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NATIONAL REVIEW



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Every faith gets its Inquisition, and every Inquisition gets its Grand Inquisitor. Ours has a thing for pantsuits, and she is even tougher on heretics than was the Spanish original: Tomás de Torquemada, an orthodox Dominican, did not think anybody irredeemable. *Kevin D. Williamson*



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Trade or the Trade Establishment?

Robert D. Atkinson's "Four Myths about Trade" (September 12) are almost correctly stated; which is to say, incorrectly stated.

"The first assumption is that America is the world's economic leader because it is the most open, entrepreneurial, and market-driven economy." Mr. Atkinson's evidence against this "assumption" (which is really a conclusion) is weak. While "other countries [are at least equal] in numerous areas" and "the United States runs [a colossal] trade deficit," both were also true during America's fastest growth period (between the Civil War and World War I). America's economic jinx since then hasn't been trade.

"The Washington trade establishment's second core belief is that trade is an unalloyed good, even if other nations engage in mercantilism." I defy Mr. Atkinson to find a single non-ironic affirmation of "unalloyed good," as opposed to "good on the whole." Otherwise he correctly characterizes economics since Adam Smith. If Mr. Atkinson disagrees, whence derives his view that "reciprocal free trade is the optimal condition?"

Mr. Atkinson thinks China proves that mercantilism works in that China has been able to "leap ahead." Even if we stipulate the leap, something other than mercantilism has happened at the same time. The Chinese economy has become less Communist, while ours has become less free.

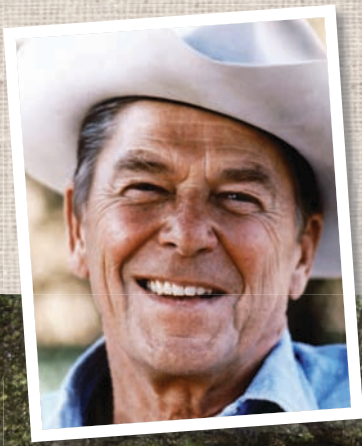
Third, "the theory [of comparative advantage] holds that nations have natural advantages in certain goods . . . and each does better when it specializes in those industries." Not quite. Goods' relative prices differ between trading countries, or there would be no trade. There is nothing "natural," essential, or permanent about the comparative advantage. Specialization is economic; it would retard but not necessarily prevent a reversal.

Fourth "tenet": "Because the United States leads the global economy, because mercantilists hurt only themselves, and because our current industrial structure is optimal or close to it, the economy as a whole must benefit from trade even though some individuals may be hurt." Again, Mr. Atkinson restates economic orthodoxy, almost. 1) "The economy" would not benefit: Only people can benefit. 2) The benefit does not depend on whether the United States "leads" the global economy. 3) The statement is true even though mercantilists do not hurt only themselves. 4) There is no agreed meaning of "industrial structure" for a whole economy, still less what it would mean for it to be optimal. Nobody claims that "our current industrial structure is optimal or close to it." 5) So a better restatement would be: "Trade benefits our people on the whole."

Roberto Alazar
Via e-mail

ROBERT D. ATKINSON: My thanks to Mr. Alazar for his letter. The letter focuses on semantic quibbles (e.g., "people" vs. "economy") and appears to misunderstand my argument. I am arguing less about the validity of neoclassical trade theory and more about shortcomings in the beliefs of the Washington trade establishment. My source of "data" for this is more than 25 years of personal interaction with its members and of reading their views. Regarding Adam Smith—who is always brought up in the debate over trade as if one were quoting scripture—a close read of *The Wealth of Nations* shows that Smith believed that under some conditions foreign mercantilism could hurt the British economy. I wonder if Mr. Alazar really believes that we should not bother to enforce the WTO rules. Since when did defenders of the free market come to believe that government economic distortion is bad here at home but okay from our trading partners? If free-market conservatives are to be intellectually consistent, they need to press for free markets both at home and abroad and acknowledge that distortions hurt U.S. firms, regardless of whether the U.S. or a foreign government imposes them.

Letters may be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com.



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The Week

■ Honestly, the thought of her becoming president makes us feel a little faint, too.

■ Hillary Clinton abruptly left a 9/11 commemoration at Ground Zero, stumbled off a curb, and collapsed into the arms of Secret Service agents before being thrust into a campaign van. The wretched moment, caught on the smartphones of bystanders, zipped online, where it reified all concerns about her health. This is the year of the elders: She will be 69 on Election Day, Donald Trump will be 70, Bernie Sanders was 74 when he bowed out. But she has had a concussion, plus three blood clots, for which she takes a blood thinner. The image of a tired and ailing senior citizen reinforces the facts that she has no vital message and that she has been front and center for a quarter century. As bad as the video was the response of her team. First they said it was hot that morning (the weather was glorious). Then they admitted that she had been diagnosed with pneumonia two days earlier. Then Bill Clinton told CBS News that she “frequently—well not frequently, rarely—but on more than one occasion” has fainted from dehydration. The only thing as familiar as Hillary Clinton is the fog of mendacious doubletalk in which she lives and breathes.

■ On September 9, Clinton, addressing a fundraiser, wrote off millions of voters. “To just be grossly generalistic, you can put half of Trump supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. . . . Racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic, you name it.” “Some of these folks,” she went on, “are irredeemable, but thankfully they are not America.” The next day, she backtracked. “Last night I was ‘grossly generalistic,’ and that’s never a good idea. I regret saying ‘half.’” No kidding. Since Donald Trump is polling in the 40s, Hillary’s first remark labels more than one fifth of Americans un-American. Like many liberals, when Hillary Clinton looks at America she sees a country succumbed, or succumbing, to dark forces. Ironically such wild misdiagnosis simultaneously blurs and encourages the true deplorables—alt-right cranks and racists who have indeed flocked to Trump’s banner, and been retweeted by him. Small but noxious political infections require acts of hygiene, not flame-throwing.

■ Clinton has slid in the polls thanks to new disclosures about her improper server, her sickness and dissembling about same, and her general charmlessness. Over six weeks, her lead went from eight points to one. Trump supporters think that the polls may understate support for him. On the other hand, Clinton will benefit from a much stronger get-out-the-vote operation, and the distribution of votes may give her a slight advantage in the Electoral College. It is no coincidence that the race has tightened while Trump has spent more time with the teleprompter he used to scorn. The polls show continued resistance to the idea that he has the right temperament to be president. He has a few more weeks to overcome it.



■ Matt Lauer became the target of a liberal mob for allegedly being too tough on Clinton and too soft on Trump during a televised forum with first one and then the other. Far from rolling over for Trump, though, Lauer exposed some of his weaknesses. Follow-up questions about Trump’s alleged secret plan to defeat ISIS, for example, made it sound like empty bluster. Liberals’ attack on Lauer does not reflect his performance so much as it does their view that voters are too dim to understand how terrible Trump is unless journalists spell it out for them in capital letters. If debate moderators follow the cue, they will be adding to the disgrace of this election season.

■ Trump, at a Washington, D.C., campaign event, finally admitted the truth: “President Barack Obama was born in the United States. Period.” So ends five years of Trump absurdly banging on the issue. There are, of course, complications: Birther rumors are an old thing in American politics, going back to Vermonter Chester Arthur (allegedly born over the border in Canada). The rumor that Obama was born in Kenya may have arisen in Hillary Clinton’s first presidential campaign: The McClatchy newspaper chain, acting on a tip from Clinton henchman Sidney Blumenthal, even sent a reporter to Africa to investigate (Blumenthal denies the whole story). No matter where it began, or how many other tales have been spun likewise, this was dirtbag gossip, easily refuted by consulting Barack Obama’s birth certificate. That Donald Trump held it to his bosom for five long years after it was released is—what you would expect.

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■ RNC chairman Reince Priebus said that the party might impose sanctions against future Republican presidential candidates if they ran in this year’s primaries, took a pledge to support the nominee, and then reneged. No sensible person holds it against the head of the RNC that he wants his party to unify behind its presidential nominee. But he is asking John Kasich and Jeb Bush (two men he named) to back Trump because of a pledge that Trump himself said he would not honor. And it is not clear how Priebus’s threat serves the party’s interests. If Trump wins, Kasich and Bush are highly unlikely to run for president in 2020. If he loses, it will probably make sense for the party to signal that it wants to win back Republican defectors rather than punish them. And right now, Trump would be better off cajoling Republican holdouts than bullying them. Mike Pence grasped the point when he promised to “earn” Republicans’ votes. Priebus, on the other hand, seems to be taking on some of Trump’s more unfortunate characteristics.



■ No Republican presidential candidate since Richard Nixon has had a proposal for child-care subsidies as expansive as Trump’s. The fact has won him some praise from liberals. Conservatives should be skeptical. Trump wants companies to offer six weeks of unemployment benefits as part of maternity leave, and claims it will cost them nothing because he will crack down on waste and abuse in unemployment programs. The numbers, unsurprisingly, don’t add up. If he keeps the promise, then, he will have to add to the burdens employers take on when they decide to hire people. Trump is also offering a tax deduction for child-care costs, with much of the money going to affluent two-earner couples in high-cost locales. The value of the deduction would be pegged to the average cost of child care in a state. There are conflicting accounts about how large a deduction stay-at-home moms would receive. Trump’s interest in making policy more family-friendly is commendable, but it would be simpler to just let all parents keep more of their money.

■ A Trump speech to the Detroit Economic Club coincided with the campaign’s release of a scaled-back tax-cut plan. The plan seems to be a moving target: The National Federation of Independent Business was told it includes a large tax cut for small businesses and then endorsed it, while organizations trying to figure out its impact on revenues were told it did not include that tax cut. The plan definitely includes a deep reduction in the corporate tax rate, which would no longer be one of the highest in the developed world: a very positive development, even if not one likely to achieve Trump’s new target of sustained 4 percent economic growth. Trump’s trade policy, unfortunately, would undermine that goal, and his rhetoric continues to betray not the slightest hint of familiarity with the integration of many American companies in global supply chains. Unfortunately, tariffs are the

part of his economic agenda to which Trump seems most committed and over which the presidency would give him the most leeway.

■ Edward Snowden, the former NSA contractor responsible for the worst leak in the history of American intelligence, is seeking a presidential pardon. “These were necessary things, these were vital things” to disclose, Snowden told the *Guardian* in a recent interview. Except they weren’t. The revelations about metadata collection, which have been the occasion for Snowden’s celebrity, constitute only a small portion of the information he exposed; according to General Martin Dempsey, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the “vast majority” of Snowden’s disclosures “were related to our military capabilities, operations, tactics, techniques, and procedures.” The result has been a massive setback in American intelligence-gathering and defense: High-level officials have confirmed that Islamic State and al-Qaeda terrorists have modified the way they communicate. Meanwhile, a senior Russian security official confirms that Snowden, who is currently living in hiding in Moscow, has provided information to Russian intelligence. If Snowden is what he says he is—a whistleblower and a patriot—he will do what he should have done in 2013: surrender to the Justice Department and take his chances at trial. The Obama administration should accept no other resolution.

■ Sean Hannity welcomed WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange onto his Fox News program, where he described Assange’s past crimes as little more than a bit of snooping. In reality, Assange has endangered the U.S. and its allies while throwing in his lot with Vladimir Putin, so what could possibly make Hannity treat Assange as a friend? He’s trying to hurt Clinton. Assange has revealed embarrassing e-mails hacked from the DNC, and he is teasing the release of more soon, which could be a huge boon to the Trump campaign. Excusing Assange now demonstrates the slippery assumptions that pass muster in some circles of the Right. National security ought never to be second to electoral politics; giving air time and well wishes to an enemy of the U.S. is shameful regardless of the benefits of co-belligerency against Democrats.

■ Garry Kasparov could have chosen to live out his life as a universally admired chess champion—he is regarded by many as the best ever to have played that game. Instead, he has dedicated himself to the cause of democracy, freedom, and human rights, especially in his former country, Russia. He has stuck his neck out. Onetime comrades of his have been killed, including Boris Nemtsov. Another comrade, Vladimir Kara-Murza, was almost killed, by poisoning, but came out of his coma. Kasparov has said that his chess fame does not necessarily immunize him from danger. But Dinesh D’Souza, with a new soft spot for the Russian authoritarian, cited Kasparov for the proposition that Putin isn’t such a danger to his critics in a tweet: “Have you noticed that @Kasparov63 is a public critic of Putin & very much alive?” To which Kasparov himself wrote, “Have you noticed I live in New York now?” Yes, he does—and he is still on alert.

■ On the 15th anniversary of 9/11, *Politico* published an extensive oral history of that day—specifically, the odyssey of Air Force One. Security officials determined that the safest place for the president to be was in the sky. One of the many fascinating tidbits to emerge was this: Shortly after he and his team



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Paul Fredrick

boarded the plane, President Bush said, “Okay, boys, this is what they pay us for.” That is very Bush.

■ Congress voted to enable private litigants—the most sympathetic imaginable, families of 9/11 victims—to sue the Saudi government for complicity in terrorism. The move stems from an

understandable impulse. Saudi financial support for the propagation of jihadist ideology is as notorious as the fact that 15 of the 19 9/11 hijackers were Saudi nationals, as was al-Qaeda’s emir, Osama bin Laden. It is past time that we undertook a clear-eyed evaluation of our relations with a repressive regime that, while providing important intelligence cooperation, de-

The Unprecedented Negative Interest Rate

INTEREST rates around the world have been pretty low lately. You might be surprised to discover how low.

According to the landmark history of interest rates compiled by Sidney Homer and Richard Sylla, human beings have been engaging in recorded credit transactions for more than 5,000 years. Homer and Sylla report that it was customary for Sumerians to charge an interest rate of 20 percent per year for loans of silver as far back as 3000 B.C. In Babylonian times, the priests of the god Shamash of Sippar loaned silver at 6.25 percent per year, but rates often climbed as high as 20 percent. In the sixth century B.C., the rate on Greek loans was 18 percent, while the rate on “safe” Greek investments dropped all the way to about 8 percent by the first century A.D.

Contracts involving large sums of money or resources have been extremely important for most of history. Indeed, “recorded” history is often a record of some debt arrangement. When the economic stakes were high, it made sense to hire a scribe, or to chip away at a tablet. While much of interest-rate history is anecdotal, by the Middle Ages it became common to keep detailed economic records, so it is possible to construct an interest-rate series on comparable assets back to that time.

The accompanying chart follows the discount rates and bond yields for the economic powerhouses of the time period as compiled by the financial firm Global Financial Data (GFD). As described by GFD chief economist Bryan Taylor, up until the 16th century, the economic powerhouse was Italy; then it was Spain; then, in the 17th century, the Netherlands briefly dominated the world economic stage, owing to its strong trade connections; then, because the country was small, its dominance quickly shifted to Great Britain. Following World War I, the United States became the center of global economic activity, and it has since remained so. While it is important to note the somewhat subjective nature of determining an economic powerhouse, these assumptions allow us to construct a continuous sampling of rates across hundreds of years.

The chart plots two rates. The discount rates are short-term central-bank rates spanning the years 1522 to 2009. The long-term government-bond yields go back all the way to 1285. The duration of each long-term bond varies, ranging from those with no maturity date—as with the oldest Italian bond, the Prestiti of Venice—to those with the now-standard ten-year maturity period of the U.S. government bond.

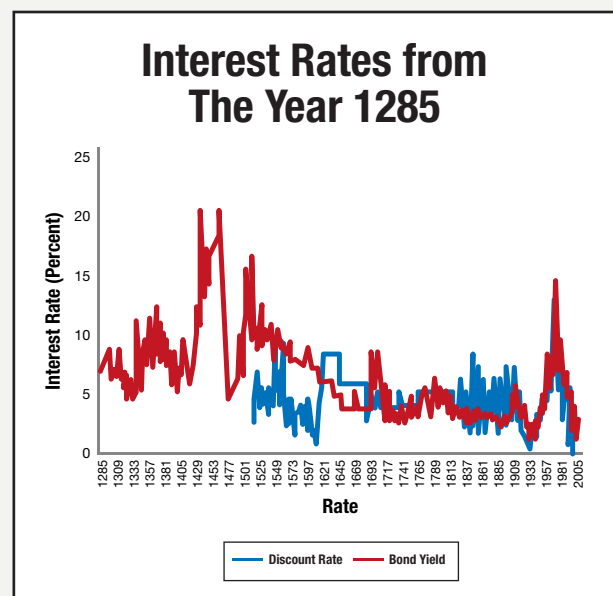
What sticks out, of course, is the end of the chart, where both the short-term and the long-term interest rates are lower than they have been at other times in recorded history.

The chart, by focusing at the end on the U.S. rate, actually understates the case. Central banks around the world are experimenting with negative interest rates, and the *Wall Street Journal* reports that globally there is now approximately \$10 trillion of government debt with negative yields. Fed chairwoman Janet Yellen revealed in a recent speech that the U.S. might try negative interest rates as well.

Which raises the \$10 trillion question: Is the economy so much worse now than it has been over the past 5,000 years that negative interest rates make sense?

The most reasonable answer is probably “Yes.” For today, unlike any other time in human history, our financial markets have been taken over by Keynesian central bankers determined to drive interest rates into negative territory, purportedly because of the positive stimulus such low rates provide. This creates a terrible equilibrium. If rates are expected to be negative, it makes no sense for private investors to accumulate capital. The government is effectively charging you a fine of 1 percent of capital for the crime of having money in the bank in the future. When capital accumulation and the accompanying investment tanks in response to this policy, growth slows, making the wizards at the central bank even more sure that rates should be even more negative. In the age of Harambe, interest rates are lower than they have been since Hammurabi.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



SOURCE: GLOBAL FINANCIAL DATA, GFD CENTRAL BANK DISCOUNT RATE INDEX, AND GFD LONG-TERM GOVERNMENT BOND YIELD INDEX

DOCTOR'S MEMORY BREAKTHROUGH

One Simple Trick to Reversing Memory Loss

World's Leading Brain Expert and Winner of the Prestigious Kennedy Award, Unveils Exciting News For the Scattered, Unfocused and Forgetful

By Steven Wuzubia
Health Correspondent;

Clearwater, Florida: Dr. Meir Shinitzky, Ph.D., is a former visiting professor at Duke University, recipient of the prestigious J.F. Kennedy Prize and author of more than 200 international scientific papers on human body cells. But now he's come up with what the medical world considers his greatest accomplishment — A vital compound, so powerful, it's reported to repair... even regrow damaged brain cells. In layman's terms — Bring back your memory power. And leave you feeling more focused and clear-headed than you have in years!

Dr. Shinitzky explains this phenomenon in simple terms; "Science has shown when your brain nutrient levels drop, you can start to experience memory problems and overall mental fatigue. Your ability to concentrate and stay focused becomes compromised. And gradually, a "mental fog" sets in. It can damage every aspect of your life". Not only do brain cells die but they become dysfunctional as if they begin to fade away as we age. This affects our ability to have mental clarity and focus and impacts our ability to remember things that were easy for us to do in our 20's and 30's.

Scientists think the biggest cause of brain deterioration in older people is the decreased functioning of membranes and molecules that surround the brain cells. These really are the transmitters that connect the tissues or the brain cells to one another that help us with our sharp memory, clear thinking and mental focus, even our powers to reason well. "When we are in our 20's" according to Dr. Shinitzky "our body produces key substances like phosphatidylserine and phosphatidic acid"...unfortunately they are believed to be critical essential nutrients that just fade away with age, much like our memories often do leading to further mental deterioration.

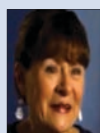
As we get older it becomes more frustrating as there is little comfort when you forget names... misplace your keys...or just feel "a little confused". And even though your foggy memory gets laughed off as just another "senior moment," it's not very funny when it keeps happening to you.

The Missing Link is Found and Tested

It's hard to pronounce that's for sure, but it certainly appears from the astounding clinical research that this one vital nutrient phosphatidylserine (PS) can really make a huge difference in our mental wellness. 17 different double blind studies with placebo controlled groups have been involved in the clinical research of PS with patients between the ages of 55-80 years of age. Periodically the researchers gave these patients memory and cognitive tests and the results were simply amazing:

- 1) *PS patients outperformed placebo patients in All 5 Tests - 100% Success Rate*
- 2) *After only 45 days there was a measurable improvement in mental function*
- 3) *After 90 days, there was an impressive and amazing improvement in mental function*

The group taking phosphatidylserine, not only enjoyed sharper memory, but listen to this... they were also more upbeat and remarkably more happy. In contrast, the moods of the individuals who took the placebo (starch pill), remained unaffected....no mental or mood improvement at all.



My Memory Started to Scare Me.

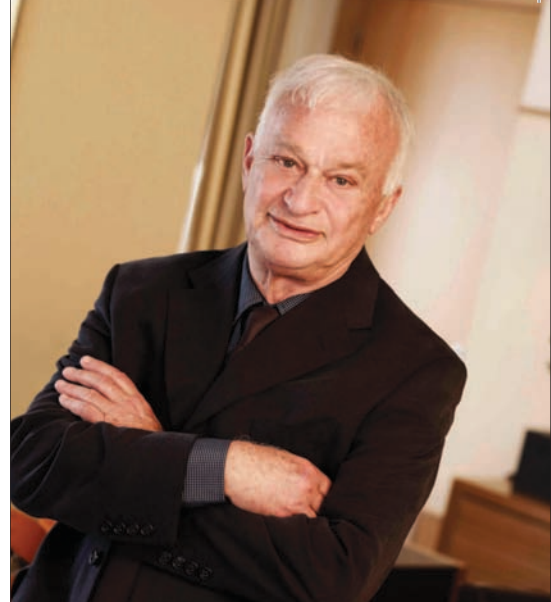
I would forget all kinds of things and something that I just said earlier in the day would have completely slipped my mind. I almost forgot my granddaughter's birthday and that would have been horrible. I had forgotten lots of other little things along the way. I was worried about it.

Over the last several months I've noticed my memory seemed to be getting pretty unreliable and so I thought I'd better do something about it now. So when I read about this amazing PS nutrient and how much it would help me with my memory I wanted to try it.

It's great! I have actual recall now, which is super. After about 6 weeks of taking it on a daily basis is when I began to notice that I wasn't forgetting things anymore.

Thanks to PS for giving me my memory back. It's given me a lot more self-confidence and self-esteem. I would not trust my memory without it.

- Ethel Macagnoney



Dr. Meir Shinitzky, Ph.D. a former visiting professor at Duke University and a recipient of the prestigious J.F. Kennedy Prize

Vital Nutrient Reverses "Scatter Brain"

This incredible PS nutrient feeds your brain the vital nutrient it needs to stay healthy... PS now has the attention of some of the world's most prominent brain experts. It has been written up and published in leading science and medical journals and its findings have electrified the International scientific community.

Earth-Shaking Science

Published, clinical reports show replenishing your body's natural supply of Phosphatidylserine, not only helps sharpen your memory and concentration — but also helps "perk you up" and put you in a better mood. PS as it turns out also helps to reduce everyday stress and elevate your mood by lowering your body's production of the hormone cortisol. When cortisol levels are too high for too long you experience fatigue, bad moods and weakness. This drug-free brain-boosting formula enters your bloodstream fast (in as little as thirty minutes).

Officially Reviewed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration: PS is the ONLY Health Supplement that has a "Qualified Health Claim for both Cognitive Dysfunction and Dementia".

Special Opportunity For Our Readers

We've made arrangements with the distributor of this proprietary blend of PS, which combines with several other proven special brain boosting natural ingredients to give you the mental clarity and memory gain that you need, to give you a Risk-Free trial supply. This is a special "Readers Only Discount". This trial is 100% risk-free.

It's a terrific deal. If Lipogen PS Plus doesn't help you think better, remember more... and improve your mind, clarity and mood — you won't pay a penny! (Except S&H).

But you must act fast. Your order can only be guaranteed if it comes in within the next 7-days. After that, supplies could run out. And your order may not be fulfilled until they are replenished.

So don't wait. Now you can join the thousands of people who think better, remember more — and enjoy clear, "fog-free" memory. Call today, toll-free at 1-800-780-6526. Think of it as making a "wake-up call" to your brain.

nies religious liberty and systematically discriminates against women, religious minorities, apostates, and homosexuals. The courtroom, nevertheless, is no place for such a reckoning. Diplomacy is no more a fit subject for litigation than is terrorism a law-enforcement matter. Moreover, such legislation will spur other countries to allow their citizens to sue the United States, and perhaps even to enact criminal laws authorizing arrests of current and former U.S. officials (including military personnel) for actions taken in our national defense. Foreign policy is the constitutional bailiwick of the political branches. They extend reciprocal diplomatic immunities, but have policy options ranging from negotiation to warfare. That's as it should be, and Obama is right to promise a veto.

■ On its way out the door, the Obama administration has signaled to health insurers its readiness to grant them bailouts that would violate longstanding Justice Department guidelines and the will of Congress. The game concerns Obamacare's temporary risk-corridor program, which was designed to help insurers that suffered losses from participating in the exchanges. The program does not have the money to pay them what they want, since there have not been enough profitable insurers to kick in and Congress refused to provide any other funds. (Insurers have requested \$2.87 billion, eight times as much as other insurers have put in.) Some insurers have sued, demanding payment from the Judgment Fund, which was established to settle claims against the government but is not available to an agency when it has, as in this case, recourse to seek funds from Congress. So held the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel in 1998. Congress has said no to a bailout of insurance companies, and Obama signed the legislation. So the Justice Department should prepare to defend against their claims—and HHS should desist from conniving with them.

■ HHS has proposed a new rule to force states to fund Planned Parenthood. The federal government provides Title X funding to state governments so they can provide family-planning services. States have had discretion over the disbursement of these funds. The proposed rule forbids state governments to distribute federal money “using criteria in their selection of subrecipients that are unrelated to the ability to deliver services to program beneficiaries in an effective manner.” In other words, states will not be allowed to steer money away from groups they consider morally abhorrent because of their involvement in abortion and fetal-tissue trafficking. Specifically, they will be blocked from defunding the nation's largest abortionist, Planned Parenthood. The administration has managed, then, to combine some of its favorite causes: executive legislating, government subsidies, Washington-knows-best interference, and the culture of death.

■ Two years after the corruption at the Department of Veterans Affairs was revealed, the House of Representatives has finally passed a bill to make it easier to terminate VA employees for misconduct or poor performance: a long-overdue step in reforming an agency mired in incompetence and malpractice. Predictably, the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents 230,000 VA employees, and the White House have suggested that the bill might undercut veterans' health care. But given that veterans are currently dying—literally—in the parking lots of VA hospitals, it seems like a risk worth taking.

■ Pittsburgh, a city synonymous with the 20th-century industrial economy, is serving as a cradle to what promises to be one of the great technologies of the 21st, with Uber deploying its first self-driving automobiles in the Steel City. It is a safe bet that those cars will become fully operational and widespread right around the time the Democrats are successful in unionizing and cartelizing Uber drivers, as they have so successfully done with the taxi mafia that Uber threatens to put out of business. For the moment, Uber is keeping humans in the driver's seat, just in case, and the autonomous vehicles' programming is so risk-averse that the robot taxis are, for the moment, of limited usefulness. If experience is any guide, self-driving cars soon enough will be as different from today's test models as the iPhone 7 is from the Motorola cinderblocks of the Reagan era. This will present some interesting policy problems, no doubt, with the nannies torn between trying to limit autonomous cars to save all those cab-driver jobs and mandating them when they turn out to be safer than human-operated Volvos. Uber and its competitors have been obliged to fight with regulators and parochial business interests from Day One, and no doubt there will be an attempt to make it into a national scandal the first time an autonomous car gets into a fender-bender. But the future is coming, in spite of the best efforts of the regulators and rent-seekers.

■ Missouri is to become the eleventh “constitutional carry” state. In September, its legislature overturned a gubernatorial veto and abolished the state's concealed-carry permitting process entirely. When the new system goes into effect next month, residents of the “Show Me” State will have to show nothing before exercising their basic rights. Upon hearing the news, the usual suspects—Everytown, *The Daily Show*, the *New York Times* editorial board, etc.—screamed bloody murder. But few Americans seem to have been listening. Since 1987 (in which year Florida moved to a “shall issue” concealed-carry system and began the restoration of the right to bear arms), voters have been treated to an endless parade of ghastly predictions. Concealed carry, they were told, would lead to shootouts in the street; to bloodbaths in the supermarkets; to the return of the Wild West. None of it happened. Instead, over the last three decades, gun-homicide rates have been cut in half and crime has returned to its pre-1960 levels. There is no evidence that the abolition of state permitting systems will reverse this trend. Indeed, there is no evidence that permitting systems do anything much at all to the crime rate. For recognizing that purposeless restrictions on constitutional rights are futile and unjust, Missouri's legislature should be applauded.

■ With the apparent collapse of the latest Syrian cease-fire mere days after Secretary of State John Kerry announced it, we have another opportunity to learn the same lessons all over again. Russia and the Assad regime will pursue their interests regardless of international agreements. Cease-fires are inherently unstable unless all sides are content with the status quo on the ground. Yet with competing factions that desire to dominate more than to achieve a level of autonomy and stability, the only status quo they are content to perpetuate is continued violence. With final victory elusive, look for this civil war to end at an indeterminate future point through exhaustion instead of negotiation.

■ The United States is not alone in experiencing a populist revolt on the right focused on immigration. Europe has seen an upswing

Vaccines and Stem Cells: Secret Weapons in the Fight Against Lung Disease

BY CAMERON KENNERLY | *Staff Writer*

Once a year around the end of October, the U.S. will enter flu season, sparking millions of parents and grandparents to pull their children kicking and screaming all the way to the doctor's office. Although any needle is an unwelcomed one, we tolerate these injections because at our hearts, we just want to be healthy. However, what is often unknown—or worse neglected—is that seniors have an inherently weaker immune system leading to increased rates of medical complications and death from viruses like the flu; particularly those suffering from a chronic lung disease such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), pulmonary fibrosis and emphysema.

Although many of these deaths are preventable, fortunately, the answer is simple: get vaccinated.

The relationship between vaccines and health cannot be understated, particularly for seniors who suffer from respiratory illness. For those who live with a debilitating lung disease, exacerbations or flare-ups can be both physically and mentally exhausting. Exacerbations further lung degeneration, and when coupled with fatigue and a consistent shortness of breath, chronic lung disease can be an incredibly difficult disease to live with. Add a flu virus and these factors can produce a potentially lethal combination.

Although flu shots are known to reduce flu-related hospital admissions by up to 77%, when it comes to combating lung disease, there are few options available to address more than just the disease's symptoms.



For seniors with lung disease, a flu vaccine combined with stem cell therapy could have a significant impact on their health and quality of life.

However, as medicine has continued to advance, investigative stem cell therapy and clinics such as the Lung Institute (lunginstitute.com) have come to the forefront as a premiere method of treatment. With a success rate of 83%, and a quality for safety among the highest, the Lung Institute has been able to increase the quality of life for over 2,500 patients. Using stem cells as the body's natural repair mechanism, investigative stem cell therapy hopes to promote healing from within, reduce lung inflammation, dilate airways and works to improve quality of life and pulmonary function in those with chronic respiratory illnesses.

Emerging from a time when epidemics took millions from the population every century, science has taken humanity into a golden era of medicine and personal healthcare. Although neither the flu nor chronic lung disease possess a known cure, through the combination of vaccines and investigative stem cell therapy, it's possible to dramatically affect the lives—and lifespan—of one of our nation's most susceptible demographic. ■

Stem Cells: The Next Big Thing

Lung disease accounts for the loss of 150,000 lives every year and is the third leading cause of death in the United States.

Specialists using stem cells from the patient's own body can offer treatment for people suffering from lung diseases like:

- COPD
- Pulmonary Fibrosis
- Emphysema
- Interstitial Lung Disease
- Chronic Bronchitis

With clinics located in Tampa, Florida; Nashville, Tennessee; Scottsdale, Arizona; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Dallas, Texas, the physicians at the Lung Institute are able to treat patients from anywhere in the United States and around the world.

If you or a loved one suffers from a chronic lung disease, contact the Lung Institute to find out if stem cell treatments are right for you.

Call **(888) 704-5594** for more information or visit LungInstitute.com/NatlReview

in immigration-restriction movements, ranging from the broadly responsible center-right in the Netherlands to the ugly and irresponsible elements rallying under the Le Pen banner in France. In Germany, that energy is sustaining Alternative for Germany (AfD), which is less anti-EU than is the U.K. Independence party but opposes the euro and strongly opposes liberal immigration, especially from the Middle East. That formula seems to be of some interest in Germany, with AfD having played a key role in two humiliating defeats of Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, most recently in the regional elections in Berlin. AfD has not quite decided what kind of party it wants to be, although it has forcefully rejected the most unsavory elements of German nationalism, especially the National Democratic party of Germany (successor to the "German Reich party," to give an indicator of that group's views). The lesson is the same here and there: If the responsible Right fails to deal seriously with the question of immigration, the resulting political vacuum will be filled by something.

■ Injecting a poison-filled syringe into the arm of a 17-year-old, a Belgian doctor killed the patient, the first minor to be legally euthanized in Belgium, which in 2014 revised its laws to eliminate all age restrictions on the practice. The principle having been established, it was a matter of time before the precedent would be set. The patient was dying and had requested a hastening of death, as those who defend the right to die will be quick to note. Its critics will point out that, by its own logic, the law should apply equally to children who suffer from depression or mental illness, at which point the grim absurdity of the right to die should be obvious to all. Palliative care coupled with emotional support of the dying is the obvious alternative to assisted suicide, which is beneath the dignity not just of the dying.

■ Mahmoud Abbas, the PLO leader, had a Soviet education. He wrote his dissertation at Patrice Lumumba University (now called the Peoples' Friendship University). His dissertation was "The Connection between the Nazis and the Leaders of the Zionist Movement." He found that the Holocaust was a "fantastic lie." Now there is news from the Soviet archives: Abbas was an agent of the KGB in Damascus, nicknamed "Mole." We cannot be shocked or scandalized. Studying at Patrice Lumumba, denying the Holocaust, leading a PLO that refuses to make peace with its neighbor: Isn't that enough?

■ Colin Kaepernick may be having a bad year on the field, but he has had a great one on the sidelines: Not standing for the National Anthem has become a trend among American athletes. What to make of it? Coercion is detestable: The compulsory salute and the orchestrated ovation are the marks of the worst societies. Free speech, by contrast, should be a mark of ours. The best way for an athlete (or anyone) to think about the National Anthem is to think about what it represents. Frederick Douglass wrestled with the problem in a Fourth of July speech in 1852, when slavery flourished and he himself had been free for only 14 years. "The existence of slavery," he told his audience, "brands your republicanism as a sham, your humanity as a base pretense, and your Christianity as a lie." Yet he did not despair for America, because of its founding principles. The Constitution, he went on, was a "glorious liberty document. Read its preamble, consider its purposes. Is slavery among them? Is it at the gateway? Or is it in the temple? It is

neither." Thirteen years later, in fulfillment of those purposes, slavery was nowhere. Free men and women should stand for that.

■ The National Collegiate Athletic Association—the self-serving bureaucratic apparatus that reaps an annual multibillion-dollar paycheck off the labor of disproportionately poor and minority students—is suddenly concerned about social justice. The NCAA has decided to pull seven championship events out of North Carolina (and the Atlantic Coast Conference has followed suit) because the Tar Heel State had the hateful audacity to pass a law requiring that its citizens use the public bathrooms that correspond to their biological sex. Given the NBA's recent decision to pull its All-Star Game from Charlotte for the same reason, it's become unmistakably clear that progressives are determined to turn the court and field into sweatier versions of an Oberlin classroom. One hopes these symbolic victories for pregnant "men" are worth the eventual backlash. We suspect that most people around the water cooler want to talk about sports, not gender politics.

■ Bill Cosby's lawyers have done the inevitable: claimed racism. This is especially interesting in light of Cosby's longtime gospel: personal responsibility. Cries of racism give patriotism a run for its money as the last refuge of a scoundrel.

■ Ever since the ancient Greeks, the ability to vividly portray characters very different from oneself has been indispensable to writers. Now it has become a literary crime: "cultural appropriation." Speaking at a writers' conference in Australia, the author Lionel Shriver explained what should be an obvious truth: that "the ultimate endpoint of keeping our mitts off experience that doesn't 'belong' to us is that there is no fiction." This was enough to make one sensitive listener head for the exit and write a long, bitter complaint about "identity," "marginalized groups," "defining their own place," and "the normalization of imperialist, colonial rule," all of which was quickly echoed by leftists around the world. As Shriver pointed out, fictional characters, being fictional, cannot be exploited, and history and culture have no owner, nor are they finite resources that one person can deprive another of. Obvious? Not to the cultural Left. But as long as brave souls such as Shriver are around to stoutly defend the cause of literature, fiction writers will not be intimidated into putting their imaginations in a cage.

■ General Mills, the Minnesota-based food giant and one of the nation's largest advertisers (annual marketing budget: \$700 million), is pressuring third-party ad agencies to increase their diversity: Agencies bidding for the company's business should have staffs of "at least 50 percent women and 20 percent people of color" within their creative departments. "We'll get to stronger creative work that resonates with our consumers by partnering with creative teams who understand firsthand the diverse perspectives of the people we serve," said Kris Patton, a General Mills spokeswoman. Ah yes, because women need women to sell them Lucky Charms, and people of color require people-of-color-specific ads before they'll buy Totino's Triple Pepperoni Pizza Rolls™. We understand that this is mostly about virtue-signaling, but c'mon General Mills, Trix are for kids.

■ In 2015, a 69-year-old man sat on a bench, exposed himself, and masturbated in front of a group of female students on the

campus of the University of Catania in Sicily. The man, identified in court documents as Pietro L., defended himself by noting that he engaged in the practice only occasionally. He was sentenced to three months in prison and ordered to pay a fine, but his sentence has now been overturned by Italy's highest court. It ruled that a recent change to Italian law meant that obscene public acts were no longer criminal—providing they weren't performed in the presence of minors. Luckily for Pietro, his audience had reached the age at which lewd displays must now be tolerated.

■ Edward Albee wrote more than 30 plays over the course of his half-century-long career, but if he's remembered, it'll be for just one: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, a *succès de scandale* when it premiered in 1962, notable for its sexual frankness and its seething dissatisfaction in the midst of Kennedy-era optimism. Today, the play is no longer “edgy,” but its anxiety and menace are as riveting as ever—perhaps because the sense of unraveling that envelops George, Martha, Nick, and Honey over the course of their evening together has since extended far beyond the confines of Albee's New England bourgeoisie. Reviewing the premiere, Robert Coleman of the *New York Daily Mirror* called it “a sick play for sick people.” He was right, and the sickness—the characters', and ours—is the reason the play has endured, and will endure, whatever history makes of the rest of Albee's oeuvre. Dead at 88. R.I.P.

■ His mandate, from WFB, was “to go about seeking strange and remarkable things.” In the Seventies, D. Keith Mano did just that, in a back-of-the-book column in *NATIONAL REVIEW* called “The Gimlet Eye.” He reported on pawnbrokers, jockeys, Chinese waiters, Russian Orthodox believers, firewalkers, phone-sex operators, homosexuals before they were called gays. His eye was clear, bright, restless, his prose crackled like a just-lit fire. Before his NR days he wrote a string of well-received novels, culminating in *Take Five*, that tracked pilgrims' progresses in the modern world. In 1990 he returned to the form with *Topless*, about an Episcopal priest who inherits a topless bar. He also wrote for television (*St. Elsewhere*), magazines with pictures (*Playboy*), and magazines with words (*Esquire*). He was consumed with God, the world, and the flesh; his personal mortification was rooting for the football team of his alma mater, Columbia. In person he was loud, sharp, smart, fun, and kind. If we were a team, we would retire his number. Dead at 74. It's hard to imagine Keith at rest or at peace, so God bless, and au revoir.

TERRORISM

The Attacks Continue

ON Saturday, September 17, a bomb packed with metal shrapnel exploded in the Manhattan neighborhood of Chelsea, injuring 29 people, eleven hours after an explosion in Seaside Park, N.J., along the route of a planned Marine Corps charity run. Both bombings—and at least two other attempts, one in Manhattan and one in Elizabeth, N.J.—appear to be the work of Ahmad Khan Rahami, a 28-year-old naturalized citizen from Afghanistan.

The sequence of events, culminating in Rahami's capture, coincided with liberal attempts to make the weekend's goings-on anything other than what they obviously are: Islamist terrorism. On Saturday night, New York City mayor Bill de Blasio called



Police officers and firefighters respond to a bombing in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City, September 17, 2016

the bombing “an intentional act,” making his own contribution to the roll of Obama-era euphemisms, while two days later, news that Rahami might not have acted alone prompted a CNN terrorism “expert” to propose that “two or three lone wolves may have gotten together.”

These are only the most recent demonstrations of liberals' refusal to acknowledge that the United States faces a deadly threat grounded in a distinct ideology. Terrorism is not an expression of frustration at a lack of economic opportunity; it is violence intended to subvert the existing political order, and, in the case of people such as Rahami, to replace it with the political framework required by supremacist Islam. Acknowledging this fact does not require condemning Islam as such; it requires simply acknowledging that a strain of Islam, with broad appeal today, opposes the American way of life.

Our policymaking should be based on this recognition. Instead, liberal leaders have been hampering counterterror efforts. The Obama administration has drawn down our intelligence efforts at home and abroad while smearing police departments across the country as racist. Meanwhile, in New York City, Mayor de Blasio caved to the demands of Islamist activists earlier this year and ordered the NYPD to stop using a report that helped officers identify individuals who might be considering terrorism.

Restoring these tools is one necessity. Another is reforming our immigration laws to better screen out unsavory characters. The results of our thoughtless immigration policies were on display on September 17 not only in New York City but halfway across the country, in St. Cloud, Minn., where 22-year-old Dahir A. Adan, born in Kenya but of Somali extraction and raised in the U.S., stabbed ten people at a local shopping mall before being shot dead by an off-duty police officer. Inroads into Minnesota's Somali diaspora by both al-Qaeda and the Islamic State have been widely reported, and should serve as a warning going forward. Those seeking entry to the United States should face serious scrutiny; it's not “xenophobic” to prefer applicants who embrace American ideals.

That no one was killed in any of these particular attacks is a minor miracle. But the adherents of Islamism are many, and dedicated, and they'll try again. It's long past time for a coherent, coordinated, aggressive strategy to root them out before they can do so.



Rob Portman's Perfect Campaign

The Ohio senator has surged by hyper-localizing his reelection bid

BY ELIANA JOHNSON

Columbus, Ohio

OHIO STADIUM, or “The Shoe,” is a sea of scarlet, gray, and white as fans stream in to see the Buckeyes face off against the University of Tulsa. Football here is a quasi-religious experience. But today, another set of fans is present. The school’s baseball team, drinking beer and lounging under a tent outside the stadium when a 60-year-old man materializes in its midst, starts cheering and chanting, “Rob! Rob! Rob!”—and then, moments later, “Portman! Port-man! Port-man!”

The unlikely subject of this fandom is Rob Portman, Ohio’s junior senator. He prefers kayaking and mountain biking, but as he awkwardly swings a make-believe bat in the team’s direction, they only cheer more loudly. Portman is up for reelection in what was supposed to be a grueling battle against the state’s former Democratic governor, Ted Strickland. But

he has found support in unlikely places: from college sports teams, yes, but also from a number of unions that had never before endorsed a Republican in Ohio, and that are backing Hillary Clinton in the presidential race.

That helps to explain his surprising success, and why many are beginning to write off as a lock for the GOP a race once expected to be one of the most competitive in the country. “It’s not over yet, but things are looking really, really, really good,” says Matt Borges, the chairman of the Ohio Republican party. They didn’t always look so bright. Every public poll conducted through the end of May had Portman either tied or trailing, in one case by a nine-point margin; the latest trio, from Bloomberg, CNN, and Suffolk University, have Portman up 17, 21, and 8 points respectively, and Democrats are starting to give up hope. The Democratic

Senatorial Campaign Committee and a super PAC run by associates of Senate minority leader Harry Reid recently canceled millions of dollars’ worth of ad buys on Strickland’s behalf. Tom Lopach, the executive director of the DSCC, has reportedly conceded that “Portman has run a damn fine race.”

With many of Portman’s Republican colleagues who are seeking reelection to the Senate still struggling, his campaign offers something of a guide to success for Republicans in the Trump era. “Of anybody, he has had the toughest tightrope to walk between Kasich, Clinton, and Trump,” says Randy Evans, the Republican national committeeman from Georgia, who has kept close tabs on the race. “Somebody should write a textbook just based on his campaign.”

It should’ve been a rough summer for Portman, the embodiment of the moderate Republican establishment in a year that has favored outsiders. He lobbied to bring the Republican convention to Cleveland, and then the party’s primary voters nominated Trump, who is everything he is not. During the convention, Trump picked a fight with Ohio governor John Kasich, who has refused to endorse him or to help his campaign. Portman has endorsed Trump in the loosest possible way. He has a knack for avoiding controversy and conflict, and he spent the convention doing community service and making noises about how he had envisioned things this way even before Trump clinched the nomination. In the weeks that followed, as Trump feuded with the family of a dead soldier and reiterated his charge that President Obama was the founder of ISIS, polls began to show him dragging down Republicans across the country. But Portman cemented his lead.

It helps that outside groups have put him at a \$12 million advantage in independent expenditures, unleashing a barrage of television advertisements reminding Ohio voters why they booted Strickland out of office in 2010. That money has come from all corners of the party, from the super PAC funded by the Koch brothers to their ideological foes at the Chamber of Commerce. Some of his colleagues, including Pennsylvania’s Pat Toomey and New Hampshire’s Kelly Ayotte, have not had the same advantage, and have found themselves in tighter races in part because in both states Democrats are investing more than Republicans.

Ryuhō Okawa's Unique Solution to World Conflicts

Nowadays, the world is facing an unprecedented period of chaos with conflicts raging including international terrorism, the rise of ISIS, the Syrian Civil War and refugee crisis, the military expansion of China and nuclear development by North Korea. During the eight years of the Obama Administration, the world order has begun to fluctuate greatly as the American government has led from behind and abdicated its role as the world's policeman. The volatile nature of the 2016 American election further complicates the international business, economic and diplomatic climate.



Challenging Conventional Thinking of the Definition of World Justice

Defining Worldwide Justice for solving conflicts between nations and religions is more critical than ever. Global Visionary, best-selling author and founder of Happy Science, Ryuhō Okawa challenges conventional thinking of how global justice should be viewed from secular and religious perspectives in his recently released book, *The Laws of Justice: How We Can Solve World Conflicts and Bring Peace*. By combining six of the author's lectures given in Japan, *The Laws of Justice* has delivered religious, spiritual, political and economic reasoning guided by what Okawa states is "Universal Truths". It navigates world leaders, academic thinkers and thoughtful readers to best analyze how they can reach Okawa's ultimate goal: to help people find true happiness and bring justice and prosperity to the world. Okawa asks readers to expand their view of justice by considering world events from the standpoint of God.

America was founded on religious values as The Declaration of Independence states. But recently America has faced changes as President Obama revised this in his inaugural address saying, "We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus and non-believers." Okawa states that in this way, democracy is being shaken while religious values and freedom are being compromised.

How We Can Reconcile Two Political Trends in the World

"There are two major trends opposing each other in the world today. One centers around the United States. This force is comprised of countries that want to support and spread the ideologies of democracy, liberalism (liberty), fundamental human rights and market economies," Okawa wrote in *The Laws of Justice*. "The other is a force comprised of the countries that will suffer if these ideologies spread across the world, because their ways of thinking and methods differ. There is a battle between these two forces. For example, some countries would not be happy if democracy was pushed upon them. Their names may contain the words like 'democratic' or 'people's republic', but those names do not reflect the reality of what is happening in those countries."

"In terms of religion, the era of monotheistic religions has continued for two or three thousand years and there is a tendency to consider monotheism to be pure and non-monotheistic religions to be muddled and defiled" Okawa states. "Of course, there is nothing wrong with monotheistic religions that worship a universal God who loves humankind, but there are also those that worship a specific god who only protects one particular ethnic group. Forcing other ethnic groups to believe in their own god would

mean that one particular group could completely dominate others. That would be unreasonable."

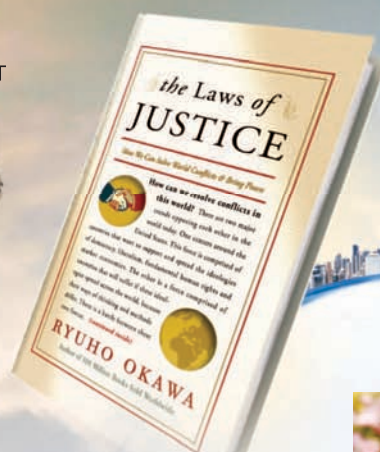
An Enlightened Lecture by Ryuhō Okawa, Founder of Happy Science

Ryuhō Okawa is the author of over 2,100 books which have sold over 100 million copies worldwide, and been translated into 28 languages.

The Laws of Justice which is on semiannual best seller list in Japan, will be published worldwide. In 1986, Okawa established Happy Science as a spiritual movement dedicated to bringing greater happiness to humankind by uniting religions and cultures to live in harmony by overcoming various barriers among humanity. Happy Science global movement spread over 100 countries strives to lead the future of the world by following God's Justice — having impacted enlightening individuals, religious organizations and governments including a new vibrant conservative political party, the Happiness Realization Party (HRP) in Japan.

Okawa will follow-up the nationwide release of this critical book and a recent 8-part special on local New York Fox 5 television, with a lecture in New York City, October 2 entitled "Freedom, Justice, and Happiness."

(*The Laws of Justice* is published by IRH Press USA Inc.)



Global visionary
and best-selling
author in Japan

RYUHO OKAWA

Global Visionary Ryuhō Okawa Special Lecture in New York

~ FREEDOM, JUSTICE, AND HAPPINESS ~

• Date & Time: Sunday, Oct. 2, 2016, 1:00 pm • Venue: Crowne Plaza Times Square Manhattan
Door closes at 12:50 pm, prior booking required. *The lecture title is subject to change.



HAPPY SCIENCE

www.ryuhō-okawa.com

A blueblood and a graduate of Dartmouth College and the University of Michigan law school, Portman prides himself on his political moderation and counts George H. W. Bush as his political hero. He's a pragmatist who talks about how great it is to "get things done" despite the gridlock in Washington. He has avoided many of the partisan knife fights that have made the front pages and has amassed a pile of legislation to his name by focusing his efforts almost exclusively on non-controversial matters such as job training, human trafficking, and the opioid epidemic. Ohio's senior senator, Sherrod Brown, a Democrat, hasn't said a bad word about him while doing the minimum amount of campaigning on Strickland's behalf. You almost get the sense that Brown won't be crestfallen if Portman wins another term. "I will tell you Sherrod has been a very good partner on a number of legislative issues," Portman says.

a methodical ground game and a TV-advertising blitz have helped Portman compensate for that deficiency. Bliss says the campaign will have knocked on 5 million doors in Ohio by Election Day. To put that in perspective, the RNC says it has knocked on 4.4 million doors nationwide so far, which means that by November, the Portman campaign may have knocked on as many doors in Ohio as the GOP has across the country.

Bliss has also hyper-localized the race, which has immunized it to some of the national trends. The campaign has sliced and diced the Ohio electorate into 22 subsets and is essentially running about two dozen city-council races rather than one Senate campaign. One example: "There are the 65,000 voters in the Toledo area whose chief concern is stamping out a toxic algae bloom in Lake Erie that has polluted drinking water," Bliss says. "When we knock on those doors, we talk to them about Rob's work on Lake Erie.

service. Frawley, a stout man with a long beard and a ponytail, is clad in a Trump-Pence T-shirt and a hat emblazoned with HILLARY FOR JAIL. Asked what he likes to hunt, he responds, "Anything that moves." And yet the Portman campaign is also handing out, at Clinton rallies across the state, literature advertising his endorsements from several of Ohio's unions. Bliss says he's gotten 397 people to sign up for Portman yard signs at those events.

Every union that has endorsed Portman has in past years endorsed Strickland, which underscores not only the elbow grease Portman has put into the race but also some demographic changes that are helping Republicans in Ohio. The state was once considered a bellwether because it resembled the rest of the country, but it is now whiter and poorer, with a median household income, in 2014, about \$5,000 below the national figure of \$53,657. The endorsements Portman has received from

Rob Portman's race is a demonstration that while the top of the ticket matters, so too do individual candidates and their campaigns.

All of this moderation belies a fiercely competitive nature—Portman pauses at one point to tell me how many more supporters his campaign turned out at a handful of local parades than Strickland's did—and the moment the midterm elections ended in November 2014, Portman began assembling the best campaign team available. If his wonkish attention to detail makes him boring, a label he chafes at, it has also made him a menace on the campaign trail. He has raised more money—nearly \$14 million—than any of his Republican colleagues. "He has played every card perfectly," says a top Republican strategist.

When Portman's campaign manager, Corry Bliss, touched down in Ohio in January 2015, he realized that Portman was more the challenger than the incumbent. The first-term senator had about 60 percent name recognition; Strickland, a former congressman and governor who lost to Kasich in 2010, was known by 90 percent of Ohio residents. In a cycle during which Senate campaigns are getting little help from the top of the ticket or from the Republican National Committee,

And when they go online, they get ads about Lake Erie. And when they turn on TV, they see ads about Lake Erie."

Ohio's hunters have gotten the message, too. At a sportsmen's dinner outside Columbus where auction items included fans and fountains in the shape of wild turkeys, Jeff Herrick, 59, a former Division of Wildlife district manager, praised Portman for his advocacy on an obscure issue: "leading the charge trying to keep the Asian carp out of Lake Erie," which would threaten some of the local—and most edible—fish. A pamphlet on each plate touted Portman's push to open more federal land for hunters, anglers, and trappers, and featured a picture of him in head-to-toe camouflage with a rifle in one hand and a dead turkey in the other. Portman regaled the crowd with a story about how his great-grandfather died on a duck hunt—with a smile on his face. "So that's the Portman family lore, that that's the best way to go, in a duck blind," he said.

Mike "Cooter" Frawley, a 56-year-old toolmaker from Clark County, stops Portman on his way out to thank him for his

the Teamsters, the International Union of Operating Engineers, and the United Mine Workers are evidence not only that the GOP is increasingly the home of downscale, blue-collar workers but also that the Democratic party has pushed them away. Strickland first ran for Congress in 1976 as a pro-gun, pro-coal Democrat. After his governorship, Strickland landed at a liberal think tank in Washington, D.C., which advocated gun-control measures and clean-energy regulations opposed by many of Ohio's unions. He had a difficult time explaining where he stood when he was challenged from the left in the Democratic primary.

That helps to explain why Donald Trump, too, is performing well in Ohio, where his lead, however, an average of about 1.7 points, pales by comparison with Portman's over Strickland. Portman's race is a demonstration that while the top of the ticket matters, so too do individual candidates and their campaigns. For Republicans, who are now able to focus their attention and resources on other races, establishment and boring never looked so good. NR

Recovery at Last?

Confusion about economic policy is distorting both political parties' analysis

BY RAMESH PONNURU

GOOD economic news came for liberals at just the right moment. As the mid-September polls showed Donald Trump closing the gap with Hillary Clinton, the Census Bureau reported that 2015 was the best year for middle-income households since it started keeping the records in 1967. Their incomes rose more than 5 percent. Poverty declined.

Democrats took the numbers as a vindication of the Obama administration's policy record: President Obama had rescued an economy in free fall, and done it without Republican help.

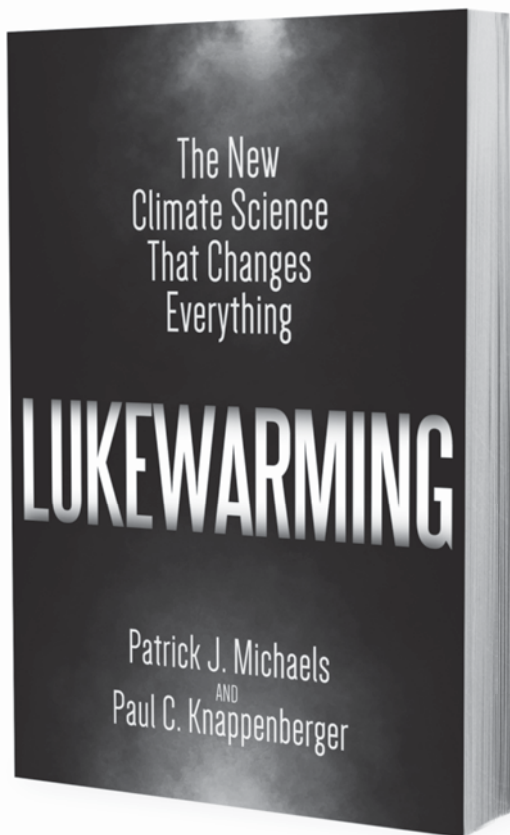
Almost all Republicans in Congress voted against stimulus legislation in February 2009. Republicans have often said that various Obama policies, from his health-care law to his tax increases to his environmental regulations, would mean economic ruin. The new numbers, according to Democrats, disproved those claims. Instead, they argued, the economy is doing pretty well and would be doing even better if Republicans would quit obstructing the administration's agenda.

The Census Bureau findings did not, however, give Republicans any pause. By a variety of measures, especially that of GDP growth, this is the weakest recovery on record in our country's history. The Census report itself showed that middle-income households were still worse off than before the economic crisis. Liberals attribute the sluggish pace of the recovery to the aftermath of a financial crisis, conservatives to liberal policies. Republicans note further that labor-force-participation rates are low, even for able-bodied young men. And

growth rates, already low, have been falling for three years.

Republicans often add that the economy would be doing even worse if the Federal Reserve were not artificially boosting it. Trump has said that Janet Yellen, the top Fed official, is keeping interest rates low to help the Democrats and should be "ashamed" of herself. "We have a very false economy," he said. Trump did not always hold this view. In two interviews in May, he said that interest rates should stay low and that raising them "would be a disaster." Back then, he also said that he had "great respect" for Yellen.

On this question, Trump has moved toward Republican orthodoxy while supplementing it with his own trademark personal shots. During the early years of the Obama administration, many Republican politicians warned that monetary policy was too accommodative and that inflation was sure to result. But the last six years have seen less inflation than any period since the early 1960s. By the time of the latest



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presidential primaries, most Republicans had stopped talking about inflation. Still, most of the Republican presidential candidates found other reasons to criticize the Fed for trying too hard to stimulate the economy. They said that the Fed's activism had kept wages down, increased inequality, punished savers—and, somewhat paradoxically, helped President Obama.

That the Fed's policy has helped Obama and, now, Clinton is the most defensible part of this Republican orthodoxy. It has helped the Democrats by helping the economy. But the nature of that economic help is easily misunderstood. Interest rates have been low around the globe in recent years, not just in the United States, and most estimates of the "natural" or "equilibrium" interest rate have been low as well—suggesting that Fed policy is not the main reason for low observed interest

In particular, Obama's tax increases have been relatively mild. The Obamacare legislation included a 3.8 percent tax on investment income. Another tax increase happened as a result of the expiration, at the end of 2012, of the tax cuts enacted under George W. Bush. Obama refused to renew those that affected the highest earners. Married couples making more than \$450,000 a year, and singles making more than \$400,000, saw their tax rates rise from 35 to 39.6 percent. Taxes on capital gains and dividends went from 15 to 23.8 percent.

It is certainly possible that these tax increases weakened the economy by reducing the incentive to work, save, and invest. But any such supply-side effect is bound to have been small. The Tax Foundation, which uses an economic model that incorporates supply-side assumptions, recently found that the Bush-era reductions in income-tax

On the other hand, the case that Obama's policies turned the economy around is also weak. The models and studies suggesting that the stimulus bill worked almost all ignore the role of monetary policy. But if Congress had not passed a stimulus bill, surely the Fed would have engaged in more quantitative easing in 2009, or taken other expansionary steps (such as stopping the payment of interest on banks' excess reserves). We overestimate the effects of fiscal policy if we fail to account for the possibility of such "monetary offset." Some Keynesians predicted that the deficit-reduction measures that took effect in early 2013 would hurt the economy. But the Fed had at the same time adopted a more expansionary policy, and in fact economic growth accelerated during the period.

Confusion about economic policy, often involving the Federal Reserve, is

If the political debate over the economy is unsatisfying, so is **the economy itself**.

rates. There is good reason to think that if the Fed raised interest rates above their natural rate, the effect on the economy would be contractionary, which would not be good for savers or wage-earners. The European Central Bank raised interest rates in a sluggish economy in 2011. The result was a renewed European recession.

The Fed hasn't "artificially" helped the economy so much as it has refrained from the kind of self-destructive policy followed by the ECB. If anything, the Fed has erred on the side of contractionary policy. It spent much of 2015 promising to raise interest rates soon, and did at the end of the year, even though inflation was at the time, and remains, below the Fed's stated target of 2 percent annually. Growth, as noted earlier, has slowed. Trump was right about interest rates in May, not in September.

If the Fed hasn't been giving the economy a years-long sugar high, though, it calls into question whether the rest of Obama's economic agenda has been quite as destructive as conservatives often say. And there is good reason for thinking that they have overstated its impact.

rates had over the long run enlarged the economy by 2.3 percent. And remember, some of those reductions have stayed in place. Taxes on dividends remain lower than when Bush took office. The capital-gains rate is only 3.8 percentage points higher than it was at the end of the 1990s boom.

The economy grew faster in 2013 and 2014, when all the Obama-era tax increases were in effect, than in the previous two years. Perhaps the economy would have accelerated even more without the tax increases; but other factors were capable of overcoming any negative effect they had.

Other Obama policies may also have had negative effects. The Congressional Budget Office estimates, for example, that Obamacare will reduce hours worked by the equivalent of 2.5 million jobs. Its analysis of the issue stresses that the law's subsidies decline as people gain higher incomes, and therefore reduce their incentive to make additional income. The higher minimum wage that took effect in Obama's first year in office may have suppressed job growth; extended unemployment insurance may have reduced employment as well.

thus distorting both parties' analyses. Conservatives, convinced that monetary policy is dangerously loose, are looking hither and yon for evidence that it is causing problems. (When all else fails, try "asset bubbles.") Liberals are telling themselves that the Fed has proven that it cannot hit its 2 percent inflation target, and so we need fiscal policy to play a bigger role in stimulating the economy in the future. But the Fed raised interest rates last year when we were below that target, suggesting that higher inflation was something it didn't really wish to pursue. Whether or not it was right to take that course, there is no reason to suppose it has reached the limit of its power.

If the political debate over the economy is unsatisfying, so is the economy itself. How unsatisfying? Democrats and Republicans are offering voters different answers to that question. Some econometricians have developed models that relate recent economic variables to election outcomes. Yale economics professor Ray Fair devised the most prominent of these models. Based on how the economy has been performing, his equation predicts a Republican blowout. **NR**

Bobby Jindal's Legacy

He paid a political price to shrink the government—and improve Louisiana

BY DAN McLAUGHLIN

DOES small government work at the state level?

Bobby Jindal stepped down as Louisiana's governor in January, and local and national coverage of his eight-year tenure would make you think that he had wrecked the state, leaving its finances in shambles and its public services reduced to Somalia-like levels. At first glance, Jindal's low approval ratings and the desperate wails of his Democratic successor over the condition of the state's budget seem to support this view. Closer examination, however, reveals a very different picture: Jindal took on the enormous challenge of cutting government in a state that is culturally deep-red but economically populist, and he paid a great political cost for his efforts. The lessons for conservatives are sobering: Reform is hard to pursue, easy to resist, and frequently thankless. The path to smaller government requires persistence, backbone, and a willingness to accept compromises and a lot of defeats.

Like many Republican governors, Jindal came to office committed to four fiscal goals: lowering taxes, shrinking government, making government programs financially accountable, and improving the state's business climate so that the private sector could grow as the public sector shrank. Unlike some others, he meant it. Over eight years, he cut government at least as much as any American leader has done this century. Even before adjusting for inflation, state spending declined despite the post-Katrina rebuilding surge. The discretionary portion of the budget contracted. Jindal slashed state payrolls by 30,000 permanent employees (a third of the state work force), reduced the state's vehicle fleet, and privatized state hospitals, group homes, and prisons. He directed his staff not to try to "bat a thousand," in the belief that if they



Former Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal, September 18, 2015

weren't losing any battles, they weren't being ambitious enough. That's a recipe for maximizing the return on your political capital—but also for using it up. After eight years, legislators and voters alike were exhausted by the pace of reform, and even the state's Republicans found Jindal a convenient scapegoat.

Many criticisms of Jindal's record are simply disagreements with his small-government goals. His detractors frequently charged him with irresponsible management of state finances, arguing that large tax and spending cuts were unsustainable. Louisiana's bond ratings suggest otherwise. Rating agencies are nonpartisan and are paid to answer one question only: Can the government pay its bills? During the eight years of Jindal's tenure, Louisiana's credit rating was upgraded eight times and never downgraded. Year after year, the media trumpeted budget "crises" and "deficits," yet the professionals never thought the state's credit was in trouble.

Jindal explains the disconnect to me by saying that the annual budget "crisis" was the inevitable result of a legislature that didn't want to cut spending and a governor who wouldn't raise taxes. Both sides needed the threat of impending fiscal

doom: legislators to convince their constituents that tax hikes were their only choice, Jindal to force them to accept spending restraint.

To understand Jindal's predicament, it helps to understand how Louisiana's budget works. Projected spending starts with state agencies' wish lists, which form the basis for an initial spending plan that arrives in the legislature. This plan almost inevitably projects a billion-dollar-plus deficit, which the media dutifully report as evidence of looming fiscal ruin.

Somehow, without significant tax cuts, Jindal's Louisiana passed a nominally balanced budget by the statutory deadline every year and ended up paying its bills on time. In another state, that might have been the end of the process, but not in Louisiana. State law gives the governor some power to rebalance the books on a running basis if, as they often do, the budget's projections prove unrealistically optimistic. Jindal frequently resorted to this authority to make politically painful cuts after the legislature had adjourned, leaving legislators free to direct irate constituents to him.

There were lots of cuts to be made, too. Only about \$8 billion, a third of state spending, is in the budget's "general

fund,” which is mostly used to pay for higher education and health care. The rest—including primary and secondary education—is protected by state law, separately funded by over 100 dedicated revenue streams that add up to about \$1 billion, or both. This design is meant to ensure that any cuts fall first on health care and universities. The separate streams ensure that even when the state is solvent overall, the governor must “sweep” funds out of dedicated accounts with surpluses to shore up the general fund. The media almost always reported Jindal’s sweeps as “raids” and “gimmicks” intended to paper over some fundamental inadequacy in the budget.

Jindal’s battles to reform government services also provoked resistance and comically dishonest criticism. Claims that Jindal had taken a buzzsaw to funding for the state’s universities focused only on direct funding, ignoring capital investments and enormous increases to the state’s “TOPS” scholarship fund, for college applicants with at least a 2.5 GPA and a score of 20 on the ACT. Scholarship funding soared from \$118 million in 2008–09 to nearly \$300 million in 2015–16, offsetting the bulk of direct-funding cuts.

Jindal’s budgetary restructuring aimed to make the state’s higher-education institutions more accountable. Universities’ funding levels would depend on their enrollments, and their admission standards would also be raised; in return, they would have more leeway to raise tuition. The goal was to boost university-graduation rates while guiding less academically inclined students toward two-year colleges that cost less and from which they would have better odds of graduating. Accountability had consequences: Graduation rates rose as expected; Louisiana State University, the crown jewel of the system, saw its total budget increase; and enrollment increased by more than 50 percent at two-year colleges, while enrollment growth stagnated at four-year institutions. Naturally, the universities resented these disruptive reforms.

Louisiana has 14 state universities, more than much larger states, and Jindal also tried to eliminate redundancies among them. In 2011, he proposed combining the mostly white University of New Orleans with the historically black Southern University of New Orleans. The schools are just two blocks apart and owe

their separate existences to the legacy of segregation. SUNO graduated around 8 percent of its students at the time—one of the worst rates in the nation—and the merger would have saved money. But it sparked protests and a complaint to the Justice Department, and fell one vote short in the legislature.

Critics contend that Jindal short-changed the state of needed revenue by signing a huge tax cut in 2008 and allowing a “temporary” cigarette surcharge to expire in 2011. Jindal’s successor, John Bel Edwards, claimed that he needed \$836 million in new taxes, yet somehow found room to ask the legislature for \$2 billion in new spending; he ended up signing a two-year, \$1.5 billion sales-tax hike, while the legislature rejected most of the new spending.

Edwards blamed Jindal for every difficult budgetary decision along the way, but Jindal remains unapologetic about holding the line on taxes: “There’s always plenty of money in Baton Rouge,” he says.

A more defensible criticism of Jindal’s time in office is that the state handed out too many tax breaks to businesses. Louisiana’s corporate tax often nets as little as \$60 million in revenue on \$3 billion a year in collections, round-tripping the rest back to favored businesses. A February 2016 estimate showed the state refunding \$229 million more than it had taken in: The government was actually losing money collecting taxes. At the root of the problem are a slew of wasteful, crony-capitalist giveaways in the tax code. One particularly egregious example, a state credit for local taxes on business inventories, costs Louisiana hundreds of millions of dollars each year: Local governments conspire with businesses to collect excessive assessments, knowing that the businesses will ultimately be repaid by the state while the local authorities keep the original assessment.

Jindal concedes that the state’s corporate-tax system is riddled with giveaways. He belatedly tried and failed in 2015 to eliminate a number of the refundable tax credits that give net hand-outs to businesses. In retrospect, he says, he wishes he had been able to eliminate the credits that aren’t a net benefit for businesses, as well, but doing so without simultaneously lowering tax rates would have amounted to a crushing tax hike. His refusal to allow such an outcome and the legislature’s refusal to cut taxes ultimately

combined to doom any chance at broader reform of the state’s tax code.

In the long run, the health of the government depends on the health of the state’s economy. Jindal points with pride to rising per capita income, the end of a decades-long trend of outmigration, and other signs that Louisiana’s economy prospered on his watch as the government tightened its belt. Both are still too dependent on volatile oil and gas prices—their decline is one reason the state’s economy slowed in 2015—but even after recent booms, the energy sector is closer to 30 percent of the state’s economy than to the 40 percent it was a few decades ago. Jindal often faced culture shock when trying to persuade legislators to see the government as the servant of the state’s economy rather than vice versa. His 2013 effort to replace the state income tax with a pro-growth, Texas-style sales tax failed in part because legislators couldn’t understand why anyone would propose to overhaul the tax system if the goal wasn’t to collect more revenue.

Louisiana had long been dominated by free-spending but socially conservative Democrats: In 2008, only three legislators out of 132 in the Democrat-controlled legislature voted against a Democrat-proposed bill to let public schools teach “creation science.” As voters grew culturally alienated from national Democrats and many legislators switched parties—on Jindal’s watch, the state elected its first Republican legislative majorities since Reconstruction—both groups retained their big-government economic populism. Jindal has no regrets about expanding the tent. He notes that Republican majorities helped him pass school choice and other reforms and that true realignment can take a generation. But even before Donald Trump won Louisiana’s primary in March 2016, Jindal had learned that “an R next to your name doesn’t always mean [you’re] fiscally conservative.” Many legislators who used to come home to break ground on new government projects found it harder to sell abstractions such as an improved business climate—and easy to blame the wonky, fast-talking governor for the loss of cushy government jobs and the disruption of sleepy academic sinecures.

“In theory, there is a lot of demand for smaller government,” Jindal muses today. “In practice . . .” **NR**

The Right's Venture Capitalist

*What Michael Grebe achieved at the
Bradley Foundation*

BY JOHN J. MILLER

MICHAEL GREBE just quit his job as the head of a \$840 million venture-capital firm. That's one way of looking at his retirement this summer as president of the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, the country's largest and possibly most influential conservative philanthropic foundation, where he has spent the last 14 years leading an investment strategy whose goal is to promote limited government and free enterprise.

"I'm worried that we're losing the war of ideas," says Grebe. "A year ago, I couldn't have imagined saying that right now." He's not just talking about the rise of Donald Trump in the GOP. "Trump is not the cause of our problems," says Grebe. "He's a symptom."

For years, conservatives have prided themselves on the high quality of their ideas. Even when they've lost elections, they've continued to take the long view, believing that in time their better ideas will prevail. Whatever faith Grebe once put into this notion has vanished. "Look at young people," he says. "They're a big part of the population and many of them don't believe in capitalism." He could cite a Gallup poll from earlier this year: Fifty-five percent of adults under the age of 30 admitted to a positive view of socialism. "It's alarming," he says. "People talk about the Republican party needing to do some soul searching. I think the conservative movement needs more introspection. We've got to do better."

The 75-year-old Grebe (rhymes with "freebie") was born near Peoria, Ill., attended West Point, and received a pair of Bronze Stars for his service in Vietnam. After law school at the University of Michigan, he settled in Milwaukee, making his career at Foley & Lardner, one of the nation's biggest law firms. Along the way, he became involved in GOP politics.

"I was an early supporter of Ronald Reagan," he says. Grebe never has sought public office, but he has considered it several times—and he came close to running for governor of Wisconsin in 1986. "The timing wasn't right for my family," he says.

That was the year Tommy Thompson, a Republican, won election as the state's governor. He went on to serve four terms, turning Wisconsin into one of federalism's fabled laboratories of democracy, receiving critical assistance from the Bradley Foundation. As a private foundation, Bradley is prohibited from engaging in politics or electioneering—but it may support the work of scholars, think tanks, and policy groups, and that's what it did under the leadership of Michael Joyce in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as Thompson and his allies introduced path-breaking welfare-reform and school-choice programs. Without those reforms, President Bill Clinton might not have signed a law demanding that welfare recipients meet work requirements, and school vouchers and education savings accounts might still be a dream of free-market fantasists rather than a slowly growing reality.

Grebe joined Bradley's board in 1996. Six years later, the foundation needed a

successor to Joyce, and Grebe joined the search committee. At one point, he missed a meeting. At the next gathering, members of the committee told him he should take the job. Ever since, he's put up with jokes about acting like Dick Cheney, who famously headed George W. Bush's vice-presidential selection process.

Although Grebe had high hopes for what the foundation could achieve, his fundamental goal was modest. "I always tried to approach the job as a steward, trying to honor the legacy of the Bradley brothers," he says, referring to the foundation's namesakes: the two men who built the Allen-Bradley Company, a maker of automotive and electrical components. "Whatever accomplishments we've had at the Bradley Foundation are not personal accomplishments," he insists.

Early on, Grebe inaugurated a project that today may be the foundation's most visible activity: the Bradley prizes, which function as a kind of Nobel Prize for conservatives, with four recipients each year. "We wanted to recognize the accomplishments of outstanding conservatives—to create a celebration for the home team—and also to publicize their achievements so they're better understood in popular culture," he says. Since 2003, they've gone to the likes of legal scholar Mary



Michael Grebe

Ann Glendon, actor Gary Sinise, and economist Thomas Sowell. The awards were not Grebe's idea—"They came out of a strategic-planning session early in my tenure," he points out—but they became a distinguishing feature on his watch, culminating each June with an event at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Last year, the foundation gave away more than \$41 million. About one-third of the grants stay in Milwaukee, supporting libraries, museums, orchestras, and other cultural organizations. But a large portion of these contributions is "more Tocquevillian in scope," says Grebe, backing "small local institutions doing good things for people in neighborhoods." These include schools, ministries, and youth centers.

The bulk of the foundation's giving, however, has a national reach. Grebe ticks off the priorities as if he were reading from a mission statement: "democratic capitalism, competent and limited government, and a rigorous defense of American interests at home and abroad." These goals haven't changed since they were adopted in the 1980s, when the foundation took on its modern shape, though their particular application continues to evolve. Today, cybersecurity is a major concern, even though the foundation didn't have its own website when Grebe joined the board. "We're also more involved in higher education," Grebe notes. Even though the Left dominates colleges and universities, Grebe refuses to label higher education a lost cause. "We don't want to give up," he says. He mentions the importance of supporting scholars who work with graduate students: As always, Bradley is thinking about the next generation.

Two years ago, the foundation received an infusion of \$200 million, a final bequest from members of the extended Bradley family, increasing the endowment by more than a quarter. "The board decided to use these new funds for large grants in areas of critical importance," he says. One of them is marriage and family. "So many things have flowed from their decline. The data show that people in stable marriages do better financially, children do better academically, and so on. This is one of the most pressing issues of our time," Grebe explains.

Another priority is to create a thriving conservative infrastructure in the states.

"We need to build networks of think tanks, public-interest law firms, and media outlets that collaborate to advance the cause," says Grebe. "We've seen the Left establish its own networks in Colorado and elsewhere. We've been getting outspent and need to respond."

The Bradley Foundation never has approached problems like a command-and-control center. "We don't come up with ideas," Grebe says. "We identify areas of concern and invite people to propose solutions." Then the foundation issues grants, much like an investment company that wants to provide seed money for the next big thing. Does Grebe have a favorite grant from his two decades in Big Philanthropy? He demurs: "That's like asking which child I like best." One important difference, though, is that while he wants his kids to succeed, he expects a few of his grants to flop: "If some don't fail, it means we aren't taking enough chances."

When Grebe joined the foundation, he remained active in politics, even as he kept this work strictly separate from philanthropy. He has served as campaign chairman for Scott Walker, the current governor of Wisconsin, who came to national attention five years ago for his efforts to rein in public pensions and limit the power of labor unions. "When I needed to make political calls, I would leave the foundation office," Grebe says. At one point, he had hoped that conservative politics would keep him occupied through 2016: He chaired Walker's presidential campaign.

When Walker dropped out of the race, Grebe switched his support to Marco Rubio. When Rubio stumbled, Grebe jumped to Ted Cruz, voting for him in Wisconsin's GOP primary in March, a contest Cruz won. Cruz finally fell in May, but Grebe refused to align himself with Donald Trump. He even resigned as a delegate and skipped the Republican convention in July.

"I did not want to be part of a process that nominates Trump," he says. "He's not appealing to people based on the conservative ideas and policies that we've held dear. He has a populist instinct that's not conservative. Parts of the case for him I can understand, such as the importance of the Supreme Court and the unacceptability of Hillary Clinton," Grebe acknowledges. "I don't accept the claim that he's going to 'shake things up.' We don't know what he's going to do.

He lacks policy positions, as well as the temperament and judgment."

Grebe isn't sure how he'll vote in November. "I might vote for Trump, and I definitely won't vote for Clinton," he says. He's even taking a look at Gary Johnson, the onetime GOP governor of New Mexico who is running for president as a Libertarian: "I haven't ruled him out. I need to learn more about him." He says he might leave the top of his ballot blank, but he'll certainly vote: "We can't forget about all of the other important races." He mentions Ron Johnson, the Republican senator running for reelection in Wisconsin.

Grebe worries that, whatever happens in November, the conservative movement is in big trouble. "Whether Trump wins or loses, he represents a serious setback," he says. "The failure of conservative candidates to get traction says we're losing the war of ideas. A large percentage of people don't share our beliefs. We've got to do a better job of talking to them. We need to keep investing in ideas—and also in ways to communicate our ideas to the public."

Grebe worries that the conservative movement has become a victim of its own success. "We've professionalized, which in many ways is a good thing," he says. "But we have to remember that fresh perspectives come from the states and from volunteers. Not all good ideas are hatched in Washington, D.C. We need more people from flyover country—people like Phyllis Schlafly." That's a reference to the grassroots activist who died on September 5 and whose legacy is to have almost single-handedly defeated the Equal Rights Amendment, an appealingly named left-wing crusade of the 1970s.

Today, Grebe has time on his hands: Not only did Richard Graber succeed him as president of the foundation in July, but he's off the board as well. "I'm going to do nothing for a couple of months," he says. "Then I'll figure out what I want to do." He mentions hands-on volunteer work: "I may help out at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission." That's a Christian homeless shelter. "I don't mean that I'll serve on its board, I mean that I might go in and serve food or provide counseling."

The Bradley Foundation faces a similar challenge. Perhaps it should put out a new request for proposals: What now? **NR**



Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton speaks in New York City, September 9, 2016.

The Irredeemables

Hillary Clinton and the politics of leftist condescension

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

IN the 1980s, every punk band had a song about racism, the classic of the genre being “Racism Sucks,” by 7 Seconds, whose teenaged members had no doubt learned a great deal about the hard facts of black life on the almost exclusively white streets of Reno, Nev., in 1981. There was also the Dead Kennedys’ “Nazi Punks F*** Off,” also from 1981, Black Flag’s “White Minority,” Operation Ivy’s “Unity,” Minor Threat’s “Guilty of Being White”—it is a pretty big catalogue.

Preachy stuff, in the main, but preaching to whom? By the 1980s, it had become difficult to find an honest-to-God open racist in the wild, at least one under about 50 or so. Punk posed as a counterculture, but here at least it was merely setting the rules of polite society to music. Indeed, it was much, much more outré to be an open racist than to have a purple mohawk—a fact that was helped along enormously by Geraldo Rivera and his infamous 1988 show with white supremacist John Metzger, which ended in a televised skin-head brawl.

People tuned in to watch that episode not because it was familiar, but because it was so unusual.

That trend continued in the following decades, to the extent that organized white racism is effectively a non-factor in American public life. As an Anti-Defamation League report put it, “Many Klan groups simply no longer have the membership necessary to hold public demonstrations or protests,” while other white-supremacist groups—with the important exception of prison gangs—are “stagnant or in decline.” Aryan Circle, one of the largest white-power groups in the nation, has about 1,400 members, most of them incarcerated. Groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center tend to track the number of organizations rather than the membership of such organizations, which exaggerates the size and scope of the movement inasmuch as many of these “groups” are nothing more than Potemkin websites or social-media accounts. Estimates of total membership in racist groups typically run less than 100,000 and possibly as low at 40,000—in a nation of more than 300 million—and casually racist attitudes have been declining for decades.

The General Social Survey found that in 1972, just under one-third of white southerners supported school segregation; that number fell so far so fast that the question was dropped

by the mid 1980s. As Anna Maria Barry-Jester put it at *FiveThirtyEight*, “since the 1970s, support for public and political forms of discrimination has shrunk significantly.” Whether the question is voting for a black presidential candidate or permitting discrimination in commercial accommodations, racist attitudes and support for racist policies have shrunk to a position of being little more than an ugly social eccentricity. The number of Americans who believe that blacks are genetically inferior to whites is dwarfed by the number of Americans who believe that astrology is scientific.

Which is to say: It’s a small basket of deplorables, after all.

Actual, indisputable racism has become so rare that we have had to invent exotic new versions of it, such as “white privilege” and expressions of bias so surpassingly subtle that when a black police officer shoots a black criminal in an overwhelmingly black city with a black police commissioner and a black mayor, the real underlying question is—of course—white racism. Developing a sommelier’s nose for prejudice is a large part of what is sometimes known as “virtue-signaling”—performative moralizing meant mainly to increase the status of the critic—though that term has come into disfavor through overuse. (E.g.: “I find it difficult to take you seriously while you’re wearing that swastika armband.” “VIRTUE-SIGNALING! HE’S VIRTUE-SIGNALING! LOOK, EVERYBODY, VIRTUE-SIGNALING!” Etc.)

In the public square and in political discourse, racism isn’t about racism.

Racism is in fact a kind of shorthand for the vices, real and imagined, of conservatives—and particularly middle-American conservatives geographically and spiritually outside the coastal elite’s sphere of influence—as understood by the sort of people who will do their best in a few weeks to make Hillary Rodham Clinton president of these United States. Mrs. Clinton’s now-infamous remarks—that one-half of Donald Trump’s supporters are “racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic,” and “irredeemable” (strong word for a Methodist!)—were, in the spirit of the age, focused on the Internet and social media, on Trump’s “tweets and retweets,” as Abraham Lincoln never put it. Trump of course does have racists among his followers, and he is the favorite candidate of Jew-hating weirdos—at least of Jew-hating weirdos not named Al Sharpton, a man whose continued prominence in Democratic circles is a constant reminder that we would not have to dig too deeply into Mrs. Clinton’s base to uncover characters who make Trump’s sad little gallery of 4Chan beasties look like scholars and gentlemen. There is a deal of deplorability in a nation.

Mrs. Clinton’s deeply uncharitable and deeply un-Christian insistence that those who prefer Trump over her are “irredeemable” (*infelix culpa!*) is familiar, being as it is only this year’s version of Barack Obama’s description in 2008 of the same irredeemable cohort: “They get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them, or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.” The president, who plainly thinks of himself as a kind of national redeemer, would have to revise those remarks if making them today, because one item on that litany of sins—anti-trade sentiment—is a hallmark of his party’s 2016 offerings.

The American Left has long embraced the totalitarian slogan “You’re either part of the solution or part of the problem,”

and among those who are part of the problem, the Left identifies two main cohorts. First are victims of what the Marxists call “false consciousness,” the rubes who are what’s the matter with Kansas, who are too gobsmacked and God-haunted to understand their own economic and political interests and therefore vote against them. They are the dupes. The second group is the saboteurs, those who are driven by hatred, nihilism, and atavistic superstition to oppose all that is good and right and progressive. Trump originally left the Left a little bit nonplussed: He’s an on-paper billionaire, sure, which provides some foundation for hating him, but he did not meet their other expectations. Where a proper right-wing villain should be religious—a member of the Christian Taliban, preferably—Trump is secular and thrice-married (so far), much more Dimmesdale than Chillingworth; a proper right-wing villain should be from Texas or Utah, not from New York City; where he should be a gun nut, Trump has long sympathized with the Obama-Clinton view of such bogeymen as so-called assault weapons and probably has never handled a shotgun outside the confines of some rarefied Scottish clays course; where he should be a warmonger, Trump is one part Ron Paul (at least when it became popular to oppose the Iraq War) and one part realpolitik Gordon Gekko: Forget democracy, grab the oil.

That being the case, the Left settled on: fat racist.

THE fat part is at least as important as the racist part, because both are shorthand in the progressive mind for *sinful*.

No sooner had Trump appeared on *The Dr. Oz Show* to talk about his health than his Democratic opponents began castigating him for his “obesity.” Fat trutherism immediately became the order of the day. There were hundreds of examples, including Sara Morrison’s conspiracy theory, published on *Vocativ*, that the Republican had added an inch to his height in order to evade a BMI calculation that would have made him technically obese. “If you wanted to be considered overweight instead of obese, perhaps because you are vain and already fielding concerns about being the oldest person ever elected to the presidency, well, adding an inch would be a great way to do that,” she wrote. “Especially if the claimed weight was already stretching the bounds of credibility, and the person claiming it seems to have a thing for eating and being photographed with fast food, including buckets of fried chicken, double cheeseburgers, and massive taco bowls.” Indra Lakshmanan of the *Boston Globe* echoed the claim. Others reveled in the story. *The Daily Edge*: “Dr. Oz says obese 70-year-old man who doesn’t exercise is in great shape.” The journalist and TV personality Touré denounced the “nearly obese millionaire birther.” Entertainer Bill Madden described Trump as “270 pounds of Lipitor-guzzling, orange-sprayed trans fat.” (Lipitor, a cholesterol reducer, is a tablet.) Gersh Kuntzman of the *New York Daily News*: “Donald Trump can now officially be called ‘Fat Donald.’” You’d think Kuntzman would be more circumspect about suggesting nasty nicknames.

John Stoehr, who writes a column for *U.S. News and World Report*, argued that this was all fair game: “Yes, it matters,” he wrote. “Why? Because Trump should be held to his own

standards. Remember his calling women ‘fat pigs’?” Which would be fair enough, if such criticism were limited to Trump, or even if it were limited to high-profile public figures with a penchant for personal attacks, such as Rush Limbaugh. But it is not—not by a long shot. When the tea-party rallies made headlines, the protesters were painted as racists, as marionettes being manipulated by Charles and David Koch, etc., but mostly they were dismissed as fat. *Wonkette* published an entire feature on the physical repulsiveness of those attending a Glenn Beck rally—the sour-faced woman in the flag shirt on a mobility scooter became the Left’s avatar of the movement—with Ken Layne writing: “Remain seated, ye lardbottoms, and also stick to daylight hours, so you don’t run into each other, on those ridiculous scooters paid for by Socialist Medicare.” Those devices were quickly nicknamed “obesity scooters.”

“This is why liberals need not fear a Tea Party uprising,” one high-minded progressive wrote at *Wonkette*. “The only thing you need to feel safe from these a**h***s is a flight of stairs.” Later, progressive counter-protesters donned XXXXL American-flag T-shirts over fat suits and rode around on scooters while carrying placards reading: “English was good enough for Jesus!” and “Thank you, Fox News, for keeping us inflamed!” Others fantasized about these benighted fools’

In their more intellectually honest moments, some progressives wonder publicly whether sneering is in fact the most effective form of political persuasion.

convening to “ride their obesity scooters in a victory formation to celebrate all those lazy gubmint employees who never made it to full pension because they rushed headlong into the Twin Towers.”

In the progressive mind, which is a perversion of the Puritan mind, afflictions of the body are mere manifestations of afflictions of the soul. That is why even though gun violence in the United States is disproportionately a young, urban, African-American phenomenon, the personification of gun violence in progressive editorial cartoons is obese, rural, and white—see Jim Morin of the *Miami Herald*, Nick Anderson of the *Houston Chronicle*, Walt Handelsman of *The Advocate*, and many others. It’s so common that it is a cliché, and hence unremarked upon.

In much the same way that antique Calvinists and modern-day proponents of the “prosperity gospel” see health and wealth as signs of divine favor, progressives see high rates of diabetes in rural Georgia and the relative poverty of some parts of Mississippi as judgment from the great god of politics.

In their more intellectually honest moments, some progressives wonder publicly whether sneering is in fact the most effective form of political persuasion. (It is very, very effective: Ask Jon Stewart, an intellectual lightweight who developed a reputation as a formidable thinker simply by ridiculing people Democrats enjoy seeing ridiculed.) At *Vox*, Emmett Rensin published an essay decrying liberal smugness, which caused irony meters to explode on planets in far-away galaxies.

Knowing is the shibboleth into the smug style’s culture, a cultural [*sic*] that celebrates hip commitments and valorizes hip taste, that loves nothing more than hate-reading anyone who doesn’t get them. A culture that has come to replace politics itself. The *knowing* know that police reform, that abortion rights, that labor unions are important, but go no further: What is important, after all, is to signal that you *know* these things. What is important is to launch links and mockery at those who don’t. The Good Facts are enough: Anybody who fails to capitulate to them is part of the Problem, is terminally uncool. No persuasion, only retweets. Eye roll, crying emoji, forward to John Oliver for sick burns.

Rensin’s real concern is exactly what you would expect: that lefty smugness is hindering lefty progress. That the Left might actually be wrong about some important things, and that these errors are neither relieved nor excused by the “liberal good intentions” that Rensin accepts without question, does not occur to him.

Kevin Drum, writing in *Mother Jones*, offered a slight corrective, arguing that the problem is not *smugness* but *condescension*:

We’re convinced that conservatives, especially working-class conservatives, are just dumb. *Smug* suggests only a supreme confidence that we’re right—but conservative elites also believe

they’re right, and they believe it as much as we do. The difference is that, generally speaking, they’re less condescending about it.

... Generally speaking, elite conservatives think liberals are ignorant of basic truths: Econ 101; the work-sapping impact of welfare dependence; the value of traditional culture; the obvious dangers of the world that surrounds us. For working-class conservatives it’s worse: they’re just baffled by it all. They’re made to feel guilty about everything that’s any fun: college football for exploiting kids; pro football for maiming its players; SUVs for destroying the climate; living in the suburbs for being implicitly racist. If they try to argue, they’re accused of mansplaining or strightsplaining or whitesplaining. If they put a wrong word out of place, they’re slut shaming or fat shaming. Who the hell talks like that? They think it’s just crazy. Why do they have to put up with all this condescending gibberish from twenty-something liberals? What’s wrong with the values they grew up with?

Drum, like Rensin, cannot quite manage to consider that last question, and concludes that this is a problem of—as you’d expect—*marketing*.

BUT it is not that. Our so-called liberal friends do not think we are merely ignorant: They think we are evil. The progressive mind believes in the unity of vice, the flip side of the Socratic unity of virtue, the belief that all good characteristics are not only compatible but also related, that they are aspects of a unitary whole that is difficult to see

in its entirety. The unity of vice, in the progressive mind, is the suspicion that someone who disagrees with you about taxes or climate policy is at heart a racist, racism being the comprehensive social sin in the American mind. If you are a conservative or a libertarian, you have no doubt encountered progressives who refuse to believe that the Koch brothers are longtime supporters of gay marriage, that Barry Goldwater was an NAACP member who funded a desegregation lawsuit out of his own pocket, that Rick Perry has been a leading voice on criminal-justice reform, that NATIONAL REVIEW has favored marijuana decriminalization since the 1980s. For those of the mindset criticized by Kevin Drum (and, sometimes, for Kevin Drum), “conservative” and “bigot” are synonyms. That is how modern progressives can consider the case of 20th-century southern Democrats who supported the New Deal, the Great Society, progressive labor reforms, the minimum wage, welfare, social-insurance programs, etc., and spit: “Conservatives!”

This belief, and the hatred associated with it, is religious in its intensity.

Literally. A survey conducted by the American National Election Study in 2000 found that ill feeling and suspicion among religious groups (Evangelicals vs. Catholics vs. Jews) and between racial groups paled in comparison with the most intense hatred in American politics, which is the self-reported loathing of self-described secular Democrats for religious “fundamentalists,” which was as near to off the charts as you can get: Asked to rank their goodwill toward fundamentalists on a scale of 0 to 100, more than half of Democratic National Convention delegates surveyed chose zero—and the average score was eleven. For comparison, the average score white Christian fundamentalists gave to Jews was 66. The Democrats did not think highly of big business, the rich, or Republicans as a group, but they intensely disliked Christian fundamentalists and pro-life groups. A long write-up of the findings was published in the Fall 2002 issue of *The Public Interest*.

With that in mind, it is interesting, and perhaps not entirely coincidental, that Mrs. Clinton chose that particular adjective for the nasties in the Trump camp: “irredeemable.” “Culture” begins with “cult,” and how we live is an expression of what we value and what we believe. These are strange times: Atheists are more aggressive evangelists than Jehovah’s Witnesses, the might of the federal government is being brought to bear in service of the project of permitting men to use women’s restrooms, the liberal love of diversity and toleration requires that people be drummed out of their jobs and out of polite society, and people who call themselves “liberals” celebrate as a positive good the fact that young conservatives are afraid to speak their minds on college campuses. If any of that seems a little weird to you, then Jon Stewart and the gentlemen at *Vox* may suggest that this is because you are not very smart. But that is not quite enough for Mrs. Clinton, who believes that you are not only dumb but dumb and *wicked*.

Every faith gets its Inquisition, and every Inquisition gets its Grand Inquisitor. Ours has a thing for pantsuits, and she is even tougher on heretics than was the Spanish original: Tomás de Torquemada, an orthodox Dominican, did not think anybody irredeemable. **NR**

Trump As Centrist

Finding the ideological core within the bluster

BY LUKE THOMPSON

THE Trump campaign, which limped into the end of summer beset by fading poll numbers and an erratic candidate, appears to have stabilized in recent weeks. Trump still trails Clinton as we head into the debates, but her lead has narrowed to its pre-convention levels. Nonetheless, the GOP’s path to the White House remains narrow. To win, Trump will have to carry three of the following four states: Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida, and North Carolina. That difficult task means that Republicans still have good reason to look beyond November and ask what the future holds should Trump lose.

Much discussion takes for granted that the GOP will be changed utterly by Trump. Commentators have therefore focused either on Trump’s ideological heresies or on the likely electoral residua of his defeat. Will the GOP embrace an anti-trade stance? Will Trump’s anti-immigrant rhetoric drive Hispanic voters to the Democrats for a generation? These are pertinent questions, but they overlook the ideological core of Trumpism, which is likely to be his greatest legacy. And yes, there is a core.

Donald Trump changes his mind. Frequently. He can swing from one position to its opposite in the span of a single staccato sentence. His grasp of and interest in policy can charitably be called thin. Yet despite the inconstancy of his declared commitments, Trump adheres to an ideological bedrock. Surprising as it might seem, there is a “there” to Trumpism. And that “there” is here to stay. Fortunately for Republicans, the substance of Trump’s ideology will prove less onerous than his personal unpopularity. The worst thing the party can do is overreact to the vessel of Trumpism and overlook the bottled lightning that continues to propel him.

Trump has essentially run a third-party candidacy inside the Republican party, with a third-party agenda to match. Like all third-party types, Trump fixates on “the system.” Peel back the sound and the fury and Trump stands for a broadly “centrist” amalgam of good-government reform. Our elites are corrupt, says Trump, so we have to get money out of politics. Special interests entrench themselves by playing institutional games, says Trump, so let’s smash through barriers to action that are imposed by process. “I alone can fix it!”

Trump’s process fixation comes at the expense of substantive policy commitments. Bring up a meaningful issue involving national security or economic policy and Trump’s promises become notably vague. “It’ll be great,” Trump says. “Buh-lieve me.” Trump’s centrism is thus observably not conservative. He does not specify the aims and ends of mankind, cares little to

Mr. Thompson is a partner at the Applecart political consultancy.

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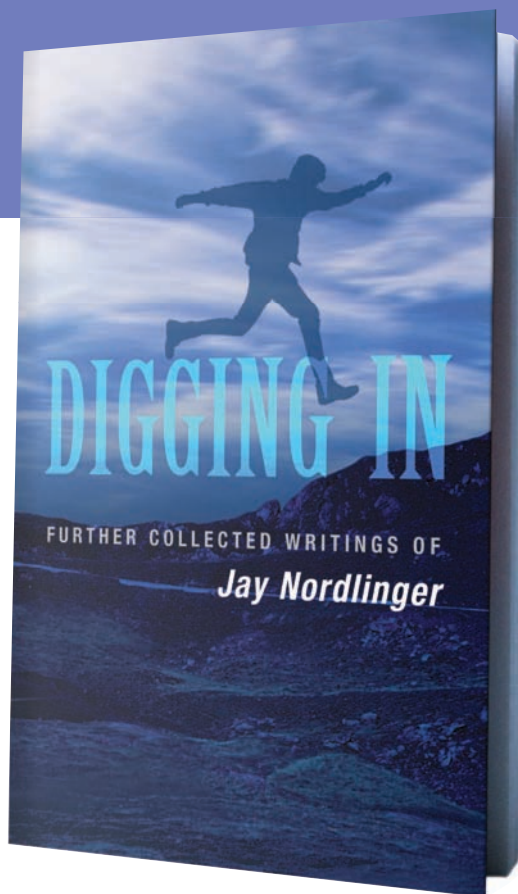
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describe what a good society might look like, and skirts hard ideological fights. America must be made safe, prosperous, and great again. But ask how, and, with the reliability of a migratory bird in winter, Trump returns to fixing “the system.”

Trump’s imprecision on substance, paired with his fixation on process, has gotten him mislabeled as either a populist or a moderate. “Moderation,” a blanket term for several different political attitudes, fits Trump poorly. Burkean moderation, on policy matters, views all grand plans skeptically. America has few if any Burkeans left, but wherever they are, they must disdain the grandiosity of Trump’s various walls, bans, and deportation plans. Dispositional moderates, on the other hand, who treat politics as an elevated business, put a premium on decorum. We can disagree without being disagreeable, after all. Mitt Romney’s persistent disdain for Trump can be attributed, at least in part, to this habit of mind. Lastly, ideological moderation stands in for a considerable mixture of partisan orthodoxy and heterodoxy, usually based on some pre-political principle. Trump obviously falls into none of these categories.

Nor is Trump a populist. Indeed, Trump’s centrism derives from two premises deeply antithetical to populism. First, every centrist earnestly believes that the American people are united. Sure, the United States is a country of more than 300 million people with an almost endless variety of values, material interests, cultures, and histories. Yes, we span a continent. Nonetheless, insists the centrist, our disagreements are more figments than facts. On 90 percent of the issues, perhaps even more, we are one. Second, at the core of centrism sits a radical distinction between political passion and political interest. Passion leads to conflict, polarization, gridlock, and mutual animosity. Interest leads to reasoning, negotiating, and ultimately consensus. No problem is too great to withstand dispassionate bargaining over interests. No distrust is so implacable as to resist brokering. If we can get the passions out, and the interests in, we can “get things done.”

The populist embraces political passion. He views the patrician pretensions of dispositional moderates as naïve, and Burkean anxiety about unintended consequences as cowardly. The centrist, by contrast, pines for enlightened and public-spirited elites empowered to set aside the provincial bigotries of faction and hash out a reasonable plan. The populist perceives a genuine struggle between the many and the few and embraces movements, parties, and associations as instruments of the struggle. The centrist’s bone-deep belief in national unity produces a powerful hostility to entities that divide the public into categories. Political parties? Pernicious faction. Organized groups? Corrupting special interests. Centrists may pay lip service to Tocqueville’s enthusiasm for voluntary associations. Yet in every concrete application, associations, in their view, become tribal bands that awaken empty rivalries and blind voters to their shared condition. For the centrist, these intercessors, these “labels,” prevent We the People from collectively realizing our natural unity through the prudent judgment of our betters.

Trump is admittedly a peculiar vessel for this interests-over-passions, unity-over-conflict mentality. But make no mistake: It is the foundation of his candidacy and the most durable part of his appeal. In substance, Trump could not be farther from a true populist such as William Jennings Bryan. Trump never promises to crush disposable elites. Quite to the contrary, Trump’s brief has always been that the particular set of elites running America today have failed to do their job as elites. They are weak, stupid,

and ineffective. Trump promises to be a better, tougher, more successful elite. He’s “a negotiator,” after all. This is why Jon Huntsman Jr. rushed to endorse Trump but a vanishingly small share of Bernie Sanders’s supporters has done likewise. Trump preaches a changing of the guard, not a political revolution.

Nor does Trump, at least by his own lights, regard a subset of Americans as the enemies of his constituents. This is because Trump errantly views race in America through the binary lens of midcentury. Before the Immigration Act of 1965, well over 90 percent of the country was either white or black, with Hispanic and Asian Americans composing small, geographically concentrated populations. Today, the racial landscape of America is much more diverse, and growing more so. There are roughly equal numbers of Hispanic and black Americans. The 3.3 million Muslim Americans cross all racial lines. The old binary cannot comprehend this development. Rather than abandon the binary, however, Trump instead appears to regard non-white and non-black racial groups as fundamentally alien, as perpetual immigrants. Thus, Trump’s bogeymen are, at least in his own narrative, suspicious foreign types rather than home-grown fifth columns.

Trump is wrong, of course, on the question of the Americanness of these groups, but this mistaken insistence on a racial binary distinguishes Trump’s centrism from populism. In high finance, Bryan saw a large, domestic enemy of the common man; Trump instead rails against an alien threat to the body politic pouring into America from abroad. Bryan probably genuinely thought bimetallism would bring prosperity, but he loved free silver because it would soak the eastern rich and relieve the western debtor. Trump likewise probably believes in protectionism as economic policy, but he embraces it chiefly as a defense of the American worker against the machinations of other nations. Mexicans and Muslims, in Trump’s view, simply amount to the vanguard of foreign interests that too often come at the expense of America’s economic well-being, national security, and domestic tranquility.

TRUMP is simultaneously the least articulate and the most politically successful avatar of centrism in at least a century. To the centrist, politics is not the means of solving social problems: Politics is the problem. As a result, centrism fixates on governing processes as the key to unlocking the popular will. Centrists presume popular agreement and then look for aspects of the political process that are actively impeding this posited agreement from coming into full bloom. It is hardly surprising that the centrist embraces the process-centered anxieties of Right and Left alike, advocating campaign-finance reform, the elimination of gerrymandering, the enactment of anti-voter-fraud laws, and term limits in turn. The centrist exploits the misperception, shared by as many as three-quarters of Americans, that corruption is widespread in the political system. A healthy skepticism of government and a low tolerance for self-dealing are political virtues. Yet attempts to operationalize this skepticism have been self-defeating. Our last crack at campaign-finance reform, in 2002, has been an unmitigated disaster, hamstringing the parties vis-à-vis outside groups. Meanwhile, money continues to pour into our elections because, when big government touches every sector of the economy and social life, every interest that can will hedge against adverse electoral

outcomes. More starkly, Congress's approval rating was just north of 40 percent when the campaign-finance law went into effect. Today, it is barely in double digits. That is not a coincidence.

Similarly, checking "ideological extremists" by eliminating gerrymandering is a centrist fever dream, as political scientists Jowei Chen and Jonathan Rodden have shown in the *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*. Using automated redistricting simulations, Chen and Rodden find that asymmetries between the popular vote and the number of legislative seats each party holds can be explained largely by patterns of human geography. Put simply, Democrats cluster together in cities, whereas Republicans are more geographically dispersed. As a result, Republicans win seats with large shares of Democratic voters, while Democrats win urban seats with next to no Republican voters in them.

As for voter fraud, it is a serious crime, and voter intimidation is even worse; prudent measures that help reduce their likelihood enjoy broad support for good reason. Let us not, however, indulge in the idea that the outcomes of American elections hinge on criminality, that the system is "rigged." It is not.

Kicking out complacent officeholders by imposing mandatory legislative term limits is a popular proposal. According to Gallup, fully three-quarters of Americans support the idea. Yet I can think of few institutional reforms that would be as disastrous. A politician will be a careerist whether term-limited or not. The career legislator seeks reelection, an aim that at least tangentially tethers him to the concerns of his constituents. Term-limited representatives, anxious to secure their post-political careers, act as the handmaidens of the powerful. Individuals regularly cycling in and out of different offices have to rely on the labor unions, large corporations, and party bosses that can secure their future. Small wonder, then, that every state with draconian term limits has seen its state legislators bought and sold by powerful and persistent interests.

The most powerful argument against term limits from a conservative perspective ought to be the Obama presidency. Term limits inevitably empower the chief executive in a divided system, as legislative rookies are easily bribed, bullied, or bamboozled. Imagine what the Obama administration might have been able to do had it been able to buy off, cajole, or simply hoodwink members of Congress. Since 2010, the president has seen his ambitions constrained and often outright stymied by Republicans in Congress. Forced to rely on executive orders, his agenda has narrowed and can be more easily overturned in the future. An inexperienced Congress would have been a sitting duck for the imperial presidency. Thank heavens for "career politicians."

An escapist desire to eliminate politics always appeals to elements in both parties. People tend to dislike politics—something those of us who do politics full-time forget at our peril. Usually the public is sleepily content to let us politicians bicker in the neoclassical playgrounds we reserve to ourselves in the capitals of every state. However, every now and again, the public is aroused to pay attention to politics. This happens when it becomes convinced that the bickering no longer serves a function, when "the system" stops "working." We tend to call the public's reaction "politicizing" or "mobilizing." In many cases, it is more accurate to say that the masses have had their latent hostility to politics activated. Get the anti-political tinder dry enough, and all that's needed is a spark to get people mobilized. Trump has provided the spark.

Centrism's flash-in-the-pan flammability makes it a frequent target for opportunists. Its disgust at and suspicion of the system make its adherents vulnerable to conspiracy theories. Small wonder, then, that a paragon of crony capitalism such as Trump can seize the mantle of reformer and do-gooder. If patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel, the antechamber of patriotism is reform.

IF Trump passes from the scene, the greatest risk for conservatives will be over-correcting to his candidacy and fruitlessly fighting the last war. The Republican party was uniquely vulnerable to a hostile takeover in 2016. In recent years, two different sets of political organizations have shared the name "Republican" for purposes of branding and ballot access. Beyond that, these parties have been institutionally distinct. One of these, a more orthodox conservative party, combined the tax-revolt ethos of the Tea Party with the social conservatism of the religious Right. The other, a center-right, more classically liberal party, brought together foreign-policy hawkishness with high-income tax cuts aimed at sparking economic growth.

Our campaign-finance regime, which empowers outside groups vis-à-vis party institutions, helped create parallel establishments in these cohorts. Each national establishment, in turn, had a base located in the state parties. Both of these parties-within-a-party struggled to settle on a nominee until well into the balloting. Ted Cruz eventually consolidated the orthodox-conservative branch, but his weaknesses as a candidate meant that he struggled to push out Ben Carson, Rick Santorum, and Mike Huckabee. The center-right party bounced from Chris Christie to Jeb Bush to Marco Rubio to John Kasich but never settled on a candidate. Meanwhile Trump shot the gap. His jihad against the establishments of both Republican parties allowed him to draw support simultaneously from insurgent forces within both the orthodox-conservative and the center-right parties. Trump brought with him a cohort of working-class whites who had long voted Republican in general elections but were entering the primaries for the first time. Fed up with conditions generally, they embraced Trump as he pitched his candidacy against the system.

This situation is unlikely to replicate itself. Moreover, casting off the foundations of the Republican party's political achievements since 2008 would be unwise. On matters of policy, the orthodox-conservative and center-right networks are more closely aligned ideologically today than has been the historical norm for the Republican coalition. To take just one example, political scientists Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal use scores, derived mainly from roll-call voting, to track how closely members of Congress vote together. Their scores show unambiguously that the Republican coalition has reached an unparalleled coalescence. Because of that coalescence, Republicans held historic majorities at the state and federal levels before Trump entered the picture. The few Republican incumbents who have lost primaries this cycle have done so for reasons independent of Trump.

Many of Trump's voters are not particularly conservative across the board, and they do not trust the GOP. The Republican party should not abandon conservatism for their sake, but the Republican National Committee's post-2012 "autopsy" effort, the Growth and Opportunity Project, went too far in attempting

to narrow and delimit the ideological commitments of the party. A party that aspires to represent at least half of a massive, diverse country cannot realistically expect internal quietude and widespread agreement. Indeed, Republicans can afford to be more open to disputatiousness on such major issues as trade, infrastructure, and immigration to help bring Trump's voters into the fold. Disagreement in a party is fine and even healthy. Heterodoxy does not amount to heresy. Internal squabbles and even tough primary fights invigorate more than enervate.

Trump's centrist insurgency is real, and it is not going away. Political scientists Jennifer K. Smith and Julia R. Azari make clear in a forthcoming article that the ideas underpinning centrism have been part of American political life for a long time. Centrism has a diverse and geographically dispersed constituency. It is unlikely to disappear, and at least for now has taken up residency in the Republican party. Conservatives are going to have to learn to live with it, and learn how to turn it toward conservative ends.

Fortunately, the demands of centrism may not be overly burdensome. While most centrist prescriptions are canards, they stem from reasonable, even virtuous, foundations. Conservatives can and should seize the cause of good government, while steering it away from damaging and imprudent institutional reforms. Above all, we need to recognize that the public does not trust its political leaders. Hillary Clinton's presidency would do little to reassure Americans that their government is anything other than a giant conflict-of-interest ring. For Republicans, opposing a manifestly corrupt Clinton administration would present an opportunity to gain back the public's trust. Of course the GOP would be perfectly capable of squandering such an opportunity, if it chose to fixate on the wildest and weirdest Clinton conspiracy theories. There would be ample genuine material without delving into the fever swamps.

Some of the most die-hard Trump cultists, and especially the alt-right white nationalists, should be condemned and excluded from the party. But the lion's share of Trump supporters understand the need for political leaders even as they distrust the system those leaders inhabit. Most simply want to see competence where now they see only posturing. Part of this is a simple communications problem: Republicans have done a poor job of advertising their successes to the public, a situation made discernibly worse by certain corners of conservative media.

However, Republicans should own up to the lack of trust within the party. To build trust with the public, conservative leaders need to refocus on how politics affects Americans day in and day out. Talk less *about* Ronald Reagan and more *like* Ronald Reagan, connecting conservative policy goals to the material lives of voters. Why will tax reform improve life for Americans? How will we fix an unsustainable entitlement regime without dramatically upending long-held expectations? How do our commitments abroad keep Americans safe at home? If these questions cannot be answered clearly and simply, then conservatives need to ask whether we should be pushing the particular policy prescriptions in question. Republicans must not come across as cruelly indifferent to the economic well-being of average Americans or cavalierly reckless in using force abroad. Trump may well be a disaster at the ballot box in November, but if he causes Republican leaders in Washington to reconnect with the regular concerns of their constituents, all might not be lost. **NR**

Progressivism Goes Global

*Transnational governance and its contempt
for the consent of the governed*

BY JOHN FONTE & JOHN YOO

NOVEMBER's elections will represent a decisive fork in the road for our nation on any number of issues, but none may prove as important as the choice between preserving our constitutional system and embracing transnational progressivism.

We can see the stakes already in the current fight over the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which prohibits all testing of nuclear weapons. The Constitution requires a two-thirds Senate vote to approve treaties, but the Senate rejected the CTBT 51–48 in 1999. Undeterred by constitutional requirements, Obama will ask the United Nations in late September to accomplish a de facto ratification of the CTBT.

The scheme works like this: The Obama administration (according to a State Department letter) will submit a Security Council resolution according to which any testing of nuclear weapons by any treaty signatory (including the U.S.) would “defeat the object and purpose of the CTBT.” If the resolution passes, international law prohibits the United States from doing anything to defeat “the object and purpose” of a treaty that it has signed but not ratified. American nuclear testing would obviously violate the rule. Presto! The U.S. will adhere to the CTBT.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Bob Corker (R., Tenn.) sent a blistering letter to Obama denouncing the plan: “The U.S. Constitution clearly provides the Senate—not the United Nations—the right to the provision of advice and consent for the ratification of any treaty.” The Senate rejected the CTBT to protect our right to modernize obsolete weapons and thus reassure allies under the American nuclear umbrella. Recently, leading opponents of the CTBT, including Corker and former senator Jon Kyl, have argued that, regardless of its substantive views on nuclear testing, the administration cannot ignore the Constitution to achieve its policy goals.

The administration's CTBT maneuver is more than just Obama's latest attempt to skirt the Constitution. For years, elites in American legal (e.g., American Bar Association), philanthropic (Ford, Rockefeller foundations), academic (NYU Center for Global Affairs), corporate (Davos conferences), NGO (Human Rights Watch), and foreign-policy (Council on Foreign Relations) circles have promoted the concept that “global problems require global solutions” and, therefore, the need for ever expanding “global governance.”

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Sixteen years ago in a law-journal essay, future U.N. ambassador John Bolton posed the question “Should we take global governance seriously?” Bolton wrote that there were “vast disparities” between what he described as “globalists” and “Americanists.” The globalists favor the transfer of some decision-making powers from the nation-state to transnational authorities when, in their view, “global solutions” are required. Americanists believe that political decision-making should remain within the U.S. constitutional system.

“As a convinced Americanist,” Bolton laments that the globalists “have been advancing while the Americanists have slept.” He argues that the challenge of global governance must be taken seriously as it advances in “substantive field after field—human rights, labor, health, the environment, political and military affairs, and international organizations.” Bolton ends by declaring that the “debate over global governance” is “*the* decisive issue facing the United States internationally.”

WHAT is the transnational-progressive agenda? A Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) working paper on “democratic internationalism,” published by G. John Ikenberry and Daniel Deudney shortly after Obama’s reelection, outlines the goals. The authors call for “social and economic equity associated with social democracy” based on “progressive pragmatism” as articulated by John Dewey. They also argue that building progressivism in one country will not work. Specifically, in order to “reverse” the policies of “Reagan-Thatcher fundamentalist capitalism,” the “forging [of] transnational democratic progressive alliances” will be necessary.

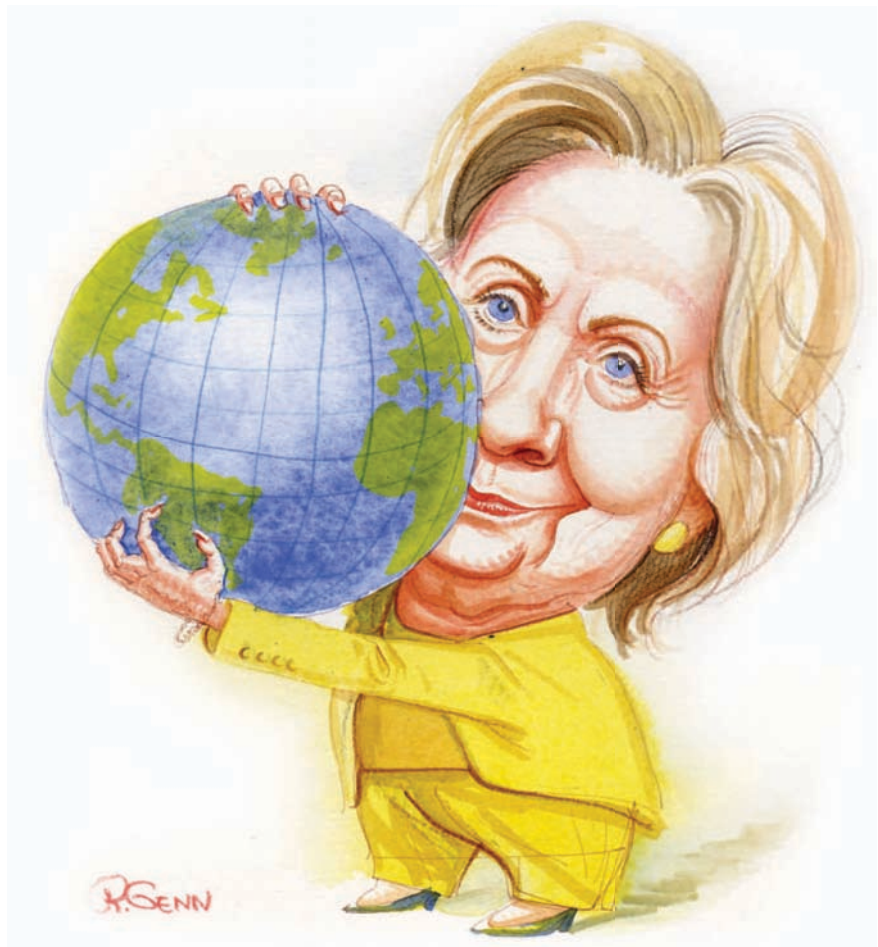
At the turn of the 20th century, progressives led by Woodrow Wilson created the modern administrative state. It expanded during the New Deal and upended the constitutional separation of powers and federalism. The administrative state effectively made laws and issued judicial rulings through overarching regulations and thereby weakened the principle of government by consent of the governed. These early progressives, however, remained nationalists. They envisioned an administrative state run by Americans. In contrast, 21st-century progressives are transnational. The CFR paper advocates a global, as opposed to a national, regulatory regime: “Solving the cascade of emerging global problems, perhaps most notably climate change, will depend on the globalization of regulatory state capacities.”

The regulatory regime of a “global” administrative state would most likely be implemented through treaty monitors (comprising various nation-state and U.N. bureaucrats) in areas such as human rights; women’s and children’s rights; refugee rights; the environment; climate; sustainable development; arms control; small-arms (gun) control; hate speech, xenophobia, and racism; and the

laws of war. Central to the transnational-progressive idea is the concept of the “global rule of law,” under which nation-states cede judicial authority to supranational courts.

One such court has been operating for more than a decade: the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Rome Statute, a 1998 treaty, created it as a permanent global court to deal with war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and crimes of aggression. The ICC claims jurisdiction over nations, such as the United States, that have not ratified the treaty if their officials or soldiers commit war crimes on the territory of a treaty member. The ICC is currently investigating American forces in Afghanistan on the grounds that Afghanistan is a member of the ICC. The ICC contends that it adheres to the principle of “complementarity,” meaning that a state would have the right to try its citizens first. But if a state is “unwilling or unable” to try its own citizens, the ICC claims jurisdiction. If an American court were to acquit an American soldier of a “war crime,” the ICC could claim that the U.S. courts were “unwilling” to convict and begin its own prosecution.

Authority over the meaning of complementarity—and even what constitutes a war crime—rests with the ICC, not with the jurisprudence of democratic states. The ICC prosecutor is accountable to no democratic authority, but only to the judges of the ICC itself. It is anathema to American constitutional democracy and the democratic principle of government by consent of the governed. Nevertheless, leading figures in the Democratic party and in elite liberal circles favor American submission to the ICC because they have ceased to be national progressives and have become transnational progressives.



As secretary of state, Hillary Clinton told a Kenyan audience that it is “a great regret” that the United States has not submitted to the ICC. Secretary Clinton’s chief intellectual strategist at the State Department, the head of the office of policy and planning, was Princeton professor Anne-Marie Slaughter. She has outlined in detail how the global administrative state would work through the “coercive power of vertical [government] networks”:

Vertical government networks pierce the shell of state sovereignty by making individual government institutions—courts, regulatory agencies, or even legislators—responsible for implementation of rules created by a supranational institution. . . . Vertical government networks make it possible for a supranational court, regulatory entity, or parliament to create a relationship with its national counterparts to make those rules directly enforceable.

Another leading transnational thinker and key Clinton lieutenant is Yale law professor Harold Koh, who was the State Department’s chief legal officer. Koh advocates a “transnational legal process” that engages “nation-states, corporations, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations” in “a variety of forums, to make, interpret, enforce, and ultimately internalize rules of international law.” Lawyers “should trigger transnational interactions, which generate legal interpretations, which can in turn be internalized into the domestic law of even resistant nation-states.”

Global governance demands transfers of authority that are categorically different in their contempt for democracy. Nations must transfer lawmaking power to transnational institutions, which will provide “global solutions” free from national interests. Their authority must run beyond any nation’s political control to preserve their claim to universality. The aforementioned methods of controlling the administrative state—oversight hearings, judicial review, budgetary control, legislative amendment—are incompatible with the institutions of global governance.

The Paris accords on climate change, for example, regulate the activity of all nations by limiting not just industrial pollution but also agriculture and household energy use. The United States is only one voice—albeit a powerful one—in the setting of climate-change targets, acting on a par with the European Union and China. The Chemical Weapons Convention, to take another example, creates an independent secretariat with the power to ban any chemical worldwide.

THE principles of American constitutional government stand firmly in the way of global governance. The Constitution places ultimate sovereign authority not in government but in the American people. This is the first principle

The Constitution places ultimate sovereign authority not in government but in the American people.

Clinton, Slaughter, and Koh welcome a post-American global administrative state and transnational legal system that are light years away from such quaint notions as the supremacy of the Constitution, representative democracy, and government by consent of the governed.

Today’s advocates of global governance confront the same obstacle that faced their progressive progenitors: the American Constitution. Wilson believed that the separation of powers had become obsolete. FDR attacked the Supreme Court for its “horse-and-buggy” readings of the Constitution—until the justices bent before his Court-packing threat. Both presidents advanced their reforms by evading the Constitution’s protections for the separation of powers and federalism. They sidestepped the former by persuading Congress to delegate broad legislative power to unaccountable federal agencies. They made an end-run around the latter by claiming that any activity, no matter how small, affected interstate commerce, which fell under Congress’s Article I, Section 8 powers.

The Obama administration and its supporters seek similar shortcuts around the Constitution, but with a critical difference. The nationalization of the American economy prompted an enormous redistribution of power from the states to the federal government and from Congress to the executive. Though a departure from the original constitutional design, this rewiring of government still kept power within bodies accountable to the American people. States still regulated crime, contracts, and property. Federal agencies still answered to the president. Congress could still recall its grants of authority and conduct oversight of the agencies. The courts could still exercise judicial review to protect individual rights.

of our constitutional order. The Declaration of Independence states that governments “derive their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed” and that when a government abuses its authority “it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government.” As James Madison argued, the federal and state governments “are in fact but agents and trustees of the people.” He wrote in *Federalist* No. 46 that “the ultimate authority, wherever the derivative may be found, resides in the people alone.”

The Constitution contains no provision to transfer sovereignty outside the United States. It allows the president to make treaties with the “advice and consent” of the Senate. It recognizes the president’s authority as chief executive and commander-in-chief, which gives him the power to conduct foreign policy. It gives the executive the authority to conduct normal diplomacy, but not to permanently transfer public authority beyond our constitutional system. That idea would have offended the Framers, who had revolted against Great Britain precisely because Parliament had prevented the Colonies from having any democratic voice. The president can conduct short-term diplomacy but may not make major commitments without the approval of the legislature. Just as physics has a law of the conservation of energy, the Constitution creates a law of the conservation of sovereignty.

The Supreme Court has reaffirmed that the Constitution, not global institutions, has the final say. In a series of cases, the International Court of Justice ordered the United States to halt the execution of aliens convicted of murder because they had not received their full rights to consular assistance. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to comply. It declared: “If treaties are to be

given effect as federal law under our legal system, determining their meaning as a matter of federal law 'is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department,' headed by the 'one Supreme Court' established by the Constitution."

Global governance also threatens the Constitution's enumeration of powers to Congress. A fundamental element of the separation of powers is Congress's sole federal authority to legislate on domestic affairs. If a treaty requires the United States to change its tariff laws, Congress must still pass legislation to bring the nation into compliance. This core principle was extensively discussed during the State of Virginia's ratifying convention in 1788 and the congressional debate over the Jay Treaty of 1796. In the latter affair, the House declared that the Constitution "left with the President and Senate the power of making Treaties, but required at the same time the Legislative sanction and cooperation, in those cases where the Constitution had given express and specific powers to the Legislature." Otherwise, then-congressman Madison argued, the president could use a treaty to create new criminal laws or impose new taxes without the agreement of the House as required by the Constitution. While President Washington could reach an agreement with Great Britain, only Congress could change the laws and provide the revenues necessary to comply with the treaty.

The Obama administration's effort to jury-rig an international obligation out of a Security Council Resolution directly violates the separation of the executive from the legislative power. He seeks not only to cut the Senate out of its constitutional role; he is also trying to create a legal obligation that would prevent the testing of nuclear weapons, even though Congress has ordered the modernization of the U.S. arsenal. Similarly, transnational progressives armed with the Paris accords will seek to impose new environmental regulations to reduce American energy use, even though Congress has never passed laws to do so. The Obama approach, no doubt to be continued under a Clinton administration, ejects the Senate and seeks to create international obligations unilaterally.

Using unilateral international promises to leverage new domestic laws violates another core constitutional principle: federalism. The Framers limited the powers of the national government primarily to the protection of national security and the conduct of foreign policy, the regulation of interstate commerce, and taxing and spending. Global governance allows the universal regulation of every type of human activity. Climate-change agreements, for example, call for the reduction of energy use in every aspect of society. Such schemes violate the Constitution's limitation of federal regulatory power.

The intractable opposition of American constitutionalism and global governance will play out for decades to come. Powerful forces in elite universities, large foundations, major corporations, the administrative bureaucracy, and political parties will continue to repeat the mantra that "global problems require global solutions" and continue to promote global governance at the expense of the constitutional framework bequeathed to us by the Founders of our democratic republic. Hillary Clinton's election would strengthen the transnational-progressive agenda. But, well beyond this year's presidential election, our fellow citizens must resist the machinations of the transnational progressives and their post-national administrative state if government by the consent of the governed is to endure. NR

The Next Space Age

*As private spaceflight advances,
Washington must reconsider its role*

BY CHARLES C. W. COOKE

Merritt Island, Fla.

As a child, I was in love with America. From England, everything about the place just seemed marvelous. America was where the movies were set. It was where all the good roller coasters had been installed. It had cities with skyscrapers with romantic names: the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, the TransAmerica. Elvis had been an American, as had John Wayne. Marilyn Monroe, too. The Americans—or so I thought—had invented all of the fun stuff: Superman, Coca-Cola, denim jeans, ten-pin bowling. Americans were rich, and happy, and on top of the world. Their president was a film star, with a welcome-to-Disneyland voice. And above all—above absolutely everything else—Americans had been to *the moon*.

An old joke has it that there are two sorts of countries: "those that use the metric system, and those that have put a man on the moon." Today, this is typically told with an ironic, self-conscious faux-bombast—as a critical, cosmopolitan nod toward the jingoism of old. But here's the thing: It's *true*. It is difficult to overstate just how substantial a PR victory the Apollo program was for the United States, and tough to relay to the inured just how exceptional its space program made the country look from the outside. As a boy, I would watch the nightly news in wide-eyed wonder as the Space Shuttle blasted off. I proudly carried around my Neil Armstrong lunchbox. I knew by heart the famous, if imprecisely delivered, line: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." In America, they got things done.

Specifically who "they" were didn't seem to matter a great deal back then. But, in hindsight, one can't help but notice that, as impressive and romantic as the NASA-led missions of my youth were, they in no way resembled the space-based visions that had set the cultural tone. Delve into the popular cartoons of the Victorian era and the Space Age—as well as the endless supply of planet-filled movies that followed 1977's *Star Wars*—and you will see the universe cast as a bustling frontier, more akin to the Oregon Trail than to Mount Everest. In *The Jetsons*, as in Jules Verne's *Rocket to the Moon* and Ridley Scott's *Alien*, the cosmos is conquered not by rare, government-led forays, but by relentless commercial activity—by P. T. Barnum rather than John F. Kennedy. In this idealized view, passengers and freight are conveyed upward by a host of competing companies that have turned the void above into a business opportunity, and space—far from becoming an isolated, Kubrickian eccentricity—resembles a translated version of Earth. Had you asked a child in 1964 where an astronaut would

stay when “up there,” he wouldn’t have said, “The space station”; he’d have said, “The Hilton.”

Of course, this vision has not yet come to pass. On the contrary: It has been politicians, not entrepreneurs, who have taken the lead above the clouds, often as part of broader military or diplomatic strategies. It was a government that launched the first satellite; a government that sent the first man into space; a government that put men on the moon. The International Space Station is a joint project of states: the U.S., Canada, Russia, Japan, and the 22 members of the European Space Agency. For a while, at least, this made sense; from a standing start, the development of space-bound vehicles proved an extremely costly and highly risky proposition that did not lend itself well to market forces. Today, though, things are different. Today, America stands on the cusp of a new and exciting era of commercial spaceflight—of a future, that is, that might finally resemble the imaginings of old. If our governments are willing to recognize that—and to intelligently get out of the way—almost anything seems possible.

At the Kennedy Space Center, a few miles from Central Florida’s famous Cocoa Beach, there are ubiquitous signs of life. That may come as a surprise. Kennedy has been through a rough time of late. In 2011, in the middle of the Great Recession, the much-maligned Space Shuttle program was put to bed, along with the 9,000 high-paying jobs that it sustained. NASA’s budget, too, has atrophied. In 1966, at the height of the Apollo effort, NASA was eating up 4.5 percent of the federal budget. By 1975, that number was 1 percent; by 2000 it was 0.75 percent; and by 2010 it was 0.5 percent. There are no plans to increase it.

And yet, everywhere I am taken, I see development, construction, activity, *restoration*. Suddenly, everybody wants to be a rocketeer. In one corner of the 147,000-acre site, Elon Musk’s SpaceX is learning to reuse its spacecraft, the better to cut costs for its clients. In another, Boeing and Lockheed Martin are testing a secret Defense Department satellite. And, on the far outskirts, Amazon’s Jeff Bezos is getting in on the action. Thanks to the work NASA has already done at the site, Kennedy boasts an enviable infrastructure base that is just yearning to be used, and thanks to a dramatic increase in attention to space’s commercial possibilities, it looks as if it will be. “That will be a satellite-production facility,” I am told as we enter a construction site near the main gate. “Once the delivery mechanisms are cheap enough, the demand is going to explode.”

It’s not just rockets. Like so much else at Kennedy, the Shuttle Landing Facility, a 17,000-by-400-foot super-runway that used to host Shuttle landings but now lies mostly dormant, is being revamped. “There are a lot of potential clients for an asset such as this,” says Jimmy Moffitt, the airfield manager. “But only once some changes have been made.”

Those changes will include the construction of a taxiway, the installation of an airside ramp, and the introduction of a suite of hangars. At present, the strip has a few unconventional clients: NASCAR and Corvette have used it for the straight-line testing of supercars; MoonExpress has set up rocks at one end, to see how well robots can avoid debris; and both Virgin Atlantic and Zero Gravity Corp. have made ample use of the runway. But, if business is to boom, the facility will need to be adapted more

dramatically, from a bespoke component into a commercial utility. The runway, in other words, will need to become an airport.

The changes at the Shuttle Landing Facility—and a host of other transformations being made at the base—neatly illustrate the challenge NASA faces. For all of its history, both the Kennedy Space Center and its sister Air Force station were set up for one client only: the government. In consequence, it is ill suited to host the free-market competition that is making the future of space travel so bright. Were Kennedy being designed today, its infrastructure would look dramatically different. Back in 1969, it did not matter that the base’s nitrogen and helium pipelines could accommodate only one launch at a time, because NASA planned only one launch at a time. But now, in an age of commercial rivalries, such a choke point is problematic. How, critics ask, should NASA proceed? Should it spend money improving its facilities so that private companies can make a profit? Should it pick winners and losers in accordance with its preferred vision for the future? And how should it behave when the government has a need that conflicts with commerce?

Indeed, quite *how* NASA should get away from its dirigiste model is the topic of a fierce debate. Some within the spacefaring community rather like the idea of the federal government’s owning and operating a commercial spaceport, and they point to the national-security needs that such an arrangement would fill. Others, generally the more commercially minded, believe that this approach would yield a long-term disaster for the United States and a boon to its international rivals. They point to the airline industry as an example of how to manage change. Until 1986, they note, both Washington Dulles and Washington National airports were owned and operated by the federal government. But as the demand for air travel increased—and as Washington, D.C., became a more attractive destination—that arrangement became unsustainable. (Why? Imagine if *your* business had to run all of its decisions through Congress.) And so, accepting that the times had changed, the Reagan administration spearheaded the transfer of the two facilities to an outside group, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. Nobody has ever looked back.

Critics of the status quo ask why this cannot be done with NASA’s Florida assets, too. Could the federal government not hand Kennedy over to an independent authority? Could it not use an enhanced-use lease to transfer power to the major stakeholders? At the very least, could Congress not move from owner to regulator? After all, the site already is playing host to a variety of experiments. The launch I have come to Florida to watch is being run directly by NASA. But the Atlas V rocket NASA is using was built by ULA, a joint project of Boeing and Lockheed Martin, and its launchpad and maintenance buildings are owned by the state of Florida and leased to all comers. In addition, Kennedy has just put in a new launchpad, 39C, which was specifically intended to encourage startup companies that work with small-class payloads. How difficult would it be, one wonders, to privatize the whole thing?

Many in Florida are hoping that the answer is “Not very.” Last year, much to the state’s horror, an impatient Elon Musk moved some of his operations to a private site in Brownsville, Texas, where, freed from the clutches of both NASA and the Air Force, he will be able to limit his interactions with the government and to plan his operations without jostling for permission. Because the land in Texas is privately owned, SpaceX needs only FAA approval come launch time. And, because it is



An Atlas V rocket lifts off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, September 8, 2016.

sharing the site with nobody else, SpaceX's engineers can set their schedules without reference to their competitors. For Kennedy, which has been the center of America's space program for six decades, Musk's move has been both a wake-up call and a reminder that, with Texas, California, and Georgia all hoping to join the fray, the future of Florida's space industry is by no means guaranteed.

Ensuring that others do not follow Musk out of the state is a priority for Florida's government. In 2006, the state legislature set up a special economic-development agency, Space Florida, and tasked it with attracting investment and encouraging private partnerships. Under the group's leadership, the Shuttle Landing Facility is being transformed; the Kennedy Space Center has diversified away from just launches and into manufacturing; and Florida's movers and shakers have taken steps to ensure that the federal government is *one* of its customers rather than its *only* customer.

For Dale Ketcham, Space Florida's chief of strategic alliances, these initiatives are not a departure so much as an evolution. "As a child I used to play on Cocoa Beach," he tells me as we drive around the site. "In one photo of me, you can see John Glenn in the background." Ketcham has seen it all: the launch of Apollo 11, the *Challenger* explosion, the early years, when nothing seemed to work. "The landing on the moon was my childhood," he says. "Only the federal government could do that. My career since has been participating in the NASA transition to more of an operations model, the merits of which are debatable. Fortunately, I'll end my career being a part of the commercialization of the space marketplace. I can be proud, take comfort, and feel excited about that future."

IN the evening, I return to Kennedy to watch the launch of Osiris Rex, a NASA-funded, ULA-fulfilled mission to an asteroid named "Bennu." I am, in truth, a little nervous. In 1987, while on vacation in Florida, my family obtained tickets to a launch of the Space Shuttle, only to see bad weather render them void. To us, the cancellation had been inexplicable; how were those perfect skies "inclement"? But they were, and NASA postponed the launch until after we'd left the area. I was crushed.

Happily, lightning does not strike twice. An hour or so before zero-hour, a classic-sounding voice begins a desultory countdown over the loudspeakers ("T minus fifty-nine minutes," and all that); gradually, the viewing area on the waterfront fills up with cameras and enthusiasts; and then, after an eerie silence and some nervous mumbling, it happens.

We hear it before we see it. At first, a throat clearing: distant, thin, unsure. Then, the bass. And, finally, the lion's roar. Cheers, whoops, hollers, and . . . there it was, flanked by a bed of smoke, rising slowly above the tree line. Twenty-nine years later, I have finally seen a launch.

As I walk back to my car, a rebellious thought pops into my head: Will my son appreciate this as much as I did? And, more important, *should* he? Much of the excitement of what I have just seen derives from its scarcity. But what will happen when rocket launches are quotidian affairs? In the 1950s, my father used to stand and watch the planes take off from Singapore airport. Today, nobody would bother. When I, too, am old and gray, will I look at my children knowingly and tell them that before the market took over, before the prices dropped, and before every other star was a satellite making its rounds, "I was *there*," and it was magnificent?

NR



The Long View BY ROB LONG

From the Newspaper Archives

***The Roman Citizen & Chronicle*, August 26, 410:**

... unclear at this time who, exactly, is conducting a long-term interaction with the people of Rome. Some local politicians have used the word “sack” to describe the series of spirited encounters between Roman citizens and the undocumented visitors from the northern regions who have arrived within the borders of traditional “Rome,” but it’s impossible at this early juncture to define either their motive or their specific ethnic makeup.

Alaric the Visigoth quickly claimed responsibility for the series of attacks early yesterday morning but has so far offered little in the way of proof that he and his “Goths” are behind the loosely organized collection of lone-wolf-style operations. Local officials and experts have called for more investigation into the root causes of these disturbances, noting especially the complicated and hard-to-navigate Roman citizenship rules that have created such a powerful backlash to the north, and religious scholars maintain that Alaric and his army are followers of what is essentially a peaceful religion that worships a deity who appears as a fire-breathing dragon wearing a necklace of human skulls.

Some have suggested that the Roman warlike “culture”—which has made powerful weaponry such as spears, javelins, maces, and even assault axes readily available to anyone with enough coin—is ultimately responsible for the “clash of

narratives” now unfolding in parts of northern Rome.

Outreach efforts in schools and temples designed to welcome new visitors from the north are ongoing but currently underfunded by the Republican-controlled Senate, which includes many senators who represent rural and more traditionally “Roman” regions, and who have veered closer and closer to a xenophobic and racist outlook. Many in fact still use the term “Roman Empire,” which has been criticized by progressive groups for its racist and privileged...

***The Hastings Advertiser*, October 16, 1066:**

... learning about the diversity and culture from across the Channel, such as the multitude of sauces and ways to prepare egg-based dishes.

Already, citizens of Hastings and its surrounding areas are rolling their “r”s and taking a bit more pride in their appearance and their home décor. This “invasion”—a complicated word that can mean many things, depending on the racial and ethnic makeup of the speaker—has been more like a “merger” of two cultures, both finding a balance after an uneasy and fraught relationship.

For his part, William the Conqueror—and while he and his team acknowledge the aggressive nuance of that honorific, they quickly point out that in their native language of French, the word has a more romantic, even erotic, connotation—has made it clear that his culture doesn’t permit the subjugation of another. And while it’s unclear right now whether the French army intends to stay, the sheer number of rapes and maraudings taking place suggests that it does.

It should be remembered that King Harold and his forces have also taken part in invasions and rapes during his rocky tenure as King of the

Realm, lending context and nuance to events now unfolding...

***The Vienna Times Diplomat*, September 28, 1529:**

... colorful banners, exotic music, and the tantalizing smell of roasting lamb and doner kebabs. The scene outside the gates of Vienna was a delightfully chaotic array—more like a church fair or feast day than what some Viennese conservatives are calling, with scant evidence, a “siege.”

Suleiman the Magnificent reposed in splendor, enjoying the dates and sweets from his homeland to the east. “I’m a peaceful person,” he murmured recently to a journalist. “I really have no particular issue with the people of Vienna. I merely ask that they subjugate themselves to the Ottoman crown and either convert to the True Faith of Islam or pay a tax. Or, you know, other stuff. But let’s keep this upbeat.”

Indeed, experts and religious scholars echo Suleiman the Magnificent’s interpretation of his faith, and military strategists suggest that the “siege of Vienna”—as it is already being called in the populist press—is nothing more than a state visit accompanied by flaming catapults.

“The important thing here,” said Geerst Trondleheim, lecturer in Cultures and Diversity at the University of Vienna, “is to remember that it’s okay for foreign visitors to camp out by the city gates. The wall we built was, in many ways, a racist act, an ‘othering,’ if you will, and this is the natural response to that. Let’s not overreact. I, for one, would like to hear the voices and perspectives that Suleiman the Magnificent would like to share with us.”

It is not clear whether Herr Trondleheim’s head was one of those spotted on pikes surrounding the Ottoman camp, but his delegation to the visitors was greeted with a noisy and affectionate volley of arrows and...

Crass Couture

DONALD TRUMP will be the first president to use a four-letter word in a press conference. Ten years later, we will look back on his tenure as an era of refinement and elegance because he said “Excuse my French” after he dropped the effenheimer. Trump’s critics on the left will find his candor refreshing, though: *At least he’s acting like everyone else. C’mon. Everyone swears. Does the pope swear in the woods if he hits his finger with a hammer? Sure.*

Why is the pope in the woods with a hammer?

That’s a stupid effin’ question. It’s a figure of effin’ speech. Ya eff.

Ah, you think: Right, of course. New York values. The celebration of crude, inarticulate people as champions of honesty and refreshing directness. None of that *Dreadfully sorry old chap, would you mind if I could squeeze through and get off the elevator? Awfully, deucedly kind of you, my good man Bee-ess.* Think what you say, that’s the ticket, and what we’re all thinking these days is Eff to the Power of Ten + You. Right?

Wrong. To people raised in polite societies, the brigade of Truthful Cursers just look like uncultured boors who rely on a vocabulary of six words to express the rich panoply of human effin’ emotion. But at least they wouldn’t use those words in front of their mothers—or so you hope. Even the most unrepentant slopmouth knows there’s a time and a place. You don’t scream obscenities at little children. You don’t curse like a meth-addled sailor with Tourette’s at a nun. There are still a few standards, tattered and thin as they might be at this late date.

Well, *Vogue.com* has a question for you: “Would You Try Fall’s Most Intentionally Offensive Trend?” In previous eras this might mean a checked blouse with striped pants, or white after Labor Day. But in an era when fashion models walk down the runway wearing \$9,000 outfits that consist of trash bags held together with duct tape, ugliness can’t be the offense. No, it’s naughty words. On the shirts! For everyone to see! Isn’t that delightful?

“The latest trend,” says the website, “is for clothes that are loud and proud: Take the Vetements Fall 2016 show, where a model wore a clean and crisp white shirt with *You [Effin’] [Excremental Aperture]* printed on the front.”

Yes, that’s something you’re supposed to display to strangers as you walk down the street. Quite the inversion of Will Rogers’s remark that a stranger is a friend you haven’t met yet. We continue:

Vetements isn’t the only label parading its bad attitude. For Fall 2016, Alyx showed a black shirt that read [*That Very Bad Word*] *You* in crooked bored-in-class scribble colored in with shocks of highlighter yellow, sky blue, and fire-engine red. . . . Lotta Volkova wears a shirt that is emblazoned with *Barbie Is a Slut*, while the model Valter Törsleff

has been known to don the New York–favorite tourist tee [*Bleep*] *You, You [Bleeping Bleep]*.

That’s directed at tourists? Apparently a real New Yorker looks at that and thinks, *You can’t possibly be talking about me. But if you are, [Bleep] you, you [bleeping bleep]*.

A cultural face-plant in the mud wouldn’t be complete without someone to describe the pratfall as if it were a ballet maneuver. And so:

A sweater by Lingua Franca that reads *Party and [Bee-Ess]* . . . best represents the current craze: the dichotomy between the vulgarity of the words and the preciousness of the medium. “It’s a cashmere sweater with a ’90s rap lyric. It’s that duality that makes it interesting,” says [*Vogue* fashion-news editor Alessandra] Codinha.

Picture an abandoned building in Detroit or the hollowed-out shell of a Lower East Side tenement. Two old men sit around a fire in a trash can, grilling rats.

“You know what I miss about the good times?” one says. “It’s not the food or the ready availability of medical care. It’s the interesting dualities.”

“Roger that, Slim,” says the other. “I remember when a fella had a reasonable expectation he’d see a provocative juxtaposition between the material of a sweater and the sentiment expressed upon it. I’d give anything for those days again.”

No, that probably won’t happen. The only people interested in a duality that superimposes a moronic “lyric” upon a high-end fabric are the people whose job consists of judging photographs of skeletons marching down a catwalk wearing outfits made of chicken bones and bicycle chains.

The next step will be toddlers’ sizes, and the edgy parent will dress his kids in shirts that say “I don’t give a [bleep]! Oh wait I just did.” And it’ll be so New York, so un-bourgeois. The certainty that someone in a less important city—you know, all the other ones out there—would be offended is what makes it so delicious. [*Bleep*] *you, you [bleeping bleep]*—that’s the mark of a sophisticated culture.

At some point, as noted, President Trump will slip during a press conference and say he doesn’t give a bleep, or the terrorists have messed with the wrong bleeping people, and there will be a great squee among the clever: The word has been spoken by a president, and thus is finally legitimate. They’ll have to come up with a new one to express their edginess. Something just as blunt and immediately recognizable, something with the same one-syllable punch that can also be conjugated.

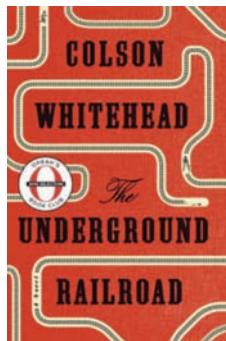
I say this to anyone planning a time-travel trip into the future: If you land in New York in 2116 and hear people saying Trump you, you Trumpin’ Trump—well, now you know why.

NR

Mr. Lileks blogs at www.lileks.com.

Freedom Trails

JAY NORDLINGER



The Underground Railroad, by Colson Whitehead (Doubleday, 320 pp., \$26.95)

COLSON WHITEHEAD is an American novelist, born in 1969. He is one of the most praised and honored writers in the country. He has won a Guggenheim Fellowship, a MacArthur “genius grant,” etc. His latest novel has been hailed in the *Boston Globe* as a “fully realized masterpiece.” President Obama announced that it was on his reading list. Oprah Winfrey picked it for her book club—which can mean a bonanza.

(I never thought Al Franken was funny, before or after he was elected to the Senate, but I did smile on reading about the dedication of one of his books: “For Oprah.”)

The *New York Times* published a lengthy excerpt of Whitehead’s novel. And reviewers’ copies came with an extraordinary letter, serving as the very first page of the book. The letter was from the editor-in-chief of Doubleday, who spoke of the book in near-historic terms. “To bring novels like this into the world is the reason we all chose this maddening profession.”

Colson Whitehead is a beloved African-American writer who has now penned a sweeping novel of slavery. He is, in a sense, beyond criticism: a Morgan Freeman of letters. Yet he is a man,

not a totem, and I bet he appreciates being treated as such.

This novel, *The Underground Railroad*, is touched with greatness. It is also touched with okayness. It is an uneven book, with marvelous passages and unmarvelous ones. There are home runs and whiffs. I think of musicians who are brilliant one night and off the next. Other musicians are neither brilliant nor off, ever.

Whitehead’s book is most successful when it tells its story. It is least successful, I think, when it teaches and preaches—like a social-studies teacher, being sure that you recognize America’s massive sins. Also, I think some of Whitehead’s moral and historical judgments are wrong. But I remember that it’s *his* book, not mine or yours.

The Underground Railroad is the story of a young woman, a slave named Cora, who runs away from a plantation in Georgia. The story begins with her grandmother, Ajarry, who has been snatched from Africa. “Two yellow-haired sailors rowed Ajarry out to the ship, humming. White skin like bone.” Before long, her captors rape her. She twice tries to kill herself, “once by denying herself food and then again by drowning.”

Telling his story of slavery, Whitehead uses the language of the time, and it can take some getting used to: “buck,” “pickaninny,” and, of course, the worst word of all, “nigger.” Children in slavery are relatively carefree, for a short time. Then they have the joy ground out of them, as Whitehead says. “One day a pickaninny was happy and the next the light was gone from them; in between they had been introduced to a new reality of bondage.” (Whitehead uses pronouns in a modern fashion.)

Let me give you one of the most beautiful, and striking, sentences in the whole book. It’s about a freedwoman who “was meticulous in her posture, a walking spear, in the manner of those who’d been made to bend and will bend no more.”

In slavery stories, I find, as in Holocaust and other stories, all you need to do is tell it—without gilding the lily. The subject matter, and the attendant

events, are horrible enough. Whitehead has one matter-of-fact statement that is a real stunner: “Lucy and Titania never spoke, the former because she chose not to, and the latter because her tongue had been hacked out by a previous owner.”

I was stopped by another sentence too—one that explains that two dogs “had been beloved by all, man and nigger alike, even if they couldn’t keep away from the chickens.” In my ear, this echoes Twain (“We blowed out a cylinder-head.” “Good gracious! anybody hurt?” “No’m. Killed a nigger.” “Well, it’s lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt”).

On the plantation, there is non-stop sadism. One day, white people assemble for a picnic. The entertainment, to accompany their eating, is the sight of a black man being tortured to death. Ultimately, he is doused with oil and roasted. Whitehead writes, “The southern white man was spat from the loins of the devil and there was no way to forecast his next evil act.”

In due course, Cora makes a run for it, together with a fellow slave. For a while, the novel becomes a thriller. The runaways are chased by the vilest slave-catcher of all, Ridgeway, who, to add insult to injury, has a philosophy: “the American Imperative.” It is the American Imperative, he says, to kill, steal, enslave, and destroy.

By the way, the Underground Railroad, in *The Underground Railroad*, is not a metaphor. It is literal: a network of subterranean tracks, complete with choo-choos, engineers, and so forth. There is such fancy in this novel (a novel being a good place for fancy).

In South Carolina, the runaways have a respite, doing honorable work among decent white people—or decent-seeming. Actually, the whites are subjecting blacks to eugenics—well before Margaret Sanger. They are also injecting them with syphilis—well before the Tuskegee Experiment.

It is in South Carolina, I think, that the narrative grinds to a halt, or at least slows considerably. The author takes to teaching and preaching. He is the social-studies teacher, with one didactic

Currency Disunion

ANDREW STUTTAFORD



The Euro: How a Common Currency Threatens the Future of Europe, by Joseph E. Stiglitz
(Norton, 416 pp., \$28.95)

IMAGINING that a large number of very different economies could be squeezed into a single poorly constructed currency was one fatal conceit. Imagining that the story of what happened next could be squeezed into one rigid “narrative” was another—but that’s what economist Joseph Stiglitz has done in *The Euro*, a badly flawed book about a disastrous idea.

Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate and a Columbia professor, has been crusading for years now against the wickedness of “neoliberalism,” a term that, like “late capitalism,” says more about the person using it than about what it purports to describe. Check out the titles of some of his more recent books: “The Great Divide: Unequal Societies and What We Can Do about Them,” “The Price of Inequality,” “Freefall: America, Free Markets, and the Sinking of the World Economy.” *The Euro* is the latest installment in a long leftist tirade.

Stiglitz has valuable points to make on the EU’s dangerous monetary experiment, but it’s easy to lose sight of them amid all the pages devoted to his insistence that the devastation caused by the single currency is another example of the havoc that “market fundamentalism” has wrought.

Yet the euro was, at its core, an exercise in central planning. Stiglitz concedes that it was a “political project” to accelerate the process of European integration. But more than that, it was to be a challenge to the supremacy of the dollar and a permanent brake on the unruliness of foreign-

paragraph after another. The evil that Americans did to the Red Man, for example. (In point of fact, some evil ran both ways.) Can’t Whitehead assume that people know this? I was reminded of the sitcoms I grew up on in the 1970s and ’80s, not all of them produced by Norman Lear: always making sure that social points were driven home, in purse-lipped ways.

As a rule, teaching in a novel should be accidental, I think, not bluntly striven for.

Whitehead depicts black people strung up in trees, for miles and miles, as far as the eye can see. He dubs this “the Freedom Trail”—thus pouring irony and scorn on the real Freedom Trail, that path in Boston which leads a traveler past hallowed Revolutionary sites.

In North Carolina, an Irish maid rats out her employers, Martin and Ethel,

exist, if there is any justice in the world, for its foundations are murder, theft, and cruelty. Yet here we are.”

In the closing two pages, there is a suggestion of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Cora is by the side of the road, badly in need of help. A white couple passes her by (like the priest in the parable). Then comes a young man with red hair and blue eyes. He asks (unlike the Levite) whether the stranger needs help. She shakes her head no, and he moves on. Finally comes the Samaritan, so to speak: “an older negro man,” whose eyes are kind.

I think back to the opening chapters on slavery—the capture of Ajarry, Cora’s grandmother; Cora’s life on the Georgia plantation. One effect they had on me was to make me wonder, What would I do, if I were enslaved? How much would I comply? How much

What would I do, if *I* were enslaved? How much would I comply? How much would I rebel?

who have been harboring a fugitive slave (Cora). In explanation, she tells her friends, “A girl’s got to look after her interests if she’s going to get ahead in this country.” Is that the maid talking or Whitehead? I think Whitehead, really, more than his character.

Earlier, I spoke of moral judgments—and my disagreement with the author. He mocks Ethel for her girlhood desire to serve as a missionary in Africa. Fair enough. Whitehead uses religion as a foil in this book. Again, fair enough. But he mocks the woman after she has been lynched—stoned to death—by a white mob. Is the mocking really necessary, at this point? In the margin of the page, I wrote, “Heartless.”

Worse, Whitehead equates the white man who wants to rape the slave with the white man who wants to help her—because they both act from selfish purposes, wanting satisfaction.

This book has a point of view, maybe even an agenda: America the misbegotten and irredeemable. The country was built by slaves, with no one else contributing a lick. A hero of the book—probably a spokesman for the author—says, “This nation shouldn’t

would I rebel? How much would I risk? Would I run? No one can know the answers, I think. We are lucky enough not to be slaves.

To Whitehead’s style, or *modus operandi*, I had this objection: Momentous events happen too abruptly, even nonchalantly. The discovery of a long-hidden fugitive, for example. It’s wham, bam, thank you, ma’am. We need a little . . . space, somehow.

Also, you know how, in horror movies and other movies, the good guys leave the bad guy alive, instead of killing him off when they have the chance? And you’re screaming, “Don’t leave him alive, he’ll come back!”? The same kind of thing is liable to happen in novels. The calamitous return of the un-killed-off bad guy is a cliché.

I have spoken of one dragging part of *The Underground Railroad*, and there are others. But, on the whole, the book kept me turning pages. I wanted to find out what happened next. I turned fast, straight through to the end. This may seem like faint praise, especially in light of the treatment that this novel has been accorded. But it is not. Not in my book. NR

exchange markets, ambitions far removed from market fundamentalism. Indeed, one of the earlier critics of the proposed new currency was Milton Friedman, not that Stiglitz finds the room—or the grace—to mention it.

Stiglitz questions the economic rationale behind the euro (arguing, intriguingly, that, contrary to the claims of its advocates, it was always likely to operate *against* convergence within the bloc) and the way that it was put together: The structures needed to make it work properly weren't there. Yet his list of those responsible for the inevitable crisis is tellingly incomplete. To be sure, he acknowledges the important (and often overlooked) fact that individual governments could—even within the constraints of the euro zone—have done more to head off disaster than conventional wisdom now suggests, but, for the most part, he blames the Left's preferred bogeymen,

to defend, and the latter was, in some cases at least, overdone, poorly timed, or both: There's a limit to the extent to which a country can be expected to deflate its way to recovery. But to attribute—as Stiglitz does—the tough love shown by the “Troika” (the European Central Bank or ECB, the European Commission, and the International Monetary Fund) responsible for the euro zone's bailouts to market fundamentalism is, to put it at its kindest, a misreading. What drove it was the complex internal politics of the currency union.

Stiglitz rightly highlights the difficulty of reconciling the management of the single currency and basic democratic principle. As he notes, voters in the euro zone's laggards were offered no serious alternative to the harsh and sometimes questionable treatment prescribed for their countries. Beyond that essential but unremarkable insight, he touches on a

discusses the fact that Germany shaped the ECB but fails to give enough weight to the democratic concerns that help explain why.

In any event, those promises were broken, and not just by a series of bailouts. Whether by effectively permitting local central banks to “print” new euros, or by allowing unpaid balances to mount up in its clearing system, or, belatedly (Stiglitz would argue), by a series of increasingly elaborate market operations culminating in the European version of “quantitative easing,” the ECB has turned out to be far less stingy a central bank than German voters had been led to believe it would be.

Stiglitz does not seem too bothered by this: Some democratic failures are evidently more equal than others. He is (legitimately) angry about the way that the Troika forced out the socialist Greek premier George Papandreou (his “long-term friend”), but he has nothing to say about

While there were undoubtedly areas in which regulation was too lax, the greater problem was that regulators were nudging financiers **in wrong directions.**

greedy bubble-blowing bankers and their accomplice, light-touch regulation.

But while there were undoubtedly areas in which regulation was too lax, the greater problem was that regulators were nudging financiers in wrong directions, whether it was toward real-estate-linked lending or into the belief that Greek sovereign risk was not that much greater than German. In the early years of the euro, Greece had to pay (on average) less than 0.3 percent more to borrow than Germany. That was nuts, but those steering the euro zone had persuaded themselves that the economies of the countries now locked into the currency union had truly converged. They hadn't. And, crucially, the warning signals that would have been sent by the currency markets of old—a drachma crash, say—had been silenced. Ideology trumped reality, politics trumped markets, and the result was catastrophe. There's a lesson in that, but Stiglitz doesn't appear to see it.

Stiglitz is on safer ground criticizing the steps, from bullying the Irish government to assume private bank debt to the indiscriminate emphasis on “austerity,” taken by the euro zone's leadership after the crisis erupted. The former is very hard

broader, somewhat neglected issue: what it means when a democracy transfers the oversight of key areas of the economy from the legislature to technocrats and, specifically, to “independent” central banks such as the ECB, a practice Stiglitz attributes to the then (supposedly) prevailing “neoliberal ascendancy.”

That's a debatable proposition to start with and it has next to nothing to do with the independence of the ECB, which echoes (as Stiglitz recognizes) the traditions of the Bundesbank (Buba), Germany's legendary central bank. Far from being the product of late-20th-century neoliberalism, Buba's independence—and its inflation-fighting mandate—date back to its origins in a ruined country that believed it knew where debauching a currency could lead.

Without Germany, there would have been no euro. But, proud of their Deutschmark, German voters didn't want to switch to a new currency. Sadly, they were never given the chance to reject it, but assurances from their government that the ECB would, for all practical purposes, be a Buba 2.0 were part of a package of promises (no bailouts was another) designed to soothe their unease. Stiglitz

the not-dissimilar putsch that replaced a less ideologically sympathetic figure, Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, with an unelected, obedient proconsul.

Then again, this is the Stiglitz who claims that the objectives of European integration included “strengthening democracy”—a revealing interpretation of a project born of the notion that Europe's voters could not be trusted to keep the peace. The idea behind what became the EU was that power should be transferred away from democratic nation-states to a supranational authority staffed by largely unaccountable technocrats. And over the decades, it was, often by the sleight of hand made necessary by European electorates' stubborn suspicion of Brussels' relentless drive toward ever closer union.

But a new currency was not something that could be introduced on the sly. People would *notice*. To a greater or lesser degree, the inhabitants of the future euro zone would have to consent to such a change, and to a greater or lesser degree they did. But they were not prepared to surrender enough sovereignty to give the euro a better chance of success. As much as Stiglitz might wish otherwise, that

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hasn't changed. If there is to be any realistic prospect of keeping the current euro zone intact while restoring prosperity to its weaker brethren, it will, one way or another, involve a pooling of resources, but the richer countries won't agree to that on terms that the poorer could accept. This impasse owes nothing to market fundamentalism and a great deal to the absence of a shared identity: Germans are Germans, Greeks are Greeks; neither are Eurozonian. They lack the needed sense of mutual obligation.

Stiglitz maintains that if the euro zone's members won't agree to a more comprehensive monetary union, big trouble lies ahead, threatening not only the euro but, maybe, the broader European project. I'm not convinced: "Muddling through" with what Stiglitz labels a blend of "temporary palliatives" as well as some "justly celebrated" deeper reforms has kept the currency going so far, albeit at a terrible cost. It could continue to do so for quite a while yet. And, despite the best efforts of the rebellious Brits, the EU seems set to endure too.

It's worth adding that Stiglitz's definition of that more comprehensive monetary union begins, understandably enough, with a credible "banking union," debt mutualization, and the like, but then spills over into a vision of a command-and-control euro zone that—if that is what is really required to make the currency union work well—is another good argument for putting a stake through it once and for all.

A different way to go could, reckons Stiglitz, be the creation of a system under which euro-zone countries (or groups of countries) adopt "flexible euros" that trade against each other within a (much) more tightly managed version of Europe's earlier exchange-rate regimes. He also puts forward yet another solution, some form of "amicable divorce": Either Germany (alone or in conjunction with other northern European countries) should quit the euro zone, or the currency should be divided into new euros—northern and southern, a division that has, in my view, long been the right way to go. What unites these alternatives is the welcome recognition that one size does not fit all: A currency *must* reflect the realities of its home economy. Tragically, there's no sign that the central planners in Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt, Paris, and Berlin agree. After all, they tell us, the euro-zone crisis is over.

We'll see.

NR

A Literal Nanny State

DAVID FRENCH



No Child Left Alone: Getting the Government Out of Parenting, by Abby W. Schachter
(Encounter, 280 pp., \$25.99)

MY son was born in December 2000 at Cayuga Medical Center in upstate New York. Immediately, there were complications. He was a month premature, his lungs collapsed, and he was quickly diagnosed with pneumonia. A joyous day had turned immediately into one of the most stomach-churning experiences of my life.

For days we watched him, held him as best we could, and prayed fervently as he panted for air. When he wasn't panting, he was crying and whimpering. Because of all the wires and tubes attached to him, it was hard to hold him, and nothing seemed to comfort him—except when we were able to bottle-feed the breast milk that my wife was faithfully (and painfully) pumping.

In the midst of this misery, I asked one of the nurses for a pacifier—hoping that that would bring my son some contentment and relief. Owing to the surprise circumstances of the early labor, we hadn't gone to the hospital with the bag we'd prepared, there were no pacifiers in the hospital gift shop, and we'd hoped the nurses could help.

One of the nurses looked at me like I'd asked to give our son a shot of Jack Daniel's, to "take the edge off." Her reply was cold: "At this hospital, we discourage 'nipple confusion.'" My response was indignant: "Well, in my family, we practice nipple diversity!"

And with that, I drove to a store, bought a pacifier, and immediately helped calm my distraught son.

I thought about that incident while reading *No Child Left Alone*, by *Weekly Standard* and *Reason* writer Abby Schachter. The book is about the unholy alliance between government nannies and private busybodies who are regulating and sometimes criminalizing the discretion out of parenting—all for the "good of the children."

Those whose kids are grown—or who opt out of government schools—can miss the staggering array of regulations that govern everything from how children nap at private daycares to the kinds of food properly served at school. Taken together, the government is increasingly implementing a one-size-fits-all model of child-rearing—in which every baby is breast-fed, no one hurts his feelings (or his body) on the playground, and each person is appropriately slim after eating state-approved meals.

The governing model is risk-avoidance taken to an absurd extreme. Schachter effectively lays out how government regulators intervene when they imagine that something bad *might* happen (in the absence of any evidence of harm) or when the risk of danger is so absurdly low that the act of, say, driving your child to the grocery store is grossly irresponsible by comparison.

Even when there *is* a problem—for example, childhood obesity—you can count on the government to respond with one-size-fits-all nonsense. Children are different, yet the government responds with uniformity. Some parents are indeed terrible, but foster families can be worse. And the entire effort is shot through with dubious science and classic governmental favor-trading (are milk portions best for kids, or best for the dairy industry?).

Fighting against the overreach are a small group of activists Schachter calls "Captain Mommy" or "Captain Daddy." These are the free-range moms—the people who grant their children more freedom to walk to school, to play alone, or to take the train; the people who (gasp!) dare to question breast-feeding mandates; the parents who actually don't mind if their kids play hard at the playground.

Many of these parents were drafted into the fight when the state came calling

after they used the same parenting techniques their parents had used. Conventional wisdom in one generation becomes criminality in the next. In one of the book's more effective passages, Schachter shares how expectations for six-year-olds have changed. In 1979, readiness for first grade included being able to "travel alone in the neighborhood (four to eight blocks) to store, school, playground, or a friend's home." Now, sending a child that age alone to school is enough to bring the police to your door.

Given the multiplicity of regulations, it's clear to me now that my

when children get truly, morbidly obese, does the potential physical benefit of forced relocation outweigh the terrible psychological costs of family separation, especially when the parents aren't trying to hurt their kid? When kids are so thoroughly protected from risk, do they pay an emotional price later when they find that the world isn't as "safe" as they'd hoped?

Moreover, are legal sanctions truly the most effective method of controlling misbehavior? After all, the law is not the only check on wrongdoing, and relying on legal-compliance checklists as a stand-in for effective caregiving

son watched the "rough" way I was playing with our youngest child. (I was in the pool with her, tossing her in the air to make a big splash when she came down.) My daughter was laughing and having a great time, but it didn't matter to the neighborhood busybody. She "could" hit her head. She "could" get hurt. So this woman approached my wife and threatened to call Child Protective Services.

It was a chilling moment. The lifeguards immediately vouched for me, for which I'm thankful, and we defused tensions. But other families are not so fortunate. Stray but a little from the

Given the **multiplicity of regulations**, it's clear to me now that my happy childhood was a veritable hellscape.

happy childhood was a veritable hellscape. I ran by myself almost a half mile from my house to play (unsupervised!) by a local sinkhole while older kids circled us riding go-karts at unhealthy speeds. At school, I engaged in disturbing, violent behavior by repeatedly fighting off the imaginary Nazis at Bastogne with my brave friends. At home, I faced indescribable risks as I let myself in the house before my parents came home and then brought my chess set onto the front porch to match wits with my latch-key neighbor. My goodness, *anything* could have happened.

It's a curious reality (one perhaps under-explored in the book) that parents of my generation (and older) are exactly the people who've rejected that same freedom and are even now imposing new standards that would have rendered their own parents neglectful criminals. My generation is wrapping their kids in emotional and physical bubble wrap. I found my childhood freedom exhilarating. Was it secretly terrifying for my peers?

To her credit, Schachter doesn't advocate replacing a misguided government's futile attempts at utopia with her own, more libertarian version of perfection. She recognizes that terrible parents can do grave harm, but she's sensible enough to know that bad facts can make bad law and that the cure can be worse than the disease. For example,

is shallow indeed. Peers and families can and do intervene all the time to protect children, and the state should remain only the protector of last resort, the entity that intervenes not because it knows best but because it's saving lives.

Schachter effectively conveys how the state child-welfare bureaucracy is vast and largely unaccountable, with virtually any parent one misinterpreted moment away from a legal nightmare. I'm reminded of a recent visit to our neighborhood pool, where another per-

new norms of childhood fun, and the government is one phone call away. After all, risk is terrible. Something bad *might* happen, and we can't be too careful with our nation's most precious young resource, can we?

Read Schachter and you'll realize that we can, indeed, be too careful. In taking such extreme care, we impose unacceptable costs on parents, and we weaken our children. Our kids are tough enough to endure dodgeball. It turns out that bubble wrap may well hurt them more. **NR**

SOME ANGELS

Lying on their backs, looking up at the sky,
The boys have made angels in the snow.
Eyes to heaven, with heaven looking down,
They wave their arms like wings, while seraphs
In the clouds bless them with their winged arms.
The shapes they leave behind are lovely.
But more wonderful still are the footprints
I saw on the blue hill at twilight.
A brief trail of delicate fairy shoes
Started out of nowhere in the field
And ended a stone's-throw distant, maybe
Left by one who longed to feel the earth
Once more beneath his feet and touched down
Briefly before starlight called him home.

—DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN

Dawn of the Terror Era

JOHN J. MILLER

WHEN Martial Bourdin moved through the streets of London on February 15, 1894, he planned to strike a blow against the order of the world—or so it would seem, judging from his decision to bomb the Royal Observatory in Greenwich Park. The truth is that nobody knows exactly what the 26-year-old Frenchman intended. Rather than blowing up his apparent target, Bourdin managed only to blow up himself. Investigators collected his bone fragments from a path that led to the famous hilltop building, which was unharmed.

A dozen years later, Joseph Conrad used the incident as an inspiration for his book *The Secret Agent*. Just as Bourdin had become the sole casualty in what may have been the first act of international terrorism on British soil, Conrad wrote what may be the first great novel of global ter-

rorism, in a genre that today clogs the bestseller lists with titles by the likes of Daniel Silva and Brad Thor. Although *The Secret Agent* focuses on the ideas and activities of anarchists and says nothing at all about Islam or Muslims, fascination with it has surged in our new age of violent extremism, as readers look for literature that might help explain the madness of the modern world—and its story reached American televisions in September, when Acorn TV began streaming a BBC production that debuted in the United Kingdom earlier this year.

Joseph Conrad was a remarkable man: Born of Polish ancestry under Russian rule in what is now Ukraine, he worked for French shipping companies and traveled the world aboard British steamers before finally settling down in England, where he became a literary giant. Today, Conrad is perhaps best known for *Heart of Darkness*, a short novel about a riverboat journey up the Congo and an ivory trader called Kurtz. (Francis Ford Coppola retold it as a Vietnam War story in his 1979 movie *Apocalypse Now*.) Toward the end of the 20th century, the Modern Library polled its editorial board on the best English-language novels of the previous

hundred years. Several authors landed on the list twice, and six, including William Faulkner, James Joyce, and Evelyn Waugh, accounted for three entries. Only Conrad made it four times, for *Heart of Darkness* (1899), *Lord Jim* (1900), *Nostramo* (1904), and *The Secret Agent* (1907). That's a pretty good run for a chap who spoke English as a third language.

Critics often call Conrad a conservative, and Russell Kirk once placed him on a list of “ten exemplary conservatives” who shaped his own thinking. As Kirk well knew, forcing today’s political labels onto figures from the past is a tricky business. Yet he was clearly on to something with Conrad, who throughout his books demonstrated a conservative skepticism of ideologies and their notions of “progress.” In *The Secret Agent*, he skewers anarchists, authoritarians, and socialists and also defends old-fashioned British liberalism, which believed in political liberty, bourgeois values, and prudential statesmanship. Conrad even invented a character who would be at home in *Radical Chic*, Tom Wolfe’s 1970 send-up of rich liberals who try to cultivate a certain image by mixing with left-wing militants.



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Oddly, one of the book's great fans is Ted Kaczynski, the domestic terrorist known as the Unabomber. As he murdered three people and maimed more across nearly two decades, he used Conrad's name as a pseudonym and apparently read *The Secret Agent* over and over. Even before his capture in 1996, FBI agents were drawing connections between Kaczynski's views and those expressed by one of Conrad's memorable characters, known only by his nickname: "the Professor." A frustrated scientist, the Professor always carries a bomb beneath his coat and a detonator in his hand and expresses contempt for just about everybody. Kaczynski must have been drawn to the Professor's deadly rhetoric but also blind to Conrad's satiric purpose.

The Secret Agent tells the story of Adolf Verloc, a London shopkeeper who sells "shady wares" (i.e., pornography). He lives with his much younger wife, Winnie, and her adult brother, Stevie, a gentle but confused soul who nowadays probably would be diagnosed as autistic. Verloc also associates with a band of anarchists and informs upon their activities to Mr. Vladimir, an official at the Russian embassy.

At the time Conrad wrote, the international anarchist movement included peaceful strains embodied by the likes of Leo Tolstoy, but also became notorious for its violence. In the United States, the lone-wolf anarchist Leon Czolgosz assassinated President William McKinley in 1901. Meanwhile, Russia's czarist government saw anarchists as proto-Communists and sought to suppress them. In *The Secret Agent*, Vladimir, Moscow's man in London, orders Verloc to become an agent provocateur who pushes the anarchists to commit an act of terrorism that will give the public "a jolly good scare" and compel the British government into a repressive crackdown on political radicals and refugees. "This country is absurd with its sentimental regard for individual liberty," he says. Then he proposes a bombing of the Royal Observatory.

This makes for one of the best scenes in the BBC's three-hour miniseries, as Verloc—his first name switched to "Anton," possibly because "Adolf" is forever ruined—reports to his handler Vladimir, who lays out the rationale for the attack as they ride through 19th-century

London. Much of the dialogue comes straight from Conrad's pages, even as it compresses an important chapter into just a few moments of screen time. In the book, Vladimir says that the anarchist terror "need not be especially sanguinary." He adds that royalty and religion no longer hold the public's esteem. "The sacrosanct fetish of today is science," he says. "What do you think of having a go at astronomy?"

Just as Osama bin Laden and the 9/11 hijackers attacked the World Trade Center because they saw it as an emblem of American capitalism, Vladimir offers the Royal Observatory as a symbol of civilization—the source of the prime meridian, the standard reference point for maps and clocks everywhere. In selecting this target, Conrad has several purposes. The first is to lampoon the act itself. In 1920, he described how he came to write *The Secret Agent* and recalled Bourdin's 1894 mishap in Greenwich, calling it "a blood-stained inanity of so fatuous a kind that it was impossible to fathom its origin by any reasonable or even unreasonable process of thought." In the novel, however, Conrad also recognizes the rising power of science and how its influence has started to displace palaces and churches as sources of authority. Finally, of course, is the simple fact that Vladimir doesn't really care about any of this: He just wants to sponsor an outrage that will provoke a backlash against freedom, much as civil libertarians say that the political responses to 9/11, such as the Patriot Act, eroded American liberties.

The scholar Frederick R. Karl credited Conrad with having invented "the political detective novel." In other words, Conrad took the example of Arthur Conan Doyle, whose Sherlock Holmes stories had found a massive audience just a few years earlier, and seasoned it with political commentary. There is some truth to this, though it would be wrong to regard *The Secret Agent* as merely a subspecies of the whodunit. The book's real mystery lies not in its clever plotting but rather in its domestic drama—and especially in the characters of Winnie and Stevie, who suffer dearly from Vladimir's machinations and Verloc's choices. The mainsprings of evil, Conrad seems to say, are not foreign embassies or social forces but rather individual acts of per-



Joseph Conrad

sonal cruelty. And although we may never defeat this permanent feature of human nature, people everywhere have the power to prevent it within their small spheres.

The BBC version of *The Secret Agent* is a reasonably faithful adaptation. Its major deviation involves a scene of torture that the writers probably added because they mistakenly thought that their show needed an extra helping of 21st-century relevance. ("If you torture him, he wins. We become him," says one character, in a line taken not from Conrad but from the earnest platitudes of today's hand-wringing liberals.) Yet this is a small annoyance in a production with plenty of strengths. Toby Jones plays Anton Verloc as a bumbling, amoral manipulator, and Vicky McClure as Winnie Verloc shows that good actresses can do great work even in motionless silence.

Behind it all sits Conrad's perceptive and prophetic novel, written for his times but with lessons for ours. NR

Film
Unsullied

ROSS DOUTHAT

C LINT EASTWOOD'S *Sully* is a movie with an interesting challenge: It's a disaster movie about a disaster that wasn't, with a central crisis that occupied just a few short minutes of real life and ended happily for everyone. Eastwood is telling the story of US Airways Flight 1549 and its captain, Chesley Sullenberger, who coolly steered his plane into the Hudson River after a bird strike and landed smoothly enough on the frigid water that every passenger survived. It's a justly famous story—but is it story enough?

The answer is: not quite enough to make a good movie, but enough to make an often riveting one. Eastwood and his screenwriter fill in a story around the water landing that raises questions about Sully's heroism and judgment. It turns out that maybe he and his co-pilot (Aaron Eckhart) could have made it safely back to LaGuardia or forged ahead to Teterboro, and that the Hudson splashdown was therefore a form of pilot error. Or so argue a clutch of suits from the National Transportation Safety Board, who grill Sully in between appearances on *Letterman* and suggest that, while he may have saved 155 passengers and crew, it was also his fault they were endangered in the first place.

Since Sully is played by Tom Hanks, and since everyone knows that the real Sully was never anything but a hero, there isn't a lot of suspense generated by this inquisition narrative (one that, the NTSB insists, is a gross embellishment of what really happened). We're supposed to believe that it filled Sully with self-doubt, and the movie supplies many scenes of Hanks, under white hair and sporting the Sully 'stache, furrowing his decent brow and staring into the distance, or having pained conversations with his wife (Laura Linney) about their financial situation and future, or having bad dreams in which Katie Couric denounces him on the hotel TV set.

But the NTSB inquisition is so implausibly hostile, its conclusion and Sully's

Aaron Eckhart and Tom Hanks in *Sully*

vindication so foregone, that this narrative never becomes compelling or—to anyone who lived through the real Sully's apotheosis—particularly believable. When the man of the hour goes fretfully through the dark streets of New York City, or worries about whether he and his wife will be able to afford their mortgage payments after this, the scenes can't quite escape the tug of unintentional comedy.

What the narrative does more successfully, however, is provide a mechanism through which Eastwood can visit, revisit, and re-revisit those fateful few minutes above and then beside Manhattan. And the chance to be repeatedly immersed in such a remarkable escape is what the *Sully* audience is there for, and why the film is doing gangbusters at the box office. Sully's dark night of the soul occupies too much of the movie without being powerful or convincing. But his miracle has power enough to be riveting every time we watch it, and Eastwood is wise to give us that chance over and over again.

So we see what Sully did from different angles—through the eyes of a few representative passengers, through the eyes of the air-traffic controller who thinks he's lost a plane, through the eyes of the ferryboat captain and other rescuers who got there in time to pluck all 155 flyers safely from the

frigid river. Then, finally, when Sully gets his day in bureaucratic court, we get the cockpit perspective, start to finish, from the thumping shock of the birds to the final splashdown.

All these angles are effective. We get to imagine ourselves as passengers—listening to the flight attendants' terrifyingly synchronized bark of “Heads down! Stay down!”—facing death for an instant and then being delivered and scrambling stunned onto the wing. We get to be amazed anew at the pilots' very Eastwoodian sort of heroism: men of honor doing a hard job well. And we get to experience the almost-crash with New Yorkers who witnessed it firsthand, as the plane drifted past their towers and sank toward their river—watching horror transformed into inspiration, tragedy into the miraculous.

What this last angle conveys—as, a little too heavy-handedly, do a few Sully hallucinations of planes crashing into buildings—is the extent to which the United 1549 landing was the anti-9/11. It had the same setting, the same heroic rescue workers, the same uncanny, dreamlike quality: a plane diving toward the Manhattan skyline, a plane where no plane is supposed to be.

Except that instead of Mohamed Atta there was Sully, and this time everyone came out alive. **NR**

Turn, Turn, Turn



RICHARD BROOKHISER

A NOT-GREEN leaf or two may appear without causing comment, the decline of the sun is a long slow slide, and even in summer the humidity breaks occasionally. But on the day when all three converge, it is with the feeling, almost the sound, of gears meshing and turning. If you had not felt it before, you would think only, That's pleasant, for so it is: Crisp is better than sticky, side- and under-lighting is more dramatic than the steady downward beat, and red, orange, and yellow are pleasing especially when they pop out against a backdrop of chlorophyll (much as one teenager with blue hair amuses, whereas a roomful of them—as at a rock concert—alarms, or depresses). We have felt and heard the tick before, though, so we know where this is going.

Attn: Hasidim, piling out of your vans. Attn: Mexicans, sweeping the fields with the efficiency of locusts. Get your sweet corn, get it now. Already acres of it—especially those planted only to qualify for agri-tax breaks—are dry and spindly. Pick it, shuck it, roast it; best of all, gnaw it raw off the cob. Its time is running out.

The last four months have seen a parade of flowers, and kitchen-shelf florists know the parade goes until the end (one of the last to bloom has a funereal name worthy of Edgar Allan Poe: *monks-hood*). Some tough guys—calendula, old roses—can go on after the end, showing a little color as late as Thanksgiving. Gather them while ye may, the next flowers will be early-morning frost on your windshield.

The lore of baseball is full of autumn heroics: The outfielder snags the almost-home run, the relief pitcher walks to the mound with two on and one out, the old veteran uncorks a walk-off hit. These stand out in high relief while the losing teams plod to year's end or disperse to their off-season breaks, thinking, "Better luck next spring."

We have added one more mark of finality to the calendar, as beautiful as it is bitter: the double towers of light that rise from the financial district every 9/11 night. Will they one day be switched off? Become generic, as Armistice Day faded into Veterans Day? Or could they retain their specificity for centuries, as England remembers Guy Fawkes, and Christendom Jesus?

But cheer up, because this time of year is also a time of beginning. The fact that it is must be a tribute to the habits instilled by universal public education. New Year for the last few centuries has

year there costs over \$60,000 if you're paying full freight. I look at the kids in their Ts and cut-offs and think, Don't blow it on intersectionality studies (it's hopeless asking them not to blow it on self-destructive love affairs).

Culture stops its EZ-listening concerts and Hamptons fundraisers, and mails out listings of all the art and artists it is about to display and present. A Memling triptych in the robber baron's house; Scandinavians performing the quartets of Shostakovich; plays that will try to elbow their way to notice past cast changes in *Hamilton*. Last and least, in the public spaces of the big stores that sell stationery, children's games, desktop paraphernalia, and magazines, the artisanal craftsmen who make content for bound print-outs will give readings for a handful of eccentrics (unless they are Armenian exhibitionists, in which case the lines will stretch for blocks). (N.B. All this product is available, for much

Cheer up, because this time of year is also a **time of beginning.**

come in January; before that it came in March. But children of the early modern era who were lucky enough to get any schooling got it when the farm chores were done, so urban/suburban kids who have never seen a furrow still start their year mentally in September; their parents, and other former children, do likewise. Every noon, in the park two blocks from my apartment building, I see a double line of preschoolers, boys and girls holding hands two by two, the girls in plaid pinafores, the boys in shirts with neckties. One boy is extra, he holds hands with the teacher (a privilege, or an unbearable burden?). What will they wear, who will they be, as adults? In my nursery-school class there was one girl, black Italian hair and eyes, who would look unmistakably the same 20 years later. I haven't seen her in almost 40 years; the hair is no longer black, I imagine, though maybe the eyes . . .

A dozen blocks to the south, the streets in and around the great university are simply crawling with students. It is not the city's Ivy League school (that is miles uptown), but it has stepped up its game big time in recent years, both academically and as a real-estate empire. A

cheaper, on your device with ReadApp.)

Retail knows now is make or break, two hurdles and a sprint to the finish. Fall collections, for clothes: stick-figure girls and bare-chested boys gaze at each other in desireless stupor, sleeves and skirts falling off appropriate limbs. Halloween, similar, but as a joke: monster life, fake death, imitation celebrities, sex life (naughty nuns, French maids, the doctor will see you now—it's hard to make jokes about sex anymore since everything funny is everywhere taken seriously), Disney characters thrown in for the innocent. Then, the Birth of Christ (see above): new devices, toys for kids, toys for adults, necessities (you used to hate getting, say, undershirts, but now you appreciate it), stores handing out champagne, eggnog, anything for foot traffic, the as-yet-unknown novelty item that will set the nation agog. Non-famous Armenians (one such who is a friend once told me) benefited from their Julian calendar to sit out the madness and take advantage of the post-Christmas sales.

As the sun slips lower, the moon rises higher. Warm enough to need no jacket, cool enough not to sweat. Come to the café, sweet is the night air. **NR**

Hillary the Hilarious

WHEN *People* magazine made Hillary Clinton the lead story in its May 2014 issue, my then-editor at the *Washington Free Beacon* e-mailed a photo of the cover to see if I would have the same reaction he did. “Looks like she’s holding a walker,” I wrote back. Because it kind of did, even though she wasn’t.

It was clearly a patio chair that Clinton, then 66, was leaning on for support in that photo, presumably to avoid another embarrassing fall. Or maybe not. It could just as easily have been an old person’s walker custom-built to resemble a patio chair, or perhaps a stylishly outfitted Hoveround mobility scooter for the wealthy. We may never know.

The *Free Beacon* ran what we thought was an overtly farcical story about Hillary’s (alleged) walker because we thought our readers would enjoy it, which they did. Many liberals in the media did not. “Walkergate” became an Internet scandal of the highest order. *People* was compelled to issue a formal denial that Hillary had used a walker in the photo shoot, and the *Free Beacon* was denounced in the *Washington Post* for its “inflamed” contribution to a “ludicrous debate.”

Two years later, jokes about Hillary’s old age and failing health are still funny, but the line between parody and reality is becoming less clear. On the 15th anniversary of 9/11, the Democratic candidate was heaved semi-conscious (and semi-shoed) into an idling getaway van like some punch-drunk bachelor into a taxi at 3 A.M., or a cumbersome duffel into the belly of a 747.

Hillary’s lifeless tumble was a sight to behold, and certainly newsworthy. If a bystander had been there to capture it on camera, you can be sure that it would have been promptly wiped clean from the server of history. But there was a video, and the campaign was forced to admit that Hillary had pneumonia. Just like that, Hillary’s health entered the bounds of acceptable discourse.

We are even allowed to make fun of it now, apparently, and not just the inflamed right-wing trolls. Everyone can do it, even liberals. In what might be the most refreshing development in an otherwise demoralizing campaign cycle, *The New Yorker*, of all places, published a cartoon that (gasp!) made a joke about the elderly politician’s health scare.

The cartoon features Clinton propped up by two secret agents, above the caption: “People wanted her to act more like Bernie, but I don’t think they meant the one from ‘Weekend at Bernie’s’”—a reference to the 1989 comedy in which two insurance agents lug around their dead boss (Bernie) in an effort to convince others he’s really alive. In the end, their whimsical charade succeeds. Will the Clinton campaign’s?

Before Hillary’s (most recent) fall, any untoward suggestions, any dumb jokes about the candidate’s health, were usually met with howls of derision from liberal pundits still

reeling from the fallout of Walkergate. These pundits, all of us, could stand to take a deep breath, back away from our screens, and have a good long laugh at Hillary Clinton. It’s not hard. Some of us have been doing it for decades.

Laughing at Hillary doesn’t make you a bad person, and it doesn’t make you a Republican. “What’s the difference?” some Democrats might say. Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert taught them that, when it comes to political humor, jokes are something not to be laughed at, but rather applauded and cheered in an orgy of self-righteous affirmation. For a certain cultural set, comedy isn’t about “punching up” or “speaking truth to power.” It’s about EVISCERATING your partisan foes, no matter how minor. For example, the number of county-level GOP officials Stewart/Colbert UTTERLY DESTROYED in their careers is likely on the magnitude of genocide.

Rogue programs such as *South Park* aren’t shy about comparing Hillary Clinton to a “turd sandwich,” but the mainstream media culture is dominated by sympathetic liberals who either don’t find anything about her funny or are simply uninterested in roasting one of their own. Both are ludicrous propositions. *Saturday Night Live*’s Kate McKinnon has won praise for her portrayal of Hillary as an antisocial, power-mad psychopath but has also said of Clinton, “Obviously, I love her so much.” It’s weird for anyone to admit to loving a politician, much more so for a professional comedian.

Democrats could at least take a moment to revel in the dark humor of their situation, having nominated perhaps the only human being (as she often, unconvincingly, reminds us she is) capable of losing an election to Donald Trump. Hillary struggled to finish off Bernie Sanders, a 75-year-old socialist who looks and sounds as though he was roused from a tent behind the venue at the first primary debate just to fill out the stage.

Hillary might be qualified, but she is hilariously bad at interviewing for the job. Normal people can’t relate to her because, for example, she’s incapable of making small talk without talking points and can’t answer a simple question like “What is your favorite ice cream?” without hedging, as if to avoid taking a position that could come back to haunt her in a deposition—because who knows, with her, it might!

In theory, Hillary should be an easy target for comedians. She’s the most powerful senior citizen on the planet. She wants so badly to be president, it’s unnatural. This is typically a disqualifying feature shared by all presidential candidates, but Hillary is just worse. She’s been campaigning for decades, is past the age of retirement, is in questionable health, and yet stumbles onward in the hope that one day the Secret Service will be heaving her aboard Air Force One.

Admit it, there is a certain humor in watching people like Hillary fail. It was pretty fun watching Jeb Bush implode, wasn’t it? But Hillary might not fail this time, and if we’re going to keep our sanity through another four (eight?) years of Clintons in the White House, we’re going to need all the laughs we can get.

NR

Mr. Stiles is the politics editor of Heat Street.



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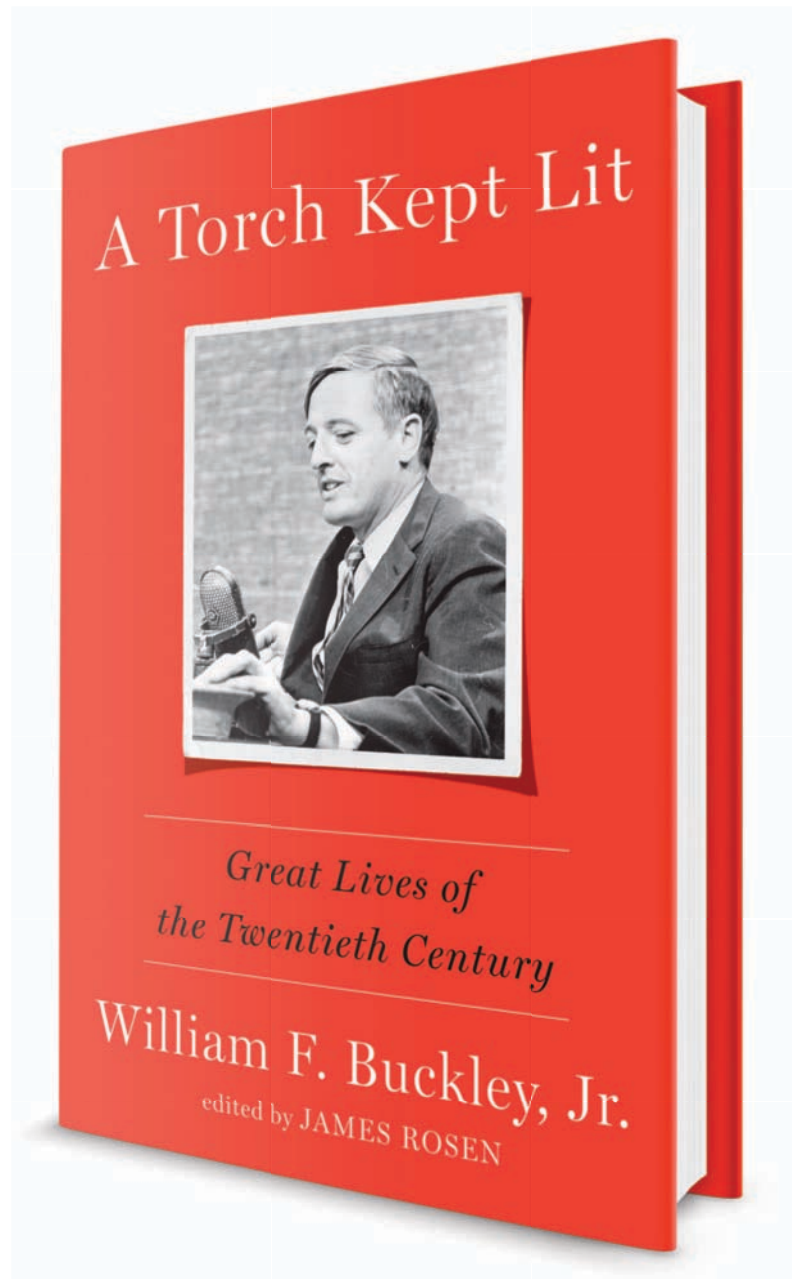
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