

JOHN O'SULLIVAN: PUTIN'S VICTORY FOR AUTHORITARIANISM

**FLORENCE KING
ON GREG GUTFELD**

REIHAN SALAM: THE JOYS OF GENTRIFICATION

**THEODORE DALRYMPLE
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NATIONAL REVIEW

HOW TO DESTROY PARADISE

Kevin D. Williamson

ON PUERTO RICO





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Undone by gigantic deficits and rapacious public-sector unions that have looted an otherwise productive economy, Puerto Rico is the junk-bond king of paradise. *Kevin D. Williamson*



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RoboArt

Being a little behind in my reading, I just finished Kevin D. Williamson's great article on public art ("Vandals and Scandals") in the February 24 issue. I would like to ask the author for his take on Detroit's RoboCop-statue funding via Kickstarter. By way of background, in 2011, a Kickstarter campaign was launched to make a RoboCop statue from the 1987 iconic movie, which takes place in Detroit. The nonprofit Imagination Station raised \$60,000 online, and a ten-foot-tall statue is on its way to a Detroit-based bronzeworks.



*Page W. H. Brousseau IV
Flint, Mich.*

KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON RESPONDS: Now that Detroit itself has succeeded in realizing the horrific dystopian future of *RoboCop*, building a ten-foot-tall statue of the character seems a little beside the point. But the model behind the *RoboCop* tribute—a private nonprofit raising money from *RoboCop* fans via Kickstarter—is precisely the right one. It has been corrupt and backward political institutions and semi-political institutions, from the Detroit city council to the automotive labor unions, that have transformed Detroit from the nation's most prosperous industrial city into the current pit of squalor and neglect that it is. If anything is going to rescue Detroit, it will be collaborative entrepreneurial projects, both in the for-profit world and in the nonprofit sector. Maybe the RoboCop statue is not the most important of them—okay, scratch the "maybe"—but it is an example of the right sort of thing to be doing. As for the work itself—de gustibus, etc.

Sexual Expression First

I almost cried when I read Mary Eberstadt's piece ("Progressivism's War on Winners") in your March 10 issue.

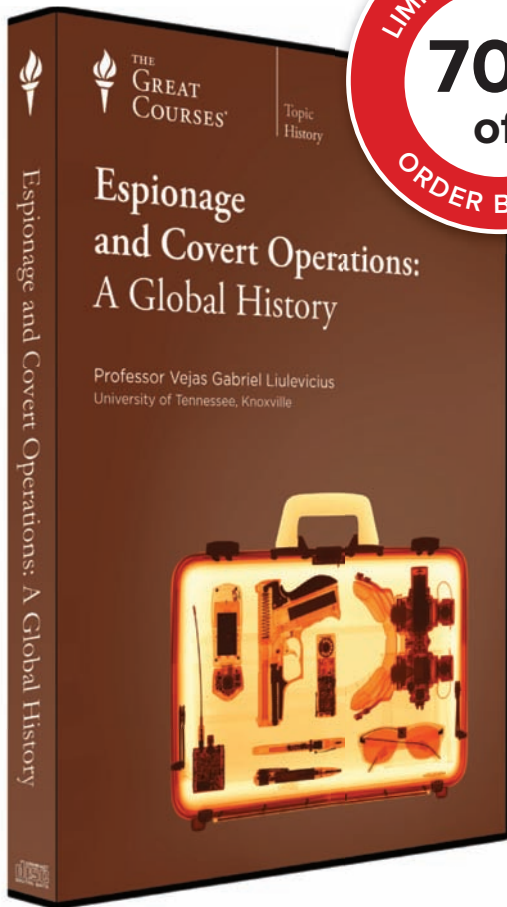
At one point in her article, she answered her own question: "If today's progressives really care so much about the poor, why not cease and desist in their enthusiastic efforts to obstruct such manifestly good works?" Her answer pointing to "the ideological desire to put sexual expression first" is to the point, of course, but unfortunately it also answers another question, which I heard stated rhetorically recently: "Why is a woman's right to abortion more important than a baby's right to live?"

*David Ziegler
Via e-mail*

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The Week

■ We have too much respect for the office to take the easy shot.

■ Republican David Jolly's victory over Democrat Alex Sink in the special election to fill Florida-13, the House seat left vacant by the death of 82-year-old Bill Young, produced an immortal lede: "Young wasn't, Sink did, and Jolly is" (congrats to James Taranto). It also produced panic among Democrats. Young was a Republican, but his district trends purple—Barack Obama carried it in 2012. Sink, an almost-successful gubernatorial candidate, had a big war chest; Jolly was a tyro and a lobbyist. But Jolly had an issue: "She supports Obamacare. I don't." Smart Dems see the problem. "[We] should not try to spin this loss" (Paul Begala). "This is a screaming siren" (David Plouffe). November is still a long way off, but the Democrats' great policy accomplishment of the last six years is a dud, which grows dudlier and dudlier as Americans get to know it better. No wonder Democrats have a sinking feeling.

■ Never mind that Paul Ryan is correct about the corrosive effect of long-term welfare dependency, or that his remarks about unemployment and inner-city culture are based in documentable fact, or that his views on the relationship between single-mother households and poverty are fortified by virtually unanimous social-science scholarship; the gentleman from Wisconsin has said that which must not be said, and therefore must be ritually denounced, as hard-hearted, as a crypto-racist, as whatever the moment calls for. Mr. Ryan's real offense—which cannot be forgiven by the likes of the *New York Times* and MSNBC—is to draw attention to the fact that whatever our massive welfare apparatus is intended to do in theory, what it does in fact is provide financial incentives that encourage poor people to make decisions that are self-destructive in the long term in exchange for short-term relief. A visit to a Detroit public school or a Bronx housing project would arouse in the curious mind some contemplation about who is in fact looking after the best interests of the poor: the architects of the catastrophe visible in our inner cities, or men such as Paul Ryan looking to reform their work?

■ The disappearance of MH 370, the Malaysian Airlines Boeing 777 that vanished, reportedly over the Gulf of Thailand, then over the Malacca Straits, raised obvious mysteries, but also familiar scenarios: the errors and defensive crouching of all governments in crisis, not just Third World ones; the explosion of speculation and fantasy to fill the void of unknowing (CNN is a major perpetrator here); the pain and helplessness of ordinary people, in this case the families of the missing. After the first few days, attention focused on the two pilots. If they were jihadists or suicidal, no evidence had appeared at press time; it is possible they were trying to cope with an in-flight accident. May all the innocents, presumably dead, rest in peace.



■ In a WebMD interview, President Obama admitted that, under Obamacare, "the average person . . . might end up having to switch doctors." Five years ago he promised that no such thing would happen: "No matter how we reform health care, we will keep this promise: If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor. Period" (speech to the AMA, June 2009, and repeated, in so many words, in other venues). If Obama knew in 2009 what he now says in 2014, then he lied. If he did not know that the insurance cancellations and the misbegotten cost controls in the bill would force many patients to have to scramble for other doctors, then he was remarkably incurious. In either case, his main motivation was to win the policy victory—national health care—that had eluded Bill Clinton. It would come at a cost in freedom, money, and health to millions of average persons, but that was a small price to pay for becoming a figurine on the Left's Mount Rushmore.

■ Another week, another passel of changes to Obamacare, whether the law gave HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius authority to make them or not. Americans who saw their plans canceled due to the Affordable Care Act's new mandates will now be able to renew their plans through 2016, pushing a possible spate of bad headlines and rate shock this fall off into the future. If they don't want to renew their plans, that's okay too:



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They're now eligible for a hardship exemption from the individual mandate. The federal high-risk pool created by the law to cover especially sick and costly customers until the exchanges were up and running was scheduled to close in December, but has been extended through April. The administration has tweaked the terms of "risk corridors," which guarantee that insurers can't lose more than a certain amount of money on their Obamacare customers, to make them even more generous. One thing hasn't changed: The shape-shifting law is resiliently unpopular across the country, and especially in some red states where senators who voted for it are trying to win reelection. The secretary shall not have the power to do much about that, no matter how hard she tries.

■ Darrell Issa has become Democrats' enemy no. 1. Why? The House Oversight Committee forced disgraced former Internal Revenue Service official Lois Lerner once again to plead the Fifth before his panel. That means Issa's committee can find her in contempt of Congress, and House speaker John Boehner has indicated he would advance the issue to the full House. This has produced a series of embarrassing displays from House Democrats, who have shown they will do anything to stop Republicans from holding those responsible for discriminating against tea-party groups to account. First there was Maryland Democrat Elijah Cummings, who demanded to speak after Issa adjourned the hearing at which Lerner appeared. Issa declined his request and cut his microphone. Cummings exhibited his typical professionalism. "I am a member of the United States Congress of America! I am tired of this!" he screamed over the din. Then there was the Congressional Black Caucus, which called Issa's behavior "an affront to the expectations of the American people" and demanded that Boehner strip Issa of his chairmanship. Issa had apologized to Cummings, but that wasn't enough for House Democrats, who went on to propose a resolution demanding that Issa come to the House floor and deliver a public apology to his colleague. As Dan Kildee (D., Mich.) introduced the measure, his fellow Democrats gathered on the House floor holding up iPads bearing pictures of Issa requesting that committee staffers cut Cummings's mic. That resolution failed too. But Democrats have succeeded in distracting from the issue at hand. Lois Lerner has obstructed the work of Congress and it is she who should be held to account on the House floor.

■ To be fair, if you followed any of us around with a camera all day long, you could capture all sorts of amusing slips. Everybody makes mistakes, and the few who don't can't be trusted. Moreover, focusing so intently on trivial gaffes creates a tit-for-tat "gotcha" political culture, which impedes serious discussion



of the critical issues that . . . Aw, to hell with it. President Obama—super-genius political strategist, graduate of two of the nation's finest universities, and by general acclaim the smartest man in any room he deigns to enter—recently spelled "respect" as R-S-P-E-C-T—in front of Aretha Franklin, no less. Dan Quayle has a spare E if you need one, Mr. President . . .

■ President Obama has proposed new overtime regulations, which would raise the wage ceiling, currently \$455 a week, below which workers cannot be exempted from overtime. Employers have many ways to respond to such a regulation—for instance, by replacing a 40-hour employee with two 20-hour employees. Anthony Barkume of the Bureau of Labor Statistics argues that the evidence suggests that employers will most likely reduce base wages to offset additional overtime costs, resulting in no net gain for workers. President Obama can offer workers symbolism, but so far he has not been able to offer them robust economic growth, which is where additional jobs and higher wages come from.

■ In a surprising rebuke to President Obama, seven Senate Democrats joined Republicans to vote against his choice of Debo Adegbile to serve as assistant attorney general for civil rights at the Justice Department. What seemed to turn the stomach of even some Democrats was Adegbile's championing of the cause of Mumia Abu Jamal, the confessed killer of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner. NPR's *Morning Edition* began its report on the vote by noting that "a handful of southern Democrats" had allied with Republicans to kill the nomination. Those "southern Democrats" included Heidi Heitkamp (N.D.), Bob Casey (Pa.), Joe Donnelly (Ind.), Joe Manchin (W.Va.), Chris Coons (Del.), and John Walsh (Mont.). When Jonah Goldberg pointed out that these were "not exactly Sons of the Confederacy," an NPR host responded that the script had been written as "Senate Democrats . . ." but that "southern" had been read on air in error. The mistake couldn't have made much difference to NPR's audience: They know that the president's opponents, no matter where they hail from, must be Sons of the Confederacy at heart.

■ One of the Democrats' special political challenges is that they must indulge their environmental activists, who represent a minority tendency but a great deal of money. Indeed, a California hedge-fund billionaire has promised to put up \$100 million to help elect new climate warriors to office, and that got Democrats to talking, and talking, and talking, staging an all-night festival of personal anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions. The Democrats' climate strategy is one part cowardice and one part unseemliness: They will talk a great deal about the alleged climate crisis, but even the casual observer will note that they give no indication of doing anything so radical as, say, introducing a bill, because climate bills do not in fact have enough support in Congress, members of neither party being eager to cripple the economy as a gesture of solidarity with Mother Gaia. The unseemly part is the focus of Harry Reid et al. on the political activism of two private citizens, Charles and David Koch, who have been made into the Emmanuel Goldstein of the 2014 midterms. Elected officials with no legislative agenda running against private citizens with no official power: As it turns out, it is easy being green.

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■ The close ties between the Center for American Progress, an ostensibly nonpartisan nonprofit, and the Obama administration have long been plain: Its founder, former Clinton chief of staff John Podesta, rejoined the White House this year as an adviser to Obama, and it has served as both a launching pad and a landing place for a handful of Obama staffers. In March, Zaid Jilani, a former writer for the outfit's blog, ThinkProgress, compared his experience to that of journalists at Russia Today, a television network funded by Putin's government. Jilani said in a blog post that ThinkProgress writers were prevented from taking a stand against Obama's policy in Afghanistan. After he published a post critical of the president's foreign policy, "calls from the White House started pouring in," and Jilani and his colleagues were "berated for . . . creating daylight between us and Obama." ThinkProgress's statement of principles claims

that it is "editorially independent" and "committed to accuracy." One of those—at least—would seem to need revising.

■ The environmental-damages suit against Chevron in Ecuador has always been questionable at best, but a blistering opinion from U.S. District Court judge Lewis Kaplan confirms what many had long suspected: This was not a legal proceeding, but a criminal conspiracy aimed at extortion to the tune of many billions of dollars. Ruling under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), Judge Kaplan found that the plaintiffs in the case, led by the noted attorney Steven Donziger, used "corrupt means" to procure a \$9.5 billion judgment against Chevron, and that those means included falsifying evidence, coercing judges, bribing "independent" expert witnesses, ghostwriting those "independent" experts'

Whom Are You Calling a Coward?

ERIC HOLDER once called the United States of America a "nation of cowards" when it comes to the issue of race. "Certain subjects are off-limits and . . . to explore them risks at best embarrassment and at worst the questioning of one's character," he told his department's employees at an event celebrating Black History Month.

I would like to think he sent a nice card to Paul Ryan.

If you haven't heard, Paul Ryan is coming out with an anti-poverty agenda that focuses on the value of work. The labor-force-participation rate is the worst it's been since 1978 (for men in their 30s, Greece is actually doing better than the U.S.). For workers in the bottom half of the economy, the recession never ended. The War on Poverty 50 years on hasn't changed the poverty rate (though, in fairness, the poverty rate is a fairly bogus statistic used to justify the anti-poverty bureaucracy's existence). Intergenerational poverty, particularly in African-American communities, is especially acute. If you don't believe me, pick up a copy of *The Nation* or *The New Republic* almost at random and you'll see that liberals routinely acknowledge this point. You could even read some of Barack Obama's speeches, including his recent remarks explaining his new "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, which is aimed solely at young black and Hispanic men.

The reasons for these problems are complex. But some of them have to do with culture. Family breakdown—a product of cultural forces, if you think about it for a nanosecond—has a powerful correlation with economic immobility and poverty. I almost feel stupid having to rehash any of this, because no remotely informed person denies these facts—at least in private conversations.

But say such things in public—and make the mistake of being a Republican—and boom, you are a racist. Paul Ryan said on Bill Bennett's radio show that there are, "in our inner cities in particular, . . . generations of men not even thinking about working."

The transmission belt between left-wing websites and MSNBC gargoyles whirred into overdrive. It was all dog-

whistle racism! ThinkProgress—a name that should be studied for succinct false advertising—announced that Ryan "blam[ed] poverty on lazy 'inner city' men." With all of the intellectual generosity he could muster, Paul Krugman wrote:

Just to be clear, there's no evidence that Mr. Ryan is personally a racist, and his dog-whistle may not even have been deliberate. But it doesn't matter. He said what he said because that's the kind of thing conservatives say to each other all the time. And why do they say such things? Because American conservatism is still, after all these years, largely driven by claims that liberals are taking away your hard-earned money and giving it to Those People.

Indeed, race is the Rosetta Stone that makes sense of many otherwise incomprehensible aspects of U.S. politics.

Ah yes, the unintended racism of wanting to find jobs for black people so they can get out of poverty. The ornate idiocy of it all is almost a thing of beauty. Essentially, conservatives are racist because they don't want to help poor black people, and they are racist if they want to help poor black people. The only way not to be racist is to endorse the policies that have done so little to help poor black people.

The cruelty of it all is eclipsed only by the hypocrisy of it. The very same liberals who bleat about the burning need for a national conversation on race are not just willing but eager to denounce the racism of anyone who enters that conversation, no matter how tangentially and no matter how sincerely. And when conservatives fail to take the bait, they are denounced as heartless cowards. To paraphrase Will Rogers, calls to join in a national conversation on race amount to saying "Nice doggy" until liberals can find a rock.

—JONAH GOLDBERG

MAKING GAY OKAY

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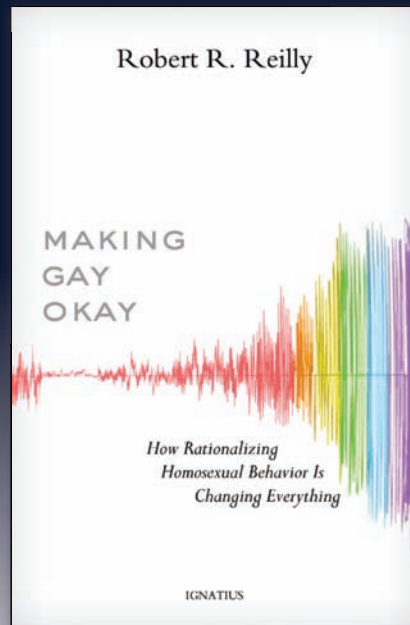
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— Jay W. Richards, PhD
Author, N. Y. Times bestseller, *Indivisible*

Why are Americans being forced to consider homosexual acts as morally acceptable? Why has the US Supreme Court accepted the validity of same-sex "marriage", which was unheard of in the history of Western civilization? Where has the "gay rights" movement come from, and how has it so easily conquered America?

As Robert Reilly shows in this book, the answers are in the dynamics of the rationalization of sexual misbehavior. The power of rationalization drives the gay rights movement and gives it its revolutionary character. The homosexual cause moved from a plea for tolerance to cultural conquest because the security of its rationalization requires universal acceptance. In other words, we all must say that the bad is good.

The understanding that things have an in-built purpose by their Nature is being replaced by the idea that everything is subject to man's will and power. This is what the debate over homosexuality is really about — the Nature of reality itself.

The outcome of this dispute will have consequences far beyond the issue at hand. Already America's major institutions have been transformed — its courts, its schools, its military, its civic institutions, and even its diplomacy. The further institutionalization of homosexuality will mean the triumph of force over reason, thus undermining the very foundations of the American Republic.

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reports to the court, bribing the Ecuadorian judge in the case, and subsequently lying to U.S. legal authorities in an attempt to cover up their misdeeds. The anti-Chevron roster includes a Who's Who of environmentalists, high-profile Democrats, lawyers, and financial interests, among them figures close to New York governor Andrew Cuomo. Those plaintiffs were showered with support from Greenpeace USA and the Sierra Club, and their representatives were given generous space in *Politico* and the *Huffington Post* to press their case. Kaplan's ruling has rendered the Ecuador verdict uncollectable in the United States, but Chevron will still face efforts to collect these ill-gotten gains in practically every country where it operates. The ruling makes it clear that what happened was not an ill-founded lawsuit but a crime. Perhaps the Department of Justice could be bothered to take note.

■ In late March, the Obama administration quietly announced a new initiative: America would give up its control of the Internet. Why? So that, in the terse approximation of the Department of Commerce, “stakeholders across the global Internet community” might step into the breach. To the untrained ear, this does not sound too dire. The Web is a wildly decentralized network of computers, servers, and commercial services that are run and maintained so well by businesses, citizens, and civil society that one might ask why it needs “controlling” at all. In the main, the answer is that it does not—except at its root, where the most basic of questions need answering—questions such as “Where is the website for NATIONAL REVIEW located?”; “How does e-mail work in practice?”; and “What number does another computer use if it wishes to locate my iPhone?” As one might imagine, the capacity for these questions to be answered with censorship is rife, and yet the combination of a California nonprofit and the light touch of the Commerce Department have hitherto ensured that the principles of the First Amendment have been available worldwide. Now the system will be subordinated to the amorphous ideals of “global participation” and “democracy,” which in practice means subject to the machinations of international bodies and foreign states. An unforced error.

■ The College Board's decision to make the SAT less rigorous was hardly surprising. It was not the first such revision and will not be the last. Not everything about the change was bad: Eliminating the essay section is no loss, since it essentially measured one's ability to write like a low-level bureaucrat. More dismaying is the removal of advanced math; a basic understanding of mathematical concepts grows ever more important, so students should be encouraged to take that one extra class. Worst of all, the test will contain fewer uncommon words. What would William F. Buckley Jr. think? The changes will make the SAT easier, as intended, but they won't solve the fundamental problem: However the test is written, some ethnic, economic, and gender groups will score better than others, which to the liberal mind means the test is flawed by definition. The increasing prominence of high-scoring Asian students only exacerbates this “problem.” The original SAT was designed, in part, to give students from immigrant families a chance to compete in college admissions. Now it's increasingly designed to prevent them from competing.

■ In early March, the West Virginia legislature passed, by wide margins, the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act: The final vote was 83–15 in the house of delegates and 29–5 in the senate. If Governor Earl Ray Tomblin signs the bill, West Virginia will become the first Democratic-controlled state to ban abortions later than 20 weeks after conception. Over the past few years, 20-week abortion bans have garnered broad political support: Fifty-six percent of Americans prefer that period to the more commonly observed 24-week ban, and the House of Representatives passed a federal Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act last summer, with Senator Lindsey Graham (R., S.C.) now leading the effort to secure its passage in the Senate. We hope Governor Tomblin signs the bill, and that other blue states follow suit.

■ El Salvador has had another presidential election, and the country is left in a perilous spot. Salvador Sánchez Cerén, a leftist of the guerrilla army-turned-political party FMLN, has won with 50.11 percent of the vote; his conservative opponent received 49.89 percent. The conservative challenged the result, alleging fraud. But the result will stand. Sánchez Cerén was a rebel commander in the civil war, and is the first such man to rise to the presidency. His comrades in Nicaragua, Venezuela, Bolivia, and elsewhere have all used their elections—their initial elections—to subvert democracy, making sure there is never again a free and fair election. If Sánchez Cerén chooses not to follow this path, it will be well-nigh a miracle. Democratic gains in Central America, and Latin America more broadly, were very hard won. Painfully, bloodily won. We learn the redundant lesson that no gain is permanent.



■ If one elects to host a flagship television show with the title “Free Speech,” it is perhaps best not to be obvious when one shuts down debate. But this, alas, is precisely what the British Broadcasting Corporation was caught doing in March. After Britain's “first and only gay Muslim drag queen” asked the panel, “When will it be right to be Muslim and gay?” host Rick Edwards stepped in and explained that the question had been ruled out at the behest of his hosts, the Birmingham Central Mosque. “We were going to debate that question,” Edwards explained, “but today after speaking to the mosque they have expressed deep concerns with having this discussion here.” The show then moved on, much to the irritation of the audience. *Free Speech* advertises itself with all sorts of inclusivity buzzwords and slogans. Its website boasts that it is “the show which makes your voice heard in the national conversation.” If the BBC is to escape investigation under the British Trade Descriptions Act of 1968, it might consider adding “. . . unless you have something uncomfortable to say.”

■ Naturally, Oliver Stone has made another film celebrating Hugo Chávez. Naturally, the Venezuelan government required

all networks to run it on the anniversary of Chávez's death. It's hard to imagine a tribute more in keeping with the Chávez spirit.

■ Joseph Fan Zhongliang, whom Pope John Paul II made bishop of Shanghai in 2000, spent his episcopacy under



house arrest in his apartment. He was baptized into the Church at age 14, in 1932, and entered the Jesuit order at age 20. After the Communists rose to power, he spent 20 years in the laogai for the crime of persisting in his belief that authority in matters of his faith resided in Rome, not Beijing, which in 1957 invented the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association in an attempt to establish a national Catholic Church independent of the Holy See. Bishop Fan died on March 16, at 95. The government forbade a funeral Mass to be said for him at the cathedral. The last state-approved bishop of Shanghai was approved by Rome as well but has been missing since July 2012, when, to loud applause at his ordination ceremony, he renounced his association with the CPCA. To its frustration, the Chinese government lacks the faculty to confer Holy Orders, though it continues to demonstrate its talent for raising faithful Catholic priests to the status of international heroes.

■ The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission has initiated disciplinary proceedings against a group of scofflaw cable channels. The channels' names—AOV Adult Movie Channel, AOV XXX Action Clips, and AOV Maleflicxxx—make clear what kind of entertainment they carry, but the CR-tTC's complaint has nothing to do with the subject matter. Instead they are charged with violating two rules: one that requires them to show at least 35 percent Canadian content, and one that requires 90 percent of each channel's offerings to be closed-captioned. We can't help feeling that the commission has overreached. After all, as our FCC can tell you, a broadcast regulator's most important job is to try to impose racial and gender quotas on newsroom staff.

■ The Romeike family is considered a crime family in their native Germany, and their offense is homeschooling. After seeing the German state seize the children of other would-be homeschool families—and forbid them, in contravention of German and European law, to move with their families to homeschool-friendly jurisdictions such as France—the Romeikes had sought and obtained refugee status in the United States, until the Obama administration succeeded in having that status overturned. Faced with the possibility of deporta-

tion and the rending of their family, the Romeikes took their case to the public, and the administration has relented in its preferred way, which is to say with an ad hoc suspension of legal processes. The Romeikes' deportation is now on "indefinite deferred status," meaning that they will be permitted to stay in the United States—right up until the second the federal government changes its mind, a worrisome position given the arbitrary habits of the Obama administration. The episode reflects poorly on Germany, which remains positively Bismarckian in its approach to schooling, as well as on the herky-jerky system under which such cases are adjudicated in the United States.

■ Condoleezza Rice is scheduled to give the commencement address at Rutgers University. Some faculty—many faculty—don't like this. They have voted to condemn the selection of Rice and to urge the rescission of her invitation to speak. So far, the administration is holding firm. In other circumstances, the Left might ask, "Why do Rutgers professors hate trailblazing black women?"

■ On a sunny March day at the University of California, Santa Barbara, a dozen students from the nearby Thomas Aquinas College conducted a pro-life demonstration, passing out pamphlets next to large pictures of aborted fetuses. Soon, a pack of students led by feminist-studies professor Mireille Miller-Young (who specializes in black cultural studies, pornography, and sex work) began chanting "Tear down this sign" before the professor took one of the pro-life signs and walked away with several students. Thrin Short, a young woman participating in the demonstration, followed the burglars, and when she attempted to retrieve the sign was assaulted by Miller-Young, receiving scratches on both of her arms. The sign was later found destroyed. As Short was in pursuit, the professor shouted at her, "I may be a thief, but you are a terrorist." Terrorists generally don't engage in peaceful demonstrations. Terrorists tend to quash dissent and attack peaceful people, two activities this feminist-studies professor seems inclined toward.

■ In April, the Stanford Anscombe Society, a student organization named after British analytic philosopher G. E. M. Anscombe that "promotes discussion regarding the roles of family, marriage, and sexual integrity" among Stanford University students, will host a conference entitled "Communicating Values: Marriage, Family, and the Media." Recently, the society requested funding for the event at a Stanford Graduate Student Council meeting and was denied it. Why? Because, according to some offended students, the view that marriage is between a man and a woman could be considered "hate speech," and the "negative event" could "threaten the safety of campus for the queer population." There may be hate speech against LGBT students on Stanford's campus; espousing a view of traditional marriage does not constitute it. The conference will go on, with outside funding, but we're reminded of another term that's been completely stripped of meaning at the American university: tolerance.

■ When a fire alarm went off at Como Park High School in St. Paul, Minn., Kayona Hagen-Tietz was swimming in the

school's pool. Since her clothes were locked in a locker, she hurried out of the building and into the five-degrees-below-zero cold. Letting her back into the building, even to stand just inside the doorway, was out of the question; the fire code forbids it. Someone suggested that she could sit in one of the teachers' cars until they got the all-clear, but that, too, was unthinkable; a district policy prohibits students from entering a teacher's vehicle. So her fellow students wrapped her up as best they could and crowded around to shield her from the cold. After ten minutes, a teacher finally secured official permission to let Kayona sit in her car; she got through the ordeal with a minor case of frostbite in her feet. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath; he knew that you sometimes have to give the rules a rest. The bureaucrats in St. Paul are more Pharisaical.

■ MSNBC president Phil Griffin brought on the network's newest host, Ronan Farrow—a precocious 26-year-old who graduated from Yale Law School and is a Rhodes scholar to boot—in the hope that he would draw young viewers to MSNBC. As it turns out, Farrow, the celebrity son of either Woody Allen or Frank Sinatra, is drawing fewer viewers even than Andrea Mitchell, the host he replaced in the 1:00 P.M. time slot. His largest audience is among adults 50 and older. That makes perfect sense: Farrow was groomed from an early age by aging liberal elites and learned how to strike a perfect pitch for them. It may make for a successful career, but not for compelling television.

■ Facebook executive Sheryl Sandberg, the author of a bestselling book urging women to “lean in” to their careers, has launched a celebrity-backed campaign to “ban bossy.” We need to “get rid of” the word, according to Sandberg, because girls are discouraged from pursuing leadership roles by the fear that they will be perceived as bossy. One prominent counterexample to this thesis is Sandberg herself, who despite being labeled a bossy girl in her youth went on to become chief operating officer of a Fortune 500 company. There's no reason to think that girls today are any more cowed by the specter of what she calls “the other b word”: Millennial women are already beginning to eclipse their male peers in academia and in the work force. Her call to affirm all girls as nascent “leaders” is also misguided.

American education already fetishizes leadership too much.

Most girls—and boys—will not grow up to be leaders, and this isn't a bad thing.

Sandberg should stick to bossing her employees.



■ Joe McGinniss was involved in several ethical broils of the sort that journalists love to chew over: He bought a house next door to Sarah Palin, one of his subjects, the better to spy on her; he befriended, then condemned, murderer Jeffrey MacDonald, thereby earning the ire of Janet Malcolm (he got that one right). He shot to fame with *The Selling of the President 1968*, his exposé of Richard Nixon's media operation. The book was hilarious, a delight—and an exposé only to those who knew nothing of American history. Presidential candidates sell images of themselves—and this was news? After I Like Ike, FDR and his airbrushed polio, TR and his he-man antics, Lincoln the rail-splitter, the log-cabin/hard-cider campaign, Old Hickory? Every generation must relearn the truth; future generations will have a pleasant time of it when they consult McGinniss's youthful tour de force. Dead at 71. R.I.P.

■ Anthony Wedgwood Benn was Britain's most outstanding champagne socialist. Born into a titled family and married to an American heiress, he passed himself off as proletarian Tony Benn. During his 50 years as a member of Parliament, he struck a familiar pose as a radical, microphone in one hand, a cup of tea in the other, usually speechifying that now was the moment when the powerless could and should take power. A cabinet minister in the enfeebled days of the Labour prime ministers Harold Wilson and James Callaghan, Benn was pushing for a Soviet-style economy with nationalization of the commanding heights, and nuclear disarmament to boot. Benn's defeatism had the contrary effect of turning the electorate in favor of Mrs. Thatcher and renewal. His persistent trading on privilege came to be humored, and on leaving politics he wrote his own epitaph, “I'm harmless now.” Dead at 88. R.I.P.



■ In our darker moods, conservatives speak of cultural liberalism as a miasma, seeping into our thoughts we don't quite know how. But sometimes you can point your finger and say, That's how. Justin Kaplan was a prize-winning biographer—Mark Twain, Whitman—who edited the 16th edition (1992) of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*. Kaplan was guided by a prejudice—he despised Ronald Reagan. Nor was it a secret prejudice—“I'm not going to disguise the fact that I despise Ronald Reagan,” he told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. As a result, Reagan, the great communicator, got only three entries, none of them consequential (compare JFK with 28, and Jimmy Carter with six). Kaplan's ideology skewed other entries—Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn appeared eight times, but only once criticizing Communism. Kaplan's tenure belongs in a political *Bartlett's* as a reminder that the great sins of ideological commissars are sins of omission. Dead at 88. R.I.P.

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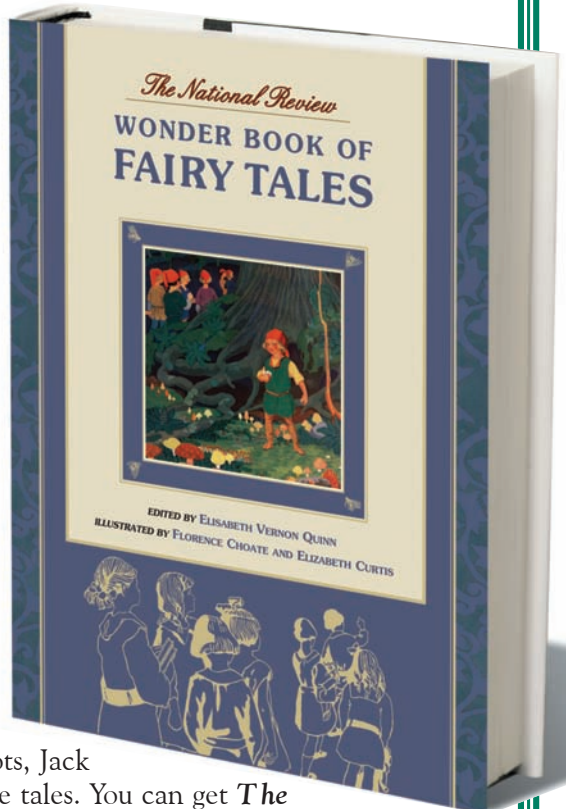
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RUSSIA

Putin's Perilous Overreach

VLADIMIR PUTIN'S speech confirming what everyone already knew—that Russia would annex Crimea—was written up immediately afterwards by the media (and by former Western ambassadors to Moscow) as both a fait accompli in relation to Crimea and a Russian foreign-policy victory in general. It was certainly a bold, skillful, and effective performance.

Putin stressed NATO's Kosovo intervention as a legal precedent for Russia's military and constitutional takeover of a province of a neighboring state. That was a shrewd choice since, as conservative specialists in international law such as Jeremy Rabkin warned at the time, our actions in Kosovo involved a violation of the basic legal tenet of non-intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, one that might return to haunt us. (The Iraq war had much greater legal justification in numerous U.N. resolutions, which is presumably why Putin largely skirted it.) Putin's argument will therefore undercut Western governments that oppose the annexation of Crimea on international-law grounds.

He underlined the historic relationship between Russia and Crimea—namely, that until the 1950s Crimea was a part of Russia. That argument will appeal to those Western companies, notably in German industry, that value their economic ties with Russia and would prefer not to risk them for what may look like—in Putin's words—righting a historical wrong.

He promised that annexing Crimea was his last territorial demand in Ukraine. That will suggest to diplomats everywhere that if they agree to let Crimea be annexed (doubtless after some face-saving agreement on details that changes nothing important), they can relax and return to the status quo

ante. What remains of Ukraine can then become the basis of a new compromise that would insist on something like a “unity” government, including pro-Russian parties—if we want to preserve our earlier illusions.

And overall Putin had some shrewdly reassuring words for almost everyone who might object to the swallowing of Crimea. He set out to sedate Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians, Western investors, NATO, even American conservatives who might be comforted by his warm historical references to Christianity.

So is the crisis over? Not quite.

Almost every reassuring passage in Putin's speech was contradicted by another passage. His promise to respect Ukrainian sovereignty, for instance, was balanced by his claim of a right to protect ethnic Russians wherever they are under threat. Since his intelligence services are at present fomenting ethnic conflict in eastern Ukrainian cities, that reduces the value of his assurances to slightly below that of the Russian ruble.

Putin's clever manipulation of the Kosovo precedent ignores the fact that his annexation of Crimea breaks Russia's own pledge in the Budapest Declaration to protect Ukraine's territorial integrity. That does more than reduce the value of Russian promises—it emphasizes the awkward fact that Russia under Putin is a lawless state run by its own security services.

Above all, Putin is still behind where he was five months ago, when he began pressing his puppet, President Viktor Yanukovich, to withdraw Ukraine from its proposed relationship with the European Union. Then, Ukraine was not only part of Russia's zone of influence; it was intended by Putin to become much closer to Moscow, to the point of joining his own Eurasian Union. Today Ukraine is outside Russia's zone of influence altogether; and as long as Crimea is annexed and occupied, it will remain outside. That in turn will ensure that Belarus, Kazakhstan, and other post-Soviet nations will be reluctant to join the proposed union too. Unless Putin is content to abandon his grand design to revive Com - econ, the former “Soviet bloc,” in post-Soviet form—and in the present heady, nationalistic mood of Moscow, that seems unlikely—he will be looking for new opportunities to expand its potential membership.

For all these reasons, Crimea is not the end of a crisis but the midpoint of one that began with the occupation of parts of Georgia in 2008. The difference is that the West now realizes the nature of the Putin regime. Even if it fails to agree on serious sanctions, therefore, it will gradually move to reduce its reliance on undependable Russian energy. Which means that the future crises Putin sends us will occur against a background of Russia's greater economic weakness.



AP PHOTO/ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO



Putin's World

In Crimea, a victory for authoritarianism

BY JOHN O'SULLIVAN

FOLLOWING a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Putin about Ukraine and Crimea, German chancellor Angela Merkel is reported to have said that he is living in another world. That sounds like condemnation but it is really a dispassionate statement. In much the same way, the inmates of a lunatic asylum might say that their psychiatrist is living in another world. He is. But his world is the real one; the inmates inhabit a world of illusions. In which worlds are Putin and Merkel respectively living?

Merkel is living in the post-Cold War world that began in 1989 and was entrenched by the failure of the 1991 Soviet counter-coup. It is in its way a very pleasant world—a place of peace dividends, reduced military budgets, arms reduction and nuclear disarmament, alliances between former enemies, free-trade agreements, largely free capital movements, the growth of international organizations and their influence, the spread of international law and regula-

tion, and economic growth. One characteristic fruit of this world was the Budapest Declaration of 1994, under which Ukraine surrendered its nuclear weapons in return for security and territorial guarantees from Russia, the U.S., and Britain.

That world was dependent, however, on Western dominance, U.S. leadership, and the acquiescence of non-Western powers such as Russia and China. It came to an end in 2008 when the financial crisis undermined Western dominance, there was a shift of power from the West to Asia (or at least the perception of such a shift), Russia invaded and occupied parts of the sovereign state of Georgia, and the West acquiesced in this occupation. These developments ushered in the post-post-Cold War world in which President Putin is living. Indeed, he has done more than most to bring it about, having annexed parts of Georgia and now the Ukrainian province of Crimea.

This world is a much more insecure and unstable place. If the Crimean epi-

sode of the Ukraine crisis is any guide, it is marked by the violent redrawing of boundaries, contempt for international law, the tearing up of treaties, the incitement of ethnic riots in neighboring countries to justify aggression, the barring of neutral observers from the conflict, the use of national troops under false colors, the whipping up of an atmosphere of aggression, and constant war propaganda attacking the putative enemy.

Comparisons to Hitler in modern debate are usually odious. But parallels between this world and the Central and Eastern Europe of the 1930s are unsettling nonetheless: the forced military “Anschluss” of Austria with the Third Reich on ethnic and historical grounds; Berlin’s encouragement of ethnic separatist demands by German communities of the Czech Sudetenland; the military occupation of the Rhineland in contravention of the Versailles Treaty but justified by the British as like “a man walking into his own garden”; the almost casual violation of the Locarno Treaty, which Germany had signed freely during a period of international optimism very similar to the period 1989–2008; the constant Big Lie propaganda from Berlin against one victim of power after another—the Austrians, the Czechs, the Poles . . . ; and, finally, the leader’s assurance after every coup de main that he had no further territorial demands. All these have their counterparts in the events of the last few months.

We even hear sophisticated Westerners advancing excuses that echo the understanding attitude of the Anglo-French appeasers of the 1930s towards Germany’s violations of Versailles: That treaty (cf. the 1954 handing over of Crimea to Ukraine) was unjust; Germany’s legitimate security interests (cf. Russia’s naval interests in the Black Sea) deserve respect; Germany’s resentments (cf. Russian resentments) were a natural reaction to the French (cf. NATO’s) policy of encirclement; and small countries could not expect great powers to protect their interests at the risk of war (*Mourir pour Danzig?*).

Of course, the parallels are not exact. There is no Holocaust around the corner; indeed, the forced famine that the Soviet Union inflicted on Ukraine in the 1930s is one factor restraining Putin from

ROMAN GENIN

going farther into Ukraine. Putin, moreover, is a far cooler customer than the German dictator ever was: If he exploits ethnic hatreds, he does not seem to share them. And he wants to avoid any major breach with the West that would damage the Russian economy, his regime, and his private fortune.

All that said, there is still an ideology driving his policy in addition to geopolitical considerations of security or the slaking of Russian resentments. He wants to make the world safe for authoritarianism. What alarmed and even offended Putin was not only that Ukraine decided to defect to “Europe” from his Eurasian Economic Union but that this decision was achieved by a popular resistance on the Maidan that proved stronger than all the forces an authoritarian government was able to throw at it. “People power” may not always be wise, as developments within and since the Arab Spring have proved; but at a certain point in political evolution it becomes a formidable force. Putin’s Moscow is full of theorists (most of them slightly loopy) who are desperately seeking ways and theories to oppose or divert it.

Unless Putin (with or without their help) can find a way to discredit and defeat people power in Ukraine, it may well spread to Russia. That explains the extraordinarily virulent attacks on the new Ukrainian government as fascists and terrorists, the attempts to foment the Russian–Ukrainian ethnic violence and disorder that have not occurred spontaneously in eastern Ukraine, and the determination to prevent neutral observers, especially ones from international bodies such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, from seeing how the Crimean referendum was conducted. The small number of Western journalists there report, for instance, the arrest of Ukrainian community leaders and their disappearance into prison beforehand. The landslide was the result of such intimidation—together with the fact that the ballot paper offered voters no choice to stay with Ukraine.

What makes the threat of people power more dangerous to Putin is that he may be losing his ability to buy it off. He depends on high tax revenues from Russian energy sales to the West to keep the transfer payments running. He therefore wants to avoid anything in the short

or long run that is likely to reduce or disrupt that revenue.

Western politicians and businessmen who worry about the energy weapon have it the wrong way round. For producers the energy weapon is a suicide bomb. Threatening energy cut-offs makes existing and potential buyers look for those producers who have no likely interest in blackmailing them with threats to cut off supplies. Except in those few cases when one customer-country can be isolated—in the past Ukraine has experienced this—it’s a weapon that can’t be used without driving away customers. Unlike the Saudis, the Russians can’t afford to do that.

It will happen spontaneously, however. Following this crisis, Western European customers will gradually diversify their purchases without further prompting, probably by enabling fracking within their countries and importing liquified natural gas from U.S. producers who are way ahead of them in developing such technologies. Far from adding another incentive to this drift of events, Putin will try to retard it. His speech to both houses of the Russian parliament reflected this consideration. It alternated tough nationalist rhetoric with reassurances to Ukraine that he would stop at annexing Crimea and pleas to Washington and America’s European allies not to start another Cold War. He wants a long pause between rounds.

But Putin, by changing the spirit of the age through his handling of this crisis, has compelled the West to live in his post–post–Cold War world too. Russia might have gained many of its objectives through diplomacy. It already enjoyed full naval rights in the Black Sea ports. It might have gotten a unity government in Kiev from the start.

Polish foreign minister Radek Sikorski reported that the Russian representative at the negotiations between the EU ministers and the leaders of the Maidan protest had played a helpful role. But the back office in Moscow then rejected the agreed document. Would the Maidan demonstrators have surged ahead and beyond the agreement if it had carried a guarantee of Russian support for a compromise? Maybe. Yanukovich’s power had simply collapsed and it was hard for the demonstrators not to seize power over his discredited political corpse. On the other hand, the Ukrainian govern-

ment since those first few days has behaved with restraint and moderation. A peaceful outcome might have happened; but seemingly Putin didn’t want that.

Contrary to Russian and other analyses, the West *did* want that. Sikorski appealed strongly to the Maidan leaders not to reject the initial compromise. Indeed, only two European Union leaders—Sikorski and the Swedish foreign minister, Carl Bildt—were strong supporters of the people-power movement in Kiev. Other EU and Western European leaders were quite happy to lose to Putin and to let the problems of Ukraine pass from them. It was the Ukrainian protesters who prevented that outcome.

All that has now changed. President Obama and other NATO leaders might have been willing to see a bundle of different compromises that gave Russia more power—almost sovereign power in Crimea and strong influence in Ukraine—provided that this had been achieved by diplomacy and agreement. What they cannot accept is that such matters as international borders and population movements should be decided by a single power employing brute force, ignoring its own signature on treaties, and defending itself with lies. They may not be able to agree on tough sanctions to punish or deter such behavior for the moment, but they can’t accept the *fait accompli* either. So it won’t be a *fait accompli*. And since Putin has nailed his skull-and-crossbones to the mast, there will be a long-running crisis in Russo–Western relations in which the Western aim will be to weaken Russia economically and Putin’s aim will be to make the West cry “*Dyadya*.”

Western leaders live in Putin’s world now, and they will have to play by his rules if they are to prevail or even to score a draw. As aids to understanding international relations for the next few years, therefore, government statements and diplomatic proposals will be much less useful than the spy thrillers of Eric Ambler (written and placed in the 1930s), of Alan Furst (written today and placed in the 1930s), and of Daniel Silva (written and placed in the world of today). These works explore the world of border incidents, coups d’état, stolen documents, energy-exploration contracts, corporate conspiracies, and intelligence wars. Mars, meet Mars.

It’s going to be a bumpy ride. **NR**

Conservative State Think Tanks

The Left tries to shut them down because they're winning

BY STEPHEN MOORE

If you've ever wondered why conservative policy ideas triumph more often at the state level than they do in Washington, here's one explanation: the rising influence of free-market-oriented think tanks in the states.

Take the momentous victory last month in Chattanooga, Tenn., where workers at a Volkswagen plant rejected the United Auto Workers' bid to represent them. This victory didn't come about by chance. The Beacon Center, an advocacy group for conservative policy in Tennessee, played a key role in the battle. Beacon held town-hall forums—one of which I participated in—making the commonsense case to community leaders, the media, and VW workers that inviting in the union would put this fast-growing southern town on the path toward becoming another Detroit. The failure of labor bosses to win the VW vote and establish a foothold in the South is due at least in part to the Beacon Center's successful campaign to educate the public.

Today there are more than 60 of these mini think tanks in the country—one operating in just about every state capital. Beacon in Tennessee, the Illinois Policy Institute, the Show-Me Institute in Missouri, the James Madison Institute in Florida, and many others like them market and help implement conservative solutions to a range of thorny policy problems, from failed schools to traffic congestion.

Naturally, the Left wants to muzzle these groups, in much the same manner that they have proposed new IRS rules in an effort to shut down conservative 501(c)(4) social-welfare groups. Leading the left-wing charge are two groups, Progress Now and Center for Media and

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Democracy (CMD), that try to bully corporate supporters—including Kraft Foods, Google, and Microsoft—into pulling their funding from the conservative “stink tanks,” as the attack dogs charmingly call them.

Here we go again. This is the same intimidation tactic that George Soros-sponsored groups use to pressure Fortune 100 companies into withholding donations from the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a national network of 2,000 conservative state legislators. The left-wing groups are also issuing Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests in at least five states to obtain think-tank donor lists. They also want legislators to disclose any and all communications with ALEC or state think tanks—as if they were drug runners. On November 13, CMD released a report charging that a “web of right-wing ‘think tanks’” act as “extreme pressure groups” by “orchestrating extensive lobbying and political operations to peddle their legislative agenda, all while reporting little or no lobbying activities.” The groups are hired guns for big-business interests, CMD claims, and are funded with “dark money,” which it defines as undisclosed contributions from anonymous donors, including those who have “deep ties to the Koch brothers.” The goal is to shut down or shut up these conservative think tanks because they pose a growing threat to unions and leftist governance.

For the past dozen years, these conservative research groups have not only proliferated from coast to coast, they have also racked up stunning policy victories, especially in red and purple states. Disclosure: Over the years I have spoken at conferences held by many of these groups, and some of them have published my work. And why not? The Goldwater Institute has been instrumental in bringing school choice to nearly 20,000 students in Arizona, making the state a national model for education reform; the Texas Public Policy Foundation has inspired the booming Right on Crime movement, which cuts incarceration costs by strengthening alternatives to jail time, such as probation and treatment, for non-violent drug users; and last summer, two think tanks in North Carolina, the John Locke Foundation and the Civitas Institute, helped push through the biggest income-tax cut in the state’s history.

But what sent the Left into anger-management therapy was a startling win last year by the Mackinac Center, a think tank in Michigan, the birthplace of unionism in America. Through effectively presented research and diligent legwork, the group persuaded Lansing lawmakers to pass a right-to-work law in the Wolverine State. The Left never saw it coming.

Late last year, the unions took it on the chin again, when the Independence Institute’s \$100,000 campaign convinced Colorado voters that a union-sponsored ballot initiative to raise taxes by \$1 billion to pay for schools would be money wasted and would wreck the state economy. The Left spent \$10 million to \$12 million, but voters agreed with Independence and rejected the initiative by a margin of nearly two to one.

A few years ago, a George Soros employee told me off the record that it would cost the Left up to \$1 billion to match the infrastructure and intellectual credibility of these free-market-oriented conservative outfits—quite a compliment given that many of these state groups still operate out of cramped offices in shopping malls, on shoestring budgets of \$4 million or less. In most states, conservative think tanks are at a distinct fundraising disadvantage because most take not even a dime of government money, whereas the leftist groups they battle are generally funded through tax dollars and union dues (which are collected even when the individual taxpayer or union member opposes the aims of the groups).

Alas, the Left’s attacks are already drawing some blood. Two think tanks, the Buckeye Institute in Ohio and the Commonwealth Foundation in Pennsylvania, are currently under audit by the IRS, and groups in other states are girding for a similar assault. Predictably, the media have dutifully echoed the Left’s litany of allegations. Relying heavily on the views of Lisa Graves, the director of CMD, Jane Mayer argued in *The New Yorker* in November that the state think tanks are nothing more than mouthpieces for big business and Wall Street. “The think tanks are less free actors than a coordinated collection of corporate front groups,” she claimed. Equally alarming to Mayer, they are supposedly masterminded by the State Policy Network (SPN), a coalition of state think tanks. “Far from

being independent,” the state think tanks “have promoted . . . the same carbon-copy claims, identical language, and distorted statistics . . . [and] are intensely subservient to the wishes of the most powerful few,” she wrote, quoting Graves.

The complaint here is that conservative state groups are borrowing reforms that have worked in one state—in welfare, pension, or education policy—and using them to improve policies in other states. The scoundrels. As Tracie Sharp, who runs SPN, tells me: “This is precisely what state think tanks are supposed to do and why they are so effective at solving problems.” What the Left calls distortion—the statement that lower-tax states have stronger economies than do higher-tax states, for instance—is in fact observable reality. And what Mayer finds sinister is the American concept of federalism, whereby states learn from one another what works and what doesn’t. In private industry, this is called “best practices.”

The “dark money” claim, propounded by *Mother Jones*, among others, is even more baseless. It’s also toweringly hypocritical. Wherever they fall on the political spectrum, 501(c)(4) tax-exempt social-welfare groups are not legally required to list their contributors publicly. When I contacted CMD and the Center for American Progress, which are hollering for disclosure of right-wing “dark money,” they were not willing to reveal their own lists of donors. Graves grew tongue-tied when asked during a press conference about contributions CMD had received from George Soros and his foundation. She admitted the group had received funding but wouldn’t divulge how much. When Soros gives hundreds of millions to the Left, it’s an act of goodwill, but when Charles and David Koch fund right-wing groups, it’s corporate tyranny? I asked Jon Caldara of the Independence Institute whether his group receives much Koch money. His reply: “Well, we sure wish we did.” Evidently the Koch network has not yet penetrated everywhere.

The original hero and funder of the conservative think-tank movement in the states was neither of the Koch brothers, despite their ubiquity in the leftist media. It was the late Thomas Roe, a successful South Carolina businessman who invested seed capital in the 1980s and ’90s to get

fledgling free-market groups off the ground. He described these entities as “foot soldiers in the war of ideas” and believed they could counter the taxpayer-funded, largely left-wing research churned out by universities and the union-funded “studies.”

The state think-tank leaders all laugh at the idea that they are puppets of the Kochs or of the State Policy Network. Anyone who believes that has never met these think-tank presidents. The groups are fiercely independent entities, sometimes excessively so. “Top-down management is the Left’s standard model of operation, not the Right’s,” Tillman tells me. “We practice what we preach: local control and decentralization.” This goes a long way in explaining why the Left has failed so starkly to duplicate the success stories that are widespread in the state-think-tank movement.

As for lobbying, many of the more successful conservative groups spend up to 20 percent of their budget on it, which is permitted under federal tax law—in their case, they spend this money to promote free-market legislation. “We’re in the business of winning, so, yes, we engage in lobbying activities, and proudly,” says Independence’s Caldara. “By the way, we got this idea from the leftist groups that have been lobbying for years.” One could make a strong argument that tax-exempt social-welfare groups should not be able to lobby. The unions and other left-wing organizations, though, are reluctant to call for changes in the tax rules because they know the reforms would probably shut down many of their own strong-arm lobbying activities.

The good news is that no matter how much money George Soros keeps throwing at the cause of government expansionism, it’s doubtful the Left will come close anytime soon to duplicating the committed donor base, strategic leadership, and overall policy clout of the conservative think tanks in the states. “Liberals have until recently tended to ignore us,” says the unflappable Tracie Sharp. “But now they’re coming after us pretty aggressively—we must be winning,” she shrugs. They are, primarily because their ideas actually work. That’s the real reason the Left thinks these free-market groups “stink.” And why conservative donors should double down in funding them.

NR

Sexual Assault and Military Justice

The political undermining of due process

BY DAVID FRENCH

THE sexual-assault report came just after noon, right before a critical mission deep into the heart of al-Qaeda-controlled territory. A young soldier, a specialist, informed his first sergeant (the senior noncommissioned officer in his troop) that a sergeant first class had exposed himself, grabbed the young soldier, and demanded that he perform oral sex. The soldier claimed he twisted out of the grip of the sergeant first class, ran out of the room, and then proceeded straight to the first sergeant.

Despite the high tempo of combat operations, the command immediately launched a comprehensive investigation. There were no witnesses besides the two soldiers allegedly involved, and the sergeant first class tearfully denied any wrongdoing. He had a wife and kids, he said. Why would he assault another man? The guys thought he was gay, and he was tired of the rumors.

And what of the specialist? While his story was also delivered through tears, he demanded that he be removed from the unit and sent back stateside, away from Iraq. A number of soldiers said that the specialist had been profoundly unhappy and told other soldiers that he planned to get home—one way or the other.

So what happened? Was there a sexual assault? Or did a young soldier target another soldier he perceived to be gay and make a false complaint as part of a plan to be transferred home? After all, other soldiers had done more extreme things to go home, like shooting themselves in the foot. Or was the situation somewhere in the middle, an encounter neither as extreme nor or as innocent as either soldier claimed?

Mr. French is an attorney and a veteran of the Iraq War.



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The command, utterly incapable of determining the truth, separated the soldiers, issued a no-contact order, and charged the senior NCOs with monitoring the situation to prevent any further incidents. Both men served out the remainder of their deployments honorably and returned home. Case closed.

I thought of this real-world story, in all its irresolvable ambiguity, when forced to watch *The Invisible War* last year while on a brief period of active duty. Designed to shine a light on the alleged crisis of sexual assault in the military, the film has been shown on Capitol Hill (outraging Congress), it's been shown to the highest ranks of the military, and now it's shown

cutted, according to *Time* magazine.

But these statistics have profound problems. First, the surveys themselves count as a sexual assault any self-report of a sexual assault, regardless of its veracity or credibility or of any analysis of the underlying facts. So the young soldier's story mentioned in the opening of this article would count as an unprosecuted sexual assault—an injustice. But was he actually assaulted? Who can know?

Second, some fraction of the sexual assaults reported in the broader survey numbers and narrower complaint numbers include incidents that occurred before the soldier joined the military.

Third, in the vast majority of cases,

the Air Force and Navy held, “unlawful command influence” in violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The UCMJ prohibits a commander from ordering a specific outcome or punishment in any given case, a prohibition violated by the president's direction that dishonorable discharge be considered following some convictions.

These Air Force and Navy rulings, together with more than a dozen other defense motions that threatened other military sexual-assault prosecutions, required the secretary of defense, Chuck Hagel, to clarify the president's words, stating in a memorandum that “there are no expected or required dispositions,

The United States military is **not a social-justice organization** with an ancillary war-fighting mission.

to virtually every soldier in the Army. Last year, I had to see it twice, and I'm a mere reservist.

It is a documentary that tells the heart-rending stories of a series of alleged victims of sexual assault. Their tales of justice thwarted are undeniably powerful, but cherry-picking a few cases out of several decades of military life (some of the stories stretch back to the Vietnam era) presents a form of indictment-by-anecdote that makes for a good film but can lay the foundation for terrible public policy.

Perhaps aware of this shortcoming, the filmmakers end *The Invisible War* with statistics on the prevalence of sexual assault in the military, claiming that most “assault” is never prosecuted, most perpetrators get away with their crimes, and most victims suffer not only from the assault but also because of the military's alleged indifference.

And, yes, at first glance the statistics are eye-popping. According to sexual-assault surveys, 26,000 men and women (mostly men) in the military claimed they were assaulted in 2011, up from 19,000 in 2010. Last fall, the military reported 3,553 actual sexual-assault complaints (the survey measures not just complaints but also alleged sexual assaults for which no complaints were filed) in the period October 2012 through June 2013, up 50 percent over the equivalent period the previous year. Of the 26,000 potential incidents of sexual assault in fiscal year 2011 (October 1, 2010, to September 30, 2011), 3,000 were reported and 300 were prose-

even if reported, the alleged sexual assault can't be effectively prosecuted for reasons (such as the victim's choice or a lack of evidence) that have nothing to do with any “breakdown” in military justice. “He said, she said” cases, often clouded by alcohol, with no outside witnesses and inconclusive physical evidence, are difficult for any justice system, not just the military justice system.

Finally, even with statistics inflated by self-reports that include pre-service assaults, the military is a far safer place for women than your typical college or university, where, according to one Department of Justice-funded study, as many as 19 percent of college women report that they had experienced completed or attempted sexual assault.

But don't tell President Obama or Congress that the military is safer than college, or that the military is prosecuting credible sexual-assault claims. To the civilian leadership, the military is in crisis, the brass need to fix the problem, and longstanding rules of military justice need to be upturned. “So I don't just want more speeches or awareness programs or training,” the president declared in a news conference in May 2013, “but ultimately folks look the other way. If we find out somebody's engaging in this, they've got to be held accountable—prosecuted, stripped of their positions, court-martialed, fired, dishonorably discharged. Period.”

Coming from the commander-in-chief of the United States military, that statement constituted, as military judges in

outcomes or sentences in any military justice case, other than what result from the individual facts and merits of a case and the application to the case of the fundamentals of due process of law.”

But the president isn't the only politician to wrongly put his thumb on the scales of justice. By a vote of 97–0, the Senate recently passed a bill, sponsored by Senator Claire McCaskill (D., Mo.), to reform prosecution of sexual-assault cases. While the bill is not as extreme as one proposed by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D., N.Y.), which would have removed sexual-assault prosecutions from the chain of command, it still alters normal military criminal procedure.

Under Gillibrand's bill, if a commander and his JAG (Judge Advocate General's Corps) officer disagreed about the merits of a sexual-assault case, the dispute would have gone all the way to the civilian service chief, a requirement that would have placed far greater weight on decisions to prosecute sexual assault. In addition the bill would have required that “in every decision on every promotion in the military,” a commander's record in handling sexual-assault cases be considered, injecting into the commander's decision-making a factor—whether his decision can be justified to a promotion board—that is irrelevant to the proper administration of justice.

Is justice more important in a sexual-assault case than in a murder case or other violent crime? By having the civilian service chief and promotion boards looking

over commanders' shoulders regarding the handling of sexual-assault complaints, the message is clear: Commanders can't be trusted. Moreover, the goal is clear: Commanders should increase their rate of prosecutions.

But neither Senator Gillibrand's defeated bill nor Senator McCaskill's unanimously passed bill will do anything to clear up the ambiguity and messiness of the typical sexual-assault case. Just ask Brigadier General Jeffrey Sinclair.

General Sinclair, the former deputy commander of the 82nd Airborne Division and perhaps the military's highest-profile sexual-assault defendant, was accused of a host of offenses, including adultery, viewing pornography in a deployed area, and committing sexual assault against a younger captain with whom he carried on a three-year affair.

The general did not dispute the adultery and other, lesser charges, but he disputed the assault charge, vigorously. In early March his court-martial was suddenly suspended when the military judge ruled that the military might have pressed ahead with its prosecution of Sinclair not because of the evidence in the case but because of the perceived political need to "send a message." In fact, the victim's lawyer in communications with prosecutors explicitly tied the case to the Army's larger fight against sexual assault. And now a plea bargain is back on the table in a case that feminist *Slate* writer Amanda Marcotte noted would be "just as messy in civilian court."

Yes, sexual assault is a heinous crime. Yes, sexual assault can fracture unit cohesion. So can many crimes, especially violent ones, but the president has singled out sexual-assault complaints as the reason to violate the due-process rights of defendants through unlawful command influence and has led Congress to inject, through the McCaskill bill, promotion considerations into prosecutions.

The mission of the United States military is to fight and win the nation's wars. It is not a social-justice organization with an ancillary war-fighting mission, and the president and Congress should take great care in upending rules of military justice that have been proven over time to safeguard the constitutional rights of the accused, achieve justice for victims, and maintain the military's command integrity and fighting edge. **NR**

Down with Eleven

On the overamplification of American life

BY JAY NORDLINGER

It's not our biggest problem, or even in the top ten, or top 100. But it's still a problem, I think: the over-amplification of American life. I have long held this view, but have been spurred to write about it by recent events.

I went to the New York Philharmonic to review a performance of *Sweeney Todd*, the Sondheim musical. (Every season or so, the Philharmonic will stage a musical, for variety's sake, I suppose, and maybe for the box office, too.) The cast was a mixture of classical and Broadway performers. In the title role was Bryn Terfel, the great Welsh bass-baritone. It was a shock to hear him sing into a microphone. The sound was unnatural—Terfel-like, but not quite Terfel. There is no hall anywhere that he can't fill, naturally. Was it really necessary to mike him? To gild that lily?

Soon, the entire company came in, and the hall shook, so great was the amplifi-

cation. The crowd cheered, excited. It was a little vulgar.

But as amplification goes, the Philharmonic's *Sweeney* was tasteful. Certainly as compared with the next night—when I found myself in Minneapolis, at the Dakota Jazz Club & Restaurant. My friends and I enjoyed a nice dinner, then settled back for the show. Onstage were the musicians of Viva Brazil. They were good, and so was the music they played and sang. But the volume was absurd—painful, assaultive, and anti-musical. We had to leave, and quickly.

Why would someone have done that to music, and how could others have sat there? Why didn't it seem wrong to audience, management, and, maybe most important, the musicians themselves? They're musicians, right?

Complaining about the sound of music—not in the Julie Andrews sense—is a classic expression of fogginess. But I can plead this: If I'm a fogey, I have always been. When I was in high school, a musician friend of mine asked me to go with him to hear Pat Metheny, a jazz guitarist. My friend said he was first-rate. That night, he may well have been—but the amplification was so great, I could hardly hear him. I could not really listen to the music. It was a question of enduring the sonic assault (which I could not do for long).



Bryn Terfel and microphone

Much later, I went to a concert by Lyle Lovett. He has written and sings so many excellent songs. Why would he want to smother them in overamplification? Why would he want to drown them, and render them offensive? He did.

There is a place for loud in music, of course—a big and wonderful place. Richard Strauss was notorious for writing orchestrations so heavy, they drowned out the singers in his operas. The story is told that he attended a rehearsal of his *Elektra*, in which Ernestine Schumann-Heink had a part. He calls out to the conductor, “Louder, louder, I can still hear the Heink!”

Years ago, I interviewed Beverly Sills, and the subject of Birgit Nilsson came up. Sills was talking about her *Elektra* or *Salome*—one of those Strauss roles, I forget which. She said, “You wouldn’t have believed the sheer volume of that voice. It was so *loud*. It simply blew your ears back.” I said, “But her *Salome* [or *Elektra*]—was it musical?” Sills made a face: “It was cold.” She quickly brightened again: “But that sound! It was so *loud*!”

The loudest music I ever heard in a concert hall or opera house—unamplified—was in Salzburg’s Grosses Festspielhaus. The opera was *Das Rheingold*, the first installment in Wagner’s *Ring*. The orchestra in the pit was the Berlin Philharmonic. When the giants (Fasolt and Fafner) came in, the ground shook, thrillingly. And when Wotan and Loge descended into Nibelheim, I thought the house would break apart. It was beyond thrilling—and entirely musical. Of course, these were just moments, not an entire evening.

There were no microphones on that night, as far as I know, but, more and more, microphones are creeping into the opera house. After one performance, a friend of mine said to a singer friend of his, “You sounded almost miked!” The singer admitted she had been. This is not merely a matter of “cheating”—a matter of using artificial means to do what your technique fails to do. Miking distorts, warps, or at least alters sound.

For a long time, Broadway musicals have been rock concerts—amplified to that extent. Singers prance around wearing headsets, with sticks at the side of their mouths. Even the plays are

routinely and heavily miked. People seem to have forgotten how to speak—on Broadway and off.

Earlier this season, I was in a grand old church on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, to review a choral concert. A priest came out to give introductory remarks. His microphone went dead. He stood there, silent, until another one was brought to him. I don’t think it occurred to him to continue speaking, without a microphone. It’s not done now. But for years, priests and others spoke in this church, without benefit of a microphone. Did they make themselves heard? I bet they did.

Above, I mentioned rock concerts, and those are another kettle of fish: Extreme amplification is part of the phenomenon. An aspect of the music. This is certainly true of heavy metal. There is a loved moment in *This Is Spinal Tap*, the 1984 satirical documentary, or “mockumentary,” about the rock life. A guitarist explains that the knobs on his amplifier go up to eleven, rather than the standard ten. Why is eleven better than ten? Because it’s “one louder.”

At the Dakota club, with Viva Brazil on the stage, there was hardly any need for amplification at all. The space is not that big. But they had enough amplification for Yankee Stadium, and beyond. Everything was out of whack. The frustrating thing was that not everyone knew it. Or did they? One boy, who had come with his parents, had his fingers in his ears. That was the only visible sign of dissent. Everyone else . . . well, it was hard to read their feelings. Were they only pretending to think that everything was okay? Or did they really think it was?

Music is not a democracy, but I would have been interested to see a vote—by secret ballot. If the room could have voted on whether to turn down the volume, by a lot, what would the results have been?

William F. Buckley Jr.’s most famous essay was written in 1960 and has been anthologized many times. Its title: “Why Don’t We Complain?” The author begins by describing a train trip of considerable discomfort. It is winter, yet the temperature inside the train is boiling. Everyone is sweating and miserable. Yet no one says anything to the conductor as he passes through. Writes Buckley,

When the temperature outdoors is below freezing, it takes a positive act of will on somebody’s part to set the temperature indoors at 85. Somewhere a valve was turned too far, a furnace over-stoked, a thermostat maladjusted: something that could easily be remedied by turning off the heat and allowing the great outdoors to come indoors. All this is so obvious. What is not obvious is what has happened to the American people.

I had much these thoughts while sitting in the Dakota. For one thing, a “valve” was obviously “turned too far,” a musical thermostat was “maladjusted.” Later in his essay, Buckley talks of sitting in a movie, which is badly out of focus. Again, the people just take it. Toward the end of the essay, Buckley writes,

I think the observable reluctance of the majority of Americans to assert themselves in minor matters is related to our increased sense of helplessness in an age of technology and centralized political and economic power. For generations, Americans who were too hot, or too cold, got up and did something about it. . . . With the technification of life goes our direct responsibility for our material environment, and we are conditioned to adopt a position of helplessness.

It could be that most people don’t mind the amplification at ballgames, and at wedding receptions, and in restaurants, or elsewhere. Incidentally, that elsewhere includes movie theaters. The flicks are no longer out of focus. But have you noticed the volume? And that the previews are much louder than the movies? A friend of mine—it was Rich Lowry, NATIONAL REVIEW’s editor—recently said, “The previews are positively punishing. You can hear them through the soles of your feet.” Maybe most people don’t mind what I consider “overamplification.” Perhaps they like it. But are we sure we would know for sure? That boy in the Dakota, with his fingers in his ears, has not yet learned to conform.

They say the unexamined life is not worth living; I say the overamplified life is nuts. Buckley asked, “Why don’t we complain?” I am, Bill, in your magazine, and maybe someone will hear, over the awful din.

NR

And When The War Is Done

How to remember the First World War?

BY THEODORE DALRYMPLE

CAN we give definitive meanings to great historical events? If we can't, does it mean that we are condemned to moral and political relativism? The centenary of the outbreak of the Great War will be the occasion of an outpouring of historiographical reflection on the war's true meaning and significance. (A minor subsidiary question is why some anniversaries—the tenth, fiftieth, hundredth, and so forth—so capture the human imagination. Why not the seventeenth, the thirty-first, the hundred and eleventh anniversary?)

Thirteen years after the end of the war, in 1931, Noël Coward, an unlikely radical, wrote a deeply anti-war play called "Post-Mortem." In it, a soldier killed in 1917 comes back to his family in 1930. His father, Sir John Cavan, is a press magnate who had a good war in the sense that he made a great deal of money during it by the mass sale of his jingoistic publications. On his return to the living world, the son discovers that forgetfulness of the suffering of the soldiers during the Great War is general, and that what one of the characters calls "all that mealy-mouthed cant [about patriotism and heroic sacrifice]" is still "being shoved down people's throats."

Coward believed that, from the point of view of the population's true interests, the war was irrational and was fought for the benefit of industrialists and profiteers. *Post-Mortem* was virtually a Marxist play and was part of a wave of theatrical and literary revulsion against the war. In 1928 had come R. C. Sherriff's great anti-war hit, *Journey's End*, in which heroism and sacrifice in the trenches are shown to be to no larger purpose or end. (I was first made

to read the play when I was about twelve, under the direction of my English teacher.) In 1932, Somerset Maugham's attack on military patriotism, *For Services Rendered*, in which the shallowness of such patriotism is compared with the depth of the suffering that it wrought, was likewise a great success. The critic of the very conservative *Morning Post*, long defunct, wrote, "This is one of those great plays which make nearly everything else seem so much trivial entertainment."

Here was the soil in which appeasement grew: the view that anything was preferable to war. The irony was that both Coward and Maugham would be writing patriotic propaganda only a few years later: in the case of Maugham, extolling the French war effort in 1940. The effectiveness of their anti-war plays helped to make inevitable the very war for which they were now propagandizing.

The belief that the war was a pointless cataclysm that brought in its train every

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kind of calamity, with neither side having justice or right on its side, is one that is now commonplace to the point of cliché, even among those who view appeasement as having been a historical calamity of similar proportions. I doubt you could find more than one person in a hundred in any European country who thought that *any* of the participants, including his own country, was fully justified in its actions. And Niall Ferguson has recently written that, from the strictly British national perspective, entry into the war was a terrible mistake, hastening the country's no doubt inevitable decline as a power. While it lent as much money as it borrowed during the war, it had to pay its creditors without being able to recover its debts. It was weakened in a way from which, in effect, it has never recovered, and probably never will.

The war smashed up European civilization and sapped Europe's belief in itself: For if the wages of its civilization was such a war, bloody and muddy carnage on so unimaginable a scale, what price its civilization? At least savages fought only with spears, often in a highly ritualized and non-fatal fashion. Civilization was therefore worse, more brutal, than savagery; in short, a sham. No wonder the word "civilization" now almost always appears in quotation marks in all right-thinking academic writing. Of course, from any point of view other than the European, the suicide of Europe might now seem to have been more a blessing, and certainly an opportunity, than a tragedy. When Gandhi was asked what he thought of Western civilization, he replied that he thought it would be a good idea. This witticism after the First World War seemed to have a point, as it almost certainly would not have done before it.

It is salutary, then, to realize that the anti-war reaction of the late Twenties and Thirties was not universal (after all, it took several years for it to develop), that patriotic verse probably outweighed anti-war verse, in quantity if certainly not in quality, long after the war ended, and that what seems so obvious to us now, that the war was a struggle without deep moral meaning, was not always obvious. Indeed, a moment's reflection shows that it cannot have been so, for otherwise the war could hardly have lasted as long as it did, or been fought so bitterly as it was.

I was reminded of this recently when I happened to read *The View in Winter*, a

book by Ronald Blythe about the process of growing old. It consists of transcribed interviews with old people, how chosen the author does not tell us. The work is therefore not in the least scientific, but that does not make it valueless and the author does not seem to have been a man with an ax to grind, except the belief that human experience is worth recording. In 1979, when it was published, survivors of the Great War were still alive, and the chapter about them has the title "The Beloved Holocaust." How I wish now that I had been more interested myself in the lives and experiences of the old people I met, but youth is a period not of idealism but of self-absorption, when the time ahead seems infinite and no opportunity lost forever. The old you have with you always and you can listen to their stories any time in the future.

The old men whom Blythe interviewed said things that now mystify us almost wholly, so deeply entrenched (no pun intended) are we in our own view of the war that we never witnessed. One 81-year-old man said: "The war means something special in my life. I think of the life and the attitude we had then. Now it is an entirely different world so I feel a great gratitude that I passed through all that. I really do. I'm always pleased when I remember."

Blythe describes another man, aged 79, who was wounded in the last year of the war. He lived and will die (he told Blythe) "in the spirit of 1918":

That was when he was 18 and when a bullet crippled him for life. He has lived with pain and disfigurement ever since. One leg is bowed out and shortened so that his movements are gripped in a vigorous rolling motion. . . . Now old, he has no doubt whatever that his bad wounds were a good price to pay for what the war eventually gave him and it is hard to detect a scrap of regret.



"You have to be careful about them—they're low on the food chain, but they keep cutting in line."

This man describes his imminent death as "going over the top [of the trenches] again." But he knows that what he thinks he fought for "doesn't mean a thing to them [the younger generation] any more."

Another veteran of the war, 81, quotes Browning's poem "Fra Lippo Lippi": "This world's no blot for us, / Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good: / To find its meaning is my meat and drink."

But the old man doesn't quote the following line, which is the reply of the Prior, who finds Lippi's defense of his realism in painting insufficiently pious and orthodox: "Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer."

The fact is that the prayer to which history instigates is constantly changing. Our pieties may change, it is true, but the need for piety, or pieties, remains. What, when we commemorate the outbreak of this war to start all wars, will be the pieties to which we subscribe? From history, to adapt slightly Mao's adage about the poor people upon whom, like a blank piece of paper, the most beautiful characters may be drawn, the most beautiful morals may be drawn.

In Europe, almost certainly, the views of the old men of the kind whom Ronald Blythe interviewed will be forgotten, as ruthlessly expunged from the record as any erstwhile colleague of Stalin from photographs once he had fallen from favor to enmity of the people. Instead, the lesson will be drawn that nation-states mean national hatreds, and national hatreds mean war—to which the only solution is federation. The European Union not only means peace, but is the only means to peace.

Hang on a moment, though: Weren't the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires multinational unions, and weren't they opposed to one another in the Great War, as Russia and the European Union are now? Were they peaceful and contented even internally, within themselves?

Oh, it is all too difficult, this historical-interpretation business. I feel the need to adapt Siegfried Sassoon's famous poem about Armistice Day: "Everyone suddenly burst out interpreting / O, but Everyone / Was an historian; and the moral was unclear; the interpreting will never be done."

At least, not from 2014 to 2018. **NR**



Bankruptcy Boricua

Down and out on the isle of prom-queen jerky

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

Carolina, Puerto Rico

WHILE Polar Vortex Part Whatever is tightening its wicked arctic grip on the defenseless bare scrotum of the northeastern United States, things are looking relatively good here at the El San Juan, and the news that some 1,500 flights into JFK have been preemptively canceled is met with something between stoicism and merriment: So we're all stuck here with the 88-degree poolside weather and the perfect beaches and the \$20 snifters of Zacapa XO rum for another day or two. We'll live.

It isn't always pretty: There's the usual tacky casino, although here it is tucked into an off-room behind a set of double doors, like something the suits at Hilton are slightly ashamed of, rather than splat in the middle of the main floor of the hotel, Vegas-style. Instead, the lobby tonight is hosting a dance band as a wedge of oldsters and not-quite-oldsters salsas and merengues the night away, the whole thing having the distinct feel of a cruise ship that never leaves port, with vast and bulbous expanses of semi-exposed gynecomastia not so much deeply tanned as rotisserieed, the gentlemen accompanied by desiccated former queens of happy hour, their tiaras abdicated approximately sometime during the Clinton administration, who are still bravely clinging to the clingy cocktail dresses and the brutal tanning regime—prom-queen jerky. An elegantly outfitted wedding party makes its way through the crowd, bridesmaids and grooms men scanning the bar

scene at an establishment christened, with admirable forthrightness, “Meat Market.” The silver-maned septuagenarian king of this particular dance floor has his well-honed act momentarily upstaged by the bad bar mitzvah dancing of a rummed-up young interloper, whom he challenges to a push-up contest. He wins.

And the band played on. It's not the Ritz, but it's not five grand a night, either.

This wasn't the plan. San Juan is a picturesque colonial city, its dramatic ramparts commanding views of the apparently endless Dodger-blue sea. Artists paint at easels in the public squares, and, unlike the case at most tourist destinations, there is not a panhandler to be seen, no obnoxious drunks on the street, nobody sleeping on the sidewalks, the most aggressive form of street life being the capital city's famous colonial cats, which, like their celebrated cousins in Rome, stalk with haughty impunity through the ruins and outdoor cafés. It's all terribly comfortable and welcoming, but when Luis Muñoz Marín, the “Architect of the Commonwealth,” contemplated the future of this Caribbean island, he didn't envision casinos or plantations—he wanted factories. Puerto Rico was supposed to be the gold standard of the Caribbean.

Now, undone by gigantic deficits and rapacious public-sector unions that have looted an otherwise productive economy, it's the junk-bond king of paradise.

AP PHOTO/RICARDO ARDUENGO

WHILE much of the Caribbean was largely content to peddle rum, sugar, and freshly laundered beach towels, Marin had hoped to build an industrial economy in Puerto Rico, and to some extent he was successful: Manufacturing, particularly that related to pharmaceutical, medical, and electronics companies, accounts for about half of the commonwealth's industrial output. Major players such as Johnson & Johnson and Abbott have extensive operations in Puerto Rico, and even with the economy in the depths of a long recession and the government teetering on the edge of insolvency, the so-called 936 companies—named for a section of the U.S. tax code that conferred certain advantages on Puerto Rico-based operations—are still robust enough to be paying some \$2 billion a year in taxes, or nearly a quarter of the commonwealth's government revenues. This is remarkable given the fact that Section 936 and the benefits that went with it were repealed by a law signed in 1996 by Bill Clinton. During the ten-year phase-out of Section 936, the pharmaceutical industry did not collapse but instead grew, and by the turn of the century pharma accounted for more than half of Puerto Rico's manufacturing, 20 percent of its industrial jobs, two-thirds of its exports—and 43 percent of the island's net income. It hasn't retreated to any significant degree. Tourism accounts for another 8 percent or so of the economy. Agriculture, by comparison, is a minuscule slice of it.

With a well-educated work force and a beneficial if thoroughly weird relationship with the United States, Puerto Rico was positioned to thrive, and it did, at least relative to most of its Caribbean neighbors. Puerto Rico is poor by mainland standards—its average income is about half that of Mississippi, the poorest of our states—but it is rich by Caribbean standards, with a per capita income that is nearly three and a half times that of the Dominican Republic and 27 times that of the poor country at the other end of Hispaniola. In fact, the only Caribbean jurisdictions that are better off are the tiny banker colony that is the Cayman Islands, Saint Barthélemy, and the British Virgin Islands, where Her Majesty's subjects enjoy almost exactly the same per capita income as their cousins in the motherland.

Walking through San Juan, even the rough parts, it is clear that this is a very different sort of city from Santo Domingo, in a very different sort of country. And outside of the capital, in Coama and Ponce and Mayagüez and on the roads connecting them, there is little sign of abject poverty or economic catastrophe. Even La Perla, allegedly one of the most dangerous places in the Caribbean, seems pretty decent as slums go. Said to be a way station for itinerant narco-traffickers from points south, it is, perversely, right on the waterfront, the sort of place that ought to be home to a \$20 million mansion. It had been a slaughterhouse—appropriate enough given the neighborhood's reputation for violence—and 19th-century laws required that freed slaves and non-white servants, along with others regarded as social undesirables, make their homes outside of the city walls, thus the billion-dollar view from a ramshackle slum. But La Perla is pretty squared away. I do wonder about the billboards advertising “Gasolina—Party in a Pouch!” Turns out that's a prepackaged cocktail that comes in a Hawaiian Punch-style juice box with a straw attached and seems to be the Sunday-morning breakfast of choice in La Perla. A very thoughtful gentleman offers me one.

IT'S not in your face, but the economic catastrophe is here, and it is measured by three numbers: The first is 15.2 percent, which is the unemployment rate; the second, arguably worse number is 30 percent, which is the share of *puertorriqueños* employed by government; the third is 51 percent, which is the share of residents on welfare. In this case, $15 + 30 + 51 = \$70$ billion, the amount of outstanding government debt suffocating the economy, \$3.5 billion of which has just been refinanced at credit-card rates, Puerto Rican bonds having been downgraded to junk status some time ago. Far from being scared off by that junk rating, the bond market ate up the latest offering from this distressed island—where else are you going to get a yield of almost 9 percent on a tax-free bond? Barclays, Morgan Stanley, and RBC Capital, which handled the bond offering, got \$16 billion in orders for the \$3.5 billion they had for sale, so even at junk rates, Puerto Rico ought to be able to continue to roll over its debt for a while. (And, given that the banks made \$28 million on the deal, Puerto Rico will not want for financial services.) But that's just issuing new debt to pay off old debt. And though the point is a matter of some contention, Puerto Rico is either near, at, or beyond its constitutional limit on general-obligation debt. The ongoing problem is the island's deficits, chump change in absolute terms for mainland types in the Age of Obama grown horrifyingly blasé about throwing around the word “trillion” when it comes to deficits, but an ongoing \$1.5 billion shortfall is serious fiscally existential business when you have a population of only 3.6 million—and that declining rapidly, with the most skilled and educated in the vanguard of the exodus. With its enormous, unionized public sector and swollen welfare rolls, Puerto Rico consumes \$10 billion worth of government annually with only \$8.5 billion to pay for it. One of those things is going to have to change—or all those bondholders are going to be ruing the day they took that call from Barclays as their 9 percent returns vanish in default.

The unemployment rate understates the severity of the problem: Just as there are more people of Irish origin living in the United States than in Ireland, most Puerto Ricans do not live in Puerto Rico but in the continental United States, and the ones most likely to move to the mainland are those who are in possession of good employment prospects. Because Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, the pattern of immigration is radically different here than it is in the rest of the Caribbean. “We have a saying: ‘All economic problems are solved with JetBlue,’” says Marcos Rodriguez-Ema, a lawyer and banker who served as president of the Government Development Bank for Puerto Rico and later as chief of staff to the reformist governor Luis Fortuño of the New Progressive party. “Those who leave are those who are bilingual and have degrees—and they take their families with them. When they leave Puerto Rico, the grandparents come. It's not like the Dominican Republic, where you leave and you send money back.” He notes that his own children reside on the mainland.

GOVERNOR FORTUÑO's tale is a cautionary one, the moral of which is this: Get yourself in enough financial trouble and doing the right thing—even all the right things—is not going to be enough. Governor Fortuño was elected in 2008 and came to office with a crumbling economy and a \$3.3 billion deficit, with the government unsure it would even be able to make its payroll. Despite the name of his New Progressive party,

Fortuño is a conservative's conservative (he even hosted the editors of NATIONAL REVIEW at the governor's mansion in 2011 during one of our seagoing excursions), and his economic agenda consisted of doing the sorts of things that Washington Republicans dream about doing but never get done: He waged a two-front war, cutting the top corporate tax rate from 39 percent to 30 percent (partially offsetting those cuts with some higher taxes on multinationals) and halving income taxes to encourage growth and investment, and then cutting thousands of government jobs and lopping nearly 20 percent off of government spending. The deficit was reduced from 44 percent of revenues to 7 percent. He met with the bond-rating agencies and promised further reforms. His efforts were rewarded in 2012, when Puerto Rico saw its first measurable economic growth in seven years.

And his efforts were punished later in 2012, when Puerto Rico's public-sector unions—with a critical assist from their mainland allies—sent him packing.

The public-sector unions were bound to be displeased with his economic program, which amounted to a swift kick in the bank account for the bureaucratic class, but Governor Fortuño's reforms were, while admirable, not an unalloyed success. The credit-rating agencies backed off a bit, with Moody's giving Puerto Rico its highest rating in 35 years. But the markets were not entirely convinced, and bond yields eventually crossed the 10 percent mark. An audit of Puerto Rico's 2012 finances revealed that the general-fund deficit climbed by a quarter in 2012 to \$1.3 billion. And the island's comprehensive deficit—which includes not only the commonwealth government's fiscal deficit but also those of public corporations and entities such as the University of

Puerto Rico and the Government Development Bank—hit a record \$39 billion. Governor Fortuño's administration imposed real ledger restraint on the official budget, but there is always more to the fiscal picture than that, and in this case there was much more. Puerto Rico's public agencies were in such a shambles that the fact did not even come to light until four months after the regularly scheduled audit was supposed to have been completed. The Fortuño administration nudged Puerto Rico into growth territory, but it was not enough—not economically, and certainly not politically.

Fortuño's successor, Alejandro García Padilla of the center-left Popular Democratic party, thanked his union allies profusely when he was sworn in and promised an end to public-sector layoffs—and then began twisting their arms, reducing some bloated pensions and benefits programs. Taxes leapt up, with the corporate tax returning to 39 percent, its legal limit, and taxes overall increased by 1.1 percent of GDP, a substantial number. The new governor hopes to get the deficit back down below the \$1 billion mark, but the signs are not good. Unemployment does not look to be budging and growth remains elusive. He may very well end up adopting most of the Fortuño program whether he wants to or not—Puerto Rico is running out of options.

Juan Carlos Batlle, a Santander veteran who also served in the Fortuño government, is cautiously optimistic that all parties—government, unions, and electorate—will be boxed into doing the right thing. "Based on what we know today from what has been communicated by the current administration about presenting a balanced budget for next year, one of two things has to happen: increase revenue or cut expenses," he says.

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“We’ve already had our share of increased taxes, so I don’t see much space to increase revenue. That means you’re left with the expense side. You’re going to have to take out \$1.5 billion in government spending—out of education, out of the University of Puerto Rico, out of collective-bargaining agreements—and it’s all politically difficult.” But, he says, the unions’ political position has been weakened by illuminating media reports on the fat compensation and generous benefits of their members, which stand in politically queasy contrast to the situation of typical Puerto Ricans. “There will be opposition from unions,” he says, “but they will not have as much clout.”

Governor Fortuño himself declines to discuss the specific policies of the current administration as a political courtesy to his successor, but he does see some lessons for other governments in Puerto Rico’s predicament. “Puerto Rico, the federal government, and every jurisdiction in the world should follow the same rules that a traditional family or business owner follows: not to spend more than you take in, allow people to do what they do best, and not try to impose government on their ingenuity and their will. They’ll succeed. Do the opposite and you’re not only imposing on their freedom, but you’re imposing a set of values not shared by the majority of people.”

THE island’s very friendly tax environment for investors has attracted some activity—hedge-fund gazillionaire John Paulson has taken a stake in a few resort properties and plans to put \$1 billion into Puerto Rican investments in coming years—but the Switzerland-in-the-Caribbean strategy is of limited potential. Billionaires can send their money to live in the Cayman Islands; that doesn’t mean they have to live there themselves. Puerto Rico had hoped to entice a small gang of super-rich U.S. tax refugees into bringing their residences and their economic activity to the island—which is, after all, only a short flight from New York City and Washington—but it has had more luck in attracting tourists, from the older Florida types to the superlatively well-heeled ones unloading their Louis Vuitton luggage at the recently opened Ritz-Carlton Reserve at Dorado Beach, which is doing brisk business in its \$5,000-a-night suites.

A tourist economy is not what Luis Muñoz Marín wanted for Puerto Rico, and it’s not really what Puerto Rico wants, either. There is nothing quite like being a U.S. citizen in the Caribbean to drive home one of the ironclad laws of real-world economics: Tourism can be a nice complement to a strong economy, but places that depend on tourism are generally terrible places to live and doomed to stagnation. Puerto Rico doesn’t want to be that place. There are still signs of a relatively robust industrial economy: Standing on the 16th-century seaside battlements of San Juan, you can watch trains of heavily loaded container ships lumbering out to sea, bringing the island’s products to distant markets. But the John Paulsons of the world are not investing in widget factories—they’re investing in resorts.

“We can’t focus on just one thing, like tourism,” Mr. Battle says. “We need all cylinders firing. We have to find a way to increase tourism, sure, but we have to be realistic and balanced about that. We can’t compete with the Dominican Republic on some aspects—our costs are too high. We’ve done well with some of the very high-end market from the mainland, for

middle-income, senior leisure travelers who don’t want to leave the U.S. or don’t have a passport. But for the long term, we have to defend the existing manufacturing base, especially for pharma and electronic devices. We have to have enough tools to get those who are here to stay and to go after some of the manufacturing businesses, but we have to be aggressive. We used to just sit here, because we had huge tax advantages. Now it’s us against Singapore, Ireland, India . . .”

And if you look closely, you can see some of the signs of cracking. Setting out east from the old city, I walk past abandoned properties that should be prime real estate but are being torn apart, cast-iron balconies ripped off, presumably for scrap, leaving gaps like empty molar sockets. I proceed along the Avenida Fernández Juncos and parallel streets, past midrise housing projects with burglar bars all the way up to the top floors, the hideous Brutalist architecture of the Departamento de Hacienda, an Army Corps of Engineers building behind razor wire like a prison, a monument to U.S. presidents that skips from Gerald Ford to Barack Obama. Herbert Hoover is praised for officially changing Porto Rico to Puerto Rico. President Obama, a plaque notes, once attended a reception in Puerto Rico. It’s the little things.

Attending that reception was in fact something very close to the least he could do. With Puerto Rico’s economy ankled and a whole lot of people who are let’s not forget U.S. citizens suffering, and suffering terribly, the Obama administration empaneled a task force and then did approximately nothing. Puerto Rico is the Greece of the American Union, but there’s no Germany hovering about to lay down the law.

“In Europe, you had leaders in charge,” Mr. Rodriguez-Ema says. “You had Germany and the European Central Bank leading the way. With Puerto Rico, the White House is looking the other way, Congress hasn’t even winked, the Fed isn’t involved, and Treasury is saying ‘Not my job.’ None of the adults in Washington is willing to look our way, which makes our situation a lot more difficult to deal with.” President Obama, he notes, enjoys a great deal of credibility and political capital in Puerto Rico—if he were willing to deploy it. “In Europe, at least they had Merkel. Somebody has to be the adult, and nobody has behaved as one here. We certainly don’t have one in the governor’s mansion—or in Washington.”

Like everything else in Puerto Rico, the question of the economy is tied up in the issue of the island’s status—whether it will become a state, become an independent republic, or linger in its current purgatory between the two. How that is resolved will have profound consequences for Puerto Rico and the rest of the United States, but how it is resolved may be, as an immediate economic matter, less important than the fact of its being resolved, should that come to pass. The status question divides Puerto Rican politics and prevents the emergence of effective governing coalitions. It also leaves investors and businesses unsure about what sorts of legal and tax environments they’ll be operating under long term. San Juan is a very attractive city, but it is also very much a foreign city. It is difficult to imagine it as the capital of a U.S. state, but not easy to imagine it as the capital of a sovereign nation, either. Similarly, Puerto Rico is neither a hopeless poor backwater working for tips in the tourist economy nor the industrial powerhouse the founders of the commonwealth had hoped it would be. It is an island in seas that are as blue as the Hope diamond, but not nearly so calm as they seem.

NR

A Defense of Bulk Surveillance

The NSA programs enhance security without uniquely compromising privacy

BY ARTHUR HERMAN
& JOHN YOO

At this writing, President Obama is set imminently to make one of the most momentous choices in the history of American intelligence. He will decide whether to curtail or terminate the National Security Agency's bulk collection of phone-call records and e-mail traffic in its quest to find and stop terrorist plots against the United States. President Obama could continue a program that takes advantage of America's technological superiority, meets the requirements of constitutional law, and has proven effective in stopping terrorist attacks. But, manipulated by intelligence leaks and stampeded by the demands of his anti-war base, he is likely to sacrifice national security in response to spurious claims of lost civil liberties.

In the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the NSA established a program to trace phone calls and e-mails into the United States from suspected terrorists abroad. (One of us, John Yoo, judged the program to be constitutional as an official in the Justice Department in the months after the attacks.) The NSA already intercepts electronic communications abroad between foreigners in order to detect threats to U.S. national security and advance our foreign policy; that was the very purpose behind the establishment of the agency during the Cold War. To keep the intelligence agencies out of operations at home, however, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) allows only the FBI to eavesdrop on counterespionage and counterterrorism targets within the United States, after obtaining a special warrant.

The 9/11 attacks revealed a gap in this framework: The government had weakened its abilities to trace suspected terrorist calls and e-mails entering the U.S. by erecting a wall between the domestic and foreign aspects of electronic surveillance. Domestic- and foreign-intelligence officials could not share information or seamlessly monitor communications coming into, or passing through, the United States from abroad. In response, the NSA began collecting phone-call

and e-mail records—their addressing information, rather than their content—to analyze patterns that might emerge once they were linked to a suspected terrorist message from abroad. The current head of the NSA, General Keith B. Alexander, has testified before Congress that the collection program has helped stop developing terrorist plots, and that had it existed in 2001, it could have led to the discovery of the 9/11 conspiracy.

Nevertheless, President Obama is now considering whether to end NSA surveillance as we know it. Even the most modest of his policy options—placing the database of call and e-mail records in the hands of private companies—would represent a radical change in the NSA's effectiveness, without much gain for privacy. A White House blue-ribbon panel has even proposed to end special national-security surveillance abroad by requiring a warrant, as is the case with domestic searches, and some in Congress want to end the NSA altogether.

This uncertainty is thanks to one man's success in generating international hysteria: Edward Snowden. Snowden apparently used his access as an NSA network administrator to steal massive amounts of U.S. military and intelligence secrets. Since fleeing to Hong Kong last June with four laptops jammed with classified data, Snowden has set up shop in Russia and has launched carefully stage-managed leaks of more and more secrets, such as U.S. surveillance of the telephones of foreign leaders. Snowden could not have done more damage to our national-security apparatus if he had been a Chinese or Russian mole.

Damage to the NSA doesn't arise just from the stolen technical data. It's also caused by the myths, misperceptions, and often downright lies about NSA data collection spread by Snowden and his supporters. Aided by a network of anti-government activists, Snowden has managed his leaks and distorted the truth to mislead the public into seeing the NSA data program as part of a vast Orwellian totalitarian nightmare, with our government gathering and inspecting the personal data of millions of innocent Americans.

Early on, for example, Snowden planted the notion that NSA workers were able to wiretap anyone, "even the president if I had a personal email," as he told the *Guardian* newspaper. We now know that this claim was completely untrue. Also flatly wrong was the notion that the NSA stores the content of phone calls—yet a recent poll revealed that 38 percent of Americans believe it *is* true. And the revelation that 80 percent of the phone calls about which the NSA collects data are made outside the United States has done nothing to decrease the impression that our smartphones and civil liberties are under daily assault.

As a result of Snowden's distorting leaks, the media routinely describe the NSA program as "domestic spying" or "eavesdropping." Even now, the American Civil Liberties Union website proclaims that "the government is regularly tracking almost every ordinary American and spying on a vast but unknown number of Americans' international calls, text messages, and emails."

While spreading conspiracy theories about a tyrannical "national-security state" has been standard left-wing practice since the 1960s, it is disappointing to see some on the right joining in. Even though a federal judge recently rebuffed the ACLU's lawsuit challenging the phone-data program, Senator Rand Paul (R., Ky.) is still suing the administration on the

Mr. Herman is the author of, among other books, Freedom's Forge: How American Business Produced Victory in World War II. Mr. Yoo, a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of Point of Attack: Preventive War, International Law, and Global Welfare, forthcoming in April.

same ground, with the help of the Tea Party–backed think tank FreedomWorks and former Republican Virginia attorney general Ken Cuccinelli, who claims the suit is needed “to vindicate the Fourth Amendment rights of every American who uses a phone.”

CRITICS must return to earth and remember that the program was set up in 2001 in order to, as President Obama himself has acknowledged, “address a gap identified after 9/11” in tracing “the communications of terrorists so we could see who they may be in contact with.” The answer was to analyze metadata on millions of phone records from telecommunications providers in order to learn the numbers dialed by known terrorists. Only if analysis

what about the program’s constitutionality and alleged violation of the Fourth Amendment? The Fourth Amendment does not protect some vague and undefined right to privacy. Instead, it declares: “The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause.” The Constitution protects only the privacy of the “person,” the home, and “papers and effects,” which are usually located in the home. It does not reach information or things that we voluntarily give up to the government or to third parties outside of the home or our persons. The Fourth Amendment also does not make such information absolutely immune—it is still subject to search if the government is acting reasonably or has a warrant. These basic principles allow the government to search

It may perhaps be time to reconceive the rules of search and seizure in light of new Internet technologies, but that is the responsibility of our elected representatives.

linked a pattern of suspicious calls to a terrorist could the government seek a warrant to learn the identity or content of the communications. In fact, far from involving unprecedented access to individual phone records or (in the case of the PRISM e-mail-surveillance program, launched in 2007) e-mail addresses, the NSA program is simply one more variant on the data-analysis techniques used by commercial companies.

With an eleven-judge panel overseeing every step, NSA handles data with a lot more care and supervision than Facebook or Google. Out of the thousands of NSA employees, for example, the phone database is handled by 22 technicians, and far from being deathly secret, their operating procedure is transparent, even (compared with the metadata’s possible uses) banal. Algorithms sift through mountains of phone calls, including overseas calls, matching phone numbers to numbers with known terrorist links. Only when the technician can show one of seven superiors “a reasonable, articulable suspicion” that the number could be linked to a terrorist network is he or she allowed to pull up the dates of calls made and received over five years, the other parties’ phone numbers, and the durations of the calls—and nothing else. The analyst may not listen to any calls, or read any text messages or e-mails sent on that phone, without a court warrant. Only after the NSA confirms a terror link through other sources can it pass the investigation on to the FBI, which can then seek a warrant for a wiretap.

How many times does this “reasonable, articulable link” get made? In all of 2012 there were exactly 288 such findings. In twelve of those cases, the NSA found grounds to pass the case on to the FBI—and in three of those, the information helped to prevent an attack. If Snowden and his congressional and White House allies have their way, that last number will be a zero.

Considering the millions of phone numbers making billions of phone calls that year and every year, these levels of surveillance can hardly be considered a major intrusive system. But

through massive databases of call and e-mail records when doing so is a reasonable measure to protect the nation’s security, which is its highest duty.

THE most lucid critique of the constitutionality of this logic comes not from Senator Paul or the ACLU, but from Judge Richard Leon of the federal district court in Washington, D.C. In *Klayman v. Obama*, Judge Leon declared that the NSA’s bulk collection of phone records violated the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution. Leon’s decision encountered a major obstacle: a Supreme Court precedent directly on point, *Smith v. Maryland* (1979). In *Smith*, the Court held that the government did not need a warrant to use what is known as a pen register, a device that records dialed phone numbers. According to the justices, there was no constitutional right to conceal phone numbers because callers provide them to a third party—the phone company. When we reveal private information to a third party, we lose privacy rights over it.

Judge Leon could not rule that *Smith*’s logic does not include telephone metadata, since the calling records collected by the NSA are exactly the same as the phone numbers that were held to be unprotected in *Smith*. Judge Leon instead concluded that technology has changed so much that *Smith* is no longer good law. The “almost-Orwellian technology” that allows the government to collect, store, and analyze phone metadata is “unlike anything that could have been conceived in 1979” and, “at best, the stuff of science fiction,” Leon wrote. “I cannot imagine a more ‘indiscriminate’ and ‘arbitrary invasion’ than this systematic and high-tech collection and retention of personal data on virtually every single citizen for purposes of querying and analyzing it without prior judicial approval,” he continued. “Surely, such a program infringes on ‘that degree of privacy’ that the founders enshrined in the Fourth Amendment.”

Whether changed circumstances render *Smith v. Maryland* infirm was not for Judge Leon to decide. It may perhaps be

time to reconceive the rules of search and seizure in light of new Internet technologies, but that is the responsibility of our elected representatives. Only they can accountably determine what society's "reasonable expectation of privacy" is in Internet and telephone communications, balancing existing privacy rights against the government's need for information to protect the nation from terrorist attack. Judges are far too insulated and lack the expertise to make effective judgments on national security and foreign affairs.

If it comes to a judicial decision, the Supreme Court should find Judge Leon mistaken (as did a New York City federal district judge the following month). While the Fourth Amendment protects certain personal information, its text says nothing about the government's ability to analyze data that legitimately come into its hands. Under Judge Leon's theory, New York City's use of data-mining to predict high-crime spots would violate the Constitution, even though the information comes from public records of arrests and incidents that have happened in the past. In fact, if Judge Leon is right that the increase in the government's ability to collect and analyze information should suddenly confer on some data shared with third parties the constitutional protections now reserved for "persons, houses, papers, and effects," then the courts should protect all kinds of information besides what the NSA collects. Under his theory, the Fourth Amendment should also protect all credit-card information, financial transactions, travel reservations, and public Facebook and LinkedIn posts because the information, though no longer private, can be analyzed to make inferences about our activities. But, contrary to this argument, we have always allowed law-enforcement and national-security agencies to search information that has been handed over to private third parties.

Still, can we trust the NSA to stay within its limits and handle only phone-call and e-mail records? Critics point to one of Edward Snowden's earliest (and most misleading) leaks as proof that Americans aren't safe: a 2012 internal report that the program had crossed the line on privacy rules more than 2,776 times between April 2011 and March 2012. Taken out of context, that figure is utterly misleading: It is a tiny fraction of the billions of calls the NSA intercepts every year. The same report showed that more than two out of every three mistakes involved foreign targets living abroad, not Americans, and the vast majority were due to human error. One NSA employee, for example, typed "202," Washington's area code, instead of "20," Egypt's international code, on a database query.

These are hardly East German Stasi surveillance standards. They pale even beside the tools used by social-media companies to collect and analyze information about our buying, reading, and travel habits. The president did the men and women in our intelligence agencies a disservice when he suggested in a January speech that the program could lead to Stasi-style abuses. Interfering with these arrangements would greatly disrupt our anti-terrorism efforts while yielding no gain in individual privacy. President Obama could do no better than to allow the men and women on the front lines of America's intelligence wars to do their jobs and continue preventing terrorist attacks on the United States, which they have been doing against the odds for the last 13 years.

NR

Welcome, Gentry

*Development and affordable
housing go together*

BY REIHAN SALAM

A SHORT while ago, Spike Lee, the celebrated African-American filmmaker, gave a wide-ranging lecture at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute. Among other things, he discussed the ongoing transformation of Brooklyn neighborhoods such as Fort Greene, where he was raised. At one point, he was asked whether there was an upside to "gentrification," in which more-affluent residents settle in neighborhoods that once were the preserve of low-income households, and he offered a spirited reply. Lee granted that gentrifying neighborhoods have better schools and police protection than they did in earlier eras. Yet he attributed the improvement in local public services to a kind of racism.

Neighborhoods like the South Bronx, Harlem, and Bedford-Stuyvesant had been plagued by low-quality services when he was young ("the garbage wasn't picked up . . . the police weren't around"), Lee recalled. But then, in Lee's imaginative retelling of recent New York City history, the influx of white residents suddenly led city officials to get their act together. Picture police officers taking naps as black people get mugged, then suddenly springing to life as white Park Slope moms start scolding them. Lee seemed to have forgotten that right-thinking liberals have been attacking the NYPD for being *overzealous* in poor black neighborhoods since at least the Giuliani years, not *underzealous*.

"So, why did it take this great influx of white people to get the schools better?" Lee asked. "Why's there more police protection in Bed-Stuy and Harlem now? Why's the garbage getting picked up more regularly? We been here!"

Like Spike Lee, I grew up in Brooklyn. I've been here too! And like Lee, I miss certain things about the Brooklyn of my childhood. Brooklyn wasn't cool or artisanal when I was a kid. It was rather dangerous, in fact. But I loved it because it was mine, and I share Lee's sense that some of Brooklyn's new arrivals don't seem to appreciate the qualities that make our hometown great.

That said, there are many things wrong with Lee's anti-gentrification soliloquy. Gentrification is not the product of a racist conspiracy. If it were, you'd think the racists responsible for improved police protection and garbage pick-up would notice that Bed-Stuy and Harlem still have large black majorities. Rather, gentrification is an opportunity, for New York City and for other cities that are home to strong local economies and high-poverty neighborhoods. Capitalizing on this opportunity is easier said than done. But if gentrification is handled the right way, it can benefit poor families striving to get ahead just as much as it benefits gentrifiers.

One of the chief reasons neighborhoods like the South Bronx, Harlem, Bed-Stuy, and Fort Greene are safer than they were in Lee's day is that since the early 1990s, as Franklin Zimring reports in his book *The City That Became Safe*, New York City has experienced the sharpest and most prolonged crime drop in modern American history. And though the drop hasn't been perfectly uniform across New York City's five boroughs, it comes pretty close. The most violent neighborhoods of the early 1990s are still by and large the most violent neighborhoods in today's New York. Yet there is no question that they are safer than they were in that era, whether gentrifiers are now present or not. It seems that while crime has continued to decline in Manhattan and the Bronx since 2002, progress has slowed somewhat in Brooklyn and Queens. Given that gentrification is a far more entrenched phenomenon in Brooklyn than it is in the Bronx, it's not clear that Lee's thesis sheds much light on why crime has declined more in some neighborhoods than in others.

earliest opportunity. That is why large numbers of middle-income blacks followed middle-income whites out of New York City when crime and disorder were at their worst. The fact that there is better police protection and more reliable garbage pick-up makes people want to stay—and it attracts outsiders. Therein lies the rub.

Lee's black-white focus also leads him to neglect the fact that New York City is now home to over 3 million immigrants, only 16 percent of whom are from Europe. While Lee is exercised by white gentrifiers, he is curiously indifferent to the Latinos and Asians who've settled in New York City in large numbers, and who've had a far larger cultural and economic impact than the hipster influx. The largest foreign-born populations hail from the Dominican Republic (380,000), China (350,000), and Mexico (186,000). New York City's non-Hispanic black population is, at 2 million, notably large. Yet a large and growing share of this population is of foreign origin,

The fundamental question about gentrification is whether it necessarily entails the displacement of existing residents or it can instead lead to more integrated neighborhoods.

Improvements in school quality, meanwhile, have been the product of a number of developments. Rudolph Giuliani fought to wrest control of the city's public schools from an elected school board, and the state government finally granted mayoral control in 2002, when Michael Bloomberg had taken office. The Bloomberg administration embraced a number of reform measures, some of which have proven more successful than others, but which are widely credited with gains in school performance citywide. The expansion of public charter schools has also been a boon, particularly in neighborhoods like Harlem, where charters primarily serve students from low-income backgrounds rather than the children of affluent gentrifiers. Though charter schools serve a relatively small proportion of New York City students, Marcus Winters of the conservative Manhattan Institute has found that competition from charters tends to raise the performance of local public schools.

HAVING grown up in the 1960s and 1970s, Lee sees the gentrification phenomenon through the lens of black-white conflict, with African Americans uprooted from their ancestral neighborhoods as white hipsters arrive from America's hinterlands. The problem with this view is that the historically black neighborhoods Lee identifies haven't exactly been black since the days of Sacagawea. Many of them became predominantly black after the First and Second World Wars, as migrants from the South streamed into New York City and middle-income whites left in large numbers for the suburbs and the Sun Belt. And throughout the years these neighborhoods were almost exclusively black, people were moving into them in search of affordable housing and out of them in search of, say, shorter commutes, or a safer and quieter environment. It is the improvement in the quality of local amenities that makes people want to stay in gentrifying neighborhoods. In the absence of this improvement, those who can leave do so at the

from the English-speaking Caribbean, Haiti, and sub-Saharan Africa. Many of these black immigrants, who tend to be well educated, have been invisible gentrifiers in historically black neighborhoods across the city and have done just as much to change the city's cultural tenor as their native-born white counterparts, if not more.

The fundamental question about gentrification is whether it necessarily entails the displacement of existing residents or it can instead lead to more integrated neighborhoods. Ever since the civil-rights era, liberals have called for the integration of schools and neighborhoods, and they have embraced a wide range of tools, from busing to affordable-housing mandates, to help achieve it. Gentrification has been an entirely voluntary, market-driven process in which white (and black and Latino and Asian) middle-income and upper-middle-income families have chosen to settle in poor neighborhoods, some of which are heavily black. If this process ends with poor black residents' being pushed out to outlying neighborhoods, the potential benefits of integration will never materialize. If, however, cities choose to increase the local housing supply to accommodate rising demand, the promised land of un-coerced integration might not be far away.

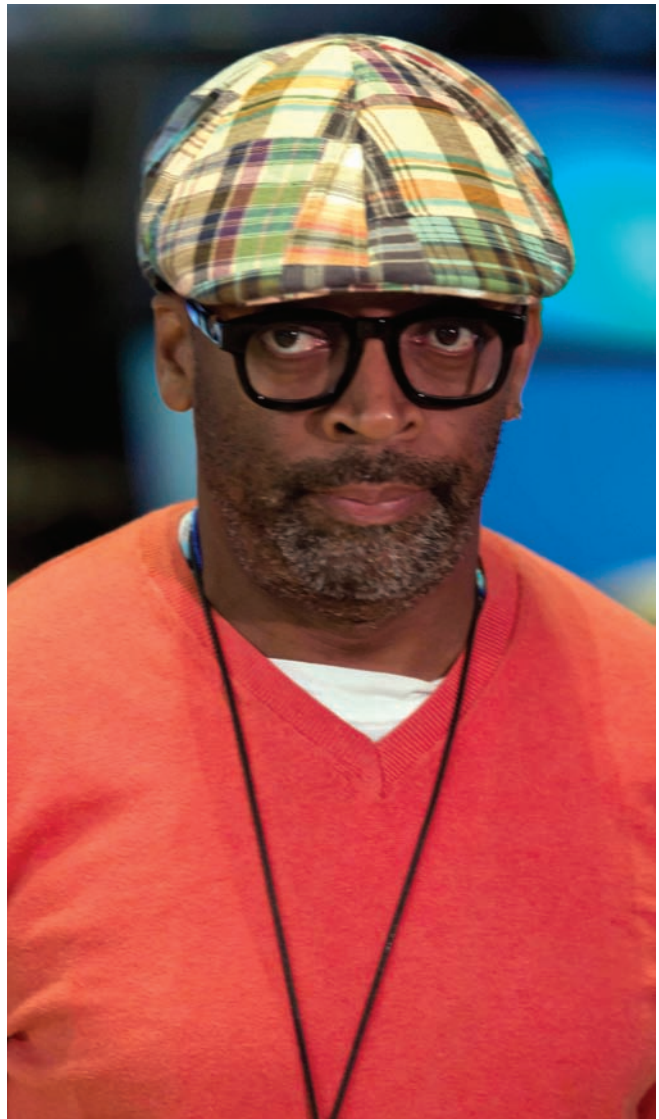
The reason integration matters is that long-term joblessness and absent fathers don't affect all communities equally. Rather, they are concentrated in certain high-poverty neighborhoods. Children raised in these neighborhoods face challenges other children do not, particularly if their parents grew up in similarly deprived environments. This is true even if these children are raised in stable two-parent families with a history of steady employment. In *Stuck in Place*, New York University sociologist Pat Sharkey observes that children raised in poor neighborhoods by parents who were also raised in poor neighborhoods score 16 points lower out of 100 on a test of basic reading skills than children from families that never lived in poor neighborhoods. This gap is comparable to missing as much as *eight* years of schooling.

According to Sharkey, the cumulative effects of living in high-poverty neighborhoods from one generation to the next are the key source of the gap in life outcomes between white and black Americans. Remarkably, only 10 percent of African Americans are now being raised in neighborhoods with less than 10 percent poverty. The same is true of 60 percent of whites. Almost a third of black children live in neighborhoods with a poverty rate of 30 percent or more, while virtually no white children are raised in such environments. Whites raised in middle-income households tend to “stick” to the middle class when blacks raised in middle-income households are far more likely to fall out of it—in part because the middle-income blacks are much more likely to be surrounded by poverty.

After surveying changing conditions in poor neighborhoods from 1980 to 1990, Sharkey found that economic outcomes for black youths improved far more in neighborhoods that experienced an influx of less-poor residents than in those that did not. Most of these neighborhoods were not neighborhoods that saw the large-scale arrival of affluent white gentrifiers, but rather neighborhoods that saw the arrival of middle-income Latinos. Though it is hard to tease out exactly what was going on in these neighborhoods, the fact that economic outcomes improved for the incumbent population makes intuitive sense. When people with jobs move into a neighborhood plagued by joblessness, they bring disposable income that can help boost employment in retail and other service sectors. They also bring with them the norms and habits associated with economic self-reliance, which sometimes prove infectious.

So how can we promote the kind of un-coerced integration that can spread middle-class values? A good first step would be to stop demonizing gentrifiers, who aren't to blame for the myriad pathologies of urban governance. A second step would be to continue investing time and effort in controlling crime. Though crime levels have fallen in America's big cities, and particularly in New York, they still have a long way to go in poor neighborhoods. And the third and most important step would be for cities such as New York to accept the importance of building new housing units.

The natural pattern for urban growth is for the homes of the rich to become the homes of the poor as the housing stock ages and deteriorates, a process known as “filtering.” Rich people, meanwhile, flock to new, bigger homes with superior amenities. But in cities that place tight constraints on the construction of new housing units, like New York and San Francisco, to name two of the most egregious examples, this natural filtering process is replaced by gentrification, in which people who are not quite rich enough to buy their way into established neighborhoods move into poor neighborhoods and upgrade the existing housing stock to meet their needs. This upgrading process often involves transforming buildings that housed large numbers of poor people into buildings that house smaller numbers of more affluent people. If the powers-that-be allowed for new high-end construction in established neighborhoods, would-be gentrifiers would be less inclined to venture outside of their comfort zones. Similarly, if cities allowed more construction in gentrifying neighborhoods,



Spike Lee

they'd help dampen the price increases that drive out incumbent residents.

Why haven't cities embraced this strategy? This is one instance where demonizing gentrifiers is entirely appropriate. As Stephen Smith, a reporter at *The Next City* and a market-friendly urban theorist, has argued, gentrifying neighborhoods go through several stages. When the first wave of gentrifiers arrives, the quality of the local amenities tends to be fairly low. Soon entrepreneurs set up shops that cater to the new population, raising the amenity value of the neighborhood. But once the amenity value has increased, further waves of gentrifiers arrive, to the annoyance of the first wave. First-wave gentrifiers thus push for restrictions on development, and because they're more politically influential than the poor incumbents who came before them, they tend to succeed in their efforts. Now that the amenity value of the neighborhood has improved in a durable way, restrictions on supply lead to big increases in housing prices.

If Spike Lee is going to bash gentrifiers, he can—but he ought to be bashing them when they try to restrict development. When they allow and encourage it, as the more enlightened among them really should, they're doing the right thing. **NR**



The Long View

BY ROB LONG

From the Twitter feed of Kim Jong Un, @youthcaptain

Love the way you bring it, Mr. Putin! RT @vladtheimpaler “Loving me my warm-water port! Much respect to my peeps in Crimea! Truly grateful! #blessings”

Hey, @vladtheimpaler! I’m firing some missiles into the sea tomorrow! Really gonna stir things up! #shhhhhhh

Say what you like about the roll-out and the internals of the plan, but #obamacare is at least an attempt at the right thing. Health care is a right!

Hey, @vladtheimpaler, please follow me back so I can DM you. Have some stuff I’d like to pick your brain about. Thanks!

That moment when you think you’ve been retweeted but you only got favorited. Hey, people! Please RT! A favorite is about as useless as an uncle!

Is it weird that I have funny feelings when I watch that young boy on MSNBC? Would like to send him some of my house-made artisanal kimchee and a nice card. Peeps, I keep forgetting how names work in English: Is it Maddow Rachel or Rachel Maddow?

Um, hello? Is this on? Is this on? I just test-fired a couple of missiles into the Sea of Japan and it’s like . . . crickets. Nothing. Nada. I know the world is busy with missing airplanes and Syrian chemical weapons and Russian invasions but, hello?

Impossible to accept, even a couple of weeks later, that Miss Meryl Streep did not win the Oscar for “August Osage County.” Brilliant performance. And yes, she’s won it before but I’ve also won dozens of “Kimmies”—the Korean Oscars—but that doesn’t mean I don’t deserve more.

Think it would be cute to have T-shirts made up for some of us. Hey, @basharassad and @vladtheimpaler and @iranirouhani, tweet back with your size and I’ll get some made up. Thinking, “Da Bad Boyz” or something. Happy to brainstorm.

Atkins works! Have lost 20 lbs. in about a month. Check out the before-and-after pics! Twitpic.45ffd.com Warning: NSFW!

All due respect but: The 95% vote for independence in Crimea is kind of embarrassing. Votes around here hover between 100% and 125%. Would like to know the plan for the 5% holdouts. #justsaying

RE last Tweet: no disrespect, @vladtheimpaler. Love your work and what you do. Would like to offer my advice and help, if interested but you WON’T FOLLOW ME BACK.

RE last Tweet: Sorry, I get emotional. Want to know the truth? I think of you as a kind of father to me. Still looking for that perfect male role model since Dad died, and since my three older uncles were set on fire in front of me. Under my orders, yes, but still. #willyoubemydad?

I have a hard time believing that FL13 and Jolly’s win is a bellwether for the midterms. Where’s YOUR plan, Repubs? Oh, right. YOU DON’T HAVE ONE!!

So I hear that @vladtheimpaler and @iranirouhani and @basharassad had, like, a Google hangout or something? Must have been fun. Not saying I could have made it but

it would have been considerate to ask. #moreflieswithhoney

Therapist made an excellent point this morning: Even if Alyssa Milano did return my calls and e-mails and DMs, she’d probably be bad for my self-esteem in a relationship. Liked what he said, not so much the way he said it. Will miss him.

Loving loving loving the new Arcade Fire. Question for the dudes in the band: Do you need a member who plays the Korean harp? Hit me back.

Okay, still nothing from @vladtheimpaler. My new therapist says that I need to understand that sometimes the world needs a rest from my magnificence. Rings true. Still: fired off a couple more missiles. (One of them with my new/old therapist attached!) Hello, world? I’m still here!

RT “@vladtheimpaler Heard squeaky noise. Maybe a mouse? Maybe my shoes are too tight? No! It’s @barackobama! Hi @barackobama! I know you’re reading my Tweets! Call me!”

Hey, @vladtheimpaler, @basharassad, @iranirouhani! Got the T-shirts back from the guy. They look good. What do you think? Pretend I’m wearing pants: Twitpic.5fttd.com

Unclear to me why the T-shirt maker needed to actually mark my T-shirt “XXXXXXXXL” unless it was to make me feel bad. Well, now he feels bad in that cage. I guess we both feel bad. Not sure I get why. #hatenegativepeople

Today was a down day. Feeling fat and worthless and unattractive. Maddow Rachel hasn’t thanked me for the kimchee. No word from @vladtheimpaler re mentorship. Didn’t feel myself until I had one of my uncles killed. #notanimportantone #gratitude #beherenow #justbreathe

Snips and Snails and Oppressive Tales

YOU shouldn't judge a book by its cover, unless it's pink and sparkly. Then it's marketed at girls, and we can't have that. They should be reading *Chilton's* car-repair manuals. But not the one whose cover indicates it's aimed at boys, because that's just as bad. This, apparently, is the new policy of the book-review editor of the British newspaper the *Independent*:

I promise now that the newspaper and this website will not be reviewing any book which is explicitly aimed at just girls, or just boys. Nor will *The Independent's* books section. And nor will the children's books blog at Independent.co.uk. Any Girls' Book of Boring Princesses that crosses my desk will go straight into the recycling pile along with every Great Big Book of Snot for Boys.

The problem? Such books are gendered, a prerogative term applied to things that don't realize children are nebulous blobs of brain goo who are warped by a heteronormative society to adopt "girl" or "boy" traits. Left alone and shielded from the psychic emanations of the Great Penis in the Sky, girls would play with dump trucks and boys would put on tiaras and totter around in heels. Well. I can only speak from firsthand experience, but my daughter was not given Barbies or princess books or anything like that, mostly because I find them inane at best, and a white-washing of the realities of the feudal system at worst. Yet she wanted them.

Me: Don't you realize that princesses did not lead idyllic lives in magical castles with birds braiding their hair, but were part of a crushing, rigid caste system? They were mere pawns to be married off to some gouty brute who got his title because his father stabbed the king in his privy. I won't buy it.

Daughter: [*sad look*]

Me: Oh, all right.

As for the books she read, there were series aimed at girls. They all looked alike. Juniper Junie's Mystery Adventure Bus (432 books) or Molly McMinifer and the Puppy Pound Detective Crew (3,264 books) or something like that. She gravitated to an interminable series of books about cats at war with other cats. They formed clans. You know, as cats are wont to do. There were dozens of YouTube channels devoted to fan art and animation, all of them run by other girls.

"Did you know any boys who read the series?" I asked her the other day.

[*eye roll/shoulder shrug*] "No. Not any."

Why? Perhaps because the covers had a cat face, and boys prefer pirates or soldiers, if such things are permitted on a book jacket these days. Now, if the cat was a boy who turned into a cat to be a secret agent in *Star Wars*, then we're talking.

When I was a kid, I read Tom Swift novels. They were all the same. *Tom Swift and His Atomic Repellator*. *Tom Swift and His Ionic Masticator*. *Tom Swift and His Hydraulic Depilator*. One of my favorite covers had Tom driving a levitating machine over the jungle, incinerating forests and laying down highways. At the time this was seen as progress, but nowadays it's like seeing the Boy Genius vaporizing polar-bear cubs with his Levitating Floe-Melter.

In each book Tom and his sidekick Bud, along with their Slim Pickens-type cook Cookie, would fight off nefarious agents who wanted to steal Tom's invention. (There was a volume called *Tom Swift and His Patent Attorney*, but it was the least successful of the series.) In each book Tom and Bud are hit hard on the head and lose consciousness. Tom sustained more concussions than Muhammad Ali but got brighter and smarter as the books went on. You wondered whether he ever got stumped for a new invention while sitting in his Flying Laboratory and asked Bud to hit him on the head with that wrench over there on the table. You know, the Percussive Inspirer.

These were boys' books, just as the Hardy Boys were boys' books, and Nancy Drew was a girls' series. It would have been nice if there had been a series of scientific-fiction books for girls—although you suspect that Tomasina Swift would not be paving the Amazon but finding ways to protect endangered species.

Why? Why couldn't she be a paid agent of the government, determined to open up the interior to logging and grazing? Why couldn't she be blind to anything but the fascinating problem of making the asphalt ribbon adapt to the tropical climate without melting? Don't tell me it's because girls care about the planet and its creatures more than boys, who just want to bend nature to their will, preferably while standing on a hill, observing the toil of the armies, arms akimbo, laughing.

That would suggest there's something innate, that there are differences between men and women. Which, I know, is ridiculous. Remember that female Marine in the second *Alien* movie? Tougher than any guy. Case closed.

In the perfect world soon to come, boys and girls will be raised without any reference to gender whatsoever, but in this fallen, benighted dystopia in which we still struggle, some boys are still interested in disgusting stuff. *How to Light Snot on Fire and Blow Things Up in Space* would be a best-seller. But the *Independent* wouldn't recognize its existence, and disapproves of the very idea that such things are produced. They're not helpful.

It's necessary for boys to read books that understand what it means to be a boy. To which the *Independent's* book editor might say with impatience: No idea what you mean by that.

No. Didn't think you would.

NR

Mr. Lileks blogs at www.lileks.com.

Shooting at The Hip

FLORENCE KING



Not Cool: The Hipster Elite and Their War on You, by Greg Gutfeld (Crown Forum, 272 pp., \$26)

LET'S get my only complaint out of the way first. Not since *Gone with the Wind* was initially called “Tomorrow Is Another Day” has such a great book been saddled with such an inadequate title. Titles are supposed to hit the reader where he lives, but this one is an eviction notice. It starts with a negative, and then revives “elite,” long benumbed from its association with everything from social class to matched luggage. Were it my book I would call it “Drinking the Cool-Aid: How America’s Useful Idiots Are Poisoning Our National Life.”

That said, let the hosannas begin. Greg Gutfeld is the reason I fiddle with my meds. He co-hosts *The Five* on Fox News at 5 P.M., when I’m supposed to take my anti-stress pill, so I skip the pill to avoid restorative detachment. I will leave no pill unturned to make sure I’m wide awake for his raucous 3 A.M. talk show, *Red Eye*, when I also skip my diuretic pill to keep from being distracted by my bladder. Gutfeld may well be the death of me yet, but in the meantime his latest book has given me a new lease on life.

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He contends that a change in the nature of fame has empowered a triumvirate of government, the media, and academia—the “Coolerati”—to decide what far-left progressive ideas get shoved down our throats by the sort of naïve liberals Lenin called useful idiots. Such a mammoth propaganda machine would have been impossible before fame as we know it came into being. In the past, most fame was actually infamy, the mantle of larger-than-life outlaws like Jesse James, whom people heard about but never saw. But then big-screen movies came along to create celebrities and make them literally larger than life; then came television with its avuncular anchors and masters of ceremonies who “came into our homes” for years on end; and finally, the advent of we-never-close cable, which will cover anything and interview anybody to fill its bottomless maw. With so many people now instantly recognizable, the Coolerati can send in their clowns whenever a desperate scheduler phones.

Gutfeld draws a vital distinction between the Coolerati’s definition of cool and the word’s origin in the black ghetto. In the latter, cool was Hemingwayesque: “poise under pressure for members of a stigmatized group [and] a dignified

method for maintaining detachment during tense encounters.” To the Coolerati, the function of cool is not to maintain equilibrium, but to topple it and bring about an “attitudinal apocalypse” of public opinion that reflects their visions of a brave new world.

Gutfeld’s cool-detector goes off whenever he scents “manufactured, attention-seeking behavior or activism that benefits no one but the activist.” A favorite target is the Save the Earth crowd. “Blaming auto emissions for asteroids is the modern equivalent of a rain dance,” he snorts, but a lot of people will believe it because somebody on television said so. Ditto for using dung for fuel; if that could be done, “MSNBC could heat the entire solar system.” The natural-versus-artificial debate is behind the ever-more-hysterical nutrition obsession, exemplified by the man who dressed only in bits and pieces of natural fabrics and turned orange from eating nothing but carrots: “He looked like a homeless sherbet.” Thank God, then, for the football player named José. He was cleated on the field, dirt got into his wound, the dirt contained armadillo dung, and he came down with leprosy. “He did not get leprosy from a Twinkie, a Camel cigarette, or a gallon of gas. He got it from an armadillo’s ass.”

Then there’s Raising Awareness, which might be called rubbing it in, when you consider how often the same awarenesses keep getting raised. Two in particular have been raised so often for so long that they make for a kind of tandem Ur-Awareness. Both find their natural home on college campuses. One of them is sex, as in the University of Tennessee’s Sex Week, held to make students aware of all the new goodies the sex-toy industry has developed. Why the venue, asks Gutfeld? Ever since the Sixties proclaimed “If it feels good, do it,” college students have been aware of nothing but sex. “Taking a stand for sexual awareness is like taking a stand for more fleas at the dog pound.”

The other Ur-Awareness is race. As recently as 2012, the University of Wisconsin at Superior—uncomfortably aware, perhaps, of its name—decided to

SNOW DROPS

First
useless spears against
the humus’s black backdrop,
then collapse
to heads hung down
in puny lampshade petals:
collapse without bud-burst.
Autochthonous, unshown,
their whited time
condensed,
they bell in clusters.
No tongue claps
and will not stop.
The freak wind blusters.
Down on each silent chime,
fresh snow drops, erasing as it settles.

—LEN KRISAK

hold Privilege Week to remind white students that they were white. In case they didn't know this, they were charged to write the word "UNFAIR" on their faces, wear a white bracelet as a further clue, "put a note on your mirror or computer screen to remind you to think about privilege," and "find a person of color who is willing to hold you accountable." Does that mean ask for a volunteer bully to beat you up to raise welts along with awareness? They don't say, but Gutfeld would not be surprised. "We are now at a time when being born white is a fundamentally racist act. If you are white, just by procreating, your parents committed, or rather produced, a hate crime."

When all the awarenesses are raised, the useful idiots go on TV and flog the New Cool with starry-eyed testimonials about "how much better I feel about myself," and ramble through that perennial interview question, "What went through your mind when . . .," while the interviewer nods thoughtfully. That's what interviewers do, notes Gutfeld: "nod thoughtfully to fellow nincompoops."

Want quick 'n' dirty cool cred? Try anti-Americanism: "If America were a tooth, the cool would vote for the cavity." It's what Sean Penn, Michael Moore, and Oliver Stone did when Venezuela's Marxist dictator Hugo Chávez died and they all trooped up to the microphone and onto the Internet to deliver heartfelt eulogies to the man who gave oil a good name by promising to give his to its rightful owners, the poor. "I lost a friend I was blessed to have, poor people lost a champion," they mourned, to which Gutfeld responds: "Chávez fans like Penn and Moore are so full of s**t . . . they're Porta Potties on legs." You think that's insulting? Basketball celebrity Dennis Rodman is "Jane Fonda with a jump shot." Cool athletes are "bejeweled, club-happy, limousine-loving louts more enthralled by attention than achievement." As for Rodman's new best-friend-forever who keeps North Korean missiles trained on us: "Kim Jong Un is a bed sore on the earth's ass."

The Coolerati can always find an awareness or two to raise if they hit a slow day, but what really turns them on is a new batch of Root Causes and Inner Demons. These require a mass murder like the

Boston Marathon bombing and a youthful suspect who is sexy enough to make the cover of *Rolling Stone* and cause a tweet rush as millions of Coolerati-trained Americans seek to answer the question "What went through your mind when you first saw Tsarnaev's picture?" The winner was the besotted female who replied "pillow-soft." In the five-column spread the *New York Times* devoted to Tsarnaev, his Islamic training was mentioned only briefly; the rest was about *him*. TV talking heads followed suit, speculating whether he felt inferior to his older brother and took part in the bombing to prove his manhood, etc., etc.

Gutfeld calls this "the mental masturbation of the cool contemplating bad men and turning evil into a therapy session." He predicts that, because the Coolerati have had so much success in subverting society and throwing existing structures into chaos, the murderer will be sentenced to a lifestyle choice: He will get a Ph.D., married, famous friends who claim he is innocent, and the half-understood envy of millions because "a life of obscurity is viewed as somehow inferior to a life of infamy."

Gutfeld's many no-holds-barred remarks are saved from obscenity by being funny, but I never expected him to turn into my grandmother. "The Coolerati care more about gun control than self-control," he charges, so he comes out in favor of female chastity. Limited to teenagers, but chastity just the same:

Being a virgin is a scarlet V, you must lose it so you're no longer freakishly uncool. The primary engine of cool that leads many young girls to ruin is a desire for acceptance. This is the reason for most premature loss of virginity. . . . Maybe he'll learn that the girl who says no is the girl you want. But if he doesn't, that's his loss. And every good girl's gain.

Ruin? Yes. "Men no longer find marriage as enticing as they did, because modern women forfeited the most potent power they had: their vaginas." I expected a jokey reference to the gold mine that must never be fracked but it never came. He really meant what he said.

Gutfeld has a real fear that the uncool majority is letting the cool win without putting up a fight, in "a sort of cultural Stockholm syndrome." What we need are what he calls "Free Radicals," iron-

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clad nonconformists to put the cool in their place and dismiss them as "full of sound and fury, signifying nobodies." He lists his favorite examples—Margaret Thatcher, John Bolton—but saves his best for Truman Capote: "a five-foot-two chubby gay conservative who never gave in and became a lefty so that Gore Vidal might like him."

Obviously *Not Cool* is a wonderful book, but it is also something more. Now that it has joined Gutfeld's earlier best-seller, *The Joy of Hate*, a longstanding problem of American writing has sorted itself out. We have never agreed on what humor is: We have frontier brag with its tall tales, crackerbarrel philosophy with its cute wisdom, the wisecrack by the tough guy who talks out of the side of his mouth, and the Algonquin Round Table, too brittle and acerbic to be more than an acquired taste for the few. What we have always been short on is misanthropes, those scourges of all mankind who unfriend everybody yet are blithe enough to be witty about it. A misanthrope never brags, he's never cute, he never plays the tough guy, and he never belongs to a smart set. He simply takes no prisoners, shoots the wounded on the field, and then says something hilarious. Our only bona fide misanthrope was Ambrose Bierce, and Greg Gutfeld is his heir. He could have written the famous one-sentence review attributed to Bierce—"The covers of this book are too far apart"—and he thrives on the same impish perversity that made Bierce announce his plan to disappear into an unfriendly country ("A gringo in Mexico. Ah, euthanasia!"). If we expect to defeat the Coolerati, we should stop being so nice. It doesn't take a village, it takes a misanthrope. **NR**

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TUE/Nov. 11	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
WED/Nov. 12	St. Thomas (USVI)	9:00AM	6:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
THU/Nov. 13	St. Maarten (NA)	8:00AM	5:00PM	afternoon seminar late-night Smoker
FRI/Nov. 14	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars "Night Owl" session
SAT/Nov. 15	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
SUN/Nov. 16	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	6:30AM		Debark

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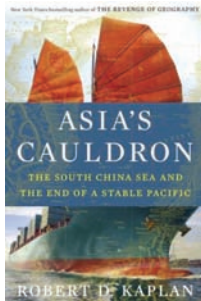
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Witches' Brew

MICHAEL AUSLIN



Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific, by Robert D. Kaplan
(Random House, 256 pp., \$26)

FOR just over a century, the kingdom of Sarawak on the Southeast Asian island of Borneo was ruled by a family of Englishmen. The “White Rajahs,” as the Brooke family were known, thrived in the overlapping and patchy maritime world dominated by indigenous rulers (such as the sultan of Brunei), local strongmen, and British imperialists. The Brookes of Sarawak, who surrendered their domain to the United Kingdom in 1946, stand as a testament to the fluid nature of power and identity in Asia, a region still riven by territorial disputes and fettered to history.

The Asia that has dominated headlines, primarily economic ones, for the past 30 years and more is largely the Asia of Japan, China, and Korea. The emergence of Japan into economic superstardom in the 1960s and 1970s fueled a generation of development throughout Asia. For the past 15 years, the story has been overwhelmingly about China. For many observers, business and trade spell the totality of their interest. In recent years, the rapid growth of China’s military might has added a different angle, one far more menacing to the simpler narrative of an Asia smoothly modernizing and integrating into global trade and political networks. With Asia’s diversity and vibrancy, moreover, there

Mr. Auslin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

is always yet another story, another interest to absorb the attention: the surreal totalitarianism of North Korea, the kaleidoscopic anarchy of India, or the enduring appeal of Japanese aesthetics.

One area of this vast region, however, has received far less attention than the rest: Southeast Asia. Ever since the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975, America and much of the rest of the world have turned their eyes away from the patchwork of states and archipelagos that range from the eastern terminus of the Indian Ocean to the entrance to the East China Sea. Khmer Rouge horrors, revolt in Indonesia, the wealth of Singapore: All were the concern only of those directly involved in trade, diplomacy, or study in the sub-region.

Such comparative isolation has rapidly dissipated, argues veteran journalist and travel writer Robert Kaplan, in his new book, *Asia's Cauldron*. Kaplan, known for his reportage on the Balkans, Central Asia, and America’s far-flung military forces, has spent the past several years focusing on Asia. This book is a sequel of sorts to 2010’s *Monsoon*, which focused on the Indian Ocean and the future of a more integrated, yet also more contested, Asia. Here, however, Kaplan turns to the far less known region of Southeast Asia.

With its 600 million people and over \$2 trillion in GDP, Southeast Asia is reaping the benefits of globalization. Yet the rise of China threatens to make its core, the South China Sea, “the military front of the coming decades,” asserts Kaplan. The primary reason is that “China’s position vis-à-vis the South China Sea is akin to America’s position vis-à-vis the Caribbean Sea in the 19th and early 20th centuries.”

Unlike the Caribbean, however, the South China Sea is of critical geostrategic importance, being the “throat” (in Kaplan’s word) of the western Pacific and Indian oceans, the point where the global sea routes that keep the world’s economy humming coalesce. Whether it’s a question of energy imports traveling east to China’s ravenous factories, or millions of tons of finished goods being shipped to all points of the globe, consumers, financiers, traders, and manufacturers all depend on an open and stable South China Sea zone.

As in his previous books, Kaplan is an on-the-ground reporter, and each of the core chapters of *Asia's Cauldron* focuses colorfully—through interviews and observation—on a nodal point of the South China Sea region: rapidly modernizing Vietnam, multiethnic and economically dynamic Malaysia, the pure entrepôt of Singapore, the ever-struggling former American colony of the Philippines, and Taiwan (Asia’s “Berlin”). Each is in ferment, responding to modernity and globalization, but each also is reactive to the story China is making in Southeast Asia. For Vietnam and the Philippines, China looms large as a security threat, primarily because of maritime disputes (such as that involving the Spratly Islands). Malaysia and Singapore have largely positive relations with China and are able to focus primarily on continued development and on taking advantage of being situated at the epicenter of Asia’s trade routes. As for Taiwan, Kaplan falls in the camp of those who see a version of an Asian risorgimento coming, in which Taiwan is in effect unified with the mainland, if not politically then on security and economic affairs, which is what really counts.

It is Taiwan’s apparent fate—being “Finlandized” in the face of China’s overwhelming power and influence—that may spell the broad tale for Southeast Asia. Unlike Japan and South Korea in Northeast Asia, which can play independent roles thanks to their size and tight alliances with the United States, the nations of Southeast Asia have little hope of opposing those policies of China that they fear, or of avoiding becoming too dependent on China economically. Finlandization not only would secure Chinese hegemony throughout Southeast Asia but also make America’s role, especially its security presence, largely moot.

In the end, it is America’s role in maintaining stability in Asia, primarily through our security alliances, that makes the issue of China’s rise, territorial disputes, and Finlandization of its neighbors of such concern to Kaplan. Even were the end result of Chinese dominance to be benign, it is the transformation of geopolitics in the 21st century that fascinates and unnerves him and so many other writers.

Perhaps that is why his first chapter, “The Humanist Dilemma,” is by far the most thought-provoking. For those of us

who have spent decades working on Asian issues, China's rise provides a particular challenge of interpretation. Kaplan has done a service in this chapter by laying out the ways in which China's threat to Asia's stability is both traditional and revolutionary. And it should be noted that Kaplan clearly sees China as the "only indigenous great-power threat" in the South China Sea.

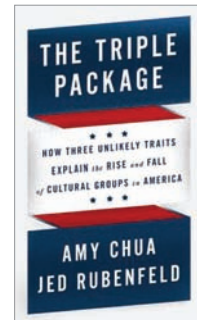
Driven by its century of shame and also by the desire to protect its far-flung trade networks (primarily involving energy imports), China has turned to history to validate its claims on the

Vladimir Putin has launched three major invasions of sovereign and semi-autonomous territory in the past decade. The drums of war in Asia may beat, but if they do, they are soft enough to allow for strategic ambiguity to shape American policy.

The danger in such a measured approach is that Washington risks having the momentum in Asia shift against it. Cautious policy begets ever more provocative action by Beijing, such as the air-defense identification zone established late last year over the East China Sea. An American policy that prioritizes the work-

Born into Anxiety

KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON



The Triple Package: How Three Unlikely Traits Explain the Rise and Fall of Cultural Groups in America, by Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld (Penguin, 304 pp., \$27.95)

The drums of war in Asia may beat, but if they do, they are soft enough to allow for **strategic ambiguity** to shape American policy.

South China Sea. That, of course, has driven a response from nations throughout all of Asia, from India, which will be the world's largest spender on naval weapons over the next decade, to Japan, which has its own flashpoint territorial dispute with Beijing in the East China Sea. The smaller nations of Southeast Asia do what they can but more often suffer what they must (in Kaplan's echo of the Melian dialogue in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*).

Yet for Americans, who were driven into global politics in the 20th century by great ideological crusades, the China threat is ambiguous. Not only is China the most important trading partner of the United States, its military rise provides no ideological challenge. Today's great game in Asia is bloodless, so to speak, a contest that Kaplan describes as "void of moral struggles," in which humanists and intellectuals find it hard to get their ardor up. Asia, never short of religious missionaries, lacks political zealots in the West who would make of it a cause central to their own identity.

In some ways, of course, that allows for a more considered response to China's challenge. The Obama administration's "pivot" is one example, as was the Bush administration's attempt to co-opt China into a more realistic working relationship. For fire-breathing hawks, China just can't quite deliver the threatening goods, especially in a world where

ing relationship with China may make even more likely the Finlandization it seeks to avoid. Nor are matters helped by the gap between the rhetoric of the pivot and the reality of a cautious response to China's provocations. While there may be prudence in such a stance, Kaplan reminds us that stability in the South China Sea may demand that we give up some of our most cherished ideals. That is the source of perhaps the greatest tension among those in Washington struggling to find the best way to ensure peace and prosperity in this most dynamic region of the world.

Kaplan does not provide many suggestions for responding to this new world shaped by China. Policy wonks will therefore be disappointed with what reads like a value-free approach. (They will also regret the absence of Indonesia from the discussion, though it was covered in *Monsoon*.) Yet Kaplan has always acted more as a recorder of contemporary trends than as an advocate for any particular approach to coping with them. In reminding Americans that their age of "simple dominance" must pass, he avoids joining those groping in the dark and almost takes the detached stance of a historian of coming decades, describing how that future Asia came to be. This acceptance of Asia's complexity and the limits of influence that any outside power has may well be the most valuable lesson in this brisk book. **NR**

AMY CHUA of "Tiger Mom" fame/infamy has written an airport book. An airport book is like an airport meal: bland and easy to consume (if not to digest), so rarely good that a good one is memorable, and of course engineered to be consumed most frequently (but not exclusively) in airports, in business travelers' hotels between airports, and in similar locales. Because they are aimed at business travelers, airport books touch most frequently on subjects at least tangentially related to the theme of "success," whether in business or non-business enterprises. And because they need to be of at least potential mass-market appeal sufficient to carry them past the gatekeepers at Hudson News, which edits air travelers' choices of readily available reading material with at least as much zeal as any Index-amending medieval cardinal, they often are wildly profitable. The irony is that if you are really good at writing airport books, you can afford to spend very little time in airports, at least outside of the first-class lounges or general-aviation terminals.

Ms. Chua became a household name with her 2011 book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, which nobody read, because they'd already read the short version, published as an essay in the *Wall Street Journal* under the much more

forthright title “Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior.” Her latest is *The Triple Package*, written in partnership with her husband, Jed Rubenfeld, like his wife a professor at Yale Law School. Both of them have written other books, largely on law and politics, Mr. Rubenfeld having written two novels as well. How the division of labor on this particular volume breaks down is unknown to me, but however much of the book is his, the voice is hers.

Triple Package to some extent is “A Tiger Mom Makes Nice.” Perhaps stung by criticism that her earlier work was on some level racist (which in these infantile United States is a damnation that stands apart from and supersedes the question of whether that work is true), Chua engineers a multicultural construct that emphasizes the shared gifts and burdens of three elegantly diverse and highly successful groups: Asian Americans, here not limited to superior Chinese mothers but including also their colleagues of Indian, Korean, and other Asian origins; Nigerian Americans, whose levels of educational and financial success are remarkable and offer social critics a very handy high-melanin human rhetorical shield when making unpleasant observations about the state of non-immigrant black Americans; and, in what very often feels like a slightly strained outreach effort with origins in the marketing department, where the intelligent among them are conscious of the market power of conservative readers, she considers the case of American Mormons, who have achieved remarkable success in business and politics, securing for themselves employment as chief executives of everything except the federal government.

The so-called Triple Package to which Chua credits the success of American minority groups ranging from Russian Jews and Koreans to Gujaratis and graduates of Brigham Young University consists of the following: a feeling of in-group cultural (and often racial) superiority that does not necessarily confer proportional feelings of superiority on the individual level; a sense of cultural and individual insecurity that inculcates a lifelong dread that the physical and social security of the group and its members are at all times threatened, requiring constant fortification in the form of accumulated wealth and social honors; and a culture of impulse control that encour-

ages not only such puritanical habits as thriftiness and sobriety but also levels of study and dedication to rote tasks that far exceed the standards of the surrounding mainstream culture.

Chua offers a persuasive case for her thesis, treating in turn (if not in any great depth) competing explanations such as economic history, immigrant-selection bias (we tend to get the smartest Indians and Chinese), IQ (upon which ground the authors tread very lightly), and others. She is by no means fanatical in making her case, and is more than willing to consider non-supportive data points—e.g., that many of the Cubans who made great fortunes in the United States came here with small ones, and that there exists a marked difference between the immediate post-Castro exile generation and recent waves of Cuban émigrés. On the subject of the Cuban diaspora she is in fact particularly enlightening: I had been aware of Cuban rejection of the notion that Cuban cultural identity should be subsumed into a broader Hispanic or Caribbean identity, but I had not been aware of the intensity of that rejection.

“Every time I hear someone refer to me as ‘Hispanic’ or ‘Latino,’ *me dan ganas de meterle una pata por culo a [alguien]*,” as she quotes one Cuban-American commentator saying.

The figures are occasionally shocking: A 2004 study of young to middle-aged American adults found a median household net worth of \$99,500—but \$443,000 among American Jews. Americans of Indian origin have the highest income of any group monitored by the Census, at about twice the national average—a particularly significant finding when you consider the “bimodal” nature of Indian immigrants: Many are in highly paid professions, but many work in humble occupations, the stereotypical convenience-store operators and motel proprietors.

As is probably inevitable, the main role played by Nigerian Americans in her analysis is to provide an

example of a population of Americans who are African who do much better in life than the people we refer to as African Americans. Thus we learn a few interesting things, such as that while Nigerian Americans constitute only 0.7 percent of the black population in the United States, they constitute between a fifth and a fourth of the black population at Harvard, 10 percent of the nation’s black physicians, etc. “In addition,” she writes, “Nigerians appear to be overrepresented at America’s top law firms by a factor of at least seven, as compared [with] their percentage of the U.S. black population as a whole.”

Nigerian Americans, in short, are closer in achievement levels to Mormon Americans or Korean Americans than to other black Americans. Perversely, though, as Chua notes, black students report the highest levels of self-esteem, followed by Latinos, whites, and Asians—which is to say, self-esteem is reported in inverse order of group academic achievement. Here, Chua reaches outside her model, locating sources of black underachievement in historical social and economic



Amy Chua

exclusion (certainly true) and in an “oppositional urban culture” that disdains academic achievement as “acting white” (also certainly true), but she might have fruitfully taken a closer look at a factor to which she pays insufficient attention: marriage culture.

Chua is very interested in the subject of out-group marriage, which threatens to extinguish such culturally distinct groups as Lebanese Americans, but about marriage per se she has relatively little to say. This is a subset of another set of factors in which she shows relatively little interest: sex differences. Historical Jewish-American social norms, very much like those developed by Indians living in India and Chinese living in China, were associated with strong marriage cultures because one of the two things that young men care about (the other is status) was very strongly linked to marriage, and marriage was linked to educational and financial achievement. The popular culture of, say, the 1950s might have made a great many young Jewish men feel as if they could never live up to the ideal of American masculinity, which was blond and WASPy and playing quarterback, but a successful lawyer or businessman or (to condense 1 million Jewish jokes) a doctor might have a fighting chance at marrying an attractive girl. Chinese Americans not named “Jeremy Lin” in 2014 are surely in the same position. (This is true regardless of individual physical condition; the phenomena of stereotype “boost” and stereotype “threat”—i.e., the fact that members of certain groups do in fact do better and worse at specific tasks when they believe that members of their group are expected to—are real, measurable, and widely documented.)

Remove the link between achievement and marriage, and between marriage and sex, and a big part of the so-called triple package is deeply discounted for about half the population, that being the half with testicles. Native-born black Americans never developed a triple-package culture for obvious reasons: Economic and educational opportunities were so limited for the great majority of blacks that there was little meaningful chance for them to distinguish themselves in that manner. Add to that black and white stereotypes about blacks’ abilities (athletic and musical rather than intellectual),

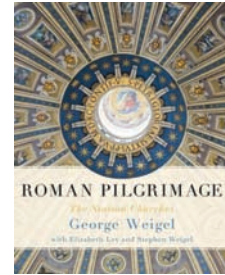
release any meaningful link between sex and marriage, and the results should not be surprising. The interesting question for Chua’s triple-package cultures, which retain some link between sex and marriage but are deeply immersed in a culture that works actively against that linkage, is whether their achievements can persist in the absence of a marriage culture. Consider the convergence between black and white rates of illegitimacy: The convergence is not in the desirable direction.

Indeed, Chua’s entire thesis assumes the ability of families to inculcate habits, values, and culture. It is far from clear that this is possible for many Americans now, or that it will be possible for others in the near future. Critics of the original “Chinese Mothers” essay went so far as to suggest that such strict parenting amounted to child abuse, and indeed such methods as were used to instill discipline in high-performing generations past (and in your obedient correspondent, for that matter) are today not only frowned upon but not infrequently treated as illegal.

Chua is very insightful on the subject of our contemporary therapeutic self-esteem culture: It is, she argues, largely an intellectual cover to enable the making of excuses for mediocrity. She imagines a man in a flash of sudden insight untangling the mysteries of string theory while walking on a beach, and writes that such a thing is indeed possible—if you assume that he has spent grueling years mastering quantum physics beforehand. She similarly notes that the greatest of our creative types developed new techniques and modes of expression only after mastering the old ones, and makes a very persuasive case for rote learning oriented toward the attainment of skill and competency as prerequisites to innovation and creativity. The problem for tiger moms is that we have kitten schools and a sex-kitten culture. The upside is that those happy few who manage to inculcate such steely habits as Chua advocates will slice through an increasingly soft and sloppy American culture like a bullwhip through Cool Whip. The downside is that they are bound to be disappointed in just what kind of society they have risen to the top of. **NR**

The Path in Rome

KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ



Roman Pilgrimage: The Station Churches, by George Weigel with Elizabeth Lev and Stephen Weigel (Basic, 464 pp., \$39.99)

A FEW years ago, before my first trip to Rome, one of the wisest and yet most practical people I know said that, for a Catholic, turning down the Via della Conciliazione—the road to St. Peter’s Basilica and the tomb of the first pope—would be like “coming home.” And so it is.

But there is no homecoming without a meal—without substance. And George Weigel’s new book *Roman Pilgrimage*, done in collaboration with Elizabeth Lev and his son Stephen, provides nourishment for both the inquirer and the believer, from a city whose bread and butter is Catholicism. Stephen Weigel is responsible for the photos in the book, and Elizabeth Lev provides art-history expertise. Rome, without the right tour guide, can be a dizzying succession of one church after another, all blending into a confusing uniformity. With the right guide, however, it can be a truly illuminative way.

Some of us who have tried it both ways say you have not been through the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican museums, among other Roman destinations, unless you’ve been there with Lev as your guide. *Roman Pilgrimage* is true to its title: A walk through the “station churches”—destinations of Lenten devotion in Rome—it’s a pilgrimage in a book. It covers art, history, and spirituality and is replete with both fact and apostolic zeal. Although long planned, and begun before Pope Francis was elected a year ago, it’s very much in line with the program of the new

pope: inviting Christians to be Christian, and opening a door of welcome to all. No mere tourist map, it is an invitation to lived Christianity, with some of the saints and martyrs whom one meets in the stones and on the walls of the Eternal City.

The book opens by quoting Pope John Paul II on the exercise of pilgrimage: “To go in a spirit of prayer from one place to another . . . helps us not only live our lives as a journey, but also gives us a vivid sense of a God who has gone before us and leads us on, who himself set out on man’s path, a God who does not look down on us from on high, but who has become our traveling companion.”

Roman Pilgrimage makes not just Roman churches but the Catholic faith itself come alive through an encounter with Biblical religion, what Pope Benedict XVI described as “the adventure of God.” It’s an adventure, Weigel writes, that “consists in the fact that ‘God did not remain within himself: He came out from himself.’” On pilgrimage, there is a purification, as the pilgrims are drawn into God, for the purpose of renewal—to be missionaries who live to witness to the Gospel and offer men and women “friendship with Jesus.”

The *Roman Pilgrimage* walk, in its most literal sense, is centered on a pilgrim tradition dating back to the fourth century and revived in recent years by seminarians based in Rome. “The Roman Christian practice of visiting the tombs of the martyrs,” Weigel writes, “praying and celebrating the Eucharist at these sites, is the foundation on which the Roman station-church pilgrimage of Lent arose.” For each day of Lent, and shortly thereafter, Weigel takes the reader into a church of Rome—from St. Sabina on Ash Wednesday to St. Mary Major on Easter Sunday and to the Basilica of St. Pancras at the top of the Janiculum on Divine Mercy Sunday a week later—and describes (and illustrates) its treasures, its history, and its lessons.

Roman Pilgrimage is, as Weigel puts it, a “rediscovery of the baptismal character of Lent.” This rediscovery is of ecumenical benefit. Lent has often been trivialized as a no-chocolate-or-booze season for Catholics; this book is an invitation to go deeper. Prayer, fasting, and charity—the



disciplines of Lent—exist to help the penitent live a more integrated life in the “fabric of the life of grace.” “Lent, which had an intensely baptismal character centuries ago,” Weigel observes, “became almost exclusively penitential: a matter of what Catholics must not do, rather than a season focused on the heart of the Christian vocation and mission—conversion to Jesus Christ and the deepening of our friendship with him.”

He continues:

This revival of Lent in the Catholic Church has involved the rediscovery of the Forty Days as a season shaped by the *catechumenate*: the period of education and formation through which adults who have not yet been baptized are prepared to receive Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist, the three sacraments of Christian initiation, at the Easter Vigil. The baptismal character of Lent is not for catechumens only, however. The adult catechumenate . . . offers an annual reminder to the Church that *all* Christians are *always* in need of conversion. The Church’s conversion, the Church’s being-made-holy, is a never-ending process.

In recent decades, Catholics in America have internalized a certain secularization, a cultural belief that religion is something to compartmentalize, to privatize, to keep to a Sabbath day (and only an hour at that). Self-professed Catholics have run for office with language about being “personally opposed” on matters of human dignity. *Roman Pilgrimage* is an accessible coffee-table textbook for a revival of real faith.

“To make the pilgrimage of Lent is to follow an itinerary of conversion,” Weigel writes. “Lent affords every baptized Christian the opportunity to reenter the catechumenate, to undergo a ‘second baptism,’ and thus to meet once again the mysteries of God’s mercy and love.”

This call to conversion takes on some added timeliness, not only because we’re all getting older and we never know our final day or hour, but also because it is the central message of the pope who has graced the covers of *Time*, *The Advocate*, and *Rolling Stone*: mercy, reconciliation, and healing.

While the Roman station-churches pilgrimage does have an unmistakable Lenten rigor to it, Weigel emphasizes that the book does not have to be put away come the Easter season. “The station-church pilgrimage can be, and in fact is,” Weigel writes, “walked on many levels, not unlike the city in which it takes place.” Along “the pathways of the station-church pilgrimage (and at whatever time of year it is walked), the 21st-century pilgrim or visitor passes through multiple layers of the history of Western civilization and has the opportunity to ponder the rise and fall of empires—as well as the continuities of culture that endure despite radical changes of political and economic fortune.” He adds that “this layer of the station-church pilgrimage is open to everyone, whatever an individual’s religious ‘location’ or lack thereof. It can be a deeply moving reminder of the fragility of civilization as well as of the richness of regenerative powers embedded in the West.”

There’s a groundedness to this walk, in a time of uncertainty. And it’s made all the more exciting by the fact that it is a tradition made popular since the mid 1970s by young men—mostly seminarians and student priests from the North American College in Rome—who wake up before dawn, to prayerfully participate in and to celebrate Mass throughout the city.

Roman Pilgrimage does make for a nourishing feast for the coffee table, but the younger Weigel’s photographs really jump off the screen of the e-book. However a reader accesses *Roman Pilgrimage*, it’s a journey of “sanctity and profound Christian conviction.” In a time that seems to have a tolerance only for nebulous spirituality and superficial religion, it provides a way of proposal and rediscovery, where at every turn is a meeting with one—a saint, a martyr, the Savior—who walked this walk before and guides anyone willing through the next step. **NR**

Film

Once More Unto the Breach

ROSS DOUTHAT

THERE were three main criticisms of Zack Snyder's *300* when it surprised everyone by becoming a massive hit seven years ago. The first was that it was lousy; the second was that it was neoconservative propaganda; the third was that it was politically confused.

The first critique was understandable enough: Snyder's take on the battle of Thermopylae, where 300 Spartans died to the man trying to slow the Persian invasion of Greece, was a historical epic purged of every note except bombast, with computer-generated visuals that were sometimes arresting but often felt like an assault, and so much slow motion that the occasional full-speed moments felt overcaffeinated. And its commercial success had unfortunate consequences in Hollywood, giving Snyder undeserved directing opportunities (including the most recent Superman movie, *Man of Steel*), inspiring a rash of terrible Greco-CGI extravaganzas (*Clash of the Titans* and so on), and forcing us all to pretend that Gerard Butler, who bellowed his way through the part of King Leonidas, is actually a movie star.

The second, politicized critique was often hysterical—a by-product of Bush-era liberal derangement, which read Snyder's epic through the lens of modern Middle Eastern politics and accused him of making a movie that either implicitly justified the Iraq invasion or promised to justify a future strike on Iran. I'm confident that nothing so specific was on the filmmakers' minds, but the hysterics did have some evidence behind them: In its broad- and blood-spattered-brush way, *300* was clearly trying to be a *kind of* pro-Western propaganda film—pitting free men against slave soldiers, reason against superstition, the birthplace of European civilization against a cruel Oriental despotism.



Sullivan Stapleton in *300: Rise of an Empire*

But this points us to the third critique lodged against the film: that the Spartans who died at Thermopylae, however heroic their sacrifice, are extremely odd antecedents for a democratic civilization to celebrate, given that their own society was as despotic in its way as the Persia of Xerxes. NATIONAL REVIEW's own James Robbins made this point well in an essay on the movie, noting that Spartan society had more in common with the totalitarianisms of the 20th century than with the liberal-democratic West. Even if Sparta played the kind of essential part in Western history that Stalin's Russia played in World War II, that still doesn't justify painting the last stand at Thermopylae as a world-historical clash between freedom and authoritarianism—not when both sides of that battle were authoritarian to their core.

I'm prompted to these reflections by the release of a sequel-cum-companion piece to Snyder's mega-hit. The new film, *300: Rise of an Empire*, overlaps with the events of the first movie, showing us the back story in Persia (if you ever wanted to know how to go from being a mere king of kings to a god-emperor, this movie has you covered) and then depicting the same Persian invasion as *300*, but this time through Athenian eyes.

So we get naval battles this time, as the Athenian fleet and its commander, Themistocles (Sullivan Stapleton), try to hold off a Persian armada commanded by Artemisia, the god-king Xerxes' right-hand woman. A real historical figure—she ruled a Greek-speaking city in Asia Minor and really did command a Persian fleet—Artemisia has been transformed by the requirements of the genre into a raven-haired man-eater played by Eva Green, who decapitates, declaims,

and seduces with equal vigor, all the while complaining that she can't find a man to equal her.

Themistocles is ostensibly that man, but actually he's a total snooze, a zero-as-hero (in the writing and in Stapleton's performance alike) who leaves the audience nostalgic for the hackish scenery-chewing of Butler. But more important, the tedium of the entire storyline (Artemisia's scenes excepted) leaves you nostalgic for the Spartans as a people. They appear here mostly in cameos and digressions (Lena Headey, who played Leonidas's queen in the last movie, is back in a supporting role), leaving the noble, democratic, proto-modern Athenians alone at center stage.

And those proto-modern qualities, it turns out, rob this story of the one thing that the original *300* actually had going for it: a zonked-out strangeness, a touch of true madness, a sense of the deep exoticism of the far-off past. It was thematically incongruous, in that movie, to have two totalitarianisms duke it out and ask us to see one of them as a "democracy in the making." But the incongruity, in hindsight, gave the movie an interesting frisson. Precisely because Snyder's Spartans clearly *weren't* actually proto-democrats, but rather war-loving statist lunatics, the original movie did something more interesting than its speeches about freedom would suggest: It induced audiences to relate to the truly foreign, the truly alien, in a way that few movies about ancient history ever do.

This realization, which made me like the original mega-hit at least a little more, came to me as I was sitting unhappily through the tedium of the sequel. I'm offering it to you so you don't have to do the same. Consider yourself . . . favored by the gods. **NR**

The Devil in Miss Blue Devil

ONE January day, an 18-year-old girl in her first year at Duke University checked Facebook to discover that more than 200 new friend requests had come in overnight, mostly from boys of about her age. “I was a bit flattered,” she later recalled. “Maybe I actually am pretty and nice and not awkward, I thought.”

Maybe. Maybe a secret conference regarding her niceness had just concluded in her favor. Or maybe Duke’s young bucks merely thought it would be funny to be Facebook friends with a porn star.

Between a Friday evening, when a boy who spotted her porn videos told of her exploits at the frat house, and the Saturday morning that followed, she had become a campus celebrity. Appearing on a rough-sex site called “Facial Abuse” is one way to make it, I mean start out with a bang, I mean climb the greasy pole, I mean . . .

Weeks, a product of a Jesuit school in Washington State, says she acted in ten or so videos, for which she was paid between \$1,000 and \$1,500 each. In addition to performing plain old sex, she was also filmed being choked, gagged, spat upon, and worse.

The kidlings these days are said to be savvy about matters technological, but it seems Miss Weeks didn’t quite think through the implications of starring in online porn. For instance, she thought that no one on campus would learn of her new career. Once her name started getting around Durham, she still thought she could conceal her identity from outsiders. Such as her parents. She did a defensive interview with the campus paper the *Chronicle*, published on Valentine’s Day for the romantic in all of us, using the pseudonym “Lauren.”

Then Weeks wrote an essay for the confessional site XOJane declaring her name was “Belle Knox.” She expressed amazement that her privacy had been violated and that boys were being hostile on online fora. “Her nose is bigger than her [breasts],” said one online analyst. Hurtful! But if you’d rather not attract such rudeness, maybe don’t have sex for money. No wait, sorry—that’s prostitution. That’s illegal. Weeks was merely having sex on camera for money, which is A-okay.

Whence the devil in Miss Blue Devil? Weeks blamed college tuition. But she also admitted that she had been offered a full scholarship to Vanderbilt, the nation’s 17th-highest-ranked university according to *U.S. News & World Report*. Duke is seventh in the same survey. A wish to move up ten spots in the rankings can’t really be termed desperation. Nor is Weeks poor; her dad, Kevin, is an Army doctor (who just returned from a tour in Afghanistan to learn how his daughter was paying the bills). And the plea about being overwhelmed by costs may not hold up to scrutiny either: “She does not hesitate to show off to me her recently purchased iPad mini and array of designer handbags,” noted her

first interviewer, for the *Chronicle*, who also mentioned that a giggling Weeks asked, “Do you think I’ll be on *Ellen*?”

Cut to: Weeks’s appearance on *The View*, where she recast herself as a feminist trailblazer, a kind of Susan XXX. Anthony. “For centuries,” she declared, “sex workers have been the untouchables of society and I’m done. I’m sick of it. I’m taking a stand against it.” “Right on!” replied Whoopi Goldberg.

Weeks also said, “In this backdrop of our society where women are so often robbed of their sexual autonomy and are subjected to sexual violence and this backdrop of, you know, misogyny against women, it’s incredibly freeing and liberating for me to have that choice to make decisions about my own body.”

Sure. American female sexuality is practically under Taliban control—Kevin Weeks could tell you about U.S.–Afghanistan similarities—and we can all agree that “misogyny against women” is an especially odious kind of misogyny. The talk of “choice” about “my body,” though, was especially droll. Weeks is making a plea for porn to be as sacrosanct as abortion among liberal women opinion-makers.

The good news is that there remains a coughing and trembly little creature left in our cultural Pandora’s box: shame. Despite concerted efforts to suffocate it—right on!—it’s still barely breathing. Shame is why Weeks begged her male friend not to tell anyone at the frat house about her porn videos, why she used pseudonyms, why she didn’t tell her parents, why she didn’t like being called a slut.

Weeks, who is majoring in women’s studies and has learned the “empowerment” rhetoric of that self-deluding tribe, is a confused little girl who took a shortcut to bling and, once figurative exposure followed the literal kind, realized privacy was no longer an option. So she leveraged her notoriety and is now selling it alongside her booty. Her adventures in porn are now permanently affixed to her and will adversely affect her career, friendship, and marriage prospects. She will never be able to find a husband—except the kind of husband who would marry a porn star.

The *View* co-host Sherri Shepherd reacted to Weeks’s blasé description of her porn career this way: “You’re a guest on our show so I don’t want to make you feel any kind of bad. It’s just for someone to say ‘I’ve been watching porn since I was twelve years old and it’s empowering,’ to me it sounds like you have something completely memorized that you’re saying.” Shepherd then delivered the applause line of the show: “My heart breaks, it does, when I hear this.” So let’s turn the “choice” rhetoric around. Let’s declare that, actually, this particular choice should not be available to a girl of 18. I propose the Miriam Weeks Protect Our Daughters from Sexual Exploitation Act. My bill would raise the age of consent for appearing in pornography to 21. Let the Democrats explain why someone who can’t be trusted with a beer should be allowed to irradiate her future by selling images of her nude body being subjected to sexual degradation. **NR**

Mr. Smith is a film critic for the New York Post.

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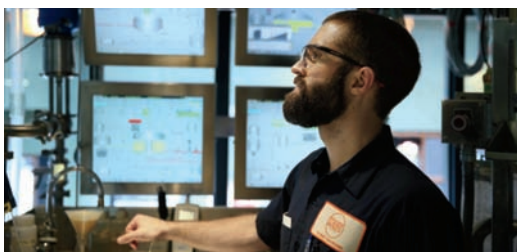
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