Nobel lecture, entitled "The Pretence of Knowledge." They didn't have enough solid information. What they lacked couldn't be reduced to a number. It wasn't quantifiable. Yet economists continued to "proceed on the fiction that the factors which they can measure are the only ones that are relevant."

Hayek got it right.

It might seem a stretch, but Hayek's insight applies to politics, and notably to the 2016 presidential campaign. Reporters and commentators have been jumping to conclusions based on insufficient evidence, particularly in the Republican race. This is less true of the Democratic contest, with its smaller field of candidates and less persistent media coverage.

At the moment, there's nothing going on in either party's campaign that is predictive of what will occur when we get to the Iowa caucuses (February 1) and New Hampshire primary (February 9). This is not a historic first. Wildly off-base projections are the norm in the nomination races. Recall the situation at roughly this time in 2007. The eventual GOP nominee, John McCain, was dead in the water. Barack Obama barely registered a blip.

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The lesson here has largely gone unlearned. We see campaign stories about the threat Wisconsin governor Scott Walker poses to Jeb Bush in the New Hampshire primary next year, based on a fleeting poll. And considerable attention has been paid to New Jersey governor Chris Christie's "comeback." What comeback? He hasn't even announced he's running, much less competed with his rivals in a televised debate. The first debate isn't until August 15.

At this stage, polls that rank the candidates are dubious but ubiquitous. National polls are totally irrelevant. They are unconnected to how candidates might do in early caucuses (Iowa, Nevada) or primaries (New Hampshire, South Carolina). In fact, state polls aren't much help either.

Such polls should be taken "with whole tablespoons full of salt," according to stats geek Nate Silver. "And it's probably best to look at the favorability ratings of each candidate rather than head-to-head polls, since favorability polls allow voters to say they don't know enough about the candidates to have formulated an opinion."

This far from the first actual voting—nine months—head-to-head polls tend to favor candidates with high name ID, like Hillary Clinton. These polls are not quite worthless, but close to it.

Pollster Frank Luntz says favorability is important because it points to a candidate's potential. It shows whether a candidate has "room to grow." And from that, "we know what their floor is . . . and what the ceiling is." But not much more.

Favorability has the advantage of being less volatile than head-to-head matchups. Among Republicans, the lead changes almost weekly in polls of voter preference. Should the press play up a candidate for a day or two, as happened after an Iowa speech by Walker and with Florida senator Marco Rubio's formal entry into the race, who's ahead can change overnight. Bush, Walker, and Rubio have each come in first in at least one poll recently.

Luntz limits his surveys to the initial four contests and asks Republican voters only about candidates with name recognition of 30 percent or better. The key result is the "net positive." That's the difference between positive and negative responses when voters are asked about their view of a candidate.

With a high net positive, a candidate has an opportunity to build his support, Luntz says. In his recent surveys, Walker and Rubio scored net positives of nearly 50 percent. Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal was 20 percent positive.

Christie hovered just above zero in net positive. "That's a bad position to be in," Luntz says. But Christie can recover with a strong performance in the Republican debates, the pollster says. We'll see.

Focus groups—normally a dozen or so voters—are a specialty of Luntz. He did two in New Hampshire in mid-April and came away with one strong conclusion: GOP voters prefer a governor to a senator as their presidential candidate.

What about money? It matters. Fundraising is rightly seen as a proxy for what Silver calls "a candidate's organizational strength." In the 2012 race, Mitt Romney spent lavishly in the Florida primary to defeat Newt Gingrich, who was unable to blunt Romney's expensive wave of TV ads. The Florida victory all but sealed the nomination for Romney.

But money isn't everything. In 2016, as many as a half-dozen

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Republican candidates are likely to have enough money to compete in every early state. And as successful as Jeb Bush was in his early fundraising, it wasn't sufficient to encourage any candidates to drop out.

So where does all this leave us? Nationwide polls tell us little about individual states, where nominations are decided. And states differ politically. Religious Iowans and secular New Hampshire Republicans don't match. Nor do GOP voters from Nevada and South Carolina. State polls aren't predictive the April before election year. Hard facts and reliable numbers are few.

In his famous speech, Hayek used a sports analogy. "Consider some ball game played by a few people of approximately equal skill," he said. If we knew specific information about each player, "such as their state of attention, their perceptions and the state of their hearts, lungs, muscles, etc. at each moment of the game, we could probably predict the outcome." Political campaigns, at least in their early stages, are similar. We can't predict their outcome either. ♦

The Coming GOP Divide

Get ready for an intra-party debate on entitlement reform.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Nashua, N.H.

For three years, Republicans have shown remarkable unity on one of the most important—and potentially perilous—issues of the day: entitlement reform. The consensus didn't come easy. And the rhetoric surrounding a mid-April Republican Leadership Summit here suggests it may be falling apart. There are prospective candidates for and against Social Security reform, Paul Ryan's Medicare reforms, and the expansion of Medicaid under Obamacare. If the emerging cracks in the entitlement consensus grow into full-blown fissures—and the coming dominance of super-PACs virtually ensures that they will—the divisions could have enormous implications for the 2016 general election.

For years, Wisconsin representative Paul Ryan pushed his party to get serious about entitlement reform. Spending on Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare is the main driver of our growing national debt, and the failure to address it, Ryan has long argued, is propelling the United States toward economic ruin. By 2031, spending on Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and interest on the national debt will consume all the tax revenue collected by the U.S. government. For perspective, that's as close to us in the future as George W. Bush's election is in the past.

Though many in his party understood the math, the hazards of entitlement reform—the proverbial third rail of American politics—made them reluctant to embrace the substantive changes required to address the developing crisis. When Ryan urged his colleagues in the GOP minority to adopt the Medicare and Medicaid reforms in his "Roadmap for America," most of them refused. The national organs of the party urged candidates to avoid talking about entitlements at all.

In August 2010, the National Republican Congressional Committee sent out an "alert" warning its candidates against any discussion of the reforms. MSNBC sought a Republican to appear "and support the Paul Ryan Roadmap, therefore supporting Social Security privatization," wrote a GOP press strategist. "Please do NOT accept this invitation; it will not end well." The aide instructed candidates to "contact me immediately" before answering any media questions about the Roadmap.

Not everyone listened. Marco Rubio, running for Senate in Florida, the state with the highest percentage of elderly, not only chose to embrace entitlement reform as an issue, he campaigned specifically on Paul Ryan's Roadmap. Rubio said he was "proud" to have Ryan's endorsement in the campaign and called his reforms "a great starting point for the conversation" about fixing entitlements.

Predictably, his opponents sought to make the policy proposals an anvil to hang around his neck, Roadrunner-style. Charlie Crist, the Republican-turned-independent who posed the greatest threat to Rubio in the Senate race, ended his campaign with misleading, demagogic ads hitting Rubio on Social Security. They had little effect. Rubio continued to campaign on the reforms. Over the final month of the campaign, Rubio's internal polling showed him slipping 4 points—from 32 percent to 28 percent—on the question of which candidate would best protect Social Security. But that drop didn't prevent him from being seen as the most trustworthy candidate on the issue in the three-way race. And Rubio was elected with 50 percent of the senior vote (65 and older).

When Republicans won control of the House of Representatives in November 2010, Ryan became chairman of the House Budget Committee. He persuaded leadership to embrace his reforms and allow him to include them in the official House GOP budget. Republicans voted to overhaul Medicare by phasing in premium support payments for younger workers when they become eligible for the program. Ryan's budget proposed reforming Medicaid by block-granting federal money and allowing for increases based on inflation and population growth. (Ryan didn't include

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Social Security reforms in his plan, but promised that Republicans would deal with the popular retirement program down the road.) House Republicans passed the budget (with four defections and zero votes from Democrats) in what the Associated Press, articulating the conventional wisdom, called a "politically risky" move.

But those risks had long been overstated. And a little more than a year later, Ryan, the face of GOP entitlement reform, had been elevated to a place on the party's presidential ticket when Mitt Romney chose Ryan as his running mate. Democrats squealed with delight at the pick and responded with a flood of attacks. Ryan's plan would "kill" Medicare, they claimed. He would balance the budget "on the backs of seniors," they announced. And on it went.

Some Romney advisers were nervous about pushing back too aggressively. But Ryan and several others in the campaign insisted on a strategy built around a strong offense. So Ryan traveled to The Villages, a retirement community in Florida, and touted his reforms, taking his mother along to reassure voters that he wouldn't do anything to hurt her. The campaign argued incessantly that the real threats to Medicare were the status quo and Obamacare, which had shifted some $700 billion in funding from Medicare to the president's unpopular reforms.

The result? Romney-Ryan won seniors by 17 points, 58-41 percent, doubling the margin by which John McCain and Sarah Palin had won seniors four years earlier (53-45 percent). In an insightful essay in the *Wall Street Journal* after the 2012 election, Dan Senor and Pete Wehner wrote that the Romney-Ryan ticket "showed Republicans that it pays to deal with attacks head-on" and "provided Republicans with an invaluable lesson and a blueprint for future elections."

But that Republican unity on entitlements is eroding. Republican governors across the country, including several conservatives, couldn't resist the siren song of federal dollars and chose to expand Medicaid under Obamacare. The federal government promises to fully fund Medicaid expansion for three years, after which the federal dollars are phased out and states will be responsible for paying for the expanded program themselves.

Among the Republican governors who expanded Medicaid are two men strongly considering presidential bids, John Kasich of Ohio and Chris Christie of New Jersey. Kasich has aggressively defended his Medicaid expansion and lashed out at those who questioned it. At a dinner with conservatives and libertarians in New York City in late March, health care policy analyst Avik Roy asked Kasich about his decision. "Obamacare is top-down government. Are you saying Medicaid is not top-down government?" according to an account by Eliana Johnson in *National Review*. Kasich accused Roy of hostility to the poor. "Maybe you think we should put them in prison. I don't."

She has Huckabee's ear.

Chris Christie, defending his decision to accept the federal Medicaid money under Obamacare eight months before the 2013 gubernatorial election, said Obamacare was "bad for America." But he added: "My job is to decide these things not based on my own personal opinion but based on what's best for the state. If I were in charge, I wouldn't have the program. But that program's there."

The decision came two years after Christie gave a highly touted speech on entitlement reform at the American Enterprise Institute called "It's Time to Do Big Things." Christie excoriated Republicans for their timidity on the subject and mocked their political calculations:

> What's the truth that no one is talking about? Here is the truth that no one is talking about: You're going to have to raise the retirement age for Social Security. Oh, I just said it and I'm still standing here! I did not vaporize into the carpeting and I said it. We have to reform Medicare because it costs too much and it is going to bankrupt us. Once again lightning did not come through the windows and strike me dead. And we have to fix Medicaid because it's not only bankrupting the federal government, it's bankrupting every state government. There you go. If we're not honest about these things, on the state level about pensions and benefits and on the federal level about Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, we are on the path to ruin.

Recently, Christie has picked up this theme. In mid-April, he gave a speech with bold calls for deep entitlement reform, including means testing Social Security and Medicare. Christie would end Social Security payments to seniors making more than $200,000 annually and provide partial payments, depending on income level, to seniors making between $85,000 and $200,000. On Medicare, Christie would ask seniors making more than $85,000 to pay 40 percent of their premiums and seniors earning more than $196,000 to pay 90 percent. He stressed that the reforms would be phased in and would not affect current recipients.

On Medicaid, Christie's plan includes cuts ($600 billion over a decade), additional flexibility for states, and required buy-in for recipients over the poverty line. A spokesman for Christie says he will include additional details when he outlines his plan for replacing Obamacare. And while Christie "absolutely believes there are better alternatives than

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current law, that doesn't preclude him from acting in the best interests of his state in his role as governor under what is currently law of the land."

At least one likely Republican candidate rejected Christie's proposals. (Technically, two, but Donald Trump, the carnival barker of an American culture of which he's the main attraction, doesn't count.) Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, who plans to announce his intentions on May 5, slammed the reforms and the assumption behind them. "I don't know why Republicans want to insult Americans by pretending they don't understand what their Social Security and Medicare program is," he said to a small group of reporters. Asked if he backed those reforms, he said: "Not just no, but you-know-what no." Huckabee also told reporters he wouldn't sign Ryan's Medicare reforms, arguing that it'd be unfair to change the rules on people who had paid to support the program.

As John McCormack of The Weekly Standard reported last week, that is something of a reversal for Huckabee. In 2012, Huckabee published a post arguing that Ryan was being unfairly "demonized" for his proposals and arguing that the alternatives might be "scarier." For those inclined to dismiss Huckabee as an unserious candidate, Jim Pethokoukis of the American Enterprise Institute notes that polling from multiple outlets puts Huckabee's support among seniors higher than any other Republican candidate's or would-be candidate's.

More questions about Republicans and entitlement reform arose at events surrounding the Nashua summit last weekend. Former Florida governor Jeb Bush raised eyebrows when he weighed in on a dispute over Medicaid expansion between current Florida governor Rick Scott and the Obama administration. The administration is withholding funds that Scott believes Florida is entitled to regardless of whether the state expands Medicaid. (Scott initially backed expansion but after pressure from Republicans in the Florida house reversed himself.)

"The feds and the executive branch and representatives from the House and Senate ought to get together and try to forge a compromise," Bush said to reporters in Concord. Asked if he thought compromise was necessary even if it involved expanding Medicaid, Bush said: "I don't know."

Bush spokesman Tim Miller says that Bush "is opposed to expansion" of Medicaid and notes that Bush has long supported Medicaid reform. In 2005, Bush proposed sweeping changes to Medicaid that included capping state spending on the program and offering recipients choices that included private health care providers. A *New York Times* article on the reforms reported that, while many governors were considering changes to Medicaid, "perhaps no one is proposing changes as far-reaching and fundamental as Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida." (A Heritage Foundation study in 2011 called the reforms a "decided success," but other analysts argue that while they reduced spending, the health outcomes were mixed.)

It's not clear where Republicans as a party will end up on the question of entitlement reform, but it's clear that there will be some stark differences between the candidates. Democrats were unable to use the issue to their advantage in 2012. But in much the same way that Newt Gingrich's "vulture capitalist" attacks on Mitt Romney had loud echoes in the general election, it's a virtual certainty that the eventual Democratic nominee will exploit the coming Republican-on-Republican attacks on entitlement reform. ♦

Drowning, Not Waving

Europe's migrant crisis.

by Dominic Green

Springtime in the Mediterranean: The skies are clear, the waters are calm, and the migrants are drowning. In 2014, the U.S. Border Patrol estimated that 307 people died while being smuggled into the United States from Mexico. So far this year, more than 1,650 people have drowned as they attempted to cross Europe's most porous and dangerous border, the Mediterranean. In 2014, the Border Patrol "rescued" 509 migrants along the Mexican border. In the third week of April alone, European vessels retrieved 8,500 migrants from the Mediterranean, most of them in the 300-mile stretch between the shores of Libya and Sicily.

Many of the migrants are trafficked out of Africa's numerous failed states, across the Sahara, and into Libya. Every stage of their journey enriches organized criminals and, in their odyssey's later stages, Islamist militias too. Smaller numbers of migrants come from Syria. Some are found floating in the water or drifting in dinghies. Others are crammed into rusting pirate ships. All have risked their lives, and many have suffered exploitation and abuse.

The migrants have been drowning quietly for years, but this month, a series of tragedies forced the European Union to acknowledge the crisis, if not to admit its responsibilities. On April 12, 400 Africans drowned when their boat capsized, apparently because they had rushed to one side to greet a rescue ship. On April 16, 40 Africans drowned when their inflatable sank off

Dominic Green, the author of Three Empires on the Nile, *teaches political science at Boston College.*

the Libyan coast. On April 17, Muslim migrants murdered 12 Christians from Ghana and Nigeria by throwing them into the sea. The worst came on April 19. More than 700 people crammed into the lower decks of a 65-foot vessel drowned when it capsized.

Until 2014, Italy policed these waters in a program named, apparently without irony, Our Sea, after the Roman *Mare Nostrum.* The Italian government suspended the program because of Italy's chaotic finances, and because other EU nations were unwilling to help. The EU government in Brussels took over and launched Operation Triton, a cheaper and smaller program that patrols only 30 miles from the Italian coast. Although the number of migrants in the first quarter of 2015 was lower than in the first quarter of 2014, the death toll multiplied ten-fold. In Europe's moral hierarchy, Palestinians rank high, other Arabs low, Africans lower, and African migrants lowest of all.

The Italian Coast Guard rescues migrants from an overcrowded boat, April 21.

After the mass drownings of April 19, Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, summoned the leaders of the EU states to an emergency summit. For two decades, the EU has tried to control the Mediterranean basin through the Barcelona Process and its spin-offs, the European Neighborhood Policy (2004) and the Union for the Mediterranean (2008). Now, finally facing a genuine pan-Mediterranean crisis, the EU leadership is washing its hands. Even before the summit had convened, EU leaders seemed resolved to return the human and budgetary aspects of the problem to member states.

"I do not expect any quick fix solutions to the root causes of migration," Tusk declared presidentially, "because there are none." His foreign minister, Federica Mogherini, bravely asserted that she was not "afraid of showing the limits . . . of the policy-making process." When Italian foreign minister Paolo Gentiloni complained that Italy has not received an "adequate response" from Brussels, EU spokeswoman Natasha Bertaud protested that there is no "silver bullet" for the migrant problem.

The EU is short of brass bullets, too. It floated the euro before floating a navy. It is the first power in history to offer a major currency without a military guarantee. There is no EU fleet, only the overstretched and underfunded navies of its member states. While the EU combines imperial pretensions with provincial pettiness, its member states behave no better. The Germans wish to manage Greece's economy but not its borders. The Italians accuse the Greeks of sending migrants to their shores, while themselves shunting migrants into France. The French denounce the Italians, while allowing migrants to camp at the ferry port of Calais so they can leave for Britain. If the EU lacks the means, its members lack the will. Both lack the money.

By commission and omission, the United States shares some responsibility for this tide of misery. In 2011, President Obama, with the wisdom and persistence that are the hallmark of his foreign policy, decided that the interests of the United States would be served by wrecking the Libyan state, and then smartly withdrawing. Next came the flip to the flop of the Libya policy: the president's refusal to act in Syria. This contributed to Syria's devolution from police state to failed state, from which a torrent of desperate refugees could escape to Europe by a short sea crossing, or overland from Turkey. "The tide of war is receding," Obama promised in 2011. It is not: The tide of war is carrying a mass of desperate people towards the dream of safety in Europe.

The EU's unelected commission purports to be the global guardian of human rights even as the EU is party to a humanitarian disaster. Neither the EU nor its member states seem to know what to do. EU humanitarian law prevents member states from returning migrants to countries in which they might suffer persecution or abuse; but immigration officials have few ways of checking if migrants' asylum requests are genuine. An expanded Operation Triton will save lives, but a safer crossing may also stimulate the flow of migrants. Meanwhile, Lampedusa, a speck of an island off Sicily, has become a vast holding pen, crowded by refugees awaiting transfer to the mainland.

Last week, Britain's foreign secretary, Philip Hammond, stated the obvious. Bromides from Brussels will not persuade the human traffickers of Sudan and Nigeria to consider new careers. The only way to limit the tide of migrants, and stop the criminality and catastrophe that accompanies their flight, is to stem their source. "We've got to work upstream," Hammond says, "in the countries from which these people are coming." ♦

NEWSCOM

Policing Children

Free-range parents are going to need lawyers.

BY ABBY W. SCHACHTER

"You know, I'd really had a nightmare about this, but I didn't realize they would do it. I didn't think they would. The kids must be terrified." So exclaimed Danielle Meitiv of Silver Spring, Maryland, to free-range-parenting godmother Lenore Skenazy. The "they" in this case are the authorities—police officers and child protective services workers—who, for all intents and purposes, kidnapped the Meitiv children on their way home from the park on a clear Sunday afternoon in April.

The police picked up the kids, assuring them they'd be driven home. The children were two and a half blocks from their house and knew exactly where they were and how to get home. Instead, police kept them in the back seat of the cruiser for several hours, without allowing the kids to call home or themselves calling the parents to alert them. The children were transferred to the nearest Child Protective Services Crisis Center, and after another couple of hours the parents were finally notified. The Meitivs rushed over to the center at 11 P.M. and were reunited with their son and daughter.

Mrs. Meitiv was especially scared because this was not the first time her children had been picked up by police. When it happened last December, they were brought home, but subsequently the parents were charged by Child Protective Services, the children were interviewed without their parents, and mom and dad were found responsible for "unsubstantiated child neglect." Considering the dozens of parents across the nation who have had much worse brought upon them for allowing their children to be outside unattended—arrests, foster care, probation, huge legal bills—the Meitivs' sentence was on the light side.

Danielle Meitiv with her children, January 16

Earlier, the Meitivs were defiant, publicly declaring they would not stop permitting their kids a measure of independence. "Allowing kids to be Free-Range is critical for their development. In spite of this ruling, we will continue to let our kids roam (they're at the park right now!)," Mrs. Meitiv declared in March. "The best way to make sure it doesn't happen is to make Free-Ranging as common as it was when we were kids," she told *Reason* magazine. When their kids were kidnapped in April, the Meitivs realized that changing the culture isn't nearly as urgent as changing the law.

Skenazy, the author of *Free-Range Kids*, agrees. "I think we all are beginning to understand just how insane, paranoid, and vindictive the state can be when it comes to respecting human rights—in this case, the right of parents who love their kids to raise them the way they see fit." After working for years to change the overly anxious parenting culture, Skenazy has now written a free-range parents' bill of rights. She wants every state to revisit its child protection laws. "Children have the right to some unsupervised time, and parents have the right to give it to them without getting arrested," her bill of rights reads in part.

These activists may be in for a long struggle. Not many years ago, another group of parents was horribly treated by the state—criminalized, in fact—and had to spend copious amounts of time and money to fight the law and reestablish their parental authority. It took years, but the good news is that they won big. They were the pioneers of homeschooling, and as a result of their work, what was once a fringe effort involving a handful of families is now legal in all 50 states, and the number of children schooled at home has risen from 10,000 in the early 1980s to possibly as high as 2.5 million today.

Stephen Arons's description from his 1981 report "Public Orthodoxy, Public Dissent: The Culture of American Schooling" sounds eerily familiar to those caught in the current free-range fight:

> In Iowa two parents who educate their 9-year-old son at home are convicted of criminal violations, appeal, are acquitted and are threatened with renewed prosecution. . . . In Michigan a family is forced to send three of their children to a boarding school 150 miles from home to avoid the threat of having their children made wards of the court. . . . In

SAMMY DALLAL / WASHINGTON POST / GETTY IMAGES

Abby W. Schachter, a writer in Pittsburgh, is at work on the book Captain Mommy vs. Nanny State: Taking the Government out of Parenting *(Encounter Books).*

Massachusetts a family is accused of parental neglect for educating two teenagers at home and the children are removed to the custody of the welfare department. After a long struggle the family is split up and scattered over three states. . . . In Rhode Island a couple is arrested for educating their 8- and 9-year-old daughters at home. In Missouri a woman spends time behind bars because she does not believe her 7-year-old is ready for school. And in Utah a man is shot to death by police officers in the presence of two of his children after he refused to send them to an approved school. In no case did anyone seriously question the health or happiness of the children or suggest that they were being abused or neglected in any way.

Instead of the compulsory attendance and truancy laws that were used against homeschoolers, today the police and child services workers use neglect and child protection laws, broadly construed, as the basis for prosecuting parents. And just as in the case of homeschoolers, the attack on parental choices happens without any evidence of harm to children. The state has a role to play in true abuse and neglect cases, but not where there is no evidence of wrongdoing.

Michael Farris, who has spent 35 years fighting for the rights of parents as a founder of the Home School Legal Defense Association, says that winning the legal right to homeschool depended largely on proving that no harm was coming to the kids and reversing the authorities' presumption that education belonged outside the family. "We won because people looked at the kids and saw that this is ridiculous, parents can be trusted to educate their own kids," Farris told me in a phone interview.

Proving that parents can be trusted and are the rightful authority over how much independence children should have is exactly what's needed today. Lawsuits like the one the Meitivs are pursuing are a good start. Parents need to challenge local and state laws, while simultaneously arguing that their kids are not only unharmed but actually helped by having a measure of freedom. ♦

Remember the Flat Tax?

It's still a good idea.

BY STEPHEN MOORE

Almost exactly 20 years ago, a gawky conservative renegade magazine publisher named Steve Forbes threw his hat in the ring for the 1996 GOP presidential nomination. Forbes's run was first seen as a joke. But he wound up rocking the Republican establishment by injecting fresh and bold reform ideas into a party that had become crusty and tired.

Term limits. Medical savings accounts. Tax limitation. Personal savings accounts for Social Security. And the issue that electrified conservatives across the country: Blow up the tax system and install a low-rate flat tax. When the New Hampshire primary rolled around, the GOP politicos, the housing lobbyists, and the municipal bond traders were in a state of terror. Steve Forbes had somehow caught on. He might—God forbid—even win. The empire fought back and successfully derailed him; their man Bob Dole then got crushed in the general election.

Rep. Louie Gohmert, R-Texas, beats the drum, December 4, 2012.

Two decades later, the flat tax is again the rage in a presidential primary. A number of GOP candidates, including Rand Paul, Rick Perry, Ted Cruz, and Scott Walker, are looking to go flat with a radically simplified postcard tax return. Mike Huckabee wants a low flat-rate tax too, but he would use a sales tax, not an income tax—i.e., no tax return at all.

"I've been for the flat tax since Steve Forbes first started talking about the idea," Cruz tells me over dinner. "It's one of the three most important reforms to fix the economy and take power away from Washington."

Rand Paul (who I have been informally advising on tax policy) says, "I want a flat tax that pushes the rate down as low as we can get it." His plan could have a rate of 15 percent.

Perry knows firsthand that low tax rates are important, because Texas, of course, has no income tax at all. "It's our great comparative advantage," he insists, "and it helps explain why for five years we created more jobs in the Lone Star State than the rest of the nation combined. If Washington wants to create jobs for America, it should adopt the Texas tax model."

Ripping up the 70,000-page tax code has visceral appeal to voters. I always remind this year's crop of White House aspirants: What is the one thing—maybe the only thing—voters remember about 2012's dismal presidential primary race? Herman Cain's 9-9-9 plan. "The simplicity of the concept is what sprung Herman into the lead," recalls Ohio-based economic consultant Rich Lowrie, who helped devise the plan. "People were absolutely captivated that we could really make the tax code that easy to understand—and that pro-growth."

NEWSCOM

Stephen Moore is a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation and, with Larry Kudlow and Arthur Laffer, cofounder of the Committee to Unleash Prosperity.

The new Republican party has been baptized in the iron logic of the Laffer Curve. High tax rates stifle innovation, work, investment, and American competitiveness. Our absurdly high corporate tax rate (40 percent on average) is incontrovertibly sending jobs and corporations abroad, where rates are typically half as high. Just ask Burger King, one of the latest iconic American companies to flee to a lower-tax competitor.

Laffer has been hard at it, selling this message in meetings in his Nashville office with nearly all the A-list candidates, from Jeb Bush to Ted Cruz. In his usual theatrical style, he explains that "if you raise tax rates in location A," lifting up his left fist, "and cut tax rates in location B," lowering his right fist, "don't be surprised if people and businesses move from A to B." Think of New York as A and Texas as B.

When Reagan reduced the top marginal tax rate from 70 percent to 28 percent in the 1980s, the Laffer Curve effect was indisputable. The economy exploded, tax revenues nearly doubled over the decade, and the share of income taxes paid by the rich soared from 19 to 26 percent.

Lowering tax rates has the added virtue of increasing the overall simplicity and efficiency of the tax code. We don't want investment or spending decisions to be distorted by tax preferences. Lower rates reduce the value of inefficient loopholes, credits and deductions for everything from investing in windmills, to race horses, to bull sperm, to empty apartment buildings. Under an ideal tax code, there are no deductions whatsoever.

It's worked before. One of the most underappreciated laws of the last half-century is the bipartisan Tax Reform Act of 1986. This public policy miracle consolidated tax rates down to two—15 and 28 percent—while clearing out hundreds of loopholes.

"No one thought it could possibly be done, given the K Street lobbyists' ferocious opposition," recalls Oregon senator Bob Packwood, who, along with Democrat Dan Rostenkowski in the House, designed the bill. "It was all based on the simple economic principle that people in both parties bought into: a broad base with a low rate." Amazingly, the bill with a top rate of 28 percent passed the Senate with more than 90 votes; even iconic liberals like Ted Kennedy and Howard Metzenbaum voted yea. A study by Dale Jorgenson, then head of Harvard's economics department, estimated long-term efficiency benefits of more than $1 trillion.

A few years later, in 1992, Jerry Brown finished a surprising second to Bill Clinton in the Democratic primary by running on a 13 percent flat tax. In the 1980s and '90s, influential pro-growth Democratic thought leaders like Bill Bradley, Dick Gephardt, and John Breaux teamed with Republicans like Jack Kemp on tax policy.

Today, any Democrat would be tossed out of the party for such an act of treason. The next Democratic leader in the Senate, Chuck Schumer of New York, has alerted Republicans that the 1986 tax reform consensus is gone. He wants to get rid of tax loopholes for the rich, not to pay for lower rates, but to raise money for more government spending.

So if Republicans are going to reinvent the tax code, they won't get help from the party dominated by Elizabeth Warren class warriors. The GOP is going to have to win a resounding electoral mandate to do it.

It's not going to be easy. At the Heritage Foundation, we've done extensive polling on how Americans feel about tax reform. "Flat tax" as a concept does not poll very well. What polls off the charts and what Americans want overwhelmingly from tax policy is "fairness."

The challenge for Republicans is to convince voters that abandoning the Rocky Mountain high of multiple tax rates for a flat tax is "fair." Democrats will scream "tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires." The key, as Forbes explains, is to "convince Americans that the current progressive rate system is unfair, because the people who get hurt the most from tax rates that chase jobs out of America are the poor and the middle class."

The way to sell the flat tax is as the ultimate Washington versus America issue. The only people who benefit from a complicated, barnacle-encrusted 70,000-page tax code are tax attorneys, accountants, lobbyists, IRS agents, and politicians who use the tax code as a way to buy and sell favors. The belly of the beast of corruption in American politics is the IRS tax code. The left keeps saying it wants to end the corrupting influence of big money in politics. Fine. By far the best way to do that is enact a flat tax and D.C. becomes the Sahara Desert.

Loopholes mostly benefit the wealthy and the politically well-connected. Well over half of the revenue lost from them comes from the top 1 percent. Want to make Warren Buffett pay his "fair share" of taxes? Get rid of the charitable deduction, which Laffer calls "by leap years the biggest tax dodge for rich people." Laffer says Buffett and Bill Gates escape income tax on billions of dollars in earnings by diverting the money into the Gates Foundation to support dubious "charities" like the Sierra Club and Harvard. The flat tax, in short, is fair because it makes everyone play by the same rules, no matter how many lobbyists they hire in Washington.

Not every leading Republican candidate has bought into the flatter tax solution. Many GOP political operatives argue that the flat tax keeps getting rejected by voters. A new group of thought leaders called Reformacons want to ditch the supply-siders' obsession with lowering tax rates and load up the middle class with tax credits. The usually sensible Marco Rubio has endorsed this concept; his tax plan offers an additional $2,500 credit per child. This would only reduce the top rate to 35 percent, and some tax filers without children would see tax rates go up.

"This is one of the dumbest ideas I've heard in a long time," says Larry Kudlow of CNBC. "It costs $2 trillion for those credits over the next 10 years, with no growth effects whatsoever." It also misunderstands the middle-class squeeze that is killing families' finances. The problem isn't so much that the middle class pays too much income tax—though they

do. It is that real wages haven't risen over the last decade. A tax giveaway isn't going to solve that problem. By depleting the Treasury of revenues, it will boost the left's case for raising tax rates down the line.

So can the flat tax catch the populist tide of voter rage and angst over an economy that has squeezed the middle class for nearly a decade? Who knows? What seems certain is Democrats will run a class warfare campaign of raising tax rates on the rich. But envy isn't an economic revival policy. Republicans can win this debate by going on the offensive and reminding voters that the best way to grow the economy, create jobs, and increase tax payments by the rich is to flatten the code. Flat is the new fair. ♦

Disruption Can Be a Good Thing

The uneasy mix of modern solar power and traditional utilities. BY ELI LEHRER

The ideal of a staid, heavily regulated industry that offers blue-collar jobs with respectable wages, pensions, and strong community ties—usually lamented as a thing of the past by observers on both the left (Elizabeth Warren, Paul Krugman) and the right (Pat Buchanan, Rick Santorum)—does still exist. To find it, one need look no further than America's electric utilities.

Whether they are stockholder-owned colossuses or customer co-ops, utilities operate mostly under regulated rates that guarantee profits. They face little competition. In 33 states, consumers have just one power provider to choose from in their region. Nationwide, more than 80 percent of residential power comes from monopolies or former monopolies.

These utilities pay nice dividends to stockholders, offer jobs for life to many employees, and provide generous support for everything from civil rights organizations to art museums. Historically, the case for their status as "natural monopolies," where competition would do more harm than good, has been so strong that it's literally used as an example in major economics textbooks.

Eli Lehrer is president of the R Street Institute.

But new technologies—in particular, the growing availability of affordable, efficient rooftop solar panels—threaten to disrupt utilities' business models in unpredictable ways. While this forthcoming disruption of the power grid may offer more good than bad, it also creates real uncertainties that policymakers will need to confront.

Disruptors disrupting.

The major driver of change is that rooftop solar has finally come into its own. When first brought to market in the 1970s, rooftop solar panels generated power at a cost of more than $70 a watt. By the end of this year, low-cost manufacturers in China will begin offering panels that produce energy at a cost of around 40 cents a watt. Combined with leasing arrangements that let property owners install panels at little to no out-of-pocket cost and net-metering agreements that let them sell unused energy back to utilities (albeit under a variety of pricing schemes that are both complicated and controversial), the decision to install solar panels is becoming a simple one for many homeowners.

One recent study from the Rocky Mountain Institute, a think tank whose board is heavy with alternative energy investors, applies a rigorous model to conclude that, within two decades, solar will be fully cost competitive in many markets and for huge numbers of consumers. As one example, the study projects that, within 15 years, as much as a quarter of the power generated in New York's Westchester County will come from solar panels. This could be a big problem for utilities. Rocky Mountain estimates they could lose nearly $35 billion in revenue. This amounts roughly to last year's total revenues for the two largest electric utilities and is greater than the 20 largest utilities' combined profits for 2014.

Even much smaller drops in revenue could be a big problem. The technology and business model of rooftop solar are most competitive in the areas where utilities make most of their profits. Because they generate the most energy during the sunny midday peak, when power generation is most costly and most profitable at the margin, even modest consumer use of the existing, relatively expensive solar panels can cut into some utilities' bottom lines. Since they provide a direct substitute for some power plants run by existing utilities, rooftop solar panels establish a ceiling that would make future rate increases harder to sustain. Finally, since they reduce the need for some new types of power infrastructure, rooftop solar makes it harder for utilities to make the case to build new generation capacity. This is a potential problem because, in regulated markets, most of the cost of new infrastructure investment, plus a profit margin to reward investors, is built into utility rates according to a set formula.

Broader use of solar panels will reduce air pollution and the output of

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climate-change-causing greenhouse gases. It also likely will cut the bills consumers currently pay to utility-scale power companies. But this shift will cause real dislocations.

We live in an era of disruptive technologies, and in nearly every case, one can identify ways in which the new technology is inferior to what it replaced. Mobile phones supplanted more reliable landlines. Ridesharing services often provide smaller cars than taxicabs. Jet airplanes replaced more comfortable sleeper trains.

In this case, solar panels generate power only when the sun shines. Technologies to allow cost-efficient storage of solar energy at home are immature. Even with cutting-edge battery technology, few households will ever get all of their power from the sun. A system that combines widespread rooftop solar panels with a power grid hooked to major utility-scale power plants almost certainly would be less likely to suffer true blackouts than the current, totally centralized model. But individual rooftop solar systems can't possibly include the elaborate redundancies of a typical utility power plant, much less the grid as a whole.

Undermining utilities' business model also could have serious implications for the grid as a whole. A University of Minnesota study found overall electric power reliability dropped steadily between 1995 and 2010, though it has rebounded slightly since then. A profit and revenue shock to the utilities likely would limit resources available for basic care of the grid. Their guaranteed profits traditionally have allowed monopoly utilities to take on money-losing but beneficial activities, like running power lines to poorer areas. Existing utility regulations place a premium on both reliability and access. As access to cost-competitive solar power becomes more widespread, there may be a need for new funding mechanisms to assure these services get provided, or at least a simple recognition of the trade-offs involved.

New business models—like the "integrated grid" proposed by the Rocky Mountain study—may address some of these issues, but there's no assurance they will work.

Whatever happens, utilities probably won't end up in the poorhouse (they already manage to profit against stiff competition in wholesale markets), and the grid is very unlikely to collapse. But widespread rooftop solar inevitably will cause bumps in the road and leave some pining for the "good old days." This doesn't mean regulators should stand in the way of rooftop solar power. History shows that efforts to strangle disruptive industries almost never succeed anyway. But it does mean policymakers need to be aware that rooftop solar power is likely to have a broad range of impacts, some of them bad, most of them good, all of them disruptive. ♦

So, What About Money in Politics?

While Democrats decry *Citizens United*, Republicans twiddle their thumbs. BY JAY COST

Hillary Clinton has been an international celebrity for a quarter-century, and since Bill Clinton left office, the two of them have monetized their worldwide renown to a mind-boggling extent. In her last official filing for the State Department, Clinton listed her net worth as between $5 and $25 million. Last year, Bloomberg News reported that she earned at least $12 million in her first 16 months after leaving public office.

Yet Clinton wants to be the "champion" of "everyday Americans." How on earth can she pull off that trick?

One pitch is identity politics: Women should vote for Clinton because she is a woman. Another is class warfare; Clinton is already talking about "toppling" the 1 percent, whatever that means. But in addition, expect campaign finance reform to be a constant theme of her campaign, especially an attack on *Citizens United*.

That is the 2010 Supreme Court decision lifting restrictions on independent campaign expenditures by outside groups. In Iowa earlier this month, Clinton said she wanted "to fix our dysfunctional political system and get unaccountable money out of it once and for all, even if that takes a constitutional amendment."

Conservatives are wont to scoff at this pledge, especially considering just how unseemly the financing of Bill Clinton's 1996 campaign was, not to mention the unapologetic courting of donations from foreign governments by the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation. Nevertheless, it behooves the right to take seriously the left's complaint about the corrupting influence of money in politics.

Money does corrupt our political process when it serves as the medium for untoward transactions between politicians and interests. The politician uses his public authority to aid some private faction, which in turn confers a private benefit upon the pol or his allies. The benefit can take innumerable forms. It might be a campaign contribution, information, the promise of a job after politics, a contribution to a politician's charity, and so on. The limits on direct contributions to a candidate's campaign are fairly strict: Last year, individuals could give up to $2,600 per candidate

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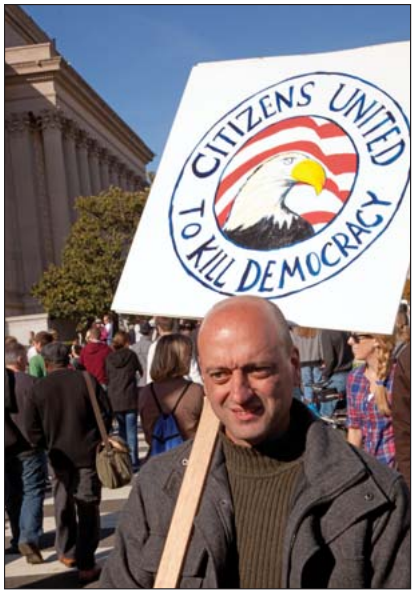
per election, while political action committees were limited to $5,000. There are lots of ways around these limits, such as charitable contributions (a Clinton specialty) and bundling of donations from people with similar agendas. Indeed, these donations are best understood as the foundation for a much larger architecture of favoritism and influence-peddling that should be of concern to citizens whatever their political views.

That said, complaints about *Citizens United* itself are mostly a red herring. True, the decision allows unlimited spending, but coordination between outside groups and candidates is forbidden. Also, the advocacy takes place entirely in the public square. All of this limits the ability of such money to buy influence.

Suppose a billionaire wants a certain policy enacted and hopes to influence a politician. Under *Citizens United*, while he can spend as much as he likes, he cannot tell the politician directly how much he intends to spend, how he will spend it, or why he is spending it. Moreover, since he wants to use this money to buy influence, he will have to spend an extraordinary sum in order to claim credibly that his effort made the difference between victory and defeat. As multiple groups on both sides join the fray, the cost of the race goes up, so he must spend even more in order to take credit for a win. And, of course, the candidate might lose. Even if the candidate wins, the billionaire still has to hope that, once in office, he will actually aid the cause. The politician could very well "cheat" on the agreement, especially if the constituents back home oppose the policy. And even if the politician does not cheat, there is no guarantee that the policy will ever become law. After all, the whole effort was dedicated to securing a single vote in Congress.

At best, this is a terribly inefficient way to influence public policy. There are much easier ways to buy a piece of the government. Such methods have been fine-tuned over decades—long before unlimited independent expenditures were allowed. In fact, the biggest donors since *Citizens United*—the Koch Brothers on the right and Tom Steyer on the left—come across more as patricians than influence-peddlers. They are citizens with an ideological and partisan vision of the good life who choose to promote their public-spirited agenda with their own money.

From this perspective, Democrats' opposition to *Citizens United* looks awfully convenient. It is a way to rail



Could the hypocrites on the left have a point?

against influence-peddling in politics without actually doing anything about it. Democratic politicians can appear to be above the fray when in fact they are knee-deep in the muck.

Yet conservatives should not be content merely to mock Democratic hypocrisy or dispute the left's claims about *Citizens United*. They need to do more. Three points are of high salience here. First, money in politics *is* a problem, insofar as it is often the medium for quid pro quo transactions that are unethical even when legal. All such transactions are implicitly anti-conservative, for their result is that the government does something special for someone or some faction. Conservatives want the government to do less and do it fairly and so have an interest in cutting down the incidence of such deals.

Second, *Citizens United* is court-made law and thus lacks democratic legitimacy. The people's representatives never debated or endorsed it. This makes it an easy target for Democrats looking to preen about good government while lining their pockets. Under our system, of course, the Supreme Court has the authority to rule on the meaning of the Constitution. But politically speaking, it is problematic. Congress and the courts have been warring over campaign finance for nearly 50 years, and the result is a hodge-podge of regulations that lacks any sense or broad popular support. So Democrats demagogue.

Third, you can't beat something with nothing. Where is the anti-corruption agenda of the right? Where are the counterparts to the good-government organizations spearheaded by Ralph Nader? Other than the Center for Competitive Politics, helmed by former Federal Election Commission chairman Bradley Smith, and Take Back Our Republic, a new organization founded by those who helped Dave Brat take down Eric Cantor last year, one is hardpressed to think of conservative entities promoting a vision of good government. Conservatives have spent enormous intellectual capital on issues like education, health care, and taxes—but what about corruption? When Democratic pols rail against *Citizens United*, what reforms can Republicans counter with?

This lack of intellectual effort from the right is a big reason why our campaign finance regime is as terrible as it is. Back in 2002 George W. Bush felt political pressure to enact campaign finance reform, so he signed McCain-Feingold, which doubled down on the very rules that had bred outrageous corruption. But conservatives offered no alternative for dealing seriously and sensibly with the problem of money in politics.

Conservatives need a practical and salable alternative to the Democrats' cheap ploys. Ever respectful of the First Amendment, they must promote ideas to constrain influence-peddling in politics, and then pressure the ever recalcitrant GOP to enact those reforms into law. ♦

NEWSCOM

The Meaning of Sex

Even on campuses, nature and culture cannot be wished away

By Peter Wood

Attraction. Pleasure. Attachment. Reproduction. Fulfillment. What is the meaning of sex? The answer lies somewhere in the way we integrate the biological imperatives with the emotional and experiential realities. I'm not going to improve on that answer in the next few pages, but I'll complicate it a bit.

Recently a young woman at Dartmouth College, having had sex for the first time with a man, reflected that she had "lost her virginity." Then she put that thought on hold: "Virginity is just a total social construct," she told her interviewer. Her story appeared in the college's student newspaper.

A "social construct"? I'm an anthropologist and I speak this language. Virginity is a social construct to the extent that we invest the state of virginity with social significance. American culture seemingly has been divesting its stock in virginity since the sexual revolution more than half a century ago, but somehow the idea lingers. The young woman at Dartmouth would like to think it doesn't matter, it is just a total social construct, but even the dismissive formula betrays her troubled feelings. It does matter.

As well it should. To say that something is a social construct is not to say it is trivial or meaningless. It is only to say that we have developed standard ways to talk about it. Virginity, as it happens, is a biological fact as well as a social construct, and because it is both, it commands a special kind of attention.

FATHERHOOD

Virginity is a bit like some other words that connect biological realities with social expectations. The word "father," for example, refers inescapably to the male who played the seminal role in impregnating the egg that became a child. But we build on this nucleus of meaning to create quite elaborate cultural conventions. The man who raises a child he has not fathered is also called a father; George Washington is father of our country; and some holders of religious office are addressed as Father. A father in the familial sense is expected to love, care for, and provide for a child and to exercise tempered authority. We could, with the Dartmouth student, say this is just a total social construct. But we'd be wrong. It is a lot more than that.

Anthropologists have spent some 150 years trying to get to the bottom of words like "father"—and mother, brother, cousin, etc.—kinship words. A 19th-century American lawyer who was gifted with both unusual curiosity and immense patience opened this door in the 1850s when he took note of how much Seneca Indian kinship terms differed from English ones. Lewis Henry Morgan tugged on this thread for the next 30 years, along the way producing one of the great monuments of 19th-century scholarship, an immense study titled *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity in the Human Family*.

Morgan made much of the observation that in many societies around the world words such as "father" apply to whole classes of people. I might, for example, use the local equivalent of "father" for my father's brothers and for my father's father's brother's sons. Thus the word "father" might be translated as "paternally related male a generation older than me." At which point we might be tempted to conclude with our Dartmouth friend that the concept of "father" is just a total social construct. After all, different cultures fill the conceptual space of "fatherhood" in different ways, so how much biological or existential reality can there be to the concept?

Morgan himself thought something similar. He speculated that maybe the natives being none too scrupulous about sexual relations were never certain who their actual fathers might be and hit upon the happy expedient of identifying all the potential inseminators with a single term. Morgan's theory was never substantiated by evidence of such promiscuity among people who used kinship words in such a broad fashion, but Morgan did succeed in putting some key questions on the table. How do we decide collectively who is a relative? And what difference does it make?

These turned out to be very good questions, and the discipline of anthropology grew up wrestling with them. One of the characteristics that makes us human and that both unites us with nature and sets us apart from it is our preoccupation with kinship. At its most basic, kinship is the way human societies organize the realities of sexual reproduction. It supplies the meaning of sex—at least a large portion

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of that meaning, if not all of it. Kinship turns the biological fact of mating into the social facts of living together in a more or less orderly world.

We need that social ordering because the biological facts are and always have been dangerous, disruptive, and often deadly. Sex without the constraint of social constructs would have brought an early end to our species, which depended on pair-bonding and a sexual division of labor to make it through the hard passage of time to reach modern civilization. Sex and human reproduction liberated from fairly stable pair-bonding wasn't a viable possibility for most of human prehistory, and in the ethnographic and historical record, there is the barest trace of societies that did without pair-bonded marriage between men and women and stable families of some sort.

FATHERLESS

There are exceptional cases, most famously the Nayar and the Na. The Nayar were a warrior caste among the several kingdoms of the Malabar Coast in southwest India, who in traditional times treated marriage as a ceremonial matter after which a woman took acknowledged lovers rather than a husband. A Nayar woman, however, had to produce a named man of appropriate status for each of her children or face expulsion from her lineage. The Na (or Musuo) are a tribal group in southwest China who went still further in erasing fatherhood. The Na kinship terminology is the only one we know of that lacks a word for "father." But the Na do allow a woman an option to marry and to take an actual husband. There are exceptional reasons for these exceptional cases: Mainly they are instances of small subgroups within larger complex societies that have fit themselves into a niche by adopting mating patterns that would be impossible in any other situation.

When Daniel Patrick Moynihan published his report in 1965, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, he likewise observed that marriage was rapidly deteriorating in African-American communities because of state incentives for unmarried women to have children. Moynihan's warning about an emergent pattern was derided at the time, but the pattern he foresaw proved real. When Moynihan wrote, about 25 percent of African-American children were born outside marriage. Today it is 72 percent. Clearly it is possible for people to form a social system that discourages stable pair-bonding between men and women. But the realization of that possibility has brought dramatically negative results in the form of multigenerational dependency on government benefits, a culture of poverty, educational disadvantage for children, poor health, and psychological damage.

Leaning away from the social constructs that comprise humanity's long-enduring kinship patterns seldom conduces to human flourishing. Of course, the kids in college who are hooking up aren't thinking about mating at all, let alone creating enclave social systems. They enjoy a different kind of enclave made possible by individual prosperity and institutional wealth, which have always provided a limited exemption from the rules that govern society as a whole. The hook-up culture is the patrician version of inner-city promiscuity—without the immediate and dire consequences.

HOOKING UP, MARQUESAN STYLE

Sex outside of marriage is as old as the hills, but what about sex outside of meaning? Sex that is "just sex"? Sex that is pleasure for pleasure's sake?

"Sex without meaning" is, paradoxically, an important and meaningful idea in contemporary life. The hook-up culture, pornography, prostitution, and the commercial sex trade in all its forms are illusory promises of sex unburdened by the "meaning" that comes from sex as part of long-term attachment between individuals. Of course, sex outside long-term attachment is nothing new. The world's oldest profession comes by its reputation honestly. But the attempt to make sex into a recreational activity equally available to men and women and free for both from the burdens of shame and guilt is something pretty new. "Free thinkers" of earlier generations may have fantasized about it; Aldous Huxley may have pictured it in *Brave New World*. But it took the peculiar combination of feminist advocacy, the gay rights revolution, modern technology, the breakdown of the two-parent family, and the liberated college campus to create the conditions whereby this assault on human nature could have the opportunity to play itself out.

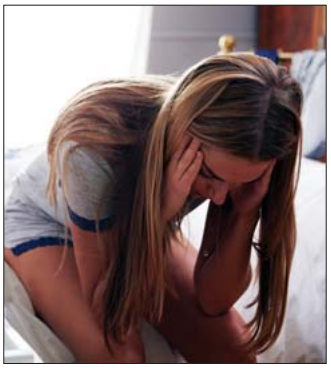
Humans have broken free of biological imperatives to the degree where we can try out all sorts of social experiments. Every human society can be thought of as experimental in this sense. We are always trying things out. And, more often than not, failing. Where are the communes of the 1960s?

In the 150 years that anthropologists combed the world looking in detail at the variety of ways people organized the facts of human reproduction, we indeed found some challenging cases—special cases where a brother might marry his sister (ancient Egypt) or a woman might be simultaneously married to two husbands (the Marquesan Islands). But even the exceptional cases prove on closer look to fall within the fairly tight prescriptions biology gives us, even as biology leaves us a margin for cultural elaboration and error.

Those Marquesan Islanders, made famous by Herman Melville's captivity narrative, *Typee*, stand out as especially exceptional. When European ships began to arrive in these

remote Pacific islands, they were often met with swarms of young girls attempting to climb aboard to have sex with the sailors. Though our knowledge of the Marquesans is limited, it appears that, for them, virginity—or chastity—was not a social construct. But Marquesan life was no sexual free-for-all. These islanders were part of strictly hierarchical tribal groups governed with their own elaborate kinship obligations. The sexual openness of Marquesans shocked and sometimes appalled Westerners, as did Marquesan full-body tattoos. The sexualization of young girls was notable. Older women stretched the labia of little girls to make them more attractive. Both boys and girls were initiated into sex at a very young age by older adults, and the children became avid participants.

But behind this exotic surface, the Marquesans were governed by strong rules on rank and privilege, sexual segregation, and birth order. Only a woman of high rank could have a second husband, for example, and he was a commoner subordinate to her. Men and women ate separately. And, as in Europe, the oldest son inherited family property. Sex for the Marquesans was not outside of meaning. It was fraught with meanings, some of which are now obscured behind the shroud of a dead culture. But the general picture is clear, and it is the usual thing: Attraction. Pleasure. Attachment. Reproduction. Fulfillment. To which we can add power, prestige, danger, purity, control, and the other relational overlays that typically attach themselves to sex. But there are also culturally specific meanings that were never easy for outsiders to comprehend and that have now been lost to history.



ISTOCK

EMBARRASSMENTS

In *What Does Bowdoin Teach? How a Contemporary Liberal Arts College Shapes Students*, my coauthor Michael Toscano and I examined not only the curriculum of this exemplary liberal arts college but also a wide swath of campus social life. In that vein, we came across a series of surveys carried out by Bowdoin students on the college's hook-up culture. For several years running, the students had surveyed other students and found, consistently, that about 75 percent of the students were "hooking up." The exact definition was left to the discretion of the students who answered the question, but there was little doubt from the surrounding comments that most of the respondents meant they were having sexual intercourse with other students outside the expectation of a close or ongoing romantic relationship.

We also observed that a fairly large number of the female upperclassmen appeared to regret having been part of the hook-up culture. One of the regrets came from the discovery that the Bowdoin men are more interested in the new women on campus. Many of the female upperclassmen experienced a diminishment of their desirability, as they were replaced by fresh recruits to the hook-up scene. Those regrets seldom surprise mature adults. But I've noticed that the inclusion of this material in our very long and exhaustively detailed account of Bowdoin has drawn more attention than almost anything else—and more criticism. The criticism came from the parents of students, as well as faculty members and students. We apparently crossed some Marquesan-style cultural taboo in reporting to the general public what Bowdoin students were regularly reporting to one another.

The Bowdoin community was, in a word, embarrassed.

That makes sense. The pretense that Americans can engage in promiscuity without consequences is hollow. Sex does have meaning, and part of its meaning is that it belongs in the context of attachment. It can be removed from that context for a while, but the need reasserts itself, despite what gender theorists of various sorts would have us believe. If we are working hard to maintain the theory that sex is a combination of harmless fun and self-exploration, the reawakening of that need for attachment can be deeply disturbing.

The fictional rape crisis on American college campuses is an outward manifestation of that disturbance. Rape in the sense of forced sex is a serious crime and a terrible moral transgression. When rape occurs it should be treated as a serious crime and reported immediately to law enforcement. But we now know that forcible rape is a fairly rare event on college campuses. The National Crime Victimization Survey found that rape and sexual assault are 1.2 times higher for nonstudents (7.6 per 1,000) than for students (6.1 per 1,000). Yet we are subject these days to a highly audible campaign of assertions that college campuses are home to a vast epidemic of sexual assaults. We are also subject to efforts by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and various campus activists to make the punishing of supposed perpetrators a high priority.

Much has been written about the bogus allegations and the instances of seeming self-delusion on the part of young women who say they have been raped, so I will leave aside the details. The *Rolling Stone* story about the University of Virginia and the endlessly reported story of the mattress girl at Columbia University have now gained bodies of literature that could be case studies for pathological lying. But there are dozens if not hundreds of other instances.

Many but certainly not all women who participate in the hook-up culture eventually awaken to some sense that a

history of casual sex jeopardizes the possibility of long-term attachment. This isn't a matter of stigma at all. In our society, and especially in the microculture of the college campus, no immediate stigma follows from hooking up. To the contrary, the stigma is typically visited on those who decline to participate. Social acceptance, popularity, and a certain prestige can be obtained by playing the game. Many college women now seek sexual conquests in a pattern similar to that of many men. Feminist author Hanna Rosin made only a mild stir when she wrote in a 2012 article in the *Atlantic* that hooking up is "an engine of female progress," and advised young women to avoid the "overly serious suitor" as a danger to career success and "a promising future." Clearly large numbers of women who attend college start out believing this.

But if the cost of that view is not immediately apparent, it is still real. The woman who treats her sexuality as something detachable from strong mutual attachment to a single partner sooner or later discovers that men regard her as expendable. Rosin and her like-minded apologists for the hook-up culture shrug. What does it matter what men think?

But the pretense that sex is just sex is never true. Nor is it ever merely a social construct in the sense that society has arbitrarily decreed what it means and we can, with sufficient attitude, decide it means something different or nothing at all. The distress of women who feel used by the hook-up culture returns now as recrimination against their former sexual partners. This doesn't excuse the propagandists of the rape culture, which might better be called the "false accusation culture." But it does point to an underlying truth. Biology and culture are, at a fundamental level, opposed to the level of sexual license that colleges like Bowdoin not only condone but encourage.

The pretense that sex is just sex is never true. Nor is it ever merely a social construct in the sense that society has arbitrarily decreed what it means and we can, with sufficient attitude, decide it means something different or nothing at all.

DISAPPOINTMENT

Bowdoin College welcomes its "first-year" students with a play titled *Speak About It*, in which upperclassmen act out numerous situations of sexual coupling. At the end of the play, the cast unites in explaining that, sexually speaking, anything goes at Bowdoin. Students should take advantage of the opportunities, but they need to observe one constraint: Always be sure that you have your partner's "consent."

Consent has become the watchword of the current phase of the sexual revolution. The term is acquiring additional legalistic accretions, such as "affirmative consent," which requires the participants to make many repeated inquiries about the willingness of the partner before they proceed.

But "consent" is really no answer to the deeper questions that sexual intimacy inevitably raises for men and women. And ramping up consent with stronger affirmations of willingness doesn't change the shiftiness of the idea. We "consent" to all sorts of things against our better judgment. The whole advertising industry is founded on the ease with which we are swayed by our impulses, and no domain of human life is more susceptible to impulse than sexual attraction.

Consent between college students who are placed in a situation of social license by the colleges themselves is at best an ambiguous concept. Colleges long ago abandoned their in loco parentis stewardship of students' behavior and have in many cases moved on to the role of enabler. Bowdoin follows up the invitation to debauchery in *Speak About It* by placing bowls of condoms in conspicuous places in all the residence halls, which, of course, are co-ed. Students are told they can opt out of the sexual culture of the college, but doing so requires a student to reject the prevailing campus norms. In these circumstances, consent is a weak guardrail.

Consent exists in a gray zone between legalistic framing of sexual conduct and psychological rationalization. It is the all-purpose permission slip and excuse of the hook-up culture. In any and all subsequent recriminations, the dispute turns on whether consent was granted—or withdrawn, or exceeded, etc. This has a readily grasped logic based on the premise that people make well-deliberated choices about sex; they know what they mean and they mean what they say. Everyone admits that a woman's consent can be impaired by intoxication, but this stops short of admitting that both women's and men's consent is often impaired by immaturity, lust, peer pressure, and the thousand other things that lead people in doubtful situations to make doubtful decisions.

College students who seemed to have "consented" to sexual encounters at the time, upon reflection decide that they were coerced. These late-blooming allegations typically have little credibility with law enforcement officials and courts, but they are worth taking seriously as evidence that sexual behavior has its biocultural logic that cannot be wished away.

The young women in these cases can become obsessed

with the idea that they were assaulted or raped even where there is compelling evidence that the sexual acts were consensual and even though the women remained on friendly terms with the accused males for a long period after the alleged rapes. The accusers in these cases may sometimes be fabricating their claims out of thin air. That seems to be the case with the *Rolling Stone* accuser. And many of the accusers may be influenced by the feminist narrative that elevates them into heroic "survivors" no matter how specious their claims to victimhood. But the vehemence of the allegations suggests something more: the crystallization of regret.

Let me repeat: Actual rape is a serious crime which calls for the serious response of law enforcement. The gravity of that crime, however, is obscured by rhetoric that treats other kinds of sexual encounters as though they were rape.

Many men at some point also feel the emptiness of promiscuity and uncommitted sex, but they typically take longer to reach that conclusion. What might be called the imbalance of regret between men and women has a partial biological explanation, favored by sociobiologists. The theory is that male sexual adventurism is rooted in the built-in urge of men to sire as many offspring as possible, in contrast to female reproductive strategies that are constrained both by gestation and by the woman's need to secure a reliable protector and provider for her child.

Do these legacies of our primitive past still bear on contemporary behavior? After all, very few college men are attempting to father even one child. Hooking-up is supposed to be without consequences, not a means of filling a nursery. And college-aged women are urged to secure careers, not husbands. Outrage attended the remarks of Susan Patton, the mother of a male Princeton student, when she suggested in 2013 that female students should make a point of finding "a life partner" among the available men on campus. Much of the outrage drew on the "right" of young women to enjoy consequence-free sexual liaisons.

But a fair number of college women belatedly discover that there is no such thing as sex without consequences. Their experience is perhaps summed up in the line spoken by a female character in the 2001 movie *Vanilla Sky*, "Don't you know that when you sleep with someone, your body makes a promise whether you do or not?" Broken promises like that add up. The liaisons are easy in the microculture of the college campus. But there is an internal cost that comes from acting against a woman's better self—and a man's.

At Bowdoin, the rise of the hook-up culture coincided with a sharp drop in the number of alumni who marry each other. That's a pattern that I expect we would find around the country if the data were available. But, be that as it may, the recriminations that make up the substance of the "rape crisis" speak loudly of the regrets these women have over their transient sexual relationships.

LEAVING THE WILDERNESS

The sexes are complementary. The distortion of women's sexuality plainly distorts men's sexuality as well, though in a more deferred way. Men, instead of learning how to be responsible, committed partners and eventually husbands and fathers, learn that the pleasure-seeking dimension of their sexuality can be sustained with relative ease. As a result, the men shun social maturity. The women who are veterans of the hook-up culture find that, once they are in it, their options for getting out are reduced. The fictionalized portrayal of this situation is the hit TV show *Girls*.

All of this distorts and diminishes the lives of those who are caught up in the pursuit of sex without attachment. They eventually become those for whom genuine attachment is far more difficult. There are also less obvious consequences. As the philosopher Peter Kreeft has pointed out, the disruption in college of traditional sexual mores is part of the devaluation of truth and the rise of subjectivism; the emphasis on instant gratification undermines the habits of character that depend on patience and longer-term planning; and it cuts away the authority of the past in favor of the instant wisdom of the present and utopian dreams about the future. As Kreeft puts it, "If you want to restore liberal education, restore sexual morality. And if you want to restore sexual morality, restore liberal education. The same virtues of honor, self-control, innocence, purity, respect, patience, courage, and honesty are cultivated in both places. They reinforce each other."

But one doesn't need to go all the way to the mind of the moralist to recognize that we are cultivating deep problems by ignoring the meaning of sex.

The Dartmouth student who attempted to suffocate her realization that she had tossed away her virginity by diminishing virginity to "just a total social construct" testifies to how difficult it is for contemporary college students to face the realities. Part of that difficulty is that they find themselves immersed in a sea of rationalizations for destructive behavior and invitations to wade in even deeper. The Dartmouth student, for example, now regards her sexual orientation as "queer." That is to say, she has embraced the movement that rejects efforts to model same-sex attraction on age-old patterns of opposite-sex attraction. The wilderness of self-invention beckons.

We are, however, not creatures who thrive in the wilderness. Both biologically and culturally, we need to plant ourselves in an order that accommodates our sexual complementarity. The meaning of sex is that it leads somewhere—somewhere beyond orgasms and the excitements of strangers. An older generation called that "somewhere" marriage. ♦

Eugene O'Neill and his third wife, Carlotta Monterey O'Neill (1933)

Long Night's Journey

The biographical drama of Eugene O'Neill. BY JOHN SIMON

Tolstoy's famous dictum—the second half of it, anyway—that "every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" certainly applies to the O'Neills, in spades. Though our concern here is with the playwright Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953), the miseries of his father, James, his mother, Mary (known as Ella), and his sibling, Jamie, were spectacular enough in their respective ways, as Eugene's supreme autobiographical masterpiece, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, makes abundantly clear.

Eugene O'Neill
A Life in Four Acts
by Robert M. Dowling
Yale, 584 pp., $35

Much has been written about O'Neill, by himself and sundry others, but more keeps coming to light. Only recently—too late to be included in extant collections of his plays—the sole copy of *Exorcism*, a play about his failed suicide, has surfaced, and it contributes a significant novelty to Robert M. Dowling's valuable new biography, *Eugene O'Neill: A Life in Four Acts*. The postulated four acts of the life story are seen as emblematic of the four acts in which so many of O'Neill's plays are written.

Eugene's early life in his family's New London, Connecticut, home was relatively uneventful, except for the young fellow's tuberculosis, for which his stingy father kept sending him to cheap, inadequate institutions. There was the horrible example of Irish-born father James, who could have been a great classical actor had he not chosen more-lucrative matinee idolhood in the

CARL VAN VECHTEN

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melodrama *The Count of Monte Cristo*, with which he kept touring the country and becoming rich, yet miserly about a son's survival.

Eugene and his brother Jamie were dragged from pillar to post, with their mother another terrible example, a morphine addict stemming from a hack physician's prescription to ease her parturitional pain. So Eugene, as Dowling summarizes, became "antisocial, alcoholic, a heavy smoker. His father was a domineering overachiever and his brother an underachiever and a world-class drunk. His mother, Ella, had been a morphine addict since the day he was born."

He lasted one year at Princeton and, later, at Harvard, in George Pierce Baker's famous playwriting seminar, despite Baker's considering him his best student. On he went into the merchant marine, sailoring through Latin America and hitting ground in Greenwich Village at Jimmy the Priest's saloon, and another nearby bar known as the Hell Hole, drinking with a series of deadbeats downstairs while sharing a filthy upstairs room with a couple of them.

A chief buddy was the 61-year-old boozer Terry Carlin, from whom Eugene got the idea of "philosophical anarchism." The two moved to Provincetown, Massachusetts, in the summer of 1916, where a theatrical group, eventually known as the Provincetown Players, had formed. It comprised a number of gifted people, chief among them the playwright Susan Glaspell, the set designer/director Robert Edmond Jones, and the political-journalist couple John Reed and Louise Bryant, the latter of whom had a brief, turbulent affair with Eugene.

It was by the Provincetown Players, who later moved to Greenwich Village, that Eugene had eight plays produced in two years. As reflected in his writing, his taste gradually improved: The early enthusiast for Swinburne and Rossetti, who memorized and would recite "The Hound of Heaven," moved on to Strindberg and Nietzsche—albeit also to the anarchist Max Stirner. (He came to respect Freud, but, contrary to general perception, disclaimed him as an influence.)

There were women with whom he was involved—one of whom, Kathleen Jenkins, he impregnated. He lovelessly married her and showed little interest in their child, Eugene O'Neill Jr., yet he *was* interested in the Players, to whom he first read an unsuccessful play, and later his first success, *Bound East for Cardiff* (1914), one of several seafaring dramas that started his career.

Though excessively sensitive and said to "grieve like a stricken collie if you so much as looked an unkind thought at him," O'Neill persevered. It led to four Pulitzer Prizes and, in 1936, to the Nobel Prize for Literature, which no other American dramatist had ever won.

Dowling does a nice job summing up what the O'Neill plays are about, how many of them shocked their contemporaries—making blacks their principals, having a socialite fall for a brutish stoker—and how the critics managed, with a few exceptions, to underestimate and even savage them. The plays got more and more adventurous, if not always better—Dowling is never blind to Eugene's failings—as O'Neill's private life, too, became more complicated.

It is fascinating how divergent the various views of O'Neill could be. Thus, the famous Catholic convert and social worker Dorothy Day—for a while his (allegedly platonic) girlfriend—while fascinated by his intellect, never found him "really physically exciting." But one night, in the backroom of the Hell Hole, there entered a 25-year-old beauty, Agnes Boulton, who uncannily resembled Louise Bryant. Soon O'Neill left Day for her, declaring (perhaps jokingly) that his ideal would be a composite of wife, mistress, mother, and valet. Agnes Boulton was never organized enough to be a valet, but they eventually got married.

It was not a felicitous union. "Gene knew how to hurt me," Agnes noted.

> He knew how to hurt everybody. I think he was hurting so much inside himself, that periodically he *had* to lash out. After such enormities, he was so contrite, he was embarrassing to be around. . . . If he hadn't had his plays in which to play out his principal hatreds, I feel very sure he'd have found his way to an asylum before he was thirty.

As for O'Neill, who, in the early stages of their relationship, would hide in a closet when Agnes's kin visited, he answered his critics this way: "I'll write about happiness if I ever happen to meet up with that luxury, and find it sufficiently dramatic and in harmony with any deep rhythm of life." A problem with the marriage was the rivalry that resulted from Agnes being a successful novelist. But then, O'Neill would not even attend his brother's funeral, pleading hangover. With *The Emperor Jones* (1920) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922), he found a satisfactory blend of naturalism and expressionism that became his first major style, which he called super-naturalism. "Truth in the theater as in life," he averred, "is eternally difficult, just as the easy is the everlasting lie." He even tried his hand at fiction, envying the novelist's opportunities: "Crowding drama into a play is like getting an elephant to dance in a tub," he complained.

Still, *Desire Under the Elms* (1924) became the longest-running tragedy in American theater history, with 420 performances. But the problem remained: "To express a character's submerged foundation, the dramatist only has the soliloquy. But the *soliloquy* is in the dramatic warehouse relegated there by modern realism." Dowling is good both at summarizing O'Neill's plays, including the manifest failures that got neither revived nor read, and at tracing the playwright's gallant efforts to extend his dramas' reach inward as well as outward. This is where such things as masks and simultaneous voicing of a character's speech and thought come in, laudable experimentation even if the result—with the grandiose middle-period plays, hailed at the time—has proved less than successful.

With his marriage to Agnes Boulton, O'Neill began a neurotic search for the right habitat that was to plague him both in that marriage and even more so in his next, to the beautiful actress Carlotta Monterey—a risky

business, as she had been through three marriages and a long affair with a Wall Street banker. George Jean Nathan, a friend, noted that O'Neill considered "ideal" or "best ever" numerous domiciles in America and France, ranging from a Sea Island, Georgia, villa built to his specifications to an actual French château. His and Carlotta's final home in California, Tao House, proved a lasting repository for his 8,000 books and her 300 pairs of shoes.

But if the marriage to Agnes had steep ups and crashing downs, they were not quite as Strindbergian as the ups and downs with Carlotta, however good she was at managing his business affairs: "I am wife, mistress, housekeeper, secretary, friend and nurse . . . everything but his tailor," she declared. Even their reconciliations were violent, "a combination of name-calling, insults, jumping up and down, screeching, hair-pulling, stamping feet, wrestling and finally winding up in a passionate embrace smothering each other with kisses and hugs." When O'Neill fell for the beautiful young Jane Caldwell, Carlotta's jealousy played out with threatened suicide, then murder. Finally, "O'Neill leveled a loaded handgun at her head. She grabbed a butcher knife. He dropped the gun, grabbed her neck, and closed his fingers around it while she dug her fingernails into his hands; eventually, he let go and knocked her out with a crack to the jaw."

What sort of a man was he? A writer friend, Benjamin De Casseres, wrote that he "almost awed me . . . a grim, unsmiling face taut with suffering, he seemed to say to me: 'Excuse me for not being nice, but I've just returned from hell.'" But as one actress wrote, he "was a very beautiful man . . . terribly handsome and very gentle." Another remembered "sweetness—the greatest sweetness I've ever found in a human being; that's Mr. O'Neill's outstanding quality."

So which one was he? Most likely both. What is certain is that he was a failed parent: Both his ne'er-do-well son Shane (by Agnes), and his somewhat more successful son Eugene Jr. (by Kathleen), a Yale professor of classics, committed suicide. He had a long and terrible quarrel with his daughter Oona for marrying Charlie Chaplin, who was 36 years her senior, but they were eventually reconciled, and, considering her the only sensible one among his offspring, having married for wealth, he willed her one of his residences.

O'Neill's last, never-fully-diagnosed illness was horrible, and here Carlotta comported herself nobly, looking after her husband better than any trained nurse—including, among other chores, a daily measuring of his urine, preparing him special meals, and waking up in the middle of the night with him. This, despite her having to say to him, two years before his death, "How could you have done that to me?"—and his replying, "Well, it was a helluva fourth act." Carlotta did well by him posthumously, too, allowing his supreme masterpiece *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1956) to be published, which he had permitted in his will, and getting it produced, which he had forbidden forever.

Altogether, *Eugene O'Neill* deals cogently with the important final works, identifying, for instance, some of the real people who became characters in *The Iceman Cometh* (1946). There is, however, a bit of sloppiness: Coming from a professor of English, one shouldn't see such things as "wracked" for "racked," a repeated "whom" for "who," "a sojourn to the city," "a consternating letter," "doyen" for a female doyenne, "vouchsafed" for "conceded," and "fortuitously" for "fortunately." And there are other kinds of errors: Lee "Strasburg" for Strasberg, Agnes being "tall" in one place and 5'4" in another, and once calling the favorite dive Jimmy the Priest's "Johnny the Priest's." Still, this joins the two Louis Sheaffer biographies of Eugene O'Neill as a third indispensable account. ♦

B&A

The Yankee Traders

An unlikely duo spawns a baseball dynasty.

BY EDWARD ACHORN

The Dynasty. The Evil Empire. The Bronx Bombers (and, at times, Zoo). Valued at $2.5 billion. Winner of 18 division titles, 40 American League pennants, and 27 World Series. No sports franchise in America approaches the orbit of the New York Yankees.

Marty Appel, who worked for George Steinbrenner for years, notes in his foreward to this volume that owning the Yankees is like possessing the *Mona Lisa*. But, Appel stresses, the genius who painted the masterpiece—the Leonardo da Vinci, so to speak—was not Steinbrenner but Jacob Ruppert. It was Ruppert who, with Til Huston, invested in the shabby American League New York team in 1915, a club without even a ballpark of its own, the drab sister to the city's adored National League Giants. With the help of a brilliant little manager he hired named Miller Huggins, Ruppert turned the Yankees into baseball's richest and mightiest franchise.

The Colonel and Hug explores that remarkably fruitful relationship in a meticulous account brimming with

The Colonel and Hug
The Partnership That Transformed the New York Yankees
by Steve Steinberg and Lyle Spatz
Nebraska, 576 pp., $34.95

Edward Achorn, editorial page editor of the Providence Journal*, is the author of* The Summer of Beer and Whiskey *and* Fifty-nine in '84.

quotes from the period. Some believe the Yankees' acquisition of Babe Ruth—arguably the greatest player of all time—was what transformed the Yankees. Ruppert declared in 1931 that "getting him was the first and most important step we took toward making the Yankees champion." But the "him" he was referring to was Miller Huggins, not Babe Ruth.

Before Huggins arrived, the Yankees' player acquisition strategies left much to be desired. Frank Chance, lured from Chicago, where he had won four pennants and two world championships as player-manager of the Cubs, threw up his hands in New York: "I know there are boneheads in baseball," he said in 1914, "but I didn't believe so many could get on one club. Mine." The team's horrific past led one writer to suggest, in 1916, that the perfect historian for the franchise would have been Edgar Allan Poe.

Ruppert, a former congressman and influential brewery owner who proudly bore the honorary title of "colonel," could not gain traction with his acquisition until he took the advice of the American League president Ban Johnson to meet with Huggins, the scrappy, wily player-manager of the St. Louis Cardinals. Though Huggins had a law degree, the gnome-like creature who showed up with a cap tugged over his eyes did not initially impress Ruppert as a leader of men. As the *Sporting News* recounted, "[T]he cap accentuated his midget stature and made Huggins look like an unemployed jockey. And Colonel Ruppert, an immaculate dresser, instinctively shied away from a cap-wearing job applicant."

As Ruppert came to know him better, though, he set aside his qualms. And Huggins, digging into Ruppert's pocketbook, began assembling highly competitive teams, most notably acquiring a troublemaking pitcher-turned-slugger from the Boston Red Sox. Initially, Ruppert balked at Boston owner Harry Frazee's $100,000 asking price for Babe Ruth: "Huggins, you are crazy and this man Frazee is even crazier. Who ever heard of a ballplayer being worth $100,000 in cash?"

"Colonel," Huggins replied, "take my advice. Buy Ruth. Frazee is crazy, yes. He's crazy to let you have Babe for so little." And he was right. The authors aptly call Ruth's sale "the most significant player transaction in American sports history."

Miller Huggins, Col. Jacob Ruppert (ca. 1928)

BETTMANN / CORBIS / AP IMAGES

Of course, Huggins would age considerably worrying about the manchild Ruth's sneering at rules. "Look at ya! Too fat and too old to have any fun!" Ruth told co-owner Til Huston. "That goes for him, too," he said, turning to Ruppert. "As for that little shrimp," he added, indicating Huggins, "he's half-dead right now."

Many players shared the Bambino's disdain. Carl Mays, a superb pitcher obtained from the Red Sox (most famous for killing Ray Chapman with a pitch), openly defied Huggins's order to intentionally walk a batter, costing the Yankees a game. In a later game, Mays threw a tantrum when Huggins pulled him, heaving the baseball into the stands. In another contest, Huggins called for a sacrifice by Ruth, who ignored him and clubbed a home run instead. Pitcher Waite Hoyte took a swing at Huggins in the dugout after losing a 14-inning game. Later, Ruth and his teammates reportedly dangled the manager from a moving train, a stunt that easily could have killed him. Yet Huggins seemed to hold the key to the Babe: "To be at his best, he must be a happy, carefree boy."

Reporters called the morose Huggins "a 'wet blanket' sort of manager" who lacked "the personal magnetism so necessary" to lead strong-willed stars. He had no more personality, one newspaperman observed, "than a stark old oak tree against a gray winter sky." Another revealed that he "smokes a pipe, reads the market quotations, talks little, has a sad smile, makes friends reluctantly, has his own ideas about baseball and baseball players, votes a straight Republican ticket, and thinks Tiger Flowers [a boxer] is a florist." (Huggins never married, and lived with his spinster sister.)

Yet his genius for baseball is beyond dispute. He worried himself sick, year after year, stripping down and rebuilding his team, encouraging young players to stick with the game, and winning six American League pennants and three world championships, all while making the Yankees New York's favorite team—with the means to build Yankee Stadium. Worn down, he died during the 1929 season when a boil on his cheek led to blood poisoning, an affliction modern medicine and penicillin could have easily healed.

Bereft of his manager, but with the help of general manager Ed Barrow, Ruppert went on to greater glory. As his plaque at the Hall of Fame notes, the Yankees won 10 pennants and 7 world championships during the colonel's 25 years of ownership, while signing 20 Hall of Fame players.

Ruppert possessed surprisingly poor instincts for making money on his own, but proved a brilliant leader by hiring remarkably talented people and letting them do their jobs.

At one point, he offered a novel explanation for never marrying: "I was afraid that I would kill her," he said. "I would be certain that she had married me for my money and that sooner or later she would take on a younger lover. And then I would have no alternative but to kill her." Jacob Ruppert was never quite that pragmatic about the New York Yankees, the true love of his life. ♦

B&A

Pointier Heads

Efficiency shrinks while government grows.

BY KEVIN R. KOSAR

Pension Building, Washington (1936)

I had my first reckoning with big government in a small town in New Jersey. The incident remains startlingly fresh in my mind, although it was years ago. A traffic island on a main road, perhaps 20 feet in length, was being demolished. Perched above the brightly vested construction workers was a white metal sign with black letters. The cost of the project was close to $500,000, much of it provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation. I was gobsmacked. The community's average household income was north of $100,000. The project was plainly local, not interstate commerce by any stretch of the imagination. Why were the feds paying anything?

Bring Back the Bureaucrats
Why More Federal Workers Will Lead to Better (and Smaller!) Government
by John J. DiIulio Jr.
Templeton Press, 186 pp., $12.95

This, in a nutshell, is an example of what John DiIulio calls "leviathan by proxy." The federal government now spends $3.5 trillion annually, much of which is transferred to state and local governments and private organizations. In 2012, for example, the Department of Health and Human Services gave out 81,000 grants amounting to $350 billion. The Department of Defense relies on 710,000 contractors. States and localities reap $600 billion in federal funds every year. Approximately 56,000 not-for-profit organizations receive federal largesse.

DiIulio brings leviathan's scope into focus with this chilling challenge:

> Just try to name ten adult U.S. citizens you know who have never received any federal, state, local or intergovernmental payments, loans, subsidies, grants, contracts, or other benefits whatsoever. (O.K., can you name just five?) Or just try to identify any activity in which you engage; any space that you traverse; any building that you enter (including your own private home); any product or service that you produce, buy or sell (including private health insurance); or, for that matter, any air that you breathe on which there is no government policy, program, or regulation. (Give up?)

How did we get here?

It's a complex story, one DiIulio can't fully tell in this trim volume. He points out that a big piece of it comes down to elected officials rationally pursuing their short-term interests (i.e., reelection) at the country's long-term cost. Congressmen rail against big government and trash federal bureaucrats, but simultaneously promise the public more and more benefits. Our representatives authorize new programs and appropriate more and more money, but fail to make taxpayers foot the bill immediately.

It is an insidious form of government that masks its size by borrowing and by using nonfederal actors to administer federal programs. Thus, America today is a "debt-financed, proxy-administered, superficially anti-statist form of government" whose total government debt-to-GDP ratio topped 100 percent last year. The federal government has more than $16 trillion in debt, not counting various unfunded promises. (Medicare, DiIulio notes, is a $40 trillion unfunded liability.)

DiIulio's ameliorative for our republic's ills is counterintuitive: We can curb government growth and improve its performance by hiring one million more bureaucrats by 2035. The idea is not a batty one: Since 1960, federal

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spending has quintupled, yet the number of civil servants (two million) has remained flat.

With more federal employees, the public could better discern the size of the government. Work outsourced and granted to unaccountable proxies would be insourced to these new civil servants. Democratic accountability would be improved, as Congress could keep a closer eye on civil servants than is possible with sub-subcontractors and grantees scattered all over the nation. Costs might possibly be reduced, as funds would be transferred through fewer parties that each take a cut. (This is the "leaky bucket" problem that the late economist Arthur Okun identified long ago.)

Certainly, some agencies would benefit from more staff. It is very difficult for a bureaucrat at a desk in Washington to know whether the grant for a traffic island he approved actually has been well-expended. It seems doubtful, however, that Congress would take work and funds away from private proxies and give them to federal employees. Proxies vote and lobby aggressively. Additionally, as a Government Accountability Office study recently showed, federal employees, in effect, have lifetime tenure. Republicans will not go for a million more unionized lifers demanding annual raises. Perhaps the circle can be squared by authorizing agencies to hire more bureaucrats who are put on multiyear, performance-based contracts.

Still, we should not give up the pursuit of direct cuts to spending. Leaders of both chambers should schedule more votes to cut programs and spending than to authorize new ones. Congress could adopt a policy to vote on the president's annual "kill list." Officially titled "Cuts, Consolidations, and Savings," the list is part of the annual presidential budget. It is a grab bag of billions of dollars in zombie programs. This BRAC-like process would allow congressmen to act on their professed small-government principles with less heat. Each year, Barack Obama has identified around 100 programs for elimination. One can envision a conservative president identifying far more. ♦

DEA / G. DAGLI ORTI / DE AGOSTINI / GETTY IMAGES

B&A

Copts and Robbers

Can these remnants of Christianity be preserved?

BY RICHARD TADA

Virgin Mary and apostles (6th century), Monastery of Saint Apollo, Bawit

To its immense credit, the perpetually beleaguered Coptic church of Egypt has seen fit to dedicate some resources to the study of its history. The Coptic church and two lay Coptic organizations have organized a series of symposia on Christian history and archaeology in Egypt. The latest of these was held in Aswan in southern Egypt, and we now have this collection of articles based on the symposium papers. As is usual in volumes of this kind, the articles are a mixed bag: Some concern the minutiae of scholarship, while others touch on larger issues—most notably, the history of Christian Nubia, just south of Egypt.

The northern part of the territory now ruled by the benighted Sudanese regime was once Christian, the domain of a church that celebrated its liturgy mostly in Greek and fostered Greek literacy. Sixth-century Byzantine missions played the leading role in Christianizing Nubia. During the seventh century, even as Egypt was overrun by the new force of Islam, the Nubian church shifted its allegiance, both theologically and organizationally, to a closer source: the Coptic Patriarchate in Egypt. Nevertheless, Byzantium had made a lasting impact. The Nubian church stuck with Greek rather than switch to a Coptic-language liturgy. Greek remained a prestige language, as shown by a wealth of archaeological evidence, including the discovery of tombstones inscribed with Greek epitaphs at Dongola, the capital of Makuria (the most powerful of the Nubian states, in modern Sudan).

Christianity and Monasticism in Aswan and Nubia
edited by Gawdat Gabra and Hany N. Takla
American University in Cairo, 352 pp., $49.50

Richard Tada is a writer in Seattle.

It was Christian Nubia that delivered the first check to the conquering Muslims. Nubian warriors halted their advance up the Nile in a battle near Dongola. The result was a treaty in 652, which established the frontier between Muslim Egypt and Christian Nubia south of Aswan and north of the citadel of Qasr Ibrim in present-day southern Egypt, now an island in the lake formed by the Aswan Dam.

The Copts who found themselves under Muslim rule had an avenue of escape to the south. One who took this route was no less a personage than Joseph, bishop of Aswan, who died in exile in Dongola in 668. His funerary inscription—with some portions in Greek, others in Coptic—was discovered in 2004. Jacques van der Vliet of the University of Leiden suggests in his essay here that Joseph "as a public personality had sided with the Christian Makurians and was therefore unable to return to his see after 652." Joseph was not the only Copt who took the road south. Qasr Ibrim appears to have become a refuge for Copts fleeing Egypt in the aftermath of unsuccessful eighth-century revolts against their Muslim rulers.

As a result, Coptic cultural influence spread throughout Christian Nubia. In 738, at Pachoras in Makuria, the monk Theophilos put the finishing touches on the decoration of his cell, which later became his tomb. He lived and died inside a Coptic book. The whitewashed chamber walls were covered with religious texts—"in square compartments like the pages of a book greatly magnified," wrote one of the archaeologists who examined the site. As evidenced by graffiti left behind by visitors, Theophilos' tomb and cell became a pilgrimage site, and remained one until as late as the 11th or 12th century.

North of the treaty line, Aswan became a center of Muslim power. Christian life shifted to the west bank of the Nile, centered around the now-ruined monastic complex of St. Hatre. Van der Vliet refers to St. Hatre as "a center of supra-regional importance." Nubian monks from the south resided there alongside their Coptic brethren, some of whom came from as far north as Middle Egypt. A Coptic-language graffito, dated 1404, was found in a section of the monastic church that should have been reserved for clerics; apparently, by that time, the church was no longer used for services.

Coptic frescoes, Qubbat al-Hawa

A smaller monastic complex existed nearby at the site called Qubbat al-Hawa, where monks occupied ancient rock-cut tombs. One of the cells at the site records a pivotal event. A painted inscription mentions the sack of the Nubian stronghold of Qasr Ibrim in 1173 by Shams al-Dawla, the brother of Saladin. This was the beginning of the Islamization of Nubia, although the process was a long one: The last Christian petty state held out until the late 15th century.

Both St. Hatre and the remains at Qubbat al-Hawa are deteriorating. In 1998, Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities cleared away debris at the latter site, uncovering several previously concealed wall paintings. For some unexplained reason, though, the paintings were left exposed to the elements, with predictable results. In his contribution to the volume, archaeologist Howard Middleton-Jones describes "a noticeable decline" in the condition of the paintings. The looming threat to this and other Coptic heritage sites motivated Middleton-Jones to create a 3-D computer model of the monastic church of Qubbat al-Hawa in its heyday. "The ultimate aim," he writes, "is to 'capture' the site and to freeze a moment that otherwise may be lost to the ravages of time."

Coptic Christianity survives in Aswan, though not without difficulties. Metropolitan Hedra, the Coptic hierarch who hosted the symposium, contributes an interesting article about the modern Coptic community in southern Egypt, centering around the struggle to build a new cathedral in Aswan. The cathedral was dedicated in 2000 and is apparently the second-largest in Egypt. On the other hand, other parts of the diocese of Aswan have not fared so well.

Three articles describe aspects of the Coptic past in the city of Edfu, which lies on the Nile, north of Aswan. In 2011—a year after the symposium—Copts in a village near Edfu attempted to renovate their dilapidated church of St. George. Local Islamists demanded that the rebuilding stop and that the dome of the structure be removed. When the Copts balked at this last demand, a mob burned down the church and sacked the homes of nearby Christian families for good measure—just one of a wave of assaults against the Copts in recent years.

One might feel tempted to suggest that Howard Middleton-Jones expand his project to encompass the creation of an entire virtual Coptic community, on the grounds that insubstantial Christians are the only sort Islamists seem willing to tolerate. ♦

OLAF TAUSCH

B&A

A Seventh Note

The score for destruction by Hitler and *Stalin.*

BY ALGIS VALIUNAS

Leningrad
Siege and Symphony
by Brian Moynahan
Atlantic Monthly, 496 pp., $30

Saint Petersburg from its groundbreaking in 1704; Petrograd from 1914; Leningrad from the arch-demonic founding father's death in 1924; and St. Petersburg *redux*, with the hope of civilization restored, in 1991. But the most beautiful and illustrious Russian city is still best known as Leningrad, its name immortalized with the black luster of incalculable wartime suffering. And perhaps the most famous 20th-century symphony is Dmitri Shostakovich's Seventh (1942), the "Leningrad," so-called by acclamation. For while the composer did write the first three movements of the work in Leningrad and dedicate the piece to this jewel on the Neva, he did not actually name it after the beleaguered, starving, and freezing city.

Dmitri Shostakovich in Leningrad (1941)

HERITAGE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

Now, the cultivated, much-traveled foreign correspondent and author Brian Moynahan, who has seen a great deal of war in many places, has done valuable service to the city's years of supreme ordeal and the composer's tribute. Hitler's siege of Leningrad, from September 1941 until January 1944, is among the episodes of the Second World War that decent men cannot allow to be forgotten, although the authorized Russian version still prefers that the very worst be deleted from public memory. The war altered the scale by which devastation, physical and moral, is measured, and the whole truth can be too much to bear.

The decent nations' alliance with Soviet Russia soils the gilded American memory (not to say fantasy) of the Good War. And the ordinary Soviet citizen's awareness of his motherland's own political diabolism upends the Russian moral grandiosity of the Great Patriotic War. The savagery Stalin directed against his own subjects made him Hitler's rival in the darkest princely arts well before the two rulers became certified colleagues in pillage and plunder.

The two dictators, moreover, were closely matched in strategic folly. Hitler's race-madness and vainglory brought down the Thousand-Year Reich 988 years ahead of schedule, not least because he committed the cardinal military sin of invading Russia, well-known since the tribulation of the Teutonic Knights. But Stalin's thirst for his countrymen's blood, and his military incapacity in crisis, ensured that Russia was nearly wiped off the map by his once-trusted ally.

For Hitler, the Molotov-Ribbentrop nonaggression pact of 1939 was, essentially, a delaying tactic: No treaty with Slav and Asiatic subhumans, let alone the Jewish Bolsheviks, could be expected to stand any longer than absolutely necessary. In Hitler's fever dreams, Leningrad and Moscow were destined to disappear from the earth. German engineering would create an artificial lake whose waters covered the scorched stumps of the capital city. *Vernichtung* was the ultimate war aim in the east: the extermination of creatures unfit to live in a purified world.

Stalin, of course, had his own ideas of purity. In Moynahan's words, "Pre-war Leningrad had been a pole of cruelty, the most defiled of all Soviet cities. . . . Leningrad was purged as no other." Crazed personal resentment helped drive the local effects of this program of destruction. The city's architectural loveliness, its proud history of literary excellence and intellectual defiance, gave it an almost European grace and refinement—and thus rendered it particularly unforgivable in the eyes of a Georgian provincial only too conscious of his inelegant beginnings.

With its own half-mad tyrant in command, Russia could not have been more unready when Operation Barbarossa headed its way in June 1941. Stalin had gutted the Red Army officer corps during the 1937-38 purges of the Great Terror: As many as half of its 75,000 officers had been arrested, and the higher one's rank, the more certain one's end. Three of the five Soviet marshals and two of the four naval fleet commanders received the traditional bullet in the back of the skull. Every corps commander and nearly every division commander went down likewise—though a lucky (or unlucky) few were shipped off to the slow-motion death camps of the Siberian Arctic.

Thus, when the imminence of Nazi invasion became undeniable to all but Stalin, the surviving brass was disinclined to breach the great man's

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omniscient serenity. Even as panzer divisions rolled in, and the Soviet Air Force was smashed before it ever left the ground, commissars and generals issued orders *not* to fire on German forces, for Stalin had decreed that such an invasion was impossible. The commotion must be some gross misunderstanding. As for Stalin himself, he shivered and crumpled in the unexpected and unrelenting west wind: Nikita Khrushchev would say, years later, that the Man of Steel proved useless for weeks after the attack. By September 1941, the Germans had Leningrad under siege.

Leningrad would have all the comforts of hell. The siege took some 750,000 civilian lives. Epidemic starvation went under the more respectable diagnosis of dystrophy. Once-civilized persons shared their lodgings with frozen corpses. Thousands of instances of cannibalism—and examples by the dozens of mothers murdering their starving children to make a meal of them—are documented but better forgotten. As Anna Reid notes succinctly in *Leningrad* (2011), "The Russian language makes the morally vital distinction between *trupoyedstvo*—'corpse-eating'—and *lyudoyedstvo*—'person-eating,' or murder for cannibalism." A language that observes such niceties does say a lot about a people. And all the while, not even the enemy pressing from without could stop Stalin's endless war on the "enemy" within: "The deranged accusations," writes Moynahan, "the discovery of elaborate, rambling 'plots' went on apace." The ordinary Leningrader had every reason to fear the NKVD as much as the SS.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975) and his Seventh Symphony came to represent Russian indomitability both to Russians themselves and to listeners in the civilized world. The piece had its world premiere in March 1942 in Kuibyshev, where the composer had been swept off for safekeeping; but that occasion was overshadowed by the first performance in Leningrad the following August. Moynahan's account of the event, with an inspired pickup orchestra playing to an audience with "stick-insect limbs," is richly heartening and almost unbearably sorrowful.

As for the reception abroad, mandarin music critics could carp at the symphony's "lassitude" and "platitude," but the great public, eager to believe the best of their Soviet allies, hailed not just the music and the man but the entire nation that produced such stalwarts. Shostakovich, in a Leningrad fireman's helmet, graced the cover of *Time*, which declared that in the symphony's "last movement the triumphant brasses prophesy what Shostakovich describes as the 'victory of light over darkness, of humanity over barbarism.'"

Performance of the Seventh Symphony, Leningrad (1942)

In 1942, Arturo Toscanini's NBC Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra all performed the Seventh Symphony, and the crowds almost invariably went wild from political sympathy as much as from aesthetic bliss. Millions exulted at the radio broadcasts. Moynahan deals brusquely with Carl Sandburg's braying encomium, characteristic of American excitement at the time, to "a great singing people beyond defeat or conquest":

> The music succeeded perfectly. It hid the camps and the interrogation chambers. The Soviets were not only civilized and cultured: they were also upholders of human freedom.

With the war's end, no half-serious observer could be fooled any more, as Shostakovich and Leningrad slid into disgrace. The piano-playing apparatchik Andrei Zhdanov found his native city and its sometime heroes to be undemocratic stooges of the imperialist West. He fingered the writers Mikhail Zoshchenko and Anna Akhmatova as enemies of the people, and a Zhdanov flunky denounced Shostakovich, Sergei Prokofiev, and Aram Khatchaturian as "Formalist vermin" who were conspiring to bring down the state with music insufferable to honest proletarian ears.

Such attentions were not limited to artists: In 1950, 2,000 Leningrad municipal and regional bureaucrats went to prison or to the wall. "The city's proud Museum of the Siege was closed," writes Moynahan. "The heroism of the siege itself was written off as a myth designed to denigrate the grandeur of Stalin."

How, then, are Shostakovich's masterwork and the Passion of Leningrad best remembered? Not a single American commentator at the time remarked that Shostakovich's macabre rendering of malignity on the march might have represented anyone other than Adolf Hitler. But the composer would be quoted in *Testimony* (1979), his memoir related to musicologist Solomon Volkov, in this way: "I have nothing against calling the Seventh the *Leningrad* Symphony, but it's not about Leningrad under siege; it's about the Leningrad that Stalin destroyed and that Hitler merely finished off."

Moynahan shrugs at the lingering controversy about how much of the composer's secondhand loathing of Stalin is fact: "In the end, perhaps, it does not matter." But it does matter, a great deal, and Moynahan's own impressive book shows why. ♦

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B&A

Thought for Food

The quality of the (literary) fare at organic restaurants.

BY JOE QUEENAN

While traveling in the west of England recently, I had occasion to dine in an organic restaurant just outside Cirencester. The restaurant was clean and inviting and resolutely wholesome, with a small but equally wholesome grocery off to the side. Everything in the building was radiantly, obstreperously organic. The apples. The pears. The potatoes. The kale. The waitstaff.

For lunch, I had some sort of organic vegetable quiche and an organic pastry. They were both quite tasty. I also had some coffee. Shade-grown, of course. Very piquant. As I was leaving, I noticed a used-book rack over in the corner. I expected the books to be all touchy-feely, *Diet for a Small Planet*-type material; but no, staring right up at me was a variety of thrillers, including a brand-new copy of Lawrence Block's *A Walk Among the Tombstones*. The movie version of the book had been released a few months earlier. A picture of a very displeased, very determined-looking Liam Neeson adorned the cover. It looked as if he were already preparing for installment four in the series that launched the action-hero phase of his career, *Taken 4: To the Cleaners*. I snapped it up.

That night I started reading the book. A beautiful woman is abducted and held for ransom somewhere out in Brooklyn, then returned to her husband in pieces. Very small, neatly wrapped pieces. The widower hires Matthew Scudder (the central figure in many other Lawrence Block mysteries) to bring the depraved killers to justice. The killers, we subsequently learn, are ex-DEA operatives who have a history of luring beautiful young women into the back of their van, torturing them, murdering them, and leaving their mutilated corpses in graveyards. One potential victim escapes death only because she allows the men to cut off one of her breasts. She has to choose which breast. At the end of the book, when the killers are brought to—or at least very near—justice, the mastermind of the original kidnapping plot is left alone with the widower, who thereupon chops off all of his appendages, cuts out his tongue, and blinds him.

None of this sounds terribly organic. None of it. And therein lies my problem: *A Walk Among the Tombstones* is an interesting book, an engrossing mystery in which the private eye must track down the killers with almost no initial clues to work with. The plot is ingenious, the dialogue compelling. Had I bought the book in a bookshop, I would have thought no more of it.

But in an organic restaurant with an organic grocery on the side, one has a right to expect a unilaterally organic dining and shopping experience. In an establishment such as this, as one would expect, all of the vegetables and fruits and tubers and free-range chickens are organic. The milk is organic and the eggs are organic and the pastries are organic and the condiments are organic. The women who work in the restaurant have that organic sixties vibe about them; they seem healthy and focused, averse to letting anything mass-produced or synthetic enter their bodies. All of the furniture and the fixtures and the lighting in the establishment seem organic. The signage is organic.

Why then, off there in the corner, is the restaurant selling used books in which women get their breasts cut off with piano wire? How did a book like *A Walk Among the Tombstones* make its way in here in the first place? If it was donated by a patron, it can mean only one thing: Some of the customers have organic palates but unorganic minds.

Am I making too much of this? Perhaps. But this is not the first time I have seen sadistic books turn up in strange venues. I recently went through the paperbacks on loan at the back of a tiny church and found all sorts of novels in which people get shot, maimed, assassinated, cut to ribbons. And library book sales always have more than their share of violent paperbacks on offer.

For the record, I don't mind churches selling or lending out violent books. The Bible is filled with hideous violence, and churches are routinely adorned with all sorts of violent images: crucifixions, flagellations, beheadings, and even, in the case of St. Agatha, gruesome paintings of a woman whose breasts have been cut off. Violence is neither unexpected nor inappropriate in a church; religion is all about the battle between good and evil.

The same can be said for libraries, which, by their very definition, house all sorts of books dealing with murder, mutilation, massacres, mayhem. Libraries have books about scalping, books about mass murders, books about serial killers, books about Scottish heroes who got hanged, drawn, and quartered. They also have books about the Gestapo. Quite a few of them. Violence is par for the course in libraries.

But organic restaurants? It seems to me that the whole point of operating an organic restaurant is to provide the diner with a respite from the world's ugliness. In an organic restaurant, one can escape from trans-fats, hidden supplements, genetically modified foodstuffs, fakery. In an organic restaurant, one can escape from bad language, bullying, mean drunks, switchblade-brandishing thugs. In an organic restaurant, one can hold the world at bay—as long as someone on the staff makes sure that none of the world's unpleasantness leaches in.

All of this reinforces one unassailable truth: People are very particular about what they put into their mouths, but they will put absolutely anything into their brains. That's fine—but not in an organic restaurant, please. ♦

Joe Queenan is the author, most recently, of One for the Books.

"In a 2014 episode of the PBS documentary series 'Finding Your Roots,' [Ben] Affleck learned a great deal about his family tree. But according to private Sony emails published by WikiLeaks, he apparently didn't want the show to reveal that one of his ancestors owned slaves. . . . PBS said [host Henry Louis Gates Jr.] reviewed ten hours of footage and made an independent editorial judgment. . . .The program chose to highlight other ancestors who had more interesting stories."

— CBS News, April 20, 2015

PARODY

HENRY LOUIS GATES JR.

Alphonse Fletcher University Professor
Director, Hutchins Center for African
and African American Research

Harvard University
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Dear Ben,

I've been wrestling with the concern you expressed about revealing the existence of your slave-owning ancestor on "Finding Your Roots," and, as you can imagine, I'm sympathetic. Accordingly, after careful consideration, my Public Broadcasting colleagues and I have decided that, all things considered, it would be a better show if we highlighted, instead, those other Affleck forebears we uncovered and discussed with you.

Just to remind you, here are the two thumbnail biographies we will be talking about during our filmed interview:

• First, your great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, Ebenezer Affleck (1727-1796), who was born in Braintree (now Quincy), Massachusetts, and died in Boston. During the period when the Commonwealth was governed under the Articles of Confederation (1778-89), he was a persistent advocate for recognition of transgender rights throughout New England. Ebenezer's pamphlet *A Fulsome Blast Against ye Harbingers & Advocates of Cisgender'd Tyranny in the Republick*, published in Provincetown in February 1790, is regarded as a seminal document in the struggle for LGBTQ rights prior to the Hartford Convention.

• Second, your great-great-great-great-great-great-uncle, Elias Affleck (1759-1832), Ebenezer's younger son, who was born in Massachusetts but spent most of his life as a clerk in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where, beginning in the 1790s, he was a vociferous critic of the industrial waste and air pollution emanating from the new Slater Mill along the Blackstone River. In an open letter to Samuel Slater, published in Newport (1806), he complained that, "while ye may boast and prate upon thy wicked repute as the Father of this Industrial Revolt, the fayre face of our dear New England hath been render'd repugnant by the foul effluvient & carbon footprint of