the weekly Standard

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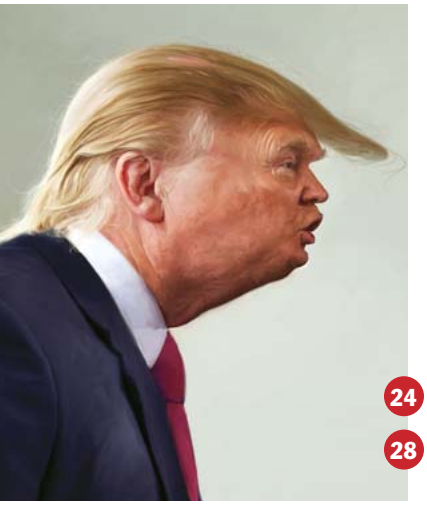

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COVER BY JASON SEILER

Hillary's Clouded Prospects

The Scrapbook is revising its opinion of "word clouds," which we have heretofore mocked. That's because we were so entertained by the ones produced in Quinnipiac University's latest national poll. Besides the usual questions about preferences for the 2016 candidates, voting intentions, and so forth, the pollsters also asked their sample of 1,563 respondents, "What is the first word that comes to mind when you think of Hillary Clinton?"

You can see the results depicted in the word cloud we've reproduced here. The more often a word comes up, the larger it appears in the Quinnipiac graphic. Leading the list—the first word on the lips of 178 respondents (or more than 11 percent of those polled)—is "liar." Following closely behind is "dishonest" (from 123 people), "untrustworthy" (93), "experience" (82), "strong" (59), "Bill" (56), "woman" (47), "smart" (31), "crook" (21), "untruthful" (19), "criminal" (18), "deceitful" (18), and quite a few more, not very many of them complimentary.

The same word-association question was asked about Donald Trump and Jeb Bush. The words respondents blurted out for Jeb are mostly anodyne, though not unrevealing: "Bush" (136), "family" (70), "honest" (53), "weak" (45), "brother" (41), "dynasty" (40), and so on.

The Trump results, as you might imagine, are almost as entertaining as Hillary's. His greatest hits: "arrogant" (58), "blowhard" (38), "idiot" (35), "businessman" (34), "clown" (34), "honest" (30), "ego" (29), "money" (29), "outspoken" (28), "crazy" (26), "rich" (26), "showman" (23), "strong" (20), "a—hole" (18), "joke" (16), "loud" (16), "leader" (15), "pompous" (15), "bombastic" (13), "egomaniac" (13), "loudmouth" (13), etc. Ironically, given Trump's shtick on winners and losers, and his preference for the former, the word at the bottom of his list is "winner," suggested by just five people out of those polled. ♦

Too Graphic

Duke University has managed to court controversy before the school year even begins. Over the summer, the school assigned all incoming freshmen to read *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*, a graphic novel by Alison Bechdel. (Note: "Graphic novel" is the preferred descriptor for upscale comic books.) Naturally, *Fun Home* is a lesbian coming-of-age story. We say "naturally," because when The Scrapbook was an undergraduate a couple of decades ago, we recall being similarly required to read lesbian coming-of-age tales by the likes of Jeanette Winterson and Dorothy Allison. But these were at least full-fledged novels, not comic books. College kids these days apparently can't even be expected to put in the work necessary to be properly indoctrinated!

In any event, the *Washington Post* tracked down an incoming Christian student who objected to the book and asked him to explain himself. And wouldn't you know it, he seems pretty reasonable—his objection is that the book's sex is needlessly graphic, both in the literal and figurative sense:

> I'm not opposed to reading memoirs written by LGBTQ individuals or stories containing suicide. I'm not even opposed to reading Freud, Marx or Darwin. I know that I'll have to grapple with ideas I don't agree with, even ideas that I find immoral. . . . I think there is an important distinction between images and written words. If the book explored the same themes without sexual images or erotic language, I would have read it. But viewing pictures of sexual acts, regardless of the genders of the people involved, conflict[s] with the inherent sacredness of sex.

Indeed, The Scrapbook can testify to the difference between written and visual representations of sex because we were once forced to

endure a lecture as an undergraduate consisting of a slideshow of images taken from *Hustler* magazine. (The course was "The Philosophy of Love and Sex," and it fulfilled the "Identity, Pluralism, and Tolerance" credit required for graduation.)

Of course, the folks at *Salon* responded about as one would expect them to: "Clinging to Christian moral beliefs can end an education before it even begins." But how is it that when "trigger warnings" are all the rage on college campuses, this objection from a Christian student is to be disdained? All across the country, students have demanded to be excused from reading or otherwise being subjected to material that they find psychologically or politically or sexually traumatizing. If it's okay to object to reading, say, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*—because the depictions of slavery and sexual assault are too intense to handle while paying $50,000 a year for the privilege of fighting white privilege in the heart of the phallocratic campus—surely some "safe space" can also be carved out for a Christian freshman who wants to adhere to his own sense of what is just and right.

Christian students are at least upfront and consistent in their principles. The academy is loath to admit that secular progressivism is a religion unto itself, eager to attack heretics and brutally enforce doctrine, provided one can keep track of an orthodoxy that seems to change constantly. One year it's all the rage to stick it to the morally hidebound establishment by showing kids porno mags in class and claiming it's educational. The next year, the very same material is said to prop up a patriarchal rape culture.

The truth is Bechdel's book is mediocre at best, just as Jeanette Winterson's and Dorothy Allison's lesbian *romans à clef* are decidedly overpraised. There's little value in forcing students to read middling, agenda-driven drivel when there's far more worthy reading assignments. In this day and age, Christian college students are more likely to be open-minded about differences of opinion than the Robespierres-in-training who claim to be advancing the cause of "social justice." ♦

'Courage Is Contagious'

There was a memorable instance of multiculturalism last week that The Scrapbook heartily commends to readers. Google for the touching video of the ceremony at the Elysée Palace in which the president of France, François Hollande, pins the Legion of Honor ribbons on Spencer Stone, Anthony Sadler, and Alek Skarlatos—the three young Americans who risked their lives to disarm and subdue a terrorist gunman on the high-speed train from Amsterdam to Paris—while giving each of them a very formal French *bisou* on both cheeks.

From their heroic actions, Glenn Reynolds drew the appropriate moral in a column for *USA Today*, "See Something? DO Something!":

> Bureaucracies have their place, but they don't deal well with diffuse threats such as terrorism. By the time "first responders" get there, it's usually too late. But there's one group of "responders" who don't have to go anywhere, and that's the group already on the scene. In conventional analysis, and in the terrorists' hopes,

those people are called "victims." But as the three Americans on that French train demonstrated, victimhood isn't the only response.

And there's more. The purpose of terror is to terrorize. But responding appropriately has the opposite effect. The response of British businessman Chris Norman, who helped subdue the attacker, illustrates this: "Norman said his first reaction was to hide," *The Fiscal Times* reported. "But after he saw the Americans fighting the attacker, he said he went to help them."

Concluded Reynolds: "Fear is contagious. But so is courage." ♦

Orientation

To quell disputes, cry "Check your privilege."
It frightens foes and gives you leverage.

Faced with ideas that scare you in the morning,
Prostrate your Prof by crying "Trigger Warning!"

Don't blame your failing essays on bad grammar.
The word "Micro-aggression" has more glamour

And terrifies the academic who
Might lose his tenured job because of you.

Avoid men's touch, thoughts, winks, and dirty jokes.
If they behave, you must commit a hoax

To prove "Rape Culture" lives to wreck the lives
Of anyone who figures otherwise.

Remember, first and last, that sex trumps God
And family, and that no one is odd

Except those freaks who in apostasy
Believe a lie called meritocracy.

And, finally, admit discrimination
Is only caused by students born Caucasian.

—Paul Lake

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A Life that Made Sense

The difference between man and woman is the force that hauls life forward (as the Talmud remarks) and the origin of everything that is most beautiful in our world. I thought I understood that, but I didn't until my father died. The whole can transcend the sum of parts, and that's why Judaism deems marriage sacred. I never truly understood that either.

The death of a loved one rips us like shrapnel, but the wound heals and we limp gamely on. A father's death is one of the harder hits life offers as it fights to knock you down. There is nobility in a boxer's fighting until the last bell, although he is hurt and bound to lose. Every one of us has that kind of nobility. We acquire it as boxers do, blow by blow. Don't sell us short. We are tough.

My father Herbert Gelernter, of blessed memory, died in May at 85. He had a remarkable career. His doctorate was in theoretical physics. My mother had supported him throughout graduate school, but it was his duty to support her. So in 1955, his degree complete, he looked for a secure job and a living wage—which he found at IBM.

IBM Research was ablaze with new ideas about computing. "Computer science" was being created, by physicists, mathematicians, and engineers. In the late 1950s, my father became one of the six men who invented artificial intelligence and changed the intellectual world.

He built the first AI program ever to do anything substantial—history's third overall. His revolutionary software proved theorems in high school geometry and introduced techniques that became fundamental to computing.

But he missed physics and returned to it in the early 1960s; then he missed computing, and spent the rest of his career at the outer limits of AI. His last achievement was a program that discovers syntheses for organic compounds—otherwise a task for Ph.D. chemists. It took him a quarter-century. It remains one of the most sophisticated programs ever built.

IBM wanted to elevate him to senior management. So he left. He had been in love with physics since boyhood (although he loved my mother incomparably more, and we all knew that from the day we were born). Nothing in science or mathematics was foreign to him. The acute curiosity and the powerful, joyful intelligence always sparkling in his eyes—everyone saw it—extended to every corner of nature and everything his children did or cared about.

Newly married and untested but ready for anything, 1953

COURTESY OF DAVID GELERNTER

He wanted to stay near New York, where his parents and my mother's lived. Between offers from SUNY at Stony Brook and Yale, he chose SUNY; stayed for the rest of his career. In the late '60s, truckloads of money were being spent on Stony Brook. It was about to become the "Berkeley of the East." It didn't. But my father was happy there. Prestige meant nothing to him. (As a graduate student, he had left MIT for the University of Rochester, where his thesis director of choice happened to teach.)

He was the smartest man I ever knew. A master of real life also. He could repair anything from busted TVs to stuck zippers. He was a superb musician. His French was fluent; on trips to Soviet Russia, he talked science in Yiddish. And on sabbaticals in Israel, he mastered "Fill it up, please!" All right: Hebrew was not his strong suit. But he tried.

Yet in the last period of his life he was weak and in pain, and could do almost nothing for himself. My mother did it all.

It never damaged his dignity or hers. It only exalted them both. Sometimes he was sad, more often serene. After all: He had worked all his life to support her. In the end, when she had to support him every moment, it was a labor of love for her as it had always been for him.

He could not equal my mother's grasp of human character and her sheer kindliness. She lacks his intellectual aggression (all eminent scientists have it), his uncanny grasp of mathematics, music, and everything in between. Husband plus wife equaled a miracle. But every man and wife are a miracle waiting to happen: Manly and womanly virtues are so deeply different—each so desperately essential to the other and to the children. He always knew, God bless him, that her gifts were more important than his. But there was nothing he wouldn't do for his children, and they all—and his two daughters-in-law—loved him dearly. He lived life in a vibrant major key, but when affliction forced him into the dark relative minor, he was prepared with bigness of heart and soul. He showed us the sanctity of a life that puts first things first.

David Gelernter

the weekly Standard

Up from Trumpism

"The Muse of History must not be fastidious." Thus Churchill the historian. But as Churchill the politician knew, the Muse of Politics must not be fastidious either.

Which brings us to Donald Trump.

Trump is, to say the least, not in favor among the fastidious. He's not even in much favor among those of us who are nonfastidious in our politics. We at The Weekly Standard enjoy the rough-and-readiness of the American political scene—but we also understand the distinction between a reality show and reality, between performing and governing. We love American democracy and are impressed by Trump's mastery of some of the arts of democratic politics—but we also acknowledge that Trump embodies much that is dubious about mass democracy. We admire the American people—but we also grant that Trumpism exemplifies much that is problematic about American populism.

Not our beau ideal

AP IMAGES

Still, the fact remains: Donald Trump stands, unexpectedly and impressively, at the center of gravity of the Republican presidential field. His rise has been spectacular, a shock not just to the Republican establishment but to the conservative movement. His fall may be sudden or protracted, complete or partial. Conceivably he won't fall at all. But in any event, Republicans and conservatives can't afford fastidiously to turn their back on, or mindlessly to embrace Trump . . . or Trumpism.

What is Trumpism? Elsewhere in this issue Christopher Caldwell and Julius Krein consider the question. In this they join other thoughtful commentators who have recently addressed this matter. What we have to add to the conversation is simply one name: Richard Nixon.

After all, isn't Donald Trump's political appeal a kind of cartoon version of Richard Nixon's? Nixon was the most consequential Republican in America for a long time, arguably from the Hiss-Chambers hearings in 1948 until his resignation from the presidency more than a quarter-century later; a candidate who ran five times for national office, four times a winner and losing only once, possibly as a result of stolen votes in Illinois and Texas; a politician who invented the Silent Majority and laid the basis for the emergence of a governing Republican majority; a president whose achievements pale beside those of our beau ideal, Ronald Reagan. But no Nixon, no Gipper.

Now, in 2015, we seem to be replaying history in fast forward. What took 16 years, from 1964 to 1980, is now happening in a matter of 16 months. The Tea Party was in a way a replay of the Goldwater movement—a visceral, deeply felt, and in many ways justified rebellion against the pretensions and depredations of big government liberalism. Both rebellions fell short of attaining the presidency. Both were followed by a less constitutionalist but perhaps more wide-ranging revolt against the cultured despisers of American patriotism and traditions—the first of which produced the Nixon ascendancy over several tumultuous years, the second of which has fueled the Trump phenomenon over several rambunctious months.

The Nixon era was followed, after a short interlude, by Reagan. The task today is to ensure that the Trumpian moment is followed—with no interlude, and with time telescoped—by a neo-Reaganite victory, one that builds on what is best in the Tea Party and what is healthy in Trumpism to create a politically viable governing conservatism.

The current candidates are, understandably, struggling to come to grips with the phenomenon of Trump. None has put the pieces together as Reagan did. Can one

of the 2016 contenders be Reagan to Trump's Nixon? Can any of the candidates—or one not yet in the race—move beyond disgust at a decadent liberalism to forge a vigorous governing conservatism? That is the question of the hour. The Muse of History will smile on any political leader who can pull this off.

—William Kristol

Step Up on Immigration

More than a few Republican graybeards are panicking about how the rise of Donald Trump is pulling at the seams of the GOP's big tent. However, the Republican establishment itself has played a big role in creating this particular Frankenstein's monster.

In September 2014, I found myself in Lexington, Nebraska, population 10,230. I was at a campaign stop with the soon-to-be-elected junior senator from Nebraska, and it seemed as if voters in this small town wanted to talk about one issue in particular. Just a few weeks earlier—right before school was to start—the federal government had showed up in Lexington and dropped off 11 unaccompanied Central American children who had been scooped up in the recent border crisis. The handoff was done with little warning and without any apparent concern about how the folks in a small town with a small budget and limited resources were going to take care of these kids. The Obama White House's lawless immigration policy had created an avoidable humanitarian crisis, and heartland voters were being given no choice but to deal with the consequences.

Despite the very real pain and costs associated with decades of federal neglect of immigration policy, both parties have treated voters' legitimate concerns about the issue with disdain.

It's easy to see why voters have become radicalized on the issue. Republicans have long mouthed platitudes about enforcing immigration laws, with little to no follow-through. Democrats, eager to play identity politics, argue that border controls are essentially racist. And it doesn't help that the left-leaning media, which have been masterfully manipulated by Trump, view all worries about immigration as the last gasp of a nativist underclass in a country where the demographics are rapidly and inexorably changing.

Unfortunately for Republicans, voter demographics *are* changing. One such change is that white American voters are increasingly voting Republican, and this is creating some pressure to turn the party into something that is genuinely nativist rather than a party unfairly perceived as such. After all, as *National Review*'s Ramesh Ponnuru recently pointed out, given the vagaries of Electoral College math, Mitt Romney could have done 40 points better among Hispanic voters and still not garnered the votes to win in 2012. By contrast, had Romney done just 4 points better among white voters, the White House would have been his.

For Republican campaign types, the easiest path to victory might appear to be finding ways to stir up white voters. But if white identity politics looks like how the GOP might win the White House in the short term, it's bad news for America in the long term. The party of Lincoln has been the one that understands our nation's failures and triumphs are linked to our ability to adhere to the principles of individual liberty above race and class divisions.

In the meantime, for Republicans alarmed by the prospect of Trump claiming the Republican mantle in Cleveland next summer, one way to take the wind out of his sails would be to try to unite the party behind a credible immigration policy. And since the GOP controls Congress, they could start on the issue tomorrow. It need not be a radical agenda; it should simply be one that takes the issue of enforcement seriously and is backed by a credible commitment that it will be enacted. After congressional Republicans go on the offensive and Obama vetoes a few bills in areas of bipartisan agreement such as tougher border security, perhaps GOP primary voters won't be as inclined to turn to party outsiders to see their concerns addressed.

Similarly, the other Republican presidential hopefuls can seize the opportunity Trump has created to talk about immigration and do so frankly. Where Trump's rhetoric on the issue is little more than pandering, articulating tough but realistic policies would make Trump look small by comparison. Unfortunately, the supposedly serious GOP candidates haven't offered voters enough substance to distinguish themselves from Trump.

Based on recent election results, Republicans shouldn't fear addressing immigration head-on. A large percentage of Hispanic voters are more receptive to the GOP's message of economic opportunity and traditional values than they are in favor of open borders. In 2014, Georgia senator David Perdue and governor Nathan Deal each won more than 40 percent of the Hispanic vote while holding tough positions on illegal immigration. Arizona governor Doug Ducey and Texas governor Greg Abbott did more than 5 points better than their GOP predecessors with Hispanics. It helps that Republicans have also elected impressive Hispanic pols, such as Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, Susana Martinez, and Brian Sandoval.

Until the GOP establishment convinces voters it's serious about immigration, Trump will dominate the debate.

That's because Trump is saying something voters want to hear on an issue the Republican party has been needlessly afraid to address.

—Mark Hemingway

Growth and Inequality

Tesla Roadster: Why should its owners be subsidized?

The economic recovery is barely worthy of the name, and there is evidence that inequality in America is increasing. Ignoring the first rule of statistics—correlation is not causation—progressives see this as a new reason to expand government. Reduce inequality and the growth rate will increase.

But there is more assertion than fact in the claim that increased inequality results in slower growth. Some studies suggest that to be the case, others point out that so many factors determine an economy's growth rate that heeding the call of the redistributionists will not add much to the flagging growth of our economy.

Still, respectable economists at the International Monetary Fund, famous for the speed with which they revise their forecasts, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development say significant income redistribution is needed if advanced economies are to grow faster. These practitioners of the dismal science are joined by our homegrown left-leaning economists—when they are not busy criticizing these very same organizations for backing the growth-devastating austerity Krugman & Co. contend has turned bad to worse in Greece.

NEWSCOM

All of this has morphed into criticism of the American economic model. Years ago it was Mussolini who made the trains run on time, then communism that would spread prosperity to the masses by sending capitalists north, then National Socialism that had the answer to a worldwide recession (rearmament). More recently we've heard hosannas to the centrally directed Chinese model, which now seems threatened by its internal contradictions. Now it is any system that is less unequal than ours, although beware of comparative data: The gap between Vladimir Putin's reported income and that of a Moscow store clerk is probably less than the gap between a successful investment banker and a New York sales clerk. And if it turns out that reducing inequality can't be defended as a growth enhancer, well, it surely can on grounds of fairness.

Not "surely." If we are indeed engaged in a search for the economic system that looks in the mirror and declares itself the fairest of all, as President Obama believes he sees in the European democratic socialism model, it is not the income-distribution figures that should be our guide. Most advanced economies do well by those on the top of the heap. The rich will always be with us, to borrow from Matthew, unless it was Mark. The place to look for which is the fairest is at the bottom: In which economic system is the living standard of the poorest highest? In America, some 50 million people live below the official poverty line, but that measure does not include food stamps, rent subsidies and entitlements, and other income transfers that supplement their wages. As scholar after scholar has pointed out, although being poor is not as much fun as being rich, and being poor can involve considerable hardship, the typical household living at 125 percent of the official poverty line or below owns a car, lives in an air-conditioned house, has cable or satellite service, a refrigerator, a microwave, and those with children have a game system. And 84 percent have two or three color television sets according to the Energy Information Administration. The average *poor* American has more living space than the *average* European.

So before attacking inequality by raising taxes on the rich and hiking the minimum wage, think of the word used by the great William Buckley: "stop." Stop taking cash out of the paychecks of the poor and middle class to subsidize $85,000 electric cars for Hollywood celebrities; stop raising the energy bills of the poor and of struggling workers by forcing them to buy wind-produced energy instead of cheaper coal- and natural-gas-based energy; stop making it difficult for poor and even not-so-poor farmers to make a living so that little fish can swim around unimpeded; stop the government monopoly from fleecing middle-class taxpayers to support students who don't want to repay their loans; stop taxing Joe the plumber for gasoline he buys to get to work so that richer cyclists have still more bike lanes in which to amuse themselves. There's more, but you get the idea. I hope this bit of hyperbole helps to focus the debate.

—Irwin M. Stelzer

A Fading Campaign

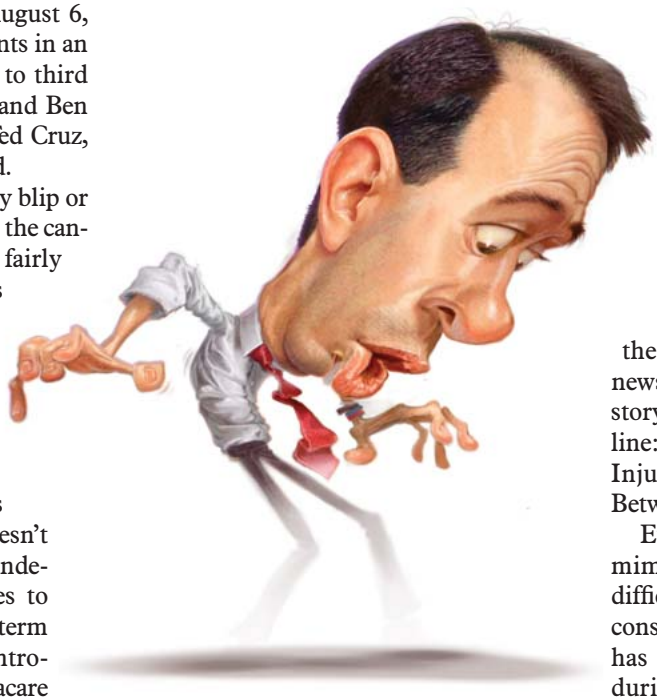
Scott Walker's no-good month.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

It's been a rough month for Scott Walker. From February through July, the Wisconsin governor topped virtually every poll of likely GOP voters in the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses. But after a lackluster performance in the opening Republican presidential debate on August 6, Walker dropped nearly 10 points in an average of Iowa polls, sliding to third place behind Donald Trump and Ben Carson, with Carly Fiorina, Ted Cruz, and Marco Rubio close behind.

Is Walker's dive a temporary blip or a sign of deeper problems with the candidate? The case for calm is fairly strong. There are five months and five more debates left until anyone must settle on a candidate. Trumpmania has overtaken the entire GOP field, not just Walker. When the "frontrunner" is only polling in the high teens or low twenties, the title doesn't mean much—voters remain undecided. And Walker continues to lay the groundwork for long-term victory: On August 18, he introduced a plan to repeal Obamacare that Yuval Levin, a leading conservative reformer, called "the most substantively and politically serious conservative health care reform we have yet seen from a presidential candidate." There's still hope for Walker that when the dust settles he'll be the candidate left standing who can unite a fractious party.

But signs of deeper trouble for Walker are also strong. The theory behind a Walker candidacy is that after two terms of Barack Obama, voters are ready for a workhorse, not a showhorse. The Trump phenomenon may indicate that's not true, and voters still want a candidate with charisma—someone who can inspire or, in the case of Trump, at least entertain them.



GARY LOCKE

Walker has always acknowledged he's an ordinary guy who doesn't give soaring speeches, but he believes that charisma is about much more than oratory. "I think there's a certain appeal that people have for candidates who are authentic, people who have a passion for ideas and who believe in things," Walker told me during his 2014 gubernatorial reelection campaign. "We say what we mean, we mean what we say. I think that's certainly appealing."

Lately, however, Walker himself seems intent on undermining his core appeal as an authentic, straight-talking conservative.

On Monday, August 17, Walker said in a Fox News interview that his position on immigration is "very similar" to Donald Trump's. When asked by an MSNBC reporter later that day if he thinks birthright citizenship should be ended for the children of illegal immigrants, Walker replied, "yeah, absolutely, going forward." But by Friday, after a week of negative headlines and criticism from some donors, Walker declared of birthright citizenship on CNBC, "I'm not taking a position on it one way or the other."

Two days later, ABC's George Stephanopoulos asked Walker if he supported the Fourteenth Amendment's provision that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States . . . are citizens of the United States." Walker replied: "Well, I said the law is there, we need to enforce the laws, including those that are in the Constitution." The satirical newspaper the *Onion* published a story the next day with the headline: "Out-of-Control Scott Walker Injured After Wildly Careening Between Stances on Immigration."

Even when he isn't trying to mimic Trump, Walker has had a difficult time delivering a clear and consistent message. The governor has a strong pro-life record, but during his 2014 reelection campaign he wouldn't say if he'd sign legislation protecting unborn children after the fifth month of pregnancy. He again declined to specify any actions he'd take to protect the lives of unborn children in a March 1 interview on *Fox News Sunday*. Two days later, under pressure from pro-life leaders, Walker said he would sign the popular bill banning abortion after the fifth month of pregnancy. He made good on that promise in June.

But in the August 6 GOP debate, with 24 million people watching, Walker staked out a very unpopular

John McCormack is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

position on the issue. When Fox News's Megyn Kelly asked Walker if he'd "really let a mother die rather than have an abortion," Walker replied, "that unborn child can be protected, and there are many other alternatives that will also protect the life of that mother." In a post-debate interview with Sean Hannity, Walker called the question a "false choice."

"Medically, there's always a better choice between choosing the life of an unborn baby and the life of the mother," Walker told Hannity. "Medically, that's just a nonissue."

There were several problems with Walker's statements, the first of which is that they just aren't true. There are cases prior to viability when lifesaving treatment for a pregnant woman will necessarily result in the death of her unborn child. A Walker aide told me that Walker doesn't consider such treatments to be abortion, but Walker's public comments did not make that clear.

Ethicists may make such distinctions between a lifesaving treatment that results in the death of a child and a direct abortion, but American laws never have. "All states had at least a life of the mother exception before *Roe* v. *Wade*. Until 1967, almost all states prohibited abortion except to save the life of the mother, with a few that had 'health' in their law," Clarke Forsythe, senior counsel at Americans United for Life, told me in an email. "I don't recall any states that specifically made the statutory distinction in the text between 'direct' abortions."

Almost all voters, including Republican voters, support an exception to abortion laws when a mother's life is endangered. That's why Bill Burton, a Democratic operative who ran President Obama's super-PAC in 2012, wrote on Twitter, "Megyn Kelly/Scott Walker exchange probably the most important of the night—it will live deep into the general if he's the nominee." Walker was hammered explicitly on the issue of abortion exceptions in 2010, 2012, and 2014, and he scored solid victories each time in a Democratic-leaning state. But he hadn't provided opponents with the kind of fodder that he gave them in the August 6 debate.

After Walker publicly defended this deeply unpopular position, a donor told the *Washington Post* that Walker privately "has promised that he would not push a 'social agenda' as president and is simply expressing his personal beliefs when asked."

That might be true enough with regard to the question posed to him at the debate. Republican-sponsored legislation to ban late-term abortion and tax-funded abortion includes the usual exceptions for extreme cases—and it's such bills that would end up on a President Walker's desk to be signed. The governor would be better off talking about these specific and popular policies, contrasting them with Hillary Clinton's extreme position on the issue, than getting suckered into a theoretical debate only to dismiss his comments later as personal opinion.

The reason Walker became a strong contender in the first place is that he did the right thing, as far as conservatives are concerned, in facing down public unions even after being swarmed by protesters and the media. The polls had turned against him, but Walker signed the collective bargaining bill anyway. Only after the reforms took effect did they become popular. As Walker himself later acknowledged, he did a poor job of explaining them. "My problem was I fixed it, then I talked about it. Most politicians spend all their time talking about it but never fix it," he said in a 2012 debate.

There's still time for Walker to turn things around and win the GOP nomination. But if he's going to succeed, he'll need to do a better job of explaining his agenda—and convincing voters it's clear in his own mind. ♦

Doing Better with Hispanic Voters

It's an achievable goal for the GOP.

BY FRED BARNES

Three of the Republican presidential candidates are sons of immigrants. Marco Rubio's parents—his father a bartender, his mother a maid—came from Cuba. The parents of Bobby Jindal emigrated from India, his father an engineer, his mother a student who later earned two master's degrees. Ted Cruz's father is an evangelical pastor from Cuba, his mother an American citizen. Cruz himself, a citizen from birth, was born in Canada.

The three candidates became success stories at a relatively early age. Rubio was 39 when elected to the Senate from Florida. Jindal won the Louisiana governorship at 36. Cruz was 43 when he captured a Senate seat in Texas. Democrats have nothing that comes close to matching this.

Yet Republicans have failed to package the three to draw attention to their immigrant "narrative," says GOP consultant Marc Rotterman. They show that "we're the party of upward mobility," he says. "It's not the Democrats." It's a positive narrative likely to appeal to immigrant voters.

But forget that. It's an anti-immigrant theme that now dominates the Republican presidential race and GOP politics in general. Sadly, it's a theme far more likely to hurt the party's chances in the 2016 election than help, notably in winning Hispanic support.

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at The Weekly Standard.

Indeed, the strategy embraced by a large segment of Republicans is all but certain to alienate Hispanic voters. It consists of running against what Hispanics see as their interests, rather than courting Hispanics as a critical voting bloc. This is a political mistake, since Hispanics are expected to make up 9 or 10 percent of the 2016 electorate.

Donald Trump is not entirely responsible for this, but his intemperate attacks on illegal immigrants have had an enormous impact. Plus, his remarks have been exploited by Democrats and the media, especially Spanish-language talk show hosts.

In stepping up his attacks, Trump has called for deporting the 11 or 12 million illegal immigrants here—an estimated 70 percent of them are from Mexico and Latin America. He has also hinted he'd like to reduce legal immigration. And he's eager to repeal "birthright" citizenship for those born in America of illegal immigrant parents.

The effect of these attacks on Hispanics is significant. They pay close attention to issues touching their community. They know about Trump's denunciations and the enthusiastic response to him by millions of people, especially on the birthright issue.

To many Hispanics, the rise of the birthright issue suggests they're unwelcome in the United States. Ted Cruz, Rick Santorum, and Lindsey Graham were among presidential candidates in agreement with Trump, who said automatic citizenship provided in the Fourteenth Amendment "remains the biggest magnet for illegal immigration." Cruz said on the Michael Medved radio show that ending the right would be "difficult," since it would require a constitutional amendment.

Rubio, Jeb Bush, and John Kasich dissented, as did Scott Walker after wavering for a week. "I'm open to doing things that prevent people who deliberately come to the U.S. for purposes of taking advantage of the Fourteenth Amendment, but I'm not in favor of repealing it," Rubio said. Bush called birthright citizenship a "noble concept."

Kasich, once an opponent, said the issue should go away. "Let these people who are born here be citizens and that's the end of it," he said on CNN. "I don't want to dwell on it."

For all the hot rhetoric, the Trump ascendancy has raised questions about the strategic importance of the Hispanic vote. For one thing, Gallup and other pollsters found that while Hispanics dislike Trump overwhelmingly, this hasn't tainted the other Republican candidates, at least yet. Bush, Trump's chief Republican foe, has gained in favorability from plus 1 in July to plus 22 in August.

Hillary Clinton has revealed how Democrats will deal with Republicans who differ from Trump: They'll link every Republican to Trump anyway. "These days, there's not much daylight between Jeb Bush and his Republican colleagues when it comes to immigration," she said in a statement.

Mark her down as a 'maybe.'

CHIP SOMODEVILLA / GETTY

Another question: Do Republicans need at least 40 percent of the growing Hispanic vote to win the presidency next year? I think the answer is yes, as a study by Latino Decisions, a Hispanic polling group, found. That's also the view of pollster Whit Ayres, author of *2016 and Beyond: How Republicans Can Elect a President in the New America*. It's "new" because nonwhites make up a bigger share of the electorate than ever.

But those in Trump's orbit, at least regarding Hispanics, point to an analysis by Nate Cohen of the *New York Times*. Republicans "do not necessarily need significant gains among Hispanic voters to win the presidency," he wrote. The GOP share fell from 44 percent for George W. Bush in 2004 to 27 percent for Mitt Romney in 2012.

So Republicans can ignore Hispanics, as Romney did, and still have a path to victory. "But it's just a harder one," Cohn noted. It's a gamble based on getting more white votes. A more sensible approach is to go after Hispanic voters, as successful Republican Senate candidates did in last year's midterm election.

There's no trick to it. You treat Hispanic voters much like white voters. You become a presence in their community. You organize. You show respect. You take up their concerns. You endorse some form of immigration reform that doesn't have to include a road to citizenship. You appear in campaign ads on Spanish-speaking media.

The test in 2016 will be in Florida, a must-win state for the Republican presidential nominee. Romney came close, losing 49-50 percent by maxing out on the white vote. But there are more Hispanics now. Puerto Ricans are pouring in from their bankrupt homeland, and they have the right to vote. They normally vote Democratic but are persuadable. "Republicans have an opportunity," says Alfonso Aguilar of the American Principles Project. They better seize it. ♦

The Greatest of Teachers

Amy A. Kass, 1940-2015.

BY CAITRIN KEIPER

There are teachers and there are professors. To be a professor is to profess, to impart by virtue of one's superior wisdom and authority the knowledge that one has and one's students do not. The insights given by a great professor are a privilege to receive. To be a teacher, by contrast, calls for more ingenuity and patience; it is the canny art of coaxing insights out of the students themselves—a "midwife to knowledge," as Socrates would have it. With wisdom and authority to spare, Amy Apfel Kass, who passed away on August 19, could easily have been a great professor. Instead, she was the greatest of teachers.

Born in New York in 1940, she was a bright light at the University of Chicago for 34 years, also teaching at St. John's College in Annapolis and in various programs of the Hudson Institute in Washington. Notwithstanding these elite affiliations, she was democratic in her means and aims, a defender of the liberal arts as a heritage that belongs to and benefits everyone, with a sneakily elemental way of bringing them to life.

When I met Amy—then "Mrs. Kass"—I was a freshman who had crept into her class on *King Lear* where I did not belong, hoping she would sign my registration slip. She sternly admonished me that this was a class meant for experienced students who would all be held to the same high standard, as I turned myself inside out promising to make every effort to meet it. She peered down her nose at me, her face impassive but her eyes dancing. "I believe you," she said.

What followed was a transformative experience. Her standards were indeed high, enforced by a finely calibrated nonsense detector, but raised by an even more finely calibrated radar for a promising line of thought. "Another sentence, please," was her frequent rejoinder: You haven't made your case yet, but I sense you have one in you. All the same, you needed both humility and pluck to make it. Naming no names, I knew one cowering student who always made a point of sitting next to her so as to avoid her penetrating stare from across the room. That stare could plow the earth out from under you if ever directed that way with disgust. But it never was—at most, with disbelief, and a pointer back to solid ground. Indeed, although she might be said to "never suffer fools," she was *always* suffering fools, driven by a bottomless ambition that we could think and be so much better than we knew. Her eyes lit up with a kind of knowing surprise every time that faith was rewarded, as if she expected no less but still marveled at what was said.

Presiding over a seminar, July 16, 2012

COURTESY OF THE HERTOG FOUNDATION

As for the course's content? That one tragedy, just the one, mined for all the treasure it holds. Is there even enough to go on, you may ask, twice a week for months in a single Shakespeare play? Oh yes. Why does Gloucester begin with such a crude and blustery introduction of his bastard son, and why does it matter? What does Kent's response say of his character? Does Lear's plan to divide his kingdom make any sense? What is he trying to accomplish or avoid? Why does he force the "love test"? How can Cordelia fail to answer? Why does Lear not see what is so plain to everybody else, and find a way to backtrack before disappointment gives way to disaster? And that's just the first half of the first scene. At the conclusion of the term, by popular demand, we convened for a bonus session to return to the problems posed at the start. We felt like now we were ready to *begin* our study of this dark illumination of family, power, and mortality. We were learning to read.

An added benefit of this and many of her other classes was the habitual presence of her partner in all things, Leon Kass, resulting in what she self-mockingly (but accurately) would sometimes refer to as "the Amy and Leon Show." They always sat directly across from each other, while an invisible line between them crackled with tangible energy, like some kind of superstring from outer space. This was the marriage you wanted to have, if you only knew that such existed. Best of all was when they disagreed—not only for the spectacle of a good-humored literary squabble, but because it showed the students that multiple perspectives really were defensible, and because the

Caitrin Keiper, a graduate of the University of Chicago, is editor of Philanthropy.

engagement between them energized the text and led to deeper understanding. (That said, she usually "won.")

In the beginning, or close enough, a young Amy Apfel enrolled at Antioch College, where she "spent the better part of a year folk-dancing." Through Antioch's internship program, she got a job at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. On her first lunch break, she walked over to the University of Chicago's admissions office and submitted a transfer application, then called her parents to tell them where they could reach her from now on.

On her matriculation at Chicago, two fateful events happened in short order. First, she went to a party for new students hosted by a committee devoted to keeping the spirit of inquiry at the college alive; among its members was the 19-year-old medical student Leon Kass. Second, she enrolled in the legendary Karl Weintraub's course on Western civilization (students used to camp outside his office overnight in order to attend). Years later, she would say her mental reference for the "air of authority" embodied by King Lear was Mr. Weintraub.

One day she reported to him for a meeting. "So, Miss Apfel, what are you going to study in graduate school?" he growled. She stammered her way through the interview and withdrew, then pulled aside a passerby out on the quad. "Excuse me, what is graduate school?" she asked. In the Apfel family, one went to medical school. But in time, the answer to his question turned out to be the history of ideas and the purposes of the modern liberal arts movement, the foundation for the curriculum she would dedicate her life to teaching. She traded clinical questions with determinable answers for perennial questions with inexhaustible answers.

Those questions were not the ordinary austere humanistic deep-think—is there free will, what is man in a state of nature, and so forth—although they would inevitably lead in a profound direction. But they took on a character of their own. An Amy Kass discussion might begin thus: In the Declaration of Independence—"When, in the course of human events"—what does it mean for human events to have a course? Do they? In Shakespeare's Sonnet 116—"Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments"—is it minds that marry? How? In the 1934 romantic comedy *It Happened One Night*, what is the "it"? Setting the tone with such a query was an invitation to read closely, to attend to the subtleties of what's in front of you, rather than pursuing abstract theories into space, to not take what you thought you knew for granted, to uncover what in some sense you knew all along.

Alternatively, the introduction might not be so literal, but instead an open-ended prodding to creative reflections: What is the difference between an adventure and a voyage? What does it mean to be at war, or be at peace? Is "home" the place where you are from?

Or it might be a focused investigation into a particular character—a line of inquiry that, if not taken up with the first question, she would soon turn to as the discussion went on. Out of the classic five Ws and an H, Amy's approach seemed to be that when you have a handle on the *who*, the rest will more or less reveal itself accordingly. But you may not ever get to the bottom of that who. "What a piece of work is a man," as Hamlet says.

Part of the secret was that the *who* off the page was as important to her as the *who* on it. There is a popular quotation widely attributed to George Eliot: "It is never too late to be what you might have been." Eliot never actually said this, but it's a fair description of Amy's position towards her students of all varieties, from tender and cocky undergrads on the brink of enormous life change to D.C. policy wonks shocked out of their stodgy habits of thought by a humanizing revelation. To be what you might have been: not a reference to a career reevaluation or other things that often are too late to change, but to the orientation of the soul.

It was among her deepest convictions that the works of great writers over time have the capacity to elevate our thoughts and aspirations—to encourage us to reason better, feel better, seek better, become better. Through such works, this education is available to everyone throughout our lives. A recurring theme of her Johns Hopkins dissertation on the liberal arts and the "Great Books" movement is that adult education has always been an important aspect of that project—not an afterthought or spin-off, but a major impetus. (The inspiration was the "People's Institute" in turn-of-the-century New York City, where immigrants gathered in the thousands to participate in lectures and discussions.)

In that spirit, Amy's own educational project encompassed both four decades of teaching undergraduates and a wide variety of other offerings for general dissemination. At the University of Chicago, she helped design a core class for freshmen, "Human Being and Citizen," and a departmental major for students to investigate a question of their own—Why are democracies dangerous? What is a father? Should we have secrets?—across philosophical and literary texts.

For the last decade, she maintained a perch at the Hudson Institute, where her focus was philanthropy, civic life, and the American character—as known through story, speech, essay, and song. Through formal and informal reading groups, video conversations and movie discussion series, curricula, and anthologies, she encouraged private flourishing and public-spiritedness, one awakened thinker at a time. Meanwhile, she took as many wandering souls under her wing as she could fit.

A highlight of Hudson's annual programming was the Christmas discussion that Amy, a very chosen member of the Chosen People, always led. Often with seemingly odd or bleak story selections for the season, she drew out the mystery of charity and renewal, and the idea that no one is beyond grace.

Another quotation, this one unmistakably Eliot's, captures what it means to make your life's work other people:

> Her finely touched spirit had still its fine issues, though they were not widely visible. Her full nature, like that river of which Cyrus broke the strength, spent itself in channels which had no great name on this earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs.

Fortunately Amy did not live a hidden life, and will not go unremembered. But she did not leave behind much of a paper trail or other monument to her achievement. One catches glimpses of what she was up to in her several anthologies—with her touch visible in their selections and the tantalizing little introductions to each—in recorded conversations, in the course of study she designed at the university she loved, and in the spirit animating her inseparable husband Leon's much larger body of written work. But to see her true accomplishment, you have to look without and look within.

Out and about, there are the hundreds of sometime students for whom she was, as one eulogist at her service put it, "the teacher of our lives"—not just the teacher of a lifetime, but the teacher who showed us how to live. We received an inheritance from her that now belongs to our own students, readers, children, in incalculably diffusive and unhistoric ways.

Within, there are the voices of *the choir invisible / Of those immortal dead who live again / In minds made better by their presence* (Eliot again) with *pulses stirr'd to generosity* and *thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars*. Having recommended this choir to us and trained our ears to hear it, she now joins it herself. The song goes on. Everything she meant for us to know and be is still there for us to discover and reflect and act upon. You *can* give birth without a midwife. I only wish we didn't have to. ♦

COURTESY OF DIANA SCHAUB

Her 'Epic Reverberations'

Remembering Amy Kass.

BY DIANA SCHAUB

Amy Kass was a great reader of George Eliot; she also had the sympathetic imagination so prized by the author of *Middlemarch*. Even in the difficult, yet beautiful, final weeks in hospice care, Amy found the generous strength to study the novel's opening pages with her oldest granddaughter, raising with her the penetrating questions that were her teacherly gift to generations of students.

When her granddaughter reaches the last paragraph of that long novel, she will find a few select phrases that could describe the unostentatious but far-reaching influence her grandmother had on "the growing good of the world." Like Eliot's heroine Dorothea Brooke, Amy Kass possessed a "finely touched spirit" and a "full nature." Every speaker at her recent memorial service feelingly confirmed what her friends knew to be true: "[T]he effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive."

Amy Kass, 2009

Amy poured herself out liberally to family, friends, and students. She offered her wisdom, her sympathy, her smile, trusting open-heartedly to the result. She was, above all else, a teacher, with the patience and humility that requires—humility before the text and author under consideration, humility in the face of the "mysterious mixture" that is human nature, humility in treating her students as potential equals in philosophic conversation. (The formal presumption of equality was visible in her practice of addressing students as Mr. and Miss, at the same time declining the honorific "Professor" for herself.) The educational force of Mrs. Kass was supreme because she knew how to turn a classroom, or a dinner table, or an elevator ride, into a place where souls were shared and shaped.

Amy's mode was the seminar, with the entire school quarter devoted to one book, a big one like *War and Peace*, *The Odyssey*, *Moby Dick*, or *Middlemarch*. In a lecture on George Eliot entitled "Sympathy, Love and Marriage: Effective Reform in *Middlemarch*," delivered in 2010 at Bowdoin College, Amy made the case for studying these monsters of the Western canon:

> The virtue of a long book is precisely that it occupies us for a really long time: time not merely to visit but also to inhabit a different world; time not merely to meet but also to befriend and understand new kinds of people; time not merely to imagine novel decisions but also to live with their consequences. In a word, reading a long great book enables one to live feelingly outside of oneself. For those who teach as a vocation, not just as a job, there is no better gift one can give one's students.

Diana Schaub is professor of political science at Loyola University Maryland and coeditor with Amy A. Kass and Leon R. Kass of What So Proudly We Hail: The American Soul in Story, Speech, and Song *(ISI, 2011).*

"Critical thinking" is the mantra on college campuses these days. All well and good, but for critical thinking to be anything beyond arrogant cleverness, it must be grounded in moral seriousness. That was what Amy brought forth in her students. They already knew they were bright; she took them seriously as moral agents (more seriously than most had ever taken themselves) who longed to figure out the contours of a good life. They rose to the challenge—and challenge it was, for Mrs. Kass's encouragement had a peculiarly bracing quality. It wasn't usually approval of what had been said, but rather an invitation to say more and to say it more precisely and more searchingly.

In June 2010, on the occasion of Amy's receipt of the University of Chicago's Norman Maclean Award (given by alumni for extraordinary teaching), hundreds of former students gathered to express their gratitude for her abiding influence on their lives. Some notable teachers receive a *festschrift*, in which a handful of students who have elected to pursue the scholarly life write scholarly essays in recognition of their teacher's example. A *festschrift* is a tribute not to be scorned—but how different this testament was. What Amy's students shared was not a career path (for they had scattered in many directions), but an education—an education of heart and head, an education that was in many cases being passed on to their own children ("incalculably diffusive" indeed!).

Amy Kass taught for 34 years in the College at the University of Chicago. As a graduate student at Chicago in the early 1980s, I studied with Leon Kass, but never with Amy. Yet, long before I met her, she acquired a special status in my imagination. I knew of her solely from the praise of others and the reputation of the core course "Human Being and Citizen" that she and Leon had created. It wasn't until a quarter-century later that I finally saw this fabled teacher in action—and she did not disappoint.

After the Kasses moved to Washington, D.C., Amy ran a seminar series at the Hudson Institute for young policy wonks, established think-tankers, and a smattering of academics. This was a scaled-down version of her Chicago classes, meeting less often and reading short stories rather than novels. Because they weren't as fresh and daring as freshmen are, the Washingtonians were perhaps less inclined to be led out of themselves and their settled convictions. However, they did have more substantial reserves of knowledge and insight that could be brought into play. Amy adjusted her stride to the new audience, but her pathway into a text remained the same. She began with a carefully scripted, masterful summary of the plot along with a few choice observations about the author's writing style or some needed historical background. These preliminaries would culminate in a deceptively simple question—a question that would then open out into more and ever deeper questions as the conversation took form under her light but sure guidance. There was something magical about it. Even her pixie haircut and the hint of mischief in her eyes, as if thinking hard were the most adventurous of activities, helped to cast the spell and turn us into conversational co-conspirators, feeling more earnest and free.

'Critical thinking' is the mantra on college campuses these days. All well and good, but for critical thinking to be anything beyond arrogant cleverness, it must be grounded in moral seriousness. That was what Amy brought forth in her students.

Post-Chicago, Amy (with Leon anchoring the other end of the table) continued to teach undergraduates under the auspices of the Hertog Summer Program. In general, students appreciate team-taught courses, especially if there is a prospect of dialectical fireworks. In this case, the doubled pedagogical energy had a special charge. Here was a clearly loving couple, equals in wit, who, whether in agreement or disagreement upon the point at issue, charmingly addressed one another with old-fashioned decorum. I suspect their example gave the idea of marriage a new attractiveness, but also led students to a realization of just how seriously one ought to approach the choice of a life partner. One could see that virtues of character and good manners really mattered—could make life more fun and sexy, more joyous and fulfilling.

Because she was a teacher at heart, always willing to adapt to the needs of new students, Amy (in her ever-active retirement) devised new ways to reach a wider audience. Although the Socratic mode of private, small-group conversation remained her ideal, Amy did write and publish. But she did so with a uniquely teacherly intention. The form she made her own was the anthology. There is modesty in that choice; she wasn't intent on forwarding her own literary interpretations (marvelous though they were). Instead, she put before new generations of students—who didn't have the luck to study with her in person—selected works (prefaced by those all-important questions) that might enable an inquiring reader to "live feelingly outside of oneself." Her five edited anthologies make a kind of approximation of her classroom. The topics indicate the matters of central concern to her: marriage (*Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar: Readings on Courting and Marrying*, with Leon as co-editor), philanthropy (*Giving Well, Doing Good: Readings for Thoughtful Philanthropists* and *The Perfect Gift: The Philanthropic Imagination in Poetry and Prose*), and American identity (*American Lives: Cultural Differences, Individual Distinction: An Anthology of American Autobiography* and *What So Proudly We Hail: The American Soul in Story, Speech, and Song*).

Each of these was a public-spirited undertaking. To see how a collection of stories and poems might

have a broadly political purpose, let me quote again from Amy's lecture on *Middlemarch*: "[E]ffective public reform depends first and last on personal reform, which politics cannot itself produce." This statement about Eliot's intention reveals, I think, the underlying assumption of Amy's anthologies: To be *effective* one must pay attention to the *affective* dimension. Through literature, with its unique access to the moral imagination, Amy sought to encourage the affective preconditions for a flourishing republic: individuals capable of living on terms of intimate and understanding equality with a treasured other; friends and neighbors who are thoughtfully concerned about how best to care for others, both near and far; finally, and most expansively, citizens who are robust and mindful patriots.

After getting to know Amy through the Hudson seminars, I had the privilege of working with her (and Leon) on the anthology for citizens, *What So Proudly We Hail*. Every element of the project was an unalloyed delight. For me, Amy stands as the model of all things good: in love, in friendship, in the relations of a full life (from grandmother to citizen), in the activity of thought, and, yes, a model for how to meet death (when to grapple with it and when to accept it). I've had a lot of great teachers over the years—her husband, Leon Kass, high among them—but these last half-dozen years of acquaintance with Amy were an unexpected gift: a gift that allowed me to be a student again and at the same time a friend.

At the close of Amy's lecture on *Middlemarch*, when she shifts from discussing Dorothea to discussing her creator, she describes Eliot as the founder of an "invisible 'movement'":

> Eliot's authorial voice, heard in her many bold and memorable assertions and exhortations, turns our attention not only to the fate of her characters but also to our own habits of heart—our *attitudes*, *prejudices*, and *sensibilities*. Dwelling with Dorothea and the many other characters in *Middlemarch*, enduring their trials, and recognizing the reasons for their triumphs and failures helps "extend and intensify" also our capacity for sympathy. And if, as a result of reading and living with *Middlemarch*, any one of us is brought to a "keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life"; if we are moved to hear, understand, and give voice to the silences in lives we might otherwise simply dismiss; if we are in fact moved beyond our own moral stupidity—then we should be most profoundly grateful to George Eliot. George Eliot too lived no epic life, but once they take hold, her characters and her teachings can have epic reverberations—then, now, and always.

Amy was probably too modest to admit this as a self-portrait. Yet, all who came in contact with the "finely touched spirit" of Amy Kass knew that she too lived a life of "epic reverberations." We are profoundly grateful for what she gave us. ♦

Illegal P.R.

The EPA's propaganda machine.

BY KEVIN R. KOSAR

A little over a century ago, Rep. Frederick Gillett (R-Mass.) read something in the *New York Times* that vexed him. The Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Roads advertised that it was seeking to hire a publicity expert. Gillett could not understand why a government agency needed someone to "advertise" its work.

A few weeks later, on September 6, 1913, Gillett introduced legislation, which read: "No money appropriated by this or any other act shall be used for the compensation of any publicity experts unless specifically appropriated for that purpose." When House Agriculture Committee chairman Asbury Lever (D-S.C.) asked for his rationale, Gillett clarified that he saw no harm in agencies employing editors to write agency reports in "more popular language." What offended Gillett was agencies spending public funds to "extol" their work.

His amendment was accepted, and remains law to this day. In addition to the Gillett law, Congress has banned agencies from encouraging the public to lobby it. But one would not know this from a glance at how routinely agencies dole out propaganda.

Federal agencies regularly toot their horns to the public. They blog, post videos to YouTube, host Google hangouts, and generally flood the Internet with hyperbole and hooey. What would the children do without kids.usa.gov and its videos instructing them on the gear they need to play various sports?

Of the lot, the Environmental Protection Agency might be the most pushy and self-aggrandizing. It has at least a dozen Twitter accounts that have posted more than 70,000 tweets over the past seven years. The EPA's unabashed willingness to politic has been on full display in the recent public relations blitz for its "Clean Power Plan." The agency has posted videos, blogged, issued press releases, and frenetically blasted out 140-character propaganda:

An EPA tweet of chief Gina McCarthy

- "How would you spend $100 billion? Climate/weather disasters in the US cost that much in 2012! #ActOnClimate" (July 20)
- "People w/heart & lung illnesses are especially vulnerable to excessive heat exposure. Climate change means more health risks." #ActOnClimate (July 27)
- "Today w/#CleanPowerPlan we are showing the world what's possible. Countries across the globe will step up as we lead." (August 3)
- "No one has led us to #ActOnClimate as fearlessly as @POTUS. It's made all the difference for #CleanPowerPlan." (August 3)

Cost-benefit analysis is an inherently complex enterprise. Analysts can come to very different results, especially when trying to calculate the interplay between consumer demand, power production, and climatological effects on health. The EPA, however, brooks no dissent, and the agency's public communications lack all nuance. The EPA Connect blog confidently asserts that, thanks to its new regulations:

> By 2030, sulfur dioxide emissions from power plants will be 90 percent lower than 2005 levels, and emissions of nitrogen oxides will be 72 percent lower. Because these pollutants can create dangerous soot and smog, the historically low levels mean we'll avoid 90,000 children's asthma attacks, 300,000 missed days of school and work, and up to 3,600 premature deaths in 2030 alone.

As for those who think otherwise, EPA administrator Tom Reynolds blogs: "They're wrong."

Whatever one's feelings about the risks of climate change and the new emissions regulations, it is undeniable the EPA is not simply informing the public. It is propagandizing. The EPA's spin doctors are relentlessly on script, often in coordination with the Surgeon General's Office and other Obama appointees. The rationale for all this public-relations work is plain: The EPA is trying to build public and media support for its agenda to kneecap critics in Congress.

This is not quite how the Founders drew up our government. Congress, by virtue of being popularly elected, is to represent the public interest. The legislature enacts the laws and the executive branch is supposed to implement them. If legislators stray from the desires of the voters, they get voted out. That is democratic accountability.

Congress's best option is to direct the Government Accountability Office and the EPA Inspector General's Office to audit the agency's public-relations activities. This tactic has worked in the past. The Department of Health and Human Services dialed back its promotion of new Medicare benefits after it was subjected to GAO scrutiny. The Department of Defense abolished one of its public communications units after it was caught trying to manipulate press coverage.

The Constitution's careful balance of powers goes out the window when executive agencies make policy unilaterally and then manufacture public sentiment in support. The EPA obviously needs reminding that last year's omnibus bill, which funds it, includes this prohibition: "No part of any funds appropriated in this or any other Act shall be used by an agency of the executive branch . . . for publicity or propaganda purposes." ◆

Kevin R. Kosar is the director of the governance project at the R Street Institute.

Jobberwocky Lives

You can't keep regulating the workplace without killing jobs.

BY ANDREW B. WILSON

Twenty-one years ago, *Fortune* boldly declared "The End of the JOB." Thanks to rapid advances in technology, people had been freed from the tyranny of the nine-to-five workplace. Now they could set their own hours and schedules, do without constant oversight and supervision, and concentrate on a more powerful objective: not just "doing their jobs," but finding better and more innovative ways of "doing what needs to be done."

In today's world, Uber Technologies Inc. stands as a perfect example of a "post-job" success story. It is now serving millions of hugely satisfied customers and providing part-time or full-time work for 200,000 active drivers in 311 cities around the world. Its app-based method of connecting users and providers of taxi service is the feather that has knocked a whole industry on its ear—an industry that had been doing the same things in the same way for three-quarters of a century.

One can also cite the sprouting of dozens of major franchise operations like Two Men and a Truck that have combined to provide millions of new jobs through thousands of small business startups over the past two decades. Like Uber, they have discovered work that clearly needed to be done—once people hit upon the right way of doing it.

But none of that cuts any ice with the Obama administration and its appointed chieftains at the Department of Labor and the National Labor Relations Board. Far from applauding greater freedom and creativity in the workplace, they want to restore the old-fashioned *job* to something like its former prominence, but with a raft of new government-imposed rules and regulations. By limiting the growth of independent contracting and other means of farming out work to individuals or small businesses, the Labor Department wants to herd as many workers as possible back into the corral of corporate employment—with Big Brother there to watch out for their best interests.

Washington, D.C., Uber driver Sanjiv Kumar, at right, with a passenger, April 9, 2014

Former college professor David Weil, the Labor Department's top wage-law enforcer, explains the broad thinking behind such policies in his book *The Fissured Workplace: Why Work Became So Bad for So Many and What Can Be Done to Improve It*, published last year. Weil blames decades of outsourcing or subcontracting for deteriorating conditions in the workplace. He argues that big companies have tried to have it both ways—on one hand, making harsh or impossible demands on subcontractors; on the other, taking no responsibility for the plight of workers. The solution that follows from Weil's analysis is to force big employers to bring many jobs back in-house—and then subject them to farther-reaching and more stringent rules and regulations.

But if the analysis is faulty, the solution is no good. Why should we suppose that it is so easy for companies to mistreat or abuse subcontractors, or be motivated to do so? Should we always assume the worst of capitalist enterprise?

In public statements, Weil has complained of "jaw-dropping" violations of standard labor laws and accused employers of "finessing" job descriptions and duties in order to miscategorize workers who remained under their supervision as *independent contractors* rather than *employees*. He claims this practice has caused many dispossessed workers to incur expenses related to their jobs while losing access to overtime pay, vacation pay, and other benefits.

While waiting for Labor Department lawyers to bring forth the proof behind such accusations, you can expect to witness a good deal of hair-splitting over the legal definition of an *employee*. On July 15, Weil released a 15-page memo that was supposed to "clarify" the Labor Department's stance regarding "employees who are misclassified as independent contractors." The memo concluded that the "ultimate determination" would turn on "whether the worker is really in business for himself or herself (and thus an independent contractor) or is economically dependent on the [*putative*] employer (and thus an employee)."

But that surely is a false dichotomy. For example, does an Uber driver automatically become an Uber employee because he chooses to drive 40 or more hours a week and gets most or all of his income from the company? Or does he remain an independent contractor

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Andrew B. Wilson is a resident fellow and senior writer at the Show-Me Institute, a free-market think tank in St. Louis.

(1) because he picks where and when he works, (2) because he (like other Uber drivers) is free at any time to accept work from Lyft, its chief competitor, and (3) because he has no wish to be an employee?

Or consider the owner of a Two Men and a Truck franchise. He might depend upon the franchiser's name, brand, and preestablished business plan for the origination of 90 percent of his orders, but he would still be very much in business for himself in almost every other sense—bearing full responsibility for hiring, firing, and disciplining workers, meeting payroll, doing satisfactory work, and running a profitable business.

One of Two Men, at work

These examples also highlight a disconnect between the broken work environment described in *Fissured Workplace* and the much more vibrant conditions that exist today among companies that have come under scrutiny from the Labor Department (or freelancing plaintiff's attorneys) for alleged misclassification of workers and other infractions of labor laws.

Clearly, no one can accuse Uber, Lyft, and others of that ilk of farming out work they used to do in-house. Nor can the same accusation be made against major franchise operations such as McDonald's Corp., which has a systemwide workforce of close to two million people, nearly 80 percent of whom are employed by franchisees in locally owned and operated stores. Through six decades of operation, McDonald's has always been heavily weighted toward locally owned as opposed to company-owned outlets.

Even so, the NLRB announced last summer that it was prepared to treat McDonald's Corp. as "joint employer" of its franchisees' employees. This is no small matter. Franchisers and franchisees in dozens of different industries (not just fast food) are up in arms against the ruling—seeing it as a dagger aimed at the heart of the whole concept of franchising.

If the NLRB ruling becomes law, the "joint employer" standard will collapse a longstanding set of complementary incentives. It will subject franchisers to almost unlimited risk and deprive franchisees of the ability to act on their own in making decisions critical to running their businesses on a profitable basis, including the setting of wages and benefits and hiring, firing, and disciplinary matters.

And if government is suddenly able to treat a major franchiser as lord and master over all the little fiefdoms using its name, then it can turn the same franchiser into a one-stop enforcer of government policies. McDonald's has already agreed to raise the average wage in company-owned stores to around $10 an hour. Now it might be coaxed, cajoled, or coerced into ordering systemwide pay increases (at 10 times the number of stores)—even if that meant throwing its franchisees under the proverbial bus.

As a final matter, let us take a look at one of the new workplace rules. With a whiff of gunpowder from the class-warfare front, it is described in a Labor Department press release as "a critical first step toward ensuring that hard-working Americans are compensated fairly and have a chance to get ahead."

Do you worry that the manager or assistant manager at your favorite fast food restaurant is getting a raw deal? Do you think she should be paid time-and-a-half if she has to work more than 40 hours a week? Consider it done—or almost done. That is included in a proposed new regulation from the Labor Department that would extend mandatory overtime pay to about five million white-collar workers. If a midlevel manager is paid $25 an hour now, she will soon be boosted to $37.50 an hour for overtime work. What's more, it will be incumbent on her employer to keep close track of her time and to make sure she is paid overtime for checking on company emails or catching up on paperwork during her off-duty hours.

Is that so bad?

On one level, in mandating overtime pay for salaried workers making up to $50,400 a year, the new protocol does nothing more than repeat the foolishness of the idea that the president can "give America a raise" or that mayors and local politicians can help unskilled workers by raising minimum wage levels in their cities or towns. To force companies to pay some people more than their actual value to the business is to ensure that any well-managed, profit-seeking company will keep employment of such people to an absolute minimum. What is true for unskilled workers is equally true for middle managers.

However, this is also a rule that sets a new high-water mark in government meddling in other people's business—or businesses. Why is the government telling companies what they can or can't do when it comes to managing their managers? The CEO of one restaurant chain complains that the new rule will demote entry-level managers into "glorified crew members"—making the overriding incentive one of logging more time rather than getting results and being rewarded with bonuses and promotions. At the same time, the new rule will force employers in law offices and other professions to hang out a sign that says, in effect: We don't want any go-getters around here. You are strictly forbidden to make any special efforts for this company on unpaid time.

Obviously, that is not a good message to send for any company that wants to grow and prosper. But it is just one of the many job-killing effects of Jobberwocky, as I have called it—the mistaken belief, or the false pretense, that government can impose onerous restrictions on business and conjure up new benefits and protections for workers . . . without paying a heavy price in lost growth and employment. ♦

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A Senseless Policy

Take kids off the sex-offender registries.

BY ELI LEHRER

At age 10, Maya R. did something that would disturb just about anyone: "Me and my step-brothers, who were ages 8 and 5, 'flashed' each other and play-acted sex while fully clothed," she told Human Rights Watch researcher Nicole Pittman. After copping to the incident in juvenile court, Maya's punishment was an 18-month sentence in a detention center, mandatory counseling, and a quarter-century of registration as a sex offender.

Maya's mistake had significant consequences for her life. With her name on a sex-offender registry, she faced harassment in college and ultimately dropped out. Facing huge barriers to finding housing, she spent 90 days in a homeless shelter. She fell into a deep depression. Despite a clean adult record and a life that eventually got on the right track—she did missionary work, married, and now has a child of her own—Maya can't escape the "sex offender" label. She and thousands of others like her continue to be punished for mistakes they made as children.

In April, prosecutors in Archbold, Ohio, brought charges that could have meant mandatory registration for high-school students caught exchanging nude "selfies." An Indiana judge, likewise, has sentenced two teenage boys to lifetime sex-offender registration for having sex with teenage girls they met online. In some states, even trivial offenses like public urination and streaking can land children on registries.

Currently, 40 states have sex-offender registration for those convicted in juvenile court. This ought to trouble us, not least because it undermines the usefulness of the registries. It's a policy that needs to change at both the federal and the state levels.

The juvenile justice system is predicated on a trade-off. Juvenile defendants have fewer rights, but the system is supposed to expend greater effort at rehabilitation. There are no jury trials in juvenile courts. Records are typically confidential, and rules of evidence are looser. As counterbalance, juveniles serve shorter sentences and are sent less frequently to secure facilities. Sanctions are, at least in theory, levied in the "best interests" of those convicted, rather than meted out as punishment.

Juvenile sex offenders in Stockton, California, March 15, 2007

Unlike adult criminal records, which normally follow offenders for life, juvenile records can be sealed at age 18 (the procedure is automatic in some states). Even unsealed juvenile court convictions (which generally aren't on the public Internet) typically don't affect offenders' ability to vote, live where they choose, receive most government benefits, get professional licenses, and hold public office. When juveniles commit particularly atrocious crimes, like murder or violent rape, every state offers a procedure that would permit them to be tried and sentenced as adults.

Sex-offender registries impose some of the most severe restrictions that face anyone convicted of a criminal offense. In addition to public humiliation, made more intense in the Internet age, those required to register as sex offenders often are forbidden from living close to schools and day-care centers, pushing many far out into the country or even into homelessness (and homeless shelters turn many away). Sex offenders can be denied professional licenses and may be subject to near-constant police surveillance. Since most juveniles on sex-offender registries have victimized other juveniles, some also face restrictions intended for adult pedophiles, and can be excluded from living with their own siblings and even, as they get older, with their own children. Even those who do manage to find jobs and places to live will generally see much lower wages and find healthy adult relationships much harder to establish.

Registry laws were created to deal with the problems of recidivist pedophiles and serial rapists. They are a harsh response, but public sentiment holds they are just. And they are certainly popular, as evidenced by near-unanimous votes to create them in state after state. It's less obvious how society benefits from imposing such long-lasting sanctions in response to mistakes made by children. There's little evidence that youthful sex offenders remain a public danger. The largest meta-analysis shows that only about 7 percent of youthful sex offenders are ever convicted of another offense. Some studies have found reoffense rates as low as 1 percent. By comparison, 40 percent of adults convicted of serious crimes reoffend.

Juveniles convicted of sex offenses clutter the registries. They account for as much as 25 percent of the rolls. Monitoring these individuals for decades wastes resources that law enforcement and social workers otherwise could use more effectively to target those who pose real dangers to society. (And where young offenders do appear to pose such truly significant risks, prosecutors can avail themselves of the opportunity to file adult charges.)

States are encouraged to include juveniles in their registries by the federal Adam Walsh Act, which ties federal funding to state and local enforcement

AP / STEVE YEATER

Eli Lehrer is president of the R Street Institute.

to the degree to which state registries comply with the law's classification system for sex offenders. Not only should these incentives be eliminated, but Congress should consider withholding some grant funds from states that continue to list those adjudicated in juvenile court on the registries.

At the least, many states should rejigger their registry laws. Teenagers who have sexual relationships or exchange nude "selfies" with other teenagers may need counseling, punishments from their parents, and admonitions from other adults. But they shouldn't routinely face criminal sanctions for "statutory rape" or "child pornography."

Pre-teens like Maya R. who act out sexually may well have serious problems that require more extensive intervention. But absent strong evidence that they're likely to reoffend, they shouldn't face lifetime sanctions more severe than those levied on juveniles who commit crimes like armed robbery and auto theft. Like other juvenile offenders', their records should be eligible to be sealed, and they certainly shouldn't spend long periods on sex-offender registries.

Including children on sex-offender registries is a grave injustice that does little good and much harm. Congress and state legislatures need to undo the damage they have done. ♦

Economic Liberty vs. Security

Another time for choosing.

BY RYAN STREETER

Whatever the outcome of the 2016 presidential election, the summer of 2015 will be remembered as the summer of Trump and Sanders. The other candidates, especially the Republicans, could learn a lesson from the two renegades, who have figured out how to capitalize on the fact that America is in a funk even as its economy improves.

Unemployment is at a seven-year low, and job growth is steady, but 65 percent of respondents in the latest NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll say the country is on the wrong track. Six years ago, at the low point of the recession, the figure was 49 percent—when unemployment was 9.5 percent. It's 5.3 percent today.

Nearly all of the 2016 presidential candidates agree that middle-class stagnation is a key source of America's foul mood. But Trump and Sanders have done more than the others to blame well-connected, powerful interests for that stagnation. Sanders rails against banks, and Trump against entire countries. They have pledged a fight against forces over which everyday Americans feel they have no control, while the majority of other candidates speak as thoughtful managers and policy wonks. Hillary Clinton and GOP favorites Jeb Bush, Scott Walker, and Marco Rubio engage economic issues as capable policymakers.

But to many Americans, low wages and low-quality jobs are symptoms of a deeper problem in which, to use Elizabeth Warren's words, the game is rigged. Banks and corporations, foreign governments, and our own government are profiting from policies they have shaped with politicians at the expense of ordinary people. Sanders's promise to break up the banks or Trump's promise to take on China (all by himself, apparently) strike a chord with frustrated voters who feel helpless and want someone to fight for them.

The feeling that the powerful are rigging the game against the rest of us runs deep. According to Gallup, the share of Americans who say they are satisfied with the freedom they have to choose the direction of their lives has dropped steadily over the past decade, while the percentage of Americans who believe the U.S. government is corrupt has grown. For nearly 50 years until 2000, more than 80 percent of Americans said the United States offers plenty of opportunity to get ahead, but that figure steadily dropped to roughly 50 percent in recent years. In Pew's political typology study last year the vast majority of Americans, including steadfast conservatives and "young outsiders" who lean right on many issues, believe too much power is concentrated in the hands of too few companies. A smaller yet still significant share of people in the survey believes our current economic system favors the powerful. All of these trends stand against the backdrop of flagging confidence in institutions. With the exception of the military and small business, every institution Gallup tracks suffers from lower public support than its historical average, with the presidency, the courts, and Congress near the bottom along with banks.

Middle America's anxieties are not unfounded. The regulatory state and big business are getting bigger together as government policy increasingly favors the powerful. From 1994 to 2013 *Fortune* 100 companies grew their share of nominal GDP from 33 to 46 percent, while federal regulations grew nearly 30 percent. Vast new regulatory powers at the Departments of the Treasury and Health and Human Services are making banks and insurance companies fewer and larger. This distention of the regulatory state has exerted a downward pressure on income and growth over the years. According to a 2013 study, if we'd had the same regulatory system we had a half-century ago, we would have seen growth of 2 percent more per year, which effectively means

Ryan Streeter is the executive director of the Center for Politics and Governance at the University of Texas at Austin.

the economy would be more than three times larger today than it is.

Democrats have done a better job than Republicans talking about Americans' feeling of disempowerment. The ascendant progressivism of Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, which Hillary Clinton is embracing even if not persuasively, uses economic security as its framework for fighting back against the forces of inequity in America. Their view relies on a more muscular redistributive state and old-fashioned tools of the left such as confiscatory taxes, higher minimum wages, and stricter labor laws. When Hillary Clinton threatened to impose "workforce protections" on sharing-economy companies such as Uber and Airbnb in her July economic address, she was using the language of economic security.

Even as GOP presidential candidates have parroted the conventional wisdom that Trump has "tapped into" the frustration voters feel, they have largely avoided doing so themselves. When they talk about the middle class, they thoughtfully discuss familiar topics such as tax reform, education reforms, and replacing Obamacare. Their focus on upward mobility for the middle class is a welcome departure from Mitt Romney's 2012 focus on "makers and takers" and the 47 percent, but they are missing an opportunity to tie their tax and health care policy ideas to a more compelling policy framework.

They would do better to fight for an alternative vision for America, one of economic liberation as opposed to the left's economic security. Many people legitimately want security, but many also want to know it is possible to be freed from an elite who use government to serve themselves while limiting opportunity and making life more expensive for everyone else. A majority of Americans believe the government is doing too much, and small-business owners increasingly worry more about government rules than taxes as threats to growth.

Ronald Reagan, whom GOP candidates frequently cite to justify tax and foreign policy ideas, eloquently addressed the problem of self-dealing elitism years ago. In his famous "Time for Choosing" speech in 1964 he said, "This is the issue of this election: whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capital can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves."

Reagan's insight was not only that government has grown too big, which all conservatives acknowledge, but that it is too intrusive. In the same speech, he warned of the disquieting trend of "proliferating bureaus with their thousands of regulations [that] have cost us many of our constitutional safeguards."

The summer of Donald & Bernie

Ours is an era in which the IRS bullies people because of their politics, activists collude through lawsuits with federal agencies to reach mutually beneficial settlements, and government agencies meddle with entrepreneurs whose new ideas threaten the regulatory status quo. People have long complained about bureaucracy. The real problem is the intrusiveness of those bureaucracies and their disturbing penchant for targeting their critics while rewarding their friends.

GOP candidates should speak more directly about the need for economic liberation from such powers as a way to create hope and opportunity for the middle class. They will not do this by simply supporting "regulatory reform," which they all do (and which bores crowds). They need to go further and make the case, as Columbia University law professor Philip Hamburger has done in his excellent book *Is Administrative Law Unlawful?*, that government agencies often act outside the law in a manner akin to the 18th-century absolutism that our Constitution was written to prevent. The fight is not between "outsiders" and "Washington," which candidates repeat ad nauseam every political cycle, but between those who understand how freedom produces happiness and the unlawful powers bent on restricting that freedom.

Next, they should promise to push legislation that will force Congress to do its job and stop delegating the unlawful writing of rules to the unelected employees of government agencies. Similar legislation has passed the House in recent years but has never become a nationally debated issue. An imaginative candidate could change that.

Finally, candidates could lay out specific ideas for several types of economic liberation. Candidates could promise to liberate young workers, the self-employed, and small-business owners by working with states to create alternatives to the licenses that now require a third of the workforce to get government permission to work. States could opt, for instance, to allow people to join a nationally recognized, self-certification registry for a particular profession as an alternative to going through burdensome professional requirements. They could promise to liberate the most highly regulated population, low-income families, by flexibly consolidating benefits, promoting portability, and rewarding demand-driven training. Candidates could also promise to give states a more muscular and active role in approving or rejecting federal rules.

The appetite for checking the power of unaccountable elitism is growing. Within a week in May, American Enterprise Institute scholar Charles Murray and legal activist Jay Sekulow published books proposing new strategies for pushing back against overreaching government agencies, even to the point of civil disobedience. These books were not written in a vacuum. They are a sign of our times—times in which the Export-Import Bank fails reauthorization and states are threatening to disregard the EPA's latest rules.

The Republican candidate who figures out how to convert this anticrony, anti-elitist energy into a positive plan for change could do very well next year indeed. ♦

IMAGES: NEWSCOM

What's the Deal with Trump?

Cleaning up elections, beating up corporations

By Christopher Caldwell

Dubuque, Iowa

Like rap music and *The Simpsons*, the celebrity real-estate mogul Donald Trump, who burst onto the scene looking like a six-weeks' fad in the 1980s, still has the look of a six-weeks' fad 30-some-odd years later. Clearly the doubters' assumptions need to be reexamined. *Straight Outta Compton* shows a rising generation enraptured with rap, Bart and Lisa have been on the air longer than *Gunsmoke*, and the Donald looks like an increasingly plausible candidate for the presidency of the United States.

"The polls have been nothing short of tremendous," Trump told an overflow crowd at a convention center here on August 25. This was not one of his exaggerations. When Trump declared for the Republican nomination in June, few news outlets paid attention. But his crude and colorful attacks on illegal immigration turned the primary into a spectacle, and were responsible for making the first Republican debate the most-watched nonsports event in the history of cable TV. Now an Ipsos poll shows Trump running at 32 percent among Republicans nationally, twice as popular as runner-up Jeb Bush. The arrival of savvy campaign operatives in Iowa and New Hampshire has brought organizational sinew to his effort. A CNN poll has Trump running only 6 points behind Hillary Clinton among all voters—a better showing than the supposedly mainstream alternative, Bush.

THE ART OF THE DEAL

Pretty Dubuque, set amid limestone bluffs and rolling farmland along the Mississippi, has nominated only one Republican to its board of supervisors in the last half-century. There is still a labor newspaper here, and the Democrats are of a zealous stripe. The socialistic Vermonter Bernie Sanders drew 2,500 people to a rally for his presidential campaign at nearby Loras College a few weeks ago, while Hillary Clinton managed only 440 at the Grand River Center. German- and Irish-Catholic, with several orders of nuns still resident, Dubuque is the oldest city in Iowa. It's not Republican country, but maybe it is Trump country. A lead-mining, farming, and furniture-making town across the river from the Wisconsin-Illinois border, the place has been deindustrialized in recent decades. Casinos have replaced factories and department stores as the economic motor of the city's downtown. The help-wanted ads in the local daily, the *Telegraph-Herald*, are pathetic, not even reaching a full page: a few paper routes at the *TH* itself, waitstaff at Domino's, a part-time job at the library. Trump's Tuesday night draw at the Grand River Center was about 3,000.

Many of the voters who showed up were checking Trump out, rather than rallying to his side. Michael Goodart, a 35-year-old vendor of campaign buttons wearing the jersey of St. Louis Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina, could tell. His generic conservative buttons (the Don't-Tread-on-Me Gadsden flag, the Second Amendment button with the green assault weapon and a defiant "Come and take it" written across it) were selling twice as fast as Trump-for-president buttons. But it is striking how heavily independents and Democrats were represented, and the wide variety of reasons they gave for being there. The very first people in the door when it opened just before 5 were Judy Teal, 70, and her husband Tom, 71, of Dubuque. They're retired from Nordstrom's and the nearby John Deere factory, respectively. They were Hillary backers in 2008, but they're Trump backers now, Judy out of a respect for Trump's independence ("Mr. Trump is his own man. . . . He's not in anybody's back pocket"), Tom out of a sense of national humiliation ("China is just laughing at us").

The crowd skews old, but Republicans skew old, and Iowa skews old. It has the fifth-heaviest concentration of senior citizens in the country. Relative to other Republican rallies here, this group is fairly young. Burt Ford, a 47-year-old on active-duty military service who

Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

is also keen on Scott Walker and Ben Carson, likes the way there's "no bulls—t to the guy." Brett Morris, 26, dislikes Trump's statements on immigration but is tired of political correctness, and so is the 56-year-old conservative Jake Speed of Onalaska, Wisconsin, who thinks we've been "steered away from the First Amendment by intimidation." Democrat Sandy Wilgenbusch, 48, wants to "put America first," and she says we haven't done that for the past four years. People are looking at Trump for solutions to a wide variety of problems.

Very few of those I interviewed were motivated by Trump's views on immigration—the only issue on which he has laid out a clear policy position. Trump's position seems vindictive and impractical—calling for Mexico to pay for a wall between the two countries, floating the idea of deporting most or all of the country's 11 million immigrants here illegally—but it may help him all the same, by laying down a marker. It defies a party taboo to highlight Trump's independence. It shows a forcefulness that can be drawn on should Trump face other problems. For instance, Trump argues, not very plausibly, that the street gangs that have contributed to unrest in Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore include a lot of illegal immigrants. In Dubuque, the immigration issue allowed him to pick a 10-minute-long fight with Univisión telejournalist Jorge Ramos, a sort of Spanish-language Sam Donaldson ("No human being is illegal!"), a foil whom the Trump campaign clearly hopes will help cast its candidate in a reasonable light.

Trump speaks during a rally in Dubuque, August 25.

AP / CHARLIE NEIBERGALL

Trump is often iffy on the facts. For a moment in Dubuque it was unclear whether he knew the difference between North and South Korea. But he has addressed areas no one else has dared to, and in these he is more often right than wrong. There *are* Mexican government publications that counsel illegal immigrants on how to avoid getting deported. There *are* maternity hotels in Los Angeles where illegal immigrants come to have "anchor babies" who are automatically accorded birthright citizenship. A plausible constitutional argument *can* be made that "birthright citizenship" could be revoked without a constitutional amendment. (It would involve teasing out the meaning, under the Fourteenth Amendment, of which babies born in the United States are "subject to the jurisdiction thereof.")

SCHRUTE FROM THE HIP

Trump is proving to be an extraordinarily powerful orator. The power is not in the arguments he makes, but in the feelings he evokes and the power relations he implies. "What went wrong formerly," wrote Bertrand Russell in 1952, "was that people had read in books that man is a rational animal, and framed their arguments on this hypothesis. We now know that limelight and a brass band do more to persuade than can be done by the most elegant train of syllogisms."

Trump brags. At the Iowa State Fair in August, he took lots of little kids for rides in his helicopter, and, he says: "Those kids loved me." The buildings he owns in San Francisco and New York are beautiful. "Vets like me a lot." That record-setting Fox debate got 24 million viewers, instead of the usual 2, and "100 percent of that is me." Most important to Trump is that *Businessweek* once called him "the best negotiator"—in what context he did not make clear. In order to understand the effectiveness of his campaign appeal, we must understand that Trump operates under a very different oratorical principle from his rivals.

A negotiation can be an appeal to reason. But it can also be an appeal to force or to power. The power can be real or bluffed. It can be shown out of love (to buck up a friend) or out of hatred (to cow an enemy). We who don't much read Cicero anymore can forget that contumely, not logic, is the weapon of choice in classical oratory. Trump never mentions Jeb Bush without describing him as "low-energy" ("a very low-energy person," he said in Dubuque). The adjective never varies. Trump does not ever say Bush "lacks oomph" or "has no get-up-and-go" because his goal is not to be smart or varied or interesting—it is to plaster "low-energy" onto Bush as an epithet.

Trump, not just through his words but through his attitude, wants to render his adversaries pitiable, weak, and disgusting. He did it with Secretary of State John Kerry in Dubuque in the context of the Iran nuclear deal. ("What a schmuck.") He did it to Rand Paul in the first Republican debate. ("You're having a hard time tonight.") His oratory often takes a turn for the nonrational, creepy, Gothic, and grotesque. He deals in subliminal images and in strange rules of thumb of dominance and submission, in a way that will remind viewers of Dwight Schrute

in *The Office*. In Dubuque, Trump didn't explain what Republican sell-outs had done wrong, he painted a picture of them as sexual failures:

> They get elected, they're really gonna do a job, they're all enthused, they're gonna end Obamacare. . . . They go to Washington, they look at these beautiful buildings, these beautiful halls, and all of a sudden . . . they become impotent. Is that an appropriate word? They become . . . just . . . it doesn't work. Put those two together!

So when Trump complained after the August debate about the line of questioning Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly had taken—saying, "You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever"—was it a carelessly chosen word? Or did he really intend to suggest (or, to be more precise, depict) that she had been tough on him because she was menstruating? Well, none of us is inside Trump's head, but put those two together.

IMMANENTIZE THE ETYMON

Trump's speeches are sometimes vivid, sometimes vague. The ability to inflect, decline, conjugate, or otherwise modify words appears to hold no interest for him. He deals in *etyma*, in deep roots. When he talks about wanting a strong military, he says, "I'm the most militaristic person," although he could just as easily have said militant or military. He wants to "spiritize" America, which seems to be some neologistic mix of spiritualize and inspire.

Trump's great gift is comedic. He is informal. He is wry. "The insurance companies are making a fortune because they have control of the politicians," he said during the August debate, "of course, with the exception of the politicians on this stage." He is a good narrator. His sense of timing is devastating. He noted that presidential candidate Marco Rubio was a protégé of presidential candidate Jeb Bush, and dismissed the latter as milquetoast for not using the August debate to attack Rubio for disloyalty:

> So I saw them on stage and Jeb says, Oh, Marco's a dear, dear friend. And Marco says, I love Jeb. . . . You notice how Bush never uses his last name? Why? Because he's ashamed of it. . . . I watch these two guys and they're hugging and kissing and they're rubbing each other. . . . Very much like, actually, Chris Christie did with the president.

He sounded like Jackie Gleason at his fall-down funniest. People would have been rolling in the aisles if the aisles had not been full. This came just a few minutes after Trump had hollered out to this audience of Republicans, Democrats, and independents, "Who would you rather have negotiating against China: Jeb, Hillary, or Trump?"

And they hollered back, "Trump!"

TRUMP ON THE STUMP

Probably the first rule of negotiating is that you don't immediately show the thing you most want. We probably have not yet seen the heart of Trump's pitch to the public. He is beginning to say nice things about the Bible ("the greatest book of all time . . . it's not even close") and about the sermons of Norman Vincent Peale that he attended at his Presbyterian church when young ("You hated to leave church"), which may appeal to the evangelicals who play a big role in Iowa caucuses.

But his stump speech is improving with every passing week, and the most obvious improvements are those that will appeal to general-election voters, not Republican ones. The core of his campaign pitch starts about 15 minutes in. It is really, really good. It is flexible and eclectic, in a way that neither party's establishment would tolerate. Trump is beginning to demonize corporations that have moved factories abroad, and to talk about ways to get them to reverse the outsourcing of jobs. (Earlier this year, the Dubuque office of IBM, which got $50 million in incentives from the city and the state to relocate there, laid off 200.) "You can get Ford, believe me, to stay in this country," he says, adding: "I would say to them at Ford, 'You're gonna pay a tax—for every car, and every truck, and every part that comes across that border, you're going to pay a 35 percent tax!'" This is Trump's biggest applause line of the night. It sends the crowd into a delirium.

Trump is in the early stages of deploying a powerful and popular protectionist platform. He does not use the word "protectionism," preferring to call it free trade managed by people who know how to negotiate deals. But his voice takes a vengeful tone when he describes his trade policy. He has promised to enlist some of the toughest negotiators in New York to lay down the law. ("I know people who are so nasty, so mean, so horrible," he says, "nobody in Iowa would want to have dinner with them.") About the parent company of Nabisco, which is closing a plant in Chicago and moving production to Mexico, he says, "I'm never eating Oreos again—ever!" It sounds like an implicit threat to mobilize voters around boycotts and other forms of economic pressure, a tactic that has been limited in recent years to progressives' agitating on gay marriage and other social issues.

Paradoxically, his own braggadocio puts him in a good position to attack the information-age plutocracy. Talking about how filthy rich the filthy rich are is one of Trump's favorite subjects, much as beautiful women like to deplore the role beauty plays in human relations. At a press availability before the speech in Dubuque, Trump made a shocking allusion (in ways that few but the initiated will have understood) to the carried-interest deduction that enables rich

investors to limit their tax liability. "I know a lot about hedge funds," he said. "I know a lot about how they're taxed."

This economic critique fits into a sophisticated attack on the present state of presidential campaign finance. It is not a call for reform. It is a boast of his own unbuyability in a world where all politicians can be bought. A *Washington Post* article about the consternation of top Republicans took the boast at face value: "Donors feel powerless. Republican officials have little leverage. Candidates are skittish. Super-PAC operatives say attack ads against him could backfire." Most voters will read of such big-donor consternation and think: What's not to like? On the trail, Trump has of late been telling the story of a lobbyist who came to him offering the campaign $5 million, only to be sent away. Otherwise, Trump says, "he'll be coming in two years, representing some foreign government." Trump alleges that Jeb Bush has secretly raised either $114 million or $135 million this way. Whether this lobbyist is an actual person or a composite, the story is plausible, and Trump uses it for a beautiful piece of oratorical pedagogy. He talks about how even the noblest politicians with the best intentions will give in to lobbyists once they get behind closed doors:

> I turned down so much money I feel like a stupid person . . . five million dollars. I could have it right now, and I turned him down. In fact, how about—I'll just take a vote—how about if I take all this money and promise you, swear to you, that I won't do anything for these people. What about that? No?
>
> "*Nooooo!*" the crowd bellows.

This kind of campaign-finance talk could broaden Trump's appeal far beyond the Republican party. This week, a Quinnipiac poll found his support strongest among liberal and moderate Republicans. Progressive campaign-finance activist Lawrence Lessig of Harvard Law School told *Politico* he would consider running with Trump on a third-party ticket.

But the campaign-finance talk does something else. It allows Trump to play the game of alpha male and beta male with his fellow candidates. Attacked during the early August Fox debate for giving lots of money to Democrats, he replied:

> I will tell you that our system is broken. I gave to many people before this. Before this, two months ago, I was a businessman. I give to everybody. When they call, I give. And do you know what? When I need something from them two years later, three years later, I call them, they are there for me.

One of the other candidates asked, So what did you get?

"Well, I'll tell you what, with Hillary Clinton, I said, be at my wedding, and she came to my wedding. You know why? She didn't have a choice because I gave."

At the pre-speech press conference in Dubuque, he ran down Scott Walker's record in Wisconsin and described him in the same terms. "I supported him, gave him money," Trump said. "He came to my office and gave me a nice trophy."

This is the core of Trump's vision of the American presidential system. In the plutocracy that America has become, the rich are people who say "Jump," and politicians are people who say "How high?" Trump wants your vote because he's the only person running who has spent his life as a real leader: a *Jump*-sayer, not a *How-high?*-sayer.

KILROY WAS HERE

One might compare Trump's rise to the anti-immigrant populisms on the rise in Europe, but the parallel is deceptive. European immigration, unlike American, appears to be turning into an outright military threat. The parties that focus on it often are suspicious of the European Union and have ideological affinities with old right-wing movements. Whatever one thinks of Trump, he is not an ideologue. ("I'm fine with affirmative action," he recently told the *Los Angeles Times*.) The European radicals he most resembles are those freelances who combined (or combine) truth-telling and piss-taking: the Dutch firebrand Pim Fortuyn, assassinated on the eve of the 2002 elections, the radio host and UKIP leader Robert Kilroy-Silk, who rose and quickly fell two years later, the Italian comedian Beppe Grillo, who still leads the Five-Star Movement.

Two factors produced Trump. First, the governing style of Barack Obama, which, by insulating presidential action from constitutional checks and balances, drove up the value of "deal-making." Second, the corruption of the Republican party. If the Republican Senate permits the president to pass off his Iran nuclear weapons treaty as a "deal," abdicating its prerogative to ratify or block, then a better "deal"-maker is all it can offer the country the next time around.

Candidates Jeb Bush and Rand Paul have fallen into this misunderstanding, treating Trump as a "fake conservative," as if he were running for chairman of the Republican party. So have George Will and virtually everyone who writes for *National Review*. "Trump," writes Daniel Foster, "is sucking the most talented GOP presidential field in a generation down the gaping event horizon that is his huge mouth." This is dubious. The GOP may have talent, but it has squandered the trust that might win it the country's permission to do anything with it. For almost two decades Republican leaders have been asking a country with which they have lost touch to be content with words. Since the Tea Party rebellion of 2010, they've succeeded, with empty promises, in getting their own dissidents to lay down their arms. For now, there appears to be little that any member of the party establishment can say to hale voters back. ♦

Traitor to His Class

Nothing is more terrifying to the elite than Trump's embrace of a tangible American nationalism

By Julius Krein

Donald Trump is not a serious candidate. Donald Trump is not a serious man. The truth of these statements is supposed to be self-evident. But one begins to wonder, are they true?

Trump's popularity, while beyond doubt, is treated not as a legitimate expression of popular will but as a mass psychosis to be diagnosed. It would seem to be the duty of every American pundit today to explain the inexplicable and problematic rise of Donald Trump. The critical question, however, is not the source of Trump's popularity but rather the reason his popularity is so shocking to our political culture. Perhaps Trump's candidacy threatens a larger consensus that governs our political and social life, and perhaps his popularity signifies a profound challenge to elite opinion.

Trump fans spread the message at a rally in Mobile, August 21.

Why is Donald Trump so popular? Explanations range from mere celebrity, to his adoption of extreme positions to capture the most ideologically intense voters, to his explosive rhetoric. These explanations are not entirely wrong, but neither are they entirely right.

To begin with, his positions, as Josh Barro has written in the *New York Times*, are rather moderate. As Barro points out, Trump is willing to contemplate tax increases to achieve spending cuts. He supports some exceptions to abortion bans and has gone so far as to defend funding Planned Parenthood. He has called for protective tariffs, a position heretical for Republicans, who are typically free traders. Although opposed to Obamacare, he has asserted that single-payer health care works in other countries. Even on the issue of immigration, despite his frequently strident rhetoric, his positions are neither unique—securing the border with some kind of wall is a fairly standard Republican plank by now—nor especially rigid.

With respect to his rhetoric, whether one characterizes his delivery as candid or rude, it is hard to ascribe his popularity to colorful invective alone. Chris Christie, who never misses an opportunity to harangue an opponent, languishes near the bottom of the polls. Or ask Rick Santorum, as well as Mitt "47 percent" Romney, whether outrageous comments offer an infallible way to win friends and influence voters. Trump's outré style, like his celebrity, helps him gain attention but just as certainly fails to explain his frontrunner status.

Most candidates seek to define themselves by their policies and platforms. What differentiates Trump is not what he says, or how he says it, but why he says it. The unifying thread running through his seemingly incoherent policies, what defines him as a candidate and forms the essence of his appeal, is that he seeks to speak for America. He speaks, that is, not for America as an abstraction but for real, living Americans and for their interests as distinct from those of people in other places. He does not apologize for having interests as an American, and he does not apologize for demanding that the American government vigorously prosecute those interests.

What Trump offers is permission to conceive of an American interest as a national interest separate from the "international community" and permission to wish to see that interest triumph. What makes him popular on immigration is not how extreme his policies are, but the emphasis he puts on the interests of Americans rather than everyone else. His slogan is "Make America Great Again," and he is not ashamed of the fact that this means making

IMAGES: NEWSCOM

Julius Krein is a writer in Boston.

it better than other places, perhaps even at their expense.

His least practical suggestion—making Mexico pay for the border wall—is precisely the most significant: It shows that a President Trump would be willing to take something from someone else in order to give it to the American people. Whether he could achieve this is of secondary importance; the fact that he is willing to say it is everything. Nothing is more terrifying to the business and donor class—as well as the media and the entire elite—than Trump's embrace of a tangible American nationalism. The fact that Trump should by all rights be a member of this class and is in fact a traitor to it makes him all the more attractive to his supporters and all the more baffling to pundits.

Trump's campaign is predicated on restoring American greatness here and now, and he is seen to select policies in support of that overarching purpose. Others, in contrast, appear to pursue public office mostly for the sake of implementing favored policies so that they can read about the results of their grand experiments in future economics textbooks. They are like doctors who use patients to advance medical research for its own sake, rather than physicians who use medicine to cure the patients before them.

Conservative pundits have complained for years about the base and its desire for "ideological purity." Trump shows that what is most in demand, however, is not ideological purity but patriotic zeal. Only a fool would believe that the fate of the Export-Import Bank could motivate millions of voters. It is not a minor and complicated organ of trade promotion that motivates but whether the ruling elite is seen to care more about actual national interests or campaign dollars and textbook abstractions like free trade.

Trump's critics misunderstand his political appeal just as they fail to comprehend his business appeal. Indeed, Trump is almost certainly not as rich as he claims he is, nor is his record as glittering as others', nor is his a rags-to-riches story. What he offers instead is a portrait of business as a fully human struggle filled with almost romantic jousting competitions. For Mitt Romney, corporations may be people and capital the invisible hand, but for Donald Trump business success is about human battles and visible victories. When asked if he feared a backlash against rich candidates like the one that damaged Romney, Trump responded, "Romney isn't that rich." If listening to Bizet made Nietzsche want to be a composer, listening to Trump makes one want to buy real estate. He imbues business with glory. For Trump, business is about winning and losing, and for real human beings, that's what gives it life.

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It is the same in politics. Our election discourse, though increasingly mawkish and sentimental, has become almost Kantian when it does have a theoretical orientation. "Serious politics" is believed to be the politics of rational beings on the path to perpetual peace—not men, and certainly not Americans, with real interests that sometimes conflict with those of other nations. Questions of basic policy, if not argued from some victim narrative, are inevitably situated in arcane disputes over economic theory. The words *victory* and *defeat* have been banished from our discourse. "Serious politics" is now confined to detached rationality.

Trump, however, is eros and thumos incarnate, and his very candidacy represents the suggestion that these human qualities should have a role in our political life beyond quivering sentimentalism. Trump alone appears to understand that politics is more than policy and ideology. Beneath the bluster, he offers an image of Machiavellian *virtù* long absent from American politics.

Nothing in our politics seems worthy of being taken seriously anymore. The White House takes to Twitter with *Straight Outta Compton* memes about the Iran deal. We no longer know what political seriousness is—or we are afraid to pursue it, for fear of offending. We have reached a stage of decadence where we fear everything except frivolity. This is precisely the precondition for Trump's popularity, and his unapologetic mockery of more conventional forms of political theater makes him in some ways the most serious candidate in the race. ♦

Police vs. protesters, Athens (2011)

Greece on the Edge

How, exactly, did it come to this? BY JOHN PSAROPOULOS

When James Angelos embarks on a series of trips to report on the Greek debt crisis, he finds that no one is to blame for it. On Zakynthos, for example, three-quarters of blindness disability beneficiaries were exposed as frauds. The island's ophthalmologist had liberally handed out certificates of blindness, countersigned by the prefect. Angelos approaches the prefect first: "The doctor!" he says. "Only he has responsibility. The doctor puts you down as blind. Not the prefect." Angelos duly interviews the ophthalmologist: "One of the people who put down a signature was me," he admits. "Even if there are a thousand signatures, if the prefect doesn't sign it, no one gets anything."

More astonishing than these men's self-defense is their eventual fate: Although the island is buzzing with talk of the scandal, the prefect runs for its parliamentary seat and wins. The ophthalmologist quietly retires from the national health system with a full pension.

Anyone left incredulous by this lack of accountability should enjoy Angelos's telling of how two treasurers at the municipality of Pangaio, in northern Greece, lured their mayor to a rendezvous and shot him dead with an Uzi submachine gun. The treasurers could not account for 700,000 euros missing from municipal accounts; at their trial, they claimed that the mayor had forced them to embezzle. The jury convicted—but embezzlement and murder notwithstanding, the treasurers were able to continue to provide for their families at public expense for nearly four more

The Full Catastrophe
Travels Among the New Greek Ruins
by James Angelos
Crown, 304 pp., $27

John Psaropoulos, a journalist in Athens, writes for the Daily Beast, *National Public Radio, and the* Washington Post.

NEWSCOM

years. Even after they lost an appeal, the disciplinary process "took really long to start functioning properly," as one government official put it.

The Full Catastrophe is based on stories Angelos originally covered for the *Wall Street Journal*. Reworked and expanded, they illuminate the nature of the problems that led Greece to its present pass: opacity, unaccountability, and lack of meritocracy in a bloated public sector and among many who have dealings with it. Angelos's prose is beautifully light and capable of large, yet unobtrusive, shipments of information. He has a Herodotean gift for quoting direct speech. What people say and how they say it are his chief means of observing them, since his interviewees are strangers to him. The cumulative effect is that, rather than drawing heavy-handed conclusions, Angelos allows them to ripen in the reader's mind.

Occasionally, he leads us to judgments without cultural context. In a chapter on the vast influx of Europe-bound war refugees Greece has received in recent years, he quotes dreadful racism in the mouths of Greeks: "If you were an old man and saw fifty blacks walking down the street past your house—and I'm talking *very* black—wouldn't you be afraid?" an old man asks him in the border town of Tychero. It is true that many Greeks say such things, but Angelos's Western readers are sophisticated enough to understand political correctness. His sources are not.

On the few occasions when Angelos expresses an unabashed conclusion, it is well aimed. After listening to rants against Jews, Muslims, and Turks, he says that "the monolithic, ossified brand of Greek nationalism that has long concealed evidence of past pluralism has served to denigrate the concept of Hellenism itself, making it trite, insular and fragile." This is the manifest anguish of a worldly Greek lamenting attitudes that ultimately imperil his ancestral homeland.

The Full Catastrophe requires one important caveat: While it does very well recording primary problems that led Greece to over borrow, it spends almost no time discussing the secondary problems created by creditors' prescribed therapy. In 2013, one of those creditors, the International Monetary Fund, acknowledged that it had miscalculated the so-called multiplier effect of austerity. Whereas it had estimated that the economy would shrink by 50 cents for every euro cut from public spending, the lack of competitiveness in the Greek economy made it twice as vulnerable. A report by the Bruegel Group, a Brussels think tank, reached similar conclusions the following year. Miscalculations such as these emboldened the Greek parliament speaker Zoi Konstantopoulou to make the absurd claim that Greece's *entire* debt is due to austerity, and that Greece should repay none of it.

As early as 2010, the IMF told the European Union that attempting to finance Greece without a generous, up-front debt reduction was unsustainable. The EU did not want to listen, largely because French and German banks held more than 100 billion in Greek debt. A haircut to the Greeks meant another bailout of European banks, two years after governments spent 1.3 trillion euros refinancing them. Some debt reduction came in 2012, when the IMF threatened to pull out of a second institutional loan to Greece, but this was foisted upon the private sector. This meant that 80 percent of the 103 billion euros discount came from Greek banks, pension funds, and educational institutions, whose savings at the Bank of Greece had been converted to bonds. Pension funds, which lost 12.8 billion euros, have remained crippled ever since and must be subsidized with budget money.

Finally, creditors prescribed a 50 billion euros privatization plan, through which Greece guaranteed bailing-in public assets. But privatizing every shred of public infrastructure that taxpayers had built—including the power grid, roads, rail, ports, and airports—would not be enough. Vast amounts of public land would have to be bundled, securitized, and dumped on the market, severely devaluing the real estate banks held against nonperforming mortgages.

Compounding these grave design flaws were Greek errors of execution. The Greek civil service represents over 15 percent of all people at work. It is Greece's best-paid and most tightly unionized workforce, capable of swinging elections. Governments opted for across-the-board wage cuts rather than layoffs. These had a knock-on effect on the private sector, reducing the minimum wage by a fifth, to 3.33 euros an hour. Unemployment remains at 25 percent despite that wage cut, but the civil service continues to enjoy tenure. The state is a holy cow that continues to lie across Greece's road to recovery.

Crisis-era governments also kowtowed to pensioners and the nearly retired, together more than one-quarter of the population. They have suffered benefit cuts of more than 20 percent, but in a country where only 3.5 million out of 11 million people still work, this isn't enough. Retirement benefits still haven't come down as much as health spending over five years (over 50 percent) or funding for higher education (three-quarters), nor have they allowed a much-touted corporate tax cut from 26 percent to 15 percent—all of which would arguably have helped the economy more than pensioner-driven consumer spending.

In short, Greek governments never claimed ownership of reforms the country needs. It is easier to take orders resentfully and blame creditors for policy failures. For pensioners and the civil service, who together claim more than half the budget, they contemplated only generational change, as though these groups should never be disabused of their expectations, which have become entitlements writ in stone. So just as people benefited unequally in the good times, they have suffered unequally in the bad.

The Greek failure of leadership, and the creditors' foul-ups, mean that years of austerity have brought a balanced budget but little prospect of growth or jobs. Many Greeks now believe that the bailouts weren't even meant in good faith but as a means of economic colonialism: They have a sense of their fight for sovereignty and dignity as the vanguard of a global struggle for the soul of capitalism. It is this resentment and mistrust that brought the left-wing

Syriza party, or Radical Left Coalition, to power this past January. Syriza promised to focus on growth and end the vicious cycle of austerity and recession by rescheduling Greece's debt.

Greece currently has 16 years to repay the 204 billion euro principal to the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. The level of wealth extraction from the Greek economy required to achieve this is as high as 4.5 percent of GDP a year. Syriza wants this lowered to between 1.2 and 1.5 percent of GDP. In a debt sustainability analysis, the IMF recently agreed, suggesting that Greece be given a 30-year grace period followed by a 40-year repayment period—essentially the rest of the 21st century.

After five months of tortuous negotiations, a third loan, of 86 billion euros, was agreed on in mid-July. Greece was offered a 35 billion euro investment fund and a promise to discuss debt sustainability in the autumn. But Syriza got this in return for going back on its promise to end austerity. Apart from further—needed—-cuts to pensions, consumer taxes and corporate taxes will rise. This has caused a rift within the Syriza party. The crisis has halved the life expectancy of elected governments and moved voters towards extremes. Sooner or later, more badly implemented austerity will give further impetus to that trend.

How does one reconcile James Angelos's diligence with the lack of cultural context and a more balanced view of the multiple causes of the crisis? One can believe Angelos when he claims a "fondness for Greece and many of its people," and the answer could be that his perspective remains that of a diaspora Greek struggling to understand the complexities of his ancestral home.

James Angelos has a good ear for popular wisdom. Greeks' relationship with authority—both their own government's and the European Union's—has been transformed by this crisis, and not for the better. Surely the most fitting Greek saying for *The Full Catastrophe* would be this: Good friends don't strike good bargains. Good bargains make good friends. ♦

B&A

Really Big Show

The Broadway impresario's 'maelstrom of mirth.'

BY **WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD**

Ziegfeld and His Follies
A Biography of Broadway's Greatest Producer
by Cynthia Brideson and Sara Brideson
Kentucky, 576 pp., $40

Although I was a frequenter of burlesque in its last days, with its comedians, strippers, and feeble orchestra—the Casino Theater in Boston was a good escape from the toils of graduate English at Harvard—I knew little about its more dignified ancestor, the Ziegfeld Follies. So this account of the man and his work was new territory, even though that territory has been pretty fully covered already by Charles Higham's (1972) and Ethan Mordden's (2008) biographies.

Cynthia and Sara Brideson propose to examine Florenz Ziegfeld Jr.'s "multilayered relationship with his stars, his friends, and his lovers, paired with an examination of the productions, innovations, and content." Such an examination, they believe, "comes as close as possible to revealing Ziegfeld the man." In the introduction, they engage in some uncharacteristic wordplay by calling their book "primarily the story of Ziegfeld's personal follies" which, along with his productions, made his name "a brand that would endure forever."

Forever is a long time. Ziegfeld, for awhile, was Ziegfeld Jr., his father being the head of a classical music "college" in Chicago and an intimidating "Prussian autocrat" (as someone called him) whose musical tastes held no interest for his son. After working for a time with his father, Florenz Jr. launched as an investigator of more popular forms of entertainment, as they were to be found in New York, London, and Paris. In Chicago, the burlesque appealed to audiences more than higher forms of musical presentation. By the turn of the last century, Florenz Ziegfeld became, according to one historian, "a figure who could fuse naughty sexuality . . . with the savoir-faire of lobster palace society." The Bridesons take seriously the claim that Ziegfeld raised things to a higher plane and rid burlesque of its low origins.

In Paris, he discovered the first of his "women," Anna Held, who became a popular star of his earlier revues. The biographers conceive the scene of discovery as follows: "Strolling along the boulevards of Paris while on his honeymoon" (he and Anna were never legally married, since she was already married), Ziegfeld found himself "increasingly enamored with the city's revues. The shows included tasteful nudity and a *joie de vivre* that electrified audiences."

If you can swallow the phrase "tasteful nudity" without smirking, you will also believe that the shows "electrified" audiences and that Ziegfeld became "enamored" with them. The writing here is typical of the popular style in which the biography is told, and a reader must put up with the repeated use of "comedic" as an all-purpose word and "disinterested" to mean not interested.

One will also keep a straight face, more or less, when hearing about a musical comedy from an early revue of Ziegfeld's, *The Parisian Model*, in which Anna Held starred and which contained a song titled "Won't You Be My Teddy Bear?" This number was inspired by the teddy bear craze attendant on President Theodore Roosevelt's refusing to shoot a bear that had been tied to a tree, and

William H. Pritchard is the Henry Clay Folger professor of English at Amherst.

Florenz Ziegfeld and beauty contestants (ca. 1925)

BETTMANN / CORBIS

it featured two children dressed as bears and six chorus girls sitting astride fake bears. The biographers call it "a wholesome act in the midst of a risqué show." Roosevelt must have felt it wholesome enough to have invited Ziegfeld and Anna out to dinner more than once.

Ziegfeld's finances were always in chaotic shape. His favorite and frequent escapes from economic rigors were expensive cars, splendid clothes, and lots of gambling. Early in the last century, he and Anna took a suite at the famous Ansonia Hotel on upper Broadway, the hotel featuring a lobby fountain with live seals, 2,500 rooms, staircases of green marble, and serving kitchens on every floor. Ziegfeld's "decadent" apartment contained a salon, a music room, a wood-paneled library, and sizable butler's pantry—ideal for throwing large dinner parties.

The revues were comparably lavish; for example, the *Follies* of 1908, which had Adam and Eve viewing the "accomplishments of their progeny." Its most memorable production number consisted (in the Bridesons' words) of "chorines dressed as giant mosquitoes flying through the newly-built Holland Tunnel between New York and New Jersey."

Although more than once here, and in other books about Ziegfeld, we are assured that he had absolutely no sense of humor; perhaps that made him impervious to giant mosquitoes in the Holland Tunnel. As an impresario, not knowing whether or not the antics were funny, Ziegfeld could concentrate on drawing in an audience—in those 1908 *Follies*, indeed, to the tune of 120 performances. As the chapter heading has it, it was all a "maelstrom of mirth," although there's not much mirth in it for the reader, dragged along year by year to hear about fully-described productions.

Surely the most impressive thing about Florenz Ziegfeld was his talent for finding and promoting comedians in the nonmusical parts of the show. In the 1911 *Follies* they included the rubber-legged Leon Errol as a hapless traveler and the dancer Bert Williams as the clever black porter who prevails over him. One would like to have heard from that revue such songs as "Be My Little Bumble Bee" or "Woodman, Woodman, Spare That Tree"—the latter sung by Williams saluting a convenient elm tree as the only place where he could hide from his shrewish (but nonclimbing) wife. Fanny Brice also performed, and it was the first show for the young Jerome Kern, who joined Irving Berlin as the two most notable songwriters for Ziegfeld shows.

Probably the most ubiquitous comic appearing over a long stretch of productions was Eddie Cantor, often in blackface; Cantor, Will Rogers, W.C. Fields, and Ed Wynn were stellar performers. (It's interesting that Ziegfeld disliked W.C. Fields, and fortunate for us that we can observe Fields in *My Little Chickadee* and his other films.)

After romances with Anna Held and Lillian Lorraine—a beautiful woman who could neither sing nor act—Ziegfeld met, at a New Year's Eve masquerade ball, Billie Burke, whom he would marry and live with until his death in 1932. Burke was an actress, starring in a play by Somerset Maugham, who had brought her to the masquerade.

Despite affairs, and rumors of affairs, on Ziegfeld's part, he and Billie Burke managed to stay together, often in their

various country retreats, especially Billie's impressive house at Burkeley Crest, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, where she lived with her mother. Ziegfeld presented them with a cow, among other gifts, and we are told that he enjoyed "rinsing [Billie's] hair in quarts of champagne to enhance its copper hue." Somehow, the Bridesons know that Billie Burke liked the champagne enough to "lick any spare trickles from her face."

Rather than being led through productions I'll never see—there is a full appendix with all the details—what captured me were the multiple illustrations, many of them vivid, accompanying the text, and oddly placed at the end of the book. Here is Eddie Cantor doing what's advertised as a "Comedy 'Clean up'" in the 1924 *Follies*. Here is "Flo" himself, nattily dressed as always—looking as if his ever-present three-piece suit was indeed so ever-present that it didn't need to be removed at bedtime—surrounded by his "Glorified Girls." There are pictures of his show palaces, notably the New Amsterdam theater on West 42nd Street with its Art Nouveau architecture, Beaux-Arts façade, an auditorium that could hold 1,700 people, and a rooftop garden.

Most surprisingly and affectingly, there is a photograph of the young Barbara Stanwyck, just turning 15 as she danced in one of the *Follies* of the early twenties. Stanwyck never looked half as beautiful later as she does here in a sequined dress, sporting a fan. I was less charmed by Clare Luce, dressed in an ostrich feather outfit—although we don't get to see her mounted on a real live ostrich as she entered the stage.

Still, for all the research and hard work that went into this book, its style is not designed for anyone with the least sense of irony, so that one might balk at the following description of black-and-white photographs of the Ziegfeld girls as "breathtaking." In case we were lasciviously looking for sensual excitement, the biographers are quick to assure us that "most of them were seminude but tastefully done in an Ancient Greek style." Nobody can object to Ancient Greece, of course, but to find that the photos were also "tastefully" done makes this bit of folly less fun. ♦

B&A

Laureate of Demons

Uncollected writings from the Shirley Jackson vault.

BY DANNY HEITMAN

During a literary career that lasted a quarter of a century, Shirley Jackson (1916-1965) published six novels of the macabre, a collection of short fiction, two books for children, a play, and two comic memoirs of motherhood—enough work to fill a small shelf. But she's best known for a nine-page short story, "The Lottery," in which the residents of a quaint Norman Rockwell town are slowly revealed as participants in a ritual act of murder.

After "The Lottery" was first published in the *New Yorker* in 1948, it drew more letters than any other fiction the magazine had ever published. Of the 300-odd letters about the story that Jackson read that summer, "I can count only thirteen that spoke kindly to me, and they were mostly from friends," she recalled. "Even my mother scolded me."

Published only three years after World War II, which called Americans to fight evil overseas, "The Lottery" suggested that human depravity could also lurk closer to home, even in the quiet places beyond the cities where many returning veterans were starting to build families. Today, in a culture saturated with images of violence, "The Lottery" continues to shock. Much of the story's power lies in its understatement. Jackson never overtly mentions blood in "The Lottery," nor does she resort to exclamation or exaggeration to make her point. Jackson's emotional restraint is the most chilling aspect of her fiction.

The disciplined objectivity of "The Lottery" makes it seem as urgently real as a newspaper story—so much so that some readers misread it as a factual account, writing the *New Yorker* to ask just where these gruesome lotteries were taking place. Jackson's scrupulously neutral tone can seem clinical at first, but it serves a larger moral vision. Several months before Jackson died, she visited Georgia to see the home of the recently deceased Flannery O'Connor, a writer whom Jackson admired. Like O'Connor, Jackson incorporated violence in her work not in the service of sensationalism but to explore the world's fullest spiritual dimensions. In all of Jackson's work, writes Kevin Wilson, "It is so unsettling to see the darkness and the chaos beneath the surface. We encounter a world where, thanks to Jackson's talent, we recoil from the danger and then move closer to see it more clearly."

Shirley Jackson grew accustomed to staring demons in the face, in no small measure because she had demons of her own. She was born in 1916 in San Francisco to an affluent family that didn't quite know what to do with her bohemian artistic personality. The Jacksons eventually moved to Rochester, New York, where Shirley proved an indifferent college student, graduating without distinction from Syracuse in 1940. Jackson married the literary critic and college professor Stanley Hyman, and they spent most of their years together in Vermont, where she raised four children and wrote the books that earned her international

Let Me Tell You
New Stories, Essays, and Other Writings
by Shirley Jackson
edited by Laurence Hyman
and Sarah Hyman DeWitt
Random House, 448 pp., $27.99

Danny Heitman is the author, most recently, of A Summer of Birds: John James Audubon at Oakley House.

fame. Jackson battled with obesity, smoked and drank heavily, and abused amphetamines and barbiturates. On August 8, 1965, while taking an afternoon nap, she died of heart failure.

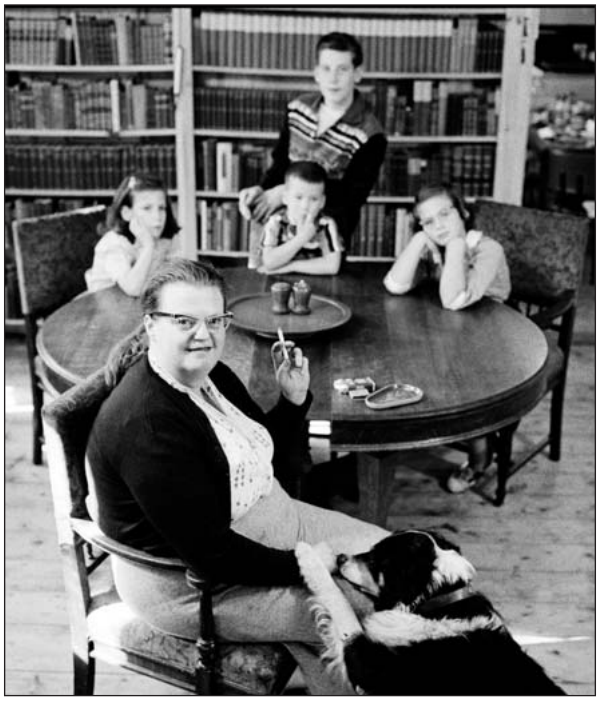
This year has brought the 50th anniversary of Jackson's death, and next year is the 100th anniversary of her birth—two landmarks that are irresistible to the publishing industry. *Let Me Tell You*, a new collection of prose from the Jackson vault, is out now, and next year, just in time for the Jackson centennial, Norton plans to release a new biography by Ruth Franklin. In truth, the Jackson revival started five years ago when the Library of America unveiled a handsome edition of Jackson's best novels, stories, and sketches, affirming her stature as an Important Writer. The subtle craft of *The Haunting of Hill House*, a celebrated Jackson novel included in the Library of America volume, invites comparison with Henry James's *Turn of the Screw* with its narrative of a protagonist in a haunted house whose struggles might be as much psychological as supernatural.

Such recognition would surely please Jackson, who aspired to be not only a popular writer but a respected one. One of the most revealing selections in *Let Me Tell You* is a brief essay, "Notes on an Unfashionable Novelist," in which Jackson declares her deep affection for Samuel Richardson, the 18th-century author best known for a sweeping, two-part epistolary novel, *Pamela*. Reflecting on Richardson, Jackson longs for the time when an author "could, if he chose, write a book a million words long and expect people to have time for it." Jackson admired the winding architectural heft of Richardson's fiction, although she recognized that his plodding pace couldn't be emulated by any modern writer who wanted commercial success.

In "Garlic in Fiction," another essay here, Jackson laments the shrinking attention span of her public.

> Far and away the greatest menace to the writer—any writer, beginning or otherwise—is the reader . . . The reader is, in fact, the writer's only unrelenting, genuine enemy. He has everything on his side; all he has to do, after all, is shut his eyes, and any work of fiction becomes meaningless.

The essay outlines Jackson's suggested techniques for keeping readers hooked, breaking down the dry mechanics of symbolism and description in a tutorial that reads like *Writing Fiction for Dummies*. It's a blueprint, of sorts, for decoding some of the formulaic material Jackson felt compelled to churn out to pay her bills.



Shirley Jackson and her children (1956)

ERICH HARTMANN / MAGNUM PHOTOS

In a perceptive introduction to *Let Me Tell You*, Ruth Franklin notes that Jackson "distinguished between her serious fiction and the less complex, cheerier pieces demanded by her editors at *McCall's*, *Collier's*, and other 'slicks,' as they were called at the time." Some of the pieces here betray by-the-numbers expedience, such as "Company for Dinner," a short story in which a man trudges home from the office for his evening meal, sitting for quite a while at the table before he realizes that he's entered the wrong apartment. The O. Henry ending seems like a meager payoff for a slender tale, but it does point to one of Jackson's prevailing preoccupations. She was fascinated by how humans could be governed by routine—sometimes with tragic implications, as in "The Lottery," where ritual creates its own dark logic, and sometimes with comforting results, as in "Here I Am, Washing Dishes Again," an essay about the pleasure Jackson took in a daily domestic chore.

This kitchen-sink musing isn't Jackson's best work, either—there's an extended ode to a carving fork that is, sadly, as riveting as the premise sounds—but several of the other essays about Jackson's domestic life underscore her genius for household comedy. Pieces such as "Questions I Wish I'd Never Asked," "How to Enjoy a Family Quarrel," and "The Pleasures and Perils of Dining Out with Children" compare favorably with James Thurber's first-person farces—although, like Thurber, she didn't adhere to literal truth in telling family stories.

"I find it very difficult to distinguish between life and fiction," she declares in "How I Write," a lecture reprinted in *Let Me Tell You*. Jackson's accounts of motherhood "were often based on actual events, but they were wonderfully embellished," the book's editors (who are also two of her children) concede in an afterword.

Although Jackson's autobiographical writings might not be strictly factual, they do have a compelling ring of plausibility for any parent who's mediated fights at the dinner table or cast a bewildered eye over the wreckage of a room populated by youngsters. They also showcase Jackson's tender side, her embrace of what she professed to value in Samuel Richardson: "peace, principle, and kindness." *Let Me Tell You* isn't the first sweep of Jackson's literary archive: Two other posthumous collections—*Come Along with Me* and *Just an Ordinary Day*—have promoted prose not previously gathered between

covers. This new anthology hints that we might be getting to the bottom of her publishable work. There's memorable material here, primarily in the pieces about writing and family, but also a good bit of marginalia.

With any luck, *Let Me Tell You* will lead readers toward her novels and memoirs, which Penguin Classics has recently reissued. In "The Lottery," and so much of her other work, Shirley Jackson explored what can happen when the mind is leashed by convention. She wrote to free herself from that prison, and free her readers, too. Existence, she believed, "is a happy, irrational, rich world, full of fairies and ghosts and free electricity and dragons, and a world beyond all others fun to walk around in. All you have to do—and watch this carefully, please—is keep writing. As long as you write it away regularly, nothing can really hurt you." ♦

B&A

Stalin's Orphans

Children, by the millions, scattered across the USSR.

BY SUSANNE KLINGENSTEIN

When 55-year-old Stephen Pasceri walked into a Boston hospital last January and fatally shot Michael Davidson, a 44-year-old heart surgeon who had taken care of Pasceri's late mother, his futile rage deprived others of a superb physician and changed in an instant the lives of Dr. Davidson's three young children. They are fortunate to be growing up with their mother in upper-middle-class America, where their trauma will gradually heal.

Eighty years ago, during the Great Purge from 1935 to 1940, millions of fathers were arrested in Joseph Stalin's empire as "enemies of the people" or "traitors of the motherland." They were interrogated, tried, and executed, or sent to Siberian gulags. Shortly afterwards their wives would be taken, sentenced to exile or internment in a special camp for wives of traitors to the motherland (known by its acronym AlZhIR) in Akmolinsk in present-day Kazakhstan.

Some 10 million children, from just past the nursing stage to the age of 16, became collateral victims of Stalin's regime of deliberate terror. When not claimed by relatives, these children entered the horrendous world of state orphanages for warehousing and reeducation. Until Stalin's death in 1953 they were saddled with the stigma of descent from "enemies of the people."

Silence Was Salvation
Child Survivors of Stalin's Terror and World War II in the Soviet Union
by Cathy A. Frierson
Yale, 304 pp., $65

We first learned about their fate in Semyon S. Vilensky's blood-curdling documentary compilation *Deti GULAGA, 1918-1956* (2002) and its English-language equivalent, *Children of the Gulag*, published (together with Cathy A. Frierson) by Yale University Press in its Annals of Communism series. Under the title *Silence Was Salvation*, Frierson has now published 10 detailed interviews she conducted with children who had managed to survive and build families and careers for themselves in the Soviet Union.

Between 2003 and 2005, five men and five women, then in their early to late seventies, and ranging from a busy physician to a retired metal worker, sat down with Frierson in tiny kitchens or offices to be guided by her questions back to their childhoods in the years 1936-1953. The result is a heart-stopping journey through displacement, deep loneliness, abject poverty, hunger and dirt, through betrayal, icy silence, and all the hell that was Stalin's regime. We get to see its underbelly from the perspective of its most vulnerable subjects.

One example will stand for all. Inna Aronovna Gaister was born in Moscow in 1925. Her parents were Jews who had joined the Bolsheviks during the civil war that followed the 1917 revolution. As part of the Soviet elite, the family lived in the prestigious Government House in Moscow. But both parents were arrested in 1937, the father executed the day after his 12-minute trial, the mother sentenced to eight years in Akmolinsk, leaving 12-year-old Inna with the responsibility of taking care of her two younger sisters, age 7 and 1.

Their housekeeper fought tooth and nail to keep the girls out of the orphanages, moving with them to a dark hallway until their final eviction, when all of them moved in with the grandparents—who had, meanwhile, collected two other children of arrested parents. From 1938 to 1941, seven adults and six children lived in an apartment of 280 square feet. This was not unusual at the time: The only place to do homework was on a shallow plank in the bathroom, and the kids fought over the space. All excelled in school.

In 1940, Inna's mother petitioned to receive a visit from a family member; a 24-hour visit was granted. For one year, Inna gave mathematics lessons after school to earn the money for the trip to Akmolinsk, a three-day train ride, third-class. She left in June 1941, and remembers this:

> The camp is forty kilometers from Akmolinsk. And there was this kind of mud hut where drivers who drove back and forth stopped. We walked into that little house and they told us that the truck had left that morning. We would have to wait a couple of days. And we eagerly went out into the steppe, to look around, to see what the steppe was . . . after all, we were city people.

Soon they got the news that war had broken out between Germany and the

Susanne Klingenstein is the author, most recently, of a biography of the Yiddish writer Mendele Moykher Sforim.

Soviet Union, and the allotted visiting time was cut in half.

> So there was this little mud hut, it stood directly in the middle of the field right behind the barbed wire. They brought our mothers there. It was impossible to visit with each other outside, because it was so hot. Kazakhstan! We sat like this shoulder-to-shoulder on the bed. Mama, and next to her sat Yasha with his mama. It was completely difficult for the boys. Because they aren't very affectionate and here, right in front of everybody, they had to be affectionate with their mama. That's how we were granted our visit.

After 12 hours, Inna returned to Moscow. She, her sisters, and a male cousin were evacuated in December, spending a hellish time in Bashkortostan, starving, slaving, studying, the youngest sister (age 5) still hanging on. But that youngest sister, and the male cousin (age 15), did not survive the evacuation: "We left as a foursome, I tell you, two of us returned. Only two of us returned."

In 1944, Inna managed to claw her way into the top-drawer physics department of Moscow State University. (Due to the war, MSU still accepted Jews and children of "enemies of the people.") She brought her mother home from Akmolinsk in 1946, but Inna herself was arrested on the day of her thesis defense in 1949 and sent into exile in Kazakhstan, serving there as a math teacher until she was allowed to return to Moscow in 1953.

When Cathy Frierson asked her, in American research fashion, to assess how strongly her years of exile and the loss of her parents had influenced her development, we can see a chasm open between two worlds: "I would say this is a primitive question," Inna Aronovna spat back. But because she felt sorry for the befuddled American, she added the story of bringing a parcel to her mother in Butyarka Prison.

> I had to be there at four in the morning. Mama's last name was Kaplan. If I arrived at five in the morning, I might not make it in. The letter K came up once a month; if I don't make it in, I won't know anything about Mama. What do you think? Did this affect my life? In order to get Mama a parcel when she had already been sent to exile, I had to leave the city of Moscow. They didn't accept parcels from the city of Moscow. We went to the town of Mozhaisk. They accepted a limited number of parcels, and the entire train, which left Moscow at 6 in the morning, was jam packed with people who were sending parcels. So you had to climb up to the bridge, then run across it, and go down to go to the post office, and [run] to be in the number of people from whom they were still taking parcels. They took parcels of exactly eight kilograms. An extra ten grams wouldn't go . . . [S]o just consider: did this affect my life or not?

What emerges from these 10 interviews are the strong core values of intelligent Russians striving, in hard times, to create decent lives: close family ties, higher education, self-discipline, endurance, self-cultivation through pre-revolutionary literature, poetry, theater, and art. And above all, a maximum of self-constraint, because "silence was salvation." These values endure in Russia today. As we look at our own society of entitlement and self-indulgence, we do well to read these interviews with respect and humility. ♦

B&A

Senior Services

The best is yet to be, especially if you take a course.

BY STEPHEN MILLER

MENAHEM KAHANA / AFP / GETTY

Palestinian women in the Dead Sea (2008)

In recent years, I've begun to worry that I should think more about aging. (I know, I know — everyone is aging, but the term only seems to be used for people over 60.) The Beatles wrote "When I'm Sixty-four," but I am 74—older than a baby boomer—so it's irresponsible of me to know so little about aging. I should read some books on the subject, or take a course. I was happy to learn recently that Washington D.C.'s Office on Aging offers seven courses on aging, including "Take Charge of Your Aging 101," "Age Well, Live Well 101," and "Mindful Living."

I was about to sign up for one of these courses when I had second thoughts. I said to myself: "You did not take a course called 'Marrying 101,' yet you've

Stephen Miller is the author, most recently, of Walking New York: Reflections of American Writers from Walt Whitman to Teju Cole.

been married to the same woman for 48 years." It also occurred to me that my wife and I didn't take "Child-Rearing 101," yet our two daughters have turned out okay, insofar as they are gainfully employed. Last but not least, we did not take "Financial Planning 101," yet we still have enough money to spend one week at the beach every year, fly to Los Angeles twice a year to visit our younger daughter, and buy tickets for some cultural event once or twice a month.

I now had an even darker thought: Maybe there is a negative correlation between taking a course on something and doing well at it. I know a handful of people who've taken creative writing courses, yet they can't write worth a damn. A guy I know has taken many tennis lessons, yet his backhand still stinks. If I took a course on aging well, I probably would age poorly. I'd trip on an uneven sidewalk on the way to the classroom and break a hip, or I'd catch pneumonia from one of my aging classmates.

There is something else about these aging courses that bothers me. To put it bluntly, there is no course called "Dying Well 101." The courses offered by the Office on Aging imply that if you get an A in "Age Well, Live Well 101" you will always be aging well. Yet according to the latest scientific research, this is not true. At some time in the future, you will have to take charge of your dying.

I told a friend that the Office of Aging should offer a course about dying well. He did not agree. "When you go from aging to dying," he said, "it's too late for a course. Your education is over. All you need to do is make sure your significant other knows what kind of funeral you want and knows the passwords to your bank accounts. I assume you drew up a will many years ago."

My friend has a point. It's not a good idea to think too much about dying. I took out *The Oxford Book of Death*, a book I dip into now and then, and read a line from Epicurus: "Death, the most terrifying of ills, is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us." I remember the famous passage from Lucretius, which Dryden translated, that begins: "What has this Bugbear Death to frighten Man?" What about Montaigne, I said to myself: Didn't he write an essay called "To Philosophize Is to Learn How to Die"? Later in life, though, Montaigne changed his mind; he decided that it was pointless to think about dying. As the editor of the Penguin edition of Montaigne says, "He now believes that . . . mankind should neither 'practice' dying nor 'meditate' upon dying."

Montaigne says of Socrates: "Nor is there anything more striking about Socrates than his finding the time when he was old to learn how to dance and to play instruments." I told my wife that if the Office of Aging offered a course in "Greek Folk-Dancing 101," I definitely would sign up, but I was not going to learn how to play an instrument. I had a hard enough time with piano lessons when I was 10.

After giving it much thought, I decided to deal with aging on my own, with a little help from family and friends. So far, I think I'm doing okay. I rarely quarrel with my wife and my beer consumption has remained constant, one or two bottles a day. My wife and I do, in fact, dance. Once a week we do international folk-dancing, but we were doing that long before we were aging.

Moreover, I practice mindful living which, for me, chiefly means making sure that wherever I travel in the United States I will able to have a good cup of coffee. This requires mindfulness to the max, since good coffee is hard to find outside of major cities and college towns. Try finding good coffee in a national park! I hope I can persuade my wife to do without visits to natural parks. My ability to be mindful of mountains and trees and flowers is limited. I agree with Charles Lamb, who said: "I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life."

For me, mindful living means either strolling on a beach or sitting in a sidewalk cafe — watching people while sipping a double espresso. ♦

B&A

Gem of Discomfort

The return of the classic thriller. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

The Gift
Directed by Joel Edgerton

The Gift—a compact picture written and directed by the Australian actor Joel Edgerton—is the best American thriller in 20 years or more. On its own limited terms, *The Gift* is an almost perfect piece of work; in an extraordinarily controlled debut behind the camera, Edgerton doesn't make a false move. And *The Gift* benefits from an almost infinitely shaded leading performance by the longtime sitcom star and light movie comedy breakout Jason Bateman, who clearly understood he had the kind of role here that could redefine his career and simply knocked it out of the park.

Bateman plays Simon Cullum, a corporate suit who has moved from Chicago to Los Angeles with his wife Robyn (Rebecca Hall) for a new job that might eventually make him a billionaire. He's slick and she's unsteady, having had a miscarriage the previous year that led to some kind of nervous breakdown that involved pills and alcohol. At Williams-Sonoma, they run into Gordo (played by Edgerton himself), an odd high-school classmate of Simon whom Simon does not remember.

Gordo begins showing up at their new home in the Hollywood Hills bearing gifts of welcome. He's awkward, and Robin is awkward, and she feels sorry for him and grateful to him and somehow haunted by him. But quickly

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

Rebecca Hall, Jason Bateman, Joel Edgerton

MAGNUM PHOTOS

Gordo's attention begins to seem stalkerish, and Simon decides Gordo must be banished from their lives.

Whereas in many movies what I've just summarized would constitute 90 percent of the plot, *The Gift* is only just getting started. It does what every great thriller does, which is to create a jangly and unsettled atmosphere, startle the bejesus out of you every few minutes, and consistently surprise you by taking the story to places you didn't expect. I'm very good at guessing thriller twists, but *The Gift* completely took me by surprise three or four times.

Go see it as soon as you can, because while it is a modest hit—it's already made $30 million against its minuscule $5 million budget—it won't last much longer in theaters. And this one really deserves to be seen in a big dark auditorium. As the lights came up and the credits rolled, I got to wondering just why it was *The Gift* seemed so unusual an offering these days. After all, the thriller genre has been a reliable cinematic staple from the earliest days of the talkies. And it was the bread and butter of Alfred Hitchcock, who made himself the most famous director in movie history over his six-decade career until Steven Spielberg took the title from him. Hitchcock died in 1980, but the thriller did not die with him; far from it.

It practically took over Hollywood in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a succession of gigantic smashes from *Jagged Edge* to *Fatal Attraction* to *Basic Instinct* to *Sleeping with the Enemy*, and culminated in an Oscar for 1991's *The Silence of the Lambs* (the first thriller since Hitchcock's *Rebecca* in 1940 to win Best Picture).

These movies spawned a million cheap imitations that flooded the world's video stores (remember video stores?), mostly with titles that included the word "instinct" or the word "attraction." Fourth-rank ex-kid actors made second careers starring in them (remember C. Thomas Howell? or Nicole Eggert?). The knockoffs then began dominating the fare offered by cable channels late at night (remember Skinemax?). Once the primary form of nerve-jangling entertainment for adults, the thriller became an onanistic diversion for teenagers. And so the genre went cold.

The takeover of the multiplex by those same teenagers left very little room for the thriller, which relies for its power on specifically adult anxieties—fears that a spouse isn't what he or she seems, fears that something will happen to a beloved child, and, overarching it all, the fear of losing one's mind. Instead, those very real and very human fears were completely pushed aside cinematically by the fear of the supernatural. After the colossal box-office triumphs of *Scream* in 1996 (it cost $15 million and earned $173 million) and *The Blair Witch Project* in 1999 (an astounding $250 million on a $500,000 budget), most movie studios created production lines solely for the purpose of generating cheap horror pics that would create a steady annual revenue stream. That's why there have been six *Paranormal Activity*s, several *Insidious*es and a whole bunch of other franchises whose names I can't remember (remember how easy it used to be to remember things?).

But now the genres, always closely related, may be starting to blur, as Hollywood's most successful horror-movie honcho has decided to make thrillers as well. *The Gift* was produced by Jason Blum, whose firm Blumhouse makes the *Paranormal Activity* and *Insidious* movies. Blum limits his output to movies with budgets in the $4-$5 million range, and he has begun to expand outward from the horror genre with pictures whose thematic darkness fits within the Blumhouse wheelhouse. Last year it released *Whiplash*, the brilliant and unsettling portrait of the abusive relationship between a music student and his insanely demanding instructor, which was so expertly made in the manner of a thriller that it won Oscars for its editing and sound mixing. And now Blum has given us *The Gift*. Someone hand this guy a movie studio. ♦

"Clinton responded dismissively to a reporter's question about potential wiping [of her email server]. 'What, like with a cloth or something?' she said, adding: 'I don't know how it works at all.'"
—News item, August 19, 2015

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Dear FBI,

Hello. My name is Hillary Clinton, and I am writing in response to a subpoena that I received from your office last week. According to the document—which I must say was a little bit confusing (and such small print!)—you requested that I "turn over" all electronic equipment that might contain any classified material from my time as Secretary of State. Well, I just want you to know that I am cooperating fully with your request, and I have turned over every gadget and gizmo I own (I have attached a photograph below, one of those newfangled Polaroid instant ones—What'll they think of next?).

My only question is, now that I have turned everything over, what do I do next? Just to be thorough, I even turned over the remote to the TV/VCR, though I think maybe that thing doesn't get the email. I don't know how these things work. But I am a little curious just how long I'll have to leave the remote like this, because it's made it real hard for me to watch my stories. I also have complied with your request that I not "wipe" any of the equipment before turning it over, but as you can see from the picture I sent, it was sitting out like that for a bit and got real dusty, so I wiped it off with a little towel. I figured that's ok, because you said don't wipe it before you turn it over. I am really not sure how all this computer stuff works, and I just don't want to cause any trouble, but dust is a real problem in my house, ever since Andre—he's my gardener—I had him put in my storm windows. Well, it just gets real stuffy and the dust just settles on everything, and then I end up just wiping and wiping, all day and night. But if I don't put those windows in, well, you know, it does get real drafty. So, you win some, you lose some.

Anyhoo, it's getting late and—oh, I think I left the stove on, silly me! I should go. But I sure do hope that when the time comes you'll remember I did my best to help your little investigation. And don't forget to vote!

Sincerely,

Hillary Rodham Clinton