the weekly Standard

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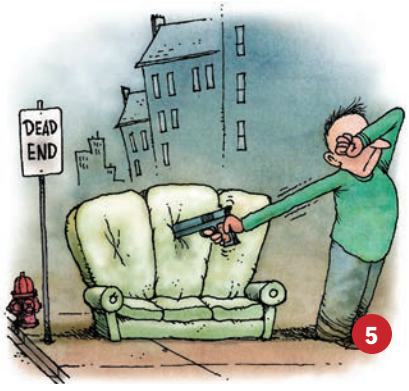

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Books & Arts

Revolution Devours Its Young Adult Fiction

Thanks to the success of book series such as *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*, the young adult, or YA, fiction market has become lucrative and culturally influential. With that in mind, *New York* magazine recently did a feature on the bevy of online critics whose opinions can make or break authors in the world of YA fiction. *New York* was appalled by what it found: "Many members of YA Book Twitter have become culture cops, monitoring their peers across multiple platforms for violations. The result is a jumble of dogpiling and dragging, subtweeting and screenshotting, vote-brigading and flagging wars, with accusations of white supremacy on one side and charges of thought-policing moral authoritarianism on the other."

Exhibit One is a review, posted on a blog this spring, of a buzzworthy debut YA novel, *The Black Witch*. The blogger denounced the fantasy novel as "the most dangerous, offensive book I have ever read. It's racist, ableist, homophobic, and is written with no marginalized people in mind." The review goes on for some 9,000 words in this vein asserting all manner of thoughtcrimes perpetrated in a book about elves, wolfmen, and witches.

Another YA fiction author hauled off by the Thought Police.

Piling on ensued. The online fracas over *The Black Witch* has caused big headaches for the publisher and author, and few of the YA "culture cops" seem to realize that online mobs demanding that books be banned are problematic.

Those who now find themselves writing books that may at any moment be objects of the Two Minutes Twitter Hate, however, get it. One anonymous YA author and "former diversity advocate" told *New York*, "I have never seen social interaction this f—ed up. . . . And I've been in prison."

If there's a silver lining here, it's that things are getting so bad that prestige liberal media outlets such as *New York* find themselves not just covering, but decrying, the politically correct carnage coming from the left. Here's hoping some useful political consensus emerges about how to discourage these jayvee Jacobins from their cyberbullying. If it doesn't, well, American society is going look eerily similar to the sort of dystopian fantasy worlds found in so many YA novels. ♦

NYT's Killer Logic

So ingrained are religious prejudices in societies the world over that people tend to think that atheists are more likely to be serial killers—at least, that's the way the *New York Times* reported a new social-psychology study in *Nature Human Behaviour*.

In the experiment, more than 3,000 participants in 13 countries were given a description of a gruesome serial killer with five dismembered bodies in his basement. To make it clear just how terrible the sociopath was, the study added that the bodies were those of "homeless people that he abducted from poor neighborhoods." Study participants were asked, in effect, whether they thought such a person was more likely or not to be a religious believer. Twice as many guessed the generic killer was an atheist.

The lead author of the study, Will M. Gervais, told the *Times* they asked about hypothetical serial killers as a way to test whether people linked atheism with extreme moral depravity: Even "if people didn't trust atheists enough to let them babysit their children, they wouldn't necessarily assume them to be serial killers." To which the *Times* responded, "But they did—overwhelmingly."

Which means the *Times* (with a little help from the good professor) got the study backwards. Gervais et al. did not find that people assumed atheists to be serial killers. It was the other way round: Two-thirds of those asked to guess whether a given serial killer was religious or not, guessed the murderer was not among the faithful. It's a very different thing to assume serial killers are atheists than it is to believe atheists are serial killers. All squares may be quadrangles, but not all quadrangles are squares.

Even if one gets things the right way round, it's hard to give much credence to the study's conclusion that the "recent rise in secularism in Western countries has not overwritten intuitive anti-atheist prejudice." Did those study participants who guessed the killer was an atheist do so out of bias? That's not the only conclusion one could make. We suspect that most of those who guessed the serial killer lacked religion did

Maybe. Maybe not.

BELOW: FIGURE, BIGSTOCK

so because they assumed that faith requires one not to commit mass murder. That's not a comment on the nature of disbelievers, but rather a comment about the demands of belief. ♦

Offal Behavior

A federal extortion trial in Boston last week showed that Teamsters members haven't lost their knack for cooking up trouble. It all began in June 2014, when the reality TV kitchen competition *Top Chef* visited the city to film. Let's just say things got a little hot in Beantown, and we're not talking about the sesame-sriracha glaze on local cod.

Turns out the Bravo show was using a non-union crew, poaching, as the Teamsters saw it, their work. The union men were boiling mad and didn't mince words. *Top Chef* stars and crew endured taunts, threats, and slurs. Crew members testified that Teamsters members peppered them with nasty epithets: Host Padma Lakshmi was called "towel head"; other women on the shoot were repeatedly called the c-word.

When the production vans arrived at the restaurant where *Top Chef* was to film, the talent and crew were confronted by Teamsters who had clearly been stewing. "Oh, looky here, what a pretty face," one man said, menacing Lakshmi. "What a shame about that pretty face." She told jurors she took it as a threat. "I felt he was saying 'I might hit you.'"

Longtime *Top Chef* judge Gail Simmons testified that one man stuck his head into her van and yelled at the occupants. "I remember him being very aggressive, animated," she said. "I remember being afraid of what he was saying." Fortunately, just to clarify, there was no actual batter-y.

While the show was taping, someone filleted the tires on all the vans, leaving the vehicles like so many fallen soufflés.

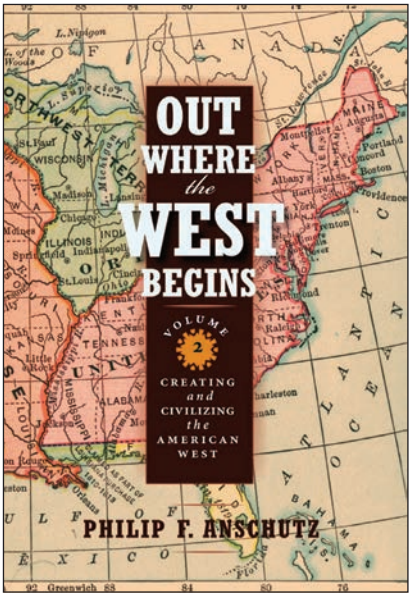
The defendants chose not to take the stand, depriving prosecutors of the opportunity to grill them.

The *Boston Globe* reported that trial testimony "painted a picture of a sordid, profanity-laced scene that, according to other witnesses, has bruised Hollywood's working relationship with Boston and its labor unions."

Sounds like the tensions over the incident are still simmering. ♦

Go West, Young Man

A little over two years ago, The Scrapbook was pleased to welcome a new work of history from Philip F. Anschutz, chairman and



A paean to the limitless potential of the West

CEO of The Weekly Standard's parent company. In The Scrapbook's words, *Out Where the West Begins* profiled "an astonishing variety of business entrepreneurs, visionaries, inventors, and all-purpose risk-takers [who] headed toward the Pacific to build, swiftly and largely from scratch, a frontier empire and distinct American region."

Now, with an energy, insight, and skill both infectious and rewarding, the author has expanded his horizon beyond the realms of business enterprise to the men and women—the explorers and statesmen, artists and writers, soldiers and reformers, inventors and conservationists—who recognized the limitless potential of the American West in the larger enterprise of building a nation. Anschutz is a genuine scholar of our evolving frontier, and *Out Where the West Begins, Volume 2: Creating and Civilizing the American West* (Cloud Camp, 384 pp., $34.95) tells the story of the idea and reality of the nation's westward expansion in a series of essay-biographies both astute and accessible.

At the dawn of the republic, he writes, "far-thinking Americans . . . understood that the West offered limitless political, economic, and social potential." But translating vision into reality was a complicated matter, inevitably bound up with the national growing pains—the question of slavery, the expansion of territory, the status of Native Americans—of 19th-century America. Appropriately, Anschutz's purview is as wide as the continent, and in exploring every aspect of the growth and settlement of the expanding West, he not only revives our interest in neglected actors in the American drama—Stephen A. Douglas, Marcus Whitman, Tecumseh, George Catlin Sr., Blandina Segale—but treats them, in engaging style, with perception and fairness. ♦

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Ode to a Couch

Disposing of a used couch in an urban neighborhood turns out to be a complicated affair.

I initially placed an ad on Craigslist for what I thought was a pittance but received no responses, save for a couple of scammers.

An ad on the "free items" list didn't work either, and Goodwill didn't return my phone calls.

I told my wife I was out of ideas: She blamed my sentimental attachment to the couch and suggested I redouble my efforts.

It was a fair critique.

When I left school, I used every dime I could scrounge to make a down payment on a dilapidated bungalow abutting the train tracks in a dubious neighborhood in the town where my new job awaited.

I moved in with nothing but a mattress, TV, and beach chair. My plan was to find a girlfriend who could help me pick out the furniture.

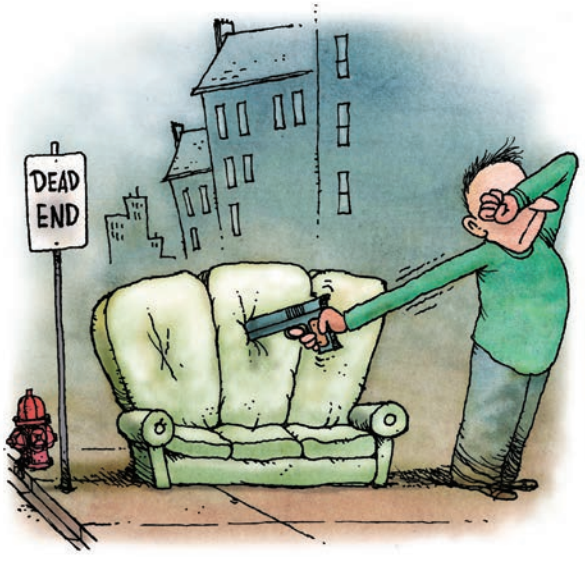
It was a lousy plan: No girlfriend-cum-interior-designer materialized. And why would she have? The lack of decor telegraphed to the (very few) women who saw the place that I was unserious, unable to commit, and no prospect for a relationship—or maybe just a weirdo with no furniture.

A few years later, out for drinks with my rec league basketball team, I managed to chat with a woman and get her phone number. Our point guard brought me down to earth by suggesting that on the off chance she was going to see my house, I might want to make it look like an adult lived there.

Scales fell from my eyes. I went to work and in the following weeks hung curtains, put up artwork, and even painted. And I shopped for furniture, visiting stores and perusing every catalogue I could find, without success.

Meanwhile, a relationship was developing: We went out every weekend and she even made me dinner at her place one night. I needed to reciprocate soon.

I finally asked my best friend and his wife in Chicago to pick something out for me. They went shopping the next afternoon and phoned me from a Room & Board showroom to say they had found something they thought I would like—a white canvas couch with a matching loveseat and ottoman.



DAVID CLARK

They handed the phone to the clerk and I bought it on the spot. Ten days later, it arrived. That evening, I hosted dinner.

When my date saw my furniture she declared herself impressed but had a practical concern: "The white will show every single stain—can you imagine having kids with this furniture?" she asked.

I had not considered that at all, but realized in the moment that I could indeed imagine having kids with this furniture—and with this woman.

So I lied: "I ordered a washable slipcover from the manufacturer. It should be here next week. You can come over and help me put it on."

The next day I called to see if such a thing existed—it did, and it cost almost as much as the couch itself. I paid extra to have it express shipped. She helped me put it on the next weekend.

Putting on the slipcover became a ritual we would perform together dozens of times after we married and had a family. It proved to be a solid investment: Our two children subjected the couch to the normal stresses of childhood and then some, but nothing that couldn't come out in the wash.

However, even the best slipcover can't save a couch from obsolescence. Last month, my wife and our two daughters went shopping and managed to select a replacement in an afternoon.

The writer Joe Sheehan observed that it is a very American idea that we make our own destiny, but serendipity plays a greater role in our lives than we want to admit—perhaps because it is humbling and a little unnerving to think that we are where we are, with the people we are with, in no small part because of random luck.

But it is, it seems to me, an undeniable truth. All we can do is be prepared when a chance encounter presents us with a golden opportunity.

So get the couch before meeting the girl.

Oh, and if you need to get rid of the couch, don't try to give it away for nothing. I finally disposed of the white canvas couch by advertising it on a different website for way too high a price. The first person who showed up haggled me down while I feigned indignation.

Ike Brannon

the weekly Standard

When Loretta Met Bill

In many quarters of the American news media today, seasoned journalists seem incapable of pondering those parts of reality that don't complement their political worldviews. It goes beyond "bias"—we're all biased. This is negligence.

Consider the trove of emails between FBI and Department of Justice officials published this week. The emails concern the June 27, 2016, meeting between former president Bill Clinton and then-attorney general Loretta Lynch. As readers may remember, Clinton paid an apparently impromptu visit to the attorney general aboard her DoJ plane while it was parked at Phoenix's Sky Harbor airport. It was extremely improper for the two to meet for any reason. Clinton was the husband of the subject of an FBI investigation, and Lynch, as attorney general, had the ultimate authority over that investigation.

Just a meet and greet between old friends?

The meeting likely wouldn't have made it into the news at all except for Christopher Sign, an industrious reporter with Phoenix's ABC affiliate, who pursued the story and made it national news. Lynch eventually conceded that the meeting raised "questions and concerns." At the time, though, she told Sign that she and the former president only discussed grandchildren, some golf Clinton played in Phoenix, and other such innocuous topics. Sign reported that "the FBI [was] there on the tarmac instructing everybody around 'no photos, no pictures, no cell phones.' " That was strange, and it was strange, too, that no one was able to find any evidence that Clinton had played golf in Phoenix. This encounter and its suggestion of conflict of interest led FBI director James Comey to take the unorthodox step of holding a press conference on July 5, 2016, where he announced that the bureau's investigation of Hillary Clinton's use of a private server would not result in a recommendation to the Department of Justice to indict her. Comey later recalled that Attorney General Lynch had directed him not to call the investigation an "investigation" but instead to call it a "matter." A direction, Comey said, that "confused me and concerned me."

None of this mess, however, confused or concerned much of the mainstream news media. We don't relish the tired "imagine if" logic of today's political discourse—*Imagine if he/she were a Democrat/Republican!*—but it is utterly beyond dispute that if any Republican attorney general had engaged in a similar meeting with the spouse of a front-running Republican presidential candidate under the cloud of an FBI investigation, journalists in the mainstream media would have needed no extra motivation to cover the story. Yet for a full year now, only right-leaning media outlets—Fox News, Breitbart, and such—have shown a serious interest in the Clinton-Lynch meeting.

That brings us to this week, when the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) published more than 400 pages of emails received from the Department of Justice in response to a Freedom of Information Act inquiry. The documents are newsworthy, whatever the arbiters of news may think.

The first thing to be said about this trove is that for a year the FBI pretended it didn't exist. The ACLJ's initial open-records request came up with nothing: "No records responsive to your request were located," the bureau said in a letter. But the same request to DoJ was answered with scores of emails, many of them to and from FBI officials. Why the initial stonewall from the FBI?

The emails are heavily redacted and don't reveal much about what Clinton and Lynch discussed, why the former president put the attorney general in such a compromising position, or why she allowed herself to be put there. What they reveal is an agency trying hard to control the damage. DoJ's communications director Melanie Newman asks her FBI counterparts to "let me know if you

get any questions" about this "casual, unscheduled meeting between former president Bill Clinton and the AG." She also offers talking points in the event media asked about the meeting, but these are inexplicably redacted. Another email reveals a DoJ spokesman, Patrick Rodenbush, informing his colleagues that the FBI was "looking for guidance" about inquiries that the FBI had prevented media from taking pictures of the Clinton-Lynch meeting, as Sign was saying in his reports.

It's all very murky. But so is virtually every political scandal when the press begins to ask questions. The trouble with this one is that journalists in the mainstream media never bothered to start asking questions. Some of the reporters quoted or referenced in the emails the ACLJ received are essentially volunteering to be spun into inactivity. *New York Times* reporter Mark Landler, for instance, worded his request to DoJ for comment by noting that "I've been pressed into service to write about the questions being raised" by the Phoenix meeting. Another reporter, Matt Zapotosky of the *Washington Post*, said that although his editors were "still pretty interested in [the story]," he himself was hoping that the DoJ press folks "put it to rest by answering just a few more questions." In another exchange, Melanie Newman noted that she "talked to [an] ABC producer, who noted that they aren't interested, even if FOX runs with it."

Compare this sort of complaisance—and the silence with which mainstream media outlets greeted the ACLJ documents this week—to journalists' tireless and aggressive efforts to get their hands on any document pointing to any connection between any Russian official and any individual with any connection to the Trump presidential campaign. Much of the Trump-Russia coverage has hit the mark, and we've referenced the best of it in these pages. If only we could reference their tireless work in the other direction.

The inconsistency is extraordinary—and regrettable. That reporters, editors, and producers working for the nation's most prestigious news outlets found this story largely uninteresting suggests just how imperceptive they are of their own ideological motivations. Their blindness in this regard is a major reason why Donald Trump's strident attacks on the media sound entirely fair to a great many Americans. By avoiding the story of this scandalous conference on the tarmac in Phoenix—part of a general habit of minimizing the investigation into Hillary Clinton's emails and illegal use of a private server—many of these journalists made Trump's most vituperative charges sound like the plain truth.

Most journalists in America's mainstream are capable and hardworking. We know lots of them and generally like them. But hackery has consequences. ♦

A Fateful Decision

The war in Afghanistan is nearly 16 years old. It is the longest in our nation's history. Many Americans wonder why our soldiers are still there. This widespread frustration is shared by our commander in chief. The Trump administration has not yet announced its plans for Afghanistan in large part due to the president's reluctance to take action. If he sends more troops into the country, then it becomes *his* war, and he is not eager to inherit a costly, seemingly intractable conflict. But as President Trump weighs his options he should remember one maxim above all others: *The enemy gets a vote*. And in Afghanistan, our enemies are on the rise.

The Afghan government is in serious trouble. The Taliban-led insurgency contests or directly controls approximately 40 percent of the country. No area is truly out of its reach. Kabul, the capital, is regularly hit by the Taliban.

There are many in Washington who think this is merely a local concern, without any ramifications for American security. Their opinion is reinforced by a cottage industry of experts, inside and out of government, who act as de facto apologists for the Taliban. President Trump's top advisers should sweep away this rubbish, which was crafted to serve the Obama administration's desire to downplay the survival of al Qaeda.

It is essential to remember that the Taliban is al Qaeda's key ally and that the two are inseparable. In the wake of the 9/11 hijackings, President George W. Bush demanded that Taliban leader Mullah Omar turn over Osama bin Laden, who had sworn an oath of allegiance (a *bayat*) to Omar. The Taliban chieftain refused; Omar chose to lose his country rather than betray his honored guest. Al Qaeda celebrates his obstinance to this day.

Bin Laden was killed in May 2011, and Omar died sometime in 2013. Bin Laden's successor, Ayman al Zawahiri, swore allegiance to Mullah Mansour, Omar's replacement. After Mansour was struck down by an American drone strike in Pakistan in May 2016, Zawahiri quickly rehearsed the same oath to Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada.

There are numerous ties between al Qaeda and the Taliban. Akhundzada's top deputy is Sirajuddin Haqqani, who oversees the Taliban's military operations. Files recovered during the May 2011 raid on bin Laden's compound reveal that al Qaeda's men have fought alongside Haqqani's forces for years. And Haqqani's father, Jalaluddin, was one

of Osama bin Laden's earliest and most influential backers.

In September 2014, Zawahiri publicly announced the creation of Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). Its primary goal is to restore Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and AQIS's men fight under the Taliban's banner.

In October 2015, U.S. and Afghan forces raided two massive al Qaeda training camps in southern Afghanistan. One of the camps, approximately 30 square-miles in size, may be the largest al Qaeda training camp in its history. Both camps were supported by the Taliban.

Ayman al Zawahiri

Despite the Taliban's obvious partnership with al Qaeda, the Obama administration pursued feckless negotiations with its leadership. The Taliban used these talks to extract a series of concessions, including a political office in Qatar that is useful for fundraising, the removal of several key Taliban figures from the U.N.'s terrorist sanctions list, and the release of five top Taliban commanders from Guantánamo. The United States secured, in return, the release of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, an accused deserter. That's it. The Taliban neither forswore al Qaeda nor agreed to any type of ceasefire. And they never will.

As President Trump considers his options in Afghanistan, he should remember that crucial truth. There are many reasons the United States today has so little to show for the many sacrifices made in Afghanistan over the past 16 years: from an unwillingness to confront Pakistan and inadequate resourcing to two terms of strategic drift caused by an uncertain commander in chief. But among the most important reasons we've struggled is an eagerness to see the Taliban as the potential partner we wish it would be rather than the determined enemy it is. If Trump's policy continues this dangerous self-delusion, it will fail.

If the Taliban is able to resurrect its Islamic emirate in Afghanistan, it will be a momentous victory for al Qaeda's cause. Jihadists around the globe have sworn their allegiance to Zawahiri and, through him, to the Taliban's leader. They are trying to build their own caliphate, similar to the one established by the Islamic State, with Kabul as its capital. If they succeed, it will have dire ramifications for international security.

—Thomas Joscelyn

Tax Reform: Hard Work and High Stakes Ahead

THOMAS J. DONOHUE
PRESIDENT AND CEO
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Members of Congress are back in their home states for August, but the U.S. Chamber of Commerce isn't taking any breaks. We're busy preparing for the upcoming battle to pass pro-growth tax reform. We're activating our extensive grassroots and small business network to build support from the ground up, even as we ramp up our lobbying, policy, and communications efforts in Washington. Our message is simple: Tax reform cannot wait.

Before the August recess, key congressional leaders and administration officials released their principles for reform, signaling a unified approach and seeding the field for the upcoming legislative process. Many of the priorities outlined were consistent with the principles the Chamber shared with top tax leaders last month.

As we said then, among our top priorities is to lower rates for all businesses, including the many small businesses that file on the individual side of the tax code. Further, we must simplify rules to limit compliance costs, increase certainty so that businesses can plan for the future, and move as far as possible toward allowing all businesses to expense capital purchases. We also want to see an internationally competitive system that eliminates the double taxation companies now face when they earn profits abroad.

True reform is going to require compromise and trade-offs. The Chamber has been up front that any viable tax reform plan will create tensions in the business community, but we will judge any plan on one simple test: Will it spur economic growth? And we will encourage members of Congress—all of whom have their own pet tax issues—to judge legislation on the same basis.

Tax reform is too critical to become another casualty of Washington dysfunction or competing interests. Everyone involved acknowledges that our tax code is outdated and ripe for reform—but that doesn't mean the effort will be easy. It will be tough to write the legislation, tough to negotiate it, and tough for businesses to transition to the new system—which is why the Chamber has made it clear that effective transition rules must be written to provide adequate time to adjust.

Pro-growth tax reform is the most important piece of the puzzle when it comes to sparking a new wave of wage growth and job creation. Its significance cannot be overstated. To get tax reform over the finish line, all Americans must get involved—businesses, government leaders, voters, and grassroots organizations. Let's roll up our sleeves and commit to finish the job by the end of 2017. The economy will thank us for many years to come.

Learn more at uschamber.com/abovethefold.

GETTY IMAGES

White House Divided

A battle over Afghanistan is raging in Washington.

BY PETER J. BOYER

A presidential decision on a new strategy for the war in Afghanistan, long delayed and the subject of bitter dispute inside the White House, may finally be at hand. Key members of the Trump administration's war council met with the president on August 10 at the summer White House in Bedminster, N.J., and presented him with a trio of options for the 16-year-old conflict, according to senior government officials. These range from an open-ended mission for a beefed-up American military force to a near-complete withdrawal of American forces.

It is, perhaps, a reflection of this unique presidency that the future of America's longest-running war will be decided at a luxury golf club in New Jersey. But it is a better measure of the president's disappointment in the current conduct of the fight and in the plans that his national security team have previously presented to him. Trump firmly expressed that disappointment in a heated National Security Council meeting last month, when he declared that the war was being lost and mused about firing Gen. John Nicholson, the top commander in Afghanistan.

The Bedminster initiative was set in motion at an August 3 meeting of the NSC's principals committee, where the president's rebuke hung heavy in the air. To drive home the point that Trump wanted new ideas, Vice President Mike Pence, who presided over the meeting, tasked three men with preparing best-case options for the war. One of them was national security adviser H.R. McMaster, which was no surprise, given that he has taken the lead role in developing a new Afghan strategy since assuming his job in February.

The other two men charged with presenting strategy options were more telling choices: Mike Pompeo, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions.

Trump and national security adviser McMaster

Sessions, stalwart of the America First camp, has long been "the biggest skeptic in the room" when the subject of a continued presence in Afghanistan arises in meetings of Trump's war cabinet, according to one participant in those meetings. Said another White House official, who is sympathetic to Sessions' position, "The A.G. asks the same question: Is this what we were elected to do? And the answer to the question is no."

Pence made it clear at the August 3 meeting that Pompeo and Sessions were being given strategy assignments because Trump wanted a variety of proposals. According to an official who attended the meeting, Pence told the group, "I don't want to give the president something that he might feel is a stacked deck." Implicit in that remark was the concern that McMaster might present strategy choices tilted toward his preferred military option.

As it happened, Pompeo was not physically present at the meeting—he joined via secure link. He had quietly gone to Afghanistan to investigate a stark alternative to the war strategy that McMaster had been developing for months. McMaster's strategy has evolved over time, but it is believed to reflect both his status as an active-duty Army officer and his personal experience fighting in Afghanistan.

Obama sent 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan in late 2009 and regretted this decision almost from the start. He attached an end-date to his surge—to be quickly followed by full American withdrawal. Critics knew the Taliban would wait it out, and they did. Obama never got his full withdrawal, either, and toward the end of his presidency, with the Taliban resurgent, even allowed the return of a few thousand more troops for the purpose of training Afghan military and police. There are now about 8,500 American soldiers in Afghanistan, and another 20,000 to 30,000 contractors providing logistics—enough to slow, but not prevent, ultimate Taliban victory.

McMaster does not see the Afghanistan problem as intractable and is said to favor an approach that is not dissimilar to the one tried by Obama with the important exception of not imposing an end-date for the deployment. The mission would be to stand up the Afghan military, strengthen the fragile Afghan government, claim Pakistani support, and put enough pressure on the Taliban to force them to the negotiating table. In May, Bloomberg's Eli Lake reported that the most ambitious version of McMaster's plan would increase the American force to 50,000. After it became clear that Trump would never approve such a plan, officials say, McMaster scaled it back.

Trump's national security adviser is both a scholar and battlefield hero, and his plan would certainly win the

ANDREW HARRER / BLOOMBERG / GETTY

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approval of most of the professional military. But his constituency is Trump, who remains pointedly skeptical of the possibility of success in Afghanistan.

Encouraging that skepticism are the America Firsters in the administration, led by Sessions and Trump's chief strategist, Stephen K. Bannon, who is firmly fixed on the idea of Afghanistan as graveyard of empires. It may be owing to his conversations with Bannon that the president has cited to his war cabinet the unhappy experiences of the British at the Khyber Pass and even quoted Alexander the Great ("Afghanistan is easy to march into, but hard to march out of").

Bannon vehemently opposes what he calls McMaster's "Big Army plan," and his argument to the president is at least partly a political calculation: Does Trump want to explain to voters why he's committing $50 billion to build schools in Afghanistan (on top of a 16-year military expenditure that is already nearing $1 trillion) before starting the infrastructure projects he's promised to Michigan and Ohio?

His approach would be to send the conventional American troops home and replace them with a small group of Special Operations forces, CIA paramilitary fighters, and private contractors, complemented by American airpower. The aim of such a mission, those familiar with it say, would be less nation-building and more killing insurgents.

A version of that approach got a public airing in late May when Erik D. Prince—the founder of the military contractor Blackwater and the brother of Education secretary Betsy DeVos—published an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* calling for an American viceroy on the MacArthur model for Afghanistan who would direct a small but potent army of special operators and private contractors. "Since few people have served, no one's comfortable calling bulls— on the generals," says Prince, a former Navy SEAL. "No one actually says, 'Wait a minute, stop. Sixteen years, and you want to do the same thing? The definition of insanity is to do the same thing, expecting different results." Though he sold Blackwater, Prince runs another military contractor called Frontier Services Group and would stand to benefit from such a plan, of course. He says he wrote his article "for an audience of one" and that he has been told that the president was impressed. In a campaign that shows he understands his audience well, Prince was a fixture on television in the days leading up to the Bedminster meeting.

The viceroy route seems an unlikely outcome, as does a war effort that is mostly privatized—not least because it would be so stoutly resisted by the uniformed military, the intelligence community, and Congress.

CIA director Pompeo declined to discuss his trip to Afghanistan or the plan that he presented to Trump in Bedminster on August 10. But two people who have spoken to him about it say that, in essence, it reflects key elements of the Bannon argument. "It's a CIA-heavy plan," said one of those people, but equally relies heavily on a small but select military force. Such a plan might appeal to Trump, who, no doubt, has been reminded of the swift success that a relatively few CIA and Special Forces operators had in routing the Taliban in the early days of the Afghan war.

Trump is expected to make a decision on an Afghan strategy by the time he returns to Washington on August 21, if not before. The resurgence of the Taliban, and the likely aftermath of an American withdrawal—a vacuum filled by violent extremists, hoping to build a new caliphate—poses a keen dilemma for Trump.

"The fundamental tension in Trump's thinking is he doesn't want nation-building, big expensive foreign projects," notes a terrorism expert who has briefed administration officials on the situation in Afghanistan. "But he doesn't want to look at television news and see the American flag coming down as the black flag of jihad rises, and the leader of the Taliban giving a victory speech from the middle of Kabul. This is a nightmare scenario. He doesn't want that to happen." ♦

Plowed Under

The regulatory state vs. a California farmer.

BY TONY MECIA

On a rainy afternoon in late November 2012, Matthew Kelley, a project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, pulled his truck over to the side of a road in Tehama County in northern California.

He'd seen something he found disturbing: a tractor parked in an open field. Fields and tractors are common in this rural region halfway between Sacramento and the Oregon border. The area is known for its almond and walnut orchards. What Kelley found so alarming was that this tractor was in a 450-acre field that he knew contained dozens of vernal pools. These are small depressions that can fill with rainwater seasonally, but environmental regulators consider them to be part of nearby Coyote Creek.

Kelley was the Army Corps's lone representative in Tehama County, and nobody had asked him for a permit to plow. In an email to his superiors, Kelley wrote, "I think this is going to be a big violation."

He had no idea just how big the investigation he was launching would become. For rather than acquiesce to the Army Corps's demands, the property owner, John Duarte, decided to fight. His decision unleashed the full fury of the government's regulatory apparatus and resulted in a legal

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battle that has stretched more than four years and placed Duarte on the brink of financial ruin.

This month, after a string of victories largely vindicating the government's legal positions, the Justice Department is heading to court to press Duarte to pay a $2.8 million fine and to buy mitigation credits his lawyers say will cost at least $13 million.

Above: Pacific Legal Foundation representatives and Justice Department attorneys discuss where plowing by John Duarte, right, took place.

The case rests on a handful of narrow legal questions, such as how much deference to afford executive branch agencies; whether ponds that are sometimes dry are really part of a "significant nexus" of "navigable waters" subject to regulation under the 1972 Clean Water Act; and if plowing a vacant field constitutes protected "normal farming." But to farmers across the country, the case exemplifies the overreach of the regulatory state. To them, it seems like a guy could wind up paying millions in fines for the crime of planting wheat.

"What sort of things can a citizen-farmer do without having to say 'Mother, may I?' to the government?" asks Will Rodger, a spokesman with the American Farm Bureau Federation, which is closely following the case. "What sort of things can they do without worrying about the hand of the federal government coming down on their head?"

The most curious aspect of the case is that despite the Trump administration's rollback of Obama environmental regulations, the Justice Department is continuing to advance legal arguments that augment environmental regulatory power. In May, the chairmen of the House Agriculture and Judiciary Committees wrote to Attorney General Jeff Sessions, saying that the prosecution of Duarte is inconsistent with legislation passed by Congress. Yet the case continues. The Justice Department declined to comment for this article.

Duarte is a fourth-generation California farmer. He bought the 450-acre parcel in Tehama in April 2012. As part of the deal, he received a detailed environmental assessment that identified the vernal pools as potential water features. Coyote Creek, a tributary of the Sacramento River, runs through a portion of the property. He was considering flipping the land or perhaps turning it into an orchard or vineyards—Duarte Nursery is a large supplier of small trees and plants to farms. Initially, though, he decided to plant wheat on the land for the winter season. He hired Brad Munson, a friend of his father, to supervise the operation.

In November, Munson hired a subcontractor to till the soil in preparation for seeding. Planting wheat, a member of the grass family, is generally easier on the soil than planting nut trees, which require deeper cuts into the earth. Duarte and Munson acknowledge that some of the plowing was done through vernal pools.

A 2006 Supreme Court decision, *Rapanos* vs. *United States*, says the Clean Water Act covers only waters that have a "significant nexus" to "navigable waters." But when Kelley saw the tractor and later found evidence of plowing, he and the Army Corps were alarmed because they interpret the Clean Water Act as covering any and all water features connected to a creek. As the plowing resulted in the movement of soil into the vernal pools, regulators further interpreted that action as a "discharge" into federal waters—which generally requires a permit. Some of the vernal pools in the area occasionally contain a variety of tadpole shrimp that is on the endangered species list—though there's no proof that any were in Duarte's pools.

There is a section of the Clean Water Act that exempts "normal farming, silviculture, and ranching activities such as plowing, seeding, cultivating, minor drainage, [and] harvesting for the production of food." The Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency, which jointly enforce the Clean Water Act, interpret that clause to mean that the farming in question must be part of an established, ongoing operation. Duarte's wheat, regulators believed, did not qualify for that exception: At the time of the plowing, the land was not used for growing crops, although there had been wheat production on nearby land in the past.

When Duarte received a cease-and-desist letter from the Army Corps in February 2013, he stopped the seeding operation. But the government also accused him of "deep

PACIFIC LEGAL FOUNDATION

ripping," which is plowing three-to-four feet deep rather than the shallow plowing needed for wheat. He contested the investigators' findings and launched a legal process that continues to this day. (He's represented by the Pacific Legal Foundation, a libertarian public-interest law firm headquartered in Sacramento.)

Duarte contends that the government case is baseless and that investigators simply doubled-down rather than admit they made a mistake. Prosecutors do agree that the plowing was less than a foot deep. But they still refer to it as "ripping." For his part, Duarte calls them "a carload of idiots": "They're evil and they're destroying jobs and destroying lives," he told a local TV station in June.

President Trump in February ordered the EPA to revise the Obama administration's environmental rules and limit their scope. In signing the order, Trump described some of the problems with a broad interpretation of the regulations: "You have to worry about getting hit with a huge fine if you fill in as much as a puddle—just a puddle—on your lot. I've seen it. In fact, when it was first shown to me, I said, 'No, you're kidding, aren't you?' But they weren't kidding."

Trump's Justice Department, nonetheless, continues to pursue the Duarte case, in which a farmer is accused of plowing soil near a wetland that might not have been wet. "You have this irony of the government continuing to prosecute a crippling civil penalty, when they're also in the process of deciding these aren't really waters protected by the Clean Water Act anyway," says Duarte's lawyer, Tony Francois.

It's hard to know how often regulators pursue such cases. The Army Corps's Sacramento office says that it has no documents that summarize its enforcement actions. In a deposition in the case, Kelley's boss said the Army Corps typically investigates between 30 and 60 Clean Water Act cases a year across four Western states. About one-quarter of those cases involve farming. ♦

Schumer's Losing This One

Washington's not showing much love for his tunnel. BY FRED BARNES

On November 12, 2015, officials in New York and New Jersey thought they had struck it rich. They had arranged a 50-50 deal with the federal government in which the feds would pay for half the cost of a new tunnel under the Hudson River, the renovation of Penn Station, and a lot more.

GARY LOCKE

An announcement said the "new federal commitment" included creation of a "development corporation to leverage billions in federal grant and loan funding." With the estimated cost of the project now at $29 billion, that would mean $14.5 billion coming from Washington. The government loans would come on top of that. The corporation is known as the Gateway Project.

A half-dozen ecstatic officials were quoted in the announcement. Anthony Foxx, then Transportation secretary in the Obama administration, declared himself "ready to roll up my sleeves and use all the tools at my disposal to move this critical project forward."

But there was less to the announcement than met the eye. The agreement was not signed into law. It wasn't binding. No contract obligating the parties was signed. The "commitment" to share costs evenly was merely an expression of intentions. The announcement itself was all that existed—a press release. Foxx never had to roll up his sleeves.

From the Trump administration, the agreement gets less respect. It's beginning to be seen as a giveaway program to two of America's wealthiest states. Neither President Trump nor Department of Transportation officials have endorsed the 50-50 arrangement, nor are they expected to. The officials scoured DoT files in search of documents that might spell out any obligations they have. No such documents have been found.

The New York and New Jersey crowd isn't happy. They were alarmed when Transportation secretary Elaine Chao quit the Gateway board as a potential conflict of interest. Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer, New York governor Andrew Cuomo, and New Jersey senator Cory Booker have lobbied her. They got nowhere, but Cuomo at least got along well with the secretary (in contrast with Schumer). She told them they'd have to wait for Trump's decision this fall on his heralded infrastructure initiative. That comes first.

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At this point, Schumer may regret having voted against Chao's confirmation, a vote that also displeased her husband, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell. He needs her now. But for the time being, Schumer has turned to political hardball. Last week, he rounded up Booker, New York senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and New Jersey senator Bob Menendez—Democrats all—to join in delaying the confirmation of three top DoT officials.

Alienating the three nominees could come back to bite Schumer. The three are Ron Batory, who would run the Federal Railroad Administration; Derek Kan, the future undersecretary for policy; and Adam Sullivan, who would be the assistant secretary for government affairs. They're the best and brightest at Transportation.

Besides, the tactic isn't likely to work. Schumer and friends have already let it be known that as much as they love 50-50, they're "open" to a smaller share of federal funding. That's hardly a compelling concession. That the feds won't pay half is a given.

But that came after the initial request from Schumer for the full 50 percent, plus another 45 percent in loans. DoT staffers were irritated that the Schumer crew acted as if the loans were part of their 50 percent share. The folks at DoT add that up to being a 95 percent federal government share, with 5 percent coming from the two states.

That wasn't all that clashed with the way Transportation and other departments normally do business. Most appalling was the demand for a commitment to funding the Gateway Project even before a financial plan for the proposed tunnel had been created, much less submitted. Nor had the next step—the engineering phase—been developed.

And where specifically would the tunnel money come from? The Capital Investment Grant program, which has an annual budget of $2.3 billion. By gobbling up all that money, transit programs in cities outside New York and New Jersey would be left out.

This would be hard to defend even in Washington, especially since what Schumer wants is money for a parochial project in two states. The beginning Gateway project, the Portal Bridge, is the approach to the proposed tunnel. And nine out of ten users of it would be riders on New Jersey Transit.

Yet Schumer would have Transportation promise to fund a program affecting his state and one other at the expense of the other 48 states. Not only would access to transportation funds be sharply diminished, but taxpayers in the other 48 states would have pay disproportionately for a project they would rarely if ever benefit from. But well-to-do people would have an easier commute between New Jersey and Manhattan.

Forget all that. Schumer, with his smooth as sandpaper style, argues that the Gateway Project is urgent. "The delays this summer at Penn Station demonstrate a dire need for investing in infrastructure projects like Gateway sooner rather than later," he argued in a press release.

"In a matter of years, the only two rail tunnels operating under the Hudson River into Manhattan could become inoperable and if that were to happen, rail delays would become insufferable." Yes, Schumer makes a strong pitch, but he ought to adjust for his audience. President Obama is gone and the "commitment" he left behind has lost its appeal.

Schumer displays that habit of believing that what New York needs is vastly more important than what the rest of the world needs. Not anymore.♦

Shut Up, They Explained

The Google monoculture.

BY ADAM KEIPER

In *Chaos Monkeys*, his memoir about his rocky career in high tech, Antonio García Martínez lists a few pithy rules for understanding how Silicon Valley really works. The best of these insider insights: "Company culture is what goes without saying." That is, if you want really to understand the firms vying to invent the future, pay less attention to how they describe themselves than to the actions they take. Watch what they do, not what they say.

That lesson was driven home last week after the tech publication *Gizmodo* published a document that had been circulating privately among Google employees for about a month. The document describes a stifling climate of opinion: "Google's left bias has created a politically correct monoculture that maintains its hold by shaming dissenters into silence." The document asserts that this corporate conformity prevents open discussion of Google's policies encouraging diversity, especially gender diversity.

Those policies, the document says, are "unfair, divisive, and bad for business." It offers a brief layman's summary of some of the biological, psychological, and social-science findings about differences between men and women—suggesting that, at the population level, women tend to have more "openness directed towards feelings and aesthetics," "higher agreeableness," "higher anxiety," and "lower stress tolerance" than men. In short, the

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gender gap that Google's diversity efforts are meant to address may have causes other than, or in addition to, bias.

Once the document went public, the ensuing controversy unfolded rapidly and predictably. Press outlets called it a "screed" and even a "manifesto." Critics called it "sexist" and "anti-diversity." The author was revealed to be James Damore, a 28-year-old Google software engineer. Hot-take articles and countless tweets griped about his document's gloss on the science. And a counterreaction soon began, with a few sober experts in the relevant scientific fields coming to Damore's defense, joined by opponents of diversity programs as well as some of the more unhinged characters from the world of men's-rights activism. Accusations of distortions, misrepresentations, and cherry-picking flew in both directions.

With lightning speed, the search behemoth canned Damore. "Portions of the memo violate our Code of Conduct and cross the line by advancing harmful gender stereotypes in our workplace," wrote Google CEO Sundar Pichai—although he hastened to add that Damore wasn't fired for criticizing the company's policies: "The author had a right to express their views on those topics." (Whatever led Pichai to use the gender-neutral pronoun "their," he presumably did not notice the ironic implication that Damore's free-expression rights were limited to toeing the company line.)

Balloon-bedecked and dissent-free: Google employees bicycling to work at the Googleplex in Mountain View, California

Outside of Silicon Valley, this controversy may well exhaust itself in a few days: All the virtue signaling, thought policing, anti-PC griping, concern trolling, and media swarming will peter out. But before the episode is forgotten, it's worth taking a moment to consider what it reveals about the role of science in our public debates and about the role of Google in our public life.

First, on the science. To say that there is ample scientific evidence of biological and psychological differences between men and women, including differences related to cognition and personality, would be an understatement. However, there is also a mountain of journalistic and anecdotal evidence that the high-tech industry is bro-y, fratty, and weird about women. (This is a major theme in the HBO comedy *Silicon Valley*.) Perhaps the most egregious recent example comes from Uber; a former female employee earlier this year published a lengthy account alleging sexism and sexual harassment at the company.

How women should be treated in Silicon Valley is not a scientific question, it is a political one. It cannot be resolved or even fully understood through science alone: The real-life experiences of the employees harassed or discriminated against—either because of sexism or in the name of diversity—are not best understood using the tools of science. Science can inform the debate over whether equal representation of men and women in a given profession is a realistic or practical goal. But whether it is a *just* goal and whether the efforts used to reach that goal are fair to all involved are matters that science cannot speak to.

Second, this episode has serious implications for the public perception of Google. Hundreds of millions of people rely on the company to provide access to information of all kinds; millions more depend on it for storing their own personal and business information. But the company's decision to fire an employee for expressing mainstream views—views that are particularly common among conservatives—could understandably lead some Google users to wonder whether the company can be trusted.

This speaks to one of Google's greatest assets, one that is not on its books: its reputation. No one outside the company knows the details of how Google sorts through search results. It is easy to imagine that the company could systematically bias results—for reasons of profit or politics. The fact that Google finds certain views to be unacceptable for its employees to hold and express could reasonably lead users to wonder if it might be taking steps to protect them from such supposedly odious views. The possibility of an erosion of trust in Google is not just a matter of the company's bottom line, but given the company's importance for how citizens obtain news and political information, it could be a matter of serious public concern as well. ♦

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Diagnosis: Heartburn

Is an Obamacare bailout coming? BY JAY COST

Last week, insurance giant Anthem announced it was pulling out of the Obamacare exchanges in Nevada, leaving most of the counties within the state without even one insurer to cover demand in the individual marketplace. This latest development only increases the pressure on Congress to do something.

If history is any guide, conservatives should prepare themselves for some kind of bailout of the insurance industry—a backstop of some sort to keep insurers on the exchanges, offering policies that are not prohibitively expensive. Such a subsidy, while sure to generate bad headlines, would be perfectly in keeping with the corporatism that has defined our welfare state for more than half a century.

Obamacare is no outlier in our vast, byzantine system of entitlements. Instead, it was an extension of a typical approach to providing benefits to the citizenry. Public assistance can take one of two forms—direct cash payments or in-kind benefits. Direct cash payments include Social Security and unemployment benefits. In-kind benefits come mostly in the form of health care—Medicaid, Medicare, and now Obamacare.

Importantly, the government does not offer in-kind benefits directly, at least not in most cases. Care through the Veterans Administration is done by government doctors in government hospitals, of course, but Medicaid, Medicare, and Obamacare employ private intermediaries to provide the promised benefits.

The enactment of Medicare was the government's first effort to provide health care to the masses, and the primary providers employed were hospitals (covered under Medicare Part A) and doctors (Medicare Part B). The original terms of the Medicare contract grew outdated, so it has been updated in the last 25 years. Now, Medicare Advantage employs private insurers, and Medicare Part D subsidizes prescription drugs, which similarly ropes in the pharmaceutical industry.

All of these groups serve as mediators between the citizens and the government. The government promises eligible citizens that they will receive a specified form of care, and then contracts with these groups to provide it. Because these mediators are all private entities, they only agree to provide the care on behalf of the government if it is in their interests.

This approach to entitlements is not without problems. One main challenge has been cost overruns. The original terms of the Medicare contract between the government and providers was open-ended. Doctors and hospitals were asked to charge a reasonable rate, with no statutory definition of what that meant. Little wonder that the costs of the program exploded in the 1970s, and required strenuous efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to rein them in. With the aging of the baby boomers, the costs of Medicare remain a challenge for policymakers.

Our mediated welfare state also creates civic problems, as it gives the government a decidedly corporatist gloss. The citizenry is not directly involved in the details of the benefits they receive. Instead, those are worked out between the government and providers, who have an incentive to invest heavily in the political process. This is a main reason why the medical services industry is such a major contributor to campaigns and spends so lavishly on lobbying. Before Medicare, it had little incentive to involve itself so deeply in public affairs.

This has been a bipartisan process almost every step of the way. It was, after all, Republicans who spearheaded Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D, which expanded the scope of intermediaries acting at the behest of the government. And the medical service industry, like most major financiers of politics, contributes to both sides of the aisle—often based on its estimate of who is mostly likely to win the next election. Corporatism is a bipartisan ideology in Washington.

Far from reforming this approach to health care when enacting Obamacare, the Obama administration and congressional Democrats doubled down on it. While drafting the bill, they were exceedingly solicitous of industry support—for they knew full well that when push came to shove, the government would depend upon medical service providers to make Obamacare work. In its current form, Obamacare provides health insurance to individuals by making it in the interests of health insurance companies to offer it to them—so, in effect, the government provides a backstop for the insurers' profits in the individual marketplace.

But the individual marketplace is of course malfunctioning now. Enrollment among healthy people in the private exchanges is lagging, so insurers are exiting the marketplace because it doesn't pay to remain. If this continues, it will effectively nullify the entitlement provided by Obamacare, and worse, people who are not eligible for Obamacare subsidies but who need insurance through the marketplace will not be able to acquire it.

Having won total control of the government, in no small part based on their pledges to fix health care, Republicans are on the hook for this problem. They must find a way to keep insurers from bolting the individual marketplace, and also keep the price

GARY LOCKE

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of policies within reason. One way to do that would be to get rid of the strategy of mediation altogether, and give money directly to citizens so they can purchase their own care for themselves. Another way would be through deregulation, which would make it easier for insurers to make a profit and thus rejuvenate the individual marketplace.

But with the effort to repeal and replace Obamacare having failed, the chances of implementing any bold reforms have been greatly reduced. The most likely alternative is some kind of bailout for the insurance industry—a cash infusion to continue to make it profitable for them to remain in the exchanges.

Conservatives, of course, should be appalled by this. After all, one of the key failures of Obamacare was in its shoddy design of the marketplaces. It would be awful to see Congress write the insurers a check rather than fix the market it screwed up in the first place. And the political implications would be disappointing as well. One of the main conservative successes during the Obama years was the GOP effort to limit the Department of Health and Human Services' discretion in channelling funds to the insurance industry. A bailout of the insurers now would undermine all that good work.

Nevertheless, a bailout would be the easiest thing, and perhaps the only thing, that could acquire bipartisan support—which Senate Republicans like Lamar Alexander and John McCain are now emphasizing. GOP rhetoric about small government notwithstanding, the congressional party has long had a decidedly corporatist tilt to it—especially as regards federal entitlements. There are solid conservative members who will oppose such a subsidy, but if the party leadership ropes in enough Democrats, they are bound to be outvoted.

The unfortunate truth is that many Republican politicians are much more comfortable with Obamacare than they have let on these last seven years. Push comes to shove, they like its corporatist approach, and rather than doing the hard work to reform it will prefer simply to write a check to the insurers. ♦

Bring Back Containment

And end the Iran deal.

BY ROBERT JOSEPH

The Trump administration is conducting a comprehensive review of U.S. policy toward Iran. There is no doubt top national security officials view the Islamic Republic as a major threat, both in terms of regional instability and proliferation. This recognition represents the principal difference from the previous administration and a welcome step forward. One likely outcome will be a stronger U.S.-led effort to counter Iran's expanding presence, particularly in Syria and Iraq. The formation of an Arab alliance against Islamic terrorism, announced when Donald Trump visited Saudi Arabia, signaled a move toward a more effective regional stance.

But there is little to suggest that, beyond an attempt to roll back Tehran's external adventurism, there will be a fundamental change in U.S. policy. Press reports indicate that the usual interagency battle lines are being drawn—between those who advocate regime change and those who would continue past policies.

The main indicator of the direction of Iran policy will be the president's decision on the future of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Candidate Trump's stance on the nuclear deal during the campaign was clear: The JCPOA was a calamity for American security interests. Trump called it the worst agreement ever negotiated and declared in the spring of 2016: "My number-one priority is to dismantle the disastrous deal with Iran."

Robert Joseph was undersecretary of state for arms control and international security from 2005 to 2007.

But much seems to have changed since he took office. His secretaries of state and defense have both reportedly urged him to stick with the deal—while admitting Iran remains the chief sponsor of international terrorism and the greatest threat to U.S. interests in the Middle East. Most telling are the administration's two declarations to Congress that Iran is in compliance with the agreement. That might be true only in a very narrow, technical sense. Iran may now be complying with those terms of the agreement monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency, but that does not mean Tehran has stopped work on nuclear weapons. Just recall that the potential military activities identified by the IAEA in November 2011 were swept under the rug and that the supreme leader has explicitly ruled out inspections of the facilities that were the suspected sites of many of those activities.

Iran continues aggressively to expand its offensive ballistic missile force, already the largest and most dangerous in the region. The revelations recently made public by National Council of Resistance of Iran make clear that the country's weapons programs, both nuclear and missile, are alive and well and moving forward. Consistent with this conclusion, U.S. officials have assessed that Iran has an active intercontinental ballistic missile program, for which the only purpose is to deliver a nuclear warhead.

A number of arguments for and against staying in the nuclear agreement are presumably being considered in the administration review. The two most often heard in favor of remaining are:

■ The agreement provides some transparency to Iran's nuclear program and slows it at least temporarily. Better to have 5,000 centrifuges spinning than 12,000 or 19,000. Better to have quantitative and qualitative limits on low-enriched uranium and limits on heavy water and the Arak reactor than not. But the issue is how meaningful these limits are in the broader context of Iran's nuclear ambitions and at what cost.

■ Leaving will lead to widespread criticism from the other parties to the deal. John Kerry often raised the specter of the United States being isolated if Washington did not go forward with the agreement.

As for arguments in favor of withdrawal, five stand out:

■ The JCPOA does not prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons—ostensibly its intended purpose. Even defenders of the agreement acknowledge that it represents—at best—a mere pause in that pursuit and that Iran retains the capacity to sneak out or break out of the agreement and possess a nuclear weapon in a matter of months or even weeks. Iran's new generation of advanced centrifuge designs will permit it an almost immediate breakout capacity even before the terms of the JCPOA expire. After that time, as President Obama acknowledged, the breakout period would be essentially "zero."

■ The flawed verification provisions of the JCPOA mean that we cannot verify that Iran has stopped work on nuclear weapon design. If Tehran does not have a covert program today, it would be the first time in decades.

■ The premise of the deal is demonstratively false. Far from leading to a more moderate Iran, the agreement has resulted in increased funding of international terrorism and a further expansion of Iran's external interventions. The irony is that the misguided policies of the Obama administration have only strengthened the regime in Tehran, providing it with the means to advance its proliferation programs, foment disorder in neighboring countries, and brutalize its own people—the first and foremost victims of the regime.

■ Staying in the agreement undermines the U.S. ability to contain the broader threat by providing legitimacy to an illegitimate regime and strengthening the Iranian economy and thereby the regime. This undercuts the regional coalition to roll back Iranian adventurism and military aggression.

MAHMOOD HOSSEINI / AFP / GETTY

Iran test-launches a long-range Qadr ballistic missile, March 9, 2016.

■ The JCPOA—in the form of an executive agreement reinforced by a U.N. Security Council resolution—usurped the constitutional prerogative of the Senate, which, under Article II, Section 2, has the power and responsibility to advise and consent on all treaties. President Obama deliberately chose not to pursue a treaty because he knew the Senate would reject it.

President Trump will make the final decision on the nuclear agreement. If he takes the country out, it will almost certainly be against the advice of his cabinet members and the institutional national security complex in and out of government. But this would nevertheless be the right decision: It is not in the U.S. interest to remain in the JCPOA.

Yet a decision to leave would not be easy. It's always tempting to postpone a hard choice that will inevitably bring widespread criticism. Other options will be floated as alternatives to straight withdrawal, such as putting the onus on Tehran by insisting on "scrupulous compliance" with all terms of the agreement while imposing additional sanctions on the regime for its missile activities and support for terrorism.

But that approach could easily become a quagmire, as questions of compliance with arms control agreements such as the JCPOA are inherently legalistic, lengthy, and political. Inevitably, it would lead to an entangling debate over whether Iran's violations are "minor" or rise to the level of material breach. Whatever the outcome, the time lost would be profoundly detrimental to U.S. security interests. If President Trump does not act decisively to end participation in the JCPOA, the near-future is clear: Iran will be the next North Korea, a dangerous adversary on the brink of acquiring a nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile.

In place of the JCPOA, the United States must develop and implement a comprehensive strategy of containment and regime change from within. That is the real challenge of the Iran policy review. It is not a call to replace diplomacy with war, as alarmists will argue. Rather, as it was with the Soviet Union for decades in the Cold War, it is perhaps the only means to deal effectively with the threat the Islamic Republic poses.

The misplaced hope has long been that the regime will become more moderate or that we will identify a moderate faction within the regime and encourage it to move the country in a positive direction. Hope has repeatedly triumphed over experience since the Iranian theocracy was established. What must be acknowledged is that the regime is the heart of the threat. The regime is the source of the nuclear and missile programs; it is the source of Iran's expansionist policies in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen; it is the source of brutal domestic repression. It is a regime that will not change and cannot change because change would lead to its downfall.

The key is to support change from within—something that was ruled out by the Obama administration. The United States cannot impose change

from the outside but it can assist internal change and those popular forces that can bring it about. U.S. policy should give hope and sustenance to the opposition forces in Iran that support democracy, human rights, and a secular government focused not on repression, missiles, and nuclear weapons but on the needs and aspirations of its people. Despite the propaganda from Tehran's apologists, this is a weak regime with little popular support. Like other repressive regimes, it is brittle and will—one day—crumble to the will of its citizens. President Trump must work to accelerate its fall. ♦

Huddled Masses Through the Ages

The welcome mat wasn't always out.

BY PHILIP TERZIAN

On August 2, the White House press room was the scene of one of those dialogues of the deaf that so infuriate people outside Washington. Stephen Miller, one of President Trump's senior policy advisers, stepped to the podium to endorse an immigration reform bill sponsored by two Republican senators, Tom Cotton of Arkansas and David Perdue of Georgia. Whether you approve or disapprove of the Reforming American Immigration for Strong Employment (RAISE) Act—and I generally approve—the next several minutes, by any measure, were disheartening.

First, Jim Acosta, the CNN senior White House correspondent whose function seems largely to engage Trump administration spokesmen in pitched arguments while the cameras are rolling, told Miller that "what you're proposing here . . . does not sound like it's in keeping with American tradition when it comes to immigration." And then, to emphasize his debating point, he reminded Miller (and anyone listening) that "the Statue of Liberty says, 'Give me your tired, your poor / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.' It doesn't say anything about speaking English or being able to be a computer programmer."

An immigrant family at Ellis Island, circa 1930

GETTY IMAGES

At which point Miller, in keeping with Trump White House press policy, chose not to dismiss the reporter's non sequitur with a wave of his hand or a pitying smile, and stay on message, but to angrily engage Acosta. The next several minutes were consumed with a loud and fractious verbal wrestling match about immigration policy that revealed Acosta's ignorance of American history and Miller's capacity for rising to baits. By the end, if CNN had enlightened its viewers on a complex subject or the White House advanced the prospects for passage of the RAISE Act, I managed to miss it.

I was, however, intrigued by Acosta's recurring invocation of the Statue of Liberty, which, he explained, "has always been a beacon of hope to the world for people to send their people to this country." Which, strictly speaking, is not quite so. It *is* true, of course, that the Statue of Liberty has become a talisman of sorts for immigration to America. But that is because it is (accidentally) situated in New York Harbor adjacent to Ellis Island, which opened in 1892 to accommodate the last great wave of immigration to the United States. The 12 million people who passed through immigration control on Ellis Island until it closed in 1954 did so in the physical shadow of the Statue of Liberty. But the statue itself—a gift from France to commemorate the centennial of the American Revolution (1876)—was intended to honor not immigration but liberty, as its name would suggest. Indeed, Emma Lazarus's sonnet "The New Colossus," from which Acosta quoted its most famous line, is not so much about immigration per se as about America as symbol of freedom, whose "beacon hand / Glows world-wide welcome"—to Europeans, especially: "Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp."

In a sense, of course, the squabbling words repeated in the White House press room were nothing new, and may even be said to encompass the long, and no doubt eternal, debate about America as "a nation of immigrants."

It is fair to say that since the first Eurasians crossed the Bering land bridge at the end of the last Ice Age, North America has welcomed newcomers with a certain ambivalence. When the Native American tribes weren't slaughtering each other in prehistory, they turned their attention to the successive waves of Scandinavian, Dutch, Spanish, and English settlers who followed the European discovery of the continent. The dominant English and Scots of the colonial era looked askance at the Germans

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who, in the later decades of the early republic, disapproved of the Irish escaping famine—not to mention the Chinese who built the railroads, the free Africans who migrated northward from slavery, the Jews fleeing pogroms in Russia, and on and on.

Still, even so sensitive an observer as Henry James was not immune to this natural instinct. When he revisited New York City in 1904, James was struck by the Russian/Yiddish-accented English he encountered on the Lower East Side, wondering what it augured not just for his native tongue but for what it meant to be American. Lost on a ramble in the New Hampshire countryside, he asked directions from a young hiker who emerged from the woods. Assuming, from his "dark-eyed 'Latin' look," that he might be Italian, James was unable to make himself understood in that language, and so asked plaintively, "What *are* you, then?" He was Armenian, came the response—thereby prompting a worried reflection, in James's mind, about the stranger's capacity, even desire, to assimilate into the American "brotherhood."

Which, in a nutshell, is the conundrum. Nation-states have always protected their borders and, in varying degrees, reserved the right to withhold or grant citizenship. An influx of immigrants may confer economic benefits, in the short term, and cultural enrichment, in the long run; but the benefits are never evenly distributed, and the enrichment assumes a blend, not subversion, of values. A nation such as our own, founded on ideas and governed by laws, is entitled to demand that its immigration statutes reflect a democratic consensus, and that the laws be observed. This is logical to most citizens, and fair to all immigrants, especially those who observe the rules. Does the RAISE Act reflect these principles? That's the question.

For obvious reasons, Henry James's awkward encounter with an Armenian immigrant has a certain resonance with me—and, to some degree, reflects my own conflicted views about immigration policy. My paternal grandparents arrived on Ellis Island a few years after Emma Lazarus's poem was affixed to the Statue of Liberty. But why did they come? They were fleeing for their lives from the Ottoman Turks, who had been systematically massacring Christian subjects within the empire, and who would, a dozen years later, seek to finish the Armenians off in the 1915 genocide. As a practical matter, my grandfather had an elder brother who had already emigrated and settled in Philadelphia, which is why they sailed for America and not, say, Australia or Canada.

Yet their evident determination to be "legal" immigrants—whatever that meant in 1907—had one tragic consequence. My grandfather's elderly mother had accompanied my grandparents as far as Marseille, where a medical examination revealed that she suffered from conjunctivitis, an eye infection (now eminently curable) that caused the American authorities to forbid her entry. And so the rough decision was made: My grandparents went on to America, where they and their offspring thrived, and my great-grandmother returned alone to the Ottoman Empire, never to be heard from again. Her sacrifice, it might be argued, had a larger purpose. ♦

The Young and the Vulnerable

Bioethicists' turn to the dark side.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

When I was a small boy, polio terrified me. Each year, it would strike thousands of children like me—and you never knew when or where it would hit next. In the 1952 epidemic, a very bad year, there were nearly 60,000 reported cases in the United States and more than 3,000 deaths.

Summer was the worst time, and I recall my parents' tension as "polio season" approached. Most vividly, I remember my horror at the prospect of being encased in an iron lung. I had seen the photographs: hospital wards with children in iron lungs, only their heads visible outside the great metal beast, a mirror strategically angled so they could view their immediate surroundings.

That long-ago era came to mind the other day as the National Right to Life Committee's executive director, David O'Steen, introduced me before a lecture on euthanasia. O'Steen described having polio as a youngster and wondered whether the same unequivocal commitment to recovery that he and his fellow patients experienced would continue to prevail in a health care system increasingly driven by utilitarian decision-making and cost-containment imperatives.

In those difficult days, there was never any question of letting a child with polio die based on a determination that his or her life would not be worth living. This included my late friend Mark O'Brien, who contracted a catastrophic polio infection at age 6 and spent most of his nearly 44 remaining years in an iron lung. Even

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so, Mark graduated from UC Berkeley, became a journalist, a published poet, a disability rights and anti-assisted-suicide activist. (He was the subject of the Academy Award-winning documentary *Breathing Lessons* and a motion picture, *The Sessions*.)

It's comforting to believe today's far more sophisticated health care system would swing into action should a similar decades-long epidemic leave tens of thousands of disabled children in its wake. To be sure, medicine's full armamentarium would be deployed to treat the acutely ill and find a vaccine. But what about the Mark O'Briens—people whose lives might be saved with extended intensive interventions, albeit with a high probability of profound disability? Would they receive the same unequivocal commitment as during the polio epidemic, or would the greater impetus be toward letting them die—with "dignity," of course?

Polio patients in Baltimore watch a newly installed television using mirrors attached to their iron lungs, September 14, 1948.

BETTMANN / GETTY

And if the patients and their families insisted on continued care against medical advice, would hospitals and doctors force them off life-sustaining treatment—would care be deemed "futile" or "inappropriate," to use the jargon already prevalent among bioethicists? Indeed, would seriously disabled patients such as Mark be considered candidates for the lethal "treatment" of euthanasia, as they are today in the Netherlands and Belgium?

I fear so. At the very least, I suspect that the unequivocal commitment to saving the life of every polio victim that so benefited America's O'Steens and O'Briens in the 1950s is already a relic of the past. Today, people with disabilities often complain about being pressured by hospital personnel to sign "do not resuscitate" orders under circumstances in which able-bodied patients are not. Families of elderly patients and parents of children with developmental disabilities may meet similarly cold attitudes.

Victims of a contemporary polio-style epidemic might even be rationed out of receiving expensive treatment based on principles of "distributive justice." This would especially be the case if the disease, unlike polio, affected their cognitive capacities. Thus, bioethicist Ezekiel Emanuel—an influential adviser on Obamacare—strongly implied in a 2009 *Hastings Center Report* column that care considered basic for most people should not be guaranteed for those "who are irreversibly prevented from being or becoming participating citizens. . . . An obvious example is not guaranteeing health services to patients with dementia."

And how would people caught up in such an epidemic fare if we ever adopted the "quality-adjusted life year" (QALY) form of medical rationing, currently applied in the United Kingdom and popular among bioethicists? For example, the *New England Journal of Medicine* called (unsuccessfully) for QALYs to be deployed as a tool of Obamacare cost containment, saying "the best way to improve health and save money at the same time is often to redirect patient care resources from interventions with a high cost per QALY to those with a lower cost per QALY."

What does that mean? QALY formulas can be complicated, but to illustrate the concept, consider a highly simplified hypothetical. Let's say I have a serious illness and that Medicine A will give me two calendar years of life as an able-bodied man, or two QALYs. Now, let's say that my friend and contemporary Mark O'Brien is sustained by an iron lung. Let's say he has the same illness and Medicine A would also give him two calendar years of life. Because he is confined to the breathing contraption, his two remaining years might be deemed worthy of only a .5 QALY. His continued life would be deemed of less benefit than mine due to his disability.

Next, the cost of the treatment is measured against the perceived benefit. Let's say the cost for each of us would be $200,000. Under a QALY rationing system, I would be more likely to be approved for the treatment than Mark because that expense would buy me 2 QALYs and in his case would buy a mere .5 QALYs.

In supporting such an invidious system, the authors of the *NEJM* article deploy an extreme example:

> A ban on valuing life extension [via a QALY system] presents its own ethical dilemmas. Taken literally, it means that spending resources to extend by a month the life of a 100-year-old person who is in a vegetative state cannot be valued differently from spending resources to extend the life of a child by many healthy years.

For that matter, the QALY approach dictates that if the situation were reversed and the child had the severe cognitive disability, the child would be allowed to die while the older adult received support.

To say that one human life has greater value than another based on health prospects or disability is to declare the most weak and vulnerable among us, essentially, expendable. So David O'Steen was wise to worry. Many things have unquestionably improved in medicine since he came down with polio. But the introduction of a pernicious "quality of life" judgmentalism into the ethics of health care sure isn't one of them. ♦

Flowers in Their Hair

Remember the Summer of Love? No? Lucky you.

By Andrew Ferguson

San Francisco

If you're going to San Francisco, be sure to check out the trams at the airport. They're done up in psychedelic colors. And over by the gates you can have your picture taken in a mock-up of an old VW bus like the hippies used to drive, also decorated psychedelically. Wearing flowers in your hair is strictly optional.

When you get into the city proper, passing several psychedelic billboards, you'll find it jumping with events celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love. Having come to an end half a century ago, the Summer of Love is one of those events San Francisco has never quite got over, like the gold rush and those two earthquakes. The summer of 1967 is considered by people who like to consider such things to be the high-water mark of the hippies, the climax of the counterculture, the Camelot moment when all that was lovely and innocent about the sixties blossomed fleetingly from the potential to the actual.

Thousands camped on a local community-college football field during the Monterey Pop Festival.

MONTEREY HERALD / AP

The locus of the Summer of Love was the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. This summer old VW buses—real ones, each of them an antique, and also painted psychedelically—are cruising its streets, carrying tourists past the historic sites while an eccentrically dressed guide explains what they're looking at. Afterwards you could stop for a Summer of Love happy hour at the Love clothing store at the corner of Haight and Ashbury streets or enjoy a "Hippie Lunch Combo" ($14) at a restaurant down the block. A few blocks further, past the historic "Hippie Hill" in Golden Gate Park, you come upon the de Young museum, one of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. The de Young is showing its most popular exhibit in years, "The Summer of Love Experience: Art, Fashion, and Rock and Roll." The museum restaurant has invented a pair of drinks for the occasion: the "Acid Trip" (a margarita with Midori) and the "Flower Child" (Blue Curaçao, vodka, lemonade), both for $12.

The de Young's is not the only show in town. An exhibit called "On the Road to the Summer of Love" is at the California Historical Society downtown, which is only a stone's throw away from the San Francisco Central Library, where, in addition to its four Summer of Love exhibits, seminars are being held with titles like "Hippie Food" and "Jefferson Airplane: A Deep Dive." From there you can walk to City Hall for an exhibition of photos of Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix.

Back in the Haight district, the branch library is offering tie-dye classes and a 1967 fashion show. Over the hill, in the Castro district, the GLBT History Museum celebrates with "Lavender Tinted Glasses," an exhibit "highlighting the roles of four queers in the making of the Summer of Love." You probably missed the big Summer of Love concert and light show in the park, but there's talk of another one coming up. There was also some SOL stuff across the bay in Berkeley, but that was just bandwagoning. Berkeley suffers from a notorious case of San Francisco envy.

The de Young's show is by far the most ambitious of the Summer of Love commemorations, filling its largest exhibit space with relics that evoke that scented and beflowered season: original handmade clothes, poster art, photographs, simulated light shows, and scores of lapel buttons, even though hippies seldom wore clothes with lapels; also Janis Joplin's (very showy) handbag and the famous "Captain Trips" top hat owned by Jerry Garcia, the Grateful Dead's lead guitarist and, since his martyrdom from a heroin overdose in the 1990s, the patron saint of hippies. Garcia wore the hat off and on for two years before he gave it to a neighbor, who sold it for $117,000 in 2014.

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If visitors doubt the significance of all this material, or of the SOL itself, they need only consider the large display of street signs erected to greet them as they enter the museum. The central one simulates the intersection of Haight and Ashbury streets. The others are more fanciful. One marks an intersection of Free Love and Marriage Equality. Another pair of signs joins Civil Rights with Black Lives Matter. Another: Hippie intersects with Hipster. The *Whole Earth Catalog* meets the World Wide Web.

The message to museumgoers is clear: Just because the Summer of Love took place 50 long years ago, well before most of you were born—before 60 percent of the country was born—nobody should get the idea that it's something irrelevant, some dim event from antiquity like the Wars of the Roses or the Annexation of Guam. The street signs trace a genealogy from then to now. Without the hippies' belief in free love, there'd be no gay marriage. The *Whole Earth Catalog* was the foreshadowing of the Internet. No civil rights movement in the 1960s would mean no #blacklivesmatter today. Many of the things that thrill a millennial heart sprouted in the Summer of Love. With no hippies, we'd have no hipsters. Think of it.

Summer of Love and Haight
by William Schnabel
CreateSpace, 314 pp., $11.55

Sleeping Where I Fall: A Chronicle
by Peter Coyote
Counterpoint, 400 pp., $18.93

In My Own Way: An Autobiography
by Alan W. Watts
New World Library, 384 pp., $18.95

Season of the Witch
Enchantment, Terror, and Deliverance in the City of Love
by David Talbot
Free Press, 480 pp., $17

Summer of Love
Art, Fashion, and Rock and Roll
Jill D'Alessandro and Colleen Terry, eds.
University of California, 344 pp., $23.99

The exhibit itself isn't quite so didactic. It's devoted to the aesthetics of the Summer of Love, surely the movement's most appealing aspect. Hippies were much better at art than ideas. The exhibit features clothes and posters and photographs, while the speakers boom with what is supposed to be the "San Francisco Sound," a school of rock discovered in 1967 and left undefined ever since. Nearly every item on display catches the eye.

The exhibit takes advantage of one of history's little jokes: Though famous for sexual liberation, the baby boomers were the last generation in which nearly every girl was expected to learn how to sew. As a consequence the most mundane item of clothing could be made singular and beautiful. Fifty years ago, denim was the textile of the lower classes, infra dig for all but farmers and men who worked with their hands. The hippies claimed it, and under the imagination of a Summer of Love dressmaker, the lowliest pair of blue jeans could become gloriously exotic with studs and stitching and higgledy-piggledy patchwork. The still-brighter colors of the print dresses, all whipped together in gaudy swirls, might have become a cliché, but here they seem exuberant and witty. The marquee piece in the fashion displays is a crocheted wedding dress, complete with a train several feet long, in a mild combination of pastels. Curators swear it was actually worn at a wedding—but just once.

A crocheted 1967 dress featured in the de Young museum exhibit

FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Clothes for men, at least for the dandies represented here, were a hodgepodge of found styles: American Indian, Victorian, and Old West affectations scrambled together. There was a nostalgic, even reactionary, element to the hippie aesthetic. These were very retrograde progressives. They claimed to be rebelling against the soulless uniformity of mass production, and so tried to revive an artisanal way of providing necessities, forgoing polyester for natural fibers, favoring hand stitching over machine made. Almost every piece of clothing here is one of a kind. The only mass-produced items are a few microdresses stamped with peace signs. But they come from the early 1970s, when a lot of things had gone wrong.

The art posters, usually advertisements for local rock concerts, had an old-timey feel too. The first rock advertisements to appear in the Haight looked like fight cards for a boxing match: crude block lettering, red or black on a white background, a solitary picture of the performer. Later, elements were incorporated from the "Wild West" wanted posters—familiar to a generation reared on TV shows like *Have Gun, Will Travel* and *Gunsmoke*.

Most of the poster artists had no formal training, but when they discovered offset printing, they quickly pushed the range of its possibilities. The unthought-of juxtaposition of amoeba-like blobs in lurid colors—canary yellow lettering over a whorehouse red background—created the vibrating effect the posters are now famous for. The letters themselves were of a typeface not previously seen on our planet. The lettering does take some getting used to—it is, in a word, illegible.

In any other era, visual advertising that customers cannot read would be considered not such a great idea. Yet the hippie promoters who were paying the hippie artists to publicize their hippie shows gave the artists "carte

blanche," says Colleen Terry, one of the de Young curators. The posters were understood to be advertising not merely upcoming individual concerts but the subversive adventure of concertgoing, a kind of romanticized endorsement of the Haight experience itself—and this too could be good for business. There was no doubting the demand. No sooner would the posters go up than they were snatched away by passersby, to reappear as wall hangings in tumbledown walk-ups badly in need of decoration. The de Young began collecting the rock posters in early 1968.

Besides, the obscurantism was deliberate. It created a kind of freemasonry. Hippies could (allegedly) decrypt them, especially when stoned, and the rest of us couldn't. In an essay in the show's companion book, Terry quotes one of the most celebrated poster artists, Victor Moscoso: "The goal of my posters was, ideally, if somebody was across the street, they'd see the vibrating colors and say, What's that? They cross the street and spend a half hour or a week trying to read it."

Having prowled the poster displays as sober as a judge, I can report that the obscurantism is part of their enduring charm. You can't mistake the inventiveness that went into their design and execution, and they retain the power to lighten and lift the spirit. They are humorous, original, unpretentious, and wildly allusive—popular art of a heightened kind. And utterly misleading.

Inscrutable Bay Area concert posters, destined for icon status

Christmas in the Summer of Love

On one of my visits to the "Summer of Love Experience" I fell in with an elderly woman, Susan (not her real name), a lifelong San Franciscan who was being steered through the exhibit in a wheelchair pushed by her middle-aged daughter. Susan was dressed for the experience. Her faded jean jacket was covered in buttons that seemed to be of sixties vintage: I was able to read "Ban the Bomb" and "Love Bug." Elaborate, colorful scarves were draped loosely over her shoulders and around her neck. Her blue jeans, also faded to perfection, had been stylishly torn to expose her tiny knees. She wore expensive boots with complicated stitching. In her lap she kept a floppy, wide-brimmed hat.

She seemed to be enjoying her stroll, or roll, down memory lane immensely. Her daughter read her the wall plaques and Susan, straining to hear, would nod. When she rolled into a room designed to simulate a poster shop from the Haight, covered floor to ceiling in psychedelia, she chuckled. "Oh yes," she said. "I think I remember all of these." Before a photo of the Grateful Dead performing on Haight Street, she said something indistinct about "Jerry." When we came to a photo of a theatrical troupe of transvestites, who were briefly the toast of San Francisco, she asked her daughter to stop and to identify the picture.

The daughter looked at the wall plaque and said, "It's the Cockettes, Mom."

"What?" said Susan, leaning forward in the chair.

"The COCKETTES!"

Susan sat back. "Oh yes, they were wonderful," she said. "I saw them once performing in front of Grace Cathedral, on Christmas Eve."

"Christmas Eve?" said her daughter. "The Cockettes?"

"Oh, yes. Marvelous!"

"When was that, Mom?"

Susan waved a bony hand. "Oh," she said, "forever ago."

With No Beginning and No End

Any investigation of the Summer of Love instantly runs up against the problem of chronology. Take the "poster era" as an example. In September 1967, *Life* magazine ran a cover story announcing the onset of "The Big Poster Hang-Up"; more than a million were being printed and sold every week. Four months later, the premier poster shop in the Haight closed and the *San Francisco Chronicle* announced the "death of the great poster trip." Can four months be an era?

And what about the Summer of Love, of which the "poster era" was merely a phase? The excellent exhibit at the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society traces the roots of the SOL back to the beatniks of the 1950s, and it's true that some beats, especially the poets Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder, made the transition from bongo-playing beatnik to bong-playing hippie without missing a beat, if you'll please forgive me. Both men helped sponsor the Human Be-In, a 40,000-strong assemblage of young people

BOTTOM POSTER: FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO

held in Golden Gate Park in January 1967. The Be-In is often identified as the kick-off to the Summer of Love and the hippie era. Other authorities say the Summer of Love commenced in mid-June with the Monterey Pop Festival, which brought San Francisco bands like Jefferson Airplane to the attention of a national audience.

For his part, the historian William Schnabel, in his *Summer of Love and Haight*, says the January Be-In was not the beginning but the peak of the hippie era, and by the time summer rolled around it was more or less kaput. This would mean that the Summer of Love was over before it began. (Maybe the hippies really did discover an alternative reality.) The most energetic historian of the SOL, Dennis McNally, has declared authoritatively: "The true Summer of Love was not the public affair of 1967, but the private social experiments that took place, largely in the Haight-Ashbury, in 1966," including a raucous party at the Grateful Dead's place. An interested amateur can only wish these guys would get on the same page.

The confusion suggests that the Summer of Love as we've come to know it was a confection of marketers and media, particularly of the trendsniffers at the newsweeklies. They were powerful cultural arbiters in those days, setting the agenda even for the TV networks, who descended on the Haight once the flare went up from *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Look*, and the other leading magazines. "Summer of Love" is a catchy phrase, though, and it works as shorthand for the origins of what was then called the counterculture and which is now, in many deep and surviving particulars, just the culture.

The media abetted the romanticizing.

Up for Grabs

Whenever the SOL began, whenever it ended, the basic storyline is always the same: a dream of Utopia, an Eden of innocence, and then the Fall. The dream was the recurring dream of antinomianism—the belief that all traditional arrangements of morality, family, commerce, and religion can be discarded and arrangements of one's own devising put in their place. "Western civilization is up for grabs," said one hippie leader, and "a new mode of being" was being born. McNally, the historian, says the movement took aim at what was assumed to be the heart of American culture. The hippies, he writes, "challenged the nuclear family, materialism, violence, the Vietnam war, and the bulk of the ideas they'd been raised on."

Well, two out of five isn't bad: The Vietnam war is over, and the nuclear family has been all but finished off. Materialism and violence live on, however, as a stroll through the Haight this summer confirms. In any case, it's hard to argue that the hippies didn't have good reason to seek alternatives to American life in the mid-1960s. By then a lot of people were beginning to wonder whether the available channels of the popular culture, from music to food, from clothes to movies and TV, would ever produce anything of distinction, or even of intelligent interest. If you ever wonder why the sixties cultural revolution was necessary, listen to a hit album by the Ray Conniff Singers, watch a Bob Hope variety special from NBC, try on a pair of Sansabelt polyester slacks, or choke down a Wonder Bread sandwich made with Welch's grape jelly and Skippy creamy peanut butter spread. The hippies had a point.

And they never seemed to doubt that their antinomianism was the surest way out of this cul-de-sac. But there was a puritan streak in them, too, these children of the middle and upper-middle classes, the spawn of the greatest generation. They went to San Francisco to start a party, but the party had to stand for something other than self-indulgence. A high-minded justification was wanting. There were plenty of brainy, publicity-minded shamans around—the Harvard professor and LSD evangelist Timothy Leary or the pantheist philosopher Alan Watts—to provide it.

And so LSD wasn't just an enjoyable if risky intoxicant, it had to be a gateway to a new reality or, if you were really lucky, God Itself. Sex, no matter how overworked, was a means of achieving personal authenticity and throwing off bourgeois shackles. The avoidance of work was a noble attempt to end-run the soul-deadening mechanisms of capitalism and create a new economy without money. Toying with half-baked, Americanized versions of Eastern mysticism was a way of transcending the limits imposed by Judaism and Christianity, leading to new realms of the spirit.

Historians of the SOL keep this tradition alive. Most of them are evangelists rather than historians, in fact. You will read that hippies "experimented with sexual liberation," as though they were dressed in lab coats like Masters and Johnson, when all it really means is that they were having a lot of sex. When you read the hippies were "exploring the frontiers of consciousness" you know they're getting high. An "experimental college," like one in the Haight, means a college where nobody studies or has to take a test. "Alternative commerce" is bartering or, in many instances, thievery.

Experiments require a laboratory, of course, and Haight-Ashbury presented itself. It was a down-at-the-heels but

centrally located neighborhood not far from downtown and adjacent to Golden Gate Park. In the mid-sixties, the Haight was on a downward trend in the urban lifecycle: The earlier population of Italian and Irish tradesmen were moving their families to the suburbs, and many of its grand Victorian and Queen Anne style townhouses had been split up for apartments after the war. A proposed freeway threatened to slice the neighborhood in half, further driving down housing prices, which in turn drew in the artists and bohemians fleeing pricier North Beach. If you were planning to explore consciousness, the Haight was as good a place as any.

As the SOL approached, the neighborhood contained a few thousand hippies—or "freaks," the tag many preferred, "hippies" sounding too cute for such a momentous experiment. ("Flower children" came into use a bit later.) Life was rigidly non-hierarchical. Even at concerts, bands played right on the dance floor, among the frugging crowd, since to climb a stage suggested a form of dominance, a leader/follower arrangement, like the kind everyone was trying to escape. Property, of course, was theoretically communal. A locked door was a sign of mistrust. The use of alcohol was discouraged and the use of weed mandatory. Parents drank alcohol.

Then, into this bizarre and ultimately tragic chapter in American Utopianism, strode the Diggers.

Tripping out in the Haight

BETTMANN / GETTY

A Voice in the Wilderness

A familiar voice narrates the audio tour at the de Young museum. It's Peter Coyote—the obvious choice for such a gig.

Coyote—he chose the name after he saw coyote tracks in the snow; he was high at the time—is the most prominent surviving figure from the Summer of Love and the counterculture it encapsulated. He helped found the Diggers, a swashbuckling group of crypto-anarchists who moved among the hippies and tried to anchor their behavior in a larger revolutionary theory. For the last 30 years Coyote has worked as an actor in small European films and on American TV. He's got several episodes of *Law & Order* under his belt. You can hear his distinctive baritone narrating Ken Burns's documentaries, including the upcoming Vietnam series; also car commercials.

Still a political activist, he has become a face for the 50th anniversary, turning up on radio, appearing in documentaries by the BBC and PBS, and sitting in on chin-wags in various venues. But he's had enough. He turned down a request to be interviewed for this article. "I'm all 'Summered' out," he said.

Coyote is also a writer. His memoir *Sleeping Where I Fall*, published in 1998 and reissued not long ago, is one of the few books of distinction about the sixties counterculture produced by a full-throated participant. It is richly atmospheric and stylishly written, showing at times a gift for genuine psychological penetration. The memoirist himself is not an appealing man—he's heedless, amoral, censorious when it suits him, given to flights of sanctimony, always quick to let himself off the hook—but Coyote's honesty doesn't feel like the kind that can be faked. This is really him. *Sleeping Where I Fall* is indispensable to anyone who wants to try to understand the Summer of Love from the inside.

For Coyote's project was the hippie project: the pursuit of "absolute freedom," to "live without the limits of law or convention." Every assumption of normal American life was to be reexamined. Indeed, in the counterculture the very word *normal* required air quotes. "The real work," he tells us, "was to create free life amid the desert of industrial capitalism." He grew up in that desert—specifically, Englewood, New Jersey. His father was a wealthy businessman, his mother a homemaker. "I knew first hand about the personal costs of inauthenticity"—his parents were inauthentic—"and unearned privilege." He had suffered for his wealth, in other words, and now it was everybody else's turn.

Coyote's sense of alienation was widely shared and essential to the rise of the hippies. He fled to San Francisco. There, he writes, "I was introduced to an analytical perspective that explained how money was created and privileges protected by the political process." The idea to form the Diggers emerged from this analysis. In the many retellings of the Summer of Love currently on offer, the Diggers invariably play the role of heroes. Their writings, says the left-wing journalist David Talbot in his interesting history *Season*

of the Witch, "were among the earliest and most passionate expressions of what would later be called San Francisco values." Membership was loosely defined and at one time numbered a hundred or more. The group was equal parts a performance art troupe, a countercultural Salvation Army, and a criminal enterprise.

The Diggers set about creating in the Haight a "free economy," a community that would function without money. Money, the Diggers believed, was the ultimate instrument of bourgeois manipulation. Their new economic model was meant to spread nationwide until the industrial desert bloomed. They would offer free meals to anyone who wanted one, especially to the growing assemblies of street people beginning to crowd the neighborhood. They scrounged in grocery store dumpsters and cajoled produce sellers, and if that failed they simply stole whatever they needed. Every day huge vats of turkey stew and homemade bread were dished out in the neighborhood park.

They set up "free stores" in abandoned storefronts. The stores, said the Diggers, were "designed to encourage reflection on the relationships among goods and roles—owner, employee, customer—implied by a store." The merchandise was donated, solicited, or, again, stolen. Often the stores were left unattended, the idea being that whoever wandered in could become the manager for as long as he wanted. Old toasters, clothes, musical instruments, all kinds of urban detritus walked right out the door. There was even, briefly, a "free bank," though without money a bank was puzzling to operate.

Maybe it was the failure of the bank, but before too long Coyote and the Diggers encountered the painful truth that if you were going to live free, you needed money. Indeed, the food and merchandise they were giving away was drawn from the surplus created by a money-driven capitalist economy. No money, no capital; no capital, no surplus; no surplus, no free stuff.

By the Diggers' own admission, and for ideological reasons, getting a straight job was a last resort, to be considered only after all other options had been exhausted. Fundraising trips to rich people were more appealing. Diggers were dispatched to New York and Los Angeles to milk plump and credulous cows like Peter Fonda and Paul Simon. High-minded as ever, Coyote explains that the fundraisers were an effort to "engage [donors] in a new social arrangement as much as an opportunity to get funds for our work." The actor James Coburn got a glimpse of the new social arrangement when he declined to donate, after which a Digger tried to set his house on fire. Peter Tork of the Monkees volunteered to put up a band of Diggers when they came to L.A. When they left, one Digger recalled, "the boys ripped him off for everything that was liftable."

But it wasn't all stars and show biz. Coyote says the group developed a thriving traffic in stolen telephone credit cards, which were very widely used at the time. "Ditto for gasoline and bank credit cards," he writes, without apparent remorse, "which often underwrote our long journeys and deliveries of supplies to the growing number of Digger family houses." Given such tactics, it's little wonder that the group eventually made common cause with gangs of murderous thugs like the Hells Angels and the Black Panthers.

But petty criminality was a way of life during the Summer of Love. To cite a last instance: After the Grateful Dead closed out the Monterey Pop Festival on the last night, they stole all the sound equipment that the promoters had rented for the weekend and drove it back to their house in San Francisco. It was top-of-the-line sound equipment, and the Dead needed sound equipment. The theft has entered the band's legend as one more charming tale from that magical time. The great journalist Nicholas von Hoffman, who wrote about the SOL with a sympathetic but gimlet eye, once said the Summer of Love was "the greatest crime story since Prohibition."

The Diggers handing out free food in Golden Gate Park

TED STRESHINSKY / CORBIS / GETTY

From Free Stores to Free Love

Meanwhile, thanks to the newly discovered birth control pill, the hippies in the Haight had managed to achieve levels of sexual incontinence that were simply staggering. The old Utopian phrase "Free Love" entered the national vocabulary. One of the current exhibits at the San Francisco Public Library displays the "Haight Ashbury Song Book," by a writer named Ashleigh Brilliant. The book is opened to "The Intercourse Song":

> God rest you girls and gentlemen
> let nothing you dismay
> science has the answers now

there's no more need to pray
for liking sexual intercourse
No consequence you'll pay
O tidings of comfort and joy . . .

There's more, and then it concludes:

But if by chance through circumstance
you miss a pill or three
And you contract the worst disease
the one called pregnancy
They're on your side, they now provide
abortions legally!
Oh tidings of comfort and joy . . .

The Diggers did their part for the cause of Free Love. Coyote, by his own admission, pitched in enthusiastically, to the point where even Wilt Chamberlain might have wondered if the man was overdoing it. Though they had helped put on the Human Be-In in January 1967, the Diggers had detected signs of bourgeois timidity in that blissful but relatively chaste daylong romp in the park. The following month they proposed a happening that would last an entire weekend and explore still more revolutionary modes of living.

It was to be called "The Invisible Circus." They persuaded the board of Glide Memorial Church, a middle-class black congregation with countercultural sympathies, to lend their building for what the church board thought would be a political event. Dazzling street posters spread the word around the neighborhood. When the doors opened Friday night, the crowd was so large that admission had to be controlled—the only thing, it transpired, that had to be controlled.

Coyote touches only briefly on the Invisible Circus in his memoir; he was laid up in his, or someone's, apartment with the flu. But one of his colleagues, Emmett Grogan, described the doings in his *samizdat* memoir, *Ringolevio*, published in 1972, a few years before his death from an overdose of heroin.

The party planners, Grogan explained, had turned the church kitchen into a "recreation room," the centerpiece being a punch bowl filled with Tang, "spiked with salutary doses of acid." The church offices upstairs were subdivided, hung with sheets, outfitted with mattresses and lubricants, and labeled "love-making salons." The makeshift rooms were quickly occupied; a queue formed.

As a nod to the original cover story, a group of straights —a lawyer, a clergyman, a cop from community relations —was invited to join a panel discussion on the "Meaning of Obscenity." As they made their presentations, a Digger crept into the glass case behind them and, as planned, displayed his genitals, clowning all the while. The audience, Grogan wrote, went wild with delight, but the clueless straights droned on. As the discussion wound down, a mattress was brought in, carrying a naked man and woman. The mattress was laid on the table in front of the panelists, and the couple had sex. There the discussion ended.

Back in the sanctuary, a vast, cathedral-like space, the large altar was covered with copulating couples, along with "a naked weight lifter standing on top of some sort of tabernacle in a beam of light, masturbating and panting himself into a trance." A group of "teeny boppers" watched a circle of drag queens fellating one another; the girls giggled, reported Grogan. And so on. "Some Frisco Hells Angels in the back pews," Grogan continued, "were being entertained by a beautiful woman in a Carmelite nun habit who kept shouting for 'More!' 'More!' and they were giving it to her." Those crazy kids.

Finally, after 10 hours, the church board members tumbled to what the Love Generation was up to. Cops and fire marshals were called, and the Invisible Circus drew prematurely to a close.

Even though Coyote missed the circus, he of course heard all about it, and in *Sleeping* he renders his summary judgment: "this Digger party [was] consonant with the emerging spirit of the times and with our intention to stretch the envelope of cultural possibilities. Permission was the rule . . . and no one was hurt, wounded, shunned, or scorned." I wonder if he checked up on the woman in the nun habit.

Survival School

'Look, mom," said Susan's daughter, back at the de Young. They had stopped before a flyer distributed by the Diggers as the Haight's hippie population swelled. "It's from the Diggers," she said. "You know the Diggers."

"Oh yes," Susan said. "They were famous. Peter Coyote."

The daughter read aloud: "Survival School: how to stay alive on Haight Street." She paused and chuckled, and Susan joined in.

"Isn't that something?" she said.

"A series of three classes," the daughter continued, "designed to save you from becoming a psychedelic casualty."

"Oh my," said Susan, laughing. They rolled on to the next exhibit and Susan looked up at her daughter. "Of course, it's easy for us to laugh *now*, but back then . . . "

Lonely Hearts

George Harrison and his wife visited San Francisco at the height of the Summer of Love. They wanted to see Haight-Ashbury. They walked the streets and quickly drew a crowd of flower children.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band had been released just weeks before and, as was said, blown minds the world

over. And here was one of its creators come to bestow a Beatle blessing on the counterculture of the Haight. The perfect alignment of man and moment, prophet and place: The photos taken that day, writes the rock music historian Joel Selvin, "became the single most enduring image from the city in the Summer of Love."

From behind Harrison's famous heart-shaped sunglasses, however, things looked different from what he'd been reading in the press.

"I went there expecting it to be a brilliant place," Harrison said years later, "with groovy gypsy people making works of art and paintings and carvings in little workshops. But it was full of horrible spotty drop-out kids on drugs. . . .

"I could only describe it as being like the Bowery: a lot of bums and drop-outs, many of them very young kids who'd dropped acid and come from all over America to this Mecca of LSD. It certainly showed me what was really happening in the drug culture. It wasn't what I'd thought—spiritual awakenings and being artistic—it was like alcoholism, like any addiction."

The Harrisons wandered toward the park. The crowd grew and pressed in. When Harrison declined a joint from one of the hippies, he sensed a rising air of menace. "You're putting me down, man," said the offended flower child. Harrison's limo appeared and his party ducked in, headed for the airport to fly to L.A.

George Harrison during his brief sojourn in the Summer of Love

BETTMANN / GETTY

"That was a turning point for me," Harrison said. "That's when I went right off the whole drug cult."

"Our city has become the momentary focus of a worldwide spiritual awakening," wrote a columnist for a Haight newspaper, and the mainstream press, always in the market for such things, wrote it up that way too. One sure method to kill a spiritual awakening is to publicize it, and the celebrants of the Summer of Love often blame the media for what followed. But this is unfair. The main daily newspaper in San Francisco, the *Chronicle*, was particularly taken with "the young pioneers flocking into the city," as Talbot writes in *Season of the Witch*. "The paper adopted an affectionate, even solicitous, tone toward the hippies." Press reports from elsewhere often did the same.

What the current celebrants really regret is the power of the 1960s press to make the freaks famous. Mass media, by which every American anywhere could hear about the same thing at the same moment, was just beginning to take hold. After the Be-In, with its enchanting photos of flower-laden, half-dressed young women dancing in meadows, San Franciscan hippies became irresistible feature fodder. The word went forth: The Haight was "liberated turf."

The counterculture became self-parody before it became tragedy. The news features led to caricature, which made the freaks seem tame enough for American commerce to celebrate them too. Diners around the country offered Love Dogs and Love Burgers. Bonwit Teller sold hippie wigs. Many of the dazzling clothes on exhibit at the de Young became templates for knock-offs, filling the racks at discount stores. Publishing companies produced potboilers: *The Hippie Papers*, *The Hippie File*, *The Hippie Cookbook*, *The Hippy's Handbook*, each of their covers featuring photos of long-haired young women in varying states of undress. One enterprising San Franciscan began a business called "Hire a Hippie," allowing wealthy people to introduce a real hippie to their friends at cocktail parties on Nob Hill. Busses loaded with tourists rolled up and down Haight Street. (When the tourists would debark, Coyote recalls, the flower children would spray paint their camera lenses.)

The travel time from neologism to catchphrase to cliché had never been quicker. No sooner had a hippie phrase entered the general vocabulary than it became a punch line. After a brief moment of saturation, nobody seriously said "groovy" or "far out" ever again. It didn't help that so many prominent adults were eager to grovel before this parody of youth. One look at the aging B-list actor Peter Lawford as he draped himself in love beads, sprouted salt-and-pepper mutton chops, designated his beach house a "pad," and declared Jefferson Airplane "groovy" is enough to capture the true horror of the thing, and there were many more like him, in every corner of the straight world. Chroniclers of the Summer of Love like to belabor the brutal oppression of hippies by civil authorities. And there were indeed drug raids, neighborhood sweeps to round up runaways, and the occasional enforcement of vagrancy laws. But the opposite is nearer the truth. The dominant culture caved with astonishing speed.

The Jingle

The main effect of the hippies' sudden fame was to draw unwanted wannabes to the Haight—unwanted, that is, by the hippies who were already there. Through the spring of '67 kids from all over had been trickling in, but by June, when schools across

the country let out, the trickle grew to a flood. John Phillips of the Mamas & the Papas wrote the pied piper tune "San Francisco," with its unfortunately deathless line: "If you're going to San Francisco / be sure to wear some flowers in your hair" because "you're gonna meet some gentle people there." Kids in the heartland believed it. Recorded by a friend of Phillips, the song reached number four on the national charts and refused to go away for the rest of the summer. (Phillips wrote the song as an advertising jingle for the Monterey Pop Festival, which he co-produced. He lived in L.A.)

Head counts of the new arrivals ranged from 50,000 to 100,000. For veterans of the Haight—residents who had been squatting since 1966, for example—the in-migration of 1967 signaled the end of the experiment. "A number of older hands realized the area was poised to become unlivable," Coyote writes, and many of them decided to roll up the futon and move to pristine Marin County, where one was much less likely to step on a used syringe or discarded condom.

The SOL literature is filled with complaints from veteran hippies that many of the newbies weren't into peace or love or the eradication of money; some were even criminals, presumably the kind who stole things for reasons less wholesome than the Diggers' reasons for stealing things. In the fall, the older hippies held a mock funeral for "The Last Hippie," as a way of declaring the end of an era. They carried a casket down Haight Street and burned it on Hippie Hill. The kids just arrived from Cincinnati or Philadelphia must have wondered, *What the hell*? They'd traveled all this way and . . . no more hippies? It was a cruel bait-and-switch.

The escape of the Diggers, the Dead, and other freaks to less crowded, more pleasant environs has a sour flavor of "there goes the neighborhood" to it—a hippie version of white flight. One unremarked detail about the hippie movement is that its more prominent members tended to come from families with means; most of the lovers Coyote identifies seem to be daughters of the upper class, even an heiress to the Parker Pen fortune. The great unwashed immigrants sweeping uninvited over the Haight, on the other hand, were more . . . diverse. The hippie revulsion at mass production, the preference for the handmade and homespun: These were class markers. An "old money" distaste for the parvenus was probably inevitable. So it was off to Mill Valley. Some bourgeois habits are hard to shake.

The Crowded Doorways

The point is undeniable: The quality of life in the Haight, never high to begin with, quickly fell, from "simple squalor" to "abandoned monkey house." Crime soared, heroin was everywhere, the numbers of homeless soared, runaways as young as 10 were left to sleep in doorways.

Even the most romantic of the Summer of Love celebrants acknowledge the decline. The exhibits this summer don't shy from the horrors that followed the SOL: There are chilling photos from the waiting room at the Haight-Ashbury Free Clinic, which volunteer doctors had founded to provide routine medical care for the hippies but which was now overwhelmed by cases of mental illness and heroin or methedrine addiction. You can read the tales of the runaways lost to dope or prostitution or some other predation. One exhibit at the library shows a "contact" section of a local newsletter, with entries written by parents desperate to find their children. "Please write—Mom." "Please come home." "Please write and tell us if you are okay—Mom and Dad." "We miss you so much. the Family"

There's a comment book at the exit of the main exhibit in the library. The day before I was there a visitor had written: "If you're nostalgic for all this, you're under 50."

The Shadow

So what happened? If everyone agrees that the "experiment" in the Haight ended in a Hobbesian tar pit of crime and misery, what caused the failure?

The people who celebrate the Summer of Love prefer to find causes beyond the counterculture itself. Peter Lewis, a surviving member of the 1960s San Francisco band Moby Grape, finds the cause in geopolitics. "Always lurking below [the SOL] there was this seething hatred and fear from Vietnam and the Cold War." The founder of the Haight clinic blames the "conservative element in American culture" and the distorting effects of the media's superficial coverage of the Haight experiment. "The Haight Ashbury was decimated by hard drugs, essentially speed and heroin," writes William Schnabel in *Summer of Love and Haight*. "The question is who introduced these drugs into the neighborhood and who had the means of producing them?" His tentative answer: the CIA, through distribution networks arranged by the mafia.

David Talbot agrees. In *Season of the Witch*, he acknowledges that there was "always a dark shadow around the San Francisco rainbow. From the very beginning violence, desperation, and fear stalked the streets of the Haight, side by side with the euphoria." The stalker was the government. Talbot cites no less an authority than Tom Hayden, the sixties activist, that the CIA's spread of harmful drugs into the Haight was akin to the military's distribution of alcohol to American Indians in the 19th century. But Talbot goes further still. "As San Francisco's revolution spread"—bringing word to the heartland of "alternative commerce," free culture, sexual liberation, and ecological consciousness—"the poison in America's soul was also billowing." It was bound to

blow westward. The Haight collapsed when the poison from the rest of the country passed through it, like a pestilence.

In all the celebrations of the Summer of Love, you will look in vain for a hint of remorse or self-blame. Not an "oops," not a "yikes, I think we went a little overboard that time," not a "boy, I'd like a do-over on 1967." baby boomers, especially the ex-hippie division, are averse to second-guessing themselves. Nowhere in the literature have I found a hint of one explanation that is far more obvious and plausible than the others.

Which is this: The seeds of the destruction of the Haight experiment could be found in its own antinomianism, in its original inspiration. Maybe the wholesale rejection of time-honored and time-tested values—monogamy, moderation, good manners, self-denial, self-control, the sanctity of private property, personal accountability to higher authorities, both material and spiritual—leads to squalor and misery. Maybe the project they're celebrating in San Francisco this summer was doomed from the start.

On the street in 1967: The future confronts the past.

Pictures in a Case

For $10 in the Haight you can buy a map that shows you where Charles Manson lived, the storefront that housed San Francisco's first poster shop, the site of the Be-In, the Jefferson Airplane mansion, and Hippie Hill, the glade in Golden Gate Park where Haight Street ends and the youth used to gather and the Last Hippie was set ablaze. Kids gather there still, although for some of them, given the slightly menacing and aggressive air, "flower child" would be a misnomer.

The sidewalks are choked with tourists and bums. One neighborhood fixture waves his sign at passing cars: "Smile If You Masturbate." Occasionally a mother in yoga pants pushes through the clusters of street people, using her baby carriage as a battering ram, ignoring the leering and the muttering. The days are long past when cops walked the beat in hopes of dispersing groups that blocked the rights of way.

I decided to spring for a walking tour because the come-on was hard to resist. The brochure said the tour would be "A poetic and symbolic act of retracing the footsteps of so many, returning with greater understanding and heightened consciousness."

This was an exaggeration. I did learn from my guide that Ronald Reagan, then California's governor, had caused homelessness as a kind of revenge for the Summer of Love, and that Jim Jones, the one-time San Francisco celebrity preacher, had been goaded by the CIA into encouraging 900 of his followers to commit suicide at Jonestown in the jungles of Guyana.

We saw the landmarks. Outside the old Victorian mansion where the Grateful Dead once lived, every kind of tourist gathers, frat bros and matrons and fourth-generation hippies who were born too late. They pose for pictures and carve their initials and good wishes into the forgiving bark of the tree out front. Eyeing the street people, one of the tourists in our group asked about crime. The guide—an old hippie and an avid civic booster—was evasive. But the numbers are easy to find. The Haight district has one of the highest crime rates in the city. The crime rate for the city at large is 142 percent higher than the national average.

When the tour was over I walked back downtown to the library to take a last look at the exhibits there. I saw something I'd missed in my first walk through. There was another thing absent from all the celebrations: They were neglecting the people who lived in the Haight before the Summer of Love, before the freaks arrived and the world changed. But here they were, in the basement of the library. At the end of the exhibit there's a single display case, labeled "The Rest of Us," as a reminder that not every San Franciscan participated in the Summer of Love.

They are photos from the mid-sixties. One shows a beauty shop, beehived women lined up for their weekly rinse; another is a family picture of a wedding party, fading with that washed-out color you find in sixties Polaroids. In another a line of middle-school cheerleaders smiles brightly, and there are a few men in suits and ties. They all look so odd—odder to the eye than the surrounding pictures of dancing hippies—and not simply because they're antiques a half-century old. They look odd because, with the smiles and the attitude of self-assurance and contentment, they look clueless. We know something they don't know. They don't know what's about to hit them. ♦

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tortured by 'Moderates'

Iran's dissidents deserve a hearing

By Kelly Jane Torrance

Hassan Rouhani was sworn in for his second term as president of Iran on August 5, surrounded by fresh flowers, fervent followers, and around 500 foreign officials. Representatives of the United Kingdom, France, the United Nations, and the Vatican rubbed shoulders with the Syrian prime minister, Hezbollah second-in-command Naim Qassem, Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader and FBI Most Wanted Terrorists list member Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, and murderous Zimbabwean dictator Robert Mugabe. The Westerners didn't seem uncomfortable in such company; indeed, European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini was described as the star of the show after Iranian members of parliament elbowed through the crowd to take selfies with the diplomat.

But why should they have been bothered? They were in Tehran, after all, to celebrate the renewed rule of a man who has overseen a steady increase in killings—Iran has the world's highest per capita execution rate. Three days before Rouhani's inauguration, Amnesty International released a damning report on conditions in the country: "Iran's judicial and security bodies have waged a vicious crackdown against human rights defenders since Hassan Rouhani became president in 2013, demonizing and imprisoning activists who dare to stand up for people's rights." The press release capping Mogherini's visit didn't mention the European-based organization's report—or human rights issues at all—instead focusing on "the EU's unwavering commitment to" the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal. It's unlikely Mogherini brought up the subject even in her private meetings: She was pictured smiling in multiple photo-ops with government officials.

A month earlier, a young Iranian woman told me how she and her fellow reformers feel when they see such images. "We know with every negotiation with this regime, every shaking hand with this regime, it means one more gallows in the streets," Shabnam Madadzadeh said sadly. "They close their eyes to human rights in Iran," she said of Westerners who deal with the regime and many members of the media who report on it. "They kill humanity, in themselves firstly, and after that in Iran."

Madadzadeh speaks with a seriousness that belies her age. In a hound's-tooth blazer, black pants, glasses with wine-colored frames, and a headscarf in shades of deep rose, the 29-year-old unfurled her passion in complete paragraphs. Her mustachioed and bespectacled 32-year-old brother, Farzad, wore a black suit and white shirt, sans tie. Intense but friendly, he continued his sister's thought: "The biggest mistake that anybody can make when looking at Iran is to distinguish between Rouhani and [Supreme Leader Ali] Khamenei. If you just look at the law related to the elections in Iran, nobody can become president of Iran unless Khamenei has endorsed them. So whatever differences they have on one thing, they are united maintaining this regime, keeping it in power at any cost."

It's no surprise the pair project a certain depth. Shabnam and Farzad Madadzadeh spent five years as political prisoners in Iran. The siblings were tortured in front of each other and repeatedly threatened with execution. They fled the country: separately, illegally, dangerously. What is extraordinary is that after so lately enduring such horrors, never knowing if they'd make it out alive—and learning that many friends did not—they're able not only to smile but laugh repeatedly in the course of a five-hour conversation. They were joined in the lobby of a Paris airport hotel by a fellow dissident, Arash Mohammadi. He had the same mustache as his countryman but wore a blue blazer, blue pants, and a blue checked shirt. He's only 25 but can be as grave as the Madadzadehs. A jocularity comes through in his playful smile, however—even though he's been jailed three times, enduring torture in each stint.

All three escaped from Iran recently: Shabnam less than a year ago, Arash about a year ago, and Farzad just under two years ago. And here they were, cracking up in mirth watching a YouTube video. They'd wanted me to see an example of the work of Mohsen, a comedian whose parodies make *Pake Shadi* the most popular program on a subversive satellite television network. He's so famous in Iran that even prison interrogators mention his material. In this one, he inserted himself into state television footage of the funeral earlier this year of former Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani. Khamenei watches as Mohsen leads the crowd in a

Kelly Jane Torrance, deputy managing editor of The Weekly Standard*, traveled to Paris as a guest of the Alliance for Public Awareness, apa-ice.org.*

chant of mourning. In the front row, top regime officials—notorious thugs such as Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Mohammad Ali Jafari and Quds Force leader Qassem Suleimani—play up their grief for the camera. Mohsen intones, "Hashemi is waiting for us; let's go" . . . to hell. The comedian notes that Rafsanjani, as a founder of the Islamic Republic, was buried next to longtime supreme leader Ruhollah Khomeini: "Now it is Khamenei's turn!" In between laughs, the Iranians explain just how provocative the video is. "So in the middle of the mourning ritual, he starts dancing like that. It's ripping all the taboos," said Hanif Jazayeri, the men's translator. "And this means that Hashemi is waiting for Rouhani," added Shabnam, who speaks fluent English.

The video is a high-quality production and YouTube offers an English translation. But Westerners might need explication anyway: Rafsanjani and Rouhani are regularly referred to in the West, by politicians and the press, as "moderates." The Iranians find that notion almost as hilarious as Mohsen's satire. I read them a line from the recent election analysis of a major American newspaper: "Many Iranians gravitate toward Mr. Rouhani because of his relatively tolerant views on freedom of expression." All three laughed heartily. But the talk soon turned serious.

Shabnam Madadzadeh, her brother Farzad, and Arash Mohammadi

"If there was freedom of expression in Iran, what are we three doing here? I mean, leaving behind your family is not easy, you know? We had to leave our university, our family, our best friends," Arash said. When they do talk to people back home, they do so very carefully—contact with escaped dissidents could mean imprisonment for their friends and family. The trio did not want the exact dates of their escapes published, nor the location of their current homes, other than that they're in Europe. The siblings don't even live in the same city, for security reasons.

Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif declared in a 2015 interview with Charlie Rose, "We do not jail people for their opinions. The government has a plan to improve, enhance human rights in the country, as every government should." The PBS interviewer did not question these claims. Neither did the many friendly—almost gushing—reporters Zarif spoke with on his visit to the United States last month. Arash Mohammadi and Shabnam and Farzad Madadzadeh provide more evidence—if any is needed—that such statements are simply lies.

Shabnam and Farzad were arrested in 2009, before the uprisings over the suspicious reelection results of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that would turn into the Green Movement. They were seized on the street. Their family, not knowing what had happened, called hospitals to see if they'd been in an accident and searched for the pair for months. Shabnam was studying computer science at Tehran's Tarbiat Moalem University and was a leader in the reformist student group Tahkim-e Vahdat. Farzad was a nonviolent activist and supporter of the resistance group People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), best known in the West for revealing details of the regime's theretofore hidden nuclear program. "I was 23 when I was arrested, and the torture started then," Farzad recounted. He and his sister were held separately in solitary confinement for months. Questioning would begin around 8 A.M. and last 12 to 14 hours. "In each of the interrogation sessions, I was beaten. They wanted me to confess to crimes that I had not committed," Farzad said. They wanted him to publicly renounce the PMOI (also called Mujahedin-e Khalq, or MEK) and the National Council of Resistance of Iran. "They told me, 'You come and do an interview against the PMOI, the MEK, and the NCRI,'" he said. "They would throw me on the ground and treat me like a football between three people. . . . Several times they did this to me in front of Shabnam's eyes in order to break her."

His sister will never forget her own months in solitary confinement. "The interrogator told me, 'Okay, nobody can hear you. We are alone here, and we can do everything we want.'" She could regularly hear the voices of other prisoners being tortured; some later told her they had been raped. She was tortured herself, and the only time she could see her brother was when they brought him to be tortured in front of her. Even after she left solitary confinement, she was often deprived of the few visits allowed with family because she told them about the appalling conditions of the prisons and the gruesome treatment of prisoners. Four people would share a cell, with three thin blankets each to sleep on; windows would be left open even in winter. Captives were taken to use the bathroom just three times a day, and not at times of their choosing. Having to hold it in gave Shabnam serious medical problems. "About 11 months to a year after our arrest, there was a trial. For five minutes, it lasted," Farzad said. They were both given five-year sentences and moved

KELLY JANE TORRANCE / THE WEEKLY STANDARD

from Evin Prison to the even harsher Gohardasht Prison.

"Many of my friends during this period that I was in prison, they were executed. Some of them, they died in front of my eyes because of the illnesses they had or because they were tortured so much and because of their conditions they died in front of me," Farzad reported. He can rattle off the names of friends executed after death sentences. "Ali Saremi. Jafar Kazemi. Mamadali Hojari. Farzad Kamangar. Farhad Vakili." Mohsen Dokmechi died of pancreatic cancer after jailers refused him medical treatment.

He expected the same fate. "I remember the moment that I was arrested, taken to the car, and I was in front of the door of Ward 209 of Evin. I told myself, 'You're going in here, but you're not coming out of here.' Because I knew where I had come. Because I had heard what happens here."

While the siblings each served one long sentence, Arash had multiple shorter stints in prison: He was arrested twice under President Ahmadinejad and once under President Rouhani. He was a 19-year-old studying industrial management at Tabriz University when he started gathering with other students concerned about the plight of workers in the country, especially children (factory work can start at ages as young as 6 or 7, and drug addiction with it). "If somebody just goes and walks down the streets for 10 minutes, maybe they would see a hundred kids working on the streets," Arash said. Besides toiling in factories, children sell small items: chewing gum, socks, even "luck poems," often randomly chosen excerpts from the work of 14th-century Persian poet Hafez. "If they don't work, they will be starving," Arash said. "When the government rounds them up and arrests them, instead of assisting them, helping them with their problems, they take them" to juvenile correction facilities, where the conditions can be worse than on the streets. "They are even raped there, in those centers." He knows of a 9-year-old girl who worked in a sewing factory who underwent such trauma.

"The main problem is that the Iranian government actually doesn't even acknowledge that such a problem exists," Arash said. Calling attention to it was an implicit criticism of the government. "Although we were campaigning for children's rights or worker's rights, they would charge us for things like insulting the supreme leader, insulting the sanctities, and things that nowhere in the world is a charge," he said. "Because the Iranian regime, they want to say that this is the best place on earth. Neither during our time in prison, neither now, the regime does not accept that it has political prisoners." Arash was taken from his home at 5 A.M. "They told my family, 'We have to speak to him for about an hour, then he'll come back.'" He spent a couple of weeks in solitary confinement and was sentenced to a year in prison. "They constantly brought a paper in front of us and said, 'Either you have to answer these questions like this, or you're going to be executed.'"

He was next arrested after trying to aid victims of the 2012 earthquakes in the Iranian province of Azerbaijan. "The government didn't want people to know what had happened there," Arash said. It wasn't the natural disaster the regime was trying to hide. "There were a number of villages that didn't have even the basic of facilities like electricity, water," he reported. "The IRGC, the Revolutionary Guards, had come there and they had closed off the routes to the villages." Dozens of people were arrested for trying to help victims and locate survivors trapped under the rubble.

"The primary thing of importance for the regime is for the people not to become alert as to the problems that exist there. That's their number-one priority," Arash said. "It's 100 percent a danger as a threat to the regime because it'll become clear that for 38, 39 years, this government has done nothing for the people."

Arash was detained yet again the day after Rouhani was announced the winner of the 2013 presidential race. "During his election and campaigning, he had promised to free all political prisoners. And so as soon as it was announced, we went in front of his campaign headquarters, and we started to chant, 'All political prisoners must be freed,'" Arash said. He quickly became one himself.

That third stint in prison was the final straw. He realized that if he didn't leave the country, he'd eventually be sentenced to death. Farzad and Shabnam also made the difficult decision to flee. "When I was released from prison, immediately a lot of problems started to come about, and I was being followed and being monitored," Farzad said. "I couldn't work. I couldn't get by, live."

Shabnam had the same experience. "When I was released, they didn't allow me to continue my studies. They didn't allow me to have a job." She still worries about her female friends, especially, "under the clutches of the misogynistic regime."

Recalling why he left his homeland reminded Arash why he started fighting for its freedom in the first place.

> We are some youth, and naturally no youth want to see hardship. The youth of Iran are just like the youth in America and Europe. They want the same things. But when we reached a certain age, we looked around us and we saw that there are some things are happening, and people are being killed in the streets. People are being hanged in the streets. We also knew that in this regime, for the past 38 years there has been a current, a faction, that constantly says, "We're reformists, we're reformists." But we saw that there was no reform. So we realized that the dictatorship needs to be overthrown.

And that is the heart of the matter: Western diplomats may pretend otherwise, but the government over which Hassan Rouhani presides is a dictatorship.

"As far as I'm concerned, you can't say that one dictator is better than another dictator," Arash said. "I was lashed in prison. For me, it did not make a difference which government's agents were lashing me. But the pain of the lashes by Rouhani's government were for me more painful. Because during the Ahmadinejad administration, everybody accepted it: Ahmadinejad was a dictator. But during Rouhani's time, I felt, I saw these lashes on me, but the West did not accept that was going on. So it was much more painful for me."

Of course, the West also sometimes found it convenient to pretend that Ahmadinejad was no dictator. Farzad recalled being in prison in 2009 when an influx of inmates arrived. Arrested supporters of the fledging Green Movement told him of their cries: "Obama, Obama, are you with them or with us?" "In Farsi, this rhymes, so it was a slogan that was chanted in the streets. But what did Obama do? Obama secretly brought a letter to Khamenei. . . . This was while people were being killed in the streets," Farzad said. "The policy of appeasement exists. Because some people have vested interests."

That is a succinct summary of what Iranian freedom fighters would like from the West: an end to the policy of appeasement. "I interpret the Iranian regime like a statue, like this bottle here," Arash said, grabbing a one-liter glass bottle of Pellegrino on the table. "I believe the foundation of this regime has been destroyed by the resistance." He made a digging motion underneath the bottle with one hand; with the other, he started shaking the bottle back and forth slightly. (It seemed a particularly Persian analogy: Engineering rivals poetry in popularity in Iran.) He has seen the cracks himself, giving the example of conversations in taxicabs. In Iran, no one has enough money to ride alone. "When there are two, three people in a car, they are so aggravated by the regime that they start to curse," he said. (He was too polite to report exact wording.)

Back to the bottle: "But from the top, the appeasing governments in the West have tied a string to it to not let it fall down and shatter. So 100 percent, those who are holding onto this string and keeping it there are responsible for their role in it." He is quick to point out that it's not just Iranians such a policy hurts. "For example, when Rafsanjani was president and Rouhani was the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, the West kept on saying that this government is a moderate government. But it was the same government that went into Argentina and exploded the Jewish center. So this shows that when this regime is appeased, it does not just cause suffering for the Iranian people. This evilness is exported."

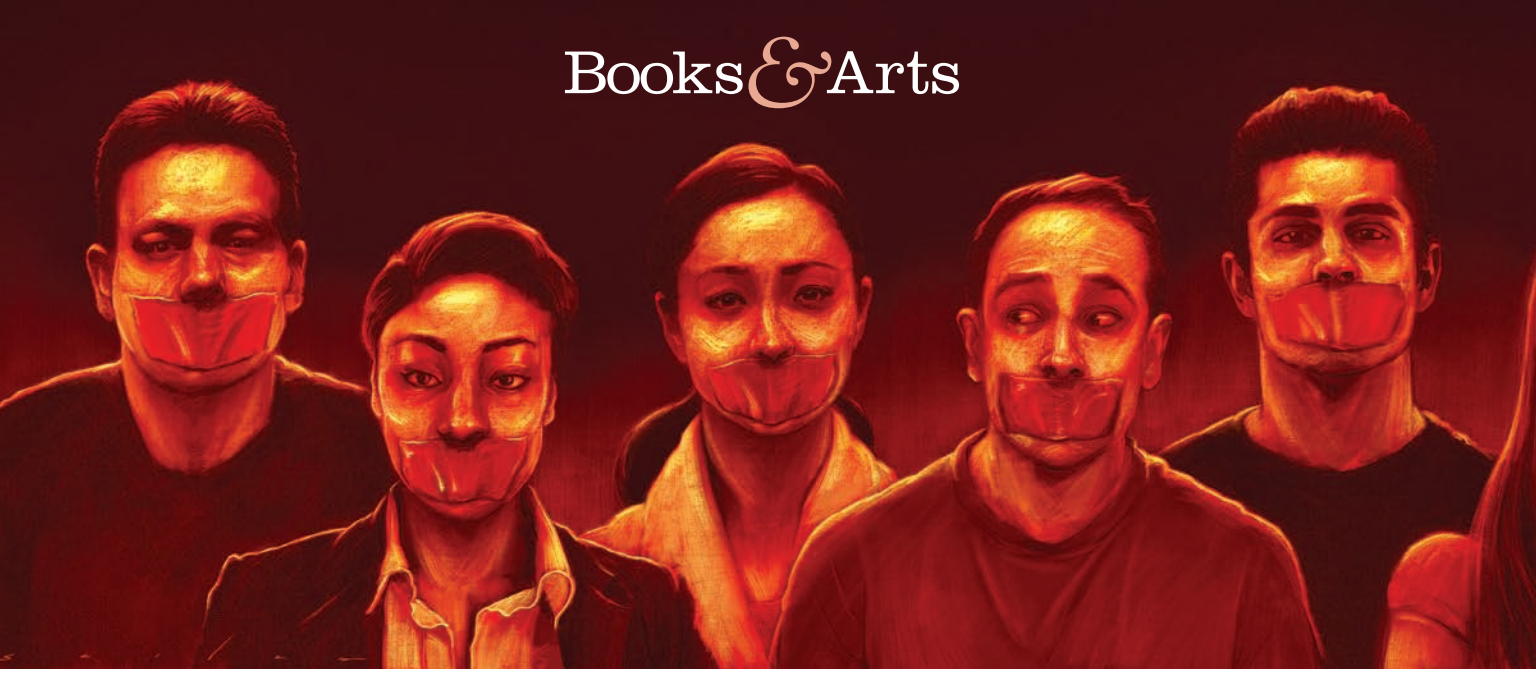
They point to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal the West signed with Iran in 2015 as a prime example. "This agreement, it gave far more concessions than were necessary to this regime. They put the money—cash—in an airplane. They sent it to Iran," Farzad pointed out. "None of that money reached the Iranian people. It reached Assad, Hezbollah." The Iranian government received $1.7 billion directly through the deal. It will see billions more through deals the agreement has made possible: Boeing, Airbus, Renault, Total S.A., and Siemens AG are just some of the American and European companies lined up to do business with the mullahs.

That agreement was the prime focus of President Obama's foreign policy and the reason he wrote private letters to the supreme leader, but of course Donald Trump is in power now. The three dissidents were in Paris in July for an annual gathering of members and supporters of the National Council of Resistance of Iran. Well over 100,000 people filled a stadium near Charles de Gaulle airport to listen to speakers from all over the world, including some Americans: former U.N. ambassador John Bolton, former senator and vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman, and Trump confidant Newt Gingrich. Throughout the weekend in Paris, from activists and their supporters alike, rang a refrain not often heard in Washington: optimism about the Trump administration. Most people were quick to note that they don't support all or even many of the president's policies. But they saw his tough talk about the nuclear deal during the election as a sign his Iran policy would be very different from his predecessor's—perhaps even a "180-degree" turn, more than one person said.

The administration is conducting a review of Iran policy, which it plans to finish by summer's end. Some pundits worry that it will make "regime change" the new goal of the United States. That's precisely what these Iranian dissidents are hoping for. But, contrary to the assumptions of some supposed experts in Washington, "regime change" doesn't have to be by military force.

When asked if they'd like to see America crush the Islamic Republic using bombs and tanks, all three immediately shook their heads and emphatically said no. Iranians can overthrow the theocracy from within, they insist—if the West ends the aid and comfort that allow it to hold onto power. "Definitely we have requests. We request that the West stop supporting this dictatorship," Arash concluded. "Based on the tally that this regime has given, every day approximately three people are hanged in Iran. So for every extra day that this regime is in power, more blood is spilled in Iran. So if the U.S., and the West in general but in particular the U.S., retracts the support that they have given this regime, definitely both the people of Iran will achieve freedom sooner and fewer lives will be lost."

All they're asking, in other words, is that the West let go of the string that's holding up the teetering regime. ♦



You Can't Say That!

Has liberalism taken a Soviet turn?

BY MATTHEW B. CRAWFORD

It was in the mid-1980s that I first heard the term "politically correct," from an older housemate in Berkeley. She had a couple glasses of wine in her and was on a roll, venturing some opinions that were outré by the local standards. I thought the term witty and took it for her own coinage, but in retrospect she probably picked it up from one of the magazines that she would leave on the kitchen table: *Commentary*, or maybe the *New Criterion*. The Cold War was in full bloom at the time, and it was clear to all in Berkeley which side deserved to win. She was on the other side. I was in my late teens; her treasonous perfidy was exciting.

Through the '80s, '90s, and into the new millennium, the phrase "politically correct" would crop up here and there. Among people who were credited as being sophisticated, use of the term would be met with a certain exasperation: It was needling and stale. The phrase had been picked up by the likes of College Republicans and Fox News, and if you had an ear for intellectual class distinctions you avoided it.

The Demon in Democracy
Totalitarian Temptations in Free Societies
by Ryszard Legutko
Encounter, 200 pp., $23.99

Originally a witticism, the term suggested there was something Soviet-like in the policing of liberal opinion. When it first came into wide circulation, was it anything but humorous hyperbole? Is that still the case today?

A sociologist might point to a decline in social trust over the past few decades—they have ways of measuring this—and speculate about its bearing on political speech. One wonders: Who am I talking to? How will my utterances be received? What sort of allegiances are in play here? In the absence of trust, it becomes necessary to send explicit signals. We become fastidious in speech and observe gestures of affirmation and condemnation that would be unnecessary among friends.

The more insecure one's position (for example, as a middle manager who senses his disposability, or a graduate student who hopes for admittance to the academic guild), the more important it is to signal virtue and castigate the usual villains. In some settings these performative imperatives lead us to mimic the ideologue. But from the outside, mimicry may be indistinguishable from the real thing. This uncertainty heightens the atmosphere of mistrust, as in the Soviet world where one could never be sure who might be an informer. Such informers need not be ideologues themselves, just opportunists.

Ryszard Legutko is a professor of philosophy in Krakow who has held various ministerial positions in the post-Communist, liberal-democratic governments of Poland and is currently a member of the European parliament. Under communism, he was a dissident and an editor of the Solidarity movement's *samizdat*. He is thus well positioned to make comparisons between two regimes that are conventionally taken to be at polar ends of the axis of freedom. In his book

JASON SEILER

Matthew B. Crawford is a senior fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture and the author, most recently, of The World Beyond Your Head: On Becoming an Individual in an Age of Distraction.

The Demon in Democracy—published last year, with a paperback edition scheduled for next year—Legutko's thesis is that the important differences between communism and liberal democracy obscure affinities that go deeper than any recent sociological developments. He finds both tyrannical in their central tendencies and inner logic. Legutko's tone is darkly aggrieved, and he sometimes overstates his case. But his biography compels us to consider seriously the parallels with communism that he asserts, for as a former dissident under a brutal regime he knows what real oppression looks like. He is no intellectual crybaby or talk-radio crank.

Many of Legutko's observations and arguments can be applied to the United States, even though he is more focused on EU-style liberal democracy:

> Even a preliminary contact with the EU institutions allows one to feel a stifling atmosphere typical of a political monopoly, to see the destruction of language turning into a new form of Newspeak, to observe the creation of a surreality, mostly ideological, that obfuscates the real world, to witness an uncompromising hostility against all dissidents, and to perceive many other things only too familiar to anyone who remembers the world governed by the Communist Party.

The parallels Legutko finds between liberal democracy and communism become plausible once you grant that in Europe the term "liberal democracy" has come to name a disposition and political system that is neither liberal nor democratic. In theory, liberal democracy is supposed to be a merely formal or neutral arrangement to guarantee rule by consent—the consent of a majority with important constitutional limits and guarantees of minority rights. Thus conceived, it is to be agnostic about human ends and ideals, pluralistic in its sympathies, and tolerant of dissent. Such political ideals would nourish a diversity of human experience and many "experiments in living," John Stuart Mill hoped.

The key to understanding the character of life in a liberal democracy is the role that history—or rather History, understood as inevitable progress in a certain direction—plays in the liberal imagination.

But if the hope was to depoliticize society, rendering issues of public morality into matters of private concern, the effect has been the opposite. Everything is deeply politicized: family life, intellectual life, art, sex, children's toys, you name it. Domains of life that were previously oriented by their own internal logic of experience are now held to account by a self-appointed vanguard, exposed to the sterilizing light of publicity, and made to answer to liberal ideals that are not merely procedural but substantive. "It is difficult to find some nondoctrinal slice of the world, a nondoctrinal image, narrative, tone, or thought," Legutko writes.

In this regard—the denial of sovereignty to spheres of life that in principle ought to be beneath the notice and beyond the reach of the political regime—it is fair to say that liberal democracy in its 21st-century workings does resemble communism as described by dissident authors such as Milan Kundera and Václav Havel. Both regimes have "proved to be all-unifying entities compelling their followers how to think, what to do, how to evaluate events, what to dream, and what language to use." Communism had, and liberal democracy has, its own orthodoxies and its own "models of an ideal citizen."

What can account for the mismatch between liberal democracy's easygoing self-image and the feel of everyday life in a liberal democracy? There is little sense of social

spontaneity; one watches what one says. This has come to feel normal.

Like François Furet before him, Legutko suggests that the key to understanding the character of life in a liberal democracy is the role that history—or rather History, understood as inevitable progress in a certain direction—plays in the liberal imagination. In recent decades, this manifested as the enthusiasm for trying to bring liberal democracy to very illiberal places using the blunt instruments of military action and marketization. But it was during the Obama era that this energy really got released onto the domestic scene for the first time in perhaps 40 years. Liberals started calling themselves progressives—a rebranding significant because it announced a new boldness in speaking an idiom of historical necessity. It announced a new impatience with foot-draggers as well.

In a handful of years, we went from Obama himself being opposed to gay marriage (however sincerely) to a cultural norm in which to wonder aloud about the civilizational novelty of gay marriage, even in a speculative or theoretical register, is to risk harming yourself socially and professionally. To anyone who felt squeezed by a tightening cultural grid during the Obama years, the parallels Legutko offers with the Soviet experience won't seem hyperbolic.

> Both the communists and liberal democrats, while praising what is inevitable and objectively necessary in history, praise at the same time the free activities of parties, associations, community groups, and organizations in which, as they believe, what is inevitable and objectively necessary reveals itself. Both speak fondly of "the people" and large social movements, while at the same time . . . [they] have no qualms in ruthlessly breaking social spontaneity in order to accelerate social reconstruction.

In his foreword to Legutko's book, John O'Sullivan crisply lays out the logic that follows from the conviction of historical privilege shared by communism and liberalism. Both insist "that all social institutions—family, churches, private associations—must conform" to certain rules in their internal functioning, and "both are devoted to social engineering to bring about this transformation. And because such engineering is naturally resisted, … both are engaged in a never-ending struggle against enemies of society (superstition, tradition, the past, intolerance, racism, xenophobia, bigotry, etc., etc.)."

Legutko writes that going with the flow, whether Communist or liberal-democratic, "gives an intellectual more power, or at least an illusion of it. He feels like part of a powerful global machine of transformation. . . . [He criticizes] what is in the name of what will be, but what a large part of humanity, less perceptive and less intelligent than himself, fails to see."

This sounds apt as an account of a certain kind of narcissistic political pleasure. In the United States, Comedy Central serves to organize the youthful, lumpen intelligentsia and make it aware of itself as a force. A coveted demographic for advertisers, these viewers tune in to be flattered by the minstrels of corporate right-thinking. As a rough rule of thumb, it seems the higher the stock market capitalization of a firm (think Google, Facebook, Apple) and the more quasigovernmental a role it plays in our collective lives, the less daylight will be found between its enlightened positions and the brave truth-telling of a Trevor Noah, Samantha Bee, or John Oliver. Liberal use of the F-bomb confirms, and reconfirms, that here we are engaged in transgression—for the sake of principles the stupids fail to grasp.

"The trackers of traitors to liberal democracy readily succumb," Legutko writes, to the delusion "that they are a brave small group struggling dauntlessly against an overwhelming enemy." In the European setting, "On their side are the courts, both national and international, the UN and its agencies, the European Union with all its institutions, countless media, universities, and public opinion. … They feel absolutely safe, being equipped with the most powerful political tools in today's world but at the same time priding themselves on their courage and decency, which are more formidable the more awesome the image of the enemy becomes."

In the United States, a small-town entrepreneur who, say, politely declines to bake a cake or arrange flowers for a gay wedding sometimes has to suffice for this purpose, serving the role of an awesome enemy. Notions such as freedom of association and freedom of conscience can only mask the "hate" just beneath the deceptively congenial surface of American life.

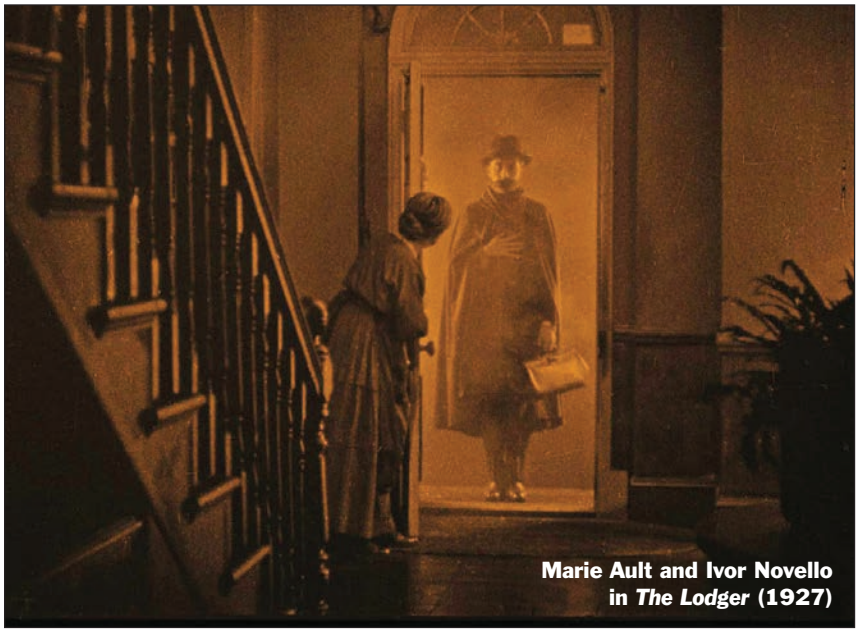
As Legutko writes, "the very idea of liberal democracy should presuppose the freedom of action." But because there is an arc of progress to this regime—one that is not only discerned in retrospect but is understood as a mission—those who fail to get with the program "lose their legitimacy. The need for building a liberal-democratic society [as opposed to a mere liberal-democratic political procedure] thus implies the withdrawal of the guarantee of freedom for those whose actions and interests are said to be hostile to what the liberal democrats conceive as the cause of freedom."

Such projects of social transformation give expression to progressive "empathy" for designated classes of victims. But here we encounter another bit of Newspeak, if we grant that empathy properly understood means being sympathetic and alive to human experience in its concrete particularity. Progressive empathy tends to treat persons as instances of categories defined by politics. Drawing a parallel between Communist class struggle and liberal-democratic gender politics, Legutko writes that "a real woman living in a real society, like a real worker living in a real society, is politically not to be trusted because she deviates too much from the political model. In fact, a nonfeminist woman is not a woman at all, just as a noncommunist worker was not really a proletarian."

One could go further: Willful obtuseness to social phenomena is crucial in constructing the symbolic persons at the heart of these progressive dramas, because the point of the dramas is for the progressive to act out his own virtue as one who embraces

the symbol. Progressive purity, based on abstraction from social reality, sometimes has to be guarded by policing the speech of real individuals who are putatively the objects of the progressive's enthusiasm, or the speech of those who are in more intimate contact with these individuals and threaten to complicate the picture—for example, the speech of the social worker who frankly describes the confusion and unhappiness that mark the lives of transgender people. The great march forward requires the erasure of "gender binaries," and that is all one needs to know.

Legutko's book will appeal to people who can point to no overt political oppression, but who feel that the standards of acceptable discourse increasingly require them to lie, and to accept the humiliation of doing so. Like other dissident writers from the Soviet sphere, Legutko provides a historical parallel to our own time that helps us parse that feeling and discern its logic. ♦



Marie Ault and Ivor Novello in *The Lodger* (1927)

B&A

Suspenseful Silence

Alfred Hitchcock's first hit speaks volumes.

BY COLIN FLEMING

There was a time when I was surprised that many Americans—even fans of Turner Classic Movies—seemed to think that Alfred Hitchcock was a roly-poly Englishman who somehow ended up in Hollywood and got his start making movies there. The way the story goes, Hitchcock crossed the pond and made *Rebecca* in 1940 for David O. Selznick, then directed a bevy of thrillers like *Saboteur* and *Shadow of a Doubt* over the course of that decade, followed by the golden fifties and a stunning succession of classics: *Rear Window*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*. *Psycho* and *The Birds* would cap the glory run in the early 1960s.

But before Hitchcock's arrival in the United States, he spent a decade and a half making movies in England. Films like *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) are as engrossingly dramatic as anything in cinema and full of the sly charm that would later be familiar to audiences as he promoted his movies and hosted *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.

Now, fortunately, the Criterion Collection has released a restored version of *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*, the 1927 film that was Hitch's first hit, so today's admirers can enjoy discovering his early development as a director.

Start with the fact that *The Lodger* is a silent movie. Anyone familiar with Hitchcock's films is aware of the notion of "pure cinema" in his work, emphasizing motion and visual composition. Consider how Jimmy Stewart's situation is made plain at the start of *Rear Window*, as we move into his apartment, see his wheelchair and the cast on his leg, then see that his character owns the kind of camera equipment used by a newspaper photographer, then see photographs he took in various dangerous locales, then see some magazines for which he shot covers. It is a soundless sequence, executed so well—just like far longer stretches of *Vertigo*, at the museum and down by the Golden Gate Bridge—that you'd rightly assume a master of silent filmmaking was behind it.

The source material for *The Lodger* is a 1913 novel of the same name, in which a family takes in a boarder who has strange ways, comes and goes at unusual times, seems to be a medical student, and sometimes has blood on his person—and the family members get to wondering if they're housing England's most notorious killer, a Jack-the-Ripper-type figure. In the movie, the daughter of the house, Daisy (June Tripp), is fair-haired, just like the killer's victims. We watch as she begins to warm toward the peculiar lodger (Ivor Novello), their growing intimacy a source of consternation for her parents and envy for her erstwhile beau Joe (Malcolm Keen)—who happens to be a policeman assigned to find the killer.

BFI / PARK CIRCUS FILMS

Colin Fleming is the author of The Anglerfish Comedy Troupe: Stories from the Abyss.

Terror, suspicion, and a love triangle: To the 26-year-old Hitchcock, it was an irresistible combination. He had worked in various capacities on movies directed by others and had himself directed two movies that had not yet been released in his own country, but he had not yet had the chance to give voice to his more poetic and philosophical filmmaking side. *The Lodger* was the perfect vehicle, even though the studio forced him to make a less morally complicated picture than he wanted, demanding he change his desired ending so that the lodger is clearly shown to be innocent. Postproduction was not easy for the budding auteur either: The studio foisted an outside consultant on Hitchcock, and he had to reshoot scenes and cut back drastically on the number of title cards he had hoped to use. But the end result was worth it. When *The Lodger* was first screened at a trade show in September 1926 it received rave reviews, and the studio agreed to release it (in February 1927) as well as the two previous unreleased films Hitchcock had directed.

If the very notion of silent films gives you pause, *The Lodger* might explode your expectations. In the arts, so many of the best things don't really feel like what they are. The best books, for instance, can make us completely unaware that we are reading; they simply carry us along. A highly voluble Howard Hawks film, with much dialogue, never feels chatty; instead, it feels immersive, like we are sitting with the characters, hanging out, waiting for our chance to talk. So it is, too, with *The Lodger*. Modern-day viewers may at first find the cast to be overacting—especially handsome matinee star Novello, whose physical presence as the lodger will call to mind any number of movie vampires—but soon you are swept up in the story.

The Criterion release does not look like a 1927 relic; it is a restoration made a few years ago by the British Film Institute's National Archive. Compared to versions of *The Lodger* that were previously available for purchase, the Criterion release is much more clean and stable. It is black and white, of course, but it is alive with color thanks to clever tinting, orange in some scenes, blue in others. (A new score commissioned by Criterion also helps.) The crispness allows Hitchcock's handiwork to be seen more clearly. A favorite innovation: Hitchcock used a glass floor to show the lodger pacing up in his room, as seen from below, like there is not so much as a two-by-four that separates fear from reality. And isn't that when fear makes the most inroads—when our worries and dark fantasies seem to converge with the world around us? ♦

B&A

The Portrait of a Man

The painterly friends and fiction of Henry James.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

Henry James grew up with Thomas Cole's *View of Florence from San Miniato* in the family parlor. Aspiring to become a painter, James took lessons from John La Farge; he had to settle for prose. The rest of his life he sought the company of expatriate painters like Frank Duveneck, James Whistler, Edwin Abbey, and John Singer Sargent; reviewed London exhibitions for the American press; and set his stories in the world of art, from "A Landscape Painter" (1866) to *The Outcry* (1911). He died in Rye, Sussex, the subject and owner of one of Sargent's late masterpieces.

"Henry James and American Painting," now at the Morgan Library in New York City, is a Jamesian puzzle. Curated jointly by novelist Colm Tóibín and the Morgan's Declan Kiely, the exhibition compresses the search for the private Henry James into a single grand room. The result is a revealing yet incomplete depiction of the writer who called himself a "painter of life" and adopted the artist's method as a metaphor: *The Portrait of a Lady*, *Portraits of Places*, *Partial Portraits*.

"I like ambiguities and detest great glares," James wrote. The glare of the portrait was the price of friendship. He was a guarded sitter, and observant, too. In 1862, La Farge painted the 19-year-old James, a stutterer, in profile. His lips are full as though brimming with speech, but pursed. The words will come later, in the ventriloquism of fiction. James's relationship to La Farge, the brilliant conversationalist and successful artist, will inform *Roderick Hudson*, in which the eponymous sculptor mentors the failing pupil Rowland Mallett.

Flaubert called the explanation of one art form by another a "monstrosity." James, by contrast, credited La Farge for "the dawning perception that

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Henry James and American Painting
Morgan Library & Museum
through September 10

John Singer Sargent, Henry James, *1913*

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON / THE MORGAN LIBRARY

the arts were after all essentially one and that even with canvas and brush whisked out of my grasp I still needn't feel disinherited." Taking art as the sibling of fiction, James fictionalized his artistic siblings.

James found material for a recurring fictional configuration, the father and the daughter, in the relationship between Francis Boott, a wealthy expatriate widower, and his daughter Elizabeth. A second Jamesian configuration, the mentor and the pupil, developed through Elizabeth's marriage to her painting teacher, Frank Duveneck, whose paintings James admired, but whose character he considered deficient: "illiterate, ignorant, and not a gentleman." In *The Portrait of a Lady*, James placed Gilbert Osmond and his daughter Pansy in the Bootts' ground-floor apartment at Villa Castellani, near Florence.

In Elizabeth Boott's watercolor, Villa Castellani looks cool and substantial. In Frank Duveneck's, the house shimmers in the heat. In Duveneck's full-length oil portraits, Francis looks terrified and Elizabeth looks strained. When Elizabeth died in 1888, Duveneck created a tomb effigy, modeled after Jacopo della Quercia's effigy of Ilaria del Carretto in the cathedral at Lucca. At the Morgan, Elizabeth reclines in a bronze copy ordered by the grieving Francis Boott. She lies next to a cabinet of James's manuscripts.

If the arts were one, it was because James compounded them for his singular art. He liked narrative painting and biographical detail. He preferred Claude Lorrain's classical clarity to Turner's Romantic disorder. He suspected that the Impressionists were placing form ahead of content and falling into "simplification." In 1873, a decade after Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and *Olympia*, James described Alexandre-Gabriel Decamps, an academic Orientalist whose reputation subsequently declined with France's empire in North Africa, as "the most salient representative of the modern school" of French painting.

For similar reasons, James dismissed Whistler's superb *Nocturnes* in London's Grosvenor Gallery in 1877 and 1878 as "pleasant things to have about, so long as one regards them as simple objects—as incidents of furniture or decoration." Yet at an 1897 exhibition at the Grafton Galleries, encountering again one of the same Whistler paintings—*Arrangement in Black, No. 3: Sir Henry Irving as Philip II of Spain* (1876)—James was "held to the spot." The portrait's tonal sophistication, James wrote, wove "the charm of a certain degree of melancholy meditation." That might equally describe James's engrossing prose style.

John Singer Sargent, Venetian Women in the Palazzo Rezzonico*, ca. 1880*

COURTESY OF DAVID NISINSON / THE MORGAN LIBRARY

John Singer Sargent was James's closest painterly friend. Like James, Sargent was an American of a peculiarly European kind. His eye is intimate but his technical flair is cool. The two combine, to use a term that James used before Freud, as "uncanny," at once present and absent. The gleaming interior and ghostly figures of Sargent's rarely seen *Venetian Women in the Palazzo Rezzonico* (ca. 1880) may be the highlight of the Morgan's show.

James encouraged Sargent to settle in London, praised him as the American who could finally match their European peers, and sat for him several times. W. Graham Robertson, a painter who knew them both, described them as "real friends, they understood each other perfectly … *plus Anglais que les Anglais* with an added fastidiousness, a mental remoteness that was not English."

James's sittings for Sargent resemble a series of chess games. In 1885, Sargent attempted a drawing of a bearded James but destroyed it, complaining that it is "impossible to do justice to a face that was all covered with beard like a bear." In 1886, when James visited the artist community at Broadway in Oxfordshire, Sargent pulled off a small drawing in three-quarters of a hour. This time, he captured the tension in James's mouth, despite the beard. Both men liked the drawing, and in 1894 they permitted its reproduction in the *Yellow Book*, a literary quarterly. By then, James had achieved two small portraits of his own: In the short novel *The Reverberator* (1888), the expatriate portrait painter Charles Waterlow evokes Sargent, and the short story "The Pupil" (1891) blends elements of James's childhood with Sargent's.

In 1911, Edith Wharton asked Sargent to portray their mutual friend. Although Sargent had forsworn portraits since 1908, he accepted the commission. James fended him off in the first sitting and extracted the reflective observation that Sargent "finds me difficult, perverse, obscure." Sargent feinted in the second session, but lost his way. The third attempt, James believed, produced "a complete success … a regular first class living, resembling, enduring

thing." But Sargent told Edith Wharton that the drawing was "a failure" and abandoned the commission.

In 1906, after evading Alice Boughton's camera, James allowed her to photograph him on his way out of the studio. James, who had been introduced to French literature by John La Farge, identified the "great symptom" of Sargent's American origins as the paradox that "in the line of his art he might easily be mistaken for a Frenchman." Top hat on, James peers at a picture on Boughton's wall, playing the part of a Daumier bourgeois.

But in 1913, James's friends commissioned a portrait as a 70th birthday present. This time, Sargent got his man. James sits like a sea lion on a rock, yet his face is pained. He knows he has been spotted. "But what is most interesting," James wrote to his brother William, "is the mouth—than which even he has never painted a more living and, as I am told, 'expressive'!" A portrait, Sargent is supposed to have said, is "a painting with something wrong with the mouth." He makes James's mouth the key to the fleshy, candid core of his character.

In James's 1888 novella *The Aspern Papers*, a literary journalist covets a dead poet's love letters. To befriend their recipient, he rents a room in her Venetian palazzo. As the hapless narrator learns, the puzzle fascinates because some of the pieces are missing.

The Morgan might have exhibited Joseph Pennell's illustrations for James's travelogues or the Venetian scenes of Sargent's cousin Ralph Curtis. Instead, we see Hendrik Christian Andersen, who was neither American nor a painter, but a Norwegian-American sculptor, and not a good one. James's infatuated letters to Andersen hint at homosexuality, but we cannot know what Henry did with Hendrik, or even what else Henry wrote. Like the spinster who burns Jeffrey Aspern's love letters to preserve his artistic posterity, James burned his private papers in a final evasion. The "house of fiction," he wrote, has "not one window, but a million." Our age peers through the bedroom window only. ♦

The drawing room of the Mannerheim House

COURTESY OF THE MANNERHEIM MUSEUM

B&A

Start to Finnish

Touring the Helsinki home of the man behind modern Finland. **BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL**

I spent a dreary half-week in Helsinki a few years ago. It was mid-March. Short days, empty streets, damp snow blowing off the harbor. The Finns I met said: "Come back in July. There's nothing like a Scandinavian summer."

This summer I went back with my wife. It was warm and breezy. The sun stayed out till 11. But the Finns themselves were nowhere to be found. They were probably at the lakeside summer houses they pine for eight months out of the year.

What were *we* supposed to do? A hundred yards up the street a gaggle of Americans had just got off a tour bus. They seemed to have found the last Finn left in town. She was smiling and gesturing cooperatively as they left. We approached her for advice.

She suggested three things.

The first thing was to go to the 19th-century Orthodox Uspenski Cathedral that dominates the harbor from a rocky hilltop.

We did it. It was great. The Orthodox service, with its opening and closing of doors, its lifting of holy objects, its processions that disappear behind walls before reemerging, was moving, as it is meant to be. In one respect the cathedral was different from the churches you see in, say, Venice, and more like the Orthodox churches in St. Petersburg and Moscow: It was actually still a house of worship, not an admission-charging concert-hall-cum-gift-shop where you go to use the toilet and put on bug-repellent. If you were a tourist, there was a rope behind which you were supposed to stand. Any time anyone pulled out a phone, a dyspeptic crewcut Finn would walk over and wave a laminated "No Photographs" placard.

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A question that will occur to many readers who remember the last years of the Cold War is, what is an Eastern Orthodox church doing in downtown Helsinki? Is this the "Finlandization" that was so much talked about at the time? Finlandization was the prospect that, caught in the magnetic field of the Soviet Union, Helsinki might come to resemble St. Petersburg (or Leningrad, as it was then called). There were always two forms that Finlandization could take: Communization and Russification. The Communization never happened. The Russification already had. Eastern Orthodoxy is one of Finland's two state religions, the other being Lutheranism, and has been for a long time. The cathedral was built in 1868.

The lady's second recommendation was that we eat in the Vanha Kauppahalli, the old market that specializes in various marinated, smoked, and fermented fish. If you like that kind of thing, she said, it will be paradise on earth for you. I do. It was. The Finnish herring—considerably smaller than the ones you'll get in Amsterdam and other North Sea ports or in a jar at your supermarket—is highly recommended, although there is nothing to match a Swedish-prepared *surströmming*.

Finally, she suggested we visit the house, now a museum, of Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim (1867-1951). Few tourists go there, perhaps because the museum is open only on weekend afternoons, perhaps because not many people anymore have heard of Mannerheim. He is the father of modern Finland and an object of enduring fascination for Finns. The Mannerheim shelf in a Finnish bookstore is as full as the Lincoln shelf in one of ours.

Descended from German grandees, Mannerheim was brought up near Swedish-speaking Turku, at a time when Finland was under Russian control. He became a Polish cavalryman, an "uhlan," for the czar. There are photos of him, in fact, marching as one of Nicholas II's guards during the coronation of 1896. Finnish was not his first language. He spoke French, German, Russian, and some Polish and English, as well as his native Swedish. Between 1906 and 1908, just after the debacle of the Russo-Japanese War, he crossed Asia on horseback. It was an 8,000-mile spying expedition. Russia was drawing up plans to invade China from the west—but failed to. Mannerheim was drawing up plans to make a kind of a long shopping trip—and succeeded somewhat better.

Mannerheim was the kind of person 20th-century biographers called a "complex character." At every stage of his military career, which included prizes for marksmanship and dressage and conspicuous instances of valor and resolve, he left the impression that he would much rather be running a little shop selling antique furniture. He loved buying art and dickering over knick-knacks in foreign markets. Mannerheim never owned the Mannerheim House, which had been divided into a half-dozen apartments before he began renting it from the chocolate and licorice baron Karl Fazer. Mannerheim left his mark on the place by furnishing it. So from the China trek there are 80 rare and delicate Central Asian Buddhist temple tapestries. Such tapestries are rare (and valuable) because they were usually burnt after services. There is also a mammoth ancient lacquered-wood Chinese writing desk, which he acquired after a lengthy negotiation with a merchant; its restoration was one of the great endeavors of Mannerheim's adult life. In Italy he made a deal for a weird and pointless-looking gate-like contraption that he just had to have to cover his central stairway. This purchase, too, involved haggling and measuring. To tour the Mannerheim museum requires a lot of patience for stories that end ". . . *and imagine the auctioneer's face when he said, throw in the guéridon and the hunting prints and we have a deal*."

Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim

The tours are all led by docents. One was about to begin when we arrived, and people were already milling about. Most of them were Germans, with an Australian couple along for the ride. The pair would dominate the afternoon. They seemed to be using the mansion tour to live out a fantasy. They were here not as tourists looking around but as houseguests with a duty to keep the conversation rolling. At one point they interrupted the docent to sing the praises of the Mannerheim bathroom.

"Byeetiful," the wife said. "Such lahge sinks."

"Toilet's nothing to sneeze at, neither!" her husband added.

Our guide was explaining the military intelligence Mannerheim had gathered in central Asia and the art he had acquired in Nepal, when Mrs. Aussie piped in, "You say Nepal? We bin thih!"

"Yih!" said her husband, turning to the rest of us. "Chitwan Neshional Pahk! Byeetiful. At least the walled-life. Wouldn't recommend the food. 'Course, that's beck a few yiz."

We were beginning to see what a protean figure Mannerheim was. Having almost reached the pinnacle of the Russian military command, he awoke in 1917 to discover the Romanovs imprisoned and the Reds in power. He returned to Finland. One month later, having been absent from the country for 30 years, he launched a nationalist uprising with the equally un-Finnish-sounding Finnish general Claes Charpentier. It succeeded. Mannerheim then held off the Red Army when Stalin invaded with a vastly superior force in late 1939.

Mannerheim allied with Hitler against Stalin until 1944. Finns call this period "the Continuation War." Apparently there is something ineffable about it that the term "World

The library

War II" fails to capture. Our guide insisted the Finns were not exactly *allies* of Hitler during this period . . . it is just that "our guns were pointed in the same direction."

By a cruel archival accident, the only surviving audio recording of Hitler in casual conversation surfaced a few years ago, and it is a conversation with Mannerheim, on a trip Hitler made to congratulate the Finnish leader on his 75th birthday, in 1942. It is an extraordinary recording for two reasons. First, Hitler and Mannerheim, great strategists though they both were, seem to have been caught utterly by surprise by the strategic problem of Russia's vastness and military power. Second is Hitler's chatty tone, unique to this recording.

> *Hitler:* We ourselves didn't really know how enormously well armed this country [the USSR] was.
>
> *Mannerheim:* We would have never suspected it in the Winter War. Of course we had the impression that they were well armed but . . .
>
> *Hitler*: They have the most enormous armament anyone could conceive of. I mean, if someone had said to me that a country could bring 35,000 tanks into the field, I'd have said, "You've gone mad!"
>
> *Mannerheim:* Thirty-five?
>
> *Hitler:* 35,000 Panzers. . . . If a general had explained to me that a country owned 35,000 Panzers, I'd have said, "You, good sir, are seeing double or tenfold. You're mad. You're seeing things." I wouldn't have thought it possible.

So was it here, one wondered, in this house, that the two met? No—Mannerheim was too canny for that. Finland's *Waffenbrüderschaft* with Germany was already paying diminishing returns by mid-1942, and Mannerheim preferred that the meeting be held in his private train-carriage, in secret, near the Soviet border. (The carriage now sits in the parking lot of a Shell station in the rural town of Sastamala.) Two years later, Mannerheim would abandon Hitler altogether, allying with Stalin to drive the Germans out of Lapland. We don't often think of Finland as a place stuck, the way Poland is, between Russia's sphere and Germany's—but the Finns themselves do.

Our guide was elegant, polite, and passionately well informed about Mannerheim and his circle. What thrilled him most were the places Mannerheim's life crossed that of the Finnish modernist painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela, a friend of Strindberg who exhibited with Edvard Munch. Gallen-Kallela painted his dear friend Maxim Gorky as well as Mannerheim. He painted Finland's mountains and lakes, and lots of naked men climbing in and out of boats. He illustrated the Finnish epic the *Kalevala* and was into Nordic mythology. If you have an illustrated history of elves, sprites, trolls, fairies, or gnomes in your house, it probably has a few of his paintings in it. He lived in Africa at the turn of the century. The Mannerheim museum has a bizarre Gallen-Kallela self-portrait from the time, most of which is taken up by some kind of sleeping (or perhaps dead) jungle cat sprawled out on the African dust. Late in his life, Gallen-Kallela moved to Taos, New Mexico, where D. H. Lawrence was his neighbor and friend.

Mannerheim, impressed with Gallen-Kallela's art, his intellect, and his Finnish nationalism, made him the chief of the national printing press and manager of the mint. The thing about having a new country is that you need all sorts of new symbols: flags, coins, stamps, seals, military uniforms and decorations. This became Gallen-Kallela's job. Gallen-Kallela designed—or tried to design—everything we associate with modern Finland outside of the packages for Finn Crisp multigrain crackers and one or two Marimekko pillowcase patterns. He was an all-rounder. In this he was rather like Mannerheim himself, a 19th-century cavalryman of the kind you find in the pages of *War and Peace*, who lived into the decade of "Jailhouse Rock."

Occasionally, our guide would make a mistake that occasioned snickering, as when he described a china set that Mannerheim had acquired in Peking as a "porcelain system." (*You order the next round—I'm gonna visit the porcelain system.*) More often, though, he cautiously sought the right word in English, something the Australians didn't have the patience for or see the charm in. Thus he began: "While in Tashkent, Mannerheim was on his . . . on his . . . "

And they started shouting out guesses:

". . . own!"

". . . horse!"

". . . larst ligs!"

". . . bist behyviah!"

That put a certain upper limit on our learning about Mannerheim. Perhaps we'll have to come back in the winter. ♦

COURTESY OF THE MANNERHEIM MUSEUM

B&A

Going Theronuclear

Does the camera like Charlize too much?

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Charlize Theron as Lorraine Broughton

Charlize Theron first appears onscreen in her mostly terrific new action thriller, *Atomic Blonde*, trying to heal her wounded body in an ice bath. She has bruises all over her back. Her face is swollen, one of her eyes blackened. She pulls herself out of the tub, dresses laboriously, and limps into the headquarters of MI6 in London for an interrogation that will, in part, address the question: How did she, a superspy, get herself beaten to a pulp?

The answer is contained within this jigsaw puzzle of a movie, whose screenplay (by Kurt Johnstad, based on a graphic novel) cleverly withholds information from us to mimic Theron's experience of being an intelligence officer dropped in the middle of a situation she does not entirely understand.

The setting is Berlin in the weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall. The thing every spy in the city wants—the Brits, the French, the East Germans, the Russians—is a master list of all British intelligence assets. There are two copies. One is contained inside a watch. The other is contained within the brain of an East German officer called Spyglass, who memorized it. Theron has been sent to Berlin after the murder of a fellow officer who was secretly her beloved. She is told by her superiors that the MI6 station chief (James McAvoy) has "gone native" and is no longer trustworthy. From the moment she lands in Berlin she is everyone's target.

Atomic Blonde
Directed by David Leitch

So, yes, she gets beaten up, but she gives far worse than she gets. The movie's able director David Leitch co-helmed the Keanu Reeves revenge thriller *John Wick*, and what he did there pales in comparison with what he pulls off here. He choreographs several jaw-dropping hand-to-hand fight scenes in which Theron is so convincingly savage that she basically sends Reeves (with whom she co-starred a couple of times when he was the bigger Hollywood draw) down to the minors.

Leitch begins the movie with a bruised and damaged Theron because, I think, he figured it might lead us to have some empathy or common feeling for her. It does help, for the reason that Theron is unique among the very best actresses of our time in a very odd way. Simply put, she's just too good-looking.

Theron is one of the great camera subjects in the history of film. That's why she had to uglify herself to win an Oscar (playing the homely and overweight serial killer Aileen Wuornos in the 2003 film *Monster*). Otherwise she's so preposterously beautiful she hardly seems like an actual human being. That's why, for her role as the avenging angel Furiosa in 2015's *Mad Max: Fury Road*, writer-director George Miller saw to it Theron was dirtied up and disfigured, with half an arm cut off.

It's not that Theron can't play vulnerable. She was sensational in 1997's *The Devil's Advocate* as Keanu Reeves's fun-loving Southern-belle wife slowly going insane when she is forced to live among the damned spouses in an apartment building entirely inhabited by the associates at Satan's law firm. (If you don't understand that sentence, go see the movie.) And she has comedy chops, too; she was a delight in the strange Seth MacFarlane Western parody, *A Million Ways to Die in the West*. When she smiles, a charming goofiness comes over her.

But at rest her face is a portrait of iciness. And she plays guarded and chilly women like nobody else ever. She gave a magnificent performance in a neglected little movie called *Young Adult* as a solipsistic failed novelist who goes back to her hometown and decides to break up the happy marriage of her nice and extremely dull high school boyfriend.

Atomic Blonde plays too many games with its timeline, so that by the time it reaches its climax you've actually lost the thread of who's betraying whom for what reason. And there's a wholly unnecessary subplot about a lesbian relationship that provides titillation but nothing else. But just when you think the movie has ended badly, it springs back to life with a couple of unexpected and satisfying final scenes.

There are good supporting turns here and there, but the movie is Theron, and if anything, it's too modestly named. *Atomic Blonde?* How about *Thermonuclear Blonde?* ♦

FOCUS FEATURES / 87ELEVEN

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

"[T]he president told some members of Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, New Jersey, before a recent round of golf that he frequents the club because 'that White House is a real dump.'"
—News item, August 3, 2017

PARODY

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TRUMP UNVEILS RENOVATED, RECONFIGURED 'GOLD HOUSE'

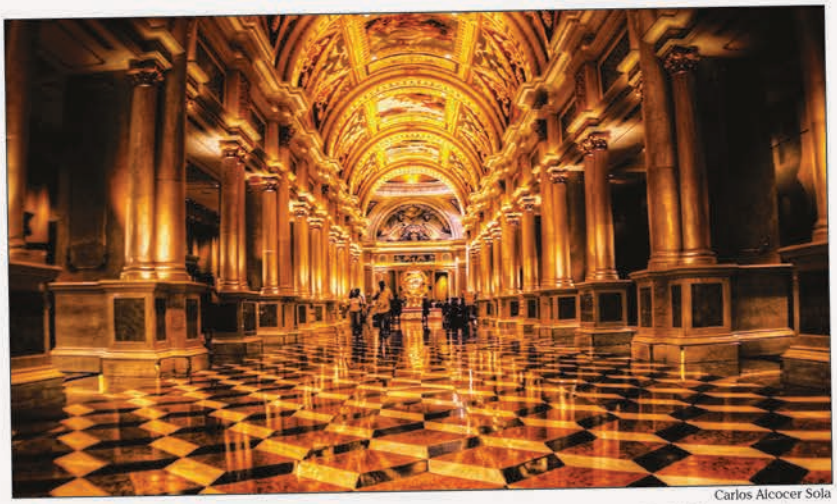
'Not a Dump Anymore'

By ROONEY BASCOMB

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump unveiled a refurbished White House today, after several months of intensive renovations that left the historic presidential residence and office building painted gold, inside and out. "It's called the Gold House now, people, and it's not a dump anymore," Mr. Trump announced to reporters from the Rose Garden, where the rose bushes have been replaced by several aquariums full of small sharks.

"We finally have a building that captures the spirit of America, loud and clear," the president told the crowd, as he led a tour of the revamped building. "It's so much better now, guys," the president continued. "Seriously, look around. No more tacky marble. No more old, dusty furniture," he said, taking a seat on a solid gold couch in the shape of Mr. Trump's own hands. "I mean, just look at the size of this couch!"

But new paint and furniture were just part of the president's overhaul of America's most iconic landmark. Mr. Trump removed all the traditional carpeting in the hallways, replacing it with gold and black tile repurposed from the now-defunct Trump Taj Mahal. And he also modified existing presidential portraits, like the one of George Washington saved from fire by Dolley Madison in 1814, to portray all the former presidents high-fiving Mr. Trump. But even those changes pale in comparison to the renovation carried out on perhaps the most important room in American politics.



Carlos Alcocer Sola

White House staffers make their way to the Eisenhower Office Building next door via the new TrumpWay, a corridor covered in repurposed tile and gold leaf.

"Best thing ever, guys: no more Oval Office!" Mr. Trump crowed as he led the crowd to the door of the traditional office of the leader of the free world. "An oval? Who would want an oval? An oval office? Very weak shape," he went on. "Now, a brick-shaped office, well, that sends a message to America's enemies

Continued on Page A3