

Chronicles

April/May 2020 A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

\$4.95



Coins of the Realm

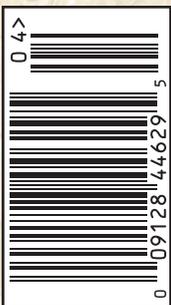
by Anthony Esolen

plus

The Geopolitics of Coronavirus by Srdja Trifkovic

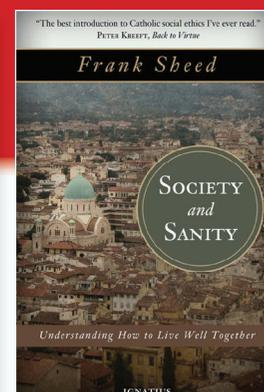
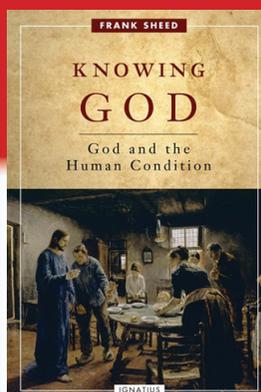
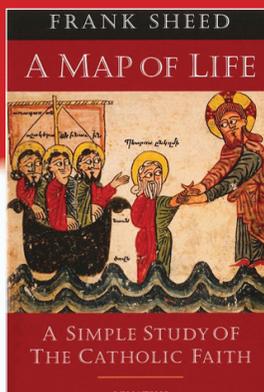
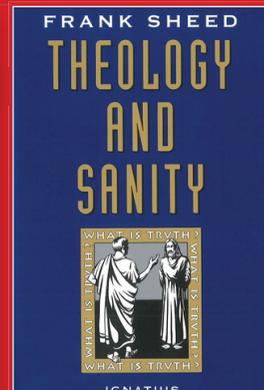
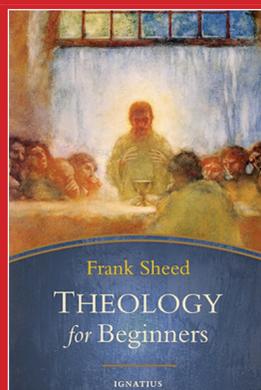
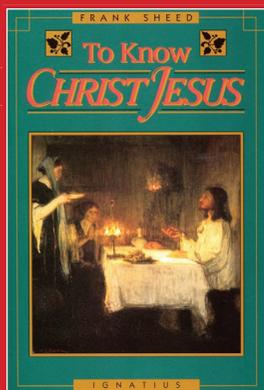
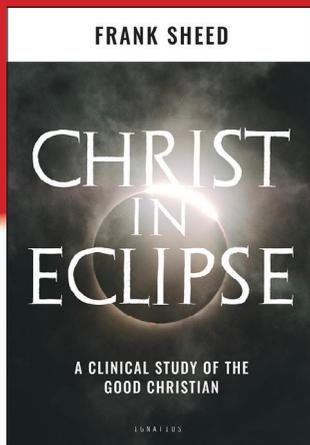
and

Remembering William F. Buckley, Jr. by Jack Trotter



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The Best of FRANK SHEED



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In This Number

IF YOU HAD TOLD ME AT CHRISTMAS that by March the whole office would be working remotely due to a state emergency order to combat a global pandemic, I wouldn't have believed you. But here we are.

Without a doubt, this is a situation 99.9 percent of Americans have never experienced. Many cities appear abandoned, the economy is rapidly shedding jobs, people are stockpiling food and masks, gun stores are sold out, and the government is printing money even more than it did in 2008! A lot of Americans are justifiably anxious about the future.

As a nonprofit, we're facing a tough fight ahead—financially, culturally, and politically. But we also see an incredible opportunity before us as conservatives, and we hope you will continue to join us in this fight for the good, the true, and the beautiful.

For 44 years, *Chronicles* has stood as a beacon to America, illuminating the West's best ideas and principles. Deeply rooted, the magazine has consistently stayed true to its moorings and helped its readers both see and understand the growing dysfunction all around us. Alas, those who embraced the imperial state and enjoyed its

rewards have long suppressed the magazine's ideas and analysis. It was a threat to their power and comfort, and they wielded their weapons well.

All of that ended when the Black Swan Corona flew onto the scene. In one fell swoop, that ebony bird revealed to Americans that a financialized, global economy isn't as strong as it pretends to be. Economic dependency on China, it seems, is a very bad idea. The Federal Reserve's only solution is easy money, but there are more fundamental changes that need to take place. Borders and sovereignty are critical; domestic manufacturing needs to be rebuilt; family and local communities need empowerment while the managerial state needs to be disempowered.

Our job now is to explain the causes behind what Americans have just experienced and to show them a better way forward. To do that, we are proud to announce that we just launched a new website platform for *Chronicles*, Charlemagne Institute, and *Intellectual Takeout*. By bringing the websites together, we are now able to share the wit and wisdom of *Chronicles* with over 10 million digital readers, the majority of whom are under the age of 45.

You're going to be seeing a lot more of *Chronicles* as its influence and reach continues to spread! As our esteemed editor-in-chief, Paul Gottfried put it recently:

We intend to continue our activities to the best of our abilities. We look upon the present challenge not as an occasion for despair but as an opportunity to redouble our efforts. Fueled by our mission, our work will go on.

This issue is proof of our continued work. We overcame some challenges created by the pandemic and decided that we needed to do an April/May issue followed later in the year with a "Remembering the Right" special issue, which we aim to distribute as widely as possible, with the help of our readers.

Thank you for your support and readership of *Chronicles*. We were created for this very time.

Devin C. Foley is co-founder and chief executive of Charlemagne Institute, publisher of Chronicles.

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Founding Virtue

TO THE LIST OF THOSE LABELED AS “social justice conservatives” by Brion McClanahan (“Reinventing Reconstruction,” February 2020) you can add the names of the Founding Fathers. Referring to them, Alexander Stephens (Vice-President of the Confederacy and author of the infamous “Cornerstone Speech”) wrote, “The prevailing ideas entertained by [Jefferson] and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old Constitution were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally and politically. It was an evil they knew not well how to deal with.”

Lincoln and the Republicans stood with the Founders. Stephens went on to describe what the Confederacy stood for. “Our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition.”

No appeal to Burke’s “ancient constitutions” can mask the inherent evil of this particular “traditional order” and this peculiar “well-constructed institution.”

Was Reconstruction perfect? Of course not, but by adopting the Reconstruction Amendments the “radical” Republicans reformed both the Constitution and the nation—and thank God for it! Who today would object to the abolishment of slavery, would deny citizenship and equal protection of the law to the freedmen, or deny them the right to vote on account of their race or color? The unalienable human right of liberty and the basic civil rights of equal justice under the law and the franchise, regardless of one’s color, are principles that any true conservative can support.

—Keith Burtner
Dallas, Texas

Prof. McClanahan replies:

My piece on “Reconsidering Reconstruction” seemed to touch a nerve with the “social justice conservative” population. Good. Mr. Burtner’s letter exemplifies the growing intellectual disconnect between modern American conservatism and its ancient roots and the symbiotic relationship between these modern “conservatives” and their radical leftist cohorts.

I should emphasize that Mr. Burtner should be pitied rather than ridiculed. He has been duped by a cadre of pseudo-intellectual talking heads on Fox News, bombarded with worthless drivel from neoconservative writers infatuated with proving that the Republican Party has always stood on the right side of the social justice crusade, and conned by conservative “historians” who attempt to show that the founding generation would have all been good Lincoln-loving Republicans had they lived until 1861.

Mr. Burtner seems to believe that the Founding Fathers would have supported the same level of political machinations and revolutionary policies the 1860s Republican Party used during Reconstruction. These are the Founding Fathers who left slavery intact in every state in the Union when drafting and ratifying both the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution, who chafed at federal involvement in election laws and suffrage requirements, who to a man considered blacks to be an inferior population, and who despised abolitionist agitation (even John Adams thought immediate abolition would “produce greater violations of Justice and Humanity, than the continuance of the practice” of slavery). The idea that they would have approved of the Radical Republican agenda during Reconstruction would be laughable, were it not so sad.

Did some members of the founding generation oppose slavery? Certainly, but

none would have suggested that the central government was anything other than the “white man’s government” or that blacks should be granted universal citizenship. There was no difference between the Confederate Constitution of 1861 and the United States Constitution of 1787 on this issue.

We can consider these positions abhorrent today, but let us not engage in the same righteous cause the myth-making Lincoln codified in the Gettysburg Address.

And what about those Reconstruction Amendments Mr. Burtner champions? I never mentioned them in my *Chronicles* piece so this is a bit of a straw man argument. No one would argue the 13th Amendment wasn’t beneficial for the U.S. Even most Southerners conceded this point after the War. Mr. Burtner also praises the 14th Amendment, the same amendment the communist historian Eric Foner has suggested fundamentally transformed America. What is “conservative” about that amendment? Nothing. It has been used as the legal gateway for every centralized social engineering project in the U.S., from same-sex marriage to transgender bathroom “equality.”

The feminist leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton gushed over the Reconstruction Amendments because they led to a “reconsideration of the principles of our government and the natural rights of man.”

In other words, they recreated America.

By using the words and deeds of the Radical Republicans of the 1860s to defend what passes for American conservatism today, would-be conservatives concede the field to Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Both would agree with the Radical Republican Henry Wilson that government should seek “equality in the broadest and most comprehensive democratic sense.”

That might be Republican, but it sure isn’t conservative.

The Unclubbable

THE LATE JOE SOBRAN USED TO refer to liberal high society as "the hive." What Joe was highlighting were certain qualities that he associated with the fashionable left, e.g., extreme clannishness, the exclusion of those who deviated from authorized political doctrines, and a sense of moral superiority. Without having to deny that such a "hive" exists on the left, it is equally obvious that the conservative establishment is at least as guilty of the supercilious behavior that Joe attributed to the "hive."

But I'll substitute a timelier image for this apiarian one to explain my drift. The subject here is a club, whose custodians determine who may apply for membership and who is considered socially unworthy. This club image popped irresistibly into my head, as I noticed the nonresponse to Ed Welsch's dignified and detailed answer ("First Things First," March 2020) to R.R. Reno's attack on *Chronicles* in the February issue of *First Things*. The caricature that Ed was addressing was the view of our magazine as a crude xenophobic publication which the late Father Neuhaus was forced to break with before founding *First Things*. Ed graciously suggested that Reno had been understandably defending the origins of his own monthly when he misspoke about the reasons for its fateful break with The Rockford Institute and *Chronicles* 30 years ago.

That response was offered in such a friendly fashion that one might have expected the editor of *First Things* to have answered, however briefly. *Chronicles* has respectfully discussed other material published in *First Things*, and normal publications that engage similar topics and which supposedly share political and cultural perspectives (e.g., *National Review* and *American Spectator*) also establish friendly working relations. But that couldn't happen in this case. Unlike Reno,

Rich Lowry, and Jonah Goldberg, we are not members of the Club, and it's unlikely we'll ever be admitted. Obviously, we've committed some terrible faux pas that has brought about our exclusion—perhaps by not accepting R. J. Neuhaus's authoritative account of the split that occurred in 1989.

I know that I've personally committed many inappropriate acts over a long life that have resulted in my being banned for several lifetimes from Club premises. My boorish acts include, among other sins, posting critical columns about the then-proposed Martin Luther King, Jr., national holiday and the 1965 Voting Rights Act and, even more shockingly, suggesting that Palestinians may have been expelled from their homes (something most Israelis admit—but not so some sponsors of the mainstream conservative movement). I've also written widely on American conservatism, and I can't think of anything positive I've had to say on that topic for at least several decades.

But the Club comparison came to mind as I noted the obvious ignoring of Ed's comments about how *First Things* manhandled our reputation. Of course, things would have been different if *Chronicles* were not *Chronicles* but instead a publication under the direction of Club members. If we were talking, say, about *National Review* or *The Atlantic Monthly* I'm sure the buds involved would have held a cordial conciliatory dinner for everyone concerned.

Although our magazine has been around for 44 years, has a growing subscription list, and offers genuinely provocative articles, we remain both unclubbable and unmentionable. That is because, among other reasons, we represent what the mainstream right was before the neo-conservatives took it over in the 1980s and pushed it to the left.

The conservative establishment has continued to move away from where it was circa 1980 mostly on social issues; and it has done so for careerist reasons. Aspiring young "conservative" editors and

would-be media celebrities are not likely to draw any benefit from right-wing associations. Instead, they can hope to move up and increase their prestige by cultivating contacts with leftist journalists and politicians. Thus, we see on the Murdoch channel a steady procession of leftist Fox News associates, but never members of the Old Right. We also find lavish praise being bestowed on leftists like writers for *The Atlantic* and *The New Republic's* former editor Peter Beinert, by Rich Lowry, Kevin Williamson, and other *National Review* editors. By contrast, "conservative" editors would never acknowledge serious thinkers on their right, because there would be no professional value in doing so.

Moreover, our present establishment conservatism looks mostly like a breakaway faction of the left. For example, what may be called Conservatism, Inc., favors second-wave feminism—but not yet third-wave; it supports federal anti-discrimination laws—but not yet having such laws applied to the transgendered. The movement also seems genuinely cool with gay marriage, but not with forcing certain religious groups to perform gay weddings or to bake cakes for them. Not yet, anyway.

Cultivating drag queen converts to Charlie Kirk's Turning Point USA-brand of conservatism is just dandy, but only if this gesture aims at getting LGBTQ activists to vote for the GOP. It's also OK from a "conservative" perspective to pull down statues of Robert E. Lee, but we shouldn't do the same to statues of Lee's fellow-Virginian Thomas Jefferson. That's because Jefferson, although a slave-owner, set this country on its way toward standing for human rights, by inserting into the Declaration the now famous "all men are created equal" passage.

Of course, party lines do change; and when they do, the new position for Club members may be that Tom is out and someone else is in—perhaps Harriet Tubman. One can go through a long list of positions in which established conservatism looks like what the left used to be not so very

long ago. The only thing that remains immutable is the Club.

The only reason I mention this go-along tendency is by way of noting a peculiar feature of the Club. The Club premises have a communicating wall with the left. In fact, Club members are delighted to have leftist guests, provided they can find friendly opponents who are willing to hang out with them. The people who are truly unclubbable are those who are noncompliant—that is, those who refuse to cooperate when the Club board decides that it's time to move further to the left. These are the true Deplorables, whom Club members may insult or stiff with absolute impunity. In fact, if accredited members make enough of a point of scorning unclubbable extremists, prominent leftists may allow them to write for their publications and appear on their Sunday news programs.

For those who think I'm suggesting that Club members have nothing substantive in common with the subjects of our ongoing "Remembering the Right" series, allow me to indicate that your suspicions are correct.

—Paul Gottfried

What Has COVID-19 Done to Our Money?

AS I WRITE, POLITICAL FACTIONS left and right are sparring over the right approach to the coronavirus. I don't envy President Donald Trump or the members of his coronavirus response team, for they appear to be in a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't situation. If they continue a general societal shutdown for too long, the economy will teeter on the brink of collapse, and the loss of jobs and ruin of savings may end up costing more in lives lost to despair than to the virus.

On the other hand, if Trump compromises with the economy and loosens restrictions, he can easily be blamed for the

inevitable rise in deaths that would result. Judging the effects of one socioeconomic policy over another is inherently difficult, as French economist Frédéric Bastiat showed in his 1850 essay "*Ce qu'on voit et ce qu'on ne voit pas*," ("Things Which Are Seen and Things Which Are Not Seen"). The gist of his observation is that because socioeconomic policies are enacted in the real world and outside of the controlled conditions of a laboratory, it is hard to track the unintended consequences of any policy, or to say with certainty *what would have happened* if the government didn't take this or that action to stop the virus.

Or, as the conservative English writer Peter Hitchens observed recently on Twitter:

Patient has pneumonia. Doctor says he will cure it by amputating patient's leg. Patient recovers from pneumonia, (as he would have anyway) but now has only one leg. Doctor praises himself for success of his bold, radical treatment.

Better to be safe than sorry, and just take off the leg, I suppose!

This same rationale has been used time and again by the U.S. Federal Reserve and government officials to justify repeated bailouts for the banking sector and for the crony capitalist captains of industry who have their hooks dug deep into the halls of Washington, D.C.

In late March, we have an estimated \$6 trillion in economic stimulus coming in the form of dollars flying off of the printing presses, with \$2 trillion coming from Congress and \$4 trillion in liquidity from the Federal Reserve. This does not include the massive "unlimited" quantitative easing (read: money printing) program promised by the Fed. The Fed has promised this easing program in the face of a global shortage of dollars as economies worldwide suffer from the effects of the virus, and as they have become dependent on U.S. dollar-de-

nominated debt to finance their own profligate spending.

In his Mises Institute article "Why the World Has a Dollar Shortage, Despite Massive Fed Action," Prof. Daniel Lacalle writes:

In the current circumstances and with a global crisis on the horizon, global demand for bonds from emerging countries in local currency will likely collapse, far below their financing needs. Dependence on the U.S. dollar will then increase.

However, just because the dollar may remain strong relative to other fiat money currencies doesn't mean that there will be no negative effects on the U.S. population as their Federal Reserve plays the role of the world's central bank. The monetary base will still expand, meaning that there will be, at the end of the day, more paper dollars out in the global economy chasing fewer goods.

In the meantime, whatever benefits there are from the Fed's money printing are distributed unevenly, by those economic classes closest to the printing press. As Austrian School economist Murray Rothbard writes about the effects of monetary inflation in *What Has the Government Done to Our Money?* (1963):

The new money works its way, step by step, throughout the economic system. As the new money spreads, it bids prices up—as we have seen, new money can only dilute the effectiveness of each dollar. But this dilution takes time and is therefore uneven; in the meantime, some people gain and other people lose. In short, the counterfeiters and their local retailers have found their incomes increased before any rise in the prices of the things they buy.

The Fed's past interventions to prop up the economy by increasing the money supply have been reflected first in the price of financial assets, roughly 80 percent of which are held by the top 20 percent of the wealthiest U.S. citizens. By the time this extra paper money "trickles down" to the people in the lowest quintiles of the economy, the price of the goods they require to survive have risen to reflect this higher cost.

Economic specialists, of which I am not one, can probably credibly accuse me of oversimplifying this complex process. But the end results of the Federal Reserve's rescues do not appear to be benefitting the average American. Printed here are charts that show the rising incomes over the past 50 years of that top quintile of wealthy citizens, which has decoupled from the rest of

population that doesn't hold nearly as much Fed-inflated financial assets. Real incomes for average Americans have stagnated even as their cost of living has increased, making them poorer than their parents or grandparents in real terms.

The next chart shows the purchasing power of the dollar since 1800. A dollar is now worth just 5 cents of its value then. Before the Fed was created, the dollar sometimes even increased in purchasing power as an industrializing America became a world economic powerhouse and shared the benefits with its citizens, rather than siphoning their saved wealth away through the stealthy tax of inflation.

The final chart shows our public debt as a percentage of our economic output heading into the stratosphere over the next

decades, set to eclipse the past peaks of World War I and II.

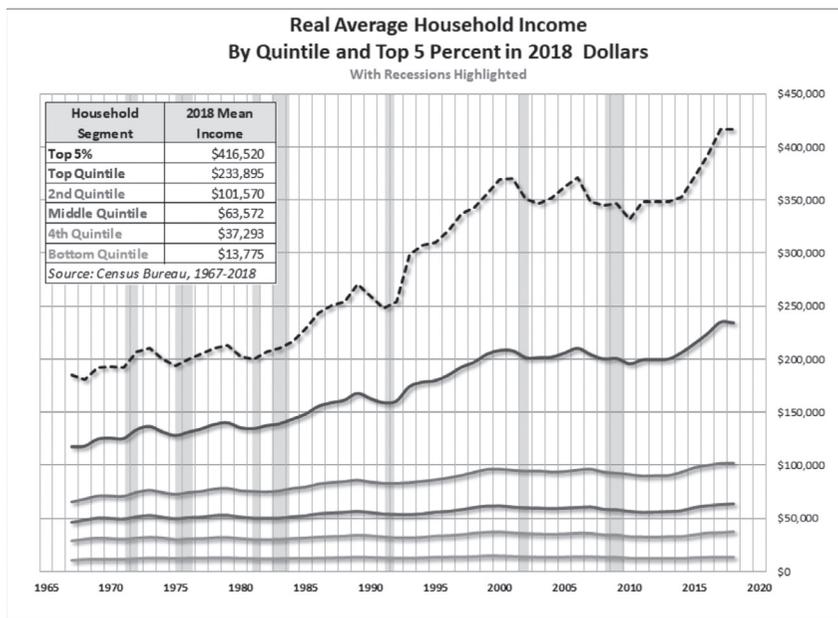
As Roger McGrath points out in his fascinating look at the Spanish Flu of 1918-19, ("Epidemic for the Record Books," pages 44-45), during that national crisis, the public patriotically rallied on behalf of the nation, scrimping together its savings to lend money to the government to fight the war. Today, such displays of shared sacrifice are unnecessary; just Netflix and chill, as the government prints the money it needs at the expense of future generations.

So I don't pay much attention to the furor over the president's handling of the virus. As always, one political side will beat the drum and laugh while the other sulks; one will sob while the other sings; meanwhile the Fed will print, print, print.

—Edward Welsch

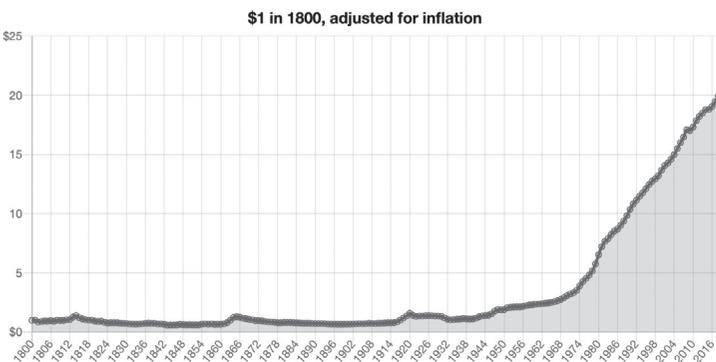
Obiter Dicta

Our April/May poet, Pete Beurskens, has taught college English for over 25 years, most recently at Minnesota State College, Southeast, in Red Wing. He considers himself a Northern Agrarian in the tradition of Russell Kirk and Robert Frost. With his wife, he raises Shetland sheep, vegetables, and chickens on his western Wisconsin hobby farm. Beurskens is at work compiling a book-length collection of his poetry, and his literary detective novel, *Snares of the Devil*, is looking for a publisher.

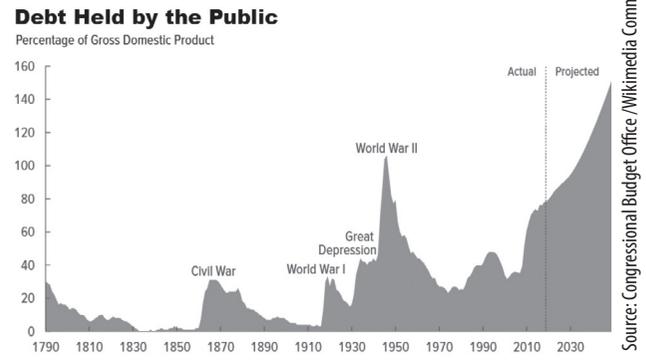


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics/Official Data Foundation

Source: U.S. Census Bureau/Advisor Perspectives



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics/Official Data Foundation



Source: Congressional Budget Office/Wikimedia Commons

That Sinking Sunday Feeling

by Pete Beurskens

Whence this sinking feeling, Sunday morning,
This Sabbath morning early springtime
When one should sense blessings falling?
Whence this feeling, Sunday morning, sinking

Low, soaking moods like sleet descending
From gray-drenched skies all monocolored,
Skies sluggish, churned by winds lamenting—
Whence this morning-sinking Sunday feeling?

Made for man, not man for it, the Sabbath sealing
Another slough of days, teeming days of worldly
Striving—could it be this gloom's from grieving
Sundays? Whence this morning-feeling, sinking?

The Noonday Devil has moved to morning
Patiently haunting Monday's awnings.
Sodden, dreary, peevish, constant, yawning—
Whence this feeling, Sunday? Sinking mornings...

There is a certain slant of light, the poet wrote;
Yet comes a Sunday slump of heavier doubt:
Hearts are restless till they rest in thee, said the saint;
Thus angled rays fix tints of glass light-stained.



Coins of the Realm

by Anthony Esolen

America's historical specie reveal times of change.

WHEN HE WAS PRESIDENT, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, a patron of arts and letters, commissioned the redesign of American coins, especially the small denominations in common circulation, from the penny to the dollar.

He was right to complain about the existing designs; at least about the nickel, the dime, the quarter, and the half. However, the Indian penny is, to my eye, easily the most beautiful of our cents: Miss Liberty on the obverse is an Indian princess, with a feather headdress and a coronet reading LIBERTY. The silver dollar designed by George T. Morgan—hence its popular name, the Morgan Dollar—is also striking, with the grand eagle on the reverse, wings outspread, clutching in its talons both the arrows of war and the olive branch of peace.

But the dime, the quarter, and the half all had the same pleasantly classical but unexceptional bust of Liberty on the obverse, and the nickel was pallid, too, its reverse dominated by a large Roman numeral V, for five cents. The word “cents” had to be added in 1883, the first year of the coin’s

issue, because unscrupulous men in the hinterlands would plate the nickel with gold and pass it off for five dollars. I have one such, hardly touched by wear.

It is hard for us to imagine that ordinary people used to care about the design of public objects: coins, dollars, bridges, court houses, town halls, churches, schools, and even factories. We are the people, to extend C. S. Lewis’s wry observation, for whom not only is drab a favorite color, but box is a favorite shape, prose is a favorite meter, grunt is a favorite melody, and nose is a favorite place for a ring. But so it was, and Roosevelt’s call for a refurbishment of the coinage met with approval. The best-known engravers and sculptors submitted designs, and the results were splendid.

Some of these designs warrant a closer look for what they suggest about their time—and ours. Take the Winged Liberty dime, for example. This coin was quickly tabbed as the “Mercury dime,” and so it is still known by most people, including collectors who know better. The engraver Adolph Weinman used as a model for Miss Liberty a tenant of his,



a young lady named Elsie Stevens, whose husband was a lawyer and insurance man named Wallace Stevens; a Republican and conservative, later to win fame as a poet of marked originality and power.

Winged Liberty wears a Phrygian cap, a classical symbol of freedom that had been employed on American coinage in the past. Weinman decided to embellish that cap with wings. His friend and teacher, Augustus Saint-Gaudens—himself the designer of what many critics praise as the single most beautiful American coin, the double eagle with Liberty striding forth—had shown Weinman how to engrave feathers in relief.

His inspiration came not from the ancient messenger-god, thief, and usher for the dead, swift footed Hermes. It came from Miss Liberty herself. Weinman said he wanted to craft an allegory for freedom of thought. The coin was issued in 1916, amidst war in Europe, two years before the emergence of a great plague, and one year before a great ideology of vengeance, envy, hatred, materialism, irreligion, and totalitarian control descended upon the continent, via the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

The reverse of the coin is handsome too and is meant to balance or to give context to the obverse. It shows the *fasces*, the bundle of rods, with its traditional ax, carried by the Roman lictor as symbols of national unity and state force. This is the same ancient symbol that Mussolini would soon adopt for the name of his law-and-order movement in Italy: Fascism. The fasces were not new to American symbolism, which borrows heavily from Ancient Rome. The fasces are to be found everywhere: see, for a rather unsettling example, the vertical sides of the throne upon which Abraham Lincoln sits in his memorial.

Of course, Weinman and the U.S. Mint officials who selected his design cannot be held responsible for what an Italian despot would do with this symbol clear across the ocean, but I do not know that anyone was uncomfortable with it even then, nor do I see why anyone should have been. The idea behind the *fasces* is the same as what animated Benjamin Franklin when he said that he and his fellow seekers of independence had better hang together, or they would all hang separately. You can easily snap rods over your knee one by one, but not if you bind them all together.

It bears mentioning not only how Miss Liberty is portrayed, but that she is portrayed at all. George Washington

may have been first in peace, first in war, and first in the hearts of his countrymen, but he was not first on our coins. Emperors and kings stamp gold with their faces, but we Americans were supposed to not hold generals and politicians in that sort of quasi-divine regard.

And we didn't—at least not at first. No historical personage appears on American coins until 1909, when the bust of Lincoln graced the penny, where he remains to this day. Once Lincoln broke the tradition, he was followed by Washington (quarter, 1932), Jefferson (nickel, 1938), Roosevelt (dime, 1946), Franklin (half, 1948), Kennedy (half, 1964), Eisenhower (dollar, 1971), Susan B. Anthony (dollar, 1980), and Sacagawea (dollar, 2000).

Most of those designs we could do without, especially after such long duration. The likeness of Roosevelt is poor, unless it was meant to portray him as a mild-mannered glad-hander. Why we should celebrate Kennedy, I do not know. The Susan B. Anthony dollar is a study in what not to do with coins. Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.) had been insisting that it was high time for a woman to appear on our money, and, presumably after exhumation and a forensic inquest, it was determined that Miss Anthony met the requirement. She was placed on the obverse, but since the moon landing had been on the reverse of the Eisenhower dollar, it remained on hers too, giving us barrenness on both sides. The public disliked the coin, because it was too easy to confuse with the quarter—and besides, it was ugly.

If historical figures are to decorate our money with their mugs, could we not at least choose somebody besides politicians, or a single-minded scold, or the common-law wife of a French Canadian trapper, whose importance to the Lewis and Clark expedition is undeniable, but who is therefore subordinate in importance to many an explorer, including Lewis and Clark themselves?

The Italians, before the advent of the ghastly euro and the Bauhaus design of its coins, had on their colorful bank notes heroes of their culture: the educational reformer Maria Montessori, the scientists Guglielmo Marconi and Alessandro Volta, the composer Bellini, and the artists Titian, Caravaggio, and Bernini. In the U.S. we might dream of someday seeing Herman Melville on a gold coin, for some patriotic citizen to nail it to a post in the Capitol, promising it and a million like it to any man who could harpoon just one of the thousands of white whales snorting and sporting in the ocean of our modern managerial state.

It occurs to me that we have inverted the Winged Liberty dime. Freedom of thought requires two things, to wit, freedom and thought. You cannot have freedom without virtue, said every Christian theologian as well as every pa-

gan philosopher and statesman who ever lived. But we insist upon freedom from virtue, from manliness; and so we end up with compulsions, surveillance, and confinement. Ask anyone who dares to express a disapproved thought at Gomorrah State University.

You cannot have genuine thought unless you are in contact with reality: either the excellent world about us with all its salutary resistance to our wills, or the world as the great artists, poets, and thinkers from the past can present it to us. Freedom of thought thus requires discipline, strength, and honest submission to truth. Otherwise we are talking about license and fantasy, slack and effeminate; these come to us readily from the manipulations of mass education and mass advertising. Think of the drag queens grooming the minds of little children at your local library.

Meanwhile, since license is chaotic and fantasy unstable and unpersuasive, we find ourselves more and more under suspicion, lest any man utter the truth or act upon it.

We need new coins to reflect our modern reality. I propose a new Charon dime. It should feature on the obverse the head of a boy, listless, drooping, eyes half shut, an emblem of resigned captivity. On the reverse, a heap of scattered rods, I Ching wands perhaps, forming the 47th hexagram, the Swamp, an allegory of confinement and oppression. And a new legend engraved: TRUST PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE FBI.



We might go on here to look at Hermon MacNeil's excellent Standing Liberty quarter (1916-1930), with Miss Liberty, wearing the light drapery of a Greek goddess, bearing a great round shield on her left arm and shoulder as she faces Europe in the east, plunged in war. In her right hand she bears an olive branch; on the reverse is a glorious eagle, its wings raised in flight. That design places America in the context of a civilization more than 2,000 years

old. Or we might look at another coin designed by Weinman, the Walking Liberty half dollar (1916-1947), whose tall Miss Liberty on the obverse, striding like a goddess, bears the American flag streaming in the breeze, along with branches of oak and laurel, while her right hand is extended forward in blessing, as a sower casting seed. The reverse features the eagle, perched on a mountain rock with a pine tree springing up from a fissure. The coin is both classical and American, rooted in a place, and grateful for its goodness and bounty.



Those were splendid coins, and so too in my opinion is the Peace Dollar (1921-1935). But it's the Indian Head or "Buffalo" nickel (1913-1938) that still can warm the remnant of the American heart. The grave and masculine Indian chief on the obverse was not a first for American coinage: Bela Pratt's recessed or "incuse" Indian on the gold quarter eagle (\$2.50) and half eagle (\$5) saw the light in 1908.

The association of the native Indians with liberty had long settled deep into the American consciousness. James Fenimore Cooper had written his *Leatherstocking Tales* long before Francis Parkman, in partial reaction against the figure of the noble savage and yet influenced by it too, wrote *The Oregon Trail* (1847-1849). The name of the great Indian chief Tecumseh, a worthy enemy of American expansion westward, an ally of the British against the United States in the War of 1812, and the most determined opponent of the Indiana governor, William Henry Harrison, who struck at Tippecanoe while the chief was away, was held in honor, not only by William Tecumseh Sherman's father, but by Americans generally. Hence, for example, the U.S.S. *Tecumseh* (1863). Hence also the panel, *The Death of Tecumseh*, at the Battle of the Thames, gracing the frieze of the Capitol rotunda in Washington—painted, I am proud to say, by an Italian, Filippo Costaggini, whom the Irish coal miners of my hometown, Archbald, Pennsylvania, hired to come north to cover the walls and ceiling of their Catholic church with sacred art.

As for the buffalo (actually, a bison) on the reverse, the engraver James Fraser took for his model the Bronx Zoo's notoriously ornery and majestic bull, Black Diamond. Fraser said he wanted the design to be unmistakably American, and sure enough, it appears that the great shaggy bison is standing on a slightly raised mound of an American prairie.

rie. The bison serves the same allegorical function as does the eagle, but is most fitting for the Indian chief on the other side of the coin, as we remember the times when the Indians roamed the plains, hunting the bison, whose herds of thousands made the earth tremble under their hooves. Fraser and his wife Laura also engraved the excellent Oregon Trail commemorative half dollar, featuring a standing Indian on the obverse, holding a bow in one hand and gesturing in what looks like an admonitory way with the other. On the reverse, a Conestoga wagon riding into the sunset.

is all rather patronizing, as I see it, because often the persons or the events engraved are known only to historical specialists. Such is Susan Gamble's design for 2013, to commemorate a 1778 treaty with the Lenape Indians: it features three animals sacred to the Lenape: a turkey, a wolf, and a turtle. The wolf is howling, and the turkey in the foreground appears to be mounting the turtle.

Such also is Emily Damstra's design for 2019, to commemorate two American Indians in the space program. One, Mary Ross, writes a physicochemical formula that she

Emperors and kings stamp gold with their faces, but we Americans were supposed not to hold generals and politicians in that sort of quasi-divine regard.

The Buffalo nickel is American, but in a way that gestures toward universality. The Indian is not bound to a particular personage. The bison in some other culture may have been the aurochs of ancient Europe, the yak of Tibet, the reindeer of Lapland, the elephant of India. The man who honors his place because it is his understands why another man far away does the same.

To go from Miss Liberty to Susan B. Anthony is to go from propaganda as expressing an already-existing unity—this is what we are at our best—to propaganda as a sales pitch or an ideological harassment—this is what you'd better believe, pal, or there's the door. Robert Weinman, the son of Adolph and a great artist in his own right, said that the legislation mandating the Anthony dollar bespoke a "billboard or campaign button approach to a national coin."

Since then, we have shown we like those billboards. With few exceptions, the recent Statehood Quarters series was composed of tourist signs, such as what you will find when you cross a border: "Maine: The Way Life Should Be."

To go from the Buffalo nickel to the Sacagawea dollar is a similar descent. Glenna Goodacre's young squaw carrying the papoose on her back is comely and far more appealing than was Frank Gasparro's harridan. Sacagawea was not the main guide for Lewis and Clark. Her presence, said Clark, assisted them mainly by showing to Indian tribes that the expedition was peaceful, because otherwise a woman would not have been in the company at all. She was by all accounts a woman of grace and courage. I do not detract from her character, or from the expedition she assisted. But what does she represent? Why, other than for her sex and her ethnicity, was Sacagawea chosen?

Like the Anthony dollar, the Sacagawea did not catch on. It is now minted only for collections. Each year since 2009, the reverse has featured a tribute to the Indians. This

helped to discover, and the other—presumably it is the other, John Herrington—is a suited astronaut with a bubble helmet, grasping hold, from behind, of the circular band that contains the coin's legend, and looking like an alien falling out of the sky. What does it mean? That Chickasaws are smart, too? Did we need to be told that? Again, it is not really a national coin so much as a metallic bumper sticker.

Of course, I realize that to complain is like shouting at the seashore when the ship has already sunk. Several years ago, I visited Arlington National Cemetery and the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It was a moving experience of what used to be national fellow-feeling and national honor. As I was leaving, my experience was altered as I came across the Women's Memorial—a campaign button in three dimensions, a monster in bad taste, with a neoclassical exterior and a political museum for an interior.

Compare the dignified treatment of Black Jack Pershing, buried beneath a simple gravestone, no bigger than any of the thousands nearby. It is eloquent in its silence; the Women's Memorial says a great lot of nothing in its garb. But what should I have expected? Had the people who commissioned and designed the Women's Memorial really been thinking about war, the ultimate sacrifice that over a million American men have made, and the patriotic ties that bind generations together, they would never have plopped down their circus tent on that hallowed ground.

I struggle to envision a redesigned coin that expresses American unity, when there is no longer unity to express. Hey, Miss Liberty! It was pretty good, while it lasted.

Contributing editor Anthony Esolen has published 24 books, including Out of the Ashes: Rebuilding American Culture, an English translation of Dante's Divine Comedy, and most recently, The Hundredfold: Songs of the Lord.

Remembering William F. Buckley, Jr.

Dangerous Charm

by Jack Trotter

TWO YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF THE MAN WHOM one of his biographers, John Judis, dubbed the patron saint of modern conservatism, Encounter Books brought out a splendidly packaged omnibus volume of his columns and essays, entitled *Athwart History: Half a Century of Polemics, Animadversions, and Illuminations* (2010). On the cover, William Francis Buckley stands at the helm of a sailing vessel, an American flag flying high behind him, his hair tousled in a stiff wind, and a pair of sunglasses perched jauntily on his prominent nose. His smile can only be described as ebullient, not unlike the smile that we have seen in dozens of photographs of Buckley.

The photograph brilliantly captures the sheer magnetism of the man who stood at the helm of the *National Review* for 35 years—the magazine which he founded and which was the flagship publication of the American conservative movement. In the photograph, Buckley appears to be well into his 40s, so the vessel is very likely the *Cyrano*, a 40' ketch upon which he made more than one transatlantic crossing. The name is suggestive. It alludes to Edmond Rostand's 1897 play *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a title taken eponymously from its hero, a multitalented nobleman and soldier who is celebrated for his charm, his wit, and his proboscis.

The choice says a lot about Buckley; it is at once a piece of braggadocio and yet a self-deprecating wink. This combination of qualities had long been a part of Buckley's charm, dating at least from his college days at Yale, where he was legendary for his arrogance, but well-liked because he was always ready to laugh at himself.

Buckley's personal charisma had a great deal to do with his ability to unify a majority of American conservatives of varying stripes around the principles of his movement. Moreover, he had been possessed since childhood of an iron will to succeed at everything he tried and he had the intelligence and good sense to do so at a very high level. Much of this drive was the legacy of his father and namesake, Will Buckley, a self-made man who made a fortune in the Mexican oil business in the first two decades of the 20th century, and whose influence over his 10 children was enormous.

Buckley *pater*, born in Texas, was of Irish-Catholic de-



scent, deeply religious yet an extreme individualist in the American grain. Politically, he was an isolationist, a vocal opponent of the New Deal, a virulent anti-communist, and an advocate of laissez-faire capitalism. Yet he thought of himself not as a conservative but as a “counter-revolutionary.”

The Buckley children largely adopted their father's views, though none so ardently as his favorite son, Bill, whose legendary debating skills were first honed in the Buckley household and were brought to perfection at Yale. There his campus-wide acclaim was achieved in part because of his brilliant verbal acuity, but also because of his controversial pen, which he wielded as editor of the *Yale Daily News*. Even then, when one might have expected him to escape the shadow of his father, his politics remained in most respects identical.

This identification with his father was evident not only in his student productions but in his early books and articles. In *McCarthy and His Enemies* (1954), he and his co-author, L. Brent Bozell, adopted a position defending McCarthy that departed very little from what his father might have argued. However, Buckley, Jr. brought to the subject a sensitivity to McCarthy's excesses and the vulgarity of the senator's personal style that reflects a more polished sensibility.

For the most part, during the late '40s and early '50s, Buckley's work remained sympathetic toward the Old Right, and vociferously libertarian regarding the intervention of

the central state in the economy, as well as decentralist on states' rights. Indeed, Albert J. Nock's *Our Enemy, the State* (1935) had been a staple in the Buckley household, and young William remained an admirer, if not always a disciple, of Nock's anti-statism all his life.

The founding of *National Review* in 1955 was, of course, Buckley's central achievement. From the outset the magazine's agenda signaled, at least implicitly, a break with the Old Right, at least on the issue of the Cold War communist threat. One indication of this break was Buckley's association with Willi Schlamm, an ex-communist immigrant from Austria who, after fleeing the Nazis, worked for Henry Luce at Time, Inc., rising to the level of chief foreign policy advisor.

An admirer of *McCarthy and His Enemies*, Schlamm was eager to start a new magazine. Both men believed that an uncompromising anti-communism should be at the forefront of the brand of conservatism they hoped to promote. Domestic politics held no interest for Schlamm, and he was openly hostile toward the Old Right's opposition to an expansionist foreign policy.

The Old Right, represented by figures such as Sen. Robert A. Taft, H. L. Mencken, and Albert Nock, as well as writers associated with the Southern Agrarians and a handful of right-leaning libertarians, had been the dominant conservative force in America since the 1920s. However, it was never a well-organized, nationwide movement with a unified agenda. While Buckley in his early years certainly aligned himself with the Old Right's opposition to the New Deal, he had little interest in what he called their "isolationism," or their regionalist concerns. According to Judis, "[Buckley] didn't see himself defending the verities of small-town America, but rather arresting the assault of Soviet communism."

What is indisputable is that Buckley was adept at surrounding himself with brilliant writers and editors. Many of them had the kind of intellectual pedigrees that would demand the attention of the Northeastern intelligentsia, who tended to associate conservatism with Chamber of Commerce business ethics and small-minded bigotry. In part to counter this perception, Buckley brought on board Catholics (like his brother-in-law and Yale debating partner, Bozell), Jews, and ex-communists. Among these were Will Herberg, Whittaker Chambers, and James Burnham.

Herberg, a Russian Jewish immigrant, had joined the Communist Party in 1920, then gravitated toward a "democratic socialist" position. By the early 1950s, he found himself increasingly aligned with conservative positions: anti-communism, anti-liberalism, and anti-secularism. Chambers, who became a senior editor for Buckley, was



not only an ex-communist, but a part of the Soviet espionage "underground" in the 1930s. His bestselling book *Witness* (1952) was published in the aftermath of his widely publicized testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee, which identified a number of highly placed American officials as Soviet agents, including Alger Hiss at the State Department. Chambers' skills as a writer and his unyielding courage against the domestic threat of communism made him a valuable asset in Buckley's inner circle. Burnham, an ex-Trotskyite and OSS operative, would become, by Buckley's own assessment at the time of Burnham's retirement in 1978, the preeminent intellectual and ideological influence at *National Review*.

If I have given special emphasis to the communist backgrounds of Buckley's inner circle, it is because their almost single-minded devotion to the anti-communist cause during the Cold War drove them, and Buckley himself, to a position in tension with their avowed antipathy toward the growth of centralized government. Buckley had hoped from the beginning to build his new conservatism around a "fusionist" balancing, as enunciated by political philosopher Frank Meyer, of various strands of American conservative thought. These included the Old Right's opposition to the expansion of the central state that had begun with the New Deal; the libertarian support for laissez-faire capitalism; and anti-communism.

Of course, all of those strands were in some sense anti-communist, but the Old Right and the libertarians, like Murray Rothbard, were adamantly opposed to an international crusade against the Soviets which would inevitably require an enormous enlargement of what Eisenhower would later call the "military-industrial complex." Early on, Rothbard attacked *National Review* for its support of "overseas adventurism and empire building," echoing the criticism of the Old Right novelist Louis Bromfield, who in 1954 accused anti-communist interventionists of seeking to extend the old "colonial system."



There is no evidence that Buckley himself dreamed of a new imperialist system, even if it is true that the anti-communist ideology he promoted helped to justify the construction of an American empire, one founded upon the evangelical conviction that the Soviet menace was an unadulterated evil that had to be defeated at all costs.

In fact, Buckley's willingness to abandon his commitment to the Old Right ideals of his father proved even more disturbing than Rothbard imagined. In a 1952 essay published in the magazine *Commonweal*, "The Party and the Deep Blue Sea," Buckley was strikingly candid about the nature of the compromise he was prepared to make. He asserted that the critical issue was survival, a reality which many conservatives were unprepared to face. The "invincible aggressiveness" of the Soviet Union, he argued, would require a rearrangement of American "battle plans." In short, "we have got to accept Big Government for the duration—for neither an offensive nor a defensive war can be waged...except through the instrument of a totalitarian bureaucracy within our shores."

Buckley provided no indication of what the "duration" of this totalitarian response to a totalitarian threat might be. But he added that once the Cold War was won, conservatives would have to take up the task of securing a second victory against an "indigenous bureaucracy," though the chances of winning such a victory would be "far greater than they could ever be against one controlled from abroad, one that would be nourished and protected by a world-wide

Communist monolith."

He repeated much the same argument late in 1954 in *The Freeman*, and his position throughout the Cold War tended toward a policy of aggressive "liberation" of Soviet satellite states rather than the more cautious policy of containment. In Buckley's view, either strategy would require much the same bureaucratic expansion, "for to beat the Soviet Union we must, to an extent, imitate the Soviet Union." That vague qualification ("to an extent") begs a host of troubling questions.

While there was no shortage of Old Right criticism of this willingness to sup with the Devil, the most troubling warning came from across the Atlantic. George Orwell, in one of his last published articles before his death in 1950, restated an argument that had already been effectively spelled out in his novel *1984*. The gravest danger posed by the rise of the modern super-states was that, whatever their outward ideological differences, they tended increasingly to resemble one another. Their bellicose propaganda was largely a manufactured attempt to consolidate power, while robbing their citizens of civil liberties.

Much of *1984*, as Orwell never attempted to disguise, is based on the arguments of James Burnham's *The Managerial Revolution* (1941). In this highly controversial work, and the book which followed, *The Machiavellians* (1943), Burnham revealed a theory of political power founded upon the idea of the inevitable rule of elites. While still a Trotskyite, Burnham, according to J.P. Diggins, had begun to view

the modern state as neither solely a “reflection” of capitalist class interests nor as a “representation” of democratic majorities, but rather “an increasingly autonomous structural entity without exact precedent or analogy in the past.”

In the modern era, Burnham saw emerging a “new class” of bureaucratic experts, economic managers, scientists, commissars, and so on—a “managerial” class which was, in its essence, totalitarian. Orwell agreed with Burnham that managerialism was indeed the main trend of 20th-century politics, not only in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, but in New Deal America, as well. Yet he objected to Burnham’s technological determinism and was disturbed by his barely concealed admiration, especially in *The Machiavellians*, for the vigor and ruthless use of power by these new technocrats.

Orwell’s perspective raises pertinent questions. To what extent was Buckley swayed by Burnham’s power politics? Did he view the struggle against the Soviets within the same Machiavellian framework? That Burnham became, with Buckley’s blessing, the mouthpiece for foreign policy at the *National Review* suggests that to some extent their views were yoked.

In his *Struggle for the World* (1947), Burnham had argued for the establishment of an “American empire” intended to secure “decisive world control.” Under the flag of “democratic world order,” America would become a global hegemon, a “unifying power.” For more than two decades, Burnham pushed the same ideas in his *National Review* column, though not always so explicitly.

Aside from his earlier articles on the need for a temporary totalitarian regime to meet the Soviet threat, Buckley himself was usually more restrained than Burnham. Yet he was constantly at odds with the State Department and a succession of presidents over their lukewarm prosecution of the Cold War. There was too much appeasement and not enough aggression toward the Soviet menace, Buckley thought. Nor did Buckley, as far as I am aware, ever express serious concern over the growing power of what has been termed the National Security State, or even more colloquially, the Deep State.

Burnham and Buckley backed the war in Vietnam but complained when it was not prosecuted forcefully enough. Burnham went as far as to call for chemical weapons strikes against North Vietnam. Yet he also lamented during the same period, as in his 1959 book *Congress and the American Tradition*, the growth of Caesarism, or what today we might call the “imperial presidency.”

Not the first to notice the seeming contradiction, Burnham’s biographer Daniel Kelly asks, “How did he think the need to wage the Cold War...could be reconciled with the

need to stem the growth of Caesarism, a phenomenon he attributed partly to twentieth-century wars, both hot and cold?” The same question could be asked about Buckley.

With the passage of time, *National Review* became firmly established as the voice of the conservative movement, though the movement remained largely outside the Beltway corridors of power. The defeat of Goldwater, whom Buckley had supported, was a blow, but the movement remained unified in the years leading up to the election of Ronald Reagan.

Unified, but not without a series of purges of those groups and individuals whom Buckley regarded as outside the pale. The John Birch Society was labeled anathema early on for the alleged anti-Semitism and conspiracy-ridden views of its leadership. Also proscribed were Ayn Rand and her ephebes, not because they were libertarians but because of their Nietzschean atheism.

Both of these purges were, in my view, justified. However, the early purging of “isolationist” libertarians must be considered lamentable. In addition, in the ’70s and ’80s fewer and fewer writers that were identifiably traditionalist or libertarian appeared in the magazine. As a number of observers have noted, Buckley drifted gradually into the neoconservative ambit, both politically and socially.

A few solidly paleoconservative writers remained on the editorial staff, including Chilton Williamson, Jr., who left in 1989 to join *Chronicles*. Also Joe Sobran served as a *National Review* senior editor for more than 20 years. Sobran was fired in 1992 after charges were leveled at him by Midge Decter and her husband Norman Podhoretz, editor at *Commentary*. The crux of the matter was that Sobran’s columns criticizing the “Israeli lobby” were deemed by Podhoretz and Decter—hypersensitive to perceived anti-Semitism as they were—to be scurrilous. In Decter’s words, Sobran himself was “little more than a crude and naked anti-Semite.”

Certainly Sobran had been quite critical of the Israelis, but anti-Semitic? Buckley thought not, and, to his credit, defended Sobran both publicly and privately, while at the same time writing in a private letter to Decter, “What Joe needs to know is that certain immunities properly attach to pro-Israeli sentiment for historical reasons.” In short, you are allowed to criticize Israel only if and when your pro-Israeli sentiments have been satisfactorily rubber-stamped by certain self-appointed gatekeepers. This had been, in fact, Podhoretz’s argument some years earlier in his much-debated polemic “J’Accuse” (1982) published in *Commentary*. But Sobran refused to accept such admonitions, hence his departure from *National Review*.

The culmination of Buckley’s success was to orchestrate



the movement that led to the election of Reagan in 1980. The great irony is that in the process, he had to leave behind the “counter-revolutionary” that he had imagined himself to be in 1955, to become a pillar of the establishment. His relationship with Reagan thrived for some 30 years, and he was a major factor in the Great Communicator’s ascendancy. A gratified Reagan offered him a post as ambassador to Afghanistan (still at that time under Soviet occupation). Presumably, this was an instance of presidential humor, but is also an indication of the esteem in which he held Buckley, who remained an unofficial advisor throughout the Reagan era.

It is not my intention to besmirch Reagan’s ascendancy as a marker of Buckley’s accomplishment. America did move significantly toward conservatism in those years, and for the first time in decades liberalism was driven into a defensive mode.

There is no doubt that Buckley enjoyed being at the center of power, which is not in itself a crime. Yet, to place things in perspective, the Reagan years also marked the rising tide of the neoconservative occupation of Washington, and, as noted, it seems that Buckley had chosen to cast his anchor on the neocon side of the good ship conservatism. To be fair, he continued at times to criticize the liberal tendencies of the neoconservatives on social issues, on the welfare state, and more.

But perhaps the best indication of how far he had traveled from the traditionalist Old Right was his involvement in the move to block the appointment of Mel Bradford to head the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1981. The story is complex, but as Mark Gerson tells it in his *The Neoconservative Vision: From the Cold War to the Culture Wars* (1996), prominent neoconservatives Irving Kristol and Edwin Feulner of the Heritage Foundation felt that

Bradford’s earlier support of the presidential campaigns of George Wallace and, more importantly, his repeated attacks on Abraham Lincoln’s contribution to the “decline of the West,” would embarrass Reagan.

Kristol and Feulner pushed William Bennett—at that time a registered Democrat but a neocon ally—as an alternative candidate. Buckley, having had a long association with Bradford, was torn at first, but in the end he joined the neocons to convince Reagan to appoint Bennett. As Feulner wrote later, “It was a coalescing of the different parts of the movement... that showed that we could in fact work together, that we had common views.”

Further evidence of Buckley’s drift from the traditionalist right is evident in a collection of essays entitled *American Conservative Thought in the Twentieth Century* (1970), which he is credited with editing. While the essays selected for the volume are respectable enough, and do include a piece by Russell Kirk, Southern writers are conspicuous by their absence. It includes nothing by any of the Agrarians; nothing by Richard Weaver or Mel Bradford. What lay behind these omissions?

Perhaps it had something to do with the kind of Lockean individualism Buckley had always promoted, in contrast to the Southern advocacy of what Richard Weaver called “social bond” individualism, which places the individual firmly within the context of his ties to local and historical communities which, in the Southern view, were the only real bulwark against the power of the state. Perhaps it was this philosophical commitment to an essentialist, abstract individualism that led Buckley, in the end, to accept the notion that America is, in essence, a “proposition nation” in the Lincolnian sense.

Thus, just months before his death, Buckley wrote in a short piece for *The Atlantic*:

I would doubt any claim that the American idea is finally validated by historical and human experience. It is, for men and women of my perspective, judged to be secure in warranting perpetual loyalties. But ours are loyalties to an ideal, not to a revelation, and this must have been the reason, even if he was not conscious of it, why Lincoln referred to the American ‘proposition.’

It seems that Buckley’s counter-revolution ended, not with a bang but with an egalitarian whimper.

Jack Trotter is an English professor and a Chronicles production editor. He writes from Charleston, South Carolina.

Remembering Willmoore Kendall

The Unsettled Conservative

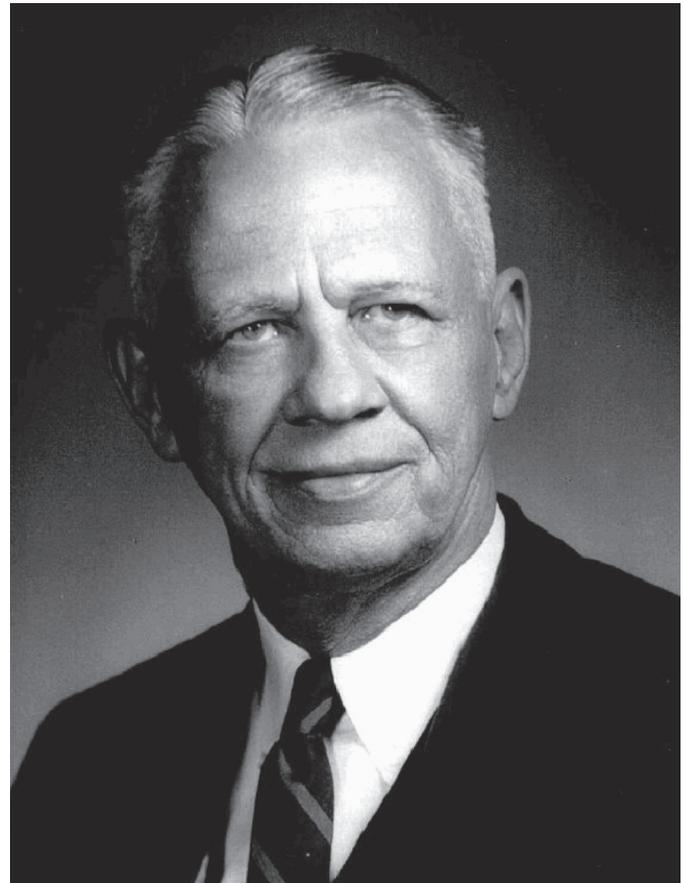
by David Frisk

AMONG THE 20TH-CENTURY CONSERVATIVE movement's legendary leaders, Willmoore Kendall (1909-1967) stands out as the one who most effectively offered a grounding in a specifically American philosophy. There is also a timeliness in this remarkable political scientist's thought. Our society has become divided to an extent that Kendall might well have found horrifying—although not surprising. His acute sense of how such divisions can happen is, therefore, especially worth considering today. Kendall's writings seem to converge on a single focus: how to make democracy work when so much threatens to either destroy it or turn it in a dangerous direction.

After studying at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship during the Depression, Kendall completed a Ph.D. in political science at the University of Illinois. His dissertation was a groundbreaking reinterpretation of Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*. But his fledgling academic career was interrupted by World War II. With his knowledge of Spanish and political science, he served at the State Department and in the Army bureaucracy, then worked for the early CIA.

His intellectual home was, formally speaking, Yale, where he taught some of the nascent conservative movement's "young people," including William F. Buckley, Jr., who graduated in 1950. In 1954, Buckley told the conservative publisher Henry Regnery: "I attribute whatever political and philosophical insights I have to his tutelage and his friendship."

It was natural, then, that Kendall would be a founding editor of the ambitious conservative magazine Buckley started in 1955, *National Review*. But it was equally natural that this temperamental man walked away from both institutions. After leaving his Yale professorship in frustration with its uncongenial political science department in 1961, Kendall also became permanently estranged from Buckley. His last years were spent as a popular faculty member at the University of Dallas—a Roman Catholic yet middle-American environment where the populist native Oklahoman finally felt he was "home." There he co-founded a great books doctoral program, inspired partly by Leo Strauss's lifelong effort to revive a close engagement with mankind's



Willmoore Kendall (University of Dallas Archive)

permanent philosophical questions through the intensive study of canonical Western texts. Unfortunately, Kendall, a smoker and a heavy drinker, died of a heart attack at age 58.

As a young scholar Kendall favored a radically democratic majoritarianism and was in some respects a radical leftist for a while. The mature Kendall grew not just increasingly conservative in a general sense but also more committed to the Constitution's checks and balances, its implicit requirements for geographically dispersed and durable—not nationwide, numerical, short-term—majorities in order to enact major public policy. He also preferred congressional as against presidential and judicial power.

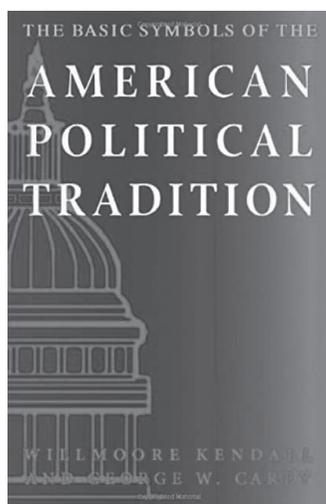
Another major theme for Kendall was public virtue in a free society. Rejecting the behavioralism already prominent (and he feared dominant) among political scientists, he similarly came to reject the widely held pluralist view that the American Founders envisioned self-seeking, mutually frustrating clashes between factions or interest groups as the essence of politics in the new republic. Rather, he argued that the Founding—as completed, Kendall believed, not by the literal Constitution but by the brilliant, political-realistic interpretation of it in the Federalist Papers—was more communitarian in its core doctrine, belonging to a venerable pre-existing American tradition based on the

REMEMBERING THE RIGHT

concept of a “virtuous people deliberating under God.” This conclusion would be central to his most renowned book, the posthumous *Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition* (1970), co-authored with his young colleague George Carey.

Also central to Kendall’s work was his belief in what is sometimes called public orthodoxy. As he wrote in one essay: “by no means are all questions open questions; some questions involve matters so basic . . . that the society would, in declaring them open, abolish itself, commit suicide, terminate its existence as the kind of society it has hitherto understood itself to be.” An example of a such question that he felt should be “closed” in America is whether communism should be accepted as a legitimate political system. Writing elsewhere, Kendall warned that complete ideological openness to the extent advocated in John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* would cause politics to “descend ineluctably into ever-deepening differences of opinion, into progressive breakdown of those common premises upon which alone a society can conduct its affairs by discussion, and so into the abandonment of the discussion process and the arbitrament of public questions by violence and civil war.” He had seen it as a journalist in Spain in the 1930s.

Along with his deep learning in political philosophy—Rousseau became another major interest—and his in-depth study of our country’s political and constitutional traditions, Kendall felt a strong identification with middle America. Appropriately, he was a major source for many conservatives’ longstanding faith in the existence of a right-of-center “silent majority.” In his writings, we frequently see a shrewd sense of how typical Americans think about issues in their capacity as citizens. He probably would have understood both our current polarized polity and the current conservative political base quite well. He would have empathized, probably, with the right’s impatience for conservative reform, while starkly admonishing it to overcome that impatience and connect better with the general citizenry.



Kendall’s intellectual life had an indomitable integrity, while his life as a whole, as the eminent historian of American conservatism George Nash has remarked, was one of “restless eccentricity.” His strengths must have owed something to his weaknesses, his apparent in-



ability to calm down or “settle” in either sense of the word. His protégé Buckley would later say of himself that he was not temperamentally a typical conservative. Neither was Kendall.

Both a disdain for loose thinking and an eagerness to make conservatives more politically effective were characteristic, too, of Kendall’s *National Review* colleague James Burnham. Despite great differences in their personalities and intellectual interests, they both understood clearly that the West faced an urgent crisis—the rampant growth of a centralized, bureaucratic state—which ran even deeper than communism, crucial though that challenge was. Yet another possible basis for a meeting of the minds was their common rejection of libertarianism and political individualism. A collaboration between Kendall and Burnham, then, might have been highly productive, as might others we could imagine. But it’s a bit problematic to say “collaboration” when writing about Kendall—or “productive,” except to suggest that he was insufficiently so.

Despite his drinking problem, his irascibility, and a tendency to spend too much time writing letters and the like, what he did publish was excellent. Except for his much-respected dissertation on Locke, Kendall did not produce a major work on his own (although in addition to his eventual co-authorship of *Basic Symbols*, he wrote a textbook on democracy and the party system with a more liberal political scientist, Austin Ranney). But his articles and essays are outstanding. Among the most relevant to conservatism are “The People Versus Socrates Revisited,” “The Two Majorities” (presidential and congressional), “The Bill of Rights & American Freedom,” “American Conservatism and the ‘Prayer’ Decisions,” “The Social Contract: The Ul-

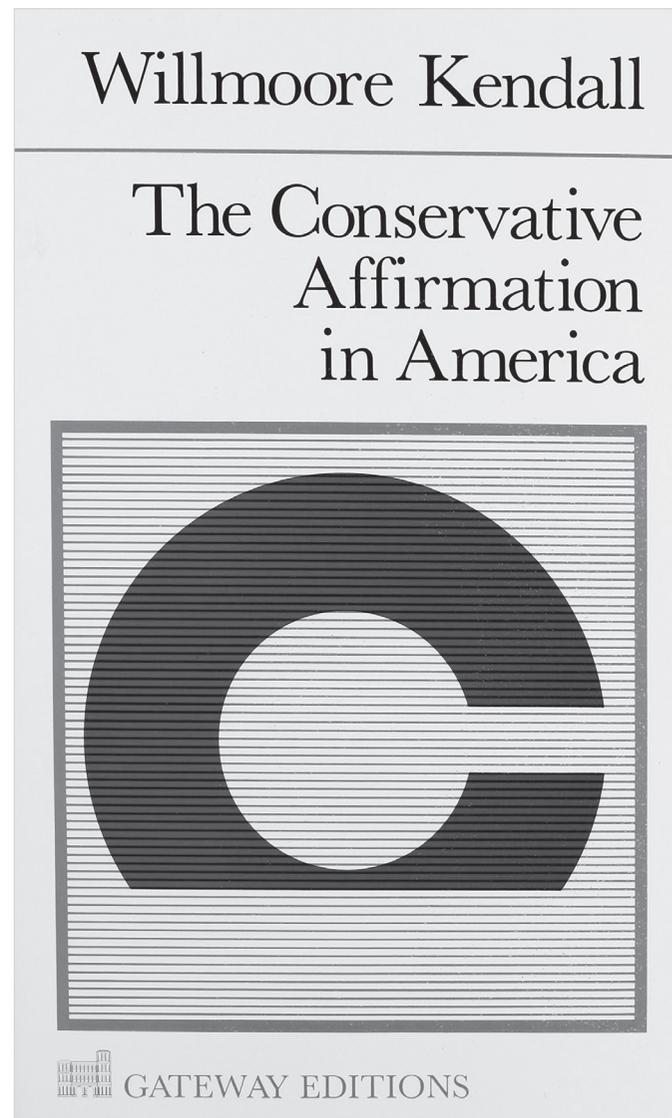
timate Issue Between Liberalism and Conservatism,” and “Conservatism and the ‘Open Society.’” All could have been the basis for entire, even more instructive, books.

In reading them, one senses that weighty issues have been both meticulously chosen and rigorously analyzed, while brought to a fresh conclusion or restatement, not an echo of anybody else’s thinking. One hears Kendall speaking directly, in elaborately constructed yet beautifully clear, often colloquial prose, logically judging alternatives and making key distinctions. Discussions with him may have been similarly rigorous—even though he could, according to the left-wing essayist Dwight Macdonald, “bring an argument into the shouting stage faster than any man in town.” Also notoriously, Kendall is said to have been on speaking terms with just one of his fellow *National Review* editors at a time. Going along to get along, suppressing major concerns in the interest of careerism or friendship, were simply foreign to him.

And so, perhaps, were intellectual closure and finality. While Kendall would have had little affinity for New Age sensibilities, there may have been a sense in which he felt that the journey mattered more than the destination. An engagement with Strauss’s writings in the 1950s had inspired him to seek out the great University of Chicago scholar and admit that he needed to rethink major questions. Perhaps his “greatest virtue,” Christopher Wolfe suggested in his introduction to a reissued edition of Kendall’s collection, *The Conservative Affirmation*, “is that he constantly argued with himself; more than once in his mature years, he had the humility to ‘start over,’ changing his intellectual position in response to some challenge to his habits of thought.”

When Kendall deliberated on how to define leading principles for conservatism in the post-New Deal era, he did so partly because he thought the right’s other prominent intellectuals were, in general, “false teachers” and a “poor lot.” Before his untimely death, he had written parts of a book, ironically titled *Sages of Conservatism*. A key point in these fascinating chapter drafts is his insistence that Russell Kirk’s traditionalism was too vague and lacked real relevance to America (although he agreed with Kirk’s “moral teachings”). But Kendall also diverged markedly from the libertarian and mainstream right’s emphasis on individual rights, a principle for a democratic polity that he was skeptical of. Majority rule and societal cohesion remained more important to him.

Conservatism today needs Kendall more than ever. A philosopher and political scientist first and a conservative second, he was nonetheless a profoundly political man who aimed to make the right more effective. Kendall’s mid-century confidence that most Americans were right-of-center



had some basis at the time, though arguably less reason for it today. Yet as the right rethinks its position in our society and reflects on the vast frustrations it has experienced in the decades since his death, he remains a compelling figure. He insisted that conservatives, if they were to become more successful politically, must convincingly articulate a claim to be the defenders of the true American political tradition. In addition, opposition to intellectual hypocrisy and complacency were major themes in Kendall’s restless life and writings. He had, in one scholar’s apt description, “no time for sentimentality, woolly thinking, or self-serving ideas.” Nor should we.

David Frisk is resident fellow at The Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization, and author of If Not Us, Who?: William Rusher, National Review, and the Conservative Movement (2011).

My Penelope: Ten Moments

by Pete Beurskens

1
She stands straight
clad in ranger khakis
in the Never Summer Wilderness.
Genially, she grasps the lead rope
of a pack mule called Spenser.

2
Her neck arcs over a menu,
small smile on her mouth,
while I strive to memorize
the precise silica tint
of her hazel eyes.

3
She's half inside her front door
hesitating while I decide
to kiss her...or not.
I reach for the hand instead,
and shake on a future chance.

4
Pale, she cradles our first boy
amid tousled hospital sheets.
She's dank, drawn,
and singularly
lovely.

5
After the pediatrician's call
she, standing, slumps,
slim shoulders folded in on herself
like self-protective wings.
She does not cry.

6
She's bent back laughing, the way she does.
From the living room with the men
I glimpse her in the kitchen
and watch her mirth
enwreath the women.

7
She sprawls on Utah slick-rock,
mountain bike akimbo.
Blood trickles across her forehead
like wine-dark veins
in time-smooth Navaho Sandstone.

8
Her broad-brimmed straw hat
bobs among the Brandywines
as she uproots buttonweeds,
freckle-dappled arm rising
regularly, daubing droplets.

9
Sitting at the sun-faded farm table
she, patient, inclines on one elbow
over a stupid algebra book,
coaxing a brooding boy
toward quadratic equations.

10
Spinning, she masters distaff, maidens
and Mother-of-All. Deftly she harmonizes
treadle and whorl, footman and bobbin,
conjuring silvery skeins
from fleecy roving.

What the Editors Are Reading

NO ONE SO MUCH AS PAUSES WHEN the mob shouts down reasonable voices during a panic. Just witness the media's daily performance during the COVID-19 crisis. CNBC hit the ejector button on author James Grant during a live broadcast when he wondered aloud if the government's civil society shutdown might lead to more harm than good. Even after crises subside, no one defends that same voice of reason when he repeats his advice with the posterity of hindsight.

Luckily for humanity, several modern-day prophets persist without defenders. One prophet in particular, Nassim Nicholas Taleb, gloats at his opponents' cowardice. He rubs his incontrovertible conclusions in the faces of those busy defending a status quo that enriches a select few at the expense of the common good—politicians with their power grabs, corporate executives with their bailouts, and academics with their burnished reputations from rewriting history during the maelstrom.

I coincidentally started reading Taleb's *Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder* (2012) the week before the country melted down. Taleb argues for a third category beyond the easily broken and the resilient: the antifragile, a thing that, like a newly healed broken bone, becomes even stronger through shocks than it was in its original state. Far too much of modern society falls into the fragile category, a by-product of gargantuan size and a failure to build redundant systems.

Consider the massive American health-care system now crashing headfirst into its design flaws. In order to meet investor demands and government edicts, the United States has a hospital system designed for profits, not problems. COVID-19 is another of Taleb's ominous "Black Swans": low-probability, high-risk events that are rare and devastating, but not unforeseeable. We ignore at our peril these cataclysms which

are simultaneously unlikely and inevitable over a long stretch of time, like the 2008 financial crisis. In our shortsightedness, we don't reward those who avoid losses.

As Taleb writes, "The true hero of the Black Swan world is someone who prevents a calamity and, naturally, because the calamity did not take place, does not get recognition—or a bonus—for it." The U.S. could have built more hospitals, manufactured more ventilators, and stockpiled masks. But it didn't. Until this latest predictable disaster struck, such moves reeked of paranoia and inefficiency to hedge fund managers, healthcare consultants, and Lizzo fans who prefer to believe whatever CNBC preaches.

Outside his cultlike following, Taleb's warnings will sadly continue to fall on deaf ears. But *Chronicles* readers should enlighten themselves with Taleb's insights. If I didn't know any better, I'd have assumed he custom-wrote *Antifragile* for the readers of this magazine, given its abundant Latin and Greek phrases, quotes from Joseph de Maistre, and timeless wisdom.

—Mark G. Brennan

PERHAPS BECAUSE THE CURRENT social order seems more fragile than ever, I've been drawn to economist Diego Gambetta's 1993 masterpiece *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection*. This scholarly work published by Harvard University Press takes the novel approach of examining *La Cosa Nostra* in purely economic terms, as a black-market industry specializing in protection services, run by "entrepreneurs of violence."

The subject of the mafia is inherently entertaining and fans of classic fiction from the genre, such as Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* (1969), will find much of interest in Gambetta's book despite its dry, cerebral presentation. Drawing on meticulously footnoted historical research and

contemporary police records, Gambetta outlines the mafia's growth in the 19th and 20th centuries from the lawless transitional period between feudalism and democracy. The book provides tables of statistics outlining the median ages of mafia bosses and their apparent occupations, from sheep breeders to undertakers and to bar owners; maps tracking the mafia's spread from rural areas to the cities of Corleone and Palermo; and anecdotes about the political and business dealings of the so-called Men of Honor.

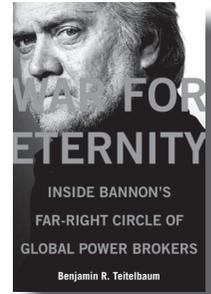
However, Gambetta's purpose in these anecdotes is to illustrate how mafia dealings follow classic business concepts. Orderly markets; customer demand; reputational effects such as trademarks, branding, advertising; competition and barrier to entry; informal regulation and industry standards—Gambetta finds a correlation between nearly every aspect of conventional economic behavior and mafia operations. The comparison is enlightening, not only in that the mafia runs much like conventional business and government, but also in that business and government seem to operate like the mafia.

Another lesson in *The Sicilian Mafia*, which may not be what Gambetta intended, makes the book a classic for libertarians and anarcho-capitalists to this day: the emergence of spontaneous order from social chaos. Some of these people, annoyed at the presumption of sainthood conferred on today's civil servants, would rather replace them with made men who burn images of saints as part of their initiation. Gambetta even calls out the great Austrian School economist Murray Rothbard in his introduction: "He seems oblivious to the fact that the society he is proposing exists already in Sicily and can hardly be described as a success." Both sides of that argument should read Gambetta.

—Edward Welsh

Traditionalism Redux

by Derek Turner



War for Eternity: Inside Bannon's Far-Right Circle of Global Power Brokers
by Benjamin R. Teitelbaum
HarperCollins
336 pp., \$28.99

MANY INTEMPERATE CRITICS HAVE attacked President Trump and his intellectual influences. Benjamin Teitelbaum is not one of them. Cleverer and more fair-minded than most critiques, *War for Eternity* strives to show that many modern national conservative and populist movements are paradoxically informed by the arcane intellectual current known as traditionalism.

At the book's heart are 20 hours of probing interviews with Steve Bannon conducted between June 2018 and September 2019. The president's supposed Svengali is an object of fascination to many, and Teitelbaum's interest was sparked in 2014 when he heard Bannon alluding to the Italian fascist philosopher Julius Evola (1898-1974). Evola was a central figure in today's traditionalism, whose writings are circulated almost exclusively on the outermost edges of the right.

When Teitelbaum learned Bannon had an eight-hour private meeting in 2018 with the Kremlin-connected traditionalist Aleksandr Dugin, he became convinced a dangerously outré philosophical movement was galvanizing global politics. At the time, American media were hyperventilating about Russian influence, and Teitelbaum felt "curious and unnerved" to think that "an obscure and exception-

ally radical way of thinking had somehow moved from shrouded religious sects and ultraconservative intellectual circles into the White House and beyond."

Defining traditionalism is the first challenge facing the author. Today's traditionalism draws heavily on the aforementioned Evola and his French contemporary, René Guénon (1886-1951). But its Western roots have been traced back to Plato, as filtered by early Christian and Renaissance neoplatonists, who formulated what became known as "the perennial philosophy." This averred there was a single, fundamental, universal, metaphysical truth underlying all religious traditions, and this amorphous idea was absorbed by academics, artists, and religious reformers alike. Romantics embraced it eagerly in the 19th and early 20th centuries, looking ever further back and farther afield for a unifying thread to help them disentangle the age of democracy. With the help of ground-breaking works like Sir James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890), prehistory was plundered to find conceptual commonalities from Greek myth to the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, Babylon to Buddhism, Christian apocrypha to animists and Sufists.

But the principal fountainhead was always the "Aryan" lands, where jaded Europeans found an impressively ancient and brilliantly colored cosmology ripe for reinterpretation. They saw in Hindu and Zoroastrian beliefs an exotic antidote to Europe's technically advanced but spiritually empty civilization—purportedly univer-

sal truths and a supposed inexorable order of aristocracy, mysticism, nobility, spirituality, and the warrior spirit. They became convinced there were four repeating "ages" in human history. During the golden age, societies are led by priests, during the silver by soldiers, by merchants during the bronze, and by slaves during the dark age, after which the cycle begins again. Time loses meaning in this reading, as the linearity and progressiveness of both Christian and Enlightenment thought are supplanted by circularity and fatalism. To traditionalists, there is endless decline in human affairs, but there is also endless rebirth—and violent destruction can be creative, because it expedites the endless return.

Traditionalists are frequently eccentric, to put it mildly. Evola believed Aryans descended from ethereal Arctic beings who had coarsened as they migrated south. Viewed from Himalayan intellectual heights, all kinds of mundane preoccupations can seem unimportant, including class, nation, race, religious denomination, and wealth. Even physical reality can seem surmountable, given sufficient discipline.

But these theories can also be influential; permeating conspiratorial, esoteric, and New Age circles, as well as the arts, literature, philosophy, and high society. It is said Prince Charles is a not-so-secret traditionalist. The British composer John Tavener dedicated works to both Guénon and the Swiss-German traditionalist Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998). Such might

be expected in rarefied circles. What is less easily understandable is a militant variant of these theories may also be helping propel today's national populist juggernaut.

Traditionalist concepts and terminology permeate rightist social media, the avatars from Hindu myth oddly analogous to the shape-shifting trolls of the alt-right. From 4Chan to Cambridge Analytica (which Bannon helped set up), minds have been changed, elections swung, and referenda won, using high-tech methodology that may be underpinned by ancient symbology.

Bannon squares theoretical aristocracy with sincere populism because two-party democracy has clearly not benefited working people. To him, the working class is less decadent, and more authentically American, than the modern West's misrulers. People from *any* class can become aristocrats because aristocracy is about rootedness and spirituality rather than birth, education, or wealth. "Every person should be a priest," Bannon reflects, in what may be the book's most telling sentence. Teitelbaum coins the useful phrase "spiritual mobility"—and the working class

and, in any case, represent cultures with very different histories and geostrategic interests. The principals also have perverse and powerful personalities. When Dugin met de Carvalho, for example, they apparently got into a bad-tempered argument about "sacred geography."

Clearly, Bannon has been influenced by these meetings and readings, and traditionalism has some bearing on today's tumults. But in the final analysis, traditionalism is more of an attitude than an *ism*—let alone a danger to the liberal order. Insofar as it is a discrete ideology, it can as easily

Traditionalist concepts and terminology permeate rightist social media, the avatars from Hindu myth oddly analogous to the shape-shifting trolls of the alt-right.

The supposedly phlegmatic British voted quixotically to quit the EU, against all "expert" arguments. The ultra-vulgar Trump embraces the believer in aristocracy—at least for a time. Cold-eyed Vladimir Putin has a weakness for the "Eurasian" romancing of Dugin. Jair Bolsonaro became Brazilian President thanks to four seminal texts—the Bible, Brazil's constitution, a book by Winston Churchill, and Olavo de Carvalho's 2013 traditionalist manifesto, *O mínimo que você precisa saber para não ser um idiota* (roughly, *The Minimum You Need to Know to Avoid Being an Idiot*). Traditionalism-influenced politicians have risen and fallen in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and elsewhere.

A few rungs down, colorful individuals cluster from Tennessee to Tehran, Virginia to Venezuela. While organizing their political plots, they attend Indian ashrams or Unite the Right rallies, beat drums in forest glades, run small but far-reaching publishing houses and schools (Bannon has been trying to set up his own). State intelligence services are in this soup somewhere, as are Mexican cartels, money from Chinese anti-communists, and agents from Moscow.

might manage this most easily because they have been so long distanced from the intrinsically corrupt centers of educational, financial, media, and political power.

In the shorter term, radical transformative action can best guarantee their economic and existential security. This is akin to the creative destruction beloved of traditionalists, with Trump (or Bolsonaro, or Farage, or Putin) as a necessary "disruptor," a bullheaded force of nature who throws everything down so that others may build better. Government needs to be slashed, families boosted, globalizing imperialisms (big business, China, equality, "human rights," Islam, mass migration) restrained, troops brought home, and individuals allowed to find their own levels, all within a spiritually uplifting culture.

Traditionalism, never easily applicable to real-life politics, becomes even less practical when it comes to potential international alliances. While Bannon, Dugin, de Carvalho and others agree on much theoretically—the desirability of a multipolar world, globalism, materialism, rejection of equality, and rationalism—they are rarely able to carry theories through into policy

be interpreted as an intrinsically universalist creed. Perhaps the publishers sought sensationalism—or maybe, like some traditionalists, the author got slightly swept away by the epic grandeur of his theme.

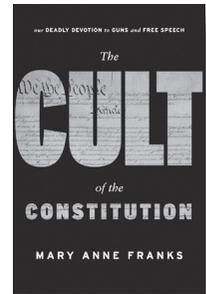
The truth of the matter may be less aesthetically pleasing—that Bannon read Evola and the others out of sheer intellectual interest, as he once read Madame Blavatsky or Joseph Smith, rather than as an effort to codify some cosmic agenda. He says of himself, "I'm just some f***ing guy, making it up as I go"—a claim some will see as disarming, but others as disingenuous.

Teitelbaum himself sometimes seems uncertain of Bannon, and he is commendably unwilling to rush to a final judgment. While he and we await events, and watch the metapolitical stars, we have for our edification his able and interesting survey of a recondite—and oddly relevant—tradition.

Derek Turner is the author of the novels A Modern Journey, Displacement, and Sea Changes.

Fatal Amendments

by Betsy Clarke



The Cult of the Constitution
by Mary Anne Franks
Stanford University Press
272 pp., \$26.00

ENTHUSIASTIC DEFENDERS OF THE First and Second Amendments to the Constitution are fundamentalist cultists—and women and minorities are their victims.

At least, that is the thesis of University of Miami law professor Mary Anne Franks' new book, *The Cult of the Constitution*, an unforgiving disparagement of the Constitution's white male origins and the allegedly unwoke application of its protections. Her subtitle brings the point home: "Our Deadly Devotion to Guns and Free Speech."

What has spawned such a jaded view of our founding document? First, says Franks, consider its history. White men wrote the Constitution, acquiesced in slavery, and deprived women of the Constitution's protections. Second, look around. Inequality, she says, is everywhere. Police murder blacks. White men murder women, and those not murdered are beaten into retreat from civil society through Internet threats and revenge porn.

White men control the media, academia, corporations, the economy, entertainment, and government, Franks writes. It follows, therefore, that the First and Second Amendments have joined forces to deprive

all but white men of full participation in society. Our First and Second Amendment rights might be tolerable were white men not villains. Alas, "white men's monopoly on deadly force" causes women and minorities to shrink from participating in civic life, for they cannot exercise their rights "when they fear grave bodily injury or death." Franks' view doesn't explain why nevertheless women can be seen everywhere in the workplace or in the political sphere.

Flimsy evidence is Franks's calling card, and she marshals it to support her position that the First and Second Amendments render life a nightmare for anyone not white and male. Central to her argument is the August 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, which resulted in the murder of one young woman—improbably by a car rather than a gun. A white male rally attendee has been convicted of that murder. For Franks, a rally protected by the First Amendment featuring armed white men and resulting in the violent death of a woman symbolizes the Constitution's toxicity.

That episode is just the latest example, says Franks, of how the "Constitution has indeed functioned to protect white male supremacy since the day it was written." Our current president, she says, personifies the malady: With the election of the "barely literate, openly racist, patho-

logically dishonest sexual predator" Donald Trump, white men have felt "freer than ever to endanger public welfare with their fetish for weapons."

However, Franks cites no statistics to support her thesis that white men have a monopoly on violence, so she seems to assume that her outrage over "the murder of Philando Castile" will serve as a substitute. But the police officer who shot Castile, an armed motorist in Minnesota whom the officer had stopped, was shown to have acted in reasonable fear of his life. He was never charged with, let alone convicted of, murder, nor was he white. Her libelous use of the term "murder" is reminiscent of former law professor Elizabeth Warren's recent claim that Ferguson, Missouri, teen Michael Brown was murdered, even though the police officer involved was acquitted of any wrongdoing by a thorough grand jury. Our lady law professors seem to be drinking a peculiarly befuddling type of Kool-Aid.

Franks begins her book by telling us that she is of mixed race and was raised an impoverished half-white, half-Taiwanese Southern Baptist in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. "Saved" at age eight, she soon became disillusioned with fundamentalism's "bad faith." Having discovered the same bad faith in the Constitution, Franks has also soured on that celebrated document. She now concludes that the Golden Rule, Im-

manuel Kant's categorical imperative, and the Fourteenth Amendment are the exclusive keys to a just society.

By contrast, the First and Second Amendments in deadly combination have driven women and minorities into hiding, denying them civic participation. She advocates a "civil rights approach" to constitutional rights—that is, the government should use the Bill of Rights to enforce equality among groups—rather than our "civil liberties approach," which protects the people from government power. "Conflicts among constitutional rights must be resolved according to the demands of equality," she writes. In short, Franks wants the government to distribute constitutional rights from each according to his privilege to each according to her needs.

Franks calls this idea that white men's constitutional rights should be rationed until full equality is realized "constitutional reciprocity." However, she does not articulate how this mandate would be administered. She seems unaware that in many ways, equality for women would mean a demotion. More women than men attend college, and they graduate at higher rates. Women also have lower unemployment rates than men. As for their wealth, men and women in the United States control nearly identical assets, a statistic that is not matched in countries without a First and Second Amendment. Of course, correlation is not causation, but it is a correlation worth pondering.

Are marauding, chanting white men killing women and minorities in terrifying numbers? A quick review of the research reveals that gun violence is not disproportionately propagated by white men, women are not its disproportionate victims, and the First and Second Amendments do not sanction gun crime. For confirma-



tion, Professor Franks might consult former mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg, or former mayor of Philadelphia, Michael Nutter, or the Bureau of Justice Statistics. In many cities, 90 percent of black male murder victims are killed by other black men. Therefore, restricting the rights of white men will not result in black safety. One suspects that learning these facts will not bring relief to Professor Franks.

One of the author's complaints is that the white men so enamored of the Constitution have no idea what it means. Among this group, she complains, have been certain justices of the U.S. Supreme Court. She deplores Justice Antonin Scalia's majority opinion in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which held that the Second Amendment guarantees the right to defend oneself with a handgun in one's home, even though the amendment says nothing about guns or self-defense. By this standard, how much more competent is Professor Franks, who asserts that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees women "bodily autonomy" even though that amendment mentions neither bodies nor autonomy?

Not counting our nation's founders, the biggest villains in Franks' book are the National Rifle Association and the American Civil Liberties Union: They are predominantly white and male, they pursue an individual-rights agenda, and they have immoral benefactors. She declaims against the moral authority of the ACLU because

it has received generous contributions from both the Playboy Foundation and the tobacco industry. But the Playboy Foundation also gave to feminist organizations, with a grateful Ruth Bader Ginsberg eagerly seeking more. As for the tobacco industry, who can forget the Virginia Slims company's sponsorship of women's tennis, linking smoking with women's liberation? Yet these associations provoke no criticism.

In her final chapter, Franks drops her constitutional analysis to address "the cult of the Internet" and specifically Section 230 of the 1996 U.S. Telecommunications Reform Act, which protects Internet service providers (but not users) from liability for defamation and harassment. Franks concedes that political pressure and technological advances have curtailed online abuse without government regulation but remains dissatisfied because inequality prevails.

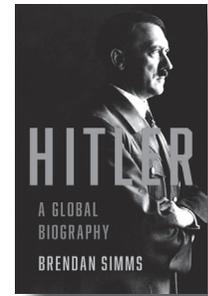
Cults have long been associated with irrationality, secrecy, and manipulation. But after considering the remedies that Franks promotes to impose on us her view of equality, one must conclude that joining the cult of the Constitution appears to be not only an acceptable but an imperative reaction to this potentially totalitarian threat. We had better seek membership while we still can.

Betsy Clarke is a retired law clerk who lives in Columbus, Ohio.

above: the current Supreme Court Justices: Front row, left to right: Associate Justice Stephen G. Breyer, Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Associate Justice Samuel A. Alito. Back row: Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, Associate Justice Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice Elena Kagan, Associate Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh (Fred Schilling, Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States)

Hitler vs. the Anglo-Americans

by Srdja Trifkovic



Hitler: A Global Biography

by Brendan Simms

Basic Books

704 pp., \$19.99

ON APRIL 20, ADOLF HITLER TURNS 131. Ten days later comes the 75th anniversary of his earthly demise in the ruins of Berlin, but he is still our contemporary *par excellence*. He continues to haunt and fascinate. Hitler's countenance, his very name, seem to get indelibly etched in the collective consciousness of each new generation. On current form, Lincoln, Lenin, or Lennon may be forgotten in a few decades, but the *Führer* will be alive and well a century hence.

At the low end of the cultural scale, politicians and their media abettors routinely Hitlerize the *monstre du jour*, from Saddam to Putin to Trump. Slightly higher up, Hitler consistently tops the biography rankings on Amazon.com. Napoleon is an increasingly distant second, while the great and the good of more recent decades—Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Mother Theresa—do not even come close.

Among professional historians the work started with Alan Bullock in 1952, and it is not abating. There are some three dozen quality biographies thus far, as well as tons of trashy Hitlerana of the *Escape to Argentina* sort. One noteworthy title has appeared every 18 months on average since Joachim Fest's 1973 magnum opus.

The good news is that serious authors

are close to the "historicization" of Hitler, finally treating him like any other phenomenon from the past. In Germany, which has been the key arena of Hitler-related scholarly endeavors for the past half-century, the process matured in the early 1980s with the debate between "intentionalists" and the "structuralists" (also known as "functionalists").

While neither side denied the reality of the Holocaust, the former—most notably Andreas Hillgruber, Klaus Hildebrand and Eberhard Jäckel—held that the Nazi Final Solution had been planned well before Operation Barbarossa, perhaps as early as the 1920s. The latter—Karl Schleunes, Hans Mommsen, Martin Broszat, et al.—argued that there never was a master plan.

This debate was followed by the acrimonious *Historikerstreit* (historians' quarrel) over the nature of National Socialism, its position vis-à-vis Bolshevism, and its proper place in the context of German history. The controversy exploded when Ernst Nolte contended that Nazi crimes were in essence a defensive reaction against Lenin and Stalin's "Asiatic" barbarism, and when Andreas Hillgruber asserted there was no fundamental moral difference between the Soviets' treatment of Germany in the final stage of the war and the Nazi genocide against the Jews.

Most of the principals are dead, but the debate is not over. At least its course conclusively refuted the notion that history is "made" not by free-willed individuals, but by underlying social conditions

and economic forces. Hitler provides the conclusive proof that Plekhanov, Marx, et al. were wrong. By now all authors of stature agree that his persona mattered a great deal, that he remains a moral problem (more intractable than the popular usage of the term "moral" implies), and that it is very important to determine, with seriousness and accuracy, what motivated him.

Brendan Simms, a Cambridge historian new both to Hitler and to biography, has written a full-size biography of Hitler (555 pages, plus over a hundred pages of notes and index), which reads well and occasionally entertains, but it fails the test of seriousness and accuracy. Its publishers advertise *Hitler: A Global Biography* as a "revisionist biography," which it is, although not in the late Imanuel Geiss's (let alone David Irving's!) sense of the word.

Simms' central thesis is that "Hitler's principal preoccupation throughout his career was Anglo-America and global capitalism, rather than the Soviet Union and Bolshevism." Hitler's grand-strategic objective was to establish racial unity in a greatly expanded Germany by overcoming the Anglo-American capitalist world order.

Hitler's earlier biographers noted his ambivalence towards Britain, a mix of grudging admiration and loathing common to many Germans of his time (famously including the Kaiser, who both longed for and hated his British mother). Simms goes much further. He sees "the centrality of the British Empire and the United States in the

gestation of *Mein Kampf*” and in practical-ly all of Hitler’s subsequent plans and decisions. His supposed obsession with Anglo-America in Simms’ rendering is the key to Hitler’s entire *Weltanschauung*, the philosopher’s stone which explains Operation Barbarossa, the Holocaust, the yearning for Eastern *Lebensraum*, and the obsession with racial purity.

On the basis of the scant new material he presents, Simms could have advanced and credibly supported the claim that Hitler had been acutely aware of the importance of Anglo-America, which he perceived as a monolithic geopolitical entity, and saw it as a global thalassocratic threat to his continental design. Had Simms tried to correct the score on Hitler the Global Strategist by throwing a new light on the Anglo-American factor in his outlook and explaining why it mattered more than previously assumed, his book could have made a worthy contribution to our understanding of the man and his times.

What we get instead is a massive exercise in self-validating reductionism. Simms’ central claim is that Hitler’s “true nemesis was the British Empire and especially the United States.” Literally everything follows from this bold yet unproven assertion. It is in the context of his “overreaching pre-occupation with Britain and the United States that Hitler’s anti-Semitism should primarily be understood.” The resulting mass murder of European Jews “was not a distorted copy of Stalin’s Great Terror, but a preemptive strike against Roosevelt’s America.” Far from being the product of Hitler’s twin obsession with Bolshevism and *Lebensraum*, the attack on the Soviet Union was really meant “to strike at Britain, and to deter the United States.”

The entire war in the East, Simms claims, “was to be a campaign of conquest and annihilation, for reasons more to do with Anglo-America than the Soviet Union itself.” The same motive applied even to individual operations: “the drive on Stalingrad, like the entire war, was pri-



marily driven by the contest against Anglo-America.” The capitulation of Axis forces in Tunisia, according to Simms, “was a much greater disaster than Stalingrad.” By the end of 1943 “the western powers were absorbing the greater part not merely of Hitler’s attention, but also of his resources.... One way or the other, most of the German war effort was now geared to fighting the Anglo-Americans, and the proportion increased with each passing month.” In the end, the war was lost because “the trophy was lifted once more by the Anglo-Americans, with substantial help from their Soviet allies, of course.”

These assertions are impudent and so easily refutable that we are left wondering who Simms was hoping to deceive. At a deeper level, he consistently ignores the distinction between Hitler’s war against the western powers, which for all its ferocity was arguably a traditional European war (*ein europäisches Normalkrieg*), and the exterminationist struggle he unleashed in the East. Against the Soviets, both ideological and racial enemies, no laws applied. That struggle turned existential in 1944-45

in the way the fight against Anglo-America never did. The distinction was clearly implied in one of Hitler’s final orders, which Simms quotes without comment, for the entire front against the Anglo-Americans to turn and face the Russians.

In his introduction, Simms writes his intention was “to show rather than tell,” but he does the opposite. In his flawed rendering, practically every idea, challenge, and dilemma faced by Hitler is explained as an attempt to preempt, frustrate, or counter the Anglo-American monster. His Hitler is reduced to an uninteresting automaton, which trivializes his grotesque record.

“[Wir sind] mit Hitler noch lange nicht fertig.” (We are not yet finished with Hitler) John Lukacs approvingly quoted a younger colleague at the prologue of his 1998 survey *The Hitler of History*. Over two decades later it is clear that we will never be “done” with him. Brendan Simms has not made the slightest difference to that fact.

Srdja Trifkovic is *Chronicles’* foreign affairs editor.

Books in Brief

The Long Night of the Watchman: Essays by Václav Benda, 1977-1989 (St. Augustine's Press; 352 pp., \$35.00). On July 4, 1983, in Prague, there occurred one of those moments that may rightly be considered a single loose pebble that caused an avalanche. Film director Miloš Forman had been permitted to return to his native Czechoslovakia by its then-Communist overlords, to film the movie *Amadeus* (1984).

On that day one of the opera scenes was filmed in the great Estates Theater, the site of the first performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. In addition to cast and crew, there were about 500 Czech extras in period dress present. When Forman yelled action on the first scene, instead of Mozart's music, "The Star-Spangled Banner" began to play and an American flag unfurled from the rafters. The cast, crew, and all the extras stood up and began to sing the United States' national anthem, in English! All, that is, but for the extras who remained sitting, with confused or terrified expressions—the secret police.

In 1977, a disparate group that included ex-Communists, Catholics, Protestants, artists, intellectuals, socialists, and other dissidents banded together to draft Charter 77, a document challenging the reigning polity and to ensure that the government abided by the provisions of the Helsinki Accords, which included a range of civil, political, and economic rights.

One of the group's leaders was Václav Benda, a husband, father, and intellectual. Outside of scholars of *samizdat* and the Cold War, personages such as Benda are relatively unknown in the U.S. Yet their influence among their own people and their heroism in attempting to breathe free air amidst the smog of the worker's paradise was just as significant as the better-known Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn or Václav Havel. Czechs breaking into song on America's Independence Day in the middle of communist Prague would not have been pos-

sible were it not for Benda and Charter 77.

The Long Night of the Watchman is a collection of Benda's writings ably edited by F. Flagg Taylor IV. The book is divided into three parts composed of "Reflections," "Essays and Inquiries," and "Reports and Defenses." The strategy of Benda and the chartists was to hold the state to the letter of its own laws so as to create spaces of freedom where culture could develop. While some of Benda's writings are very technical, written in response to particular circumstances of totalitarian rule, they demonstrate a precision of thought and analysis that embarrassed and outmatched his statist opponents. The book is not so much a gripping read of heroics in defiance of the state, but a record of chess strategy, in which Benda is Garry Kasparov and state officials are checkmated, one by one.

Benda's thoughts on the preservation of culture, religion, and tradition would have made him at home with the ancient Romans and their reverence for their ancestors, the scholastics of the High Middle Ages in their seeing a coherence in all of reality, and the political realism of his Anglo fellow travelers, Edmund Burke and Russell Kirk, and their insistence on the independence of the family and loyalty to intermediate institutions.

Possibly Benda's most widely known essay is "The Parallel Polis," written at a time when dissidents were looking for ways to live outside the totalitarian state. There he outlines timeless principles necessary to build a parallel culture outside the state.

Benda's subsequent writings and political conservatism estranged him from his fellow chartists after the fall of the Iron Curtain. He explicates this notion of articles of peace between the philosophically disparate—specifically on some socialist elements within this group—in his "Letter to Roger Scruton" written in January 1985:

...I would formulate my position

maybe thus: to oppose all Socialist ideas and fabrications untiringly and completely mercilessly; especially to unmask pre-emptively every camouflage which could enable it to rise again from the ashes... However, I would behave as considerately and as tolerantly as possible towards all Socialists (I don't of course mean henchmen or the guards of the The Gulag), always prepared to meet them more than half-way, and overlook a dozen of their unbearable habits and resentments for the single human moment which would perhaps enable them to recover from that fatal enchantment.

As an ever more explicit left-wing and subjectivist-materialist-relativist-sexual totalitarianism infects the U.S., a thoughtful populace would do well to engage with the writings of Benda. He has much to offer in terms of a defiant detachment from "our betters." However, this book will probably not interest the casual reader; it is more for the political scientist, those interested in Czech history or the Cold War, or those interested in totalitarian systems and their philosophical underpinnings. For the last, Benda ranks along with thinkers such as Hannah Arendt in his analysis.

In Benda's view, totalitarianism could not be defeated from within by competing doctrines but only could be undone by organic rebellion: "a single loose pebble can cause an avalanche, an accidental outburst of discontent in a factory, at a football match, in a village pub, is capable of shaking the foundations of the state."

This volume is also for anyone who wishes to engage in intelligent conversation on the role of the state and the nature of man. In this last sense, I suppose it is for every *Chronicles* reader.

(John M. DeJak)

Loveline: Stealth Conservative Talk Radio

by Mark Bauerlein

I FIRST HEARD THE *LOVELINE* RADIO show in the late '90s. It came on late at night, broadcast from Los Angeles back to me in Atlanta. The format was like an old-fashioned advice column, but with a coarse edge. People phoned in with questions about sex and relationships, tales of abuse and heartbreak, disease and addiction. Hosts Adam Corolla and Dr. Drew Pinsky listened and gave guidance during the show's heyday, from 1995 to 2005.

Except, that's not always what happened—not even most of the time. Yes, some callers would describe a problem and the hosts would offer a solution: this boyfriend is bad and you should flee; those symptoms sound like an STD and you should see a urologist; get some therapy to deal with how your father acted, etc. The caller would pay attention, absorb the counsel, thank them, and hang up.

When those calls came on the air, you could hear relief in the voices of the hosts. A positive exchange with a troubled person, a man in Oregon who listens and pledges to act—wonderful!

A more typical dialogue went like one that I heard the other night (dozens of the shows are archived online—this one is dated May 27, 2002). “Rebecca,” a sober-sounding woman, checked in because her husband wasn't happy with what was going to happen the next day. They hadn't been married long—they were both 18—but there was a rift.

“I start a job tomorrow at a strip club,” she told the hosts, “and my husband is, uh, having a problem with that.” She avowed she “loves him dearly,” but said her husband was worried that she may come to enjoy taking her clothes off in front of other men. She insisted she merely liked to dance. How could she get her husband to relax?



Dr. Drew is the medical advisor, a voice of professional concern, an expert in addictions and pathologies, and the author of books on dysfunctional behaviors. He preferred the questioning approach, this time verifying that she wasn't surprised that he didn't like it.

She admitted that his response made sense, but still probed for some way to calm him down and make him “feel better.”

“No,” Dr. Drew said quickly, shutting down her line of rationalization.

That was Adam's cue. If she couldn't follow a simple logical query from a doctor and realize how blocked she is, it was time for another tack: the Corolla Treatment.

Adam is the opposite of Dr. Drew: a Valley guy who played high school football and never earned a college degree. He relied on his background as a raunchy youth from a broken home to reflect on the messy lives of the callers. Drew was diplomatic, Adam politically incorrect. Drew gave medical opinions; Adam cracked wise. Drew identified them as depressed and bipolar; Adam called them “screwballs.” Drew referred to patients he's had in the past; Adam recalled

himself 15 years earlier, wasting hours in junior college, crashing on buddies' couches, and laboring as carpet cleaner and construction worker.

Adam has written several funny memoirs about his early years, one of them entitled *Not Taco Bell Material* (2012), after a line spoken to him when he applied for a job at a Taco Bell outlet. He started in radio and got his big break in 1994 when he arranged a boxing publicity stunt for Jimmy Kimmel. He would go on to co-host *The Man Show* on Comedy Central in 1999, which showcased girls in bikinis bouncing on trampolines and men guzzling beer.

Adam took up the caller's case with an enthusiastic idea for her husband. “You could give him, like, half off a lap dance and a drink coupon,” he suggested. She didn't laugh.

Drew stepped in with a dose of reality, telling her that she is there to arouse men—that's all. She insisted once more that she only likes to dance. Adam chuckled, Drew sighed, then Adam slipped into sleazy announcer mode, pretending to introduce her



for the first time to a crowd of ogling men. Drew proceeded to the obvious point: why was Rebecca in such complete denial over what she was doing? Adam added, “Why are you screwing with him [her husband]? What’s wrong with you?”

She stuck to her story. “It’s a job. That’s how I think about it. It’s just a job.” Adam raised the issue of why she and her husband married so fast as two 18-year-olds, and Drew inquired, “What are you running away from, and why?”

“We wanted to get married,” she answered, a surly tone edging into her voice.

Drew repeated, “What are you running away from, and why?”

“I’m not running away from anything.”

“Alright,” Adam said, “then dance your ass off and explain to your husband why he shouldn’t care.” She stayed silent. “You angry about something?”

“No,” she sniffed. The conversation hadn’t gone where she wanted it to go, and she wouldn’t go where the hosts suspected the real issue lies.

That was the pattern. A caller described a situation and posed a question, but the question sidestepped the real problem. And when Adam and Drew zeroed in on the core matter, the caller had to stop and think. She answered as if nobody had ever

raised a query that the rest of us consider obvious and necessary.

A teenaged girl had just gotten her nipples pierced and wanted to know if that will hinder breastfeeding once she has kids. Drew wondered why she didn’t check on that before she did the piercing.

A 20-year-old girl told the hosts that she and a friend went to Vegas, met a couple of guys in a bar, ended up drinking in the guys’ room, and when they paired off for sex, her partner eased a beer bottle inside her as some kind of crude jest. It still bothered her, and she asked for suggestions as to how she could get past it. After Adam joked about long-neck and short-neck bottles, they told her to take it as a learning experience—and part of the learning is not to go to a complete stranger’s hotel room and drink!

Before they called, it seems these callers had never pondered how they bore some responsibility for the situations they’d found themselves in, and what their actions said about their underlying priorities. These internal contradictions and unquestioned assumptions they hold about life aren’t obvious to the callers, or even to the audience—until Adam and Drew pointed them out.

Again and again, the incognizance of

the callers is stunning. A teenaged caller worried that his girlfriend’s mother doesn’t like him. Why? Because the mother caught the 16-year-olds engaging in oral sex in her bedroom. The boy asked how he might get back into the mother’s good graces. He can’t seem to acknowledge the fact that she now carries around a mental image of the two of them together that appalls her. Adam and Drew speculated, too, that the daughter, who initiated the act and left the door open with her mother down the hall, wanted to get caught as an act of rebellion, and advised the boy to stay away for his own good. The psychological considerations of the situation were beyond him.

Another caller was a wife and mother of two kids. She and her husband regularly met with a married couple for a “foursome,” but she worried that the other wife had further designs upon her husband. Adam and Drew told her to forget the other woman, that the whole thing is crazy—to which she replied with a confused, “Huh?” She was so caught up in her jealousy, notwithstanding her sex acts with the other woman’s husband, that she couldn’t recognize the perversity of the whole situation. They had to yell at her to stop at once, adding that she was harming her children. “No, no,” she objected, “we’re really good parents!”

The pleas kept coming, one obtuse or deluded individual after another. The chaos in which they found themselves originated inside them, but they couldn’t see it. All too often, the hosts detected a strange aura about the callers—Adam says, “Drew, I’m getting some ‘energy’ here”—and they asked the caller what happened to him.

“What do you mean?” one such caller answered.

“Did someone do something to you when you were young?”

Nearly always a “yes” would follow, be it a rape, child abuse, or the mistreatment of an alcoholic parent. Adam and Drew proceeded to tie the caller’s current plight to past damage, but most of the time the caller could barely make the connection

themselves.

A 21-year-old guy lived with a 28-year-old woman who had two kids from a marriage that broke up years before, after her husband beat her. He had grown close to the children, but she treated him like dirt. He's obviously a nice guy and couldn't understand why she was so cruel. He wanted advice on how to make her stop—as if this kid, barely out of adolescence, had any chance of controlling her and fixing her life. Their blunt advice to him—“You're not going to change her, buddy”—left the deeper puzzle unsolved: what happened earlier in his life that had made him devoted to an abusive woman?

Most of them were hopeless cases. The hosts knew the callers would ignore the diagnosis. The woman who was angry at all men because she couldn't find a good boyfriend wouldn't recognize that her anger may have had something to do with it. The guy who wanted to remove a tattoo from his penis and fretted about the process couldn't answer why he ever got a tat-



BACK IN 2000, MY GIRLFRIEND AT THE time thought *Loveline* was ridiculous. We were professors living together and working on scholarly books. She couldn't understand how I could waste the night hours listening to these human dregs go on about their pains. Everything in her northeastern prep school and Ivy League training taught her to stay away from screw-ups. People like us should transcend this squalor.

Up until then, I agreed. I didn't grow up in a prosperous household and I never attended a private school in my life, but I gave the poor and dysfunctional credit for as much independence and self-awareness as everyone else. People make their own decisions, I thought. Get them educated, show them the right course, and they'll choose rightly. Or, they'll hurt themselves. Either way, it was up to them.

I was 40 years old, childless and unmarried. Family and fatherhood weren't

coworkers. They had friends, yes, but those friends only added to the turmoil of their lives. The jobs they had were just jobs; they spoke of their work in tones of boredom. America had no more meaning to them than did the grocery store down the street. And, of course, the families they came from were cause for more pain than reassurance.

Merely by probing the cause of these callers' dysfunctions, Adam and Drew turned what was supposed to be a raunchy radio sex-advice show into a catechism of conservative lessons. Every confused, blind, self-destructive, promiscuous, addicted caller was a testimonial to the importance of conservative values. The callers were on their own; they relied on their own meager resources in a world of lax sex norms and do-your-own-thing morality. They had slipped into depravity, and the traditional protections against it were missing from their lives. Worse, the world they occupied discouraged the very self-examination that is necessary to transcend it.

A teenage girl told the hosts about

Adam and Drew turned what was supposed to be a raunchy radio sex-advice show into a catechism of conservative lessons.

too down there in the first place. The high school girl who hung out with guys in their mid-20s and joined in their weekend sex parties was incredulous when Adam and Drew insisted they were exploiting her. She believed they were her friends, and she said she'd stick with that notion.

Dr. Drew sighed and groaned. On a show I replayed this morning, he blurted at one person, “You're not hearing anything!” Adam would rant at their stupidity, begging one caller after another: “Please, please, don't ever have kids!” He told one who already had kids to send them up in a hot air balloon so that they'd float to another state and take up with a new family that would give the son a chance to avoid prison and the daughter to avoid the sidewalks of Hollywood Boulevard.

on the radar. I didn't go to church or believe in God. I owned a small home but had no contacts with neighbors and belonged to no local associations. My country was just a place of residence, my university the thing that gave me an office and paycheck. No patriotism and no on-the-job loyalty. Reality was myself on one side and the universe on the other.

That was the case with *Loveline* callers, too. Adam and Drew asked them about their lives and backgrounds, probed for anything meaningful, anything to anchor the callers, but came up empty. I can't remember a single happy churchgoer in the 50 hours I've listened to recently. Some young callers actually mocked their parents' faith. They didn't mention any teachers or coaches, either—no priests or wise

pain she suffered during sex and wanted to know what might cause it. She let slip that she was raped on a camping trip two years before after she got dead drunk and a guy coaxed her into his tent. When Drew asked her if she often drank that much, she muttered a casual, “No,” as if drinking herself into oblivion had nothing to do with what happened.

I just listened to one of the most frustrating callers of all: a 32-year-old single mother who liked marijuana and had two unstable boys, a 14-year-old who had exposed himself to his cousins and a 12-year-old who had been arrested for vandalism. She asked how she could make the older one stop doing bizarre things. Drew tried to get her to say in more scientific terms what is wrong with him. She muttered something



about special education and denied she had ever used drugs while she was pregnant. Drew told her to have a neurologist evaluate him first—she needed a diagnosis. She mumbled a half-hearted, “Uh huh,” which prompted Adam to bark, “Stop smoking the weed and start mothering!”

“I don’t smoke weed around my kids,” she countered.

Adam: “I don’t care—you sound out of it!” Drew remarked that he could hear the effects of long usage in her voice at that very moment.

She protested, “I have no problem doing my job as a mother.”

Adam reminded her she’s got a 12-year-old who has already landed in jail. She reports that it wasn’t her fault, that the boy had broken windows while she was at work and that he was in his father’s custody at the time. Adam grumbled, “Okay, keep going; smoke more weed,” then cut her off and asked Drew, “Listen, can we have her sterilized?”



LIBERALISM CAN’T DO ANYTHING with or for these people. They don’t possess the enlightened self-interest and ratio-

nal choice that a liberal culture assumes its members should and will acquire. Without good fathers and mothers, exposed to wickedness at a tender age, with no trust in God, and with no devotion to country or community or workplace, they act out in bad behavior the losses a liberal society has handed them.

They want to fix their lives—that’s why they’ve called—but they don’t have the equipment. No religion, no role models, no patriotism or work ethic. They demonstrate more vividly than Milton Friedman ever did what happens to a fair portion of the population when a society of libertarian individualism loses its moorings in the conserving institutions of church, family, and nation.

Instead, liberalism offers them a career plan, an achievement focus. The elite tell them, “You just need more education.” But *Loveline* callers couldn’t envision that, either. After hearing one after another meander and stumble as they described their conditions, Adam would ask, “Caller X, what are you doing? What’s going on?”

“Huh?” he would reply.

“Where are you going?”

“What do you mean?”

“What’s your plan?”

“You mean right now?”

“No, jerkoff,” Adam would grunt, “I mean what are you doing with your life? What do you wanna be?”

Confused silence. They knew in some part of their heads that they should find a steady job, stop jumping into bed with bad people, avoid drugs and booze, and take care of intimates close by, but those obligations didn’t win out. They had no God, good father, or civic duty to command them. True, Dr. Drew frequently counseled therapy, but the therapy he had in mind wasn’t the once-a-week analysis and self-exploration of old. It was a program that would take charge of their lives, assign them a monitor, and restructure their behavioral codes. After a few years of despairing for the callers he encountered, even Adam, an



atheist, started to suggest callers take up religion as a final resort.

Some conservative converts got there by reading *National Review* and Whittaker Chambers’ *Witness*. Others watched leftist comrades become too radical, or saw the Soviet Union collapse, or recoiled at political correctness. The *Loveline* caller made a different case. He demonstrated truths about human nature—the limits of self-determination, the insufficiency of private reason, the necessity of family coherence—that liberalism denies.

Liberalism has to deny these traditions that make up for human frailty in order to justify the sexual revolution and to ignore the cultural and social destruction that has followed it. Liberalism’s parade of human damage musters for roll call in student health clinics, women’s shelters, inner-city classrooms, in the streets of San Francisco and underpasses in Los Angeles, in divorce courts and public housing—and on the phone lines of *Loveline*, the best conservative radio there ever was.

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Faux Originalism

by Mark Pulliam

IS ANTONIN SCALIA'S ORIGINALISM—indeed, constitutional self-government itself—passé? The eternal temptation to read one's own values into the Constitution beguiles even religious conservatives espousing natural law.

The U.S. Constitution is the “supreme law of the land,” whose ultimate interpretation is entrusted, by longstanding custom if not by explicit textual direction, to the U.S. Supreme Court. Accordingly, it is vitally important to divine the true meaning of our fundamental law. When a state or federal law is alleged to conflict with the Constitution, how are courts supposed to resolve the conflict? How can citizens satisfy themselves that the black-robed oracles who interpret the Constitution are doing so accurately?

These questions are more pressing than ever, as contested issues of public policy increasingly end up in court to be decided as cases involving constitutional law. Since the heyday of the Warren Court in the 1960s, federal judges have asserted primacy over fundamental aspects of our lives, ruling on issues such as abortion, marriage, immigration, voting, education, pornography and obscenity, law enforcement, capital punishment, welfare benefits, racial preferences, religious expression, and the power of administrative agencies.

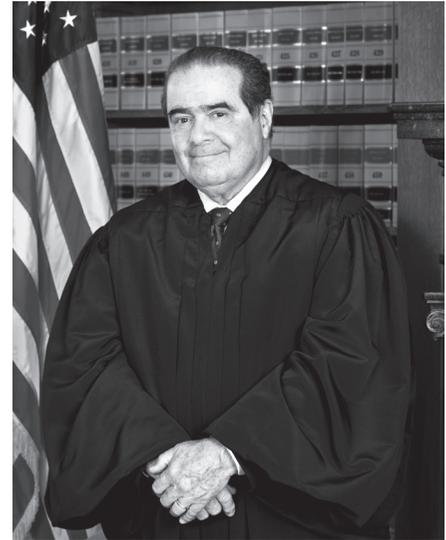
Legal scholar Lino Graglia, who taught for more than 50 years at the University of Texas School of Law, argues that a clique of life-tenured judges—a “tiny judicial oligarchy”—has usurped “our most essential right, the right of self-government,” by formulating a body of constitutional law that “has very little to do with the Constitution.” Graglia contends that many judicial decisions amount to no more than “the policy preferences of a majority of the Court's

nine justices.” In short, judges have improperly arrogated power to themselves by departing from the Constitution's text.

In response to the activism of the Warren Court (and the marginally better record of the subsequent Burger Court), conservatives in the 1970s, led by Robert Bork, advocated a jurisprudence of “original intent”—hewing to the original meaning of the Constitution, based on its text and history. Following decades of heedless activism, this was a bold position. In a 1982 article in *National Review*, Bork famously stated that “The truth is that the judge who looks outside the Constitution always looks inside himself and nowhere else.” Like the boy who pointed out that the emperor was naked, Bork's critique was devastating.

Famed jurist Antonin Scalia and others tweaked “original intent”—which focused on the subjective intentions of individual Framers—into a more general inquiry into the original public meaning of the constitutional provisions when they were enacted and ratified. How were the words understood at the time they were adopted? This is the central doctrinal question of constitutional originalism.

Originalism, now accepted—albeit with many variations—as an influential theory of constitutional interpretation, served as a check on fanciful theories advanced by liberal scholars and jurists, who regard the Constitution as a “living” document that can (and should) be adapted to suit the evolving needs of society. Taking seriously the original public meaning of the Constitution constrains extra-textual flights of fancy, such as the “penumbras, formed by emanations” that animated the activist decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965). That decision recognized a “right of



marital privacy” that precludes state regulation of contraception.

Griswold's discovery of an implicit constitutional right paved the way to the invention of abortion rights in *Roe v. Wade* (1973), the right to engage in homosexual sodomy in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003), and, ultimately, the right to same-sex marriage in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015). The impact of originalism, although not sufficient to prevent *Obergefell*, produced a narrow 5-to-4 decision, unlike the lopsided 7-to-2 margins in *Griswold* and *Roe*. Conservatives console themselves with the hope that President Trump may eventually appoint an originalist majority to the Supreme Court; Trump's excellent picks, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, join Samuel Alito and Clarence Thomas to form a solid originalist bloc. One more solid Trump appointment could be decisive.

Non-originalist theories are not limited to the political left. On the right, some conservatives and libertarians have espoused constitutional law theories derived from certain interpretations of natural law, the principles of the Declaration

of Independence, and other extra-textual sources. This group includes Hadley Arkes (Amherst), Richard Epstein (Chicago, NYU), Randy Barnett (Georgetown), and the late Harry Jaffa (Claremont), although some claim to be originalists and even risibly argue that judicial restraint is a variant of the “living” Constitution.

tional provision proscribing majority rule. Bork and Scalia both emphatically rejected the notion that unwritten principles of natural law lurked invisibly in the Constitution, warranting the judicial invalidation of state or federal laws that did not otherwise contravene an enumerated constitutional right. Bork archly remarked

ed law professor at Notre Dame, whose recent essay in *Public Discourse*, “Moral Truth and Constitutional Conservatism,” argues against the ethos of much of the Supreme Court’s abortion jurisprudence. That ethos is epitomized by the widely ridiculed “Mystery Passage” penned by Anthony Kennedy in *Planned Parenthood*

The allure of such constitutional fantasies is heightened by the reality that politics is often a fickle tool for achieving desired policy results.

The motivation of such “conservative constitutional revisionists” (as Bork described them in his 1990 opus, *The Tempting of America*, is the same as their counterparts on the left. If they can conveniently find their policy preferences embodied in the Constitution, the attainment of their goals rests only on mustering five votes on the Supreme Court, rather than in electing, persuading, and maintaining a majority of sympathetic legislators at the state or federal level.

The allure of such constitutional fantasies is heightened by the reality that politics is often a fickle tool for achieving desired policy results. Bork called this allure a temptation to substitute personal predilections for legitimate constitutional interpretation, and noted that succumbing to it ineluctably turns a judge into a legislator.

In the originalist view, the Constitution puts certain things off-limits to political majorities, either expressly in the text or implicitly in the constitutional structure, such as federalism or the separation of powers. A principled originalist judge will enforce the Constitution as written, but otherwise will not override the political branches merely because he disagrees with the policy outcome.

As Bork explained, “in wide areas of life majorities are entitled to rule, if they wish, simply because they are majorities.” Adhering to the Constitution as written, a principled judge will defer to the political branches, absent an express constitu-

that “Judges, like the rest of us, are apt to confuse their strongly held beliefs with the order of nature.” Scalia scoffed at the idea that the Constitution—which he termed “a practical and pragmatic charter of government”—contained enforceable “aspirations” or that abstract “philosophizing” was a substitute for concrete and specific textual commands.

During their lifetimes, Bork and Scalia were able to keep the revisionists at bay on both the left and the right. Alas, Bork died in 2012, and Scalia in 2016. Already the revisionists are dancing on their graves.

With the legal academy dominated by progressives, and the handful of center-right legal scholars consisting mainly of libertarians, the Bork/Scalia conception of originalism is being seriously challenged. Judicial restraint is in decline, and various formulations of “judicial engagement” are ascendant in academic circles.

On the right, some theorists advance natural law arguments that would superimpose their policy preferences onto the Constitution, *sans* text. In many cases, those policy preferences—e.g., opposing abortion, supporting traditional marriage, promoting the family, protecting property rights and economic liberties—are legitimate conservative goals, but constitutional government dictates that public policy be enacted through the political process, not by judicial edict.

A notable exemplar of the natural law theorists is Gerard V. Bradley, a respect-

v. *Casey* (1992), which states, “At the heart of liberty is the right to define one’s own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life.”

Reacting against such secular nihilism, Bradley argues that judges must rely upon “moral and metaphysical truths that lie beyond the Constitution” in order to interpret the Constitution. What are these unwritten “truths”? They are truths that answer such “foundational questions as, [W]hen do persons begin? Which propositions about divine matters are answerable by use of unaided human reason, and which require access to revelation?”

Bradley unconvincingly calls his approach “originalism,” but it sounds suspiciously like Rawlsian moral philosophy masquerading as constitutional theory, the kind of thing that was commonplace on the left in the 1970s. Bradley declares that “today’s conservative constitutionalism is inadequate...” to turn the tide against the vortex of activism evidenced in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*.

Given the state of “breathtaking subjectivism” evident in decisions from *Casey* to *Obergefell*, Bradley charges that judges cannot return to a neutral role as umpires, merely calling balls and strikes: “For decades...constitutional conservatives have diluted [constitutional interpretation] with a methodology of restraint, a normative approach to the judicial task marked by an overriding aversion to critical moral reasoning.” Returning to a neutral role would

be, Bradley says, “philosophical abstinence.”

Accordingly, judges should rule based on their own moral reasoning. Deferring to political majorities is, in Bradley’s view, inadequate because “We have passed a tipping point where damage control amounts to no more than a slow-walking surrender.” Moreover, in view of “the collapse of public morality...in our law and culture,” we can no longer count on political majorities to make morally reliable choices. In short, a debauched and godless population is “incapable of wresting control of the law back from the regime-changing project of autonomous self-definition.”

The implication is that conservative judges, instead of simply overruling *Roe v. Wade* and leaving the regulation of abortion to the states, should ban the practice altogether on moral grounds; instead of overruling *Obergefell* and leaving the definition of marriage to the states, judges should restrict the institution to one man and one woman, and so forth.

Bork’s response to judicial activism in aid of the culture war was to advocate limits on judicial review, so that political majorities could govern themselves without undue interference. In contrast, proponents of natural law and similar contrivances seek to expand the judicial role to allow appropriately enlightened mandarins (those on “our” team) to impose their agenda on the polity. This is not how a constitutional republic is supposed to work, and is not what the Founding Fathers intended. Bradley’s invitation for judges to “replace bad philosophy with good philosophy” finds no support in Federalist 78. Fidelity to the Constitution self-evidently cannot be achieved by looking “beyond the Constitution,” and it is absurd to call such an end-run “originalism.”

Legal academia has become such a theoretical fever swamp that even erstwhile conservatives have become advocates of the “living Constitution.” In *The Political Constitution: The Case Against Judicial Supremacy* (2019), political scientist Greg



Weiner pushes back against the emerging center-right legal scholars advocating “judicial engagement”—a euphemism for empowering judges to negate popular self-government. Even a decade ago, such a book would not have been necessary, but the legacy of Bork and Scalia is unraveling before our eyes.

Weiner trains most of his fire on libertarians such as Timothy Sandefur, Clark Neily, and Randy Barnett, the go-to guru in Federalist Society circles. He also includes in his critique various conservatives espousing natural law, such as Hadley Arkes and Harry Jaffa. I will not belabor criticism of the ongoing project of Jaffa’s acolytes, sometimes referred to as “Claremonsters,” to override the Constitution with the Declaration of Independence. Suffice it to say that such a project is little more than an elitist maneuver to override not only the Constitution, but the will of the people, as well. By contrast, Weiner’s wide-ranging defense of the *res publica*—the political community as a whole—serves as a broadside against anti-majoritarian usurpation of democratic rule.

Is the Supreme Court’s constitutional jurisprudence an Augean stable badly in need of cleansing? Absolutely. Have activist decisions over the past 50 years done grave damage to American institutions? Without

a doubt. The solution, however, lies in restoring the judiciary to its intended role as the “least dangerous” branch of government, not further eviscerating constitutional democracy by encouraging judges to impose their subjective moral judgments on political majorities without their consent.

Ordered liberty is to be found in the filtered political decisions of “We the People.” Majority rule is not tyrannical; minority rule would be. Consent of the governed is possible only through democratic institutions—the rough-and-tumble of representative government. These concepts are enshrined in the Constitution; natural law is not. The artifice of deciphering invisible ink in the Constitution—moral truths revealed to our robed masters in séance-like fashion—is a license for judicial activism. Disaffected conservatives tempted to surrender their sovereignty to federal judges would be well advised to read Weiner’s illuminating book, or to reread *The Federalist Papers*. Americans are capable of governing themselves quite well, if judges would only let them.

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Letter from Twickenham: In Deepest Remainland

by Piers Shepherd

ONE WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO find a more pleasant London neighborhood than the leafy suburb of Twickenham, where this author resides. Situated on the Thames River and immersed in history, Twickenham was for years a bastion of conservatism. In the last two decades, however, Twickenham has become something of a solid outpost for the liberal, globalist elite.

Most famous today as the “Home of England Rugby,” Twickenham’s history shows the town to have been a locale particularly congenial to those of conservative and traditionalist views. In the 17th century it became the residence of a number of those associated with the royalist cause in the English Civil War. York House, which is today the seat of local government, was once a royal property and formed part of the marriage settlement of King Charles I and his queen, Henrietta Maria. Following

the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, it would become the home of the leading royalist statesman of that era, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Lord Chancellor to King Charles II.

Appropriately, given Twickenham’s connection with a king beheaded by revolutionaries, the town would become in later centuries something of a haven for royals fleeing revolution. In the 19th century, York House would become the home of the Comte de Paris, grandson of King Louis Philippe of France. The House of Orleans’ connection with Twickenham is memorialized in another of the town’s famous houses, Orleans House, where Louis Philippe himself lived while in exile from 1815-1817. The Comte de Paris’s daughter married Carlos I, King of Portugal. Following the overthrow of the Portuguese monarchy by leftist revolutionaries in 1910, Carlos’s son and heir Manuel II fled to England

and settled in Twickenham. Manuel became active in the local community, and today Twickenham streets reference Manuel or Portugal: Manoel Road, Augusta Road (named after Manuel’s queen), Lisbon Avenue, and Portugal Gardens.

Twickenham’s political past is also somewhat reflected in its literary history. Twickenham’s most famous building is the spectacular gothic castle known as Strawberry Hill, home to the Whig politician and inventor of the literary genre of gothic horror, Sir Horace Walpole. The town was also meeting place for the Tory poets of the Scriblerus Club. One of those poets, Alexander Pope, resided in a villa in Twickenham, famous for its garden, though now only Pope’s Grotto, the underground cavern where he wrote many of his famous works, survives. Pope and fellow club members Jonathan Swift and John Gay were amusingly called the “three Yahoos of Twickenham” by the leading Tory statesman of the day, Lord Bolingbroke.

When Twickenham first became a parliamentary constituency in 1918, its first MP was William Joynson-Hicks, a strong social conservative and anti-communist who was also an early opponent of open immigration policies.

Along with this impressive heritage, Twickenham presents an oasis of calm in the crazy city that is modern London. Still recognizably English, it has been little affected by mass immigration, multiculturalism, and their associated problems. It enjoys some of the lowest rates of unemployment, ill health, and crime in London. Unlike so much of London, it is an exceedingly pleasant place to live with none of the decay that afflicts so much of the larger capital. Given these facts, one might hope that Twickenham would have



above: Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham, Sir Horace Walpole’s gothic castle (Gary Ullah / Wikimedia)

remained a bulwark of conservatism and would have strongly supported Brexit. But alas, this is not the case.

In the mid-1980s, the Liberals, in alliance with the Social Democratic Party (SDP), captured Richmond Council, under whose authority Twickenham falls. In 1988, the Liberals amalgamated with their SDP allies to become the Liberal Democrats (usually referred to by the abbreviation “Lib Dems”). The Lib Dems have held the council in all but three elections since.

Just how liberal are the Lib Dems? It would be fair to say there are moments when they rival Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party in their fanatical commitment to the latest politically correct fads. Just a few days before the last election, the party’s leader, Jo Swinson, was on TV discussing her party’s support for transgenderism, hardly a priority for voters. Among the policies enunciated in the Lib Dems’ election manifesto was a commitment to “fund abortion clinics to provide their services free of charge to service users regardless of nationality or residency.” In addition to providing free abortions to the entire planet, the Lib Dems committed themselves to granting a married person the right to change his or her gender without the consent of their spouse. Their manifesto denounced a system that supports the “traditional family with a main breadwinner and two children” as “entirely out of step with the modern world.”

The Lib Dems further committed themselves to legislating to allow political parties to run all “BAME” (black and minority ethnic) and all “LGBT+” shortlists of candidates and to require companies with over 250 employees to publish data on gender, BAME, and LGBT+ employment levels.

Due to undergo an election for new leadership later this year, one of the declared Lib Dem leadership candidates is Layla Moran, a self-described “pansexual” who recently dropped this gem about the current coronavirus crisis: “Farage and Trump engaging in racial hatred by ‘point-

ing out’ the virus ‘started in China.’ You know what else ‘started in China’? The fleet that discovered America in 1492.”

Yes, this woman could actually be the future leader of a major British political party. Such is the party that has dominated Twickenham’s local and national politics for going on three decades.

Twickenham’s victorious parliamentary candidate in the 2019 general election, whose result dwarfed that of her Conservative opponent, was one Munira Wilson, who dubs herself “Whitton’s woman in Westminster” (Whitton is an area of Twickenham). The Richmond and Twickenham Lib Dem website describes her as “passionate about fighting Brexit and the untold damage it will do to our country.” Interestingly, Mrs. Wilson is of Indian ethnic origin, though representing an area with little ethnic diversity. The Lib Dems, in spite of their self-conscious obsession with “diversity,” have never managed to corner the ethnic minority vote, that being overwhelmingly the preserve of the Labour Party. The Lib Dems’ image is that of an overwhelmingly white, middle class, and affluent party. It has been said that the Lib Dems are the party of those liberal middle-class people who just can’t bring themselves to vote for an openly socialist Labour Party.

Wilson’s predecessor as MP for Twickenham, Sir Vincent Cable, who had held the seat for all but two years between 1997 and 2019, had in 2018 denounced his own party for being “very male” and “very, very white,” though Cable is himself a white male. In the same speech, Cable accused Brexit voters of being driven by “nostalgia for a world where passports were blue, faces were white, and the map was coloured imperial pink.” In response to Cable’s indictment, the party established a Racial Diversity Campaign to recruit more minority candidates.

Mrs. Wilson appears to see herself as the answer to the party’s new diversity fetish. In her victory speech she stated: “I’m a



living, walking, breathing example of some diversity in the party... We are making great strides working within the party to improve our representation from ethnic minorities and women, and that’s what I’m here as a product of...” As if to allay any suspicion that she might be a beneficiary of affirmative action she then added: “as well as my own hard work.”

In her maiden speech to Parliament, Wilson began by telling her colleagues that her five-year-old daughter was sitting in the gallery and that “with a record number of female and BAME MPs elected in this Parliament, I hope that I and others will be an inspiration to girls like her and other young women as we strive towards a more diverse Parliament that truly reflects British society.” She ended by stating she entered politics to “promote internationalist values,” whatever that means. To give the woman credit, she largely chose to focus on issues of concern to local people, in between these politically correct platitudes.

Twickenham might be called “deepest remainland.” In the Brexit referendum of 2016, Twickenham voted 66 percent to 33 percent in favour of remaining in the European Union. Anti-Brexit stick-



ers on house windows are common. “Brexit wrecks it” is a popular one. During the recent general election, the Lib Dems campaigned under the slogan “Stop Brexit,” and, as if to further show their contempt for the country and the people who had voted to leave the EU, they invited the European Parliament’s leading Britain-baiter Guy Verhofstadt to be a speaker at their party conference.

Despite the party’s bad showing in the election, including its leader Jo Swinson losing her seat in parliament, in Twickenham the Lib Dems were returned with an increased majority. In the council elections of 2018, they won 39 seats, the Conservatives 11. The Labour Party has little presence in Twickenham, but the Lib Dems have now been joined on the council by that other ultra-progressive party of the “woke” middle class, the Green Party, who elected four councillors, one of them representing a ward in the heart of Twickenham.

The Greens and Lib Dems reached an agreement whereby the two parties agreed not to run against each other in six wards. The idea was to ensure a pro-remain majority on the council. One local pundit called the result “revenge of the Remainers.” In September 2018, the council passed a motion calling for what they called a “people’s vote on the future Brexit

deal,” remainder speak for a second referendum to overturn the results of the first one. The Lib Dems and Greens forged a similar agreement in the 2019 general election when the Greens decided not to run a parliamentary candidate, lest they damage Lib Dem chances. This was part of a pact called the Unite to Remain Alliance. On January 31, 2020, Brexit finally happened. While many of those who supported it rallied, draped themselves in the Union flag, danced and sang patriotic songs in Westminster and elsewhere, there can have been little celebration among the politicians of Twickenham, who had spent the last three and a half years warning of the supposedly devastating economic effects Brexit would have.

As if to illustrate its “wokeness” and adherence to the current zeitgeist, the local council recently declared a “climate change emergency” and announced its target of becoming a “carbon neutral organisation” by 2030. Far more sinister, however, has been its effective criminalization of a local pro-life vigil. This vigil, which began outside a local abortion clinic many years ago, consisted largely of Catholics quietly praying the rosary at a substantial distance from the clinic entrance. However, even such inoffensive activity has become intolerable to those who regard killing babies as a hu-

man right. The council imposed a Public Spaces Protection Order, creating a huge “buffer zone” that stretches several blocks from the clinic’s location, making the vigil’s continuance virtually impossible and imposing fines on any who violate the order.

Ironically, from 1970 until 1997, Twickenham was represented in Parliament by the pro-life and strongly anti-EU Conservative MP Toby Jessel, who had opposed the establishment of an abortion clinic in his constituency. Jessel’s long reign may have been extended by a sense of personal loyalty felt by many of his constituents due to his impressive record of getting things done at the local level.

Twickenham’s transformation from a traditionalist conservative stronghold to a bastion of the metropolitan elite has been paralleled by many other locations on the outskirts of London. It has evolved from a semi-rural locality within what was once the County of Middlesex into a London suburb dominated by a liberal professional class who make up the bulk of those who voted to remain in the European Union and who champion “woke” so-called progressive causes.

In common with so many other places in Britain, Twickenham has been a victim of the dull standardization caused by the multiplying of chain stores and the grim functional oversized boxes that are modern office blocks, which often replaced charming local-run businesses and aesthetically pleasing older buildings. Yet in spite of this and its liberal politics, Twickenham is still an attractive place to live. In its beautiful historic mansions, pleasant village-like green, old churches, old boats on the river, and lovely riverside pubs, we are able to catch a glimpse of an older and better Britain.

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The Geopolitics of Coronavirus

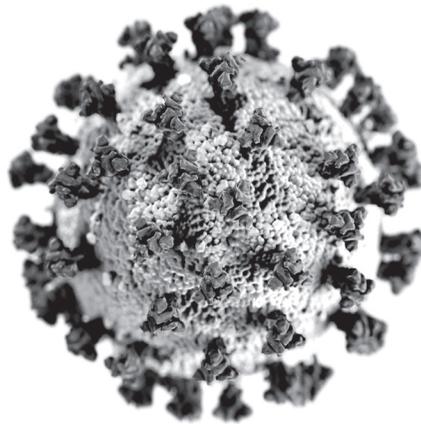
“NOTHING WILL EVER BE THE SAME again!” The cliché is invoked whenever people think they are facing an event of metahistorical significance. Sometimes its use is justified: Sarajevo 1914, the Bolshevik Revolution, Hiroshima, and the fall of the Berlin Wall fit the phrase. More often it is not. Versailles 1919, JFK’s assassination, Neil Armstrong’s “giant leap,” Watergate, 9/11, Lehman Brothers’ collapse, and many other alleged watersheds eventually turned out to be less momentous than initially claimed.

Some turning points are not recognized immediately. The Bastille riot could have ended, a year or two later, like the Glorious Revolution did across the Channel a century earlier. Only with the horrors of 1792 did it become clear that “he who has not lived before the Revolution does not know the sweetness of life.” More recently, the impact of nuclear weapons on the grand-strategic thinking of the two principal Cold War adversaries took over a decade to mature.

There are megacrises which are immediately seen, initially by the lucid few, for what they are. The Guns of August hit an ostensibly well-ordered and stable world like a thunderbolt. “The lights are going out all over Europe,” Sir Edward Grey presciently remarked a day before Britain declared war on the Kaiserreich, “and they may not come back in our lifetime.” Arguably they never did: over the ensuing four years a vibrant civilization, unmatched in its fruits and vigor, was mor-

tally wounded and thrown into the abyss in which we now live.

The COVID-19 outbreak initially looked like a periodic epidemic in the manner of porcine and avian flus, SARS, or the West Nile virus: a temporary problem which affects other people, usually far away. This virus turned out to be different, however: hitherto unknown, highly contagious,



untreatable, and lethal enough to warrant radical measures to contain its spread. The Chinese tried to hide the magnitude of the problem until late January, the Europeans did not quite believe it even as disaster hit Italy in February, and the Americans finally grasped the seriousness of the threat in the second week of March.

The pandemic’s future course and cost cannot be predicted. It does appear certain, however, that the world is experiencing changes which are likely irreversible. The contours of its geopolitical impact are becoming apparent in the rapidly changing patterns of mental mapping, political

decision-making, and economic flows in the three panregions that matter in today’s world: Asia-Pacific, Europe, and North America.

In all three we are witnessing rapid rejections of globalization, multilateral mechanisms such as the World Health Organization, and transnational institutions—most notably the European Union—in favor of the revitalized sense of national cohesiveness and national interest-based survival strategies that are developed and pursued by newly energized sovereign nation-states. It is to their own governments that nations great and small have turned. State-directed crisis management has given governments of different ideological hues enormous new powers. They will not give them up willingly once the virus is contained. The State is back.

Corona’s notable geopolitical consequence is the collapse of the neoconservative-neoliberal sacred cow known as “America’s global leadership role.” By contrast, after a faltering start marked by the Chernobyl-like disinclination to be open about the nature and magnitude of the problem, China acted with impressive speed and efficiency to contain the virus. Beijing’s measures seemed draconian in the West when they were imposed with stony resolve.

Interestingly, three other virus success stories are Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea. Unlike China, they are democratic in institutional form, but they are closely related to the Middle Kingdom in Huntingtonian terms. A civilization which promotes respect for authority, delayed gratification, and communal interests over individual rights is seen as more efficient in protecting its members while continuing to function than is the Western model.

With just a trickle of new cases, mainly among returning students and expatriates who were duly quarantined, by the end of March China was able to start sending its seasoned medical teams and life-saving equipment to Europe and elsewhere. Since

compassion for the *gweilo* (a Cantonese slur for a Westerner) is not a common Chinese trait, Beijing obviously seeks to fill a power vacuum. That much is already apparent in a remarkable development in the Balkans.

On March 17, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić declared that, despite his country's long-standing objective of joining the EU, he could only count on China for support. "That great international solidarity does not exist. European solidarity does not exist," Vučić said. "It was a fairy tale on paper." Therefore he sent a

the right thing to do because we need that equipment for our healthcare systems."

In other words, according to a local commentator, "as far as Brussels was concerned, it is the right thing to let the Serbs and other non-EU Europeans perish." Or cope as best they could, which Vučić did—and Xi was happy to help. Greeting the first planeload of Chinese doctors and ventilators on March 21, China's ambassador to Belgrade said the aid was a sign of the "iron friendship" between the two countries.

Another manifestation of the EU's ongoing collapse is the revamping and closing of internal borders within the Schengen zone. This was initially opposed by France's Eurofederalist president Emmanuel Macron, who said on March 12 that EU states should keep borders open and not give in to what he called coronavirus nationalism. "This virus does not have a passport. We must join forces, coordinate our responses, cooperate," he said. "European coordination is essential." There was none. One after another, EU member countries

...we are witnessing rapid rejections of globalization, multilateral mechanisms such as the World Health Organization, and transnational institutions.

letter "to the only ones who can help," asking Chinese President Xi Jinping to deliver desperately needed medical supplies.

Only recently, Vučić went on, Brussels had pressed Belgrade to reduce its trade with China and increase imports from the EU instead. But when Serbia tried to purchase ventilators, protective suits, and face masks from Europe, it was flatly turned down. "[S]uch medical goods can only be exported to non-EU countries with the explicit authorization of the EU governments," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen explained. "This is

This scenario has been replicated even within the EU itself. There was no response to the request from Italy's ambassador to the EU for medical equipment, but China promptly dispatched three teams of doctors with supplies to Rome. The second-hardest hit European country, Spain, "can also count on our help," Xi Jinping said after a call from Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. China is also shipping aid supplies to Iran, Iraq, the Philippines, and Africa. This epidemic is certain to enhance the ongoing explosion of cultural confidence among the Chinese people.

closed their borders, Germany included. As Germany's *Der Spiegel* magazine noted on March 23, "The signal is clear: When things get serious, every member state still looks out for itself first – even 60 years after the founding of the community"

Discrediting the Harlot of Brussels and ending the migratory deluge may be a silver lining on the Corona record. Just like during the 2008 financial meltdown, the EU *nomenklatura* is showing itself to be a dysfunctional machine that is only good at imposing self-destructive ideological fiat on immigration, diversity, and multicultural platitudes. Today's "United Europe" does not create social and civilizational commonalities, except on the basis of wholesale denial of old mores, inherited values, and "traditional" i.e., Jewish and Christian, culture. *Bruxella delenda est!*

The shock to the global financial and economic system may also have long-term benefits. Both supply chains and distribution networks are exceedingly fragile, as we have seen, and it is better to return to some degree of autarky now than to be left powerless if and when the threat becomes truly existential. It is absurd for America to be dependent on China for some 97 percent of antibiotics, as well as vital medicines for blood pressure, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's,





epilepsy, and depression. (It would be unforgivable, however, to correct the strategic vulnerability by granting Big Pharma another license to print money.)

The same applies to steel, electronics, plastics, etc. It is necessary to redesign and shrink the multi-step, multi-country supply chains that dominate today's production. All vital supply chains need to be brought back home, and warehouses rebuilt and restocked, to protect against future disruptions. This will not be good for short-term balance sheets of American businesses, but in the long run it will shield them from possible man-made disruptions in the future. More importantly, it will enhance long-term national resilience.

Neoliberal globalization in its post-Cold War form has been dealt a major blow by COVID-19, which is a good thing. The architecture of global economic and political governance developed over the past three decades is collapsing before our

eyes. At its root is the notion that we should not feel a special bond for any particular country, nation, or culture, but base our preferences on the quantifiable parameters of self-interest. The current crisis has had a beautifully subversive effect on the process of transforming globalized society into a socio-technological system in which most human relations would be streamlined into manageable routines and procedures.

The community of vulnerable and mortal human beings—who for all their money and technology cannot prevent getting sick, and needing help and empathy from their fellows—is still there. This epidemic shows that it functions when absolutely needed. It is the polar opposite of the “culture” of the artificial world, of post-historical, globalized, genderless Person. This epidemic is an existential crisis which enhanced the sense of solidarity among members of real nations

and communities—not some abstract “Europeans,” but Lombards and Tyrolers and Bohemians. The claim of the elite class that all countries are but transient, virtual-reality entities has been discredited, probably permanently.

Sir Kenneth Clark defined decades ago the challenge the Western world is facing today: “It is lack of confidence, more than anything else, that kills a civilization.” But not all is lost, it seems. After the initial shock, Americans and Europeans who love their own lands more than any other, and who put their families and their neighborhoods before all others, are the ones fighting this coronavirus with resilience and stoicism. Those who had been telling them that their attachments should be global, and that their lands and neighborhoods belong to the whole world, are now consigned to the dustbin of history. There is hope, and all will be well, because there is God. ♦

AS THE HYSTERICAL CORONAVIRUS overreaction crashes our economy, I can't help but think of the Spanish flu, which took some 675,000 American lives in 1918 and 1919. Adjusting for the difference in the size of the American population then and now, that number would be equivalent to two million deaths today. I'll be surprised—I'm writing this in late March—if COVID-19 takes as many as 50,000 American lives, or proportionally 1/40th of the lives lost to the Spanish Flu. Even some of the current projections of 100,000 or more deaths would still be only a small fraction of those who died of the Spanish flu.

The Spanish flu has been called America's forgotten epidemic. It was not forgotten in my family. My mother was one of 11 children and the age range from youngest to oldest spanned 20 years. When my mother and several of her sisters were still in their single digits, two of their older brothers were already cops and the oldest sister was married with a son. That sister and her husband died in the Spanish flu epidemic. Their toddler son was taken in by my mother's family and raised as a little brother. Until I was five or six, I thought he was another one of my uncles—he was of the right age—and not, as I learned, my cousin.

The origin of the Spanish flu is greatly debated, but it is universally agreed that it did not originate in Spain. However, Spanish newspapers were the first to report an influenza virus wreaking havoc in their own country, and also decimating Allied troops during 1918. Spain was neutral during World War I and her newspapers were not subject to censorship, unlike newspapers of the Allies, whose countries didn't want anything published that would frighten people and lower morale. By the war's end more troops were becoming casualties of flu than of bullets or bombs.

It's probably best left to virologists and epidemiologists to debate the true origins of the Spanish flu, but China is one likely candidate. A respiratory virus hit China

during the fall of 1917 and ravaged thousands. It was later determined to be identical to the one causing the Spanish flu.

This bug was then brought to Europe by nearly 100,000 Chinese contracted by the British and French to perform labor behind the war's front lines. These Chinese workers were far less affected by the virus than were the British and French, simply because they had already been exposed to it the year before and had built up immunity. A variation on this explanation says the virus came with the Chinese on a ship that put in at Boston and that the virus mutated there before the Chinese carried the new mutated version with them to Europe.

There is also an argument that the virus originated among farmers in Kansas who contracted it from their hogs or poultry in January 1918. The farmers then carried the virus to the Army's Camp Funston, which had an influenza epidemic in March. However, there were soldiers at Funston who had returned from Europe to train fresh troops, and they could have brought the virus with them.

Whatever the source, the virus spread rapidly at Funston among the thousands of doughboys who trained and lived in crowded conditions. Eleven hundred soldiers required hospitalization and 38 died. The flu spread as the soldiers were transferred to other camps before deployment to Europe, not only at other Army bases but also at towns near the camps.

There is no question that Camp Funston had an influenza epidemic. But

whether this was the Spanish flu has been questioned, principally because not enough soldiers died. Everywhere else, the Spanish flu was even more deadly. Moreover, the argument that the Spanish flu originated in Kansas doesn't account for the appearance of the virus in China six months before it struck Camp Funston.

The first American cities to feel the full effects of this virulent flu were the East Coast seaports. The Navy barracks at Commonwealth Pier in Boston held thousands of sailors in cramped quarters. In late August 1918 sick bays began filling up with sick soldiers. About 50 sailors fell desperately ill and were immediately transferred to the Chelsea Naval Hospital. They were isolated in an attempt to contain the virus, but it was already too late. Early in September sick civilians began arriving at Boston City Hospital.

Meanwhile, in late August at Camp Devens, some 30 miles northwest of Boston, soldiers began falling ill with what was thought to be pneumonia, meningitis, or some unknown virus. Nothing much could be done but to quarantine the camp and isolate the patients. By the third week of September, a fifth of the soldiers were infected and many were dying, and some doctors and nurses were dying as well.

By October the flu had spread through the population of Boston. Boston City Hospital alone treated 2,300 patients, mostly in September and October, but new cases were still arriving in November and December. Of the patients treated, 675



Epidemic for the Record Books

died. The virus took a toll on the medical staff at the hospital as well. Nine nurses, two physicians, and four other employees died. Altogether, Boston lost more than 4,000 residents to the Spanish flu before the end of the year.

Early in September 1918 a Navy ship from Boston with dozens of sick sailors aboard steamed up the Delaware River and docked at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. The next day two of the sick sailors died. Health officials told the public it was not the Spanish flu and, whatever it was, it would be confined to the Navy Yard. The next day 14 sailors and one civilian died. Day by day, civilians began falling ill. Nonetheless, Philadelphia forged ahead with a Liberty Loan parade on September 28. The war effort was paramount, and these parades were held across the country to encourage the public purchase of war bonds to fund the war. What would become the largest parade in Philadelphia history seemingly went off without a hitch, with thousands of spectators lining the parade route.

However, in the six weeks following the parade, some 12,000 Philadelphians died of the Spanish flu, most of them young and healthy until struck down by the virus. Archbishop Dennis Dougherty had his priests join the police in carrying bodies from stricken homes throughout the city. Piled high with corpses, death carts rattled down the streets. Local cemeteries were overwhelmed, and many bodies were dumped into mass graves. Thousands of children lost a parent or were orphaned. At Philadelphia General Hospital nearly 10 percent of the nurses died. Doctors were dropping as well. Three dozen cops died.

New York City was the principal port for soldiers sailing to and returning from the war in Europe, making any general quarantine of ships impractical. Col. J. M. Kennedy, the Army officer in charge of medical affairs for the district of New York, made it clear to public health officials during the summer of 1918 that the war effort would take precedence over the

Spanish flu.

Without question, the virus was coming to the city and health officials decided to fight it the way they had fought tuberculosis. "When cases develop in private houses or apartments, they will be kept in strict quarantine there," Health Commissioner Royal Copeland said. "When they develop in boarding houses or tenements, they will be promptly removed to city hospitals, and held under strict observation and treated there." Ultimately, this policy meant New York's hospitals weren't overwhelmed as Boston and Philadelphia's had been.

In addition, by the middle of September, New York City had a public education campaign in full swing. More than 10,000 posters describing sanitation and hygiene practices were placed in train and subway stations, on storefronts, police stations, and libraries, and in hotel lobbies. Health education materials were disseminated throughout the city, including the schools, which were kept open. There was also strict enforcement of the city's sanitary code, which included a prohibition on spitting in public.

The measures New York City took saved lives, and it fared better than other cities, despite its exposure to the troop ships. By October, the Spanish flu was roaring through New York, but the city's death rate of 4.7 per 1,000 infected was significantly better than Boston's 6.5 or Philadelphia's 7.3. Altogether, from September 1918 through January 1919, New York City lost 30,000 of its residents to the virus.

Meanwhile, the virus was spreading rapidly to other American cities, most often first appearing at such seaport cities as Baltimore, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. From September 1918 to March 1919, San Francisco had some 3,100 of its residents die at a rate of 6.7. During the same period, New Orleans lost 3,500 at a rate of 6.5, Baltimore 4,100 at a rate of 5.6, Los Angeles 2,800 at a rate of 4.9, and Seattle 1,400 at a rate of 4.4.

Cities in America's interior suffered



also, but their death rates were lower than their coastal sisters'. Not surprisingly, the first cases of Spanish flu in Chicago appeared in September 1918 at a military facility: Great Lakes Naval Training Station.

The Navy reacted immediately by quarantining the base and isolating those who had contracted the virus. Nonetheless, within a week civilians were falling victim to the flu. Chicago would ultimately have a death rate of 3.7. St. Louis is often cited for its preparations for the arrival of the Spanish flu and for its practices once the flu arrived, but it still had a death rate of 3.6. The cities of Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Dallas, Grand Rapids, Indianapolis, Toledo, and Columbus all had death rates slightly under 3.0. There was a striking exception to these lower death rates for interior cities—Pittsburgh with a rate of 8.0. It's thought that Steel City's terribly polluted air in that era caused numerous respiratory problems, and made residents especially vulnerable to the influenza virus. The high rate of cigarette smoking in China today is also thought to have made their population more vulnerable to COVID-19, though it may be some time before we get the true death toll from China.

Any death from illness is upsetting. But given the current hysteria, the historical perspective provided by the exponentially more deadly Spanish flu of a century ago should help us keep our fears in check. ♦

IS THERE ANYTHING AMERICANS do not think they have an unalienable right to anymore? Our collective delusion did not spontaneously generate itself. The further left a politician, the more new rights he will promise. The right to free health-care? If elected, Bernie Sanders promises to bestow that nightmare on us. How about free college tuition, or the forgiveness of debt for those dumb enough to have financed it themselves?

Elizabeth Warren planned to wave a magic \$1.25 trillion wand to create that fiscal black hole. According to Joe Biden's campaign website, he spent his eight years as vice president championing still more rights, including the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans program, creating and expanding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and the Central American Minors program, which facilitated allowing Central American children to enter the United States to live with

grounded in your duty not to murder your fellow man. Likewise, your right to property is grounded in your duty not to steal the property of others. But now, politicians conjure up new rights with complete disregard for antecedent duties and obligations.

The concept of duty highlights the inexorable cultural chasm still agape between America's North and South. Unlike in the Deep South, duties and obligations to one's family, friends, and neighbors do not rank highly here in New York, the capital of the Deep North. In his most important book, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*, historian David Hackett Fischer attributes this societal division to the rise of honor culture in the American South.

For example, an 1805 article in North

elite collectively howled in February when President Trump denied them the right to participate in the Trusted Traveler security program, commonly known as Global Entry. The Trump administration was responding to New York's treacherous immigration policies. As of Dec. 16, 2019, the Empire State's idiotic Green Light Act allows undocumented immigrants, a nebulous moniker that would logically include both MS-13 gangbangers and octogenarian Belgian tourists who left their passports in their Times Square hotel rooms, to get New York State driver's licenses.

The Feds correctly identified a problem with this. "Because the [Green Light] Act prevents DHS from accessing New York DMV records in order to determine whether a TTP [Trusted Traveler Program] appli-

Deep North Privilege

Deep Northerners take pride in their multiple passports, dual citizenship, and service in foreign militaries.

their legal U.S. resident parents.

With all those destructive accomplishments, the Wilmington Wonder raised the insanity quotient by extending rights to noncitizens, a demeaning designation that will be illegal under the Tlaib administration in 2024. But rights historically find their basis in preexisting duties and obligations. Your rights as a citizen are grounded in your obligation to comply with the rules and regulations that legitimize your citizenship—immigration laws first of all. Despite Pope Francis's condemnation of Europe's handling of the 2015 immigration crisis, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is clear on the matter; "Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens."

That means that your right to life is

Carolina's *Raleigh Register* shows how families impressed the value of honor on even their youngest sons. Backcountry parents instructed their boys to defend their honor at any expense, and in the quickest way possible, which often meant violence. Fischer writes, "Honor in this society meant pride of manhood in masculine courage, physical strength and warrior virtue." Southern boys had an ineluctable familial duty to defend their honor. That obligation eventually extended to the defense of their clan, state, and country.

In glaring contrast, today a typical Deep Northerner's duty to country ranks lowest in his hierarchy of loyalties. Deep Northerners take pride in their multiple passports, dual citizenship, and service in foreign militaries. With no single place or people providing a patriotic foundation, New York's cosmopolitan, priestly

cant or re-applicant meets program eligibility requirements, New York residents will no longer be eligible to enroll or re-enroll in CBP's Trusted Traveler Programs" explained Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Chad Wolf.

New York had arrogantly assumed the self-appointed right to declare itself a sanctuary state for persons in the U.S. who refuse to comply with their obligations under American immigration law. Of no surprise to Americans residing outside the self-absorbed Deep North, the Feds objected.

Wolf's letter also detailed the importance of federal access to New York's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) database. Working off those records in 2019, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested 149 child predators and 230 gang members. It also confiscated more than 6,400 pounds of illegal nar-

cotics. Some criminal records are maintained only by New York’s DMV, according to Wolf. New York’s DMV data, while not the sole source of important information on immigrants, is nonetheless a rich one.

New York’s dynastic governor Andrew Cuomo reflexively deemed the Trump administration’s ruling as “obviously political retaliation.” The state’s Attorney General Letitia James filed a lawsuit against the DHS, describing the Trump administration’s actions as “political retribution, plain and simple...for its unfair targeting of New York State residents.”

Wolf spoke to Cuomo when the policy was first announced, informing our very own dauphin “that if the State of New York restores access to mission-critical law enforcement information”—which is its duty—“then New Yorkers will once again be able to enroll in CBP Trusted Traveler Programs”—their right.

Doesn’t New York State, and every other state for that matter, have an obligation to the federal union to prevent loopholes in the national immigration enforcement mechanism? Deep Northerners awaiting their flights in the Royal Jordanian Airlines business class lounge at JFK would dismiss such a parochial question out of hand.

When the Fed’s sensible announce-

ment first broke, a Deep North friend eager to start an argument texted me, “Hope your global entry doesn’t expire anytime soon.” Without Global Entry, I’m a veritable cultural alien in my bizarre home state. I haughtily wrote back, “Never got it in the first place.” He then countered: “Fascinating to watch a federal govt. controlled by conservatives/republicans assert federal authority.”

I shook my head in confusion. Rather than continuing the argument, I instead meditated with pleasure upon the thought of my enraged, Trump-hating neighbors’ heads exploding over this minor imposition on their global gallivanting. The wealthy class of elite Deep Northerners have assumed that their quick passage through customs and immigration takes priority over the security of regular American citizens. You know—those forced to have the aforementioned MS-13 gangbangers and child predators as their neighbors.

While American states do have rights in the federal union, these rights are not unlimited. The bloodiest war in American history proved that. New York has the same rights as every other state. More importantly, it also has the same reciprocal duties as the other states, even if no one in New York or anywhere else in the Deep North understands the concept of coop-

eration anymore.

New York’s demographic and ethno-cultural makeup, brewing for centuries in a Deep North cauldron devoid of honor, has led to the state’s whiny, litigious, and narcissistic opposition to the federal government’s measured immigration policy. Of course, New York lawmakers have no intention of making the state a sanctuary for gun owners acting in accordance with their Second Amendment rights. New York’s Green Light Act only helps those who laugh at their obligations under U.S. federal immigration law.

One New York politician seems to understand this, *mirabile dictu!* Niagara County Republican State Senator Rob Ortt tweeted in response to Cuomo’s grandstanding, “Pure politics is passing laws that prioritize illegal aliens over law-abiding citizens and law enforcement officials to score political points with a far-left base.”

Senator Ortt, expect Twitter to deplatform you any second.

Unlike the Deep South, whose honor culture reveres duty and obligation to kin and country, the Deep North does what it can to eradicate such retrograde thought. No wonder the *Raleigh Register* never did much in the way of newsstand sales north of the Mason-Dixon Line. ♦



Parasite (2019)

Directed by Bong Joon-ho • Written by Bong Joon-ho and Han Jin-won • Produced by Barunson E&A • Distributed by Neon

Snowpiercer (2013)

Directed by Bong Joon-ho • Written by Bong Joon-ho and Kelly Masterson • Produced by Mohu Film, Opus Pictures, Union Investment Partners, and Stilling Films • Distributed by The Weinstein Company

Little Women (2019)

Directed by Greta Gerwig • Written by Greta Gerwig, based on the novel *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott • Produced by Columbia Pictures, Regency Enterprises, and Pascal Pictures • Distributed by Columbia Pictures

PARASITE MAY BE BOTH THE MOST amusing and the most horrifying movie of the year. That is, if you can get past its inept attempt at making a political statement.

Written and directed by Bong Joon-ho, *Parasite* recently became the first foreign language film to win the Academy Award for best picture.

Bong's investigation of class strife in contemporary Seoul spends its first 40 minutes setting up its premise and then springs its trap. Just as you are getting used to the sordid charm of the Kims, a slum-dwelling family of dedicated grifters, you are suddenly plunged into an entirely unexpected Grand Guignol.

The Kims live in the basement apartment of a Seoul slum. Despite their straitened circumstances, the parents and their two grown children barely strive to alter their situation. Even though their sole source of income is folding delivery boxes for a chain of pizzerias, they perform their task so shoddily their employer constantly threatens their dismissal. Beyond their official work, they are expert leeches. Their principal nourishment comes from the pizzas they steal from their employer. Without a customer account, they tap into the electric utility's grid. For internet access, they piggyback off of their neighbors' signals.

Still, they cannot offset other problems. When it rains, their apartment floods to a knee-deep river of flotsam and jetsam,

and their single toilet geysers urine and feces into their rooms. What's more, their low-rent neighbors routinely urinate in the street just outside their windows. Despite all this, Kim, Sr. (Song Kang-ho), takes no steps to improve their circumstances. He is content to laze about the apartment, entirely unconcerned about tomorrow. As he tells his son, Kim Ki-woo (Choi Woo-shik), he refuses to plan ahead. Why should he? Plans always go wrong anyhow, he explains.

Then an unexpected opportunity arises. Ki-woo's friend asks him to take over his tutoring job temporarily. His student, he explains, is a 15-year-old daughter of the Parks, an extremely wealthy family living well above ground in a Seoul suburb. No flooding for the Parks. All Ki-woo must do is pretend he is a licensed educator well-equipped to teach the girl English and math. With the aid of phony credentials devised by his computer-savvy sister, Ki-woo easily cons the Parks.

Then the plan begins to expand. Ki-woo presents his sister to the Parks as a highly qualified therapist who will be able to care for the family's autistic son. He doesn't bother to tell them she is his sister. Nor does he acknowledge his relationship with his mother and father when they in turn apply to the Parks for work as housekeeper and chauffeur. Revealing their family ties might jeopardize their plan, which is to colonize the Park home after displacing the employees who have been serving the Parks for years.

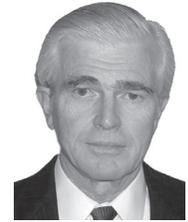
Complicating the plan is the presence of another indigent family secretly living in the Parks' sub-basement. They also have been

cashing in on the Parks and are determined to continue this arrangement. Class struggle, you see, is not just between the rich and the poor. At first the Park family remains blissfully ignorant of their parasitic interlopers. When they learn the truth, it is too late. The struggle is on, and it proves quite deadly.

All of Bong's films express his hatred for what he regards as the capitalist-enforced class system. In his vision, a socialist regime would serve the common man far more equitably. It is odd he should think so. There is an object lesson quite close to home that says otherwise. It is called North Korea. But no matter. Ideologues are not troubled by facts.

Two other films by Bong illustrate his obsession. In *The Host* (2006), a whale-like monster with legs rises from the Han river in Seoul. It is a mutation caused by an American corporation's dumping of formaldehyde in the river. The beast attacks the city's population, just like his forerunner Godzilla. When the authorities move in, they strive to save the upper class before bothering with the lower.

Eight years later, Bong made the post-apocalyptic film *Snowpiercer*, in which the world's population has dwindled to a mere thousand souls. It seems the world governments had given climate scientists too much heed. To save the world from its prophesied overheating, they decided to refrigerate the planet, but they unwittingly went too far, killing almost all life forms. The remaining humans are packed into a train that perpetually runs around the frozen planet, never stopping, not even at



Family Finances



Times Square.

The passengers comprise people from every social stratum, and the usual class inequities remain apparent. While the upper class dines on gourmet meals in the leading cars, the working class is forced to ride in the rear, munching on black protein bars made of freeze-dried insects. This is even scarier than those *Godzilla* meets *Mothra* extravaganzas.

The politics of these films could hardly be sillier. Yet, predictably, critics have been bowled over by Bong's dystopian visions. How many film reviewers do you know who are not bleeding-heart socialists? I suppose their bad judgment comes from spending too much time in the dark.

Greta Gerwig's new adaptation of *Little Women* (1868) also deals with a financially troubled family. Novelist Louisa May Alcott wrote about the March family, a fictionalized version of the Alcotts, to tell the story of a New England family in the 1860s. Alcott did not want to write the novel, believing it would be too dull to be successful in the marketplace. She was urged to do so by publisher Thomas Niles, who had been accepting her commercial short stories of sensational adventure and sultry romance. For an example of the latter, read her story "Perilous Play," in which the protagonists indulge in hashish as an aid to their romance.

Niles urged her to try something else, suggesting she write about what she knew. What she knew was her family in Concord, Massachusetts. She did not think they were an especially bankable subject, but she could

not have been more mistaken. Her book was an immediate success and is still in print today.

The Alcott family had four daughters, presided over by a capable mother. Their father, however, was a feckless dreamer who never earned enough to support them adequately. This weighed on Louisa from the time she was 11 years old. That was when she decided she had to make money in order to care for her family. *Little Women* enabled her to do that. In today's money, the book made her over \$2 million during her lifetime. Its royalties provided for her immediate family and quite a few of her relatives. Since she insisted on being given the copyright, it also gave her economic freedom.

Alcott modeled her characters on her family members, paying special attention to her sisters. As in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, each sister embodies an aspect of feminine psychology. Meg (Emma Watson), the eldest, is demure and conservative. Jo (Saoirse Ronan), the second in line, is an independent, outspoken tomboy, based on Alcott herself. Beth (Eliza Scanlen), who comes down with scarlet fever, is sweet, thoughtful, and uncomplaining. Amy (Florence Pugh), the youngest, is a talented painter but, in her own estimation, lacks genius and so resigns herself to making a prosperous match.

There's not much that is adventurous or startling in the narrative, but it's compelling nevertheless. The book's appeal derives from the recognizable realism with which Alcott portrayed her family's ordinary lives and the amusing incidents in which they

were involved, such as the evening when Jo stands too close to the fireplace and her dress begins to burn. Her sisters then throw her on the floor and beat the fire out. It's a comical moment, certainly, but one that has a stamp of truth on it and further illustrates the sisters' devotion to one another.

The novel is overly preachy at times, a complaint Niles made to Alcott about her early stories. In the novel, Niles becomes Mr. Dashwood, who tells Jo the public does not want moral instruction, a judgment with which Jo silently disagrees. Gerwig's film includes this scene, placing it at the beginning to demonstrate what a woman writer had to put up with in the past and perhaps in the present. After all, this was a time when women's rights were more limited.

Gerwig plays some other editing tricks to make the narrative serve her purpose. She has said she wanted to "correct" or "update" Alcott in order to make her more of a feminist than she was. For one thing, in the novel, Jo goes on at length about the joy of caring for the children in the school she runs in the house she inherited from her wealthy aunt. All the students are boys—or ragamuffins, as she calls them. It seems Jo cannot get enough of them. Gerwig has "corrected" this episode by including as many girls as boys among the students. Not a big deal I suppose, when you consider Gerwig's decision to be faithful to the novel's surprisingly unfeminist ending, which I will not discuss here, in deference to male readers who may not have read the novel yet. ♦

AS EVERYONE WHO HAS NOT BEEN IN total coronavirus quarantine knows, Harvey Weinstein was recently condemned to death for sexually assaulting six Hollywood wannabes. Actually, he was given 23 years in prison, but in view of his 67 years of age, it would have been far more dramatic and fitting for the former Hollywood film producer—and no more fatal—had the judge simply sentenced him to death.

Following his sentencing, the women who had testified against Harvey had their day in the sun. They were all interviewed on television and took the opportunity to gloat over his fall. Their facial expressions during these victory laps appeared to convey joy, happiness, and satisfaction that justice had been done. Alas, I am old enough to know better. Call me cynical if you like, but had Harvey paid these women and paid through the nose, their smiles would be shining even brighter off camera, and he'd still be walking around free—of that, I am sure.

Be that as it may, had he done to my daughter what he did to those women, I'd be up in front of a judge instead—for murder. Except that my daughter would never have put herself in a situation like those of the plaintiffs—but then she's not in show business. Casting in Hollywood has always involved *quid pro quo*, and perhaps now things will actually change. But I doubt it. "Do you REALLY want the part?" will become the catchphrase, and all the things that go with that understanding.

Human nature does not change, at least not where Hollywood types are concerned. Hypocrisy, not talent, is the number one commodity in Tinseltown. For confirmation, simply listen to the utter drivel expressed daily by the trained seals who pass for artists nowadays. They've learned to bark on command platitudes of concern for the poor, for racism, climate change, the handicapped, empowered women, LGBTQ rights, or whatever a Hollywood acceptance speech script requires.

Oh, I've forgotten to mention the op-

pression of defenseless cows! That was a new one brought up by the moronic, inarticulate, and obviously brain-damaged Joaquin Phoenix while accepting an academy award for his role in an unwatchable superhero movie.

For all their apparent concern, our celebrities seem more focused on who commits injustice than injustice itself. They are eager to condemn anyone who says anything perceived as mildly offensive to the aforementioned causes and victim groups. Anything or anyone outside this sanctioned circle of concern is ignored by the woke brigades with their burnished morals and burning zeal to expose oppression.

Just one case in point may serve to show the trend: the abuse of poor white girls by Asian men in the north of England. The victims of these "grooming gangs" are in the hundreds, and they are traumatized, broken, raped, used, and abused, and not a single trained seal on either side of the Atlantic has dared bring their plight into the light. No actor's trophy has been dedicated to them, no author has mentioned them while accepting an award, and no celebrity has asked for justice. The girls remain nonpersons in what used to be one of the most civilized countries on the planet.

The reason for the silence from our Oprah Winfrey types is easy to guess. The perpetrators have all been Pakistani men who cry racism at a raindrop, and as we all know, it rains a hell of a lot over in that tight little island. Mind you, five men finally have been tried and convicted. But this

is a pittance after years of police and court officials refusing to prosecute, in fact turning a blind eye to the outrage. In total the men got 55 years, which means about 10 years each, less than half of what "Uncle Harvey" got.

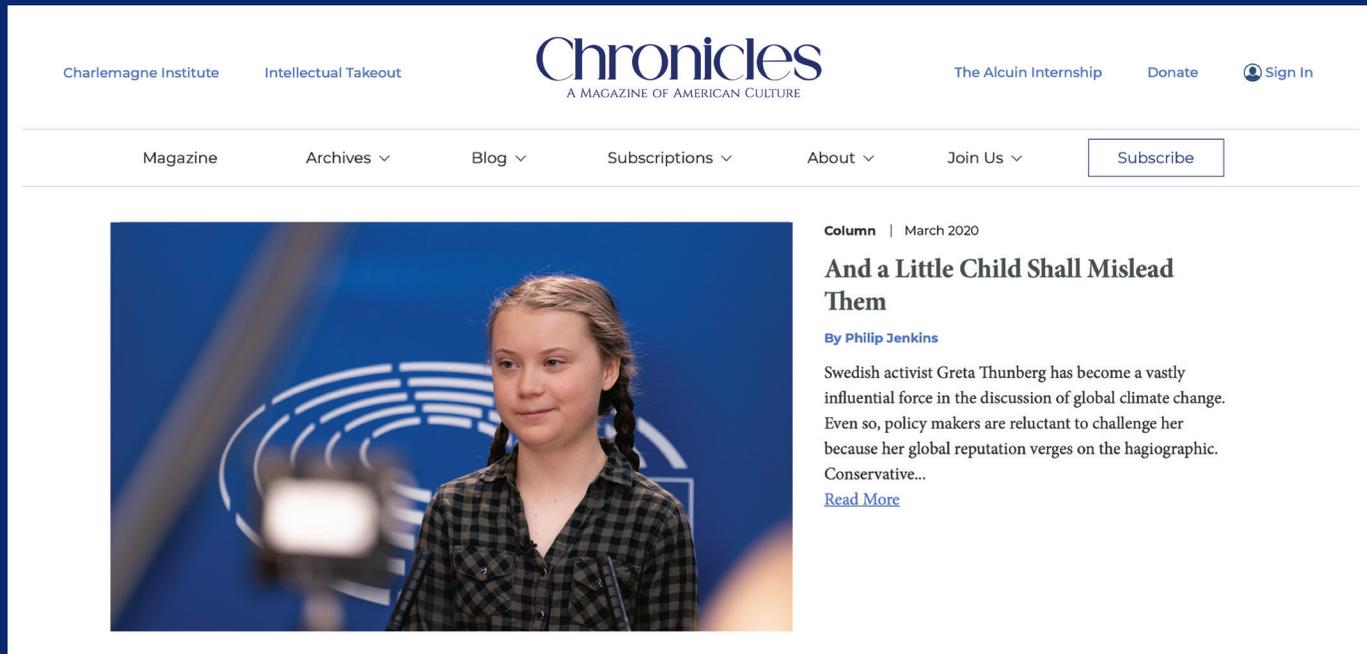
According to reports, 57 young girls were thought to have been exploited by up to 100 Asian members of a gang, and both the police and social workers knew what was happening. Under the dreaming spires of Oxford, three Asian men were jailed for raping and sexually abusing a schoolgirl of 13, but none of the usual suspects that demonstrate at the drop of a hat appeared to denounce these rapists. Where were the social justice warrior students? You know, the ones who once booed me off the stage at Oxford Union for telling a 400-pound African American student who claimed she almost starved to death following Hurricane Katrina that she could do with a bit of a diet?

How these grooming gangs operate with such impunity in so many British cities is a huge, ongoing scandal. Had these victims been black schoolgirls targeted by a bunch of white men, there would be bloody riots in the streets, the government would fall, and Hollywood would suspend filming for an afternoon of silence. The true racists are the media, and the celebrities the media enables, for refusing to make a big deal out of these outrages. The injustices against the privileged #MeToo women, bad as they are, pale in comparison. ♦



#MeToo for Me, But Not for Thee

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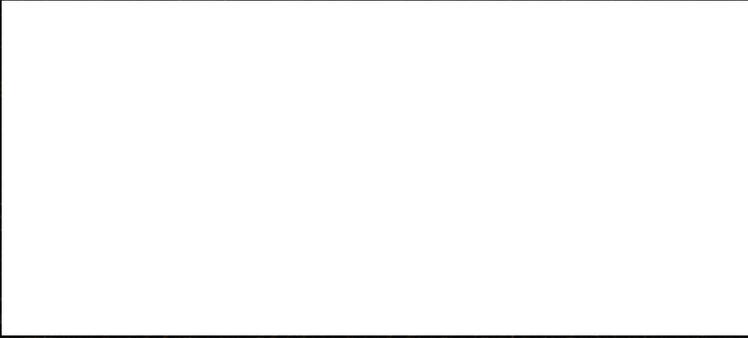
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I sincerely believe, with you, that banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies; and the principle of spending money to be paid by posterity, under the name of funding, is but swindling futurity on a large scale.

— *Thomas Jefferson,*
Letter to John Taylor, May 1816

