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COVER BY DAVE MALAN

The *WSJ* and the 1 Percent

"Were admission to Harvard based solely on academic merit, Asian-Americans would comprise 43% of the freshman class, while African-Americans would make up less than 1%, according to an internal Harvard report discussed at a trial here Wednesday." That's the sobering lede of a *Wall Street Journal* story by Melissa Korn that ran on October 17, the third day of the trial in Boston in *Students for Fair Admissions* v. *Harvard*. The school's admissions program is in the dock, accused of racial discrimination in violation of federal civil rights law.

The case is almost certainly going to the Supreme Court, so you'd expect timely coverage of the lawsuit, including what was in documents Harvard was forced to disclose on June 15. Yet somehow the media, minus the lonely *Journal* article, failed to report the "less than 1 percent" number (two-thirds of 1 percent, to be exact). Nor, during the four-month run-up to the start of the trial on October 15 and the copious coverage since then, has the number been published anywhere else in the mainstream news media. Not in the *New York Times*, not in the *Washington Post*, not on CNN or MSNBC. Other stunning numbers in the same document have also gone virtually unnoticed in the mainstream media's coverage.

The "less than 1 percent" number happens to be highly newsworthy. It provides a virtually unprecedented window into the inner workings of a

leading university's racial-preference regime, and it dramatizes—more than any other piece of information in the history of racial preferences—how very few black high school graduates are well-qualified academically for colleges as selective as Harvard even after decades of affirmative action. Together with other revelations in the document dump, the number also indicates the need for very large racial preferences if diversity targets are to be met.

Of course, the selective schools that use preferences have long pretended, and to some extent still do (although the pretense has been repeatedly obliterated by various critics), that affirmative action is a matter of modest "tips" or a "plus" to break near-ties among kids of different races who are roughly equal in academic qualifications. But the Harvard documents give the lie to this understanding of affirmative action. Nor is it near-ties that preferences are breaking. Newsworthy? One would think so.

The melancholy fact is that selective colleges care far more about the perception that they are "diverse" and "inclusive" institutions than they do about the minority young people they claim to value. They therefore admit artificially high numbers of unprepared minority students who struggle more than they might at other institutions—what scholars have called the "mismatch" problem. University administrators would rather keep that system in place than face the problem honestly and do something about it—and the mainstream press, minus the *Wall Street Journal* in this case, is happy to oblige. ♦

White Tights

Russian operatives may be feeding preposterous fictions to gullible Americans on Facebook, but at least our countrymen don't believe in "statuesque superhuman blonde Baltic snipers in tight white outfits." In his invaluable daily digest, *Windows on Eurasia*, the Russia scholar Paul Goble reminds readers of the *beliye kolgotki*—literally, white tights or white stockings—the highly attractive Baltic sharpshooters that many Russians believe can kill a man from a mile away. Their existence has been rumored, according to some sources, since at least the First Chechen War of the 1990s.

"Wild Geese in White Tights," says a Russian-language article of 2000, alluding to their supposed mercenary relationship to Chechen

forces. While some were said to be Chechen or Ukrainian, the trope of seductively dressed Latvian and Estonian markswomen is longstanding and persistent. Although the Estonian government repeatedly asked for evidence supporting the assertions, none was forthcoming. Instead, according to then-Kremlin spokesman Sergey Yastrzhembsky, quoted in the *Economist* in 2000, "They exist. Military intelligence says so, and they don't make mistakes."

Goble comments: "That this notion continues to circulate says a lot about what happens in the low-information environment the Russian

IMAGES: TWS ART / BIGSTOCK

government has imposed on its population, an environment in which rumors come to be accepted as fact and do not cease to spread because there is not the bright light of media attention that might dispel them. The idea that there are 'Baltic Amazons,' however, has consequences. It contributes to Russian hostility to Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, elevating them into the shock troops of the West against Russia on every and all occasions."

A few Americans may believe Hillary Clinton is dying of AIDS and that the U.S. government was behind 9/11. But Baltic sniper-babes? Come on. ♦

Mainly Just Trick

The older The Scrapbook gets, the more certain we become that Halloween is the worst American "holiday." The insane sugar highs and consequent rotten teeth, the horror movies, the shrubs strewn with faux cobwebs . . . enough! Here's yet another reason to get rid of it: Kids risk community opprobrium by dressing up as something they're not. In an age when our educated elite don't feel sufficiently confident to distinguish boys from girls, maybe it's not the best idea to have boys and girls disguise themselves as other people and things.

Recall the controversy at Yale University in 2015 when lecturer Erika Christakis suggested in an email to students at Yale's Silliman College that people should be permitted to don whatever preposterous Halloween disguises they wish, without inviting accusations of microaggression and cultural appropriation. "I wonder, and I am not trying to be provocative: Is there no room anymore for a child or young person to be a little bit obnoxious, . . . a little bit inappropriate or provocative or, yes, offensive?" That comment earned Christakis an onslaught from Yale's entitled protester-hoodlums. They hounded her from the campus and her teaching job.

It's okay when Jimmy Fallon does it.

Now it's NBC host Megyn Kelly's turn. In a segment on her show, *Megyn Kelly Today*, about this very topic—p.c. sensibilities and Halloween's costume tradition—the eponymous hostess asked about a costume, "What is racist?" She should have stopped right there, but television personalities are not known for their ability to stop talking. "You do get in trouble," she went on, "if you are a white person who puts on blackface on Halloween or a black person who puts on whiteface for Halloween. Back when I was a kid, that was okay, as long as you were dressing up as a character."

It was a dumb thing to say and surely a false one: At no time in living memory was it "okay" for a white kid in America to dress up as a black person for Halloween. But her intention was pretty evidently harmless: She meant that we are far more sensitive about these things than we were 25 or 30 years ago, and she proved the truth of her point by first offering an anguished on-camera apology, being called everything but a racist by NBC personalities Al Roker and Craig

VIA YOUTUBE

Melvin, and then being relieved of her job.

We're not worried about Kelly—she'll be just fine and will still collect her multimillion-dollar contract. And if our hypersensitivity over symbols and identities manages to roll back the Halloween craze, The Scrapbook will count it as the first laudable achievement of the dreary p.c. movement. ♦

Consulting with Consultants

One of the most underreported asininities of modern American politics is the existence of political "consultancies" that rake in money from candidates, fail to get those candidates into office, then go on to rake in even more money from other candidates. Consider:

Texas candidate for Senate Beto O'Rourke spent $18 million on a consultancy called "Screen Strategies Media," according to a Fox News report. By the time you read this, you may know the outcome of the contest between O'Rourke and Ted Cruz, but polls have O'Rourke trailing by double digits.

Screen Strategies, according to its website, works "hand-in-hand with our clients to develop tailor-made media solutions that deliver their message to the right audience in the right place and at the right time." Or, to put it a little differently, the firm will gladly take $18 million to help you lose an election to one of the most dislikable politicians in America.

In fairness, the reason O'Rourke and many other politicians and aspiring politicians permit themselves to

spend so much money on political consultancies is that they can't spend the money on much else. It's not *their* money. It's campaign money, collected from innumerable fundraisers, and as such heavily regulated. Millionaire consultants: yet another benefit of strict federal election laws.

The best part? In March 2017, as Beto was considering a run against Cruz, he told the *Dallas Morning News* he wasn't using consultants. "I'm not poll-testing it," he said. "I'm not consulting with consultants." Of course, the candidate had every right to change his mind. The honchos at Screen Strategies are no doubt glad he did. ♦

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BPA WORLDWIDE

TWS ART / TOILET, MONEY, AND FIGURE: BIGSTOCK

Canned Ham

Does 12 or 13 count as an early age to become disillusioned? Maybe it was once on the young side for lost innocence. On the other hand, maybe I was just a slow learner.

That said, it's the perfect age for listening to Queen's signature song, the fantabulous, preposterous, ludicrous work of 22-carat Barnum known as "Bohemian Rhapsody." There's the maudlin self-pity of the first section and at the end a good walloping bash of fist-pumping, head-bobbing hard rock, both elements fine-tuned to adolescent male sensibilities. But what makes it utterly perfect for the teen boy brain is the middle section, a puffed-up and pompous pseudo-operetta that indulges young rockers in the conceit that, along with all the sweaty leather and searing electric guitars, they're benefiting from culture and uplift.

In other words, I liked it. A lot. And so it was with no little anticipation that I took my seat in the Phoenix basketball arena for what would be my first rock concert—Queen, live. Once things got rolling, I sat through tune after tune I didn't know: I wasn't a Queen fan but a "Bohemian Rhapsody" fan. As each song got checked off the set list my excitement grew. I knew we were getting ever closer to the inevitable, ineffable zenith of the show. We were about to wallow in an operatic fantasy.

Finally, it had begun: "Mama, just killed a man," Freddie Mercury warbled from the piano. As the middle section drew near, I was gripped with the question: *How would they do it?*

How indeed. When The Moment arrived, it was announced with the most dramatic of stagecraft—all the lights went out. And they stayed out as the sound engineer pressed *play* on the tape deck that took over for the band.

At first I was slack-jawed: I had come to witness a spectacle and instead was listening to a recording in a dark arena. My bewilderment gave way to disgust.

"Bohemian Rhapsody" had been controversial from the get-go. When one of the record company men first heard the freshly mixed six-minute track, he sputtered, "What the f—'s this? Are you mad?" Nor was that just

BRITT SPENCER

the view of the suits: Elton John took a prerelease listen and said, "Are you f—ing mad?"

The real madness was in building a whole album—Queen's 1975 LP *A Night at the Opera*—around a studio-crafted single the band was incapable of performing live.

Guitarist Brian May did his best to put a positive gloss on the group's inability to perform their most famous bit. When the stage went dark and the recording played, "It gave us a chance to change the frocks."

Mercury, the front man and "Rhapsody" composer, claimed a certain virtue in the honesty with which the band relied on the recording: "We don't cheat with tapes," said Fred. "It's not like we're out there playing our instruments and trying to mime to it."

He was unapologetic. "I mean how could you re-create a 160-piece gospel choir on stage? You can't. It's impossible."

But would a live "Rhapsody" really have been impossible? Sure, if Queen had tried to re-create the overdubbed singing themselves. Even if their voices had been up to it, there simply weren't enough of them to do umpteen *Galileos* at once. But what would it have cost them to hire, say, 16 gig-starved opera singers? The band could have secreted four in each corner of the arena, revealing them only at the evening's vocal apogee. It would have created a quadraphonic prog-rock moment that borrowed a smidgen of the thrill of the Berlioz Requiem (when the previously hidden brass choirs get to the middle of the "Dies irae" and detonate the world's biggest E-flat major chord).

Too expensive? Your average journeyman Pavarotti-wannabe probably would have worked cheaper than the roadies. Too much trouble? How could it be? Think of all the money and effort that went into the band's hair.

I left the arena feeling cheated. I had been a chump to hand over my hard-earned lawn-mowing money for a shameless con, and I berated myself for being a stooge.

In retrospect I should thank Queen. I was getting a little old to still have scales on my eyes. It had been a few years since I had learned about the Easter Bunny. It was about time I learned that Freddie Mercury was no Enrico Caruso.

I think of that Queen concert as the evening I was ushered unceremoniously into adulthood, when I came to expect fakery as the default setting of the human condition. One might lament the loss of innocence, but then again, it's never too early to get disillusioned.

Eric Felten

the weekly Standard

Sinking to the Occasion

In the days since Robert Bowers murdered 11 congregants inside the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Americans have contemplated and debated the most urgent questions in our common life. There has been mercifully little discussion of gun laws. Observers on both sides have grasped that these murders—and the hatred that generated them—require more than a stale dispute about background checks and AR-15s. No; the questions before us are far more serious. Is homegrown anti-Semitism on the rise? Do people or groups other than Bowers share culpability? Was this in any sense a manifestation of political hatreds that appear less and less governable?

Mourners at a funeral for one of the shooting victims in Pittsburgh

BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI / AFP / GETTY

Whether the Squirrel Hill shooting indicates the revivification of domestic anti-Semitism is difficult to say. We are hopefully skeptical. A much-touted Anti-Defamation League report claiming a dramatic increase of anti-Semitic attacks since the election of Donald Trump has major methodological flaws (some of the increase, for example, happened on college campuses and so presumably had little or nothing to do with the far right). And, of course, violent attacks against Jews, though far rarer than in Europe, were common enough in America long before Trump rose to prominence: We recall, just in the last couple of decades, the shooting at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles in 1999, the shooting at the Seattle Jewish Federation in 2006, and the shootings at two Jewish community centers in Overland Park, Kansas, in 2014. Indeed, anti-Semitism has existed through the whole course of American history and reached a high point in the years just before the Second World War.

The habit of blaming large cultural or political forces for crimes committed by individuals is, moreover, both morally vexed and dangerous. Margaret Thatcher was ridiculed when she said, in 1987, that "there is no such thing as society," but her point was sound. Individuals are responsible for themselves; there is no entity, "society," that forces them to do wrong when they would otherwise do right. Bowers was not compelled to carry out his murderous fantasies because guns were too readily available or because dark powers on the web encouraged his hostility or because our public discourse has degenerated into name-calling or because Donald Trump said irresponsible things about his critics. The same is true of Cesar Sayoc, arrested for sending pipe bombs to Trump's detractors, and of James Hodgkinson, who attempted to kill GOP congressmen and nearly succeeded in the case of Steve Scalise. Each of these men, and no one else, bears the guilt of his crimes.

That is not to say, however, that our increasingly uncivil discourse cannot generate violence. Of course it can. When our political leaders slander their adversaries, when they maliciously distort the meanings of reasonable statements they happen to disagree with, when they encourage incivility and brutality—they create an atmosphere in which twisted minds are emboldened to act on their worst impulses. What our leaders breathe out we all breathe in.

American political culture was already dirty and uncivil when Trump arrived on the scene. His candidacy and victory were as much response to the incivility as generators of it—reactionary in a literal sense. In the aftermath of Pittsburgh, though, the president had an opportunity to express principles that bind Americans together—to forgo petty criticisms and remind Americans, even the Americans who loathe him, that we are, together, better than our hatreds. In moments of shock and grief, other presidents of both parties—George W. Bush after 9/11, say, or Barack Obama after the Tucson shooting—have spoken to the nation with compassion, generosity, and chastened idealism. "For the truth is, none of us can know exactly what triggered this vicious attack," Obama said in Arizona after a shooting that left six dead, including a 9-year old girl. "None of us can know with any certainty what might have stopped these shots from being fired or what thoughts lurked in the inner recesses of a violent man's mind. . . . But what we cannot do is use

this tragedy as one more occasion to turn on each other." No president can remain always in the sphere of unifying rhetoric, and Obama in particular would quickly drop his charitable words for vinegary criticisms of anybody who objected to his proposals. But he understood that in times of pain and tragedy, the president has a duty to speak to and for all Americans.

Trump doesn't understand this. After news of the Pittsburgh murders, he went ahead with a campaign rally in Murphysboro, Illinois. The president seemed aware of the need for cohesive words at the outset of his talk. "This evil anti-Semitic attack is an assault on all of us," he said, quite properly. "It's an assault on humanity. It will require all of us working together to extract the hateful poison of anti-Semitism from our world. . . . We must stand with our Jewish brothers and sisters to defeat anti-Semitism and vanquish the forces of hate. . . . And those seeking their destruction, we will seek their destruction."

These are fine words, but they were dropped into a lengthy campaign address in which he ridiculed Maxine Waters and railed about "the caravan" and called the media "foolish and very stupid people." No one remembers what he said about Pittsburgh because he said it in a rambling talk full of wisecracks and insults and boasts.

Trump has no inclination to speak to all Americans. His is a zero-sum worldview; he attacks those who attack him and praises those who praise him. When the time comes to remind Americans of our finest ideals and our bonds with each other, he is absent. A very few have forgotten those ideals and bonds altogether, and as we read their infamous names in the news, we sense the void at the top. ♦

The NRCC Takes a Stand

"Congressman Steve King's recent comments, actions, and retweets are completely inappropriate. We must stand up against white supremacy and hate in all forms, and I strongly condemn this behavior." So states Ohio congressman Steve Stivers, head of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC). He's referring to King's endorsement of Canadian white nationalist Faith Goldy for Toronto mayor and also, perhaps, to nasty and indefensible remarks the Iowa congressman made in an interview with the neo-fascist Austrian publication *Unzensuriert*.

That interview took place while King was in Austria visiting officials from the far-right Freedom party, an anti-immigration group with close ties to European race-nationalism movements. King was at the time on a foundation-funded trip to Poland to view "Jewish and Holocaust historical sites," but he took a side jaunt to Austria (paying his own way) specifically in order to meet Freedom party officials. In his interview with *Unzensuriert*, as Adam Rubenstein pointed out at *weeklystandard.com*, King grumbled about the horrors of immigrants—"somebody else's babies"—replacing hardworking Americans' children ("We add to our population approximately 1.8 million of 'somebody else's babies' who are raised in another culture before they get to us").

King is increasingly comfortable expressing fringe views publicly. Maybe it's the political environment created by a president who launched his campaign with a vow to go after the "rapists" sent to the United States by Mexico and suggested in a bizarre non sequitur this week that ending birthright citizenship would rid the country of immigrant criminality. "Birthright citizenship, you know all about it—we will keep the criminals, the drug dealers, we will keep them all out of our country. We will get rid of all of this. We will end, finally, birthright citizenship."

But King has a long history of bigoted comments. During the debate over the DREAM Act in 2013, King pushed back against the argument that the bulk of young immigrants were hardworking would-be citizens. "Some of them are valedictorians, and their parents brought them in," King allowed. "For every 1 who's a valedictorian, there's another 100 out there who weigh 130 pounds and they've got calves the size of cantaloupes because they're hauling 75 pounds of marijuana across the desert."

It ought to go without saying that there is no statistical evidence that comes close to supporting King's claim. And comments like this go far beyond a legitimate concern over immigration levels. King's is the twisted ideology of nativism.

The NRCC will no longer direct funds to King's reelection effort. That's a principled move just days before midterm elections, and Stivers deserves enormous credit for it. King told Bloomberg that the NRCC's move is a score "that can be settled after the election"—a threat that reminds us, as if we needed reminding, of the man's thuggish personality.

"These attacks are orchestrated by nasty, desperate, and dishonest fake news," King tweeted on October 30. "Their ultimate goal is to flip the House and impeach Donald Trump." Yes, dishonest fake-news types fixated on impeachment—an interesting way to describe the people at the National Republican Congressional Committee.

There have been times over the past few years when GOP reluctance to condemn even the most outrageous comments from its own had us wondering if there were party leaders willing to defend any norms. Stivers shows the way. ♦

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Misunderstanding Merkel's legacy

"I wasn't born chancellor," said German leader Angela Merkel in an ad for her 2009 reelection campaign. She repeated the phrase in late October at a press conference to announce her coming resignation as chairman of her party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Recent state elections have brought voter uprisings against the CDU in Hesse (home to Frankfurt and the German banking industry) and against its Christian Social Union (CSU) allies in Bavaria (an industrial powerhouse centered on Munich). Merkel meant to express humility, as she had in the ad a decade ago: She is a woman who remembers that politicians work for the people. But now her words had the opposite effect—it really did feel like she had been born chancellor. Merkel has led the CDU since 2000, when Bill Clinton was in office. Merkel also announced that this term, her fourth, would be her last. It still has about four years to run.

LIKENESSES: DAVE CLEGG

When Merkel's policymaking made her less popular at home and abroad, it made her a heroine to all those eager to melt the nations of Europe into an ever-closer European Union.

Much of the international press coverage, though, has the tone of an obituary, and for good reason. It is as difficult to beat an orderly retreat in politics as it is in warfare. In 2006 British prime minister Tony Blair tried to give up the chairmanship of the Labour party while clinging to his office. He discovered that the former was an indispensable power base for the latter and was forced into an earlier-than-intended retirement. A party chairmanship is traditionally even more important in Germany, and Merkel admitted at her press conference that separating the two functions was a "risk."

Strangely Merkel is described as a "centrist" in almost all of this valedictory coverage. The account in the *Financial Times* begins: "Angela Merkel dragged her Christian Democratic Union kicking and screaming to the centre-ground of German politics." Such accounts are wrong. Merkel was impetuous and radical. After a Pacific tsunami caused a meltdown at Japan's Fukushima plant in 2011, she announced an end to Germany's nuclear energy program. She abolished compulsory military service. She arranged the vote that passed gay marriage. At the height of the Syrian war in 2015, she announced that Germany would welcome refugees, setting off a march towards Europe from all corners of the Muslim world. That has changed her country and embittered her electorate. Every political force that tried to form a coalition with Merkel suffered for it, from the Free Democratic party after 2009 to the Social Democrats now.

But even when Merkel's policymaking made her less popular at home and abroad, it made her a heroine to the politicians, bureaucrats, and journalists eager to melt the nations of Europe into an ever-closer European Union. Since Germany is Europe's biggest and most stable economy, Merkel had the authority to dictate Europe's economic rules in a time of crisis. She opted, against the counsel of her advisers, to force bankrupt Greece to stay in the continent's common currency, the euro—almost surely to Greece's detriment. She negotiated a multibillion-dollar payment to Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan to dam the flow of refugees that Syria and her own rhetoric had set in motion. Merkel is centrist only in the sense that anything wished by the builders of the E.U. becomes "centrist" by definition.

In retrospect, Merkel's move seems cynical and destabilizing. She exploited a weakness that had developed in the West German political system in the years before the two Germanies were reunified in 1990. Rather like a convalescing patient who grows addicted to his painkiller prescription, West Germany after World War II formed certain habits under American occupation and influence that made political life more manageable. One was the unwritten rule that there would be no parties more conservative than Union (the Christian Democratic Union and the Bavarian CSU). This made Germany among the *least* radical political cultures in the West. The conservative Franz Josef Strauss, who dominated Bavaria from the 1960s through the 1980s and nearly became chancellor himself, turned this rule into a semi-constitutional formula: "To the right of the Union there can be no democratically legitimate force." As Strauss understood things, it was incumbent on the Union to be true to democratic conservatism, because this assembly of businessmen and churchgoers was the only conservative party Germany was going to get.

Merkel took Strauss's motto in the opposite sense. Raised in Communist East Germany, she had no deep allegiance to the CDU's (and West Germany's) constitutional culture. She

sought votes among Social Democrats and Greens by duplicating their policies. Gay marriage, no nukes, ending the draft, open borders . . . these were not the positions of her own party but of its traditional opponents. The taboo on parties to the right of the CDU would protect her conservative flank from electoral competition. It was elegantly Machiavellian and tactically sophisticated, rather like rushing the fullbacks up in soccer to pull an attacker offside.

But Merkel would reap great benefit from stealing her opposition's clothes only until other political actors—and the German political culture—adjusted. That adjustment has happened over the past half-decade. The Alternative for Germany party (AfD) arose to protest Merkel's plans for the euro rescue. It later became a vehicle for protesting her opening Germany's borders to Middle Eastern migrants. With the Hesse and Bavaria elections, the AfD took seats in the last two state parliaments in which it had been unrepresented. Other things are going on, too. The Left party has risen from the ashes of East German communism to gain a following in the western part of the country. The Greens are on the verge of ousting Social Democrats as the number-two party. Populist politicians, promising to protect their citizens from sharing the burden of Merkel's invitation to migrants, have been elected across Eastern Europe.

Her legacy is a varied and important one. You wouldn't call it a centrist one. ♦

COMMENT ♦ FRED BARNES

Divided we stand: Expect more vicious partisan battles ahead

The polarization of American politics has done its work and we now have an especially ugly example of where it leads. I'm referring to the fight over the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh as a justice of the Supreme Court.

But the partisan fisticuffs, as nasty and unethical as they were, represent only half of the awfulness of the episode. The other half was provided by the gang-like conduct of Democrats, the left, and the mainstream media toward a single individual, Kavanaugh.

The anti-Kavanaugh crowd isn't solely to blame. The party system played a part. It doesn't require the manner in which the nominee was treated, but it certainly allows it and even encourages it. Chances are a Kavanaugh-like ambush will happen again.

Republicans? They were not the perpetrators, but I suspect they're capable of treating a Supreme Court nominee of a Democratic president in a cruel and disrespectful fashion. They were respectful of Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan, the last two Democratic nominees, as Democrats generally were toward GOP nominee Neil Gorsuch.

According to one recent academic account, 'Political polarization is no longer just about policy differences but now shapes how partisans understand each other as human beings.'

Perhaps Republicans will be as respectful to the next Democratic nominee as they were to Sotomayor and Kagan, but the system isn't likely to be any more kind. The parties are sharply divided along ideological lines. Liberals are Democrats, conservatives are Republicans, and they are poised for political combat.

"[P]arties have few short-term incentives to cooperate in policymaking," write Stanford political science professors David Brady and Bruce Cain in "Are Our Parties Realigning?" in the fall issue of *National Affairs*. They shun compromise. Kavanaugh was confirmed, but only one Democratic senator, Joe Manchin, voted for him.

Why the divide? A major factor is the parties are tied in political strength, in what Brady and Cain call "rough parity." And "as long as both parties have a shot at majority status, bipartisan cooperation is less likely to emerge. Thus, we have arrived at a new equilibrium where party parity divides citizens, ties up the Congress, and gives us Trump as president."

Brady and Cain note three other significant consequences: "partisans of each party misperceiving those of the other; presidents who are dividers, not unifiers; and very close elections." They did not discuss the Kavanaugh case in their essay.

They cite a Pew poll in 2016 that "found that a majority of Republicans considered Democrats to be closed-minded, while large pluralities of Republicans said Democrats were immoral, lazy, dishonest, and unintelligent. Democrats reciprocated by holding the same view of Republicans: closed-minded, dishonest, immoral, unintelligent, and lazy."

It gets worse. Among the "politically engaged members of both parties" the views are "even more negative. . . . Political polarization is no longer just about policy differences but now shapes how partisans understand each other as human beings."

This was clear in the conduct of anti-Kavanaugh protesters. They screamed and yelled during the nominee's confirmation hearing, harassed lawmakers in the Capitol, confronted Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell at a

Louisville restaurant, and drove GOP senator Ted Cruz and his wife out of a Washington eating establishment.

President Trump is hardly a uniter. He likes to punch back at critics and political foes. He mauls the press verbally. He uses Twitter to take on opponents from anywhere in the world. He criticizes Republican leaders with whom he works or whom he has put in office. No one is off limits, even foreign allies, at the least the nominal allies.

The president is divisive inside the GOP, according to polling by YouGov of 5,000 Americans in 17 separate surveys since 2015. His primary voters, compared with Republicans who voted for other primary candidates, are "older, whiter, less well-educated, have lower incomes, and are disproportionately from the Southern, border, and Midwestern states."

That's not all. Trump supporters are, "on average, angrier about politics, more likely to believe that many in the government are crooks, and more dissatisfied with government," Brady and Cain write.

More important than specific issue differences is the degree to which Trump Republicans and other Republicans split on the president himself.

Eight months after Trump's inauguration, his early backers liked him more than other Republicans did by a better than three-to-one margin. Brady and Cain believe Republican women who voted for Trump over Hillary in 2016 but don't like him now are crucial to his success in 2020.

But there's another way of looking at Trump. He's adjusted to the new party system. He loathes his political adversaries, often "misperceiving" them. He's a divider. He's shown he can win a close election. Sounds like Trump fits the moment perfectly. ♦

COMMENT ♦ PHILIP TERZIAN

Is there really nothing we can do about mass shootings?

The shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue—11 dead, 6 wounded—was especially shocking: It was the most lethal attack on Jews in American history. At the same it reminded us how disconcertingly commonplace mass violence has become. In February, 17 people were gunned down at a high school in Florida, and in May, 10 people were shot to death at a high school in Texas. A year ago, 58 people at an outdoor concert in Las Vegas were killed, and a few weeks later, 26 congregants at a church in Texas were shot to death.

In the past, such events have been followed by a national argument about guns and gun control. In recent years there have been some state and federal measures designed to ban certain weapons from private ownership and to raise obstacles to the purchase of guns. But the evidence suggests that, whatever their intent, these measures have not succeeded in reducing gun crime, much less the sort of atrocity that occurred in Pittsburgh. Indeed, gun violence seems especially lethal in places (Chicago most notably) where gun laws are most restrictive.

Since the Pittsburgh horror, however, the gun-control argument has been comparatively muted. Part of this may be recognition among advocates that the cause isn't going anywhere anytime soon. The other reason is strictly political: It has become common practice, on the political left at any rate, to shift the blame for such incidents to President Trump. The fact that the victims in Pittsburgh were deliberately targeted because they were Jews—in a manner reminiscent of the shooting deaths of nine black churchgoers in Charleston (2015)—makes such arguments irresistible: Trump is regarded by his adversaries as, ipso facto, a racial and religious bigot and public advocate of violence.

The fact that Trump's daughter and son-in-law are Jewish or that the most violent rhetoric in American politics tends to emanate from the left makes no difference. The same claims, under similar circumstances, were made about Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush and most modern Republican presidents.

It's a debate no one can win. Blaming Trump for the shooting death of worshipers at a synagogue won't dissuade admirers, and defending Trump against a politicized libel won't have much effect on critics.

It is, at any rate, a debate that no one can win. Blaming Trump for the shooting death of worshipers at a synagogue won't dissuade admirers, and defending Trump against a politicized libel won't have much effect on critics. In the aftermath of Pittsburgh, the only common ground seems to have been the obvious sentiment that the anti-Semitism that inspired the gunman is abhorrent to Americans and that "this evil must end," in the words of Vice President Mike Pence.

The truth, however, is that nearly everybody understands that "this evil"—and by that I mean mass shootings—is *not* likely to end, either by way

of federal legislation or by replacing the current occupant of the White House. There is, however, one approach to this national dilemma that, in due course, might begin to reverse the gathering trend. May I offer a modest suggestion?

Religious/political terrorism has been the likely cause of a handful of recent episodes, most notably the murder of 13 people at Fort Hood, Texas (2009), and the shooting deaths of 14 others at a social-services center in San Bernardino (2015). But a common thread running through most lethal incidents is mental illness. And by that I do not mean the freedom of psychotics to purchase guns but the fact that so many of them—deranged, incapacitated, violent, delusional, menacing—are free to roam, and in many cases reside on, America's streets.

Ponder the mug shots, or postmortem case histories, of the great majority of mass shooters in recent decades, and you don't need professional medical training to recognize them as insane. This is not to say that all psychotics are violent or potentially dangerous; obviously, most are not. And it is certainly true that the modern revolution in psychotropic drugs has allowed untold numbers of sufferers who would otherwise have led tortured lives to approach a semblance of normality.

Unfortunately, the benefits of therapy and routine medication are not available to all. And to the extent that mental equilibrium is dependent on the capacity of patients to seek regular treatment—or enjoy the luxury of concerned families or support networks—a disturbing number of people fall through the cracks. Any resident of any American city encounters them regularly on the sidewalk or in subway stations or parks, sleeping in daytime, occasionally malnourished, usually threadbare, freezing in wintertime, unwashed and malodorous, occasionally violent.

No doubt there are homeless people down on their luck or victims of economic dislocation. But like their brooding, obsessive brethren in the basements of our parallel universe, they are largely mentally ill—and as is often the case, unintended victims of a well-intentioned reform.

Deinstitutionalization, the awkward term for the gradual dismemberment of the nation's patchwork system of state and municipal psychiatric hospitals, began as a humane reaction to the parlous state of public mental hospitals, which, like prisons and urban school systems, had grown overcrowded, underfunded, and chronically dangerous.

What began as a series of corrective measures, however, was swiftly superseded by a doctrinaire form of civil libertarianism. Vagrancy laws disappeared from the statute books, or were no longer enforced, and the process by which sick, endangered, or violent people could be involuntarily committed for observation and treatment—whether by families, courts, or emergency rooms—became almost impenetrable.

The movement was greatly accelerated by passage of the Community Mental Health Act of 1963, a signature achievement of the Kennedy administration that promised considerably more than it ever delivered. And with disastrous consequences: The intent of the bill was to replace the big, bad state hospitals with thousands of smaller, community-based "mental health centers" to which patients could commute for periodic medication and therapy.

The problem, of course, is that the signature achievements of Kennedy's successor Lyndon Johnson—the War on Poverty and the Vietnam war—drained the supply of available funds for community centers along with any mechanism ensuring that patients get routine treatment. Successive closures of state hospitals, along with the failure to construct most of the proposed community-based centers, effectively stranded America's mentally ill. The fact that the ultimate failure of the Community Mental Health Act coincided, in the late 1970s and early '80s, with the explosion in America's homeless population was no coincidence, but cause and effect.

To what extent violence, and especially mass shootings, can be contained or cured is an open question: Social pathologies and cultural trends can be inexorable, and legislation is susceptible to unintended consequences (see above). Nor can we ever really predict whether the problem is destined to intensify, as seems to be happening, or may fluctuate as cultural trends tend to do. Blaming the actions of insane individuals on successive politicians is largely politics and unlikely to yield results.

Still, it seems self-evident that the highway to Pittsburgh does have an exit ramp: We need to reconsider the inchoate system by which we determine what people are genuine dangers to themselves and to their fellow citizens, how to discern such dangers, and what to do about it. The old state hospitals were not nice places, and new ones aren't guaranteed to be better. But living in a medicated, insulated state is preferable to self-inflicted torture on the street—and safer for the rest of us.

In a society preoccupied with rights and privileges it will not be easy to balance constitutional requirements with demands for public safety, respond to warning signs as well as overt acts, or act coercively at all. New approaches, new laws, and new institutions won't emerge overnight. No system is perfect and no cure is absolute.

But nothing thus far—blaming Trump, conducting vigils, debating the differences between one gun and another—has had much discernible effect on a problem that stares at us vacantly, and hauntingly, from the mug shots of killers. ♦

Worth Repeating

from ***WeeklyStandard.com:***

'Using cybersecurity fears as a motivation to subsidize nuclear and coal is clearly an example of fishing for a reason to help a politically favored sector of the economy.'

—Ike Brannon, 'Is Cybersecurity a Good Reason to Subsidize Coal and Nuclear Energy?'

A Conspiracy So Vastly Inept

The plot to get Mueller.

BY JOHN MCCORMACK

The Holiday Inn in Rosslyn, Virginia, is a nondescript building that easily blends into the dull neighborhood of offices just outside of Washington. But for an hour on Thursday, November 1, the budget hotel felt like a dreamworld—an alternative universe of alternative facts.

D.C. lobbyist and conspiracy theorist Jack Burkman was joined at a press conference by Jacob Wohl, a 20-year-old blogger for the right-wing, facts-optional website *Gateway Pundit*, to allege that special counsel Robert Mueller had raped a woman in 2010.

Documents distributed to a couple dozen reporters in attendance named a woman who allegedly claims she was raped "on or about August 2, 2010," at the St. Regis hotel in New York City.

There were a few problems.

The woman—identified in the documents as Carolyne Cass—had flown from Los Angeles to Washington to attend the press conference but then became too scared to do so and boarded a flight to another city, according to Wohl. He described Cass as a 34-year-old fashion designer from Los Angeles who attended the Art Institute of Dallas and "Parsons at NYU" (Parsons is actually at the New School). "Carolyne Cass attended Parsons from 2006 to 2010 but did not earn a degree," a Parsons spokeswoman told THE WEEKLY STANDARD. No media outlet was able to reach Cass by the time this story went to press, and Wohl declined to confirm her phone number. Burkman insisted Cass would speak publicly at a "future date very soon."

Nevertheless, even in the absence of the alleged victim, Wohl and Burkman persisted with their press conference. The date given in the Wohl documents—"on or about August 2, 2010"—was also problematic. As the *Washington Post* reported on August 3, 2010:

> Robert Mueller [was spotted] dutifully doing his jury duty in D.C. Superior Court on Monday. The FBI director (with an ear-pieced security guy in tow) made it all the way into the jury box for voir dire on a gun-possession case and got a warm smile from the judge . . . but he was quickly excused (the "work in law enforcement?" question seemed to do it).

"Was [Mueller] only at jury duty?" Wohl asked at the press conference. "Sometimes people go to jury duty, but they're also somewhere else." Wohl and Burkman pointed out that Mueller, according to an August 6, 2010, press release on the FBI's website, had spoken at a cybersecurity conference in New York, which lasted from August 2 to August 5. The press release didn't specify the date of Mueller's speech. He delivered it on August 5.

Burkman, left, and Wohl in Rosslyn, November 1

JOHN MIDDLEBROOK / CAL SPORT MEDIA / NEWSCOM

Burkman and Wohl's story gave every appearance of being a farce—a sick one, to be sure—in the days leading up to the press conference. On October 30, the *Atlantic*'s Natasha Bertrand reported that journalists had received an email from a "Lorraine Parsons" alleging she had been offered money to say Mueller had assaulted her.

No one has been able to confirm whether Parsons is a real person. But a woman named Jennifer Taub, a Vermont law professor, *had* received an email, apparently from a firm calling itself "Surefire Intelligence," offering money to Taub to discuss her "encounters" with Mueller. The *Atlantic*'s Bertrand reported: "Taub told me she has never had any encounters with Mueller, though she does appear on CNN at times as an expert commentator on the Mueller probe."

Meanwhile, the special counsel's office issued a rare statement: "When we learned last week of allegations that women were offered money to make false claims about the Special Counsel, we immediately referred the matter to the FBI for investigation."

Wohl at that point denied any connection to Surefire Intelligence. "I don't have any involvement in any investigations of any kind," he told NBC News. Then reporters discovered that a number of photos of the Surefire Intelligence team were stock photos. One image was of Israeli supermodel Bar Refaeli. Another darkened image, when brightened, turned out to be of Wohl himself. And the phone number for Surefire Intelligence, NBC discovered, went to a voicemail message directing callers to a phone number that belongs to Wohl's mother.

At the Rosslyn press conference, Wohl copped to being behind Surefire Intelligence. He said he never contacted Taub or a "Lorraine Parsons." He had lied about Surefire two days earlier because his investigation was "still in flux." The totality of that investigation, according to documents provided to reporters on November 1,

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was the alleged statement of Carolyne Cass, which had been published by *Gateway Pundit* on October 30 but then quickly taken down. (In a note that replaced the documents, *Gateway Pundit*'s Jim Hoft announced that he would be investigating Wohl. Later in the week, Hoft would write: "The Gateway Pundit suspended our relationship with Jacob. We need to collect more information on this explosive situation. We are not afraid to take chances as you well know but we want to also be careful and accurate.")

At the press conference, Burkman denied that he "or Jacob or others paid or attempted to pay some woman for coming forward. None of this is true." But back in May, Burkman held another press conference at the same Holiday Inn. "URGENT MEDIA ALERT: Jack Burkman joins Larry Klayman to offer major reward for information regarding Mueller during joint press conference," read the press release.

The text of the email said:

> Jack Burkman, a D.C.-based lobbyist and lawyer, will be joined by Larry Klayman on May 11th for a joint press conference announcing a reward for evidence of bias or wrongdoing on behalf of Robert Mueller, special counsel investigator for the Justice Department's probe into potential Trump-Russia collusion.
>
> The reward will be for any whistleblower with credible evidence willing to come forward.
>
> "The special counsel has a lot of unchecked power and abilities," said Burkman. "In such a politically charged case, we need to be sure there's no nefarious underpinnings happening within the investigation. This isn't about partisanship. Justice is a matter of objectivity, not political views."

Before the November 1 press conference, I asked Burkman about his May 11 offer of a reward "for evidence of bias or wrongdoing on behalf of Robert Mueller."

"Well, actually it was from within the FBI—we were looking for whistleblowers within the FBI. That has nothing to do with this. And we never got any whistleblowers," Burkman said. When I asked him if it would be wrong to offer a woman money to discuss allegations of wrongdoing against Mueller, Burkman said: "I don't know about the legalisms of it. I think it'd be morally wrong. You'd probably violate your bar oath. And we never did, I would think."

Burkman has had an especially interesting evolution during Donald Trump's campaign and presidency. In July 2016, shortly before the Republican convention, Burkman sent out a press release announcing that he would be raising $1 million for a "last ditch anti-Trump effort" to "cause a coup at the convention." It failed. Burkman then escalated his anti-Trump efforts, announcing by press release on July 28, 2016, that Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort was compromised by his close ties to Vladimir Putin—and had probably compromised Trump, too. "Look, he lobbied for pro-Russian interests for years. Don't you think he is using them to benefit his new client, Donald Trump?" Burkman said.

Less than a year into the Trump administration, Burkman flipped. In December 2017, he announced that he'd be raising money for the "Defending American Legal Rights Fund," a legal defense fund he'd set up to help "accused Americans defend themselves against accusations and charges that the Trump campaign played a deliberate role in working with outside forces to secure the election victory of President Donald Trump."

The first fundraiser, again held at the Rosslyn Holiday Inn, on December 19, 2017, would benefit Manafort's chief deputy, Rick Gates. A month later, Burkman compared the judge hearing Gates's case, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson, to Nazis: "Is this Germany, 1943?" Burkman would later announce a fundraiser for Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security adviser, as part of the "Defending American Legal Rights Fund" effort.

Burkman is best known, to the extent he is known at all, as a driving force behind the evidence-free conspiracy theory that Seth Rich, a former staffer at the Democratic National Committee, was murdered by nefarious political actors. The conspiracy, promoted by stalwart defenders of President Trump, held that Rich was the likely source of Democrats' emails provided to WikiLeaks and that he was killed to keep him from talking. Burkman claims that his crucial work on the Seth Rich case resulted in Burkman's being shot twice and run over by an SUV. "It takes more than a few bullets to stop me," he said in one press release.

When I asked Wohl about Burkman's May 11 press conference, he told me he was "not familiar" with it. "No money's been offered to anyone," he said, adding, "I'm a big fan of The Weekly Standard, so I'll make sure to call on you. You guys aren't fake news."

Wohl claims Cass first contacted Surefire Intelligence about an "estate matter" involving a "dishonest accountant" in February 2018. So I asked him at the press conference how Cass contacted Surefire when Surefire didn't have a website at the time. "She found me over the Internet," Wohl replied. "It was either Angie's List or Craigslist."

Wohl says that Cass contacted him again around October 1, after seeing for the first time a photo of Mueller, who was named special counsel in May 2017. Why hadn't Cass previously seen a photo of one of the most famous men in the news in the previous 15 months? According to Wohl, she's not political and doesn't watch the news. "She doesn't even own a TV," he told me after the press conference.

As of press time, Wohl hadn't yet provided *TWS* with any evidence he had taken out a Craigslist or Angie's List ad in early 2018. But he was adamant that, out of 330 million people in the United States, one of the few people who saw his Internet ad and contacted him was a woman who would realize for the first time in September 2018 that Robert Mueller was her alleged rapist. What are the odds?

Just before the press conference ended, one attendee asked Burkman and Wohl: "Are you both prepared for federal prison?"

"Ah, no, we are not," Burkman replied. ♦

Spicy Politics

Do customers resist businesses that #Resist?

BY ALICE B. LLOYD

Was Michael Jordan wrong? In 1990, the basketball great refused—per one oft-quoted biography—to endorse North Carolina senator Jesse Helms's Democratic opponent because "Republicans buy sneakers too." Whether he actually said them or not, these four words reigned until recently as the reason smart businesses and entertainers steer clear of politics. Why alienate half your audience? Like a lot of other things, that seems to have changed in the Trump era.

This fall, Nike itself ran a very contra-Jordan campaign featuring former San Francisco 49er Colin Kaepernick, the first NFL player to "take a knee" in 2016. Patagonia's founder announced a public mission to combat Trumpian evil. Ben & Jerry's, just this week, doubled down on its commitment to polarizing politics with yet another new ice cream flavor: "Pecan Resist," an homage to the Women's March. But it's not just high-profile firms going down this path: The vociferous anti-Trump turn of the nation's largest privately held purveyor of spice blends took some customers by surprise in the aftermath of the 2016 election.

Bill Penzey Jr. of Penzeys Spices—a Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, company with about 70 stores in 30 states and an online mail-order business—emailed customers in the week after Trump's election the first of hundreds of such messages to come. "The open embrace of racism by the Republican Party in this election is now unleashing a wave of ugliness unseen in this country for decades," he wrote. Penzey often addresses Trump voters directly in his missives. "You just voted for an openly racist candidate for the presidency of the United States of America," he wrote in another postelection email. The messages simultaneously post to the company's Facebook page, where traffic has blossomed with commenters complaining about his bias and promising to boycott the brand. But more often, they praise his stances, most of which are pegged to promotions. The letters all end with a radio readout-style segue to the latest special offer. A late October message telling Trump supporters "please wake up, your country needs you," ended with an offer of a couple of chili powders, "free with just a $5 purchase." They're for a second-day reheated chili on Election Day, Penzey reasoned—so all those non-Trump-supporters heading to the polls won't have to think about cooking.

A sample message from Penzeys

Foot traffic to his brick-and-mortar stores multiplies with Penzey's politically themed giveaways. In Oregon, they're "swamped," according to one employee at Penzeys' Portland store, who asked not to be named for fear she'd lose her job. New customers, resistance-niks all, don't tend to come to the store for culinary inspiration, the Portland employee tells me. "A lot of them don't know how to cook!" she says, her voice tinged with disappointment, "but they do support Bill's politics." Ninety percent of the customers she meets these days come buy the blends to support Penzey's mission to "heal the world." And they come knowing they'll leave the store with a little something extra—all the better to give to an unwitting conservative cousin as a gift, as one Facebook commenter wrote she plans to do this holiday season.

Such subversive family feuding is endemic to the brand. Bill Penzey's sister Patty Erd ran a rival spice blend business, The Spice House, at the time of the 2016 election; she offered a promotion then, too. "My husband and I are very careful to never bring politics or personal opinions into our spice company, they have no business there," Erd wrote, in the days after her brother's initial letter decrying racist Republicans. The promotional code "NOPOLITICS" would secure free shipping, Erd added, for anyone who'd recently found themselves wondering what spice blends have to do with presidential elections. Their sibling rivalry wasn't new: Bill Penzey Sr. opened The Spice House in 1957. Bill Jr. struck out on his own and incorporated Penzeys in 1986, leaving his sister and her husband to take over the family business in 1992—as his competition.

As Penzeys grew from a small mail-order business, Bill Jr.'s personality and politics dominated. In 2005, then the owner of more than two dozen stores, Penzey founded a food magazine with

VIA FACEBOOK

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a social justice bent. *Penzeys One* had a circulation in the tens of thousands—mostly customers—but dedicated each issue to more than recipes: prison reform, immigration policy, environmentalism, gay rights. Then, as now, scaring away conservative customers didn't worry him.

Penzey himself has resisted opportunities to expound on his marketing style. When I pitched him earlier this month, he asked, with all the quivering *terribilità* I'd come to expect as a reader of his intensely heartfelt promotional emails, "Where would the value be in me trying to get you to understand what we are doing when your salary depends on you not understanding it?" (The Spice House's current CEO declined to talk on the record.)

Elsewhere in spice blends, mixing artisanal seasonings with polarizing politics isn't so easy to understand either. Thora Pomicter, founder of the Teeny Tiny Spice Company in Harrisonburg, Virginia, said she couldn't imagine sprinkling partisan outrage into an online marketing campaign for the organic spice blends she sells in 31 states and D.C. "Politics does not have any place in my business," she said, sounding somewhat aghast—and almost alarmingly sane. "I sell *spices*," she emphasized, in case I'd gotten her line of work confused. "That's not a political thing."

Even on the activist cutting edge of the industry, contemporary electoral politics are almost irrelevant. "We're working on a scale of several thousands of years," says Ethan Frisch, a former line cook and pastry chef who founded the spice company Burlap & Barrel: It buys and sell spices straight from farmers in Tanzania, Afghanistan, Guatemala, Turkey, Spain, Egypt, and Indonesia. Frisch and his cofounder Ori Zohar prefer that their fresh take on an ancient commodities trade supersede partisan distractions. "It's a business," Zohar says, "it's not positioning, it's not a proclamation. We want you to buy spices from these farmers that we're building a relationship with—as opposed to using the business as a platform for our positions on this issue and that issue."

Frisch's pet issues are getting around the spice industry's entrenched standards, such as the fixed length of a cinnamon stick, the circumference of a peppercorn, the color of a cardamom pod. None of these restrictions favors farmers, whose livelihoods are dependent on a longstanding network of consolidators and exporters—not to mention the weather and the whims of a volatile market. Nor do the market standards favor flavor, Frisch explains. The market demands a seven-centimeter cinnamon stick, but only so that the sticks fit in those little jars you find in the spice aisle at the supermarket. "Often it winds up being mediocre cinnamon," he says, "because it has to be soft enough, but not too soft, to roll into a nice tight stick before drying." The sweetest and spiciest cinnamons fall outside that

rollable range for a seven-centimeter stick, so most of us never taste them.

Companies like Penzeys don't work directly with single-harvest farmers overseas, of course. "Everybody's buying off of the commodity market," Zohar says, when I ask how Penzeys compares. "He's bringing the stuff in by the ton." While Penzey wields his influence to call for change and critique an unpopular president, within the actual realm of his practical power—the buying and selling of spices—he perpetuates the same old broken system.

But why *wouldn't* he? Sending an email, or thousands of them, costs a lot less than cutting off a supplier. And consumers these days really do prefer brands to take a stand: 66 percent of shoppers expect CEOs to pick sides, publicly, on the major issues of the day, according to a recent survey from Sprout Social. When partisan anxieties have the potential to dictate even the most mundane purchases—a pair of shoes, a fleece vest, a pint of ice cream, or a tiny tin of Vietnamese blend to enliven your leftovers—what better way to build loyalty than ideological pandering? As long as a CEO can safely guess where the majority of his customers lean (here the likes of Patagonia, and even Penzeys, have the gift of relative certainty), political marketing may seem more than worth the risk. The only rule to cashing in on Trump-era outrage is a truism even older than Michael Jordan's: *Know your audience*. ♦

A Tale of Two Blasphemies

It's no longer Voltaire's Europe.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

Blasphemy is not what it used to be in Europe, because Europe is changing its religion. Last week, two cases showed that while Europeans may be acquiring one freedom that Americans take for granted, they are losing another.

On October 25, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) affirmed a 2011 Austrian court decision, which convicted a woman identified as "E.S." of "disparagement of religious precepts" and gave her a choice between paying a 480 euro fine or 60 days in jail. The precepts she had disparaged were not those of Catholicism, the religion to which the vast majority of Austrians nominally adhere, but of Islam.

The next day, 64.85 percent of referendum voters endorsed the Irish government's plan to remove the blasphemy clause from Ireland's constitution. According to the *Irish Times*, four in five voters under the age of 35 were in favor. The over-65s, less enthusiastic about disparaging religious precepts, still voted 52 percent in favor.

The Irish, once among Europe's most fervent Catholics, now have gay marriage, legal abortion, and the right to insult the church. The standing and influence of the church, along with mass attendance and Catholic education, are declining sharply. Like most Europeans, the Irish have floated, in Roger Scruton's phrase, "downstream from Christianity." Their laws are now catching up.

Only in 2009 did Ireland clarify its murky medieval inheritances on blasphemy into a modern statutory definition. As late as 2017, Irish police investigated the British comedian Stephen Fry under the new statute for calling God "capricious," "mean-minded," and an "utter maniac" on television. They dropped the case not because Fry hadn't broken Irish law, but because not enough people had complained.

The Irish, interestingly, are joining only a minority of Europeans when it comes to the right to deride a deity in whom fewer and fewer of them believe. For in many other European states, historic blasphemy laws remain on the books. The French annulled blasphemy laws in 1791, and the English and Welsh in 2008, but the Germans still have blasphemy laws, and so do the Scots and the Northern Irish. The erstwhile Protestants of Scandinavia can say what they like, but the Catholics in Europe's southern and eastern states must watch their tongues.

Blasphemy laws were originally created to bolster a close alliance between the state and the Christian churches, often in formal concert with establishment clauses. Today, with Islamist activism on the rise in Europe, a revival of the classic type of blasphemy cases is once again rendering these laws a danger to free speech and intellectual inquiry—now with the blessing of the ECHR, the conscience of the Council of Europe.

E.S., the Austrian woman convicted of blasphemy, had run seminars on Islam for the hard-right Freedom party. At one seminar, she described the *hadith* that Muhammad married his third wife Aisha when she was 6 and consummated this child marriage when she was 9 and he was in his early 50s. "What do you call that?" E.S. asked. "What do we call it, if it is not pedophilia?"

The ECHR, in a ruling that should strike fear into parents across Europe, endorsed the Austrian court's finding that there is a "distinction between child marriages and pedophilia." E.S., the ECHR wrote, had "merely sought to defame [Muhammad], without providing evidence that his primary sexual interest in Aisha had been her not yet having reached puberty or that his other wives or concubines had been

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similarly young" and without mentioning that "the marriage with Aisha had continued until the Prophet's death, when she had already turned eighteen and had therefore passed the age of puberty."

Pro-repeal advocates in Dublin, October 18

The ECHR concluded that E.S.'s remarks were

> capable of arousing justified indignation; specifically, they had not been made in an objective manner contributing to a debate of public interest . . . but could only have be understood as having been aimed at demonstrating that Muhammad was not worthy of worship.

E.S. was a nonspecialist running seminars for a party whose roots lie in postwar fascism and whose recent success owes much to anti-Muslim populism. Clearly, E.S. felt that Muhammad was not a worthy subject of worship.

That was E.S.'s opinion, just as it was Voltaire's opinion that Christianity is an "infamy" that must be "erased" and just as it was Nietzsche's opinion that Jesus is not a worthy subject of worship. Voltaire's and Nietzsche's source materials wouldn't meet the "objective" criteria of the modern academy or court of law either. E.S., like Voltaire and Nietzsche, had formed an opinion about something that is said to have occurred in the past and was sharing it in a civil manner—a manner much more civil and informed than, say, that of the Monty Python excursion into the Jewish origins of Christianity, *Life of Brian*.

The objective facts that shaped the ECHR ruling have nothing to do with the early history of Islam or the doctrinal standing of a *hadith*. They have everything to do with an illiberal interaction between a legal hangover from the Middle Ages and the shifting religious demography of Europe. The latter is a "debate of public interest" in Europe, but it is a debate that Europe's political class, and especially its supranational political class, would prefer that the public not enter.

In some western and northern European cities, more citizens now attend mosque on a Friday than church on a Sunday. In practice, in the demography of native births and immigration, and in activist confidence in the public square and courts, Islam is now the growing edge of European religion. So it should not surprise that Muslim activists are invoking semi-dormant European laws like Article 10 of the Austrian code, which intends to prevent disorder by "safeguarding religious peace and protecting religious feelings."

But should it be the state's task to protect "religious feelings" against contemporary opinion, especially when the feelings are held by a minority and the opinion seems reasonable, albeit ahistorical, to the majority? Are academic historians expected to refrain from publishing anything that might contradict Islamic doctrine? And who here is really threatening to break the religious peace if they don't get their way?

Debates on free speech inevitably invoke a quotation from Voltaire: "I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." But Voltaire never said this. This line is a summary of his attitude from a 1906 book, *The Friends of Voltaire*. Europe's traditions of free speech are neither as old nor secure as those of the United States. In many countries, they are legacies of 1945 and 1989. The survival of blasphemy laws means that they rest on narrower legal foundations.

After the ECHR ruling, the status of free speech in Europe on matters of religion is conditional upon which religion you are discussing and which state you are discussing it in. You are allowed to say that to contemporary sensibilities, the burning at the stake in 1328 of Adam Duff O'Toole for heresy and blasphemy was a disgusting barbarism of which any thinking Englishman should be ashamed. You can get away with saying that to contemporary sensibilities, some of the laws in Leviticus and Deuteronomy are vindictive, sexist, homophobic, and cruel to animals. You will, however, face the law if you apply your contemporary sensibilities to the history of Islam.

If blasphemy law is bad law, its revival will ensure worse, to an extent not seen in Europe in centuries. Europeans should annul their antique blasphemy laws to preempt abuse by a sectarian minority. The alternative, as evinced by Europe's past and recent history with blasphemy laws, is the curtailment of expression, inquiry, and even physical liberty. But with the ever-present veto of Islamist violence in the air, and the Council of Europe's purported defender of human rights deferring to Muslim sensitivities, who will dare to be a friend of Voltaire in Europe today? ♦

CLODAGH KILCOYNE / REUTERS / NEWSCOM

The Making of a Martyr

On the interment of Matthew Shepard at the National Cathedral

By Christine Rosen

A little before 9 A.M. on a cool, gray day in Washington, a long line of people stretches outside the doors of the National Cathedral. They are waiting for a public memorial service for Matthew Shepard to begin. Twenty years after he died, he will finally be buried here, alongside some of America's most notable figures.

A few elaborately dressed members of the D.C. chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, which describes itself as a "leading-edge order of Queer nuns" (motto: "Go forth and sin some more!") are among the attendees. "We came out today to be a visual reminder to our community that, yes, something horrible happened, but look at all the good that can come of it," one "sister" says. "It's a momentous occasion."

Inside, the mood is more subdued, although one woman wanders through the crowd asking random people, "May I give you a hug?" The voices of the 2,000 or so attendees never rise above a respectful murmur as they find their seats. After a carillon prelude, the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington performs arrangements of John Lennon's "Imagine," U2's "MLK," and a song from *Godspell*. After greetings from the Right Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, the Episcopal bishop of Washington, and the Right Rev. V. Gene Robinson, who the Cathedral notes in its description of the event is "the first openly gay man elected a bishop in The Episcopal Church," the service follows a traditional path, with a call to worship, hymns, prayers, readings, and a homily delivered by Robinson.

Followed by Shepard's parents, Gene Robinson bears Matthew Shepard's ashes.

ANDREW CABALLERO-REYNOLDS / AFP / GETTY

Matthew Shepard was a 21-year-old college student when he was severely beaten and left to die by two men in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1998. Almost immediately the murder became international news, with claims the killing was a vicious hate crime because Shepard was gay. His killers eventually received two consecutive life sentences each. Shepard became a symbol of victimhood, a martyr to Americans' supposed rampant homophobia. Although the Shepard family held a funeral for him after his death, they never buried Shepard's cremated remains. As they relayed in several interviews with the media recently, including the *Washington Post*, they feared that if they chose a final resting place in Wyoming, his grave might be desecrated by anti-gay vandals.

"The family initially approached Washington National Cathedral expressing their interest in Matthew's remains being interred at the Cathedral. We were honored and humbled by this request," the Very Rev. Randolph Marshall Hollerith, dean of Washington National Cathedral, says via email when I ask about the decision to make the cathedral Shepard's final resting place. The cathedral recognizes "the national significance that his passing has had in reminding us all of our Baptismal Covenant to 'respect the dignity of every human being,'" he says, "and to push back against anti-LGBT bigotry and violence," although he also acknowledges, "My starting point was to think as a pastor who saw a family that was grieving the loss of their son."

Interment at National Cathedral is an honor only a handful of Americans have ever been granted (or, in the early days of the cathedral, when cash was scarce, purchased); among those interred there are Helen Keller, Admiral George Dewey, and Cordell Hull, all people who devoted their lives to public service. When I ask the dean

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why Shepard, who had not left a similar legacy of civic or military service at the time of his death, was given this honor, he points to the death itself and the meaning that has been attributed to it: "Matthew's life was far too short, but his legacy is one that helped inspire our nation to start confronting its treatment of the LGBT community. His death shocked the nation and touched the lives of many in profound ways."

Which is precisely the point. Shepard's prominent resting place at the cathedral is the result of the fact that his death is understood to have come at the hands of bigots. And not just that, but bigots formed by the larger society in which they moved and acted. In the intervening years, a great deal of artistic and charitable energy has been expended in his name to fight such bigotry. The memorial service featured several performances by Conspirare, a vocal group founded by Craig Hella Johnson, whose major work is *Considering Matthew Shepard*, a composition that intermingles the "soulful texts" of poets such as Hildegard of Bingen and Rumi with snippets of Shepard's journal entries. Shepard's mother Judy wrote a book about her son, and she and her husband started the Matthew Shepard Foundation, which supports and advocates for LGBTQ youth. The foundation also supports performances of *The Laramie Project*, originally created by the Tectonic Theater Project in New York and today, according to the foundation, "one of the most frequently performed plays in America." Shepard was the subject, too, of a 2002 made-for-television movie, *The Matthew Shepard Story*, starring Sam Waterston and Stockard Channing, who won an Emmy for her portrayal of Judy Shepard. And the Shepard family recently donated some of Matthew's belongings to the Smithsonian, where they will be "preserved for future generations."

But there is a competing narrative about Shepard's life, one grounded in facts rather than perceptions and symbolism, and one the LGBTQ community has, for the most part, refused to acknowledge. In 2004, ABC News aired a lengthy report reassessing the claim that Shepard's murder was a hate crime. Reporters interviewed Shepard's killers as well as many of the investigators and witnesses in Laramie. "Matthew Shepard's sexual preference or sexual orientation certainly wasn't the motive in the homicide," former Laramie police detective Ben Fritzen (one of the lead investigators on the case) told ABC. "What it came down to really is drugs and money and two punks that were out looking for it."

Likewise, journalist Stephen Jimenez. He went to Laramie intending to write a screenplay based on Shepard's life. He came away 13 years later with a very different story to tell from the one that had dominated the media narrative. Using recently unsealed court records and interviews with locals, Jimenez detailed Shepard's drug problems and examined many leads that had not been pursued by law enforcement during the pursuit of the murderers. People who knew Shepard spoke frankly to Jimenez about the likelihood that Shepard knew one of his assailants; many also said that it was impossible to separate the drug culture in which Shepard was enmeshed from the homophobia of his assailants as a definitive cause for the murder. The real history of Shepard, Jimenez argued in *The Book of Matt* (2013), is that he was using drugs, including crystal meth, and he was a well-known denizen of the Laramie party scene, which was rife with criminal activity. "Have we got Matthew Shepard all wrong?" asked a writer for the *Advocate* after reviewing Jimenez's book.

Not surprisingly, many LGBTQ activists denounced the book, as did the Matthew Shepard Foundation, which called it "innuendo." "Jimenez has taken away their angel," JoAnne Wypijewski, who reported on the Shepard murder for the *Nation*, told the *Guardian* "The people shaping the news require a very simple story—they have to be angels and villains."

"He was not perfect," says Hollerith, the dean of the cathedral, "nor is anyone interred at the Cathedral—but his interment here can and should serve as a reminder of the work we still need to do to live up to treating our fellow human beings with the dignity, respect, and compassion that Scripture calls on us to show everyone, regardless of who they are and who they love."

Yet this standard puts progressives like Hollerith in an odd position, in which myth-building and myth-busting proceed along parallel tracks. Today the progressive left is eager to tear down monuments to men of the past who don't conform to today's progressive values. Consider Woodrow Wilson, who is also interred at Washington National Cathedral. His legacy—particularly at Princeton, the university he transformed before leading the nation as president—is being aggressively reassessed. In 2015, the Black Justice League at Princeton staged a student sit-in to protest Wilson's racist views and demanded that the school remove his name and image from the campus—erase him from view, in other words. The *New York Times* endorsed the students' effort in an editorial. Elsewhere, progressives eagerly argue for expunging from the record the names of colonialists like Cecil Rhodes (although they'd like to keep his scholarship money flowing). Bryn Mawr College is scrubbing the name of one of its founders, suffragette M. Carey Thomas, from buildings on campus after her inconvenient views on race were discovered.

In their eagerness to elevate progressive heroes, however, a concerning number of activists are happy to whitewash the unflattering details of their icons' pasts—and

denounce anyone who doesn't toe the line. LGBTQ activists brook no dissent about Shepard. Writing about the interment of his ashes at the cathedral, the *Washington Post* reported, "gay equality activists say [he] can be a prominent symbol and even a pilgrimage destination for the movement." Bishop Gene Robinson, who presided over the interment ceremony, was blunter, telling the *Post*, "movements need symbols. [The gay equality movement has] the triangle, that reminds of what was used to brand us during the Holocaust; the rainbow flag; and we've got Matt Shepard, who became a symbol of how we are targets of violence." He added, "This could be a wonderful place for Matt's ashes to rest, and where people could go and make a kind of pilgrimage."

Orwell famously wrote, "Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent." But identity politics has rendered it impossible for a large swath of people on the left to reckon honestly with the facts of someone's life if that person is designated a progressive hero or victim. As Wypijewski noted in the *Nation* about Shepard, "The murder was so vicious, the aftermath so sensational, that the story first told to explain it became gospel before anyone could measure it against reality." Yet Shepard's unimpeachable status as a symbol perversely robs him of the humanity his supporters claim to want to protect. Complicated lives have a lot to teach us. Think of Bayard Rustin, a crucial figure in the civil rights era who spent most of his adult life in the closet; later, when he came out about his sexuality, he became an advocate for equal rights for gay people.

ED ANDRIESKI / AP

Russell Henderson, left, and Aaron McKinney at their arraignment in Laramie for the murder of Matthew Shepard, October 9, 1998

Shepard's other legacy also offers a more complicated story than is often told. According to the *Advocate*, Barack Obama credited Judy Shepard "for making him 'passionate' about LGBT equality," which led to passage of the 2009 Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Named after Shepard and James Byrd Jr., an African-American man who was killed by two white men, the federal law expanded the definition of hate crimes to include those motivated by gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. It also gave the federal government far greater power to prosecute hate crimes in state and local jurisdictions, usurping local authority in the process.

But as many critics have correctly noted, hate crime laws can have the unintended consequence of exacerbating differences rather than alleviating them. Selecting certain groups for special protections based solely on categories such as race, religion, or sexual orientation might give legislators a pleasing sense of moral superiority, but it does little to deter attacks. James B. Jacobs, a professor at NYU School of Law and author of *Hate Crime: Criminal Law and Identity Politics*, argued in *Time* in 2016, "The hate crime law movement re-criminalizes conduct that is already criminal. In effect, it creates a hierarchy of victims—one based upon the group identities of perpetrators and victims, as long as prosecutors can prove a bias motive. Thus, from the beginning, hate crime laws have simply given us something else to argue about: whose victimization should be punished more severely. They further politicize a law-enforcement and criminal-justice process that does best when it is perceived as being apolitical and even-handed—not a tool of identity politics."

Matthew Shepard was robbed of the chance to live a full life as the result of a brutal crime. His parents should be commended for their decades-long efforts to create something positive after his murder. But sympathy for the Shepards and for their son shouldn't blind us to the ways in which his life is being used to further others' ambitions. It's not a coincidence that one of the most notable responses from the audience during Shepard's interment ceremony came when Gene Robinson used his homily to criticize the current administration and urge attendees, "Go vote!"

"Matt was blind, just like this beautiful house of worship," Dennis Shepard said during his tribute to his son at the service. "He did not see skin color. He did not see religion. He did not see sexual orientation. All he saw was a chance to have another friend."

Unfortunately, the logic of identity politics, whether it is embedded in hate crimes legislation or promulgated from the pulpit, compels the opposite: an approach to the world that views everything through precisely those markers of difference that advocates of tolerance claim to want to eliminate. What they've eliminated instead are the complicated realities of the lives of their own secular saints. ♦

Up from the Grave

The illusory dream of democratic socialism lives again

By Joshua Muravchik

It's back. Not quite 30 years after Robert Heilbroner declared that "the contest between capitalism and socialism is over" and Francis Fukuyama hailed "the end of history," socialism is rising from the grave. Its rebirth began in 2016 when the septuagenarian pied piper Bernie Sanders entranced throngs of youngsters with his call for a "political revolution," announcing himself a "democratic socialist." Rather than pay a price for flaunting the once-taboo S-word, he nearly won the presidential nomination of a party that he had never deigned to join.

Sanders's campaign germinated others, most dramatically that of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a 29-year-old of Puerto Rican background and proud member of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), who upset one of the lions of the House and a kingpin of the New York Democratic machine. She will soon be seated as the youngest female in Congress alongside her sister DSA member Rashida Tlaib of Detroit, who won the Democratic nomination and ran unopposed this fall. Scores of their comrades have been nominated for state and local offices, some of them sure winners.

As the new face of the movement, the magnetic Ocasio-Cortez became an overnight celebrity, making the rounds of the major entertainment as well as talk shows and making herself available for a full-length portrait in the *New Yorker*, which editor David Remnick entrusted to no writer other than himself. The *New York Times* ran eight major pieces on democratic socialism this summer in the news, opinion, magazine, and Sunday Review sections, only one of them critical, topping it off with an interactive feature on the paper's website in which readers could answer a series of questions to help them discover, "Are You a Democratic Socialist?"

The sudden success of "democratic socialists" accords with national public opinion surveys showing higher favorable ratings for socialism than capitalism. The meaning of this is murky since the same samples prefer "free enterprise" to either of these options and also give high approval ratings to "entrepreneurs," but clearly "socialism" is no longer a scare word.

So what, then, is "democratic socialism"? Where does it come from? And, scary or not, is there anything wrong with it?

Although most socialist history has been written elsewhere, "democratic socialism" is predominantly an American coinage. Before Lenin's seizure of power in Russia in 1917 there were never clear theoretical distinctions between the various terms socialists called themselves—socialist, communist, social democrat. Lenin's band was called the Bolsheviks, a faction of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' party before going independent in 1912. With his 1917 triumph, Lenin decreed that henceforth his party would call itself Communist. At this point every socialist party in the world, whatever its name, split between those who embraced Lenin's model and those who rejected it as being too bloody and tyrannical. The former groups called themselves Communist and never again social democrat, while the latter mostly called themselves social democrat and never again communist. (Usually thereafter Communist was spelled with an upper case "C," denoting a formal affiliation with the Communist party. It remained unclear what the term "communist" with a lower case "c" might mean.)

The schism was wide. Over the ensuing decades, the Communists murdered many social democrats, and some social democrats played pivotal roles in the defeat of communism, notably former U.K. foreign minister Ernest Bevin, who first thought up NATO, and former Portuguese prime minister Mário Soares, whose underdog triumph over the Communist party in 1974 was a Cold War turning point. Nonetheless, terminological confusion endured because both sides continued to claim the label "socialist."

When I joined the Socialist party in the 1960s and its youth wing, the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL), the term "democratic socialist" had been favored for some decades, serving primarily to underline the distinction from Communism but also from European social democrats who had, over the years, become too compromising. We democratic socialists would not be content to reform capitalism. Rather, we believed in unalloyed socialism, that is, the elimination of private property in favor of shared ownership of

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"the means of production" and an egalitarian distribution of wealth and income, "to each according to his needs." However, in contrast to Communists, we envisioned achieving this entire momentous transformation by legislation enacted by duly elected officials. Indeed, we prized democracy and argued that all we wanted was more of it; that is, to wrest control of the economy from private hands and entrust it to elected officials.

Having never come near political power, our theories remained pristine. Our European counterparts, whose half measures we disdained, had a different experience. Through the middle of the 20th century, and especially in the decades following World War II, they often secured enough votes to form governments. When unhampered by coalition partners they were free to launch peaceful transitions to socialism.

None exemplified this better than the British Labour party, which was swept to power in a landslide in 1945 by an electorate aching to turn from the rigors of war to the enjoyments of peace. Labour leader Clement Attlee later explained: "Our policy was not a reformed capitalism but progress toward a democratic socialism. . . . [W]e would go ahead as fast as possible." The new government, firm in its conviction that "social justice" "could only be attained by bringing under public ownership and control the main factors in the economic system," set about at once to nationalize banks, mining, aviation, trucking, electricity, gas, and cable and wireless communication.

Notwithstanding socialist theory, which held that eliminating the profit motive would enhance efficiency, within two years several of these nationalized industries found themselves in trouble, forcing the government to begin subsidizing coal, rail, and aviation. The party's left wing was unperturbed and proposed to accelerate the march to socialism by nationalizing additional sectors, specifically insurance, food imports, and much of heavy industry. But this met resistance within the party, where second thoughts were sprouting. When a proposal to nationalize iron and steel was put before the party's executive committee, the representatives of the iron and steel unions, having observed the experience of their fellow unions in coal and other nationalized businesses, voted against it.

Labour began to beat a retreat and was voted from office entirely in 1950. Not that its program was all a failure. On the contrary, it established the National Health Service and other cornerstones of the British welfare state, notably social insurance of all kinds, subsidies for the poor, public housing, and expanded public education.

The lesson of the Attlee episode was clear. Socialist parties could provide or enlarge government benefits. These were popular and, once established, rarely challenged by conservative parties. But they could not successfully change the underlying basis of the economy by replacing private enterprise. Over the next 20 years, Labour and Tories alternated in power, but a consensus seemed to have been reached. It was called Butskellism, an elision of the names of successive chancellors of the exchequer from counterposed parties, Conservative Rab Butler and Labourite Hugh Gaitskell. The Tories would at most nibble at the margins of the welfare state, while Labour would no longer threaten the capitalist goose that laid the golden eggs that paid for it.

A Democratic Socialists of America protest outside a Republican party office in New York City, July 5, 2017

British Labour's experience was not unique. A generation later, it was reprised in France when the Socialist party led by François Mitterrand secured unprecedented domination of parliament as well as the executive. It promised "*la rupture*," a clean break with capitalism in order, as the party platform put it, to "free the workers from age-old oppression and to provide all those who are exploited . . . with the instruments for their own self-emancipation." Upon taking office, the Mitterrand government nationalized industries, expanded public hiring, and hiked wages, pensions, and welfare. Within a year, with output stagnating, inflation raging, and the trade balance collapsing, Mitterrand reversed course. "The aim is to bring about a real reconciliation between the left and the economy," explained Socialist party general secretary Lionel Jospin.

The story has been similar wherever socialist parties have operated within democratic systems, even in Sweden, which is often imagined as a socialist exemplar. In truth, while erecting perhaps the world's lushest welfare state, Sweden's long-ruling Social Democrats long ago abandoned any notion of replacing capitalism.

ERIK MCGREGOR / PACIFIC PRESS / LIGHTROCKET / GETTY

In short, democratic socialism turns out to be a contradiction in terms—not in the sense some free enterprise dogmatists believe, namely, that constraining property rights necessarily means destroying political rights, but rather in an empirical sense. Democratic polities never adopt socialism.

Likewise, democratic polities never adopt the libertarian dream of pure free markets infringed upon only by a "night watchman" state. Apart from Mitterrand, apostles of capitalism like Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, rather than socialists, have mounted the most substantial challenges to Butskellism. They trimmed the welfare state, but they did not attempt to uproot it. The Iron Lady sold off public housing, but she left the National Health Service in place. Reagan slowed the growth of government but did not reverse it.

Thus, everywhere there is democracy we find a mixed economy. Wealth is created mostly in the private sector, and some share of it is taken in taxes for public purposes. Looking at the size of the public sector in democratic countries as a portion of the total economy, we find a surprisingly narrow range. Nowhere does it get much smaller than one-third, as in the United States, Australia, and Japan. Nor does it get much larger than one-half, as in Sweden, Italy, and France.

Mostly, it seems, publics want maximum services and benefits from government but limits on taxes. Democratic countries settle into a level of government with which they grow comfortable and then opt for only slight variations from one administration to the next. The socialist economist Thomas Piketty in his bestseller *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* mused about enlarging the "social state," that is, the public sector, in European countries. He pictured growing it from one-half of national income to three-quarters and concluded, perhaps in disappointment: "A drastic increase in the size of the social state is neither realistic nor desirable, at least for the foreseeable future."

The universal absence of democratic socialism has presented a dilemma to democratic socialists. Much as they don't want to, they find themselves forced to choose. Which do they value more, democracy or socialism? That is, which do they prefer, democratic capitalism or undemocratic socialism?

Recognition of this choice made a cold warrior of me and some of my democratic socialist comrades in the 1960s and 1970s. Still nurturing our dream of democratic socialism, we realized that Communism posed a more malicious threat to all we held dear than did democratic capitalism, and a great part of our energy was directed to fighting it. We not only despised all Communist regimes and movements, we regarded attitudes toward Communism as a litmus test for others. We wanted no truck with anyone who supported dictators and hangmen. Hence we were irretrievably at odds with our peers in the New Left, who almost all idolized the likes of Che Guevara and Ho Chi Minh.

Our intransigence caused a division within the Socialist party and YPSL. The other side of the debate was led by the famous writer Michael Harrington, who objected to our stance because it distanced our party from the mass of New Left activists. Not that Harrington himself countenanced the likes of Che and Ho, but he was eager to collaborate with the legions of young radicals who did.

A formal split ensued. Our side became Social Democrats USA (from which I drifted away in the 1980s and which is today mostly defunct), while Harrington led his group into a merger with a New Left offshoot called the New American Movement, which was radical and eclectically pro-Communist. Historian Ronald Radosh, who was a leader in the NAM, recalls being wooed by Harrington with the words: "We can accept . . . people like yourself even though you might have a different estimate of the Soviet Union." (Radosh had long since left behind his youthful Communist allegiance, but Harrington apparently had not caught up.)

While Harrington never joined his new comrades from NAM in lionizing this or that Communist regime, he, too, nonetheless began to relax his democratic standards. He dedicated a book he wrote about the Third World to Tanzanian dictator Julius Nyerere, who imposed a stifling socialism on his country, in pursuit of which villages were put to the torch in order to drive their inhabitants onto collective farms.

The Harrington/NAM organization was christened Democratic Socialists of America, the group to which Ocasio-Cortez and Tlaib belong and which is at the center of much of the current excitement about "democratic socialism." The label notwithstanding, it is a mélange of socialists, some of them democratic in conviction and some not. The equivocation is manifest not only in attitudes toward undemocratic socialists abroad, for example in DSA's proclamation of "solidarity" with Nicolás Maduro's Venezuela, but also in some of its activities. The group boasts that it mixes electoral campaigns with "direct action," which sometimes means interfering with the political activities of others. One Los Angeles member told the *Washington Post* that he and his comrades had "mess[ed] up [Mayor] Eric Garcetti's inauguration party because he refuses to designate L.A. as a sanctuary city, and . . . block[ed] his car from leaving."

Bernie Sanders, who put the term "democratic socialism" into current use, has his own equivocal record on the subject. According to his extremely sympathetic biographer Harry Jaffe, Sanders started out as a Bolshevik, then joined the YPSL back when I did in 1963, and later sought the vice

presidential nomination of the Socialist Workers party, a Trotskyite outfit that held the Soviet Union to be flawed but preferable to the United States. In other words, his fealty to groups that even used the lingo of democracy was at best intermittent. Today, although he breathes fire about America's shortcomings—"a handful of multibillionaire families," he says, is "succeeding" in "mov[ing] our country toward an oligarchic form of society"—his criticisms of socialist rulers are attenuated, when he criticizes them at all.

As mayor of Burlington, Vermont, in the 1980s, Sanders established sister-city relationships with Yaroslavl in the Soviet Union, where he also chose to honeymoon, and Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, traveling to that country in 1985 for the celebration of the sixth anniversary of the seizure of power by the Sandinista Liberation Front. "No one denies they are making great progress . . . giving power to the poor people, to the working people," he said of the Sandinistas upon his return. In reality, by this time the Sandinistas' record was decried not only by conservative Nicaraguans but also by all the non-Communist liberals and leftists who had allied with the Sandinistas in overthrowing the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza.

While this was back in the 1980s, Sanders never recanted, even after the Sandinistas were voted from power, having been forced into an election by the loss of their superpower patron in Moscow. And in more recent years, Sanders has offered similar praise for the Cuban Communist government, which he applauded for having done "a lot of positive things."

Another anomaly about the putatively democratic convictions of both Sanders and the DSA is that both are antagonistic to Israel. The only foreign policy subject on which the DSA staked out a formal position at its last convention was in endorsing the BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) movement against Israel. Sanders has not endorsed BDS, but of 20 candidates in the 2016 presidential primaries, he took a position more critical of Israel than any other. And during this year's confrontations at Israel's Gaza border, in which the terror group Hamas led thousands of Palestinians, some of them armed, in trying to swarm into Israel, Sanders posted a series of videos on social media blaming only Israel.

The irony is that Israel is not only the sole democracy in its region but stands as history's most successful experiment in democratic socialism. For its first 30 years it was ruled by the Labor party, which created a far-reaching welfare state and imposed rigid controls on private enterprise and hefty luxury taxes for the purpose of social leveling. It also boasted perhaps the world's most powerful labor union, the Histadrut. To top it off, Israel was in part built and its borders staked out by *kibbutzim*, utopian communes devoid of private property whose members were regarded as the country's elite and apotheosis.

All of this apparently is trumped in the eyes of today's democratic socialists by their devotion to the practice of "intersectionality," a modern-day construction in which Palestinians have claimed an honored place as a victim group alongside blacks, Latinos, women, gays, and others, all bonded by their opposition to the oppressors, straight white males. This is a derivative of Marxism, the cardinal innovation of which was to hold that progress depended on "class struggle" in which a sanctified group, the proletariat, would vanquish a retrograde group, the bourgeoisie. In this new version, ethnic and biological categories have supplanted economic classes, an innovation first pioneered by Mussolini. With DSA member Tlaib about to become the first Palestinian-American member of Congress, the DSA is bound to become an increasingly vocal advocate against Israel.

The democratic socialism that captured my imagination when I was 15 was a thing of beauty—a voluntary system in which people would come to see that they could live more happily by cooperating and sharing than by competing. There would be no rich and no poor, no invidious distinctions, no dog-eat-dog. One day after school, our young socialist club met to draw up a blueprint of this new society, but we got nowhere. It should not have made us feel bad; Marx and Engels also failed at this.

They, too, as Michael Harrington wrote books to emphasize, often spoke as democrats, but they never explained how a socialist society would function; nor did they use the term "democratic socialism." That term became important after the murderous example of Communism made socialism repugnant to many. But alas, "democratic" has been used promiscuously by many undemocratic socialists. The Communists have used it themselves, as in the name of the world's most repressive regime, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. With the fall of the Soviet empire, some of the former East Bloc parties changed their names to add the word. Thus the onetime Communist rulers of East Germany became the Party of Democratic Socialism, those of Poland became the Democratic Left Alliance, those of Slovakia, the Party of the Democratic Left.

In the United States today, Sanders and Ocasio-Ortez and Tlaib, like Harrington before them, are no doubt sincere in imagining a socialism that is democratic. But that has never existed, and in its absence they open their arms to socialism without democracy, because the shimmering goal of socialism cannot be given up. Therein lies the final irony. Just as democratic socialism is an illusion, so too is socialism itself the pipe dream that never dies. It promises harmony and abundance; it has always instead produced strife and penury. Little wonder, then, that free people have never chosen it. ♦

Some 'Modernizer'

Is Saudi Arabia's crown prince joining a long line of absolutist rulers in the Middle East?

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

The modernizing rulers of the Arab Middle East date from the early 19th century, with Muhammad Ali of Egypt, who forcibly indentured the peasants of the Nile valley to farm cash crops, and Ahmad Bey of Tunisia, who in 1846 became the first Muslim ruler to abolish slavery. (The bey was the son of a slave, a girl abducted in a Moorish raid on San Pietro.) The allure of such despots has been strong in the West. These pashas were both widely admired in Europe for their efforts to introduce "progress"—more efficient economies, better schools, better armies, elites who spoke European languages—even though their grand ambitions nearly bankrupted their countries. A century later, Baathist, or Renaissance, parties rose and had many Western admirers, too, leading to the surreal situation of a *New York Times* columnist seeing the secular Saddam Hussein, the first Arab *Führer* to use rape as a political tool, as an avatar of social rights for women.

An odd kind of Westernizer: Mohammed bin Salman

The greatest and most admired of the modernizers is, of course, the real cross-cultural trailblazer, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Ottoman general who saved his brethren from European imperialism and a revanchist Greek army. A hard-drinking, intellectually curious, always natty, womanizing dynamo, Atatürk could be lethal with his opponents. His dream of a Western nation-state, divorced from its imperial Islamic identity and the Perso-Arabic script, which framed the faith and Ottoman glory, had a big dose of fascism—as well as a muted hope that Turkey could eventually evolve, under the watchful eye of the army, into something more liberal and democratic. We do not know yet whether Turkey's current, Islamist-friendly president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, will overturn Atatürk's legacy. We do know that decades of forced secularization didn't immunize the Turkish people from the religious appeal of the past.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS), the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia, surely sees himself in this long line of absolutist rulers who pushed their countries towards a better, more prosperous tomorrow (in the prince's case, his "Vision 2030"). The 33-year-old's fears are justified: Despite its vast wealth, Saudi Arabia is probably headed toward insolvency. Its population is too large, too lazy, too young, and too sexually segregated to become competitive with the West or East Asia. Its public sector is bloated, corrupt, and notoriously difficult to motivate. Saudi Arabia's oil and gas aren't going to last forever; though foreign currency accounts are again rising, Riyadh has been steadily drawing down these reserves since 2014 to fund significant deficit spending. Even with a sharp, sustained increase in the price of oil, the kingdom's long-term financial prospects aren't good unless it can diversify its economy and produce enough private-sector jobs for its 33 million people. (When Saudi king Faisal and the shah of Iran orchestrated the first significant oil price hike in 1971, Saudi Arabia's population was around 6 million.)

In an amusing irony, the prince shares the aspirations of an archenemy, Iranian president Hassan Rouhani: Both want a Middle Eastern/Islamic version of the Chinese model. Like the Iranian cleric, who was a key player in building the Islamic Republic's police state and at the top of the power matrix when Tehran went on an expatriate killing spree in the 1990s, MbS doesn't want to introduce political freedoms into his realm; he just wants to make his domain more economically vigorous. Some social freedom is fine if it lubricates society—allows sufficient fun—to encourage competitiveness without igniting the middle class or an aspiring underclass into insurrection. Like his royal predecessors, MbS isn't bashful about his lust for finer things: a $300 million French château, a $550 million superyacht, and the $450 million *Salvator Mundi* by Leonardo da Vinci. That he bought the yacht when he was slashing public spending and the painting while he was imprisoning many members of the elite

NICOLAS ASFOURI / GETTY

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in Riyadh's Ritz-Carlton for malversation—and coercing them into forfeiting billions—told us that he is untroubled by inconsistency.

The prince's decision to assassinate a frequent critic, the contributing *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi, has highlighted again the choices and contradictions that America has made when it comes to allied authoritarians. MbS is determined to maintain the fiction that he didn't order the killing, that someone else, probably 1 of the 18 who reportedly have been arrested in connection with Khashoggi's killing, was the misguided, zealous mastermind of the mission in Istanbul. The Henry II-Thomas Becket apologia isn't credible, of course, and it will be painful for the White House as it tries to find wiggle room in its commentary on what is likely to be a drawn-out farce. The most important datum about the murder: The crown prince, who is parochial but not stupid, intended to be graphic in his handling of Khashoggi, an occasionally free-spirited opinion journalist who had eclectically mixed support for the Saudi establishment and sympathy for the Muslim Brotherhood. Although MbS may have been careless in how he organized the Istanbul rendezvous with the columnist, he knew that this was not going to be a secret operation. The defining moment for the crown prince was his decision a year ago to kidnap the Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri and oblige him to resign. Any Saudi prince could have grown tired of how Saudi money in Lebanon never made a dent in the Shiite Hezbollah's growing control of the country; only an impetuous, delusional Sunni prince would imagine that this humiliation of a Sunni prime minister would not redound to Shiite Iran's advantage inside Lebanon.

In parading the power of sudden death through their omnipresent sword- and scythe-wielding executioners, sultans and caliphs cultivated *hayba*, the awe that comes with unchallengeable control. The crown prince's material acquisitiveness matches his political aspirations: He is a practitioner of *hayba*. Educated only in the kingdom, he has limited knowledge of the United States and Europe. We can be pretty sure that the Saudi foreign minister Adel al-Jubeir had no knowledge of the operation against Khashoggi since he is savvy about the American press, about the red lines that still exist in the West's greedy, commercial societies. He would have warned, unceasingly, that so brazenly killing Khashoggi would create a firestorm.

The Middle East has been a particularly ugly place since the post-World War I dynasties started falling to Arab military men, who within a generation or two usually carved up their societies, leaving old-world Muslim civility and, in some cases, hundreds of thousands of people dead. There were moments of serious American protest: John F. Kennedy was unimpressed by the shah of Iran and pressured him to introduce fundamental reforms. But Lyndon Johnson and especially Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger lost interest and increasingly gave the shah whatever he wanted, especially when it came to weaponry, with few concerns about how Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was "modernizing" his country. The bigotry of low expectations—the assumption that Muslim societies just don't have the necessary cultural and religious building blocks to sustain a democracy—undoubtedly conditions the way many Americans, on the left and the right, approach the morally troubling questions about governance in Muslim-majority countries. Americans are reliably inconsistent in how we judge tyranny, but we are usually at our most contradictory in the greater Middle East.

REUTERS / NEWSCOM

Jamal Khashoggi enters the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, October 2.

The military juntas in Algeria and Egypt—the former arrived in 1962 with the anti-French *Front de libération nationale* and the latter with the Egyptian revolution of 1952—have murdered vastly more innocent people than any Saudi ruler. Saudi domestic sins, until now, have been, if we exempt actions against the Shia of the Eastern Province, much more typical of hidebound monarchs than ruthless, secular Arab nationalists. The black-clad *exterminateurs* of the Algerian regime in the 1990s killed with such bloodlust and efficiency that only the Butcher of Baghdad could rival them. Yet Democratic and Republican administrations, like the French left and right, have had little difficulty engaging this blood-soaked dictatorship to further their counterterrorist missions and satisfy Europe's oil and gas needs. If President Donald Trump's commentary about Khashoggi's murder has been offensive, just go back and look at the speeches of Barack Obama administration officials praising the counterterrorist partnership between

Washington and the Algerian government, which in its *guerre à outrance* against Islamists regularly slaughtered women and children.

Internationally, the Saudi royal family's proclivities have, of course, been more damaging: As the monarchy became richer, and especially after the 1979 Iranian revolution and the attack the same year on the Great Mosque of Mecca by Sunni millenarians, it devoted much money to spreading its creed. Saudi Islam—Wahhabism, a barebones, hypermasculine version of the faith at war with the color, *joie de vivre*, and mysticism in Islamic civilization—gained ground among Muslims, who were watching the cradle of their civilization, the Middle East, rot under ever more oppressive secular governments. Perpetually insecure and scared to death of the ecumenical appeal of revolutionary Shiism, which tapped the Islamic world's anger at Muslim inferiority vis-à-vis the West, the Saudi royals put their oil and guilty consciences behind proselytism. And success bred commitment. Before the oil embargo of 1973, Saudi Arabia wasn't a significant religious force. By the end of the 1980s, the Saudis were funding mosques worldwide.

Although a great deal is often made of the Saudi possession of the two holiest cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina, which gives the regime prestige and an opportunity to press its views among pilgrims, possession of *al-Haramayn* has not made Saudi thought intellectually preeminent. It hasn't gained the Saudi royal family or the Wahhabi religious establishment spiritual deference—except where their money has gained them some institutional leverage. Egypt's renowned but declining religious center, Al-Azhar, which has been poverty-stricken for decades, gave more attention to Saudi legal views (the Hanbali school) as Riyadh started subsidizing the institution and its personnel. With Saudi Arabia's rise, Sunni Islam's other religious schools have coarsened. Poor religious scholars everywhere—like acquisitive American academics, former officials, lawyers, think tankers, and lobbyists—certainly have sought out Saudi favor. Sometimes Saudi-supported mosques have become hotbeds of militancy; sometimes they have become boring imports that relate awkwardly to young, more Westernized locals.

The defining themes of modern Islamic militancy developed beyond the Arabian peninsula: Egypt's Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, the Brotherhood's avatar of holy war and great Koranic commentator, Abul Ala Maududi, the Indian-Pakistani journalist-turned-intellectual who fused Western and Islamic thought into a thoroughly modern militancy, Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iraq's Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, and Lebanon's Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. Saudi money flowed into an intellectual landscape that was rapidly shifting, often feeding views that were hostile to the House of Saud. MbS isn't alone in the royal family in appreciating this perverse situation; it isn't clear, however, that Saudi Arabia changing its missionary activity would have much effect on Sunni Islamic militancy, which has wildly evolved in the last 20 years. State-supported Saudi clergy and their foreign partners are irrelevant now to the intellectual whirlwind that feeds the Islamic State, al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other radical movements. The capacity of state-supported clergy throughout the Sunni world to influence profoundly the faithful has declined for decades for the understandable reason that as Middle Eastern regimes have become more dictatorial and corrupt, as Western ideas about political legitimacy have seeped, sometimes poured, into the region, the reputation of the clergy associated with those regimes has declined. In Egypt and Tunisia, for example, the status of the Muslim Brotherhood—a lay organization that has kept seminary-trained, state-paid clerics at arm's length since its birth—significantly rose as the official clergy's sank. Parallel, independent religious authorities, who sometimes used the Internet to gain followers, grew in importance. This phenomenon occurred in the Middle East and in Europe, where unofficial mosques sprouted up all over the continent in part because European governments, wanting to believe the immigrants would eventually "go home," refused to authorize the construction of mosques and religious schools. A chaotic democracy of dueling religious authorities and imams developed. Without a legitimate countervailing hierarchy, militants flourished.

It is a biting irony that Saudi Arabia once subvented the Muslim Brotherhood in an effort to counter the rise of communism and monarch-downing pan-Arab nationalism. Until the royal family turned against the organization, Saudi Arabia itself was fertile ground for the movement. It may still be. The Brotherhood has become skeptical of Arab monarchies, seeing them as hopelessly corrupt, religiously hypocritical, and dependent on Western powers. That critique is more right than wrong. The movement's embrace of democratic politics in Egypt and Tunisia as a better, more legitimate vehicle to establish a moral Islamic society also has improved its appeal in the Persian Gulf, where absolute monarchies spend vast sums without any input from the commonweal. Much of Washington wants to believe that the threat from the Brotherhood was curtailed when Egyptian general Abdel Fattah el-Sisi overthrew, with considerable public support, the democratically elected government of Mohamed Morsi in 2013. However, the Brotherhood's message of religious egalitarian populism, intertwined with the idea that leadership in the *umma*, the community of believers, must gain approval at the ballot box, still fits better into modernity than kingship. (It's an excellent bet that the movement's ideas, though battered and hidden,

are still fertile in Egypt.) Both contemporary Islamic militancy and fundamentalism—and the two share terrain but are not the same—have a certain discomfort with, if not hostility towards, kingship, *mulk* in Arabic, which is deeply rooted in the side of Muslim history defined by its emphasis on virtue and the equality of believers. Orthodox Sunni Islam has stressed obedience to power, to "those who hold the reins." But within that same memory of the past runs a broad channel of dissent, even rebellion, waged on behalf of those who see leadership tied tightly to orthopraxy.

It's possible that MbS's intense animus against Khashoggi was in part fueled by the columnist's Brotherhood sympathies and real fear of the movement's continuing appeal. Conversely, it may now be the strongest argument for MbS within the Saudi royal family, many members of which no doubt would like to superannuate the young prince: If Khashoggi becomes a martyr among Saudis, or Arabs in general, that could lend strength to those who no longer see kingship as halal.

Might a desire for diversion lead to defiance? Saudi youth in Riyadh, November 15, 2017

FAYEZ NURELDINE / AFP / GETTY

Many Western officials, columnists, and intellectuals exuberantly praised General Sisi's speeches against political Islam and the Brotherhood as a necessary step in contemporary Islam's reformation. The Saudi crown prince's Western supporters have seen his speeches against the militancy of post-1979 Saudi Islam similarly. (Historically, the crown prince is on weak ground: The fusion of the Saud family and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab's creed in the 18th century never allowed an even slightly loose, cosmopolitan Muslim society to develop in Arabia.) But the official hierarchies in these countries, assuming they implement the will of their overlords energetically, simply can no longer command religious change. Their actions are more likely to prove counterproductive.

Nearly forgotten, the modern Middle East had a pretty profound reformation-cum-renaissance in the late-19th to mid-20th centuries. Among elites and even the common man, religious identities became less acute, national identities rose in importance and affection, parliamentary politics started. Serious Muslim scholars and liberal intellectuals advanced ideas for fusing Western and Islamic values, providing a means for proud Muslims to borrow from the West without shame. Traditional religious scholars and the ardently faithful went on the defensive for decades.

But as postcolonial Muslim states faltered, as they became meaner, as they attempted to ram through projects aiming to transform their societies, dissent grew. Political and cultural dissent in Muslim societies always expresses itself religiously. The harshness of secular dictatorial Arab states naturally produced a harshness in opposition. It's not surprising that the Islamist/jihadist opposition in Iraq, Syria, Algeria, and Libya has been so brutal given how the secular Arab nationalist dictators in these lands savaged their own people.

Unintentionally, the Saudi crown prince's dictatorial ambitions could well spoil a felicitous evolution in Saudi society. We know from Western history and what has transpired in the Islamic Republic since 1979 that oppressive religious rule secularizes society. As the conservative Iranian ayatollah Mohammad-Reza Mahdavi Kani worried over 20 years ago, if everything is about God, then soon nothing is about God. Saudi society, which is harder to penetrate than Iranian society because it is less sophisticated and literate, historically less open to the foreigner, may be much more secular than most people realize precisely because Saudi religious rule is overbearing. Iranian society took a cultural nosedive with the Islamic revolution, but there is a collective memory in Iran of a more curious, open, and secular society. Saudi Arabia doesn't have those memories to draw on. But globalization matters. The crown prince's popularity with the young has been undoubtedly a reflection of the Westernization of much of the country's youth. (That same process of Westernization, conversely, can fortify the appeal of contemporary Islamists, like the Muslim Brothers.) The crown prince could blow this transformative moment by intensifying his police state. Talk to young Saudis and they will quickly tell you how social media have become almost entirely a vehicle of MbS sycophants. What is now a widely held sentiment among the young for more openness, certainly for more fun, could turn into a protest movement against a dictatorship that allows only approved thought.

It is always good to recall the Iranian pre-revolutionary experience: The protest movement in the beginning was not explicitly religious. The secularization of Iranian society—especially the middle and upper classes—was profound. And yet the religious critiques gained ground as they tapped into deep historical roots and modern anxieties. The charismatic force of Khomeini and his clerical

allies finally united the disparate strands of protest into an explicitly Islamic revolution. There is not, and probably cannot be, any equivalent to Khomeini in Saudi Arabia. But the opening for serious protest against an increasingly ruthless prince, who tramples simultaneously Westernized youth, Westernized and religious intellectuals, the religious establishment, and his own family, shouldn't be discounted. It's an excellent bet that if MbS cannot check himself—and odds are if he survives the current turmoil, his embrace of *hayba* will tighten—the positions he advocates will sour with the public and the royal family. In other words, his pro-American, pro-Israel, philo-Semitic bent, and the hugely expensive Vision 2030 plan, could all become toxic. The crown prince's anti-Iranian determination might remain since those sentiments appear immovable within the society and the royal family (the Shia of the Eastern Province live on top of most of the oil; the clerical regime really would like to wipe the royals out; Wahhabis see the Shia as one small step above infidels), but elsewhere MbS could easily produce the opposite of what he intends.

The crown prince has brought forward the ugly authoritarianism among our Muslim allies that American officials usually prefer to stay behind closed doors or, ideally, between Arab security services and their counterparts in the Central Intelligence Agency. One can feel some sympathy for those in the State Department whose purpose is to highlight the tyranny of the Islamic Republic but not concurrently highlight the despotism of the clerical regime's primary Arab foe. Tehran is a vastly deadlier player in the Middle East. It is fueled by a still-potent blend of Shiite Islamic militancy and national arrogance (only the Turks are competitive when it comes to national pride among a Muslim people). Iran's mullahs and Revolutionary Guards have actually deployed a multinational Shiite legion that fights in Syria; Saudi Arabia has begged and coerced and it still can't get Egypt and Pakistan, two Sunni states deeply in debt to the Al-Saud, to send troops to Yemen. Yet when it comes to human rights for its own citizens, or the press, or the arts, it might be the Islamic Republic that's less oppressive in a competition of awfuls. The Iranian political and cultural elite don't produce great books, but they do occasionally write things that rip the flesh off each other; there are now and then, under the censor's eye, fairly serious meditations on man, God, and absolutism. And the Iranians certainly have the Saudis beat when it comes to hidden, joyful, profoundly creative, hip hypocrisy.

MbS should have known what Iranian revolutionaries have always known: Don't kill your opponents on your own diplomatic grounds. Tehran has frequently sent forth its murderous missionaries to kill in Turkey, but the dirty deeds have been done mostly in private. The Iranians have been outrageous elsewhere, most recently in an attempt to bomb an oppositionist rally in Paris where Rudy Giuliani and other Americans were speaking. But the clerical regime knows that the Western penchant with them is to forget if not forgive. Tehran benefits enormously from how Iran's internal politics—the factions within the ruling elite—always get interpreted to cast blame on the "hardliners," whoever they may be at any given time.

The crown prince won't be so lucky. Killing a *Washington Post* columnist plugged into the matrix of Western elites was rash as well as immoral. The American left and much of the right is in high dudgeon. The president's transactional approach to foreign affairs looks particularly unpleasant. And MbS will have an impossible time using the Thomas Becket defense given that he had already purged the police state's upper echelons. And if the young prince dares to kill any of those reportedly arrested for Khashoggi's murder, he could actually create a disloyal cadre within his own circle. Henry II didn't touch the four knights who dispatched Becket, allowing the men, after the pope excommunicated them, to sail off to the Holy Land to pray and fight.

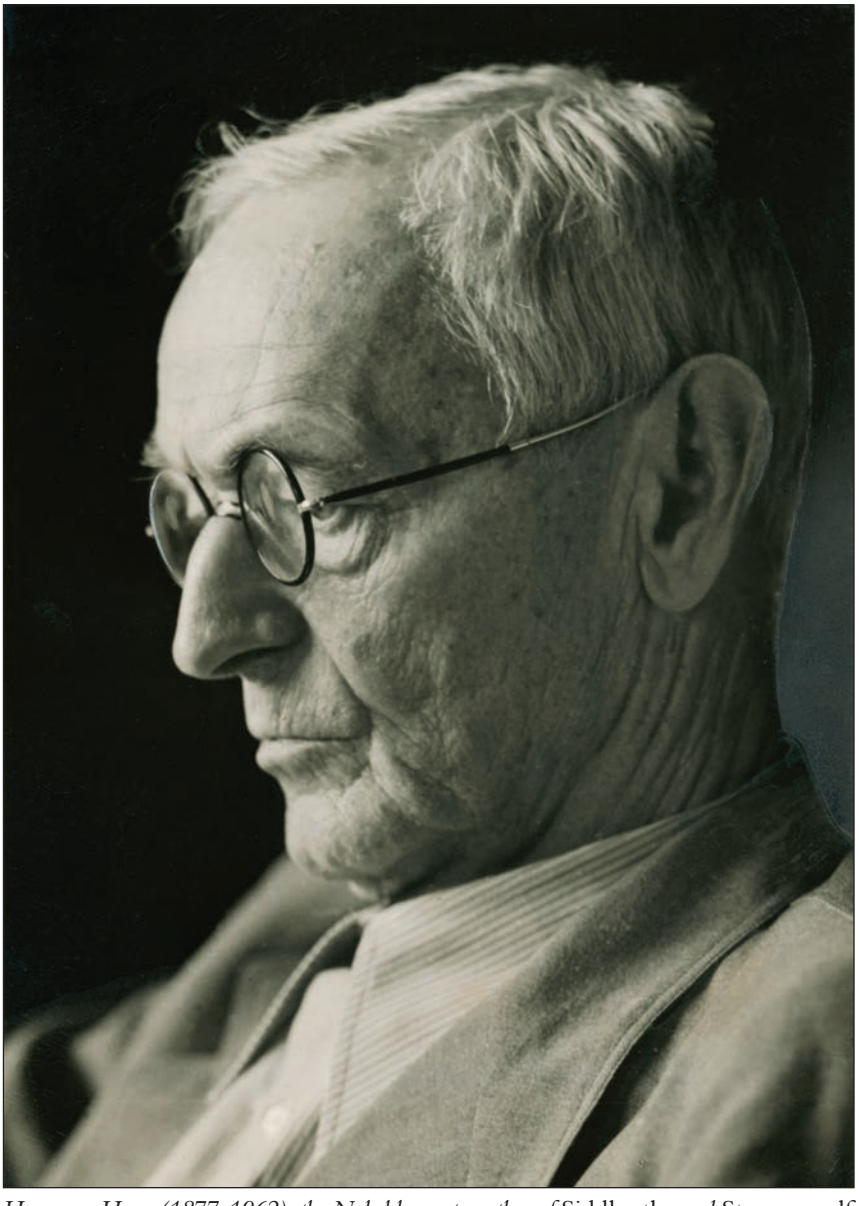
MbS has to be hoping that Erdogan doesn't really have audiotapes from Turkish intelligence bugs inside the Saudi consulate or chooses, for whatever political or financial calculations, not to release them to the public. If they exist and he releases them, if they leak from a Western intelligence service (it's unclear whether the CIA has a copy of a recording), and we can hear MbS's minions chopping up Khashoggi's body, if we can hear them cutting off body parts when the columnist is still alive, then the Western penchant of forgetting the heinous crimes of consequential heads of state may falter. This time round greed, fear, and allegiance to a grander cause—the usual reasons for realpoliticians to look beyond gut-churning messes—may not be sufficient. Washington's increasingly vicious political divisions are aligning along the crown prince's mistake. "He is a bastard, but he is our bastard" is an argument best made within the confines of Washington's Metropolitan Club without an accompanying soundtrack of bones being sawed.

If MbS survives, which is still likely, the United States will confront the distressing fact that the Saudi ruler is "modernizing" his country in ways that could well prove tumultuous. There is little to love in the Saudi royal family. There is nothing to like about what has happened since the Saudi-Wahhabi fusion in 1744. But there is something to be said for consensus within a deeply conservative society trying to change. The Muslim Middle East is littered with the wreckage of strong, oh-so-modern men exercising their wills. Saudi Arabia is a potentially explosive laboratory where cautious men need to prevail. ♦

Outside Man

The strange, lifelong discomfort of Hermann Hesse.

BY CHRISTOPH IRMSCHER



Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), the Nobel laureate author of Siddhartha *and* Steppenwolf

NEWSCOM

When he was nearly 15, Hermann Hesse ran away from the Protestant boarding school where his parents had placed him. He was missing for 23 hours. His mother was worried, not that her son had killed himself but that he hadn't. She was convinced that he had committed some dreadful deed—why else would he have absconded?

Gunnar Decker, in this newly translated massive biography of the Nobel Prize-winning German-Swiss writer, is rather stern about the Hesse parents' inability to love their wayward son unconditionally. But Johannes and Marie Hesse, ex-missionaries and members of a Protestant movement known as "pietism" that prized individual devotion and a life lived in strict adherence to Christian doctrine, were befuddled by their oldest son's steadfast determination to become a famous writer and to alienate them in any way possible, by smoking packs of cigarettes at their expense, reading Turgenev and Heine with a revolver next to him, and producing scores of derivative poems. I read Hesse's *Beneath the Wheel* (1906), his melancholy novel about his school days, when I was an impressionable teenager, and though I never went to boarding school and wasn't much of a rebel to begin with, Hesse's raw concern for the damage that social norms and uncomprehending teachers will inflict on young people in search of their place in the world stuck with me for a long time.

The public appeal of his later novels to millions of fans—especially in the United States, a country he didn't want to visit—would have surprised Hesse. However proudly he renounced his limited upbringing, in his work Hesse compulsively revisited the private battles of his adolescence. In the absence of the God of his parents, never a comforting presence anyway, Hesse made a deity of his own soul, finding heaven and hell within himself. He became the brilliant prophet of male inwardness. In novel after

Hesse
The Wanderer and His Shadow
by Gunnar Decker
translated by Peter Lewis
Harvard, 791 pp., $39.95

Christoph Irmscher, provost professor of English at Indiana University, is the author, most recently, of Max Eastman: A Life.

novel, from the early *Peter Camenzind* (1904) to his last great work, *The Glass Bead Game* (1943), his main characters are loners longing for true understanding and companionship, which they usually find only with other males.

His best-known novel, the crystalline Indian fantasy *Siddhartha* (1922), translated into over 30 languages, including some of the Indian ones spoken by his multilingual missionary grandfather, ends with a farewell kiss, reverently bestowed upon the now-enlightened Siddhartha by his childhood friend Govinda. A similar sanctification happens at the end of Hesse's post-WWI bestseller *Demian* (1919), but here, as in *Narcissus and Goldmund* (1930), one of the two friends perishes. Hesse admired Kafka, and it is perhaps no coincidence that the cerebral Josef Knecht, the central figure in *The Glass Bead Game*, shares his first name as well as the initial of his last name with Kafka's "Josef K." But if Kafka's *The Trial* ends with K.'s brutal execution, Hesse's hero sacrifices himself so that a beloved pupil may live: Following the reckless young man into an icy mountain lake, Josef Knecht drowns.

Intimacies don't last in Hesse's world; ecstasy, if it is to be experienced at all, takes place in solitude. A revelatory photograph in Decker's volume shows Hesse in 1910, about 33 years old and already a fierce devotee of good wine, admiring a glass of red wine, raised high. By then, with his trademark round, wire-rimmed specs and sharp-featured, almost birdlike head topped by a receding layer of thin hair, Hesse already looked the way he would for the rest of his life, even as his skin grew more wrinkled and leathern under the sun he so loved: an odd mix of minister and village schoolmaster, a bookish boy scout more than a reckless adventurer.

Hesse's protagonists, from the alcoholic Camenzind to the ascetic Knecht, were versions of himself, all involved in the same doomed struggle to reconcile spirit and matter, mind and body, love and desire. The biographical evidence, patiently accumulated by Decker, shows that such balance eluded Hesse in real life, too. Women puzzled him to no end. If they appear in his work at all, they are, like Kamala in *Siddhartha* or Maria in *Steppenwolf* (1927), the skilled purveyors of sexual favors, the sinful, fleeting fulfillment of teenage dreams. He married three times, though he never really knew what to do with his wives. The first, Maria Bernoulli, nine years older than her husband and the mother of his three boys, doesn't smile in any of the pictures we have of her. Hesse left her when she showed signs of mental distress. "I never experienced any outpouring of spiritual or physical love from him," complained Ruth Wenger, his unhappy second spouse, who preempted Hesse by filing for divorce herself.

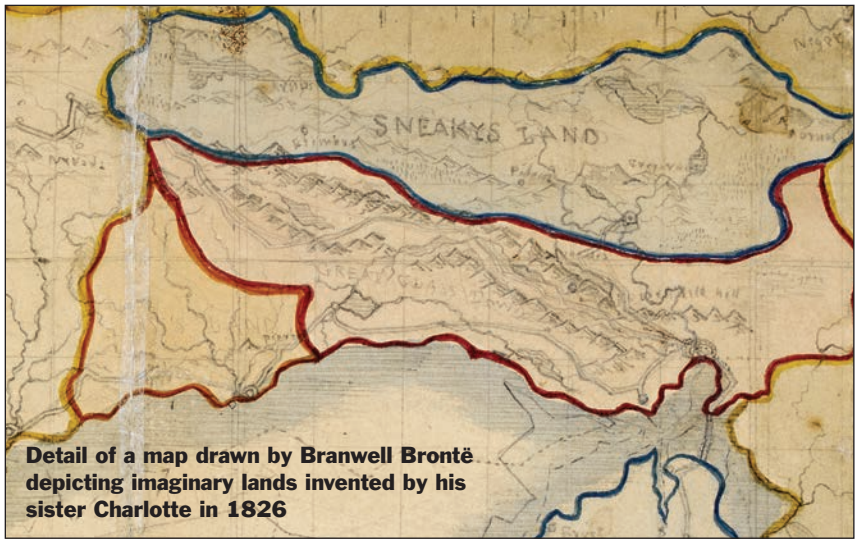
Intimacies don't last in Hesse's world; ecstasy, if it is to be experienced at all, takes place in solitude.

Third time was the charm, however: Ninon Dolbin, the last in the series, stayed and eventually outlived her husband. A smitten fan before she became his lover, Ninon submitted willingly to Hesse's household rules, which included not touching his stuff, writing notes rather than talking to him in person, and otherwise staying away from him unless needed. Outside his Swiss residence Hesse hung a sign that said, "No Visitors, Please."

Holed up in his hermitage, Hesse, who became a Swiss citizen in 1923, tried hard not to become too entangled in political controversies. During World War I, he lambasted narrow-minded patriots while also scorning the pacifists, an awkward arm's-length position he sought to replicate during the Third Reich, when he excoriated the Nazis but gladly took refuge in the hermetic world of the future conjured by his novel-in-progress, *The Glass Bead Game*. While such meandering didn't exempt him from attack, Hesse suffered none of the brutal interruptions experienced by other writers and intellectuals who had to run for their lives.

For Gunnar Decker, a supremely empathetic biographer, the fact that Hesse wasn't particularly pleasant to be with is a challenge rather than a problem. A master of biographical ventriloquism, he peppers his prose, congenially translated by Peter Lewis, with frequent exclamation marks meant to signal agreement with his crotchety subject and delivers pages of indirect interior monologue that would have done Flaubert or Zola proud, ranging from the basic ("What was he to do?") to the philosophically elevated ("How could he ever turn this chaos into an order that he trusted?"). He also heaps extraordinary opprobrium on the wife Hesse most disliked, calling Ruth Wenger "pampered," "superficiality incarnate," and, in a particularly funny aside, possessed of a "gastronomic attitude" to life, which one suspects didn't win her points with her rail-thin husband. And he skips lightly over the hurt Hesse must have caused the sons he left behind when he decided that he was more fit to be a wanderer than a paterfamilias. One of his sons, Martin, the only one to share his unreliable progenitor's artistic ambitions, later succumbed to depression and took his own life.

Decker's goal is to make us like Hesse, and the fact that he almost succeeds is a testament to his skill. Hesse had his own views about the genre. In *The Glass Bead Game*, framed as a biography of Josef Knecht, he openly mocked all biographers who seek to present their subject's life as a glorious series of merits earned, obligations fulfilled, and successes achieved. Hesse was, I believe, well aware of his personal shortcomings, of the high price people around him had to pay so that he could continue to plumb his inner depths. There is, as far as I am concerned, no more heartbreaking passage in Hesse's work than the moment when Siddhartha's son, just recently united with the man who had once discarded his mother, turns the tables and, defiant and furious, rejects his holier-than-thou father. The pain Siddhartha feels after the boy is gone is like an open wound, like "a flame that would not go out on its own." ♦



Detail of a map drawn by Branwell Brontë depicting imaginary lands invented by his sister Charlotte in 1826

B&A

Cartographantasies

The maps that guide writers and readers through fictional worlds. **BY ALAN JACOBS**

Barring some unforeseen miracle of publishing occurring in the next few weeks, *The Writer's Map* will be my book of the year for 2018. It gathers intelligently charming meditations from writers and festoons them with map after map after map after map of imaginary, and sometimes non-imaginary, lands. (Only after several days of staring at the beautifully reproduced images did I force myself to read the words, but I am glad I finally did.) I am so enamored of this book that I bitterly resent what takes me away from it, whether that be the need to eat, or sleep, or write this review. But when duty calls, I sometimes answer.

The love of maps is widespread, but not all of us love them for the same reasons. Marlow, the narrator of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, traces his career as a sailor to a love of maps:

> Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, "When I grow up I will go there."

For me maps have almost the opposite effect: They make me glad that I can see so much while staying home. (This tendency has only strengthened as air travel has become more unpleasant.) In his prologue to this volume, Philip Pullman explains one source of the pleasure I feel:

> I first learnt how to make a map at the age of about eight, when our teacher showed us how to pace out the length and breadth of the school playground and draw it on paper. Such power! To see things as if from above, and to make different sorts of marks on the paper to show trees, and rivers, and walls and buildings.

Indeed, "to see things as if from above": to take in a landscape with a glance, to see its bones as well as its flesh, to perceive what the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins called its "inscape," the distinctive frequency at which its nature vibrates. I have a sense, looking at an excellent map, that I see something about a place that cannot be seen from ground level. Certain distinctive kinds of story emerge from certain landscapes: Things happen in the mountains that can't happen on the plains, in an ancient city that can't happen in a new one. Maps reveal this to us all at once. The novelist David Mitchell spent much of his childhood making maps, only later deciding what stories they contained; and to this day he makes similar sketches when writing his novels.

That connection between imaged place and story is a key reason why, as Robert Macfarlane convincingly suggests in his contribution to *The Writer's Map*, the best maps are of islands. Helen Moss would agree. Remembering her childhood, she writes, "No imaginary friends for me; I could never get the hang of them. It was imaginary islands every time." During the rainy Scottish summer of 1881, Robert Louis Stevenson made an elaborate (and very skillfully drawn!) map for his stepson, and from that map emerged, inevitably it seems, the story called *Treasure Island*. The whole tale was implicit in the shape of the place, and when no other places are on the map that kind of thing can be more easily seen.

This is true even when places aren't literally islands but are self-contained to a degree that nothing outside their boundaries is effectively real. A.A. Milne's Hundred Acre Wood might as well be an island, as might Trollope's Barsetshire, Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County, and Richard Adams's Watership Down. (Adams knew from the beginning the boundaries of his locale, because it is a real place, but Trollope and Faulkner only started making maps when they were well into their storytelling and had begun to be confused.)

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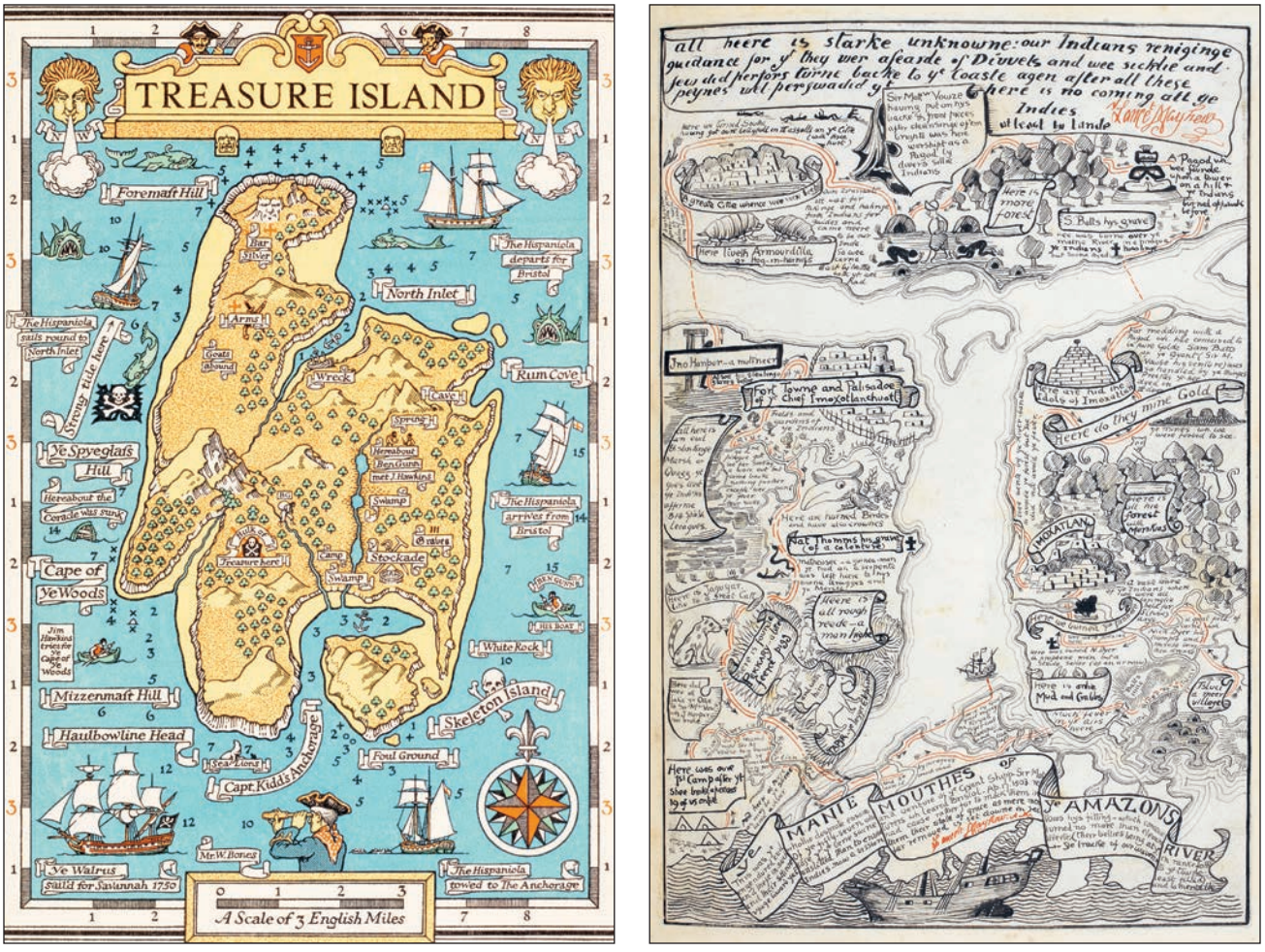
The Writer's Map
An Atlas of Imaginary Lands
edited by Huw Lewis-Jones
Chicago, 256 pp., $45

Alan Jacobs is a distinguished professor of the humanities in the honors program of Baylor University and the author, most recently, of The Year of Our Lord 1943: Christian Humanism in an Age of Crisis.



At left, a map by the Scottish illustrator Monro Orr to accompany a 1934 edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island. *At right, a map made by Rudyard Kipling to appear with 'The Beginning of the Armadillos' in his* Just So Stories *(1902).*

Macfarlane tells us that "the Inuit people are also known to have carved three-dimensional maps of coastlines from wood. In this way, the maps were portable, resistant to cold, and, if they were dropped into water, would float and could be retrieved." This is admirable, and it occurs to me that one could do this for the whole world; perhaps the resulting object could be called a "globe." But the flatness of maps is, for me, key to their charm, because of the way flatness enables distinctness while requiring imagination. And my very favorite maps appear as the endpapers of books. Several of those are reproduced in *The Writer's Map*, including those from Graham Greene's *Journey Without Maps*, Malcolm Saville's *Mystery at Witchend*, and a book adapted from the British TV series *Ivor the Engine* (featuring a exceptionally lovely map, by Peter Firmin, of the Merioneth and Llantisilly Railway, located in "the top left-hand corner of Wales"). There is something wonderfully daydream-conducive about being able to pause in the midst of a narrative and flip instantly to the two-dimensional representation of the world you are inhabiting, especially when that representation surrounds and encloses the fictional world.

But maybe the Inuit were on to something as well. One of the most delightful chapters in *The Writer's Map* is by Miraphora Mina, who designed an especially important map for the Harry Potter movies. In the books, the Marauder's Map—created by Messrs. Moony, Wormtail, Padfoot, and Prongs—is a simple folded piece of parchment that can be opened with a tap of a magic wand and the incantation "I solemnly swear that I am up to no good," and in that opened state reveals the whereabouts of every single person in Hogwarts Castle. One sees their names gliding through the hallways or remaining motionless in an office or bedroom. The map can be sealed from prying eyes simply by closing it, tapping it again, and murmuring the phrase "Mischief managed." But Mina seems to have realized that the four Marauders created something that tends to blur the lines between the map and what it represents, and for this reason she made a very elaborate map indeed, something approaching the character of a pop-up book, with multiple layers of flaps and an extensive repertoire of accordion-like unfoldings. The world the map describes comes alive, it rises out of the map and demands our attention. When I first saw her work, in *Harry Potter and the*

IMAGES: BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON, VIA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

Prisoner of Azkaban, I laughed out loud and desperately wanted one of my own.

Mina says that for her "the best stories are those where real and imaginary places are constantly overlapping, colliding perhaps, the fantasy and the everyday"; she further suggests, "Mapmaking is often like this. It's a daily process of *managing mischief*—overcoming dangers, problems, half-truths, illusions, deadlines and distractions—and tiptoeing along the edges of the known while also opening up new realms for adventure." This happens to be a very neat description also of the images in *The Writer's Map* and their complex relationship to the stories that they emerge from or that emerge from them.

And now, duty done, mischief managed, I plunge back into this delightful world of imaginary worlds. Please do not interrupt me again. ♦

B&A

The Doctor's Garden

How a New York physician planted the seeds of American medical botany. **BY PAULA DEITZ**

Victoria Johnson's illuminating biography of the founder of the first American botanical garden drives home the fact that winning the Revolutionary War was only the beginning of the struggle to create a new republic. Dr. David Hosack (1769-1835) was deeply involved in the hard work of establishing cultural and scientific institutions for the new nation. Johnson interweaves Hosack's story with those of others, primarily in government and the sciences, who interacted with him at strategic turns.

Medical practice of this period was rapidly evolving—not unlike today, as new discoveries routinely displace old techniques. Hosack was one of those doctors making advances beyond the bloodletting that prevailed as a cure, as when he dramatically saved the life of Alexander Hamilton's son Philip by immersing him in a hot bath laced with Peruvian bark powder to increase his body temperature so he could fight an infection.

Hosack had developed his passion for medicine early, as a classics student at the newly renamed Columbia College (King's College under British rule). He apprenticed himself to a former military surgeon to learn anatomy through autopsies, a controversial practice that led eventually to local riots. Hosack left New York to complete his undergraduate studies at the College of New Jersey (today's Princeton) and distinguished himself at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School in Philadelphia.

American Eden
David Hosack, Botany, and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic
by Victoria Johnson
Liveright, 461 pp., $29.95

Having defeated, through self-discipline, an inclination to depression, Hosack became a doctor bent on saving lives by experimenting with new techniques and medications, particularly in times of urban epidemics. He noticed that the best doctors he knew had studied at the University of Edinburgh, at the heart of the Scottish Enlightenment, and so in 1792, just around the time of his 23rd birthday, he set sail for Scotland to advance his education, leaving behind his young wife and infant son. On his way from Liverpool to Edinburgh he visited family friends and "found himself sipping hot toddy by a cozy fire as a young Scotsman named Robert Burns sang odes to the beautiful land where Hosack's own father had been born."

The epiphany that changed his life happened during a casual visit to a professor's garden outside Edinburgh. As Hosack listened to colleagues and other students discuss the plants around them, he faced his own ignorance on the subject and realized, as Johnson writes, "Botanical expertise … flowed in British veins." Hearing his colleagues contemplate centuries-old knowledge of the "curative properties of plants," Hosack was introduced to the study of medical botany—"how to use plants to make medicine." Hitherto, though he had known of plant-based medicines, it was only as ready-made supplies purchased from a druggist or apothecary; now he learned firsthand about the specific applications of various plants.

"Eighteenth-century Britain was a land obsessed with plants," Johnson writes, a kingdom "covered in gardens," of which London was "the botanical capital of the Western world." Hosack determined to go to London next, but not before he visited his father's handsomely arcaded native city of Elgin on the northern coast. There he met his uncles and resided with a Scottish laird, who, as chance would have it, was an ardent botanist and horticulturist.

Hosack completed his transformation to physician-botanist in London. He had been referred to the eminent botanist and author William Curtis, who for several years had taught and researched at the Society of Apothecaries' Chelsea Physic Garden (my own perennial haunt for teatime walkabouts near the Thames). Curtis himself had founded the Brompton Botanic Garden, which featured medicinal specimens arranged according to the Linnaean classification.

Curtis took on Hosack as a student, and they made daily rounds through garden beds set apart by rows of Lombardy poplars; they also studied agricultural crops, following Curtis's belief that farming practices were, as Johnson puts it, "every bit as vital to a great nation as military prowess and cultural achievements." Curtis instructed Hosack and others on how to botanize in the wild and directed his students to press, dry, and label collected specimens to begin their own herbaria.

Paula Deitz is editor of the Hudson Review.

The Elgin Botanic Garden (ca. 1810, artist unknown); inset, David Hosack (engraving after Rembrandt Peale, 1826)

Hosack meanwhile continued his studies in anatomy and surgery at a private medical school in London and, thanks to Curtis, was introduced as a foreign member into the elite Linnean Society of London, which had been founded to protect Linnaeus's vast collection of some 15,000 herbarium sheets, purchased from the scientist's estate. The young doctor studied this international treasure trove—which included native American specimens that he could have seen on his own walks in the New York countryside. When he left for America after two years away, he was given a set of doubles from this rare collection.

On his return, he went into private practice as a junior partner with Dr. Samuel Bard, George Washington's former physician, and also secured a position as professor of botany and medicine at Columbia's medical school, where he taught in a greatly admired, animated style. He also joined the staff of New York Hospital. Sadly, not only did his first child die while he was overseas, but in 1796, his wife died while giving birth to their second child, who also died. Hosack remarried and, over the years, having lost four altogether, had seven surviving children.

During the period of the great constitutional clash between Alexander Hamilton's Federalists, who supported a strong national government, and Thomas Jefferson's opposition contingent, both men became entwined in Hosack's endeavors. Johnson threads together long biographical passages and anecdotes about these and other figures, following their fortunes and misfortunes as they aged with Hosack. Her technique of suddenly moving from one person to another within sections of the same chapter creates the vivid illusion of living in that bustling time and walking among these individuals in the narrow streets of early New York.

Not only was Hamilton one of Hosack's associates, but so was Aaron Burr. Hosack was both men's personal doctor and was asked by each to attend their duel in Weehawken, New Jersey. He rowed back across the Hudson River with the wounded Hamilton and remained at his bedside until his death, as he had earlier done with Philip Hamilton—the Hamilton son he once had saved—following Philip's own fatal duel.

In general, though, David Hosack eschewed politics himself. He had another mission. As Johnson writes:

> What the nation needed, Hosack thought, was a new kind of garden—a botany classroom, chemical laboratory, apothecary shop, plant nursery, horticulture school, and lovely landscape all rolled into one. The kind of garden that was already pushing up its first pale shoots in his mind.

True, outside Philadelphia on the Schuylkill River, the Bartram family had a collection of plants, including those for medicinal and agricultural purposes, and had long been involved in shipping plants abroad. But what Hosack had in mind was an academic rather than a commercial venture—a public garden "destined to become an irresistible draw for young American doctors and naturalists, a place where they could study specimens of the whole planet's flora and experiment with medicines and crops."

Having witnessed the support such institutions received in Great Britain, Hosack had every reason to believe that sponsorship could be found in America. First he approached Columbia, hoping to continue the tradition of the university botanical gardens that went back to Pisa and Padua, but the school couldn't afford the cost. Next he approached the New York state legislature; a proposal never got past the committee stage.

Impatient to begin, in 1801, at age 32, Hosack struck out to finance the garden on his own. He purchased acreage from the Corporation of the City of New York amidst farmland along the Middle Road that bisected Manhattan. "From a rocky

TOP: THE LUESTHER T. MERTZ LIBRARY OF THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN; INSET: UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE / GETTY

bluff on the western edge of his new property, Hosack reveled in his sweeping views," Johnson writes. He "loved that he could see both rivers"—the Hudson and the East River—"from his property, but it was the earth beneath his feet that thrilled him most: his Manhattan in miniature, with its glacial rocks, its green fields, its moist bottom-lands."

Granted he had from his British mentors a specific vision for how a botanical garden should be designed and managed, but the wonder of the story is his mastery of all the practicalities of actually building and planting it from scratch. On an elevation, he constructed a majestic complex: a 20-foot-high, 60-foot-long conservatory with seven tall, arched windows along the façade and, on either side, low 60-foot-long glass hothouses for exotic plants. He also created an arboretum—and included Lombardy poplars, recalling his days at the Brompton garden. Hosack employed "recent immigrants and out-of-work native New Yorkers," and he trained two of his nephews to become botanists and plant collectors. He named his awe-inspiring creation the Elgin Botanic Garden, after his father's native city.

Johnson gives us glimpses of Hosack walking in the garden with students and visitors both domestic and foreign—including official botanists from Napoleonic France. By 1806, when he compiled a catalogue for circulation, he was growing more than 250 species native to New York and over 1,400 exotic species. He did all this while still treating patients, initiating new surgeries, and teaching medical students.

Hosack's influence on American botany and medicine was enormous; reading Johnson, one gets the impression that all of America was botanizing. But operating the garden was a financial struggle, and Hosack went deeply into debt. In 1810, after its initial refusal, the state legislature finally agreed to purchase the Elgin Botanic Garden through a public lottery. Earlier, a committee had cited its importance as "the first establishment of the kind ever attempted in the United States." Nevertheless, realizing the difficulty of maintaining the garden at the level of, say, the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, the state transferred the garden to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, which decided to lease the garden to raise funds—the first step toward its eventual total dismantlement. For me, the most heartbreaking moment comes on a day in October 1812 when, after surveying the Elgin property, men return to place marble slabs numbering 47 through 51 along the Middle Road with the single number 5 on another side—the first laying out of the grid system of streets and avenues in the area, predicting the garden's eventual demise as the city expanded northward and the Middle Road became Fifth Avenue.

The state eventually transferred the garden to Columbia, and Hosack finally—after seven years of waiting—received purchase funds. In the years after his 1835 death, it was tremendously lucrative for Columbia to sell and lease plots of the Elgin land to developers, as it became some of the most desired real estate in the world. By the 1920s, the Metropolitan Opera came knocking for Elgin property through its emissary, its stockholder John D. Rockefeller Jr., but then JDR Jr. had another idea: to lease 11 acres from Columbia for a new urban complex. Nicholas Murray Butler, Columbia's revered president, wanted him to know that the land's "history reads like a romance." On November 1, 1939, at the opening of Rockefeller Center on the site, Butler noted that, as Johnson puts it, "it was thanks in part to a visionary American doctor that they were all gathered here."

Though Hosack had tried to recover the garden and suffered with its demise, he remained productive in New York cultural life in other ways. He was a cofounder of societies like the New-York Horticultural Society and the New-York Historical Society and was active in cultural organizations under the umbrella of the New-York Institution, an organization devoted to the fine arts, natural history, and literature and philosophy. And the British did not forget him; he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. After his second wife succumbed to a long, painful illness, he married a wealthy widow with her own big family and they purchased a house upstate on the Hudson River that became famous for its elaborate landscaped gardens. He consoled himself for his loss of Elgin by purchasing from his friend Thomas Cole what became one of the artist's landmark paintings, *Expulsion from the Garden of Eden*.

I could not resist a visit to the New York Botanical Garden's library to view Hosack's herbarium sheet of a persimmon tree labeled "*Diospyros virginiana* Elgin Garden 1829," a specimen gathered from his ruined garden—a direct contact with him. (Johnson briefly discusses how the NYBG came into existence as an outgrowth of a botanical club founded by one of Hosack's prize students.)

After reading Johnson's description of a plaque honoring Hosack in Rockefeller Center's Channel Gardens, I hastened to wade through the crowds on a hot summer Sunday to search for it. All the big shiny plaques relate to JDR Jr. or the center itself, so at first I was at a loss. I reread her passage, which says the plaque hangs "facing toward the old Middle Road" (that is, Fifth Avenue). I made my rounds once more. Finally, there on a low garden retaining wall that encloses a dolphin fountain and flower beds, so low I had to get on my hands and knees to read it, was the plaque with the words she quotes:

In memory of David Hosack
1769-1835
Botanist, physician, man of science and citizen of the world
On this site he developed the famous
Elgin Botanic Garden

I whipped out my notebook to write down the final lines of the plaque, which Johnson omits:

1801-1811
For the advancement of medical research and the knowledge of plants

That dedication encapsulates a lifetime, with many years spent pursuing and a decade spent realizing a magnificent and useful vision. Victoria Johnson conveys Hosack's story with such detail that readers will feel like onlookers during those adventurous days that gave rise to so many institutions we still know. The time has come to raise the plaque and burnish it. ♦

B&A

‘Wide and Starry Sky’

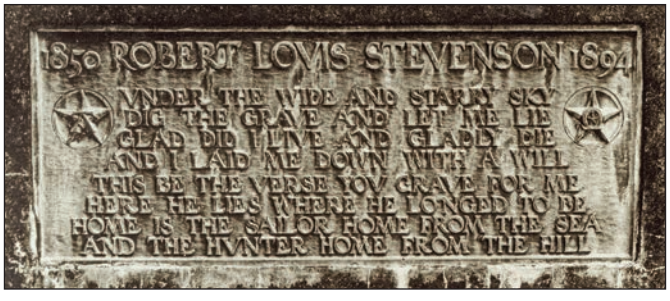
How Robert Louis Stevenson came to live, die, and be buried in Samoa. **BY MICAH MATTIX**

Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa
by Joseph Farrell
Maclehose, 352 pp., $32.99

If you travel to the British Isles in search of the grave of the author of *Treasure Island* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, you will be disappointed. You won’t find it in the coastal town of Bournemouth, where Robert Louis Stevenson lived for a time, nor in London, which he visited frequently, nor in his native Edinburgh. Rather, it’s in the South Seas, on the slopes of Mount Vaea, a three-mile hike outside the town of Apia on the Samoan island of Upolu. How Stevenson ended up in Samoa—and not only stayed but became deeply involved in the lives of the native islanders and politics of the region—is the story of Joseph Farrell’s excellent book.

When Stevenson arrived in Samoa on December 7, 1889, with his American wife, Fanny, they had no plans to stay. They had left San Francisco a year and a half earlier with Fanny’s son, Stevenson’s mother, and a Swiss maid for a long cruise around the Pacific. The sea air would be good for Stevenson’s health, and he would write articles on the region and collect material for a book on the South Seas.

On his way to Samoa in December, he wrote his literary agent Sidney Colvin that he planned to stay only long enough to learn about the recent war. His first impression upon landing confirmed his intention: “I am not especially attracted by the people; they are courteous, pretty chaste, but thieves and beggars, to the weariness of those involved,” he wrote his friend Charles Baxter.



The tombstone atop Stevenson’s mountain grave bears as an epitaph his poem ‘Requiem.’

Yet a month later, he had bought a 314-acre plot and arranged for an estate called Vailima (“five streams” in Samoan) to be built on it. In March, a mere three months after he first visited Samoa, he told Baxter that he was sure he would “never come home except to die.” In the end, he didn’t even do that.

Why did Stevenson stay, and what was his life like? The answer to the first question is various and complex. Farrell shows that his lukewarm view of the locals quickly changed. As he learned about their history and way of life, he developed an affection for their *joie de vivre* and what he called in an earlier correspondence the “simple dignity” of the Polynesian village. Tribal rule in Samoa reminded him of Highland clans, and he enjoyed taking on the role of chief at Vailima. He loved the sea and came to regard Samoa as far enough away from civilization to retain something of its primordial vitality but still within easy reach of London or Sydney by the steady stream of ships that stopped at its port. “Altogether,” he remarked, “it is a life that suits me but it absorbs me like an ocean.”

The other reason Stevenson stayed in Samoa, hinted at in the line above, was the sense of purpose he felt in defending the Samoan people. The situation in Samoa at the end of the 19th century was unique. Officially it was an autonomous country ruled by the highest-ranking chief. But in practice most decisions about land and trade were made by German, British, and American consulates in concert with trading companies, who were interested in Samoan coconut oil, which was used in soap, cosmetics, medicine, and other products.

Why a frequently ill writer of adventure stories and lifelong Tory felt compelled to write furious letters to London against the actions of German and British agents, risking, at one point, deportation, was as hard to understand then as it is now. Farrell rightly notes that the history of Scotland played a role in Stevenson’s siding with the locals but only hints at how his conservative sensibilities, particularly his high view of individual liberty and local responsibility, might have informed his decision.

Still, Farrell provides a nuanced and stimulating account of Stevenson’s actions and assiduously avoids forcing them to fit this or that political agenda. After all, while Stevenson was calling on Western powers to stop interfering in Samoan affairs for financial reasons, he was urging Samoans to be more industrious and “make a little more money.” If not, Stevenson told students at a theological college, “you may make all the good laws on earth, still your land will be sold,” and “when your land is sold, your people will die.”

In a letter to the British artist Trevor Haddon, Stevenson wrote that “no man can settle another’s life for him. It is the test of the nature and courage of each that he shall decide it for himself.” Samoa tested Stevenson’s courage, and he certainly passed, even if he also achieved far less than he had hoped. ♦

CHRONICLE / ALAMY

Micah Mattix is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

B&A

Heartache and Hope

In Hulu film Minding the Gap, *three young skateboarders rewrite their destinies.* **BY PHIL CHRISTMAN**

No one escapes the working class without guilt. You spend your life knowing that from such accidents as the ability to take tests, you won—you did not earn—reprieve from endless physical labor, chronic pain, death by opioids. Because you could turn a phrase, no guidance counselor looked at you, as they looked at some of your peers, and decided you weren't that most nebulous of things, "college material."

The documentarian Bing Liu is such an escapee from the working class, and in his film *Minding the Gap*—now streaming on Hulu—he returns to his old friendships with neurosis-free clear-sightedness. As a teenager in Rockford, Illinois, in the 2000s, Liu spent countless hours skateboarding with his friends Keire and Zack; the sport permitted—in fact embodied—freedom from their tyrannical and abusive fathers. He braids his old skate videos of them with new footage to create a masterpiece of cinéma-vérité personal filmmaking.

As the film begins, Bing, Zack, and Keire sneak into a parking garage, skate all the way down it, then ride the resulting momentum for an impossible number of minutes. It's the kind of purely kinetic cinema that makes you want to climb trees and take stupid risks. Then, soon after, you hear Keire's present-day voiceover as he walks through his mother's house: "I spent the majority of my time here alone." Gravity evaded; gravity triumphant.

Keire resents and, over the course of the film, reassesses his father, whose disciplinary methods Keire describes as "child abuse." Early in the film, you see video of young Keire after fighting off other boys at a skate park; he stands breathing hard, unable to speak. He has won the fight, but he's as angry as if he'd lost; it's the anger—displaced and unaccountable—of every kid who has ever been spanked with a belt. But Keire's father was also a black man, enacting a pattern that is as easy for outsiders to judge as it is impossible for them to argue away—"If I beat the kid, perhaps *they* won't." (At one point Keire laughingly recounts his inevitable, and fortunately nonlethal, encounter with a trigger-happy policeman; the viewer feels the shock and anger he has learned to suppress.) He comes to see the frustrated love behind his father's sternness.

Bing Liu (center) with Keire and Zack

Zack's charisma burns brightly; he has a sort of sleepy, sloppy handsomeness. At first he's the most sympathetic of the three—his boss won't give him enough hours and he takes to the role of stay-at-home parent as well as anyone ever does. His girlfriend, Nina, comes home from her fast-food job ready to go out again, to drink and party, because she's just 21 and already facing the existential terror of the sole breadwinner. Zack, like a 1950s housewife, wants her to stay home so he can talk to an adult. Can you blame either of them? But their fights escalate; Zack presents Liu with audio evidence that Nina hits him. Nina responds with credible abuse accusations of her own. Zack confirms them, first in an ugly rant ("Some bitches need to get slapped sometimes"), then in a searing self-confrontation, which, let's hope, represents a turnaround.

Liu's dead stepfather, too, was a monster, and Liu confronts his mother, a Chinese immigrant, in a harrowing sequence—his camera on her, another camera on him, pain entering the system but unable to leave. "I wish I go over, do again, do differently," she says. But consider her situation: an immigrant pursued, perhaps stalked (it's not clear from her description), by a citizen with a pension. I thought of an incident described in Matt Taibbi's *The Divide*, in which a welfare-fraud investigator tosses a Vietnamese immigrant woman's underwear drawer, looking for evidence that she's taking gifts from men. This is the kind of treatment Liu's mother could expect for herself, *and for her child*, lifelong, without the protective covering conferred by this man, who might, if she did not acquiesce to a relationship, force himself upon her anyway. The awful parents whose indefensible choices we spend our lives recovering from are, so often, good, brave people picking from among the most depressing options imaginable.

Neither Zack nor Keire seems to resent Liu for his success, and nothing in his treatment of them, throughout the film, hints at condescension. This grace, at least, is unusual, on both sides of such a relationship. It gives you some hope—not necessarily for their future but for their, and our, present. Bing Liu is a filmmaker of unusual humanity; Keire seems like a good, insightful, kind person; Zack has at least begun to face his demons, which is more than many abuse victims ever do. Any better world must begin in the radical potential buried within partial, present-tense, hard-pressed decency. ◆

HULU

Phil Christman teaches first-year writing at the University of Michigan and is the editor of the Michigan Review of Prisoner Creative Writing. *He is at work on a book about the Midwest.*

"[Hillary] Clinton said Friday that she doesn't want to run . . . but then described how she'd still 'like to be president' and talked about why she'd be a good one."

—Washington Post, *October 29, 2018*

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Democrats hold intervention for 'obsessed' Hillary Clinton

FORMER NOMINEE ATTEMPTS ESCAPE

Onetime first lady cries, begs, crawls out bathroom window

BY DENNIS FURD

CHAPPAQUA, N.Y. — Top Democrats convened on the Clinton family home in Chappaqua, New York, yesterday morning to hold an emergency intervention aimed at convincing Hillary Clinton that she has a serious addiction to presidential politics and to make clear that the party won't tolerate another campaign from the longtime Democratic leader.

"Hillary, we're here today to talk to you... about you," said intervention leader and former president Jimmy Carter. "We love you, but gadzooks, woman, give it up already!"

The intervention comes as Clinton has continued to hint at yet another possible run for the White House, despite two previous failed campaigns that proved once and for all people simply do not want Hillary Clinton as their president.

BIGSTOCK AND JALEXARTIS

Hillary Clinton yesterday, climbing out of her bathroom window to escape the entreaties of fellow Democrats

"Hillary, you've got to stop," said Senator Charles Schumer, reading from a prepared letter. "I can't bear to see what you've become: shuffling around the house in your tattered pantsuit, making campaign promises to yourself in the mirror, sitting by the phone for a call from Tom Steyer that's never going to come," Schumer went on, breaking down as Kirsten Gillibrand held his hand for support.

"Do you see?" an outraged Barack Obama cried. "Do you see what you've done to Chuck?"

Clinton struggled at first to accept the criticism from members of her own party, clinging to any threadbare justification, from sexism to the vast right-wing conspiracy, to explain her inability to win the nation's highest office. At one point, she even tried to climb out the bathroom window when the truth became too hard to hear. But as the day wore on and the testimonies of her colleagues poured in, Clinton's steely façade began to show cracks.

"I just want to be loved," a sobbing Hillary finally admitted. "That's why I run. I'm running from myself," she explained, standing and gazing into the distance. "Because I love America so much, and I will work so hard to fulfill the promise of this great land. And if you vote for me,

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