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HARVEY MANSFIELD

the weekly Standard

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THE CANDIDATE & HER BAGGAGE

- ANDREW FERGUSON on the Hillary Paradox
- DANIEL HALPER on the tedium of the campaign

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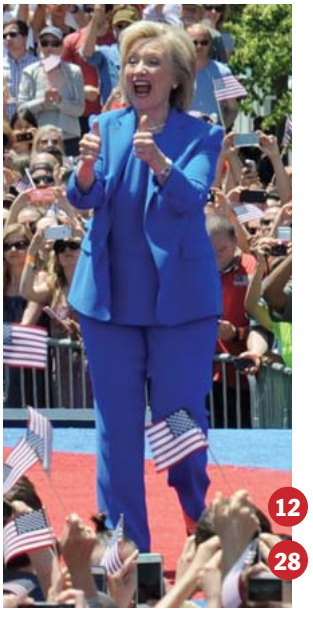

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Amateur Hour at Trump Tower

The Scrapbook confesses that its one big surprise, thus far, in the 2016 presidential campaign has been Donald Trump's announcement of his candidacy. We are not surprised that he is running for the Republican nomination—although it can be difficult, at times, to tell which party would be most compatible with Trump—but that he is running at all. Donald Trump has been threatening to run for president for the better part of three decades but, until this year, had never actually taken the plunge.

Now that he has done so, from the lobby of Trump Tower in Manhattan, complete with a TV-friendly red necktie and an alleged rent-a-crowd of actors cheering his words, The Scrapbook is emboldened to guess that Trump is not likely to win the nomination. To begin with, a significant percentage of Americans (including, perhaps especially, Republicans) seem to regard him as something of a public buffoon, a well-known "character," not the national redeemer. The famous property developer and reality-television star has never run for public office and has no credible campaign apparatus. Having emerged not too long ago from bankruptcy, he is no doubt reluctant to spend very much of his own money on this venture. Moreover, at 69, Trump is the only one among the Republican candidates who is eligible for Medicare. He's even older than Hillary Clinton.

So why is he running? Probably because he believes that a presidential run, even a sham candidacy such as this appears to be, will do his business and personal renown no harm. His fame and fortune give him access to the media; his penchant for quotable one-liners ("I will be the greatest jobs president that God ever created") is well earned. He might prove to be an entertaining wild card in debates.

Above all, however, we are living in a golden age of amateur candidates. The last nonpolitician to be elected president (1952) was the general who won World War II. Before that, the charismatic utilities executive Wendell Willkie gained the 1940 GOP nomination but was beaten decisively by Franklin D. Roosevelt. Since then, we've had comedians (Pat Paulsen 1968) who ran for president as a joke, and then more or less seriously; and one television evangelist (Pat Robertson 1988) who placed second in the Iowa caucuses. We've had boomlets for retired generals (James Gavin 1968), trial balloons from businessmen (Lee Iacocca 1988), and actual candidacies by pundits (Patrick Buchanan 1992, 1996) and computer magnates (H. Ross Perot 1992, 1996). In 2012 the pizza mogul Herman Cain sought the Republican nomination; this year neurosurgeon Ben Carson is running.

The record is not encouraging. But the peculiar genius of Donald Trump is that he manages to combine a certain seriousness of purpose ("I will stop Iran from getting nuclear weapons") with declarations worthy of Pat Paulsen ("I'm not using donors. . . . I'm really rich") and so will be noticed, and reported on, even if his candidacy is doomed. At this juncture, the best The Scrapbook can say is that it is better to have a big, diverse crowd of candidates than a narrow, depopulated field. The worst The Scrapbook can say is that, in 1992, H. Ross Perot won 19 million votes and might well have delivered the presidency to Bill Clinton. ♦

Clear Sailing for Jones?

Walter Jones of North Carolina is among the House members that Republicans are most eager to defeat. But there's a twist in his case. Jones is a Republican. His critics have their reasons—plenty of good ones, as it turns out. Jones, 72, was a strong backer of the Iraq war until he had a sudden change of heart after attending a local Marine's funeral. He became the most dovish—and one of the most liberal—House Republicans and a fierce opponent of President Bush and Vice President Cheney.

He voted for a bill to impeach Bush. He told the *Washington Post* that Cheney would "likely wind up in hell." He opposed the Bush surge of troops in Iraq that defeated the al Qaeda insurgency. Last week, he voted to withdraw American troops from Iraq and Syria in the fight against ISIS. And along the way, he amassed a long record of not supporting Israel.

Jones is a pariah in the House Republican conference. When GOP leaders conduct a "whip" count in preparation for a vote, they no longer bother to check with him. He voted against John Boehner for speaker in 2013 and again this year. And he was stripped of a seat on the House Financial Services Committee.

All this is strange considering his district. Covering most of eastern North Carolina, it is one of the most conservative in the country. Camp Lejeune, the Marine base, is in the district. Many military retirees live there. It was known as "Jesse Helms country" during Helms's 30 years in the Senate.

Yet for all of Jones's apostasy, conservatives have failed to defeat him in the Republican primary. Democrats don't matter. The district is solidly Republican. In 2014, Jones won the primary with a mere 51 percent. Prospects of ousting him in 2016 looked bright.

Republicans had an impressive candidate in mind, state secretary of transportation Anthony Tata. A West Point graduate, Tata, 55, had a distinguished Army career that included duty in Afghanistan. He retired as a brigadier general in 2009.

Tata appeared ready to take on Jones. Marc Rotterman, a Republican

consultant in Raleigh, brought Tata to Washington twice this year to meet with Republican officials, conservative groups, and potential donors. If ever a candidate appeared ready to challenge an incumbent from a position of strength, it was Tata.

Then Alex Roarty of the *National Journal* broke the Tata story on June 1. Roarty's piece was headlined "GOP Establishment Readying New Primary Challenge for Dovish Rep. Walter Jones." That was true, but Tata's candidacy was actually hatched in North Carolina with Rotterman playing a leading role.

At this point Governor Pat McCrory stepped in. Political bloggers known as "Jones and Blount" reported that he prevailed on Tata to stay on and help sell $2.85 billion in transportation bonds. Tata agreed, which meant skipping the race against Jones.

"At the end of the day Tata made the right call," Rotterman said. "There is nothing worse than a reluctant candidate. . . . I view this as a missed opportunity for North Carolina and the nation." ♦

Must Reading

Congratulations to our friend, onetime colleague, and *TWS* contributing editor Mary Katharine Ham, who has just released *End of Discussion: How the Left's Outrage Industry Shuts Down Debate, Manipulates Voters, and Makes America Less Free (and Fun)*. It's published by Crown Forum, it's a bargain at $26—and like MKH herself, it's both informative and funny.

The subject, however, is no joke. Mary Katharine and her coauthor Guy Benson offer chapter and verse on how free speech is genuinely imperiled in America: by the media and academic thought police, by political correctness, by a left so fearful of competing ideas (not to mention facts and figures) that it strives to shout them down and shut them up. To her credit, she approaches it all with humor and perspective. But with scrupulous reporting, voluminous detail, and plenty of scary stories, as well, she makes a startling case of how dangerous it can be—to life and career—to speak your mind, assert the truth, or express an opinion unwelcome to the left.

Do we exaggerate? Not really. So buy this book—and fight back! ♦

The Lesson of Doggerland

Earlier this month, the G7 met in Bavaria; its seven members are the major European and North American economies, plus Japan. The G7 is the successor to the G8—Vladimir Putin's Russia has been suspended, having invaded and annexed parts of Ukraine, and now actively making mischief on NATO's Baltic border. ISIS, meanwhile, is murdering its way through the Middle East, and China is building islands in international waters. So the G7 had quite a full plate; nonetheless, they found time to issue a declaration on climate change.

The G7 have affirmed their "strong determination to adopt" a climate change plan that, they say, will—through "binding rules"—"enable all countries to follow a low-carbon . . . pathway . . . to hold the increase in global average temperature below 2° C." A lot of this is just hot air and civic posturing. But to the extent they are serious about climate change, the G7 should pay close attention to some other recent European news:

In January, a forest was discovered east of Norwich, an English city that's northeast of London. You'd think by now most European forests would have been discovered; after all, every inch of the continent has been photographed by satellite. What makes this forest unusual is that it's under 600 feet of water, in the North Sea.

It's an oak forest, and it stands on Doggerland, an enormous tract of territory that once connected Britain to the low countries and Denmark. A geologist named Martin Warren called Doggerland "a country Europe forgot"; it was forgotten because, about 10,000 years ago, global warming triggered a rise in sea levels, which—by about 6,500 B.C.—had sunk Doggerland beneath the waves. It wasn't rediscovered until 1931, when a fishing trawler pulled up a piece of an antler.

The Earth is always warming up or cooling off. The warming periods are inevitable, and so is an associated rise in sea levels. Cutting carbon emissions won't stop it; after all, Doggerland—archaeologists tell us—hosted an environmentally friendly mesolithic society.

If the G7 is really worried about global warming, they ought to buy some industrial earth-movers: The novelist Larry Niven once remarked that dinosaurs died because they didn't have a space program. You could say, by the same token, that Doggerland vanished because it didn't have any bulldozers. The answer to rising sea-levels isn't closing factories, it's building dikes.

The lesson of Doggerland is that, when the G7 meets next year in Japan, they should invite the Dutch. ♦

Friends of the Rhino

Africa's black rhinos are on their last legs; there were seven subspecies, and three are already extinct. In the '70s, there were only 65,000 black rhinos left. As Asian economies boomed, demand there for traditional, rhino-horn-based "medicine" paid for a corresponding boom in rhino poaching. Now there are just 2,500 black rhinos left.

Of those, 450 live in Zimbabwe. That country is ruled, as it has been since 1980, by the brutal Robert Mugabe; the government is deeply corrupt, and so is the police force. Consequently, Zimbabwean conservationists have little power to stanch the rhino-killing. Last week, though, a white knight saved 5 black rhinos, the first of 20 rhinoceros refugees who are being airlifted out of harm's way. It's the first step in a new conservation program: Zimbabwe's rhinos will find a safe home in neighboring Botswana.

There are no two ways about it—Botswana is a remarkable country. When it became independent of Great Britain in 1966, it was the ninth-poorest country in the world. Eighteen months before independence, Botswana held a free and fair election. Every five years ever since, Botswana has held a free and fair election. It is a free country with a free economy and a free press, freedom of speech and religion, an independent judiciary, and a deep institutional respect for the rule of law. It's the least corrupt country in Africa, according to Transparency International, a gem of freedom in a deeply unfree part of the world. And—as a bonus—over its 50 years of independence, its economy has grown at nearly Asian Tiger levels.

Now it's helping save the rhinos. Unlike mosquitos or rattlesnakes, the rhinoceros is a species we would be very sorry to see perish from the earth—so THE SCRAPBOOK would like to extend its thanks and doff its homburg to Botswana's remarkable record of democracy. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

'In the style of a lot of current shows, *Deutschland 83* mixes real historical events into its made-up story. Ronald Reagan and other leaders of the period turn up in video clips spouting their Cold War bombast, verbiage that today feels both scary and ridiculously simplistic. The show has the feel of a . . .' (Neil Genzlinger in the *New York Times*, June 16). ♦

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Father Knows Best

Before the advent of today's advanced electronic gaming systems and cell phones with their apps, there were handheld games powered by AA or AAA batteries.

Most of these allowed the user to play precisely one game.

That is, until Tiger Electronics came out with Bo Jackson Football/Baseball in 1990. This was, at least to those who couldn't afford the pricey Game Boy, the ultimate game to have because you could play *two* sports on it, just as Bo Jackson himself played for many years in both the NFL and the major leagues.

At the ripe age of 7, I had (and occasionally completed) chores loosely tied to an allowance of $1 a week. Bo Jackson Football/Baseball was highly coveted in my social circle, and I *had* to be the first to have it.

The savings in my kiddie safe were meager, so it took weeks and weeks of agonized waiting as I inched toward my goal of $25 (roughly $45 in today's money). I even volunteered for extra chores at home, since I was too young to be trusted by neighbors with a lawnmower or shears.

These extra efforts cut a few weeks off my timeline, but it still felt like an eternity before I had my twenty-fifth dollar and Bo Jackson Football/Baseball was within my grasp.

Impatient, I asked my father every night to drive me to Toys "R" Us a few suburbs away, but we always seemed to finish dinner just at the store's closing time. Finally, I lost my cool, and my father placated me by agreeing to go early Saturday morning.

The Toys "R" Us he took me to was in a bad part of Cleveland, so the high-value electronics were kept behind a locked metal grate. An imposing bouncer/security guard type stood behind the grate, looking out as if from a teller's window.

I bounded down the aisle to the open electronics section and grabbed the card that, once I'd paid, would authorize the guard to liberate my very own Bo Jackson Football/Baseball game from its steely cage. The card had a picture of the game on the front and a barcode on the back.

I sprinted to the cashier with this prize in hand before Dad had even gotten past the register.

The clerk scanned the card, and

DAVE CLEGG

I started counting out my $1 bills. Then I heard him say that the game came to $26 and change with taxes. I didn't have the money.

My father, a tax lawyer, was not sympathetic. He'd known all along that I'd saved only $25. I'd been telling him for weeks the exact cost of the game and how close I was to getting there. So what now?

Dad offered me a deal—the first of many deals, as I was growing up, that were actually lessons, a bit like the "intricate scenarios" George Bluth used to use to teach his children in *Arrested Development*. The deal was not structured to my advantage. My father would front the extra dollar and change I needed to buy the game—if I would forgo *five weeks of allowance*. If I declined the deal, we'd go home and come back in a week or two when I'd saved the money.

"*Please*," I begged, "can't you just buy it now and I'll work really hard and pay you every penny in a week?" My father replied—and my memory is hazy, but this was the gist of it—"If you can't afford something, and you feel you need it, you have to know how lending works."

It was plain I would get no amnesty. So I grudgingly agreed to a bad deal.

Back at home, I cut open the theft-resistant packaging, freeing the game, and removed the back panel. Then I reached into the battery drawer in our dining room to get two AA batteries. Only there was a problem: There weren't any. Yes, we had AAA, C, and even D batteries, but no AA.

"What's wrong, Jimmy?" Dad asked, popping into the dining room. "Aren't there any batteries?" When I told him there weren't, he responded, "Well, if you have some money, you can buy some. Otherwise you'll have to wait until we need more AA batteries for the household."

I don't remember what happened then. Maybe I've blocked it out, since the combination of disappointment and weighty life lessons was a lot to take in. I do know that later that very afternoon I was happily absorbed in playing my game—to the envy of my friends.

All these years later, my father denies hiding the AA batteries, but I am positive he did. However that may be, the crash course in foresight is one I've never forgotten. I'm even looking forward someday to teaching it to children of my own.

Jim Swift

the weekly Standard

A Little Touch of Trump

We are not allowed, needless to say, to disclose our top secret list ranking the GOP presidential candidates from top to bottom. It's kept in encrypted form on a password-protected, self-destructing hard drive in a safe room at The Weekly Standard, accessible only to a trusted few who are cleared to know all the machinations we are planning to engage in to secure a 2016 Republican nominee to our liking. But we can reveal this: Donald Trump competes for last place on our list with Rand Paul. We don't think either man should be the next president of the United States.

So we're not Trump enthusiasts. We're not even Trump fellow travelers. We're closer to Trump deriders. But we do remember 1992. Ross Perot was, as a presidential candidate, something of an oddball and egomaniac. The George H.W. Bush campaign mocked and dismissed him. Bush might have been reelected if the campaign had instead taken the attitude that there are things to be learned from smart oddballs and eccentric egomaniacs who have a feel for public opinion.

Notice a resemblance?

What might we learn from listening to Trump?

Trump understands that Americans aspire to greatness. His campaign slogan is "Make America Great Again." Sound familiar? A prominent Ronald Reagan slogan in 1980 was "Let's Make America Great Again." In his announcement speech Trump repeated several times—and repetition may not be as foolish in politics as all the pundits who disapproved of Trump's verbosity think—that "we are going to make our country great again." And he concluded his remarks, "Sadly, the American dream is dead. But if I get elected president I will bring it back bigger and better and stronger than ever before, and we will make America great again." Politics is about dreams as much as it is about deliverables, about pride as much as it's about pocketbooks. Trump understands that. It's not clear most of the rest of the field does.

Trump understands that Americans like winning: "Our country is in serious trouble. We don't have victories anymore. We used to have victories, but we don't have them." Trump is aware the public believes international politics is more zero-sum than globalist elites like to think. "Our enemies are getting stronger and stronger, by the way, and we as a country are getting weaker." So Trump is pro-tough-trade-negotiations, he's pro-China-bashing, and he's pro-military. "I will find within our military, I will find the General Patton or I will find General MacArthur, I will find the right guy. I will find the guy that's going to take that military and make it really work. Nobody, nobody will be pushing us around." A bit simple-minded? Sure. Closer to the truth than the cocktail partiers at Davos? Probably. Closer in sentiment to the American people? Certainly. Trump understands that many Americans believe winning isn't everything, but it's a good thing. A very good thing. It's not clear most of the rest of the field does.

Trump understands the centrality of Obamacare on the domestic front. "We have a disaster called the big lie: Obamacare." "Obamacare kicks in in 2016. Really big league. It is going to be amazingly destructive. Doctors are quitting." And so Trump understands that it's important to emphasize that Obamacare must be repealed and replaced. It's not clear most of the rest of the field does.

Trump understands that, in running for president, it is a major disadvantage to never have been elected to anything. But he's a turn-lemons-into-lemonade type guy. So he goes after politicians. "I've watched the politicians. I've dealt with them all my life. If you can't make a good deal with a politician, then there's something wrong with you. You're certainly not very good. And that's what we have representing us. They will never make America great again." Trump understands that Americans have deep doubts about the competence and probity of our political class. It's not clear most of the rest of the field does.

Trump understands that Republican primary voters don't want a nominee who will shy away from criticism of President Obama. "Our president doesn't have a clue. He's a bad negotiator. He's the one that did Bergdahl. We get Bergdahl, they get five killer terrorists. . . . We get Bergdahl. We get a traitor, a no-good traitor, and they get the five people that they wanted for years, and those people are now back on the battlefield trying to kill us." Trump understands that it's okay to say something the media elite will shake their collective head at. It's not clear most of the rest of the field does.

NEWSCOM

We trust Trump will not be the Republican nominee. But Trump could win significant support from Perot-type voters in primaries who will then be up for grabs in the general election. Bill Clinton has already begun sweet-talking him: Trump "has been . . . uncommonly nice to Hillary and me." Republicans need not compete with the master in flattering Trump. But imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. A little touch of Trump in the rhetoric, the attitude, the bearing of the other Republican candidates could go a long way toward making this election more like 1980 than 1992.

—William Kristol

Caving to Iran

The Obama White House thinks that when it comes to the Iranian nuclear program, we ought to let bygones be bygones. What's past is past, and now it's time to focus on the future. Sure, the administration once thought it was a problem that the Iranians refused to disclose their past nuclear activities, or what the International Atomic Energy Agency calls the "possible military dimensions" (PMDs) of their nuclear program. As John Kerry said in April, if Iran wants sanctions relief it will need to come clean about its past activities—it will "have to do it," said Kerry. "It will be done."

Let us reason together.

Last week, Kerry and the White House changed their tune. "We're not fixated on Iran specifically accounting for what they did at one point in time or another," Kerry told reporters. "It's critical to us to know that going forward, those activities have been stopped, and that we can account for that in a legitimate way."

Well, it's true that if your chief concern is to prevent Iran from building a bomb sometime in the future, you need a verification regime to know when Iran starts to move toward breakout. Unless there is a full accounting of Iran's *past* nuclear activities, unless IAEA inspectors are allowed to visit possible military sites like Parchin and interview scientists believed to have a role in weapons development, it cannot establish benchmarks to show what Iran is doing now and has done in the past. Without those benchmarks, it will be impossible in the future to verify whether Tehran is abiding by a proposed agreement. Maybe in the next few years, for instance, the Iranians will be nearing breakout capacity but no one will know since the work is being done in an undisclosed secret site. In other words, if Iran doesn't come clean now about PMDs, any deal will be worthless in preventing Iran from getting a bomb.

The administration knows this, which is why until last week it demanded that Iran fulfill the IAEA's requirements. But with the deadline for a proposed deal approaching, the administration is getting desperate—and that's why it's lying to the American public and throwing the IAEA under the bus. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and other Iranian officials say there is no way they're opening up military sites to inspectors. So if Obama wants a deal, he's going to have to budge, not Tehran.

Of course, the administration has been caving in to Iranian demands from the very beginning of Obama's tenure, starting with the failure to support Iran's Green Movement in June 2009. The White House has not only acquiesced to all of Iran's conditions during the nuclear negotiations convened in European cities, it has also privileged Tehran's interests on Middle Eastern battlefields. Indeed, the point of the nuclear agreement is to smooth the path for a larger accommodation between the Obama White House and the clerical regime, which the administration believes will allow the United States to minimize its role in the Middle East, even as the Iranian empire grows to fill the void.

The desire to reach a nuclear deal with the mullahs, in short, turns out to have little to do with stopping Iran from getting a bomb. This explains what otherwise looks like a fatally flawed negotiating strategy by the Obama administration. Remember: At the outset, the Iranians claimed that they did not have a nuclear weapons program, never had one, and had no intention of ever building one. Indeed, according to some Iranians, the supreme leader himself had issued a *fatwa* stating that Iran could not have or use nuclear weapons. Since the United States is the stronger power by far, if the point were to deny Iran a nuclear capability, the only sound negotiating position once evidence of Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions became incontrovertible, would have been for the Obama administration to walk from the table.

But what the administration actually wanted was a deal—any deal. At the outset, it was as if the White House were talking about the price of a car while Iran was haggling over the price of a balloon. But given the White House investment in continuing to talk no matter what, it was inevitable that its position would move closer and closer to that of the Iranians. And that's what happened last week—John Kerry told the American public that the White House was about to close the deal on a balloon.

The problem is not just that the administration has made concession after concession to Iran—on everything

NEWSCOM

from sanctions relief to Iran's so-called right to enrich uranium. This is much more fundamental than just another concession. By saying that the Iranians don't have to come clean on their past activities, the White House has effectively adopted Iran's baseline position. If you ignore what nuclear activities Iran has entertained in the past, you cannot possibly know what they can or will do in the future. If you know nothing about the program's PMDs, or where there might be more secret sites, you have little choice but to take Iran's word for it. And the Iranians say they're not building a bomb. And if they are, so what? The White House said last week that it doesn't want to hear about it.

The Iran nuclear deal as currently structured is not going to make the world safer for Americans and our allies. Rather, it's going to provide a dark room for a dark regime where it can build the world's deadliest weapon.

—Lee Smith

Identity Politics

America was going to have a national conversation about transgender issues, whether we wanted to or not. Our cultural betters decreed we would. The perfectly named *Vanity Fair* deployed its considerable resources to present the coming out of Caitlyn—née Bruce—Jenner in what it took to be the most favorable and pleasing way possible. Jenner's upcoming reality show about the transition will no doubt be inescapable in a way that will make even the Kardashians in his family envious. Americans are not being asked to tolerate the former Olympian's choices, but to deny reality and accept that Jenner is fully a woman, biology notwithstanding.

Now we find ourselves suddenly caught up in a different national conversation about identity, only this time it's causing our progressive overlords a great deal of pain. It recently emerged that Rachel Dolezal, the head of the NAACP chapter in Spokane, is in fact a white woman who has been using creative hairstyling and extravagant application of bronzer to present herself as African American. There's plenty of outrage. But Dolezal's defense of herself is surprisingly difficult to refute by the internal logic of identity politics: "I identify as black." The obvious question on everyone's lips: Why should we have to accept Jenner's declaration that he identifies as a woman if it's an affront for Dolezal to suggest she can be black?

The attempts to square this circle have been comedic. See "Why Comparing Rachel Dolezal To Caitlyn Jenner Is Detrimental To Both Trans And Racial Progress," by *Huffington Post* culture writer Zeba Blay. "Transracial identity is a concept that allows white people to indulge in blackness as a commodity, without having to actually engage with every facet of what being black entails—discrimination, marginalization, oppression, and so on," Blay wrote. But aren't women also subject to discrimination, marginalization, oppression, and so on? A *New York Times* op-ed by Elinor Burkett, a feminist liberal in good standing, declared that the Jenners of the world "cannot stake their claim to dignity as transgender people by trampling on mine as a woman. . . . They haven't traveled through the world as women and been shaped by all that this entails." For this, Burkett was decried and slurred as—the horror!—a TERF, or trans-exclusionary radical feminist.

Another charge leveled against Dolezal, formulated by Morehouse College professor Marc Lamont Hill, is that she was guilty of professional fraud. But this fraud argument doesn't hold up, either. Last year, ESPN's *Grantland* website ran an exposé of the inventor of a "miracle putter." The inventor in question, Dr. Essay Anne Vanderbilt, was guilty of faking outlandish biographical details, such as claiming to have worked on the team that designed the stealth bomber. Author Caleb Hannan, however, also revealed that Ms. Vanderbilt was born Stephen Krol. After being pilloried by the transgender community, *Grantland* editor Bill Simmons issued a mea culpa—it was wrong to out Vanderbilt as transgender—and published a guest editorial from Christina Kahrl, a board member of GLAAD (formerly the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) about what *Grantland* had done wrong.

Vanderbilt (who had previously attempted suicide) killed herself before the article was published. Incredibly, Kahrl all but blamed *Grantland* for her death. "One of her responses to the fear of being outed as a transsexual woman to some of the people in her life—when it wasn't even clear the story was ever going to run—was to immediately start talking and thinking about attempting suicide," wrote Kahrl. But how can those who are transgender be allowed to remain opaque about their original identity, especially when it relates to deception in other aspects of their life—if we insist Rachel Dolezal was engaged in an intolerable fraud?

The inconvenient truth is that Dolezal, who attended Howard University and has black relatives (adopted siblings, a former husband, and a son), has more claim to black identity than Jenner does to being female. With globalization and intermarriage, race is more than ever a social construct, in contrast to the biological certainty of Jenner's having fathered children. Yet our left-wing grievance culture remains invested in reaffirming arbitrary and unscientific racial differences as a fashionable mechanism for redistributing political power. It won't admit that when all can declare themselves to be anything, these distinctions become politically meaningless. The story of Rachel Dolezal ought to be the final outing of the fictions that underlie identity politics. In a saner world, we could now turn the page and begin a new and healthier cultural chapter. But don't count on it.

—Mark Hemingway

The Politics of Tedium

Someone throw me off this island.

BY DANIEL HALPER

All the friends money can buy

Roosevelt Island, N.Y.

Reporters milled about, waiting for Hillary Clinton to make her grand entrance. Would she come by boat? Perhaps—small police cruisers bobbed up and down alongside the little island in the East River, with Manhattan on one side and Queens on the other. Maybe she'd parachute in? Less likely, but choppers flew over several times.

In a holding pen at the back of the crowd, the perpetually anxious press corps interacted with numerous Clinton advisers, greasing sources and catching up on each others' personal lives. Karen Finney, who the day before talked on national TV about how unknown the real Hillary Clinton was, gave hugs and politely conversed with members of the media who had been unable to have the same sort of interactions with the candidate herself. John Podesta, the campaign chairman and former White House chief of staff, briefly made the rounds. And various local politicians made themselves available, trying to find their way into the biggest national political story Roosevelt Island had ever been a part of.

In all, 550 media members had requested credentials just to see the perfectly staged and orchestrated event. We did not know exactly how the event, or the ensuing campaign, might unfold. Except, we figured, it would be on a grand scale.

On the main stage, Echosmith played their recent hit, "Cool Kids." *She sees them walking in a straight line, that's not really her style*, the young female singer belted. *They all got the same heartbeat, but hers is falling behind.* The several thousand assembled for Clinton's first public campaign rally of the 2016 presidential contest bopped along under the hot sun.

I wish that I could be like the cool kids cuz all the cool kids, they seem to fit in, the song went on. *I wish that I could be like the cool kids, like the cool kids.*

Eventually, to the great letdown of the more imaginative, Clinton simply walked out. About three hours after the first attendees were admitted, there, toward the H-shaped stage set that mimicked her logo, came the celebrity candidate, slowly glad-handing her way toward the lectern and teleprompter.

The reporters, myself especially, were speculating about the minutiae of the event (how exactly Clinton would come to the island, for instance) because of how predictable we knew the actual speech would be.

It would be a focus-grouped, poll-devised litany of liberal pabulum, meant to appeal at once to the largest sum of voters likely to support her and to specific groups. It would be unfocused in its scope and incredibly small in its prescriptions.

Much like the picture-perfect setting itself, the speech would be carefully planned, with very little room for error.

A large theme would be her family—more precisely, her mother, and not her father or the former president of the United States she calls her husband. "My mother taught me that everybody needs a chance and a champion. She knew what it was like not to have either one," Clinton said. "And, because some people believed in her, she believed in me." And because Hillary Clinton's mother believed in her, she believes she can be president of the United States.

Clinton paid homage to the United Nations building (visible just above her right shoulder), which elicited a decent round of applause. And she praised the two most recent Democratic presidents—her husband, whom she awkwardly avoided simply calling by his first name, and her former boss, Barack Obama.

The assembled crowd was also treated to several references to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, for whom the island we gathered on is named.

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And then came the meat of the speech: "America can't succeed unless you succeed," Clinton said, raising her voice. "That is why I am running for president of the United States. Here, on Roosevelt Island, I believe we have a continuing rendezvous with destiny. Each American and the country we cherish. I'm running to make our economy work for you and for every American." (The crowd waved the little American flags the campaign had handed out as they cheered. Visually, it was a model, made-for-TV rally.)

She portrayed herself as a tough woman and proved it with Obama-like bashing of the opposition. "Republicans twice cut taxes for the wealthiest, borrowed money from other countries to pay for two wars, and family incomes dropped," she said, failing to mention that al Qaeda started the wars and, perhaps more important, that she had authorized them as a junior senator from the state of New York. "I'll fight back against Republican efforts to disempower and disenfranchise young people, poor people, people with disabilities, and people of color," Clinton vowed, failing also to mention that her own adoptive home state—the very blue state of New York—has more restrictive voting laws than many of the Republican-controlled states to which she referred.

As for specific policy proposals, they were few. There was the proposal for an infrastructure bank, as well as for making "preschool and quality childcare available to every child in America." And a promise of respect for teachers, college affordability, "lifelong learning for workers," and "paid sick days" for American workers.

The specificity of a policy proposal perfectly correlated to whether it might be perceived as controversial. That is, the more mundane and widely accepted the idea, the more specific Clinton became.

To wit, there was no promise of peace in our time under a President Hillary Clinton, no plan to defeat and degrade Iran or the Islamic State. Just an oblique promise to "do whatever it takes to keep Americans safe," as though any presidential candidate would dare say otherwise.

In an apparent sop to her ideological adversaries, Clinton even talked about the limits of government power. "Government is never going to have all the answers—but it has to be smarter, simpler, more efficient, and a better partner."

The class warfare littered throughout the speech might have been the most gauche part of the rally. "You see corporations making record profits, with CEOs making record pay, but your paychecks have barely budged," said Clinton, who left the White House "dead broke," in her words, and now, a decade and a half later, has accumulated tens of millions.

Afterwards, the Republican National Committee would estimate Clinton spent half as much time (2 minutes) explaining her foreign policy as she did attacking Republicans (4 minutes). And less than a minute (54 seconds) on her tenure as America's top diplomat.

The speech itself went about 45 minutes. But inside the confines of the press pen, surrounded by a slew of cameras and many more print reporters and producers, it seemed much longer.

Back on stage, Clinton wrapped up her speech and accepted cheers from the audience. She clapped for herself, in between giving thumbs up to the audience and waves to her fans.

Daughter Chelsea Clinton was the first on stage and immediately hugged her mother. Bill Clinton, sporting a red polo shirt and a blazer draped over his left shoulder, gave his wife a short kiss and a long hug. And, finally, as though forgetting she had used her moment in the sun, in front of hundreds of press and thousands of fans, to bash the rich, she gave a quick kiss on the cheek and a hug to her son-in-law Marc Mezvinsky—a hedge fund manager. ♦

Jeb Bush's To-do List

Off to a bumpy start, he can still recover.

BY FRED BARNES

The best moment in Jeb Bush's announcement speech last week wasn't choreographed. As he spoke, a group of protesters rose from their seats. They wore T-shirts with "LEGAL STATUS IS NOT ENOUGH" emblazoned across the front and succeeded in interrupting Bush. The crowd yelled at the protesters as they began to leave the event.

Bush looked up at them and paused before speaking. "The next president," he declared, "will pass meaningful immigration reform, so that will be solved—not by executive order."

There was more to this incident than a show of moxie and a dig at President Obama for overstepping on immigration. A message, offered spontaneously, was packed into Bush's 17 words: He won't change his strategy for winning the Republican presidential nomination, and if elected he'll push for immigration reform.

With his formal declaration of candidacy, Bush's campaign is at a crossroads. He could go negative and harshly attack his two strongest rivals, Florida senator Marco Rubio and Wisconsin governor Scott Walker. Several of his advisers have

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told reporters he will do just that. But that tactic would be uncharacteristic of Bush. It would be a mistake.

A smarter and more positive approach would be to continue the seamless campaign Bush has planned from the beginning. That means stressing the same issues now that he will, assuming he wins the Republican presidential nomination, in the general election. This is contrary to the widely practiced strategy of leaning right to win the nomination, then veering to the center in the general.

It means he will have to talk about immigration and Common Core, issues on which his stands infuriate many conservatives. Ducking them would only make him look weak and irresolute. Bush aides insist he won't hide, though immigration wasn't in his announcement speech and came up only when he responded to the protesters.

But there's one big change Bush has to make and appears to have already begun. That involves his impressive and quite conservative record as governor of Florida from 1998 to 2006. He talks about it in his speeches, but he needs to bring it up in a more compelling context. At the moment, conservatives complain Bush has drifted sharply to the center since he left the governor's office.

Bush has to confront that notion head on. It's killing him with conservatives. Sure, he says how conservative his record was. But audiences show little interest in the subject. Instead, they are more inclined to pepper Bush with questions about immigration and Common Core.

Which leads to this conclusion: Bush must declare that what he did for Florida, he'll do for the entire country. Should he get into specifics—and he'll need to—that will intensify the conservative light in which his record shines.

The editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* captured Bush's record best: "Mr. Bush left his fast-growing state's government relatively smaller and its tax burden lower. He reformed tort laws and eliminated racial preferences. He was in particular a pioneer in education reform, especially school choice. . . . Another Bush asset is his proven ability to attract non-Republican voters. He stepped down as governor with a nearly 60 percent approval rating in a state that Barack Obama carried twice and Bill Clinton once."

Bush kisses his wife Columba with mother Barbara at right, June 15, 2015.

From the cold facts of his record Bush emerges as a bold reformer and advocate of conservative change. Other GOP candidates can match some of Bush's achievements but not all of them—that's what Bush is in a position to argue.

In his announcement, Bush touched on bringing his Florida style to Washington. As governor, he used his "veto power to protect our taxpayers from needless spending," he said. "And if I am elected president, I'll show Congress how that's done."

He suggested his goal of creating nationwide "4 percent growth and the 19 million new jobs that come with it" was realistic because he had done the equivalent of that at the state level.

And Bush bragged about changing the political culture of Tallahassee, Florida's capital, and said he could do the same for Washington. "A self-serving attitude can take hold in any capital," he said. "I was a governor who refused to accept that as the normal or right way of conducting the people's business. . . . We don't need another president who merely holds the top spot among the pampered elites of Washington."

Stressing his gubernatorial record has an additional benefit. It helps differentiate him from his older brother, George W. Bush. The contrast between what Jeb did in Florida and George did as Texas governor and as president is significant. Jeb reformed Medicaid and put in place a school voucher system that was recently copied in Nevada. He cut spending more aggressively, and so on.

Doing this would not amount to repudiation of his brother or, for that matter, his father, George H.W. Bush. But it would buttress Jeb's claim to be "his own man." It's a claim that needs buttressing. And he doesn't need to draw the contrast. That's what surrogates are for.

One more thing. The Bush campaign lacks discipline. There was no reason to reveal the goal of raising $100 million. It cast Bush as a candidate linked closely to the wealthy. And why leak the dubious plan for Bush to attack his top opponents as never before? That served no purpose. Besides, it probably would hurt more than help.

But Bush alone was responsible for his bumpy start as a candidate. "Bush's problem has mainly been one of performance," Molly Ball of the *Atlantic* wrote. His speeches have been uninspiring. His announcement speech, in a college gym in Miami, was a distinct improvement. Best of all was the clash with protesters. More of that and the Bush campaign may soar after all. ♦

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The Bum's Rush

Voters are tilting antiestablishment.

BY LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY

Americans feel—with a good deal of justification—that the political establishment has been serving them poorly for roughly the last quarter-century. Policy has generally been driven by a need to give instant gratification to the 24-hour news cycle at the expense of solving long-term problems. We've run three monetary bubbles, all of which were fun while they lasted; two ended badly, and the establishment is promising the third time is the charm. Abroad we've gone from being the Cold War victors to being in retreat on all fronts; there is no country on the planet where we are more respected today than we were 5 years ago, 10 years ago, or 25 years ago.

The face of the electorate

The political debate is viewed by the electorate as an orgy of finger-pointing; but the public knows the truth: They are all to blame. Our system relies on a "throw the bums out" approach. In a two-party system the punishment for bad governance is to be replaced by the other party. This puts a premium on finger-pointing. But it does not necessarily lead to tackling big issues; the new team has just as much incentive to not risk the public's disfavor as the old team, and the prospect of being booted from office lowers the incentive to follow policies that involve long-term planning and follow-through. So ultimately throwing the bums out doesn't work because both sides are perceived as bums, selfish and venal.

Consider some recent polls. On the Democratic side, Hillary is showing early signs of being in actual trouble. The numerous scandals and her transparent attempts to campaign as something she's not are clearly affecting the public mood. There are now two polls in a row that show Bernie Sanders closing the gap with her in New Hampshire. Her lead has dropped from over 40 points to just 10 or 12. A Morning Consult poll a couple of weeks ago showed her leading by 44-32, and it was dismissed as a fluke. It has now been followed by a Suffolk University poll showing her leading 41-31. Sanders doesn't have to win to destroy Hillary; remember what Eugene McCarthy did to Lyndon Johnson in New Hampshire in 1968 despite having come in only a close second.

Okay, these are polls; not an actual vote, and respondents can tell the pollster what they think will send a signal without consequence. And it is quirky New Hampshire. But it's also Bernie Sanders we are talking about, an avowed socialist who makes Hillary look like a spring chicken. This is a vote against a pillar of the establishment pure and simple. She is from one of America's two ruling families.

And the candidate from the other ruling family is hardly doing better. In the *Real Clear Politics* average of the last five national polls of the Republican cattle show, it's Bush 10.8; Walker 10.6; Rubio 10.0; Carson 9.4; Huckabee 8.6; Paul 8.2; Cruz 7.0. The remainder are scattered (as if the top tier is not). The fact that Jeb Bush is barely in double digits would have been unthinkable six months ago; that six other candidates would be within 4 points of him is virtually surreal.

The establishment as a whole isn't running away with it either. Walker and Rubio are vaguely establishment in their policies, but at least sport something other than ruling-class pedigrees. Combined with Bush they have 31.4 percent. Carson, Huckabee, and Cruz come from the right and have 25 percent. Paul offers a libertarian flavor and, if added to the right, would bring that combined vote up to that of the more establishment candidates. Yes, it's early—but the antiestablishment tone of the Republican electorate is as pronounced as on the Democratic side.

Antiestablishment is not necessarily a coherent solution. Donald Trump, running at 3.6 percent, employs antiestablishment rhetoric, but how can that be credible? Then there is the incumbent, elected by promoting his superficially nonestablishment pedigree (and we're not talking about being editor of the *Harvard Law Review*). He beat lots of ruling-class pillars along the way: first Hillary, then McCain as a follow-through on Bush, and finally a guy who (as Alice Roosevelt Longworth said of Thomas Dewey) looked like the little man on the top of the wedding cake and who epitomized the political and business establishments.

So the electorate has already voted antiestablishment twice, and the resulting governance has not exactly been a roaring success. That is a sign of how deep the anger runs—Barack Obama is not antiestablishment enough. And even if an "establishment" persona is elected, he or she might still feel obligated to bow to the national mood—just look at Hillary's tack to the left. Pandering is not what is wanted or needed even if being pandered to can be fun. And the public knows that superficial changes like race or gender also don't fix the problem. Obama has proven that. The public wants someone of real character. It wants genuine, it wants tough, and it wants a competent problem solver. And the characters who are perceived (rightly or wrongly) as having misgoverned us for a quarter-century will be at a distinct disadvantage. ◆

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Lawrence B. Lindsey's most recent book is What a President Should Know . . . but Most Learn Too Late.

Party On

There are far worse things than partisanship.

BY JAY COST

It has never been easy to be a conservative in "polite" society, but these days it seems to be getting harder. We live in an age when opposition to liberalism is increasingly deemed illegitimate.

A lot of that starts at the apex of the political pyramid—with President Barack Obama. Back in 2008, he promised to be a post-partisan healer, but as we all know, things have not turned out that way. Conservatives continued to oppose liberalism, despite the president's confidence that his winsome personality would bridge this century-old divide. In response, many liberals, beginning with Obama himself, judged that the Republican party has shifted *radically* to the right. The adverb there is important. Radicalism has a long history of illegitimacy in our politics, so the accusation is a serious charge indeed.

The evidence for it is quite thin: Republicans opposing an $800 billion, inefficient, deficit-financed "stimulus" package, a massive new health entitlement/regulatory regime not remotely paid for, and the enshrinement of "too big to fail" in financial regulatory law. It is hard to imagine Dwight Eisenhower going for any of this, and these days he is remembered as the paragon of Republican sensibility (liberals were much less charitable toward him when he was actually in charge).

Then consider climate change. After decades of overwrought jeremiads about an impending environmental apocalypse, liberals now push cap and trade as a solution to the problem of global warming. When conservatives blanch—pointing out that the world hasn't gotten nearly as warm as the alarmists predicted, that a domestic cap and trade program might do little to solve what is supposed to be a global crisis, and that it is a substantial expansion of the traditional scope of government—they are accused of being "antiscience." These days, that charge is even worse than radicalism.

Finally, consider gay marriage. Less than a decade ago, a majority of the country opposed it. After a highly effective campaign, advocates persuaded a critical mass of Americans to change their minds. While opponents of gay marriage find this disconcerting, it is nevertheless how politics is supposed to operate: Two sides make their claims, the public adjudicates, and policy changes accordingly. The trouble is with the next step. Liberals now aver that the only reason some still oppose gay marriage is bigotry toward homosexuals. This despite the fact that, not very long ago, many liberals themselves held the same "bigoted" views. Again, being a bigot in this country leaves you in the same place as being radical or antiscience—on the outside, looking in.

Taken together, this suggests a pattern to *mobilize bias* against conservatives. The idea is to cast conservative ideas and opinions as illegitimate a priori, not even worth the time or consideration of a thoughtful person. The assault comes from so many directions simultaneously that one can't help but feel that the point is to castigate conservatism itself as a function of radicalism, superstition, and bigotry.

This is an unhealthy development for the body politic. Today, we take for granted that principled, robust opposition is the backbone of a well-functioning republic. Yet this is a relatively recent conception in the Western political tradition. It is still a fragile view that must be actively defended against the impulse to squash opposition to one's own firmly held beliefs.

As recently as the 1700s, political parties were viewed with suspicion, for fear that they would smash society into pieces. In Britain, for instance, the persistent worry was that partisanship would devolve into another struggle between Catholics and Protestants, which had already nearly rent the country in two. Even in the early days of our own republic, party politics was considered inherently shabby. Political scientist Richard Hofstadter once called ours a "Constitution against parties"; it divides power so widely that it is virtually impossible for a party to acquire all of it.

Even our earliest party system was unlike what we have today. We're told of the "Democratic-Republican" party founded by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, but this is largely a neologism. They thought of themselves as *Republicans*, which back then was a very powerful term. They conceived of themselves as the party of the whole people, defending the republican tradition against a quasi-monarchical, Federalist cabal. The Republican party, under this view, was a temporary expedient. This helps explain why Jefferson as president took a moderate approach to the Federalists; he believed most of them could be folded into his national

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coalition. Later on, presidents Madison and James Monroe were lax party managers, as partisan organization, for them, was not to be a permanent feature of American government.

One reason the Framers were hesitant to embrace partisanship was the forceful implication of early modern thought. This was only a century after Isaac Newton's *Principia*, and many believed that reason could elucidate the proper principles of republican government just as it had discovered the laws of physics. We get a taste of that in the Declaration of Independence, where the liberty and equality of man are held to be "self-evident." The Jeffersonian Republicans thought that the rightness of their party program was similarly self-evident, and that Federalism was based on a combination of patronage and an indefensible prejudice for monarchism.

In our country, the battle between the Whigs and the Democrats was really the first instance of party competition as we know it today. It did not begin in earnest until the 1830s, almost a half-century after the Declaration. These were two coalitions formed on competing principles and in it for the long haul. In this way, they harked back to Edmund Burke, the first great apologist for modern partisanship.

In *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* (1770), Burke defined a party as "a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed." There is a subtle, yet enormously influential concept embedded in this characterization. Parties, in Burke's view, are formed on *particular* conceptions of the *national* interest. Contrary to many of his contemporaries, Burke explicitly disclaimed the capacity of abstract reason to delineate universal moral or political principles. From this vantage point, competition among opposing principles is essential to good government. The alternative is shutting down debate, which leads inevitably to corruption. As Burke put it, "Such a generous contention for power, on such manly and honourable maxims, will easily be distinguished from the mean and interested struggle for place and emolument."

Burke's views have become commonplace among contemporary democratic theorists. As American political scientist E. E. Schattschneider wrote in the mid-20th century, "the political parties created democracy and . . . modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of the parties. As a matter of fact, the condition of the parties is the best possible evidence of the nature of any regime." Implicitly, Schattschneider was endorsing Burke's view of parties.

This casts the left's efforts to mobilize bias against conservatives in a very unfavorable light. Early modern republicans might have thought that good government depends on proper reasoning from first principles, but today we know better. It depends on an open, robust combat between groups with different, irreconcilable views of the national interest.

That does not mean we can disagree willy-nilly, of course; we all must accept the basic rules of the game. It is impermissible, for instance, to suppose that a recently elected government has the authority to suspend all subsequent elections. But the left is looking to impose restrictions that would significantly constrain disagreement. Opposition to unprecedented deficit spending, traditional Christian views on marriage, and suspicion of a massive new regulatory/redistributive energy regime—a healthy republic should not cast such opinions as illegitimate. That is not to say they should be accepted; just that those who hold them should be welcome in the debate, free to make their case as best they can.

It is often said that contemporary liberalism has become postmodern. One might say that the party system is postmodern, too. It is premised on the idea that reason alone cannot delineate the proper role and function of government. Different people will inevitably hold different views, so ultimately good government depends on principled opposition to big, competing ideas. Thus, liberals who dismiss their conservative opponents as superstitious bigots should be a little bit more . . . liberal. ♦

France's First Family of Jihad

Meet the Merah-Essids.

BY JOHN ROSENTHAL

"Oh, you Jews! Allah has permitted us to kill your brothers on French soil and here on the soil of the Islamic State." So says the speaker in an Islamic State video released in March, which allegedly shows a Palestinian Mossad agent being shot dead by a child executioner. Standing next to the boy and behind the kneeling detainee, the man, whose face is uncovered, speaks French with the cadence of the *banlieues*, France's troubled urban slums that have proved fertile recruiting grounds for the Islamic State and other jihadist groups. He has been identified as none other than Sabri Essid, the "half-brother" of the infamous Jewish school killer, Mohammed Merah.

In 2012, the 23-year-old Merah, a wannabe jihadist who had made exploratory visits to Afghanistan and Pakistan, went on a killing spree in and around his hometown of Toulouse. He killed three French paratroopers in two separate incidents on March 11 and 15, gravely wounding a fourth. Merah made clear he considered the killings retaliation for the participation of French troops in NATO operations in Afghanistan. Then, on March 19, he pulled up in front of the Ozar Hatorah school on his signature TMAX motor scooter and proceeded to shoot dead three children, aged 3 to 8, and a teacher. Merah himself would be killed in a shootout with French police three days later.

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It was at the burial of Merah one week after his death that Sabri Essid identified himself to a French journalist as Merah's "half-brother." In fact, they were stepbrothers. According to French press reports, in the summer of 2011, Essid's father, Mohamed, married Merah's mother, Zoulikha, in a religious ceremony. As far as Islamic law is concerned, Merah thus became Mohamed Essid's stepson.

In the Islamic State execution video, Sabri Essid can be seen placing a paternal hand on the child executioner's shoulder while praising the "young lions of the caliphate" (all translations from French by the author). The intimacy of the gesture is not feigned: That boy is Essid's own stepson, Rayan. The 12-year-old was recognized by former classmates from the elementary school he attended in Toulouse.

From the IS video: Essid, right, and stepson Rayan

When he left France for Syria in March 2014, Essid reportedly took his entire family with him: his wife Leila, Rayan, her son from a previous marriage, and three children of their own. The youngest was just 6 months old. Sabri's younger brother Walid also went along for good measure.

Essid's departure caused particular consternation in France, since he was well-known to French security services—and not only on account of his relationship to Merah. Already in December 2006, Essid had been detained by Syrian authorities in what has been described as an al Qaeda safe house along the Syrian-Iraqi border. He was captured in the company of a French Muslim convert by the name of Thomas "Abdelhakim" Barnouin. Repatriated to France in February 2007, the two men were arrested immediately upon their arrival at Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris.

Judicial investigations identified Essid and Barnouin as members of what has come to be known as the "Toulouse group," a network specializing in the recruitment and dispatch of jihadists to fight American and allied forces in Iraq. Both men would be found guilty of forming part of a terrorist enterprise and sentenced to prison terms. In the meantime, Barnouin is also reported to have left France for Syria.

The spiritual guide of the Merah-Essid clan is said to be a reclusive Syrian immigrant who goes by the name of Olivier Corel. Born Abdulilah Qorel some 68 years ago, Corel lives in the rustic village of Artigat, 55 miles south of Toulouse, where Mohammed Merah and other members of the family are known to have visited him. Corel was arrested in connection with the Toulouse group investigations, but charges against him were eventually dropped. Last November, he was again arrested, this time in connection with investigations into possible accomplices of Merah.

Sabri Essid is not the only prominent member of the clan to have left France to join the Syrian jihad. Just two months after Essid's departure, it was Souad Merah's turn to go. In May 2014, French interior minister Bernard Cazeneuve revealed that Souad, Mohammed's older sister, had flown to Gaziantep, Turkey, and was presumed to have traveled from there to jihadist-controlled territory in northern Syria. At just some 30 miles from the Syrian border, Gaziantep is a

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frequent stop for European jihadists on their way to Syria.

Like Essid, Souad left France with her four children in tow, the youngest being 9 months old. In Syria, she is believed to have reunited with Abdelwahed El Baghdadi, her husband under Islamic law and the father of her two youngest children.

Also like Essid, Souad Merah was well-known to French security services for her radicalism—so much so that she was under electronic surveillance at the time of her departure. Along with brother Abdelkader, she is believed to have been a major influence in the radicalization of Mohammed Merah. Abdelkader ("Kader" for short) is currently under arrest pending charges. He is suspected of having aided and abetted Mohammed Merah in preparing his attacks.

In recordings made public in November 2012, Souad Merah declares that she is proud of her brother Mohammed and thinks highly of Osama bin Laden. Denouncing the "injustices" committed by "the Jews and the Americans," Souad praises Salafists—adherents of the radical Islamic current of which both the Islamic State and al Qaeda form part—for taking action while others merely talk. Referring to herself (in the third person) and other members of the clan, Souad excitedly continues, "Sabri, Mohammed, Kader, Souad, all of us—and they [the French security services] know very well who we are—we support the mujahedeen. We don't hide it. . . . Mohammed took action. . . . He took the next step. . . . I am proud. I am proud. Yeah, I am proud!"

Souad's words were secretly recorded by another of her brothers, Abdelghani. The anti-Islamist "black sheep" of the family, Abdelghani has said he made the recordings to dissociate himself from the other Merahs and expose the antisemitism in which Mohammed was "immersed" from childhood. His own relationship with a woman of Jewish origin (now his wife) was, he says, such a profound source of discord in the family that, during an argument about it in 2003, Kader stabbed him seven times, nearly killing him. According to Abdelghani, guests at a memorial service held at his mother's home a few days after Mohammed Merah's death broke into ululations of joy and, rather than offering condolences, congratulated his mother on her son's actions.

Whereas Essid emerged in the March video as an Islamic State spokesperson, the Syrian adventure of Souad and her immediate family appears to have gone less smoothly. In September 2014, her husband Abdelwahed returned to France via Turkey with two other French Syria recruits, including Imad Jebali, a boyhood friend of Mohammed Merah and convicted alumnus of the Toulouse group. Souad's lawyer, Christian Etelin, claims that the three men ran afoul of the Islamic State and were imprisoned before they somehow managed to escape and flee across the Turkish border. "They're just happy to be alive," Etelin told France's Europe1 radio. "They really thought that they were going to be executed."

The trio of jihadists had apparently arranged to turn themselves in upon their arrival in France. Indeed, the arrest was such a done deal that France's ministry of the interior announced it shortly after a flight from Istanbul touched down at Orly airport outside of Paris around noon on September 23. The only problem was that Abdelwahed and his companions were not on the plane. Instead, they were on another flight en route to Marseille, where later that afternoon they passed through customs untouched. "Even we were amazed," Jebali told the French media. Unexpectedly finding themselves free men, the trio rented a car at the airport and drove off. The next day, they pulled up in front of a closed gendarmerie station, notified the authorities of their presence, and patiently waited for the police to come get them.

As for Souad herself, her stay in Syria appears to have been cut short by matters of the heart. According to France's iTélé news channel, upon getting to Syria she discovered that Abdelwahed had taken another wife, prompting her to gather up her children again and leave for her parents' native Algeria. According to the latest reports, Souad and her two youngest children are still living there today. Her two oldest children returned to France the same day as Abdelwahed.

"Oh, you Jews! Allah has permitted us to kill your brothers on French soil." In hearing Sabri Essid's words, one cannot but think of the crimes of his "half-brother" Mohammed Merah. But the immediate reference is undoubtedly to the four persons killed at the kosher supermarket at Paris's Porte de Vincennes in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack this past January. Amedy Coulibaly, the perpetrator of the Porte de Vincennes killings, was himself killed when police raided the store. In a video posted on the web posthumously, Coulibaly pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the "caliph" of the Islamic State. His wife under Islamic law, Hayat Boumeddiene, is reported to have fled France for Islamic State territory.

Essid's remark is particularly significant in light of reports in some Western media that call into question the antisemitic character of the Porte de Vincennes killings, suggesting that Coulibaly took refuge in the kosher market merely "by accident" and without any specific intention of targeting Jews. He was at the time wanted by the police in connection with the murder of a French policewoman the previous day.

But Sabri Essid and his fellow jihadists of the Islamic State clearly have no doubt about the antisemitic character of the killings; nor does their discourse allow any doubt about the centrality of antisemitism to their ideology more generally. Still addressing "the Jews" in the March execution video and referring to Jerusalem by the Arabic expression *Bayt Al-Maqdis*, Essid continued, "Soon you will see the army of the caliphate attacking your land and your fortresses, and it will liberate *Bayt Al-Maqdis* from your impurity, Allah willing. . . . Oh, Jews! Those who gave you *Bayt Al-Maqdis* said the crusades are over. But today we say to you that the Islamic conquests have just begun, and the Jews tremble, because the promise is near." ♦

Follow the Money

Oregon makes assisted suicide a public priority.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

The United States is slowly becoming pro-suicide. No, not all suicides. No one favors troubled teens or healthy adults killing themselves. But our society can no longer be described as unequivocally antisuicide.

Look at the celebration of the late Brittany Maynard, who received the full celebrity treatment—including being named by CNN as one of the most extraordinary people of 2014—*because* she committed suicide after being diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. Indeed, the emotionalism generated by Maynard's death—orchestrated by the assisted suicide advocacy organization Compassion and Choices (once known, more honestly, as the Hemlock Society)—sparked legalization proposals in half the country. That campaign mostly failed but may have borne poisonous fruit in California, where the state senate two weeks ago passed a legalization bill.

Lauren Hill

Compare all the cheering over Maynard's manner of death with the sharply contrasting mild coverage of Lauren Hill, who had the same disease but eschewed suicide in favor of hospice, striving to overcome her illness to play college basketball, and raising money to fight cancer. It is disturbing but true: Maynard was far more celebrated for pushing "death with dignity" than was Hill, who promoted life with dignity.

The recent experiences and current policies of Oregon, the second government jurisdiction in the world to explicitly legalize physician-assisted suicide (behind Switzerland, which does not require doctor participation), also illuminate our slouch toward a pro-suicide culture. Perhaps partly as a consequence of legalization, Oregon has the second-worst suicide rate in the country, 41 percent higher than the national average, with the frequency increasing steadily since 2000. Even that unhappy number doesn't tell the full tale. Because the law does not consider assisted suicide to be "suicide," Oregon's toll excludes the 859 people who are known to have killed themselves using lethal drugs prescribed by a doctor between 1998 and 2014.

A government's priorities dictate its spending choices. Oregon uses federal and state money for youth suicide prevention. But even though one in five suicides in Oregon occurs among "older adults," the anti-assisted-suicide Physicians for Compassionate Care found that the Oregon Health Authority does not fund adult suicide prevention services. As an OHA bureaucrat responded when answering an inquiry from a state legislator, "Staff resources to work on older adult suicide development have not been developed in OHA."

In contrast, Oregon *does* fund assisted suicides under Medicaid, using state funds (federal Medicaid dollars cannot legally pay for assisted suicide). So Oregon taxpayers pay the costs of terminally ill adults seeking death, but no state funds are dispensed to prevent adults from killing themselves.

Not only that, but Medicaid is explicitly rationed under Oregon law. As one example, some poor patients with late-stage cancer are denied life-extending (as opposed to curative) chemotherapies, but assisted suicide is never rationed. Indeed, readers might recall that Barbara Wagner and Randy Stroup—two terminally ill cancer patients—were denied Medicaid coverage for chemotherapy in 2008, but told in their rejection letters that the state *would* fund their suicides.

Regulators are so in the tank for assisted suicide that the OHA has explicitly stated that doctor-prescribed death would always be subsidized for the poor. The announcement read:

> It is the intent of the Commission that services under [the Oregon Death with Dignity Act] be covered for those that wish to avail themselves to those services. Such services include but are not limited to attending physician visits, consulting physician confirmation, mental health evaluation and counseling, and prescription medications.

No poor Oregonian will ever be rationed out of assisted suicide—after all, what "end of life treatment" could be more cost effective? The message is unequivocal: The state will always pay the tab of the poor wanting to kill themselves, but will not necessarily pay for their fight to remain alive.

Apologists for assisted suicide claim that none of this matters because people have to be terminally ill to qualify for doctor-hastened death in Oregon. But suicide is suicide. And we've all known people with a terminal diagnosis who didn't actually die as expected. The famous humorist Art Buchwald is a case in point. He entered hospice diagnosed with less than six months to live from kidney failure. Not only did he not die when predicted, but he left the program and wrote his final book before finally succumbing.

Asked about Oregon's funding priorities, oncologist Dr. Kenneth Stevens, president of Physicians for Compassionate Care, lamented, "You would think with the concern about the state's high geriatric suicide rate and the similar crisis among military veterans, the state would fund suicide prevention for adults and the elderly."

That would be true in an antisuicide culture. But that isn't Oregon. By following the money, we can see what the state cares most about: facilitating some—rather than preventing all—adult suicides. ◆

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Pension Armageddon

Can California voters avoid it? BY STEPHEN EIDE

Not all Californians believe that drought is the greatest threat to their state's future. Early this month, a bipartisan group of current and former local officials filed the "Voter Empowerment Act of 2016," a statewide ballot measure aimed at reforming the politics of public pensions. Its passage would forbid politicians in California from lavishing expensive retirement benefits on workers without explicit voter approval.

The effort is being led by Carl DeMaio, a Republican former member of the San Diego city council, and Chuck Reed, a Democrat and former mayor of San Jose. If they prevail, the effects will be felt nationwide. A yes vote in this deep blue labor stronghold will strengthen the hand of reformers in other pension-plagued states, such as Illinois and New Jersey.

California's pension struggles first gained national notoriety between 2009 and 2012. The financial crisis sent pension funds into steep decline, and the broader economic slump hammered public revenues from income, property, and sales taxes. Thus, short on cash with which to backfill their rapidly expanding pension deficits, the state government and all manner of municipalities were forced to slash services and raise tax rates.

Today, the main pension plans for state workers and teachers in California are about $190 billion short of what workers have been promised in benefits, despite the Dow Jones Industrial Average having nearly tripled in value since its March 2009 nadir. Not coincidentally, state and local governments' recovery continues to trail that of corporations. The number of private sector jobs in California surpassed its pre-recession high in November 2013 and has kept climbing since. Local government employment, by contrast, is still down by about 90,000. This reduction in municipal workforces should not be seen as "right-sizing." The cost of government has not declined, nor have continuing budget imbalances made cities, counties, and school districts any more efficient. Rising pension expenditures have left taxpayers in the position of having to, in effect, pay more for past government services while getting less and less in the way of current services.

And there's the problem: anti-reformer in San Diego, 2004.

The problem is as much legal and political as it is fiscal. Fifty-five percent of government workers in California are union members, the sixth-highest share among the 50 states. Pensions have become a cornerstone of the "new Tammany Hall" arrangement, whereby elected officials boost workers' pay and benefits in exchange for union assistance at the ballot box. No other special interest comes close to matching the resources possessed and deployed by labor in California, especially at the local level.

Even on the rare occasions when political support develops to challenge the unions on pensions, legal barriers thwart reform. The so-called California Rule is a state constitutional doctrine that prevents modifying current public employees' pension benefits: Whereas private corporations routinely "freeze" their defined-benefit pension plans—workers keep everything they've earned so far, but future accruals come in the form of 401(k)-style defined-contribution plans—this is effectively prohibited for state and local workers in California.

The pension reform game is rigged. As DeMaio explains, "I've always likened this to a baseball game. Reformers are one team and the government-union bosses are another team. And the reformers are out there on the field, doing practices, building support amongst the public. The unions aren't doing any of this, . . . they're sitting behind the dugout writing the rule book with the umpires."

In 2012, Reed and DeMaio led local pension initiatives that won with 69 percent and 66 percent of the vote, respectively. Their 2016 approach draws heavily on those experiences, as well as Reed's abortive attempt to put a statewide proposition on the 2014 ballot. He was stymied by Kamala Harris, the state's pro-labor attorney general, whose office is responsible for the language of all state ballot measures. Reed accused Harris of using "false and misleading words and phrases which advocate for the measure's defeat . . . and create prejudice against the measure, rather than merely informing voters of its chief purposes and point." This time around, Reed and DeMaio believe they have designed a measure that will prove legally viable, appealing to voters, and effective as policy,

AP / LENNY IGNELZI

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and they've launched their effort early in the election cycle to allow plenty of time for potential litigation over an unfavorable ruling on the language.

Most debates about pension reform center on benefits, but Reed and DeMaio's proposal is focused on process. Should California municipalities continue to offer six-figure pensions to retired firefighters, they are free to do so, but the public must approve. Under the terms of the initiative, as of 2019, governments would be required to reauthorize their current defined-benefit system for new employees via a popular vote.

Marcia Fritz, a Democrat and the president of the California Foundation for Fiscal Responsibility, calls the voter approval requirement "profound, because it's going to require elected officials to justify to their constituents why they feel their employees absolutely have to have these pension benefits in order to attract and retain qualified workers. . . . [B]efore, they never had to do that."

Defined-benefit and defined-contribution plans differ mainly in that the latter entail no debt commitment on the part of the employer. In California, public pensions are financed by a combination of government and employee contributions and investment return. But they are ultimately backed by the taxpayers, who guarantee retirees a certain fixed percentage of their final salary throughout their golden years, irrespective of the stock market's vicissitudes.

California law requires voter approval for the issuance of government bonds, but not for retirement benefit debt. The consequences have been predictable. According to a 2013 study by the California Policy Center, when state and local retirement-benefit debt in California is calculated using conservative accounting assumptions, the sum exceeds what governments owe for bonds and other credit market obligations.

In the early 2000s, a wave of benefit enhancements swept California. Cities, counties, and public agencies sought to imitate SB 400, state legislation that boosted pensions for California's Highway Patrol from 2 percent of salary for each year of employment at age 50 to 3 percent (i.e., a $75,000 annual pension, instead of $50,000, for a 50-year-old worker with 25 years of experience making $100,000). SB 400 was enacted in 1999, at the height of the dot-com bubble, when pension systems were flush. But by the time local politicians got around to their knock-off versions, the bubble had burst and systems had dropped into deficit. Undeterred, local politicians went around piling on new debt (their pension systems lacked adequate assets to fund the more generous benefits) without even the pretense of public approval.

From a fiscal management standpoint, what's vexing about public pension debt is not simply its magnitude but the volatility of the cost of servicing it. Over the last decade, San Jose's pension expenditures have grown at a rate approximately 14 times the rate at which local revenues have grown. "Crowding out" is the phrase Reed, DeMaio, and other reformers use to describe the effect on services when escalating pension costs consume ever-increasing portions of government budgets.

In 2012, President Obama won California with 60 percent of the vote. The fate of the Reed-DeMaio initiative is thus in the hands of former Obama voters, and the crowd-out message is targeted at them. Liberals believe that it's appropriate for government to expand as the economy contracts. But crowd-out is most pronounced during downturns. Between 2008 and 2012, California local governments saw pension costs increase 17 percent, while spending on libraries and parks declined and public safety spending was flat.

Despite record-low borrowing rates and widespread calls to upgrade our nation's infrastructure, levels of capital debt issuance by state and local governments have actually declined in recent years. If California cities could devote what they now spend on pension debt to basic street and sidewalk maintenance, some cities could eliminate all or most of their infrastructure liability within a few years.

Three California cities—Vallejo, Stockton, and San Bernardino—recently went bankrupt over pension debt. But local officials made practically no use of bankruptcy's extraordinary debt-adjustment authority to restructure their pension obligations. The problem with the bankruptcy process, as former Vallejo vice mayor Stephanie Gomes learned firsthand, is that federal courts are no match for unions' political influence. "When we had a chance, in the court, with the judge, to renegotiate, [the majority on the city council] chose instead to give raises and free health care." A Democrat, Gomes supports the Reed and DeMaio approach of giving voters veto power over retirement benefits because "it's been proven: We cannot trust local politicians to rein in these costs."

Though more promising than bankruptcy and the union-dominated legislative process, pension reform via ballot measure is not ideal. It's enormously expensive to campaign competitively in a state whose population will soon reach 40 million. The 2012 election cycle saw two high-profile initiatives: Proposition 30, an income tax hike for education, and Proposition 32, which sought to ban unions from using payroll-deducted dues for political purposes. In each case, opponents and proponents combined spent over $100 million. The only two reliable sources of major funding for ballot measures are wealthy individuals and unions. Thus far, no public-spirited patron has stepped forward to bankroll Reed and DeMaio, despite constant claims that pension reform is a plot of the 1 percent to drive teachers and cops into poverty in their old age. Reed and DeMaio assume unions will outspend them by at least 5:1.

They are nonetheless confident of victory, pointing to public opinion and to their record of hometown wins on the issue. A February poll by the Reason Foundation found evidence that, nationwide, only a minority supports the status quo on public pensions. Establishment Republicans fear that Reed and DeMaio will provoke heavy labor turnout in the 2016 cycle.

Not that anyone expects California to go Republican in the presidential vote, but there will likely be state tax hikes on the ballot, which unions tend to support. However, a May poll showed that, for the most part, Californians "agree that pension reform should come before the consideration of any tax increases."

Crises may create the political opportunity for reform, but it's another question whether bad times or good times produce more effective policy-making. As documented by the National Conference of State Legislatures, virtually every state passed some sort of pension reform after the global financial market's near-death experience in 2008. And yet, though we are now six years on from the Great Recession's official end, crowd-out remains pervasive across the state and local landscape, and many continue to raise questions about the threat that pension debt poses to government finances. An April poll of municipal bond analysts by Janney Montgomery Scott ranked public pensions as "by far the most important issue facing the municipal bond market right now." Last month, Moody's Investor Service downgraded Chicago to junk over "expected growth in the city's highly elevated unfunded pension liabilities," and the credit quality of Illinois and New Jersey is similarly fragile.

California's bond rating is currently on an upswing, and the ruling elite is highly complacent about the state's fiscal condition. But lawmakers' reluctance to improve on their past halfhearted pension reform efforts has created an opportunity for Reed and DeMaio to seize the issue and put forth a proposal that might yield a long-term solution to the pension dilemma.

DeMaio likens his proposal to Proposition 13, the 1978 landmark measure that, within 10 years of being overwhelmingly approved by Californians, had inspired over half the states to impose similar limits on property taxes. "Prop 13," he says, "sent a national message. I believe we will see the same happen when we're successful on pension reform." ♦

The Bears and the People

Can't we just get along?

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

It was after midnight when my dog, Woodrow, sounded the alarm. I knew right away that this was not the usual fox or raccoon or, mercifully, the occasional skunk that we've become accustomed to dealing with. Woodrow barks at them, too, but in a more gentlemanly way.

I shined my light on the apple tree where a bear was looking for a bird feeder that sometimes hangs there. It was a big bear. Better than 300 pounds,

Snack-scavenging in suburban Connecticut

I guessed. Closer to 400. The bear was on its hind legs, bending and about to break a very strong, thick branch where the empty feeder was hanging. The branch could have been a twig. A few years back, my neighbor hung his bird feeder on a very stylish wrought iron stanchion, which a bear bent into the shape of a horseshoe to get at a handful of black oil sunflower seeds.

The bear at the apple tree was looking back at me. In my imagination, anyway, it looked as though it was concentrating and trying to come to a decision on something important. It had been a long winter and food was scarce. But were a few sunflower seeds worth the aggravation? With all that infernal barking, someone might call the cops, who would come out shooting first and asking questions later.

After a couple of minutes, the bear eased up on the branch and drifted back into the darkness that matched its pelt, probably thinking it wasn't worth the risk.

Or was I just anthropomorphizing?

Well, when I talked to Vermont's bear expert, Forrest Hammond, a couple of days later, he saw it my way. Sort of.

There have been a number of bear encounters this spring, some of them in what you would consider unlikely places. For instance, a 200-pound bear was recently tranquilized and captured in Yonkers, New York. Then there was a bear in Connecticut that went after a couple of joggers in a park. It was a small bear, perhaps 120 pounds, but big enough and aggressive enough that one of the joggers said later, "I almost blacked out. . . . I was so scared, I thought I was gonna die." That bear was killed. And then, in North Adams, Massachusetts, a man spotted a bear in the vicinity of a school, armed himself with a hatchet, and ran the bear off. "He'd had a few too many to drink," the local police chief said.

None of those bear episodes ended badly. Not for the humans, at any rate. But last year, in New Jersey, a black bear chased down a hiker, then mauled, killed, and partially devoured him. The hiker had actually used his smartphone to photograph the bear, just before the attack.

One reason for the increase in the number of bear encounters is

AP / THE REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN / STEVEN VALENTI

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self-evident. "There are more bears," Hammond told me. "It is estimated that there are around a million black bears in North America"—leading, he said, to "maybe 100,000 close encounters every year."

Two or three of which will, like that one in New Jersey, end up with the bear killing a human. Many more bears, of course, will be killed by wildlife officials who are getting rid of "nuisance bears." In Vermont, Hammond says, "We don't try to 'relocate' bears." Once a bear has lost its fear of humans, he said, there is no reprogramming the animal.

But most Vermont bears *do* fear humans, because they have good reason to. From the first of September until late in November, bears are legal game in Vermont. The state counts on hunters to kill enough bears, every year, to keep the statewide population somewhere between 4,500 and 6,000.

I've had my chances. I watched a bear eating beech nuts for over an hour one bright, cold opening day of deer season. It would have been an easy shot, less than 100 yards, but I didn't have any reason to take it. On another occasion, I was perched in the low branches of a dead oak during archery season when a bear walked below me, moving slowly, testing the air, so close that I almost believed I could smell the animal and wondered why it didn't make my scent. But it just walked on and I stayed in the tree, trembling slightly and tasting copper.

Those bears, of course, had good reason to fear me. There were a lot of other hunters in the woods on those days, and many of them would have taken those shots and killed those bears. And the bears, through some primitive mechanism in their biology, *knew* this. I'm convinced of it.

Many of the "nuisance bears" that are killed in Vermont have come here from Connecticut. The fish and game people can identify them by the bright red ear tags put on the animals by the wildlife biologists in Connecticut, where it is not legal to hunt bears and where they are, understandably, less wary than in Vermont.

So the bears that have been captured, tagged, and released in Connecticut have no reason to fear humans—or anything short of cars and trucks if, indeed, they fear those. So in Connecticut there are more bears, in more places where they haven't been seen before, including the grounds of a country club in Greenwich.

Bears are not especially territorial. They are, in fact, almost nomadic. So some of these unwary, ear-tagged bears from Connecticut wander from the golf course and show up in Vermont, where many of them become nuisance bears. And are shot. This seems somehow unfair, and I blame Connecticut.

I don't especially mind the occasional bear in my back yard. I suppose I would call it in if the bear made a habit of it. But we take the feeders down when the bears emerge from semi-hibernation in the spring. We keep the garbage in tight containers and behind walls. We take the other obvious precautions. But I don't want to just play passive defense. This has to be a matter of mutual respect.

Bears are wild, gloriously so, and relations between bears and humans should be based, at least in part, on . . . fear.

The state of Connecticut needs to open a hunting season on its bears. It would be doing the bears a favor. ♦

The Game of Life

It's not a lottery.

BY JEFF BERGNER

President Obama recently referred to the wealthy as "society's lottery winners." This clever little locution contains a world of radical implications, none of them good.

The phrase is, of course, the counterpart of another view Obama frequently espouses, namely, that the poor are not responsible for their poverty or even their behavior. Poverty and antisocial behavior can't be the result of freely chosen actions: One cannot build a cult of victimhood on the soil of personal responsibility.

Now the rich are also implicated. No one is responsible for anything. The rich did not fairly earn—and thus do not deserve—their riches any more than the poor deserve their poverty. Society is a crapshoot in which some win and others lose, without regard to personal merit. Responsibility and merit are altogether absent from the blind natural forces that churn out winners and losers in life's lottery.

We might begin by noting that President Obama's view of life as a lottery stands in opposition to the teachings of virtually every major religion. Every theology with an afterlife—from salvation and damnation to reincarnation—attaches some degree of personal merit to one's fate. Even the harshly consistent doctrine of Calvinist predestination does so for most people; we all deserve damnation and only God's freely given mercy exempts some from the fate of the damned. If the elect are the afterlife's lottery winners, the rest of us deserve what we have coming.

Obama's lottery doctrine also stands in direct opposition to virtually every legal system in the world. All legal systems, including our own, are founded on the notion of personal responsibility. There are exceptions and accommodations, of course, for accidental events, for youth, and for (permanent or temporary) insanity. But they are rare.

In taking on every major

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theological and legal system in the world, the president has chewed off quite a bit. It makes redefining the millennia-old definition of marriage look like child's play. What are we to make of this?

Obama's view taps into a long-running argument between free will and determinism and an even-longer-running argument about the role of fortune in human affairs. Are we the masters of our own fate, at least to a degree, or are our actions a strict consequence of all that has occurred up to the present moment? Are we buffeted about by forces beyond our control? If we are not responsible for our lives and our successes and failures, what right do we have to our lives or to the fruits of our endeavors?

Fair-minded successful people would acknowledge that success depends in some measure on good fortune. Whether one is born of successful, intelligent parents is not the result of personal merit. Whether one unthinkingly took a job at the newly formed Google or at a now-failed start-up down the street makes a difference. So does whether one gets a break from good timing, a lucky product placement, or the intrinsic scalability of one's business.

But success never depends upon good fortune alone. Even the lottery winner had to buy a ticket. And for everyone else success depends in good measure on much more: sound judgment, a willingness to take risks, and above all hard work. It has frequently been noted that people who benefit from happy breaks have often put themselves in a position to do so. Real-world success almost never bears a resemblance to winning a lottery.

Further proof of this is that good fortune is not a sufficient condition for success. Many who enjoy good fortune squander their lives. Good fortune is not even a necessary condition for success; there are many instances of successful people who grew up in the least promising of circumstances. Think Ben Carson.

Perhaps the fairest conclusion is that the world is a very complex place in which personal qualities like skill and hard work mix in surprising ways with good fortune. But there is nothing politically useful about such a nuanced view; nor are such truths likely to motivate people. Political success depends upon a simpler narrative.

Here are two relatively simple political narratives. The first is founded on the traditional American idea of rights that are held naturally by all people; it is that personal responsibility is important, indeed vital to one's success in life. Thus, we should not place burdens or obstacles in the way of anyone who seeks to employ his or her talents to work hard to achieve success.

The other—with which liberals would like to replace the narrative of personal responsibility—is that no one, neither rich nor poor, deserves what they have. Accomplishment is arbitrary, not merited or earned. "You didn't build that." Some people win and others lose in life's lottery. That's all that can be said.

If politics requires simplification, which is the better of these two narratives? Without a doubt, the narrative of personal responsibility. Broad acceptance of this narrative always produces the best results. This narrative vindicates the argument that people should take responsibility to better themselves. It gives force to the notion that people's choices make a difference; that people are their own masters, which is to say that they possess dignity as human beings; that individuals are not simply cogs in a vast social machine, whose political masters control everyone. And it provides a moral basis for society: Forethought, risk, and hard work benefit those who employ these virtues and are thus entitled to the fruits of these virtues. These virtues also usually benefit the broader society.

The narrative that life is a lottery admittedly offers an obvious political program. It contains a clear notion of good, defined as equalizing the outcomes of life's lottery. But where has this ever produced good results? Where has government ever—without depending on the personal responsibility of its intended beneficiaries—created successful citizens? Where have its programs ever advanced the dignity of the people it claims to serve? Where has it ever fostered innovation, risk-taking, and hard work that benefits society or even the recipients themselves? And where has it ever produced a genuine moral basis on which to maintain a political order?

Not so subtly hidden within the phrase "society's lottery winners" is the urge to exercise arbitrary and sweeping political power. The aim is to replace the traditional basis of political rights with a different view of justice altogether. Justice becomes whatever the political rulers say it is. If the rulers say that the top 10 percent of earners paying 70 percent of federal income taxes is not enough, then it is not enough.

What would be enough? Liberals can never seem to answer this question, except to say "more than what is done right now." Why? Because there are no natural bounds to liberal activism. The list of what liberals want to bestow on other people constantly grows. Liberalism is an unhappy machine that, left to its own devices, will double down on itself until government collapses of its own weight.

One can only hope that the narrative of life as a lottery is uprooted before it spreads further in American society. ◆

THOMAS FLUHARTY

The Hillary Paradox

Pity the woman's admirers

By Andrew Ferguson

When news broke this spring about Bill and Hillary Clinton's appetite for other people's money and their indifference to other people's rules, I was rereading my way through a shelf of old Hillary biographies. My memory thus was doubly stimulated. In the fresh revelations, as in the books, the traits of the Clintons were spread out for a new generation to marvel at: the furtiveness, the shifting accounts of hazy events, the parsing of language, the bald and unnecessary denial of often trivial facts (did she have two phones or one?). Her admirers, old and young, veteran and novice alike, were faced with the Hillary Paradox.

The paradox is a problem only for her admirers, and as it happens I read only books about the Clintons that are written by their admirers, on the general principle that you can learn more about someone from his friends than from his enemies. Besides, with a few notable exceptions—most recently, Peter Schweizer's *Clinton Cash* and Daniel Halper's *Clinton, Inc.*—books written by skeptics and detractors are almost psychotically hostile to Mrs. Clinton. I don't need any encouragement.

The Hillary Paradox consists of two perceptions that are irreconcilable. The first is that Hillary Clinton is a person of uncommon decency, compassionate and deeply committed to justice. The second is that many of her actions over many years are the work of a person who couldn't possibly be uncommonly decent. How could someone with a wonderful reputation so often behave disreputably?

Of all the biographers whose books are on my shelf, none wrestles with the paradox more painfully than Carl Bernstein, the Watergate reporter and author of *A Woman in Charge*. Bernstein likes Mrs. Clinton a lot, and her husband too. He considers them emblems of their generation, which Bernstein also lavishly admires. (It might be boomer envy: He was born two years too early to be a baby boomer himself.) How much does he like the Clintons? Enough to write this, when Hillary and Bill go sightseeing in Europe:

> They were still idealistic young thinkers and doers who wanted to influence their own time for the better. But there was something different (though not necessarily unique) about them: . . . a powerful connection to the threads of the history of the century and their country, a deep feel for what had gone before, intimate knowledge of the conflicting currents that had defined the generation of their parents and the places of their own past. Their uniqueness, however, was in the intertwining of their dreams . . .

As if you couldn't tell, Bernstein has a weakness for the Big Picture. He takes as his biography's theme a grandiose line from *Living History*, Mrs. Clinton's 2003 autobiography: "While Bill talked about social change, I embodied it." And it is important to understand how firmly Hillary's fans believe this. It's what they mean when they call her "iconic." And as Bernstein traces her life story you begin to see the point: She really is large, she really does contain multitudes.

Politically she rang all the changes of her generation. She was a Goldwater girl at 17, following her father's Republicanism. At Wellesley in the mid-1960s she evolved from a can-do leader of student government her freshman year—her signal accomplishment was a new system for returning books to the campus library—into a counterculture tribune by graduation day, when she gave a commencement address attacking "our acquisitive and competitive corporate life" and received a seven-minute standing ovation. She moved further left in law school,

Books mentioned in this essay:

Hillary's Choice
by Gail Sheehy (1999)

Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary: Reflections by Women Writers
edited by Susan Morrison (2008)

A Woman in Charge: The Life of Hillary Rodham Clinton
by Carl Bernstein (2008)

Blood Sport: The President and His Adversaries
by James B. Stewart (1996)

Her Way: The Hopes and Ambitions of Hillary Rodham Clinton
by Jeff Gerth & Don Van Natta Jr. (2007)

Bill and Hillary: The Politics of the Personal
by William H. Chafe (2012)

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editing a radical law review at Yale and working summers at a Bay Area law firm whose clients included the Black Panthers. A few years later she followed her husband to Arkansas and became a southern moderate, a proponent of back-to-basics education, and a partner in a law firm whose clients included Walmart, Tyson's Foods, and the largest brokerage firm west of Wall Street.

After a lightning strike as a health care reformer in her husband's first two years as president, she settled back into the role of a traditional first lady, content with uncontroversial appearances on the public stage and bloody, Nancy Reagan-like maneuvering behind the scenes. Since the turn of the century, as senator and secretary of state, she has managed to be a warhawk, a populist, a champion of finance capitalism, a regretful dove, and most recently, for as long as it lasts, a "fighter" for redistributionist economics.

At the time of her 1969 Wellesley address, above; below, on her wedding day in Fayetteville, 1975

ABOVE, LEE BALTERMAN / LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION / GETTY IMAGES; BELOW, NEWSCOM

Bernstein reminds us that in 1969 *Life* magazine, thrilled by her Wellesley speech, called her "an emblem of her generation and its values"—especially as the values changed. Zelig-like, she spans the 20th century into the 21st. The postwar Chicago suburb of her childhood was lily white and buttoned down in the manner of Donna Reed. When Clinton entered college, the social atmosphere was essentially unchanged from the 19th century: Weeknight curfew was 10 o'clock. Jeans on women, even for trips to town, were forbidden. Men couldn't visit the women's dorms except for three hours on Sunday afternoon. (And they weren't allowed upstairs.) By her senior year all parietal rules were gone, never to return.

When she fell in love and was married she declined to change her name, as a feminist gesture. When her husband wooed Arkansas voters, she agreed to change it to his. As a corporate attorney doing business in her husband's state, she adopted the hybrid "Rodham Clinton" to convey her double status: career woman and governor's wife. Striking out on her own she settled at last on simply Hillary, a first-name-only celebrity like Oprah. *Life* magazine called it right at the start: She is not just a baby boomer. She is the baby boom, and admiring Hillary Clinton is a way of admiring an entire generation.

Or so it's easy to believe, if you think, as Bernstein does, that the boom was culturally a movement of the left. His boom is the boom of the mainstream press, the boom of Hillary and Bill and not the boom of the kids who supported the Vietnam war and still vote Republican. He writes like the first type of boomer, an enthusiast, always ready to complicate the simple when describing an object of his affections. Hillary is not merely clever and quick. She has a "finely tuned sense of her own evolution, the ability to learn from her mistakes, to replay in her mind the macro and micro factors that moved a project from conception to realization or collapse and then rearrange them to get a more satisfactory result."

He uses the same gift for grandiosity to tiptoe around the paradox. Like Clinton herself, like all her friendly biographers, he is careful to keep the enemy in view: "the armies of right-wing and religious-inspired Clinton haters," who would undo all the advances the boomers had made. Bernstein approvingly quotes a Clinton aide: "She's happiest when she's fighting." Once, as another Bill Clinton womanizing story broke in the press during the 1992 campaign, Hillary turned mildly to the writer Gail Sheehy and told her she should follow up a rumor Hillary had heard about George H.W. Bush's "extramarital life." She even gave Sheehy a name to pursue. Sheehy declined the offer—she had interviewed the woman several years before. (Hillary soon found a willing buyer in a courtier journalist named Joe Conason, who wrote up the probably false story of Bush's "affair" for the cover of *Spy* magazine a few months before the fall election.)

Sheehy perceived in the episode another trait of Hillary the fighter. No matter what fight you were in, the other side started it. All offense is payback. She explained to Sheehy, with a sincere but dubious grasp of political history: "In 1980, Republicans started negative advertising. In 1992,

[they] have paid political assassination. What Bill doesn't understand is, you *gotta* do the same thing." The crucial word here is *Republican*. Belligerence is not a quality normally admired by the kind of people who admire Hillary. But they'll make the exception, considering the enemy and the stakes.

Even so, like most of her friendly biographers, Bernstein in the end gives space to the many scandals, skimping here and there on some of the shabbier details. More in sorrow than in puzzlement, he phrases the Hillary Paradox delicately and sometimes confusingly. In her public life, he writes, "she has misrepresented not just facts but often her essential self." This might be a Freudian slip. It suggests that those unseemly facts Clinton feels compelled to lie about are somehow in keeping with the person she truly is. Bernstein, having bet so heavily on Bill and Hillary, doesn't want to go so far. "Almost always," he writes on his last page, trying again, "Hillary has stood for good things. Yet there is often a disconnect between her conviction and words, and her actions."

Campaigning in Texas with Bill, 1992

About those actions: For an admirer, the hardest truth about Hillary's scandals is that they're made from the same base elements that inspire the scandals of ordinary mortals: power, money, and sex.

The typical Clinton scandal follows a pattern, as the biographies show. Husband or wife commits a shabby indiscretion. Bill will snap the garters of an employee, for instance, or Hillary will befriend unsavory characters in a scheme to make easy money. Except for Bill's admitted perjury before a federal judge in the Lewinsky scandal, the Clintons are rarely shown to have violated a law. So, whatever the indiscretion, it is probably legal. But it is mean. And its uncovering could threaten the idea that the couple has no motives beyond "uplifting the American people," in Bill's phrase.

The indiscretion lies there, out of sight, for weeks or months or years. Then someone finds out about it. Panic ensues. Staff is enlisted to ensure that outsiders believe the indiscretion either didn't occur or was the work of functionaries. The indiscretion inflates into a scandal when this effort fails. The functionaries, and usually the Clintons themselves, resort to misdirection, bogus legalism, and shifting narratives so complicated that most observers grow bored, then exhausted, then distracted by something else.

The scandal called "Travelgate" was the first controversy to emerge from the White House bearing this Clinton trademark. Travelgate is the idiotic name the press gave to the abrupt firing of employees in the White House travel office, allegedly on grounds of sloppy bookkeeping. The office handled travel arrangements for staff and press on the president's out-of-town trips. After the firings its work was meant to be handed over to a 25-year-old friend of the Clintons from Arkansas and a wealthy Clinton benefactor who owned a fledgling aviation company. It was a plum: The travel account could generate as much as $40,000 a day in business. The White House credential alone would be an invaluable boost to the benefactor's company.

The travel office had been run, loosely, by a well-meaning but hapless bureaucrat named Billy Dale, a 30-year White House employee. The finances were indeed a mess—travel expenses were sometimes paid from a cigar box. Many White House reporters liked Dale, however, and when they inquired about the reasons for his firing, the trademark panic ensued. Soon Dale and his colleagues were being slandered by anonymous officials in newspaper stories. The relationship between the Clintons and the new travel office team was first denied, then discounted, then misstated, and finally admitted. All motives for the firings were purely disinterested, according to White House accounts—merely a blow for good-government efficiency. And whatever else the public might learn about the firing of Dale and his colleagues, one central fact stood above all others: Hillary Clinton was not responsible. She said so herself.

But of course she was. Several years later the White House clarified the matter. In response to an old subpoena, it released contemporaneous notes written by a staffer shortly after an encounter with the first lady. She had told him, the staffer wrote, there would be "hell to pay" if Dale and his staff weren't immediately dismissed and her friends installed to replace them. Dale was fired within the week.

A cynic might look at the Travelgate story and think: Well, hell—what's the point of having power if you can't kick a little business to an old friend? The triviality of Hillary's bit of cold-blooded cronyism would be amusing, except for the feverish efforts to deny it—and deny even the possibility that she could be susceptible to so crude an impulse. And the consequences weren't trivial for Dale. His life was turned upside down. Federal prosecutors brought

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charges against him for his slapdash handling of funds, which they tried to paint as cover for embezzlement. After two years in legal limbo and several hundred thousand dollars in legal fees, Dale was released by a trial jury after less than two hours of deliberation—a free man but a Clinton casualty, broke and unemployed.

Even as Travelgate unfolded, the collection of indiscretions known as Whitewater continued to titillate reporters and keep lawyers busy, in and out of the White House. Whitewater involved not power but money: a failed get-rich-quick real estate deal managed partly by the Arkansas first lady, and the deal's eventual entanglement with a local savings-and-loan driven to bankruptcy by her shady business partner, an Arkansan rogue named Jim McDougal. He was, writes the biographer William Chafe, "a combination of hustler, reformed alcoholic, and manic depressive." And an old friend of Bill's.

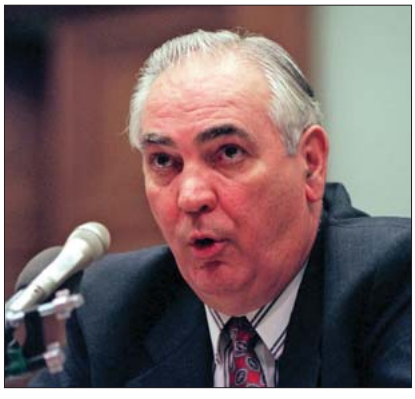
The first article about the failure of this unusual enterprise, by the reporter Jeff Gerth, appeared in the *New York Times* during the 1992 campaign. Then and later, Clinton's supporters in the press relied heavily on ad hominem arguments to discredit Gerth's reporting. Gerth, they said, was either the tool of an anti-Clinton conspiracy at the *New York Times*—let me repeat that in case you didn't catch it the first time—either the tool of an anti-Clinton conspiracy at the *Times* or a right-wing toady. For what it's worth, Gerth got his start as a researcher for the George McGovern campaign in 1972 and now works for ProPublica, the left-leaning "public journalism" outlet.

In 2007, after leaving the *Times*, Gerth published a Clinton biography with his former *Times*mate Don Van Natta, *Her Way*. Their political sympathy for the Clintons is evident throughout the book. Yet nearly 15 years after his first report, Gerth still couldn't quite believe how the Whitewater story unspooled. As the pattern dictates, Hillary Clinton's initial transgressions were surely unflattering and maybe unethical, too—but petty.

She had eagerly joined in the real estate deal in hopes of making a quick killing, and she must have known that McDougal, given his regulatory dealings with the state, inevitably would place her in conflicts of interest—and he did. As a partner in Little Rock's largest law firm, the Rose Law Firm, she shouldn't have worked on matters relating to McDougal's other business—and she did. Later, she shouldn't have denied doing the legal work—and she did. When her old billing records appeared mysteriously in an upstairs library in the White House, nearly two years after they'd been subpoenaed, they showed that she had indeed billed McDougal's businesses for a significant amount of lawyering.

But Gerth and Van Natta discover the final, exquisitely Clintonian touch: Hillary probably didn't do the work she was billing for! In other words, she didn't do the work she wasn't supposed to do and got paid for despite having denied doing it. It's Borges in the Ozarks. (Overbilling was not unheard of at Rose. Her close friend at the firm, Webster Hubbell, went to jail for bilking clients.)

Gerth and Van Natta conclude on a judicious note. "Her likely indiscretions were altogether modest," they write, "but the scandal that would result from [her] attempts to cover up past sins would be enormous."



Billy Dale, Travelgate scapegoat

And all of her past sins in Whitewater involved money—in particular, her heedless desire for it. On the campaign trail, when she's describing this trait in other people, Clinton calls it "greed." Her own version of greed is a constant in her adult life. James B. Stewart, a former editor for the *Wall Street Journal* and a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, undertook a kind of forensic analysis of Hillary's relationship to money in *Blood Sport*. Sharing the standard-issue liberalism of economics reporters, Stewart takes the Hillary Paradox very hard. He is clearly admiring of "what she represents," especially in her young, radical phase, when her anticapitalism was near the surface. As a biographer he grows increasingly puzzled as she enters her corporate-lawyer phase, with her various schemes to make as much money as possible as quickly as possible.

"Hillary's ideological reservations about capitalism," Stewart wrote, "were co-existing with an increasingly pragmatic need to make money."

Darn that old pragmatism anyway! It has kidnapped more than a few budding anticapitalists. Hillary's "pragmatic need," Stewart shows, had to do with that head-in-the-clouds idealist husband of hers. Bill Clinton's otherworldly detachment from material things is a theme in all pro-Hillary literature. Numerous admirers are called in to attest to it. "He just doesn't care about money," runs a typical comment, from Sheehy's Hillary biography, *Hillary's Choice*. Bernstein quotes Bill Clinton's former aide Betsey Wright: "Bill Clinton could live under a bridge as long as it was OK with Chelsea. . . . He just doesn't care."

This is taken by Bill's fans as evidence of virtue—his love for the higher things crowding out any concern with

the lower. Such an image rests oddly on a man who favors $2,000 suits and French cuffs and handmade ties and the bespoke shirts that are seldom found hanging in the closet of your everyday antimaterialist. It's possible Bill Clinton's indifference to money is more complicated than his friends know or admit. Other biographers have pointed to his habit, as a candidate and officeholder, of not carrying money, a practice followed by many public men. From his first campaign in 1974 through his presidency and up to the present, daily expenses have usually been handled by an aide, whether a state trooper in Arkansas or a Secret Service agent or a foundation functionary, who would in turn be reimbursed by another entity, a campaign treasury or a government account or, nowadays, a tax-exempt foundation. Bill Clinton would likely lose his famous indifference to money if the money were suddenly gone. There's always been plenty of money. It's just that money is something other people take care of.

Met on return to Little Rock by Jim Blair, right, April 8, 1993

AP / J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

For four decades one of those other people has been his wife. Early on she took responsibility for the couple's daily budgeting as well as their long-range financial condition. When her husband was elected attorney general of Arkansas, Stewart tells us, Hillary signed up with Little Rock's most successful investment adviser. With their savings she opened two investment accounts. One was a joint account with her husband, the other an account in her own name. "By now, it must also have been obvious that Hillary couldn't count much on financial contributions from her husband," Stewart writes.

Her husband's salary and her partnership at Rose placed them near the top of Arkansas's income distribution (not a dizzying height). But by the late 1970s, she grew impatient and wanted more. "It was clear she wanted to make money," Stewart writes, "and earn a return greater than what was available from simple savings accounts or Treasury bonds." At the time, 10-year Treasury bonds were yielding roughly 9 percent, considered a handsome return by everyday investors. (Today the rate is a little over 2 percent.)

And so she was led into one of her most famous indiscretions. One day in 1978, when Bill was running for governor, Hillary received a call from Jim Blair, a social friend and general counsel for Tyson Foods, soon to be the state's largest employer. Blair offered to open an investment account for Hillary with a commodities broker specializing in cattle futures. Calculations differ, but Stewart estimates that three out of four investors in the commodities markets lose money, and lots of it, even if initial investments are small. Hillary's was $1,000.

Blair set up similar accounts for lots of friends, business associates, law partners, and even his children. On Hillary's behalf he dealt directly with the broker, a former Tyson employee named Red Bone. (We're in Arkansas.) With close contacts throughout the cattle industry, Bone had nearly infallible information on the movement of prices, and he shared it with Blair, who handled his many accounts accordingly. The great threat to any futures investor is the margin call, when the trader suddenly requires the client to cover money borrowed to make a losing trade.

Hillary never saw a margin call. Stewart calculates that at one point she was $117,000 in the hole and would have been wiped out in any brokerage firm other than Bone's. Instead, after less than a year—by then she and her husband were in the governor's mansion—she asked Blair to close her account. Her $1,000 investment had grown to $99,000.

Running for president 12 years later, Bill Clinton released a dozen years' worth of tax returns. He stopped just short of the year in which he and his wife had reported her spectacular gains. The couple and the campaign refused to explain why the release of tax returns didn't go back further. Nosing around, Jeff Gerth followed the trail to Red Bone, Jim Blair, and the windfall they had bestowed on Hillary. To explain the $98,000 profit, Clinton spokesmen said Hillary had handled the trades according to information she gleaned from her daily reading of the *Wall Street Journal*. Hillary herself spoke of how much she had learned as a little girl reading the financial pages of the *Chicago Tribune* with her father. And the spokesmen pointed out that no reporter or investigator had found a—here's the familiar phrase—quid pro quo among Tyson Foods, Jim Blair, the first lady, and the governor.

Stewart ends his account of these and similar affairs sounding dismayed. "Their handling of these matters," Stewart writes, "both during the campaign and in the White House, hardly shows the president and first lady in a flattering light." And the unflattering light is to be avoided whatever the cost.

The Clintons can always count on their admirers, even when the scandals move from power and money to sex. Clintonites long ago stopped denying Bill Clinton's goatishness. "It never happened" evolved into "It doesn't matter." But as always, the transgression is prelude.

As early as the 1980s, Hillary led campaigns to silence the women who claimed to have had, and often did have, sex with her husband. "There could be no question," writes Bernstein, "that Hillary was Bill's fiercest defender in preventing his other women from causing trouble."

The methods employed by her, and by others at her direction, look remarkably dated, especially in light of society's newfound sensitivity to the victims of sexual assault and harassment.

In the 1980s, long before Bill Clinton ran for president, a political opponent privately threatened to publish a list of the governor's supposed lovers. Hillary deputized her law partners Webb Hubbell and Vincent Foster to bring the women one by one into the Rose offices. The lawyers offered to represent each of them as legal counsel in case the list was made public. Hillary sat in on at least one of these sessions, according to Sheehy. You can easily imagine the impression Hubbell and Foster, two of the state's most powerful attorneys, made on the women, brought in from every corner of the state. The women never caused trouble.

Three of the Clinton accusers, from left: Paula Jones, Gennifer Flowers, and Kathleen Willey

A better-known example of Hillary's efforts involved Betsey Wright, Bill's gubernatorial chief of staff. Wright has earned her place in history for coining the deathless term "bimbo eruptions." (Hillary hasn't used the word "bimbo," so far as her biographers know. She referred instead to "Bill's rodeo queens.") In 1987, as Clinton prepared to run for president, Wright assembled a master list of women rumored to have slept with the future candidate. It was a long list, and it came in handy. Clinton was facing the New Hampshire primary when one former lover, Gennifer Flowers, sold her story to the *Star* tabloid.

"People have been making these attacks on my husband since he first ran for office," Hillary told reporters, which was true. (The Clintons use the word "attacks" where others use the word "accusations." Attacks are accusations about them.) Hillary insisted the campaign hire a private investigator to stop any further eruptions, Sheehy writes in *Hillary's Choice*. Hillary said she knew just the man.

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Jack Palladino had worked for the Bay Area law firm where Hillary had briefly worked as a law student. Palladino's assignment was to contact the women on Wright's list. To keep him at least one remove from the presidential campaign, Hillary and Wright arranged to have his retainer of $100,000 paid to a law firm in Denver, which Palladino then billed for "legal services." (This relationship was first discovered by Michael Isikoff of the *Washington Post*.)

"I am somebody you call in when the house is on fire, not when there's smoke in the kitchen," Palladino told Sheehy. "You ask me to deal with that fire, to save you, to do whatever has to be done."

And what had to be done? Gerth and Van Natta found a private memo written by Palladino to the campaign in 1992. In it he explained his goal in dealing with Gennifer Flowers: "to impeach her character and veracity until she is destroyed beyond all recognition." That worked too. Flowers became a national joke. It was later reported that a former roommate who had confirmed Flowers's account to reporters received a visit from Palladino. "Do you think Gennifer is the sort of person who would commit suicide?" he asked her.

Palladino reported his progress to Betsey Wright, who passed the word to Hillary. And the other women on Wright's list kept quiet.

Some of the methods have been gentler, if no subtler. In 1994, an Arkansas state employee named Paula Corbin Jones insisted on pursuing her lawsuit against President Clinton, who she said had exposed himself to her in a hotel room when he was governor. Soon, nude photos of Jones taken by an estranged boyfriend mysteriously fell into the hands of the editors of *Penthouse* magazine, which rushed them into print. As anyone who saw the pictures knows, the intent was embarrassment, not prurience.

Another woman, Kathleen Willey, accused the president

Supporters wait outside in Exeter, New Hampshire, May 22, 2015.

NEWSCOM

of making a similar "pass," this time in the Oval Office. "With Hillary's go-ahead," Gerth and Van Natta write, "the White House then released nine fawning letters that Willey had sent to Bill after the alleged incident." The letters disproved Willey's story, reporters concluded.

Mrs. Clinton's theory here, successful as it was, seems particularly old fashioned: If the survivor of a sexual assault speaks kind or forgiving words about her assailant, then either (1) the assault didn't occur or (2) the victim agreed to it. The phrase "had it coming" may be too old-fashioned even for Hillary's team.

We've known about all this for a long time—about Hillary Clinton's blistering campaign to discredit the women who wanted to tell the truth about her husband. But it is seldom mentioned, and when it is, it is old news. Apparently, old news, once we know it, tells us nothing worth knowing.

The Hillary Paradox—that a woman of such excellent character should be capable of such tawdriness and worse—the paradox vanishes if you drop the first part of the proposition. Her reputation for good character, after all, rests largely on simple assertion, on what she says as a public figure, on her politics, rather than on what she's done. Leave aside the politics, and the shabby behavior is easily explainable: She does what she does because she is who she is.

But renouncing their admiration is precisely what supporters of Hillary Clinton can't bring themselves to do. Otherwise her enemies might win.

It is odd the things they will swallow, and odd the things they choke on. During her last presidential campaign a group of left-wing women writers put together a book called *Thirty Ways of Looking at Hillary*. Not all the essays were admiring, but I violated my rule and read them anyway. The writers objected to Clinton's caution, her ideological compromises, her weird devotion to her husband—and, strangely enough, to the "listening tour" with which she opened her first Senate campaign in 1999.

Remember? The candidate was photographed visiting coffee shops, classrooms, and shop floors in every corner of New York state, nodding as her future constituents prattled on. The listening tour was indeed a silly gimmick, executed with effortless smarm—politics as usual.

But to Elizabeth Kolbert, a political writer for the *New Yorker*, it seemed to expose something especially worrisome.

"That Clinton would engage in such a charade doesn't make one admire her," Kolbert wrote. "Women should wish for a more principled candidate. They should wish for one who's more honest. . . .

"Yet one simply *has* to admire her."

Yes. One simply has to. ♦

Dressing Up

The only commencement speech you'll ever need

By Harvey Mansfield

These commencement remarks were delivered at the John Adams Academy, a charter high school in Roseville, California, on June 5.

A graduation ceremony is a moment of pride in which we do honor to our graduates—and congratulations to you all—and to their parents and their teachers who were such a help to them. Of course the school gives the honors, but the school consists of students and teachers, supported by parents. So we are doing honor to ourselves. Why should we take the time to do honor to ourselves? Isn't this a waste of time, effort, and expense? Why stop what we are doing to praise ourselves for doing it?

This is a special school because it specializes in the classics. I too specialize in the classics, and I am a teacher. So I will use the time to teach you something, so that we don't waste it. I will teach you something that could be learned from Plato and Alexis de Tocqueville, but I won't refer to their texts and I won't give a classroom lecture. Let's return to what we are doing now, holding a celebration.

Last day of school, circa 1955

A celebration is a formal event, one for which everybody is dressed up. Not just dressed, but dressed up. What does the "up" mean? Dressed up is looking your best for an occasion when you want to look your best, an important occasion. You dress in order not to be naked, you dress up to show that is not ordinary work or leisure, but an event. Why do we dress at all? To show ourselves and to cover up ourselves. For an event you dress in formal wear, not informal. What is formal and informal wear surely differs in different times and places, but in every human society there is always a difference. Some people dress up for work or at school, perhaps in uniforms, perhaps by wearing a suit if you work in a fancy office.

Dressing up is done for the sake of society; it is to show yourself at your best. What will others think if you don't dress up? It's a sign of respect for what other people think important, but also for what you think is important. It's a sign of self-respect to dress up for your graduation; you worked hard for your education and you are justly pleased at the result. When dressed up, you look different from when you are dressed informally. You try to look different; that's your intention so as to show respect for others and for yourself. Formality is a sign of our social and personal sense of self-importance and self-satisfaction.

Now we begin to see a problem. Isn't it possible that some people may be too self-important and take themselves too seriously? When they dress up, they put on airs. They are not cool, they are what used to be called "phony." (That's from a book of my time, *The Catcher in the Rye*, which I hope is now forgotten.) Not only do they think too much of themselves, they worry too much about what others think of them. People like this are vain, and their formality seems to be the expression of their vanity. They are conceited and stuck up, yet they are also conformist and stuck in a rut. From this you could conclude that informal dress is more honest than fancy dressing up. You appear as you are, not as you wish you were.

This objection says that it is more direct and also more equal to be informal. It follows that democracy, which stands for equality, much prefers informality to formality.

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Americans, a very democratic people, act accordingly. We are a can-do people; we like to take shortcuts; we don't like to "stand on ceremony." We say what we mean, and we like to speak bluntly, without flourishes and without diplomatic niceties; we like efficiency and don't like to waste time; we get impatient easily.

All these can be positive qualities, but they also harbor a danger. Too much informality can make you disrespectful of other people's dignity. When you interrupt other people, it may be because you believe you know more or speak better or think faster, but it infringes on their self-expression and makes them feel inferior to you, thus resentful of you. The formality of speaking in turn is more respectful of others. It may slow down the discussion, but perhaps that is not such a bad thing if it keeps you from blurting out ill-considered opinions.

Another example of a formality that protects human dignity is table manners. "Eating like a pig" means that you are satisfying your hunger directly and immediately, without pause or ceremony or prayer, like an animal. A human being eats from a table, or at least off the ground, sociably, with friendly talk, to indicate that eating is not just "feeding your face," as we say. Table manners are a social convention, to be sure, practiced differently in different societies, but every society has some sort of table manners. It's part of human nature to want to distinguish ourselves as being above other animals. We are animals too; we have to eat. But we eat with dignity. Sometimes people overdo dignity, and in emergencies one must set it aside, but even we informal Americans insist on some level of politeness.

To be polite is a formal virtue. You don't have to like someone in order to be polite to him. Being polite keeps you from making enemies of those you don't like or don't know. It's convenient to be respectful in this way even though it's a hindrance to your free action not to eat like a wolf when you are hungry, just as it is a restriction on your free speech not to tell people what you think of them. When people expect you to be polite, not to be polite is a formal declaration that you don't care about them. Not taking notice of others is not neutral; it's an insult to them. Politeness is a required formality, and if you are not polite, you will pay for it.

Even though informal behavior is private, private behavior with other people is not always informal. Other people watch you, and if they are impressed with how cool you are, they may imitate you. "Cool" is a word that describes people who may start by challenging a more formal custom—for example, wearing jeans instead of pants—but who then set a fashion, so that the new way becomes the formal way that everyone follows. When I was in college, a male student had to wear a coat and tie to be allowed in the dining hall. Then, when the rule was abandoned, nobody wore a coat and tie. To be dressed up became overdressed. This is how democracy enforces many of its rules: Nobody wants to stick out from the rest of the crowd. If you want to stick out, and be noticed, it's better to do it with an action that's worthwhile. To dress a little bit oddly, like a man who wears a hat, is not wrong, but it's better to think differently. There is no worse feature of democracy than conformity, not in what you wear but in your opinions. Most people have reasonable conclusions, but most of those conclusions are not well thought out.

Another recent growth in informality can be seen in the use of first names only. When I was your age and the teacher (or anyone else) asked me for my name, I would give both names. Now when I ask as a teacher, the answer is always only the first name. To me, that's not enough; I'd like to know your family name as well. That's the name I'll use when I grade you. But to students nowadays, the first name is enough. That's the fashion; everybody does it, and anyone who gives his last name would seem out of place, trying to be superior, more important than others. Besides, being known by your family name might make it seem that you are not your own person; you are identified not by what you have done but by the family you were born into. Being on a first-name basis is more equal, and democracy, the kind of government we live under, is mainly about equality. Students want to be on a first-name basis with their teachers, too; that's more friendly because it's more equal. Friends are your equals, but teachers are your instructors. How come your friend gets to give you a grade? And from the teacher's point of view, shouldn't you always give a good grade to someone who is your friend? What are friends for, if not to give them benefits? Here we see the seed of grade inflation. Everybody is good and everybody is equal, so all get A's.

What is needed is a formal distinction between teacher and student, or between waiter and customer, or between policeman and civilian. While the teacher or waiter or policeman is doing his job, he is not your friend and you should treat him formally, just as he should treat you not with the favoritism of a friend but with good instruction, good service, and the impartial justice of the law. It's good to be personal with your friends, but we also need to have impersonal relations in which there is some distance between individuals, some degree of reserve in the relationship. That's because society requires authority, a certain inequality in useful relationships, even in a democracy. Formal distinctions between jobs allow someone to be your boss but only on the job; outside the job you are an equal citizen. That means you are not a slave; you obey orders only because it's useful to you to

do so. It's not that your boss is a better person than you are, but that it's his job to give orders and yours to obey. This is democracy with equal dignity despite the necessary inequalities required for any successful human society. Those inequalities are equalized, as much as they can be, through formalities such as the use of last names. You can say politely, Mr. Mansfield, you're beginning to bore me.

One last formality I will mention actually affects behavior and is useful. This is the ceremony of marriage. One might ask, Why is it necessary to get married? Why not just live together and have children and raise them without an expensive ceremony and piece of paper called a license? And why bring God into it? Why all the formality? Today two opposite trends exist regarding marriage. On the one hand, illustrating the dangerous power of informality in a democracy, many fewer people are getting married and many more children are being born out of wedlock. On the other hand, a political movement in favor of same-sex marriage has been gaining adherents and seems to be on the verge of succeeding. The premise of that movement, of course, is that marriage is a good thing, worth having, a sign of success and respectability. And indeed marriage does seem to affect the behavior of those who marry, and for the better. Married people do better in life, make better parents, and stay out of trouble with the law. Most of the time, I add, it's also more fun. The easy way to happiness in life is in finding and making a happy marriage. The hard way is through ambition.

With this homily it's time to close. Both Plato and Tocqueville talk about forms, but I have tried to find them in our daily life, in the difference we make between formal and informal, and why and how we do that. A formal ceremony shows what we want to be and covers up what we don't want to show. Human life is part show, part concealment. We never show ourselves exactly as we are, but always a little more (when through formalities we conceal) or a little less (when with informality we leave out our self-importance).

I conclude that ceremony is not a waste of time, and I have used my time in this ceremony to reason about ceremony, to show you why. Reasoning, I will add, is both formal and informal. It's formal because a reason always addresses other people, many of whom you may not know and never will know. And it's informal because you can reason in private, for example when the teacher thinks he has your full attention.

Thank you for inviting me to John Adams Academy, congratulations again, and God bless you. ♦

Groucho Marx as Professor Wagstaff in 'Horse Feathers' (1932)

Opening Shot

Antidotes to the closing of the American mind. BY THOMAS L. JEFFERS

Readers of a certain age will remember the critical surprise—a mingling of delight and disgust—when, in 1987, a pair of books on our country and our culture, written by obscure university professors, sold like Tom Clancy. Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* and E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy* became, respectively, first and second on the *New York Times* bestseller chart, and they stayed in the top 10 for half a year.

The State of the American Mind
16 Leading Critics on the New Anti-Intellectualism
edited by Mark Bauerlein and Adam Bellow
Templeton Press, 280 pp., $27.95

The "closing" Bloom described was essentially a dumbing: not Mozart but Andrew Lloyd Webber, not Jane Austen but Stephen King, not Plato but Jacques Derrida. Or worse. Underlying all these fallings-off, for the philosophically trained Bloom, was the ascendency of Friedrich Nietzsche and his deconstructionist followers, heirs of a radical skepticism inaugurated in the late 17th century by John Locke and other Enlightenment thinkers. The skeptics' purpose was to disqualify the certitudes of Plato, the Hebrew prophets, and the Christian theologians, who held that divinity—its attributes and laws—not only existed but could be known.

Philosophers call this view "foundationalism," as in Thomas Jefferson's references, more deistic than Jewish or

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Christian, in the Declaration to "the laws of nature and of nature's God" and to people being "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." Jefferson was a dues-paying member of the Enlightenment, but as a moralizing deist he had drawn a limit to skepticism—as, indeed, had John Locke, who, though nodding to revelation, defended a moralizing Christianity on grounds almost entirely rationalistic.

Enlightenment thought was complicated, but, beginning in the late 18th century, philosophy's Romantic, antifoundational tendency was toward simplification. God was either nonexistent or inconceivable; the good, our notion of proper conduct, was whatever individuals or particular groups said it was. People should, insisted the Romantics, be free to do as they like, or even to try to persuade others to follow their example. But farewell to all notions of absolute, divine sponsorship, vouchsafed either through the revelations of sacred scripture or through irrefragable argument.

Allan Bloom was appalled by the upshot. Like his Victorian precursor Matthew Arnold, he deplored the "anarchy" of "doing as one likes"—each class devoted to its own politics, entertainment, forms of worship—as an affront to "culture," defined by Arnold not just as "the best which has been thought and said" but (to *certify* its being best) in tune with "reason and the will of God." A student of Plato and a nonbelieving Jew, Bloom emphasized the rational, not the divine, foundation for culture. He didn't expect his students at Cornell or the University of Chicago to suppose that they could fully embrace the truth, but he did encourage them to think that striving for full embrace was worthwhile—was, indeed, the right way for them to use their minds.

Now, under the title *The State of the American Mind*, Mark Bauerlein and Adam Bellow have collected 16 essays that, with a little fudging, might have been called *The Closing: A Generation On*. Most of the contributors would agree with Bloom's paradox: that Americans have closed off avenues for their minds—no striving after eternal truths for them—because of antifoundational philosophers' insistence that, absent eternal truths, it's better to keep an "open mind" on all subjects, especially moral and artistic ones.

Not sure about the rightness of same-sex marriage, abortion, or affirmative action? The common liberal counsel is to declare such questions undecidable and keep an open mind, since opinions about ethics and aesthetics are forever changing. The majority, voting with their attention spans, will give us their *pro tem* judgment. But the resulting quarrelsomeness—these likings against those, all bound to shift in a few decades or years—has turned a public square in which partisans, agreeing to disagree, used to debate each other into a new Vanity Fair: all those booths filled with cliques facing not outward but inward.

"Why," critics of Bloom and Hirsch asked a quarter-century ago, "should a black sophomore study the Mayflower Compact and *Walden* in high school, instead of something out of her own culture?" A good question, Bauerlein and Bellow admit; but in trying to become more inclusive, educators have "cherished the *pluribus* and abandoned the *unum*." Factions of the *pluribus*, commonly defined by race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender, and sexual orientation, complacently regard themselves as right while dismissing their opponents—not fellow citizens engaged in debate, but "enemies"—as agents of irrational fear: homophobia, biphobia, Islamophobia, negrophobia, technophobia, etc.

With the American mind in such disarray, with the passionate partisans calling each other names and the more responsible afraid to criticize lest they be thought judgmental, Bauerlein and Bellow advance their book as a set of critical judgments of the horribles in our schools, personal habits, and political behavior.

There are chapters, heavy with statistics, about the twitterocracy, the decline of creditable middlebrow fiction, welfare dependency, and so on. Since, however, our everyday personal habits and periodic political choices depend on what we know, this book's most fruitful diagnoses and prescriptions center on education. Bloom died in 1992, but Hirsch, now in his late-80s, has fought on. Here, in an introduction titled "The Knowledge Requirement," he patiently iterates the claim he's set out over the past two decades: that K-12 students do better when asked to master what he calls "core knowledge"—not just in mathematics and science, but in history and literature.

The key is reading. Test scores fell dramatically from 1962 to 1979 and have been flat since. Why? It's not because of television and the pervasive corruptions of popular culture. Other countries' children are distracted by the same things, but their reading scores didn't fall when ours did, and they haven't fallen since. The culprit, as Hirsch all but proves, is our emphasis on child-centered pedagogy—a nice-sounding antidote to memorizing and regurgitating "mere facts"—that derives from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the English Romantics, and, at the beginning of the 20th century, John Dewey.

Dewey's progressive approach to education hoped to bring disadvantaged kids—racial minorities, recent immigrants, the poor generally—into the middle-class mainstream. Get students out of their orderly rows, show them "loving sympathy," give them activities wherein they would "learn how to learn," and the rest would follow "naturally." Progressivism dominated the new teacher-training institutions in the 1920s and '30s, and teachers thus trained gradually filled openings as the old guard retired. By the time the first baby boomers finished high school, their test scores showed that the progressive, child-centered instruction hadn't worked as planned.

Hirsch's corrective? Heed the findings of cognitive psychologists, who have demonstrated that reading comprehension improves when students have a knowledge of context: interrelated information specific to a writer's subject, be it beekeeping or baseball, the Civil War or wagon trains. At the numerous but scattered schools where a cultural-literacy core drives instruction, a curriculum that, step by step through the grades, builds kids' knowledge base has narrowed the gap not

just between their test-takers and those from other countries but, more important, between their own advantaged and disadvantaged test-takers.

That is true progressivism: a program that provides equal opportunity regardless of who a student's parents happen to be. The irony, as Hirsch laments, is that his fellow liberals, the left-wingers who oppose his core because they think it reactionary, are the real reactionaries, for they are keeping the disadvantaged from climbing the "class ladder." (It is not all that difficult, in my experience as in Hirsch's, to compose a curricular list with which teachers of markedly different backgrounds and political persuasions can live.) Hirsch writes:

> One minimal, tough-minded (and incomplete) way of defining "the most enabling knowledge" is simply to ask this question: What do people who earn over one hundred thousand dollars per year know in common, but which remains unknown to people who earn twenty-five thousand dollars or less? The answer is guaranteed *not* to be some general "how to think" skill.

It's gratifying that, among recent defenders of the Common Core state standards, E.D. Hirsch is at last being regarded as an *ex*-pariah. Too bad, however, that those standards don't identify essential curriculum content. This leaves schools free "to do what they've always done," Hirsch said last year. "I hate to be a godfather of something that is not going to work," he said, adding that the popular coupling of him with Allan Bloom was "bad luck." For while he himself is "practically a socialist . . . Allan Bloom really was an elitist." No matter. Intellectuals in search of common standards are endeavoring to help people understand each other in public discourse and compete with each other as equals.

And that means not just learning to read but learning to write, a task Gerald Graff turns to in "Why Johnny and Joanie Can't Write, Revisited." Graff, whose *Professing Literature* (1987) remains the best history of American college English departments, has in the interim addressed practical pedagogical problems. What to do about culture-war disputes as they affect the teaching of, say, *Huckleberry Finn* or *Heart of Darkness*? Don't let students game the system by offering remarks and term papers flattering to what they can tell is their professor's preferred take. Instead, make competing approaches the focus of the class. On this occasion, Graff advances a teaching-of-writing approach that mirrors my own—although I haven't achieved the pithiness of his "They Say/I Say" meme: What matters in academic writing, and in almost all writing, is the ability to put the writer's own insights ("I Say") into dialogue with other people's insights ("They Say"). Don't worry, at first, about idea development, organization, voice, diction, fluency, grammatical and rhetorical conventions; concentrate, instead, on teaching students to summarize someone else's argument, explanation, comparison-contrast, description, analysis, or narrative, and to "use that summary to motivate their own." They will then

> recognize that their opinions properly exist in a marketplace of opinions, and they will in turn be apt to look upon fellow citizens as interlocutors rather than as foes, seeing others as rivals for power and influence, perhaps, but not as enemies.

Regarding the opposition as interlocutors rather than as foes would be easier if discussions were about ideas not emotions, programs not passions. But as Dennis Prager shows, "We Live in the Age of Feelings," where rational, not to mention religious, authority is despised and rejected, while doing what makes one feel good is the first and seemingly only thing that counts. Prager calls this method of making moral decisions "emotional relativism," according to which any reference to

> impersonal reality or truth is not only mistaken, it's oppressive—which is why the young lean so far in the direction of liberalism: not because of its political content (they know little about progressive tax policy, regulations, and specific government programs), but because conservatism sounds too much like someone telling them what to think and do. Political correctness is as coercive as any right-wing dogma, of course, but it escapes the tyranny charge because it locates its demands precisely upon feelings.

Feelings, particularly, of love. Many of us are loath to challenge the *Amor Vincit Omnia* legion, but, as Prager notes, it's "guileless" to decide the issue of, say, same-sex marriage on a simple "appeal to love, not to anything fundamental about marriage, family, sexuality, children, monogamy, or the state." How can critics of gay or lesbian marriage deny the partners' love? If love is the sole criterion, Prager continues, the fact that "their wedding entails redefining marriage by gender for the first time in Western history" is beside the point. Shouldn't we, as Prager suggests, be thinking as well as feeling our way forward, especially with regard to marriage, family, sexuality, and children—and also to the philosophical and theological reasonings that, for millennia, have underpinned these institutions, categories, and practices?

Consider Barack Obama's you're-on-your-own caricature of Republicans in 2012: "If you are out of work, can't find a job, tough luck, you're on your own. You don't have health care; that's your problem. You're on your own." As Prager notes, the president is converting

> a programmatic question—how best to bring the most people out of poverty?—into a division of personalities, those with compassion and those without. Once the issue gets framed in this way, the question, "Does a policy work—does it justify the expense?" is irrelevant, especially when the policy in its ideal version sounds so warm and humane.

It's apparently too much to acknowledge that conservatives are concerned not just with preserving the lives of the unborn but also with bringing the poor into the middle class. The question is: Which policies will *accomplish* that?

The same, finally, with affirmative action. Liberals seem to be incapable of granting that those questioning the results of affirmative action—in college admissions, for instance—are doing so not because they are racists but because

(like Hirsch with his core-knowledge curriculum) they want to give the disadvantaged a truly equal opportunity to pursue happiness.

Thus, when some researchers at Duke noted that minority students (many of them, per objective admissions criteria, "mismatched" at Duke from day one) were opting out of scientific, mathematical, and engineering fields into softer humanities and "studies" programs, the Black Student Alliance and black alumni protested. This, as Prager recounts, was all that Duke's president, Richard Brodhead, needed to express "dismay" at how "generalizations about academic choices by racial category can renew the primal insult of the world we are trying to leave behind—the implication that persons can be known through a group identity that associates them with inferior powers."

As he protested against negative stereotyping, Brodhead phrased his remarks carefully. But his "feeling" transformation of social science research into a "primal insult" can only confirm students' don't-tell-us-about-it! attitude toward evidence that could help educators focus on problems of academic readiness. Emotions drive our desires, of course; but our desires are usually fulfilled only when we have rational, effective policies in place.

To insist on such policies, as all the contributors to this volume variously do, might appear quixotic, especially at a time when mainline religious leaders seem more eager to join than to guide the emotivists who dominate the secular sphere. But, as Prager writes, both religious and secular conservatives have a choice: either wait for the feel-good systems to collapse and their ideas to be revised or even discarded, or go on offense in the "war of ideas and values." Conservatives can expect the left's "fevered counterattack": They don't care about poor people, they hate gays, they don't love Planet Earth, and they're renewing "the primal insult" of categorizing people, in praise or dispraise, by gender, class, or race. Never mind that it was our fellow citizens on the left, half-a-century ago and feeling better all the time, who renewed that primal insult. ♦

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B&A

The Genius Cycle

'Art produced at the knife's edge of despair.'

BY ALGIS VALIUNAS

The art song for voice and piano—*Lied*, *mélodie*, *canzone*—is the poor relation of opera and oratorio, at least as far as popularity is concerned. There are legions of classical music fans who can hum every bar of *La Traviata* from overture to last gasp and who make attendance at *Messiah* sing-along concerts part of their Christmastime ritual, yet rarely or never listen to the masterworks of this low-ceiling repertoire. Operatic spectacle and the sonic boom of the "Hallelujah" chorus offer elemental excitements that a lone singer and his or her accompanist on an otherwise empty stage cannot equal.

There are enclaves, however, where the art song receives the attention it deserves. Founded in 2002, the Oxford Lieder Festival last October devoted its entire fortnight to the songs of Franz Schubert. The *Schubertiade* (Song Salon), in its 40th year in the small town of Hohenems, Austria, runs from May to October and features some 30 vocal recitals in honor of the provider of the feast, although it is no longer all-Schubert-all-the-time, as it was during its early years. The *Liederstube*, an offshoot of Chicago's own *Schubertiade*, features "an intimate evening of *Lieder* jamming" every other Friday all year long in the Windy City.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) is the genius of the place wherever *Lieder* are sung, and the modern *Schubertiaden* take their inspiration from the informal recitals that Schubert's friends and admirers delighted in during his lifetime, especially when the finest vocalists in Vienna would sing to Schubert's own accompaniment. Schubert composed nine symphonies, seven masses, gorgeous chamber music, and a handful of operas that failed to cause the sensation he so desired and only one or two of which are revived as curiosities these days. But it is as the author of some 600 songs that he stands apart, presiding over a comparatively obscure but resplendent kingdom.

Schubert set over 70 poems by Goethe to music, matching genius with genius, enriching texts that were invaluable to begin with. Among the other poetic masters Schubert served were Petrarch and Shakespeare (both in German translation) and Heinrich Heine, six of whose pungent lyrics are incorporated in *Schwanengesang*, literally Schubert's *Swan Song*, less

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Schubert's Winter Journey
Anatomy of an Obsession
by Ian Bostridge
Knopf, 528 pp., $29

Ian Bostridge singing Schubert

a proper cycle than an assortment of gems strung handsomely together.

But the two song cycles that Schubert composed to poems by a writer hardly famous then, and even less familiar today, have enshrined him as the nonpareil master of the art song: In *Die schöne Müllerin* (*The Lovely Maid of the Mill*) and *Winterreise* (*Winter Journey*), the poetry of Wilhelm Müller finds its perfect musical rendering and Schubert finds his perfect subject. As the most celebrated 20th-century *Lieder* singer, the late baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, declared in *Schubert's Songs: A Biographical Study* (1976),

> The unpretentiousness and simplicity of Müller's poems are matched by the simplicity of Schubert's musical textures. His sole interest is in the depth of feeling, not in psychological over-refinements. Regret and renunciation are his themes. Dreams are the lover's torture. . . . [T]he agony is unending before insanity breaks in.

Schubert did not look the part of the agonized artist. In appearance, he resembled no one so much as Mr. Pickwick as pictured by Phiz: roly-poly, bespectacled, emphatically ordinary, genial but quite without the markings of genius that distinguished Beethoven and Goethe, and evidently content with such simple pleasures as happened to come his way.

Looks, in Schubert's case, could not have been more deceiving: Infected with syphilis in his early 20s, he lived out his brief blighted days in physical and mental anguish, cut off from hope of a woman's love and believing himself the unhappiest of men. And yet he poured out song, much of it joyous, sweet, and celebratory, as though he were someone else when he made music. *Die schöne Müllerin*, however, ends with the millstream's address to the suicidal jilted lover who finds rest in the waters that close forever over his head, and *Winterreise* burns with ineradicable pain, the fleeting moments of consolation overshadowed by the prevailing desolation. For the wanderer who will never see his beloved again—she is "a rich bride," not for such as he—but who cannot stop tormenting himself with thoughts of her, the soundest available option is to die as soon as possible. But even death cannot come soon enough.

This is art produced with the knife's edge of despair at the composer's throat, and the songs will not stop coming until he has completely used himself up. Friends reckoned that Schubert's unrelenting labor on this, his final major work, hastened his appallingly early death. And just to sing or listen to this music is to enter

Franz Schubert

an area of darkness that is hard to escape even after the piece is over.

Every generation of classical music performers has its acknowledged masters, and among the distinguished contemporary cohort of *Lieder* singers that includes Matthias Goerne, Thomas Quasthoff, Gerald Finley, Christian Gerhaher, and Florian Boesch, the English tenor Ian Bostridge is remarkable for the florid passion that encompasses but does not overwhelm his exquisite attentiveness to verbal and musical detail.

Like Fischer-Dieskau before him, and even more like Hans Hotter and Jon Vickers, Bostridge is the thinking man's singer, and his reputation for going over the top tends to enhance that status rather than erode it. And now he has written *Schubert's Winter Journey*, which attempts to illuminate *Winterreise* from every possible angle. Bostridge has performed the peerless cycle 100 times over the past 30 years, and no other singer, and certainly no musicologist, could write a study like this one.

Bostridge largely eschews the scholar's customary and often parching technical analysis, confessing that he lacks academic grounding in such things; but mostly he avoids it because even adept musicians focus on "less relentlessly theoretical" aspects as they study a piece of music and prepare to perform it. Yet the academic training that Bostridge did have is telling, for he composes here an ambitious work of intellectual history, enfolding Schubert's songs in the revelatory art and constricting politics of his time and place, and discerning traces of his influence on subsequent generations of makers and performers.

Schubert announced his genius at the age of 17, with settings of famous poems by Goethe. Goethe, however, preferred his poems as set by Johann Friedrich Reichardt: in simple, limpid, classical versions now utterly forgotten. As Bostridge puts it, Schubert's renderings inclined toward "Romantic hysteria, the sickness which [Goethe] dreaded." Here was the germ of *Winterreise*, which Schubert would finish 14 years later, and in which he would bend Müller's verses—simple, limpid, melancholy, but not fatally so—to the needs of his darker and more frantic suffocating, just managing to bite back a scream.

It is startling to read that Samuel Beckett was a fervent admirer of *Winterreise*. But when Bostridge goes on to recall his performance of the cycle at the 2012 Enniskillen International Beckett Festival and cites a Beckett fragment with which an actor introduced him, the kinship becomes patent: "It's a winter's night, where I was, where I'm going, remembered, imagined, no

IMAGNO / GETTY IMAGES

matter, believing in me, believing it's me, no, no need."

Franz's Last Tape? This familiar "absurdity of existence, that Beckettian riff" is complicated by subtle indications of Müller and Schubert's "political or social engagement" on behalf of disaffected intellectuals and downtrodden proles. These indications had to be subtle in order to elude the censor's unwelcome attentions, which buttressed "a reactionary regime" determined to prevent another Robespierre or Rousseau from upending the shaky Biedermeier order.

Some of Bostridge's sightings of subversion are dubious at best, like reports of a yeti in the mountains. But with the final song, "Der Leiermann" ("The Hurdy-Gurdy Man"), an image of horror unprecedented in song and still unequaled—a broken beggar, barefoot on the ice, wearily playing the simplest tune on the crudest instrument—Bostridge's remarks ring absolutely true:

> The world of Samuel Beckett collides with that of, say, Henry Mayhew, the Victorian cartographer and ethnographer of the London poor, or of Sebastião Salgado, the documentary photographer of contemporary Brazilian life; and we are taken aback. Placing such a vision of true indigence at the very end of the cycle is bound to raise at least a small question mark over the self-indulgence of endlessly perpetuated, inner-directed pain.

Bostridge's aim is nothing less than to demonstrate the excellence of this supreme masterpiece of an artform unjustly neglected:

> Art song . . . is a niche product, even within the niche that is classical music; but [*Winterreise*] is incontestably a great work of art which should be as much a part of our common experience as the poetry of Shakespeare and Dante, the paintings of Van Gogh and Pablo Picasso, the novels of the Brontë sisters or Marcel Proust.

To make his case, Bostridge piles on prodigious learning, enlisting artists and thinkers—from Lord Byron to Thomas Mann, Alfred de Vigny to Clemens Brentano, Hans Holbein to Caspar David Friedrich, Sigmund Freud to Lucian Freud—along with excursions into the making of charcoal and the structure of snowflakes.

This book is an amazing *omnium gatherum*, a work befitting a life devoted to music of genius. And if he fails to convince one that *Winterreise* is a masterpiece on the order of *King Lear* or the *Divine Comedy*, Bostridge has nevertheless served the song cycle well. For his most important effect is to turn the reader once again, or even for the first time, to Schubert's songs, not least as sung by Bostridge himself. ♦

B&A

Over There

A not-quite-definitive dispatch from the Western Front.

BY CHRISTOPHER TIMMERS

World War I occupies virtually no acreage in the mental landscape of most Americans, even those who think themselves well educated and informed. And yet, as we honor the sacrifices of those Americans who were sent into battle on our behalf almost 100 years ago, how much do we really know about the battles they fought, their commanders, and their sacrifices (117,000 Americans never returned, 204,000 came back wounded)?

H.W. Crocker III attempts to answer these questions and more in *The Yanks Are Coming!*, with varying degrees of success. His text is well structured and features a chronologically measured approach to both the war and the events leading up to it. He first presents a comprehensive background on the political situation in Eastern Europe in the early years of the 20th century, and continues with a summary of six of the key battles in which American forces were engaged. Profiles of the generals commanding these young men follow, along with portraits of the Young Lions, as Crocker calls them—Eddie Rickenbacker, Alvin York, and others. The narrative concludes with a summary of victory and its aftermath.

Christopher Timmers, a West Point graduate who served in both the 82nd Airborne and Third Infantry divisions in Germany, lives in South Carolina.

The Yanks Are Coming!
A Military History of the United States in World War I
by H.W. Crocker III
Regnery History, 404 pp., $29.99

Crocker rightly claims that unrestricted submarine warfare was the principal cause of American entry into World War I. The infamous Zimmermann telegram, intercepted by the British and given to the Americans, did not by itself precipitate our entry into the European war, but it was a catalyst that spurred our entry. The body of the telegram from Germany's foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, to the German minister in Mexico proposed that if the United States should enter the war on the side of the Allies, Mexico should, in alliance with Germany, "make war together." Germany offered generous financial support and, if the venture were successful, the return of Mexico's "lost territory of New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona."

The telegram was intercepted on January 17, 1917. President Woodrow Wilson was informed of it in February, and he went public with it in March. On April 2, he asked Congress for a declaration of war. On April 6, his wish was fulfilled.

Yet for all this book's virtues, there are problems with errors and omissions. As early as page 39, the reader

encounters run-on sentences with a distracting use of semicolons: "Allies had hoped to force the Dardanelles; bring relief to Russia; knock Turkey out of the war; and gain Greek and Bulgarian allies to advance through what would later be called the 'soft underbelly of Europe.'" Equally distracting is Crocker's reference to Turkey as the "soft underbelly of Europe" in World War I, when the Churchillian phrase originally referred to Italy in World War II. And while the personal profiles of both high-ranking American officers and dog-faced soldiers and Marines are enlightening and uplifting, they tend, especially in the case of the generals, to meander into postwar actions, and even into World War II and Korea. Yes, Douglas MacArthur, Harry Truman, and George Marshall went on to greater achievements, but their mention in this context makes the storyline uneven and unfocused.

Early on, we read that General Erich von Ludendorff had been awarded, among other honors, the "Blue Max." What is a Blue Max? It is the nickname of the award known as the *Pour Le Mérite*, given for exceptional service in the Prussian Army. This "Blue Max" business is yet another distraction.

Perhaps the biggest defect, however, is the absence of maps by which a reader can follow the movements of armies in the field or individual battalions in battle areas. This lack of maps is accompanied by an absence of photographs of the various engagement areas along the Western Front. And why? Either Crocker or his publisher should have realized that such maps and photos are available in the public domain for a reasonable cost—or for free. How does the interested reader follow the action in the Meuse Argonne Offensive? Exactly where in France *is* the Meuse Argonne—and is it solely in France? How do you talk of battles without maps? Generals don't, and readers shouldn't have to.

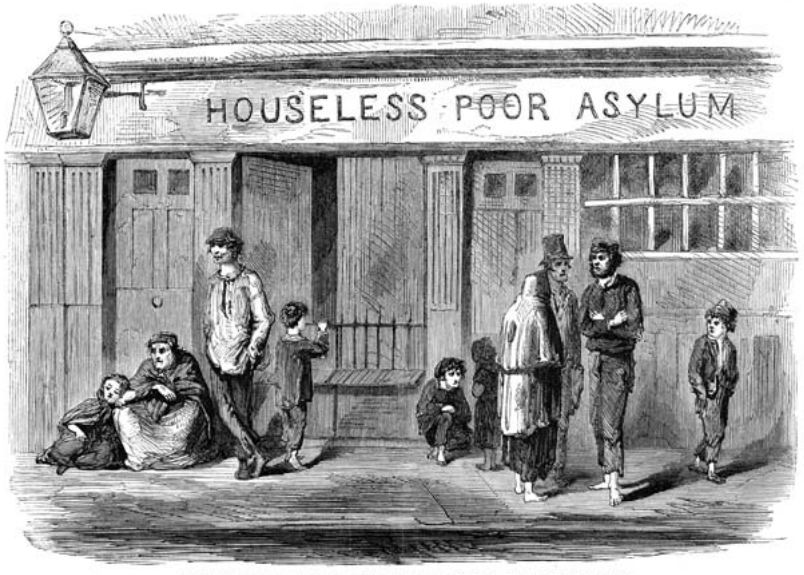
Crocker has written a tale of fact spun like fiction, and his prose is easily accessible. The average reader can enjoy his text for entertainment, but serious scholars have other, more valuable, sources. ♦

B&A

London Calling

The documentary version of Dickens's metropolis.

BY EDWARD SHORT



ASYLUM FOR THE HOUSELESS POOR, CRIPPLEGATE.
[*From a Sketch.*]

During 1849-50, the author and journalist Henry Mayhew (1812-1887) set about anatomizing the lives of the London poor in a series of 82 articles for the *Morning Chronicle*, which would eventually lay the groundwork for the greatest study of the English poor ever written, the four-volume *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851-65).

In meeting with and interviewing hundreds of men, women, and children throughout the city and recording what William Makepeace Thackeray called their "wondrous and complicated misery," Mayhew's "earnest hope," as he said, was "to give the rich a more intimate knowledge of the sufferings, and the frequent heroism . . . of the poor—that it may teach those . . . to look with charity on the frailties of their less fortunate brethren."

Edward Short is the author, most recently, of Newman and His Family.

London Labour and the London Poor
by Henry Mayhew
edited by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst
Oxford, 512 pp., $14.95 (paperback)

In this latest abridgment, by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, we can see that "earnest hope" in all its large-hearted fellow-feeling. In one section, Mayhew meets with an elderly female street seller, whom he hears has been tending to her sick husband for many years:

> The poor creatures lived in one of the close alleys at the east end of London. On inquiring at the house to which I had been directed, I was told I should find them in "the two-pair back." I mounted the stairs, and on opening the door of the apartment I was terrified with the misery before me. There, on a wretched bed, lay an aged man in almost the last extremity of life. At first I thought the poor

HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

> old creature was really dead, but a tremble of the eyelids as I closed the door, as noiselessly as I could, told me that he breathed. His face was as yellow as clay, and it had more the cold damp look of a corpse than that of a living man. His cheeks were hollowed in with evident want, his temples sunk, and his nostrils pinched close. On the edge of the bed sat his heroic wife, giving him drink with a spoon from a tea-cup. In one corner of the room stood the basket of tapes, cottons, combs, braces, nutmeg-graters, and shaving-glasses, with which she strove to keep her old dying husband from the workhouse.

Here was the sort of heroism that Mayhew had in mind. And yet, as Thackeray attested, the suffering that made it necessary "had been lying by your door and mine since we had a door of our own. We had but to go a hundred yards off and see for ourselves, but we never did." Why? Thackeray could not have been more categorical: "We are of the upper classes; we have had . . . no community with the poor."

Mayhew's claim to be one of Great Britain's best social historians has not always been acknowledged. Too often he is treated as a protosociologist whose real aspiration was to write the sort of pseudoscientific history that came into vogue in the late 19th century. It is true that the author of *London Labour* can be excessively fond of statistics; but he was first and foremost a reporter who never let his regard for the quantifiable stand in the way of his deep sympathy for the poor.

Moreover, Mayhew was a truth-teller. At a time when so many of his contemporaries were celebrating that paean to material progress the Great Exhibition of 1851, Mayhew was content to study the direst poverty imaginable, in rookeries and alleyways where respectable Londoners seldom, if ever, ventured.

What gives *London Labour* so much of its life are the voices that rise from its pages like ghosts, such as when the old woman caring for her husband tells Mayhew: "If God takes him, I know he'll sleep in heaven. I know the life he's spent, and am not afraid; but no one else shall take him from me—nothing shall part us but death in this world." Similarly, when Mayhew encounters an old strumpet in the Haymarket, nothing he reports about her tragic life can match her own pungent account: "You folks as has honor, and character, and feelings, and such, can't understand how all that's been beaten out of people like me. I don't feel. *I'm used to it*."

Then again, when he falls among the "duffers," or peddlers of pretended smuggled goods, an informant tells him:

> It is really astonishing . . . how these men ever succeed, for their look denotes cunning and imposition, and their proceedings have been so often exposed in the newspapers that numbers are alive to their tricks, and warn others when they perceive the "duffers" endeavoring to victimize them; but, as the thimble-men say, "There's a fool born every minute."

If Mayhew often describes his subjects with a novelist's eye for the defining detail, he could also write with the prescience of a prophet. In the following portrait, he might almost be describing what we are in danger of becoming if we continue to allow the political class to swell the national debt:

> Foremost among beggars, by right of pretension to blighted prospects and correct penmanship, stands the Begging-Letter Writer. He is the connecting link between mendicity and the observance of external respectability. He affects white cravats, soft hands, and filbert nails. He oils his hair, cleans his boots, and wears a portentous stick-up collar. The light of other days of gentility and comfort casts a halo of "deportment" over his well-brushed, white-seamed coat, his carefully darned black-cloth gloves, and pudgy gaiters. He invariably carries an umbrella, and wears a hat with an enormous brim. His once raven hair is turning grey, and his well-shaved whiskerless cheeks are blue as with gunpowder tattoo. He uses the plainest and most respectable of cotton pocket handkerchiefs, and keeps his references as to character in the most irreproachable of shabby leather pocket-books. His mouth is heavy, his under-lip thick, sensual, and lowering, and his general expression of pious resignation contradicted by restless, bloodshot eyes, that flash from side to side, quick to perceive the approach of a compassionate-looking clergyman, a female devotee, or a keen-scented member of the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity.

This exhibits another characteristic of Mayhew's work: its droll humor. In this, *London Labour* is a precursor of George Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), which was ostensibly written to expose the evils of poverty but ended up celebrating the comedy of class. Mayhew's research led him into similarly amusing byways. For example, apropos the "sham indecent literature" peddled by straw-sellers in sealed packets in the Strand and Holborn, Mayhew commiserates with the elderly gentlemen who fork over for these packets only to find that they contain not French postcards but religious tracts. In another passage, he describes overhearing a burglar refusing to break bread with a pickpocket: "No, no! I may be a thief, sir; but, thank God, at least I'm a respectable one."

Henry Mayhew could write with such sympathy about those trying to keep body and soul together because he had struggled to make a living himself. Born in London, he ran away from Westminster School at 16 and soon afterwards began writing popular novels with his brother. Then he turned his sights on the theater, with a farce called *The Wandering Minstrel* (1834), which had only a modest success. After editing a satirical paper called *Figaro in London*, he returned to novel-writing. In 1841, he cofounded *Punch*, but was fired shortly thereafter. He also wrote travel pieces and books for children. Years of extravagance landed him in bankruptcy court in 1846 and wrecked his marriage.

It is a sad irony that the man who spoke so glowingly of the blessings of home should have lost his own by incurring debts of over £2,000 for the redecoration and furnishing of his large house in Parson's Green. When the *Morning Chronicle* commissioned him to write a sketch on London, Mayhew submitted "A Visit to the Cholera Districts of Bermondsey" (1849),

In the workhouse, 'Oliver Twist' (2005)

which became the genesis of *London Labour*. After this lone success, he failed to make a go of a railway magazine and died in 1887.

It was the newspaperman in Mayhew that was drawn to what he called "the multifarious tribe of 'sturdy rogues,'" or those who refused to work not because of physical or mental unfitness but because they preferred thieving, swindling, and begging. In her brilliant *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (1984), Gertrude Himmelfarb observes how "even the most compassionate reader might find himself more impressed by the ingenuity of these outcasts than their miseries." Mayhew was clearly fascinated by the layabouts and scoundrels he encountered, but he also spoke with many who were clearly keen on working. The old woman who went mad rather than see her bedridden husband thrust on the parish is a case in point.

Indeed, the resourcefulness of London's poor is one of the book's great revelations. Mayhew presents not only fruit sellers, flower sellers, sandwich sellers, omnibus drivers, coffee-stall keepers, chimney sweeps, and dock workers but sellers of nutmeg-graters, dog collars, boot laces, corn salve, firecrackers, and rat poison, not to mention rat killers, bone grubbers, rag gatherers, even sewer hunters. He also came upon a number of people who made their living (however precariously) by buying such things as rags, glass, bones, umbrellas, parasols, metal, bottles, and dung. Then again, some of his best chapters are on those who entertained London's poor, including the Punch-and-Judy men, ballad sellers, hurdy-gurdy players, snake-, sword-, and knife-swallowers, street clowns, strolling actors, and various street musicians, some of whom plied their trade with the help of dancing dogs.

W.H. Auden once made a trenchant observation about the fate of this extraordinary industry:

> Even when I was a child, the streets were still full of venders, musicians, Punch-and-Judy men, and such. Today they have vanished. In all modern societies, the public authorities, however at odds politically, are at one in their fear and hatred of private enterprise in the strict sense; that is to say, self-employment.

Of course, in our own time, we have seen this hatred of the state for private enterprise intensify into an ever more insatiate encroachment into nearly every aspect of our lives: our health care, our commerce, even our religion. The question of what ought to be the relationship between the state and the private citizenry has also exercised the English, especially after the dissolution of monasteries in the 16th century, which deprived the poor of so much of the charity that had been set up to relieve their distress.

When almshouses gave way to workhouses, the seeds of the modern welfare state were sown. Gertrude Himmelfarb writes that what the Victorians found shocking about Mayhew's book was that it described a "street-folk [who] were literally regressive, a throwback to a pre-industrial, even pre-civilized state, a primitive 'tribe' surviving in the very heart of civilization." What shocked them even more was that the book revealed the humanity of the poor. For Mayhew, the unaccommodated man was not a poor, bare, forked animal: He was a fellow creature. In this most hands-on of histories, *London Labour and the London Poor* shows the poor to be real people with real troubles whose distress calls for true charity, not the travesty of alms that our own bureaucratic state offers. ♦

COLUMBIA / EVERETT COLLECTION

B&A

Monster Mash

The dinosaur quality of a blockbuster franchise.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard

Jurassic World
Directed by Colin Trevorrow

Jurassic World is a movie about itself. It tells a story about the difficulty of making special effects exciting when it seems like audiences have already seen it all. In the movie, the titular theme park has been built on the same island that hosted the old Jurassic Park back in the day when people would gasp upon seeing a realistic-looking T. rex—just as many of the same multiplexes that are showing *Jurassic World* showed *Jurassic Park* 22 years ago. Alas, complains park manager Claire (Bryce Dallas Howard), the dinosaurs that scared and thrilled people two decades ago just don't have the kick they once did. So what's needed is more height, more roar, more teeth.

Cowriter/director Colin Trevorrow has followed the same principle. He decided that the only way to please the crowd that once made *Jurassic Park* the most successful movie ever made (up to that time) would be to have lots and lots and lots of dinosaurs—and then turn them loose on lots and lots of people.

How is *Jurassic World*? Well, it's really not very good. But then, neither is the original *Jurassic Park*, aside from two astonishing set pieces conceived of and directed by Steven Spielberg—one in which a Tyrannosaurus rex sets upon a car caravan, and the climactic assault by a group of small but vicious velociraptors who hunt our heroes with terrifyingly strategic intelligence.

There's been an effort in some precincts to treat *Jurassic Park* as though it is some kind of classic, but it's not, in any way. The screenplay is a mess, a sentimentally souped-up and poorly paced version of Michael Crichton's far more tough-minded pulp novel, and its characters are alternately dumb and lumpy. Consider the difference between *Jurassic Park* and Spielberg's 1975 breakthrough, *Jaws*. The latter, with its sharply observed characters and rich evocation of life in a summer beach town giving emotional resonance to the battle against the great white shark, is one of the screen's definitive thrillers. *Jurassic Park* is nothing but a Luddite dinosaur movie. Still, no one had ever seen anything quite like those computer-generated creatures, and the execution of those two key sequences was so dazzling that they caused crowds to return again and again.

In classic disaster-movie fashion, *Jurassic World* tells much of the story through the eyes of a couple of kids who are clear stand-ins for its target audience—and who could not have been more boring if they had spent the entire two hours reading aloud from manuals on how to repair laser printers. When they are menaced, you root for the carnivore.

There's a jumbled plotline involving some bonkers corporation that apparently wants to use dinosaurs to hunt terrorists in Tora Bora—I'm not kidding—and Trevorrow can't decide whether the park's multibillionaire Indian owner (played by the absolutely wonderful Irrfan Khan) is a hero or a villain. At one point, he talks about protecting the Earth and the glory of creation; at the next, he seems to care more about having invested $26 million in a dinosaur prototype than the fact that people are being eaten right and left.

Two actors save the movie. Bryce Dallas Howard gets a really nice Barbara Stanwyck/Rosalind Russell vibe going as a comically Type-A careerist who has to crack her perfect shell to save herself and her family from the calamity that befalls her theme park. And then there is Chris Pratt, who plays—oh, who cares: He's in the movie, and he's fantastic. Whenever he's on screen, *Jurassic World* crackles.

Pratt became a movie star last year with the release of *Guardians of the Galaxy*, in which he combined first-class comic chops with action-hero grace in an entirely new way. If he evoked Harrison Ford in *Guardians*, here he seems to be channeling the glamour males of the Hollywood Golden Age—a little Bogart here, a soupçon of Jimmy Stewart there, a trace of William Holden, and a dash of Henry Fonda. We haven't seen a male movie star bust out like this since Will Smith in the mid-1990s. Now *that's* exciting, and no special effects were required. ♦

UNIVERSAL PICTURES

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

"San Francisco's controversial measure to require warning labels on soda billboards also would target Starbucks' Frappuccinos, city officials say. . . . Billboards and posted advertising in San Francisco will include the phrase, 'WARNING: Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) contributes to obesity, diabetes and tooth decay.'"

—Bloomberg Business, *June 11, 2015*

PARODY