

**CLIMATE INJUSTICE** +

DANIEL JUDT REPORTS ON SENEGAL'S SHRINKING COAST

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## LOVE AT FIRST BYTE

In this **exclusive** excerpt from his new memoir, *Permanent Record*, the world's most famous whistleblower describes his first adventures in cyberspace.

EDWARD SNOWDEN



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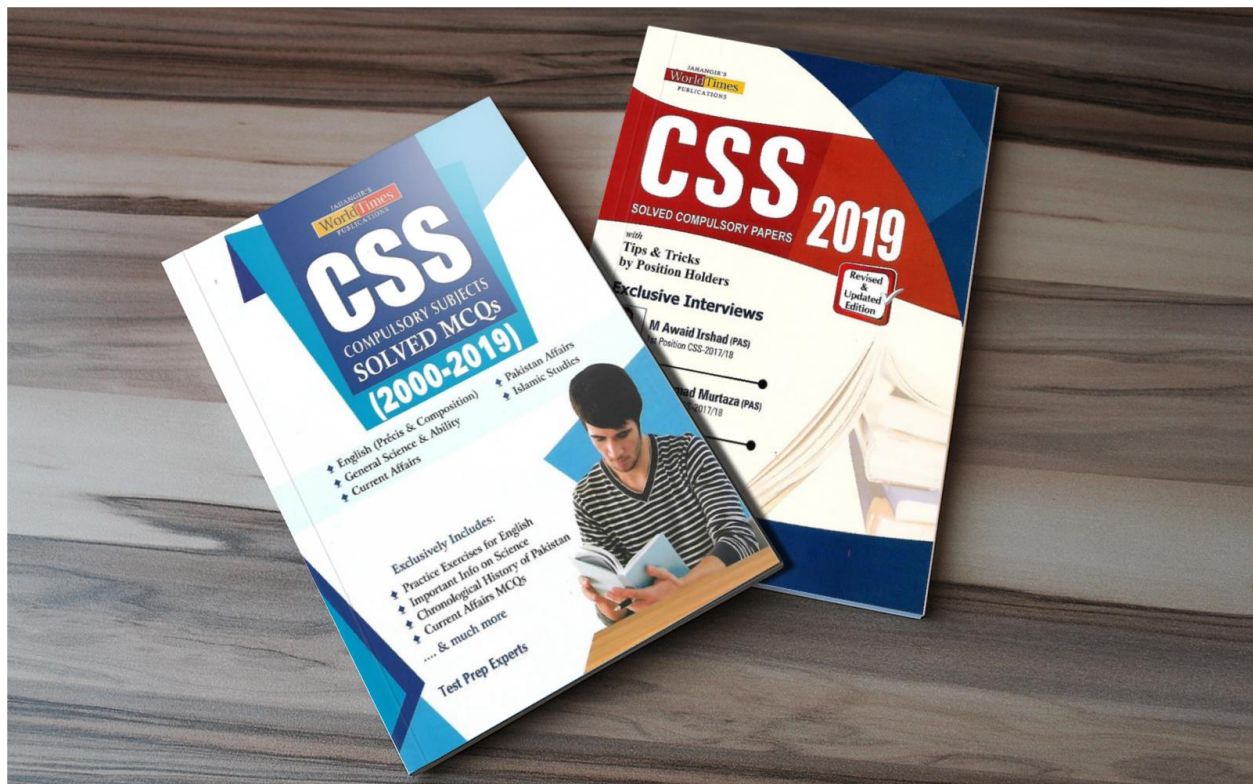
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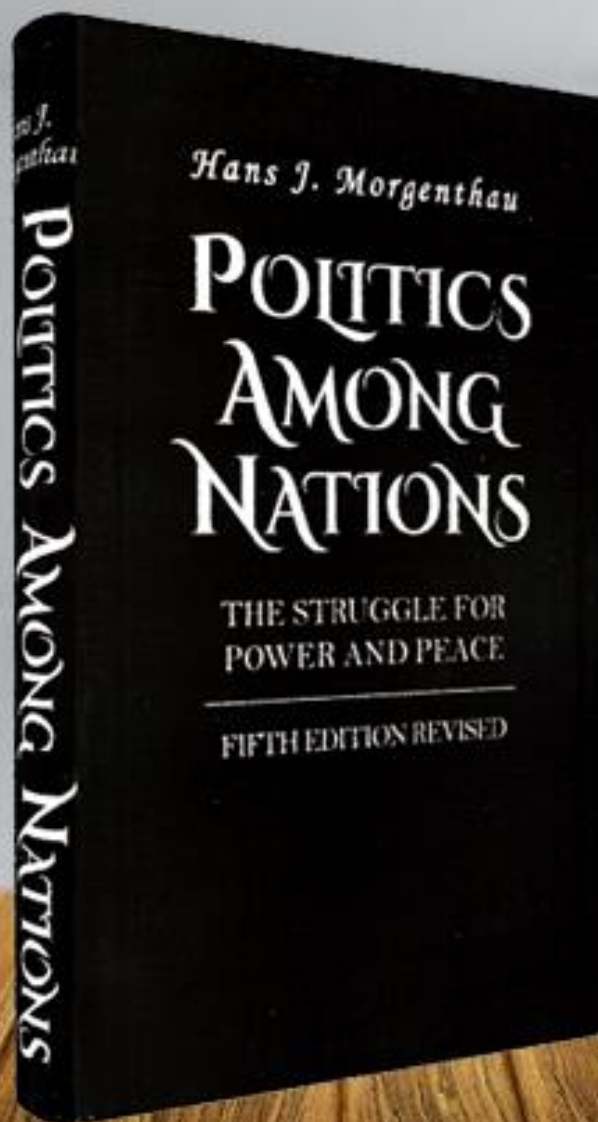
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# Letters

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—Hosted by **Jon Wiener**

## Sold Out, Again

I recently downloaded your magazine from the Braille and Audio Reading Download website produced by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. I found Mara Kardas-Nelson's article about St. James Parish ["To Stay or Go?" Sept. 9/16] to be the sad same ol' same ol'.

I live in Louisiana, should have had the sense to get out a long time ago. I do not understand why our politicians give away so much—so much in taxes that businesses do not pay, so much in natural resources—and yet Louisiana is so often found at the bottom or near the bottom in so many metrics, whether in education, income, working conditions, etc. Texas has a bigger petrochemical industry but seems not to give so much away in tax breaks. It is baffling.

DAVID FAUCHEUX  
LAFAYETTE, LA.

## Blame the Media?

I was struck by Eric Alterman's approach to criticizing the Democratic Party debates ["Destructive Debates," Sept. 9/16]. I've watched the party of Roosevelt over the course of 40 years with increasing disgust. From the Clinton-Gore team's decision to "end welfare as we know it," which denied so many the slim public assistance they received, to the party's weak support of abortion rights, the party has consistently let down those who vote for it.

The latest version of a Democratic president was Barack Obama, who had kill-list-Tuesday meetings to decide whom to drone 10,000 miles away. Under him, the Democrats did not want to implement decent universal health care, and that is why we don't have it, not because of the shallow excuse that they "were depending on the media" to sell it, as Alterman puts it. They do want to maintain the forever wars and the insane trillion-dollar-plus

Pentagon budget. The Democratic Party's adherence to the status quo (or status quo lite) led directly to the disastrous situation we are in today; it is not "assisted suicide by debate moderator."

Please don't let the Democrats off the hook so easily. For the kind of positive radical change we need in this country, hold the party itself accountable for its misdeeds.

THEA PANETH  
ARLINGTON, MASS.

Alterman's column offers a particularly erudite analysis that every Democratic Party leader must read. As I read the piece, I couldn't help but recall when, in 2013, MSNBC's Chuck Todd said, effectively, that it's not the media's job to correct Republican lies about Obamacare. Considering that MSNBC and CNN are usually vastly more honest than Fox News, Alterman just proves that the mainstream corporate media often walks on eggshells when commenting on a right-wing Republican viewpoint. We are fortunate to have *The Nation*.

SAL R. PAUCIELLO  
IRVINGTON, N.J.

☞ Re Eric Alterman's "Destructive Debates": As far as the news media is concerned, it's all canned news anyway, all of it.

I.F. Stone said one of the primary functions of a journalist is to be skeptical of any official statement. Today, it's lapdogs "reporting" what they hear in the echo chambers of the 1 percenters, who own the news media. It's a vicious circle; now it's up to the citizens to be skeptical of official statements and what they hear in the echo chamber. Good luck on that. The news media only serves to keep us divided and arguing over which way the 1 percenters threw the bone—"Over here! NO! Over there!" People have to be able to read between the lines.

NANCY LINDSAY

☞ Comments drawn from our website  
[letters@thenation.com](mailto:letters@thenation.com)



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## Strike for the Planet

**A** year ago, inspired by Swedish schoolgirl Greta Thunberg, young people around the world began climate striking—walking out of school for a few hours on Fridays to demand action against the global warming that darkens their future. In March, when 1.4 million kids around the world

walked out of school, they asked for adults to join them next time. That next time is September 20 (in a few countries, September 27), and it is shaping up to be the biggest day of climate action in the planet's history. Everyone from the members of big trade unions to over 1,200 workers at Amazon's headquarters, and from college students to senior citizens, will be setting the day aside to rally in cities and towns for faster action from the world's governments and industries. You can find out what's happening in your community at [globalclimatestrike.net](http://globalclimatestrike.net).

But it will be a success on the scale we need only if lots of people who aren't the usual suspects join in. Many people, of course, can't do without a day's pay or work for bosses who would fire them if they missed work. So it really matters that those of us with the freedom to rally do so. Since I published the first book for a general audience on climate change 30 years ago this month, I've had lots of time to think about the various ways to move people to action. Let me offer a few:

§ **Strike**, because the people who did the least to cause this crisis suffer first and worst. The people losing their farms to desert and watching their islands sink beneath the waves aren't the ones who burned the coal and gas and oil.

§ **Strike**, because coral reefs are so gloriously beautiful and complex—and so vulnerable.

§ **Strike**, because we've already lost over half the animals on the planet since 1970; the earth is a lonelier place.

§ **Strike**, because our governments move with such painful slowness, treating climate change as, at worst, one problem on a long list.

§ **Strike**, because this could be a great opportunity—and maybe the last opportunity—to transform our society toward justice and toward joy. Green New Deals have been proposed around the world, and they are a way forward.

§ **Strike**, because forests now seem like fires waiting to happen.

§ **Strike**, because young people have asked us to. In a well-ordered society, when kids make a reasonable request, their elders should say yes—in this case with real pride and hope that the next generations are standing up for what matters.

§ **Strike**, because half the children in Delhi have irreversible lung damage simply from breathing the air.

§ **Strike**, because Exxon and the rest knew all about global warming in the 1980s, then lied so they could keep cashing in.

§ **Strike**, because what we do this decade will matter for hundreds of thousands of years.

**Strike**, because the temperature has hit as high as 129 degrees Fahrenheit (or 54 degrees Celsius) in big cities in recent summers. The human body can survive that, but only for a few hours.

§ **Strike**, because the United Nations estimates that unchecked climate change could create 1 billion refugees by 2050.

§ **Strike**, because the big banks continue to lend hundreds of billions of dollars to the fossil fuel industry; people are literally trying to get rich off the destruction of the planet.

§ **Strike**, because what animal fouls its own nest? § **Strike**, because indigenous people around the world are trying to protect their rightful land from the coal and oil companies—and in the process protect all of us.

§ **Strike**, because science is real, because physics exists, because chemistry matters.

§ **Strike**, so you can look your grandchild—or anyone else's—in the eye.

§ **Strike**, because the world we were given is still so sweet.

BILL MCKIBBEN FOR *THE NATION*



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Cover illustration by Philip Burke.

## BY THE NUMBERS



52

Years Israel has occupied the Jordan Valley in the West Bank

8,775

Number of Palestinians living in the areas of the Jordan Valley that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has promised to annex

22–30

Percentage of the West Bank that will be annexed if Netanyahu proceeds

85

Percentage of land in the Jordan Valley that Palestinians are already barred from using or entering

20

Average available liters of water per day per person for Palestinians in the Jordan Valley

50–100

Minimum liters of water per day per person recommended by the World Health Organization

—Alice Markham-Cantor

## Snowden Speaks

*Why his new memoir is essential reading.*

To earlier generations of *Nation* readers, the phrase “Speak for yourself, John,” was what we’d now call a meme. In Longfellow’s “The Courtship of Miles Standish,” it’s *Mayflower* passenger Priscilla Mullins’s retort to John Alden, who courts her on behalf of his friend Standish (while secretly in love with her himself). Though the story is likely apocryphal, Mullins and Alden did marry, producing a host of descendants, including Longfellow himself and, according to his new memoir—*The Nation*’s exclusive excerpt begins on page 12—Edward Snowden.

Even for those of us who’ve followed the Snowden revelations closely, *Permanent Record* is full of surprises. Far from the low-level IT drone depicted in most early press accounts (and even further from the naive, possibly traitorous Putin pawn trashed by his critics), the narrator of this book is a thoughtful, painfully self-aware intelligence professional who found himself forced to confront and expose the reality of mass surveillance—and the immense powers of coercion it gave to authorities who, thanks to technology he helped to create, are now able to strip the personal privacy of anyone connected to the Internet.

A deeply reluctant whistleblower, Snowden also emerges as a peculiarly American patriot, with roots that go back to Plymouth Rock on his mother’s side and some of the earliest Quaker settlers on his father’s. The Snowdens, who arrived in Maryland in 1658, once owned all of Anne Arundel County—including the land on which Fort Meade, home of the National Security Agency, stands today.

The elaborate security surrounding the release of this book is a reminder that, despite his relaxed demeanor and normal-seeming life in Moscow, Snowden is still not safe. But then, neither are we: As his memoir makes clear, all the techniques he exposed in 2013 remain in place. For that renewed warning—and for finally speaking for himself—he deserves our thanks. D.D. GUTTENPLAN

## Making the World Safe for Brand Trump

*What is the president’s foreign policy vision? With Bolton gone, we’re about to find out.*

It was only a matter of time. By all accounts, national security adviser John Bolton had long alienated many of the key players in the Trump White House. The flap over the Afghanistan peace agreement, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo favoring a deal with the Taliban and Bolton opposing one, was merely the final straw, leading to his abrupt dismissal on the evening of September 9. While

personal antipathy—Bolton was widely reviled for his brash manner and self-serving ways—and discord over Afghanistan were the immediate causes of his ouster, it was a deeper rift over US foreign policy that doomed his tenure at the White House. Though aligned on certain issues, Bolton and Donald Trump possess very different visions of America’s role in the world, and with Bolton out of the picture, it is Trump’s worldview that will now prevail.

Considered an extremist by many for his staunch opposition to international agreements and his advocacy for the use of military force against perceived enemies, Bolton is nevertheless an exemplar of the security-driven brand of politics that has dominated Republican policy-making since Ronald Reagan’s day. From this perspective, an “evil empire” still exists—now Russian rather than Soviet but still governed by Moscow—as well as a constellation of anti-American states (Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela) that must be crushed by any means necessary.

As Trump’s security adviser and director of the National Security Council (NSC), Bolton labored assiduously to promote these objectives. His first target was the nuclear deal with Iran, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Viewing the agreement as a boon to Iran’s clerical leadership, since it allowed that regime to remain in power, even if deprived of nuclear weapons, Bolton convinced Trump he could get a better deal by bringing Tehran to its knees through harsh economic sanctions. When the Iranians failed to knuckle under and instead responded with provocations of their own—such as shooting down an unarmed US drone over what they claimed was Iranian territory—Bolton advocated military action against them.

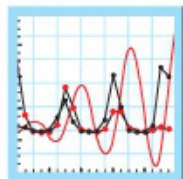
Bolton’s next target was the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia, a 1987 agreement that bans the possession of ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers. This agreement, negotiated and signed by Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, was one of the last great achievements of Cold War détente but has come to be seen by Republican hard-liners as a lamentable constraint on America’s ability to deploy missiles aimed at Russia’s and China’s critical military infrastructure. Bolton succeeded in winning Trump’s approval for a US withdrawal from the treaty—which became final in August.

Bolton’s traditional Republican views are also evident in his ongoing hostility toward Cuba and North Korea. For him and his conservative cohort, the survival of those communist regimes represents unfinished business from the Cold War that needs to be corrected as vigorously and expeditiously as possible. Hence the reversal of the Obama administration’s relaxed travel and trade restrictions on Cuba and Bolton’s repeated threats to use force against North Korea for its nuclear and missile programs.

Although the president went along with many of Bolton’s initiatives, Trump harbors a very different worldview. He was never a member of the GOP foreign policy establishment, nor does he share its ingrained hostility toward Russia or its readiness to employ military force. Rather, he has forged his own foreign policy outlook, one packed with very different grievances and priorities.

(continued on page 8)

COMMENT



THE SCORE/BRYCE COVERT + MIKE KONCZAL

# In the Shadow of Debt

**S**tudent debt is transforming the lives of young adults, and the evidence of its damage is piling up. Student debt drives people away from public service jobs toward higher-paying ones with no civic purpose. It is linked with lower rates of entrepreneurship, which is deadly for our economy that already has too few new businesses. And it is associated with a delay in all kinds of markers of adulthood: buying a car, purchasing a home, even starting a family. As the number of people carrying student debt into their late 30s and early 40s increases, these effects will drag on, with ripple effects across the economy.

But student debt affects not just the student debtors themselves. It is reworking the lives of parents and families. In her new book

## *The burden of student debt on the family is new, and it is not inevitable.*

*Indebted*, economic anthropologist Caitlin Zaloom follows dozens of middle-class families as they navigate the massive industry of college aid, financing, and debt. She discovers that many of them end up trapped between what they feel is their moral obligation toward higher education and their financial reality.

Like all American families, the parents in Zaloom's book want to ensure that their children have opportunities to be independent adults. But in order to achieve this, families feel they must go into debt, often endangering their place in the middle class. With college, parents are often making a risky gamble that a large investment today will give their children a comfortable life in the future.

When college was free or at least widely affordable, none of this was necessary. Now most middle-class families require financing to send their kids to college. This takes the form of borrowing against future earnings in student loans and saving current money in tax-deferred private accounts like 529s for future use. Using finance to fund higher education has exacerbated inequality and leaves behind those most vulnerable. This is well understood when it comes to private savings

accounts, the tax benefits of which accrue to those with higher incomes.

But there's a more subtle way that finance hinders working- and middle-class aspirations. Moving money through time with finance presumes a stable and predictable income and life that isn't available for most people. Borrowing against future earnings assumes that money will be there; saving now assumes more urgent needs won't arise before then. These savings can be eaten away by illness, disability, addiction, divorce, or any number of other ways things can fall apart.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process also takes for granted an idealized family structure, one in which parents openly discuss money between themselves and with their children. The FAFSA requires students to get documents from parents who may not be interested in providing them. When students are audited for financial aid, Zaloom finds, some parents don't want to participate in the scrutiny of their finances.

The FAFSA also decides who is and isn't counted as family. It considers the family two parents and the children who depend on them. But many families don't fit this model, and the ones that do conform tend to be wealthier. In reality, parents may have other family costs; they may help pay for the health care of a cousin or the education of a niece. That means when it comes to student aid, families that don't match the nuclear standard get punished financially.

In all this, there's a clear political ideology at play. Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously said in response to whether society has an obligation to solve problems, "There is no such thing [as society]. There are individual men and women, and there are families." The last part of this quote is often forgotten, but it is key to understanding modern conservatism, which believes that the family unit should be the primary place to handle risk. This is the opposite of how the left has understood this. One of the core arguments for the creation of social insurance was that it is difficult for individuals and families to save against all the possible risks in life but that in aggregate

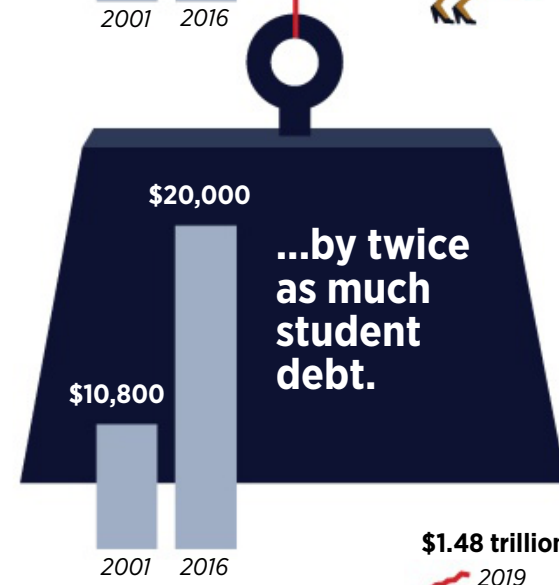
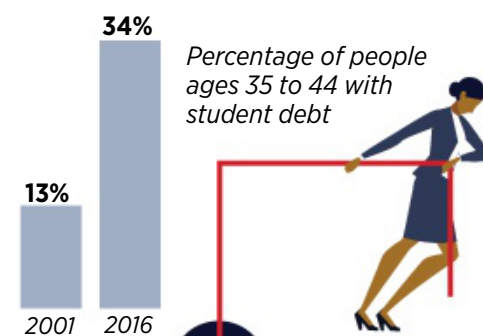
these numbers are predictable. Socializing this risk creates the freedom for people to start businesses or invest in their family or do any of the other things they want to do. The burden of student debt on the family is new, and it's not inevitable. By socializing the cost, we can upend the system: It's time to enact free college and wipe out student debt.

Mike Konczal

## The Aging Student Debt Generation

The economy is feeling the effects as people dragged down by student debt enter their late 30s and early 40s.

### Twice as many adults are weighed down...



US student debt

\$0.24 trillion  
2003

And the problem keeps growing.

Sources: New York Fed Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax; Survey of Consumer Finances  
2019 infographic: Tracy Matsue Loeffelholz

# Q&A NAOMI KLEIN

The essays collected in Naomi Klein's new book, *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal*, come together around a central verdict: that the climate

crisis cannot be separated from colonialism, indigenous genocide, and slavery. These historical processes established not only the extractive industries that have led to climate change but also an extractive mindset, "a way of viewing both the natural world and the majority of its inhabitants as resources to use up," Klein writes. For her, the best way to fight both is with the Green New Deal, which offers a way to "get clean" as well as to "begin to redress the founding crimes of our nations."

—Lynne Feeley

**LF:** Many of the essays focus on what you call the "deep stories" that are interfering with people's willingness to confront the climate crisis. Can you discuss what these stories are and how they are blocking climate action?

**NK:** Some are the economic stories of neoliberalism—about how things go terribly wrong when people try to work together and how, if we just get out of the way of the market, the benefits will trickle down to everyone else.

But the deeper story is about our relationship to the natural world. In settler colonial countries like the United States, Canada—where I was born—and Australia, continents were "discovered" when Europe was hitting its own ecological boundaries, when

it had felled its great forests, when its own fish stocks had collapsed, and when it had hunted its great animals to extinction. If you look at how the early European explorers were describing this cornucopia of nature, it was, "We will never run out of nature again."

So the idea of limitless nature is baked into the stories of settler colonial countries. I think this is why resistance to climate action is strongest in these countries, why it is not just a threat to a right-wing worldview that thinks that the market is always right but a fundamental threat to these national narratives.

**LF:** Your essay "Season of Smoke" is a personal narrative of the summer of 2017, when you were on the Sunshine Coast in British Columbia. It's different, in part because your son, Toma, is at the center of it. Why did you choose this form?

**NK:** When we think about disasters, we think of very dramatic events. But that experience of just being in the smoke for well over a month, being aware of how much of the continent was similarly choking on smoke—it isn't dramatic. It's just this low-level kind of despair, the physical manifestation of lack of possibility. I decided to write it as a diary, as opposed to a reported piece, to capture that—

the length of it, the grind of it. It's definitely one of the sadder pieces. People are constantly accusing me of being hopeful just because I haven't completely given up. Is that really what qualifies as hope these days?

In terms of writing about my son, Toma, I think we write about what we know, and we write about our lives. There's room for clinical writing on climate change, and we need those good scientific papers. But for people who are trying to reach people's hearts, I don't think we should take ourselves out of it. We need to help other people find ways to express their grief and their anger and their hope and their love of what they want to protect by risking doing it ourselves.

**LF:** You write that much of what will determine the suc-

cess of the Green New Deal will involve actions taken by social movements, but you end the book with a discussion of the 2020 election in the United States. How do you see the stakes of the election when it comes to climate justice?

**NK:** The stakes of the election are almost unbearably high. It's why I wrote the book and decided to put it out now and why I'll be doing whatever I can to help push people toward supporting a candidate with the most ambitious Green New Deal platform. I think we desperately need a new story and a sense of common purpose. The Green New Deal is really our best shot at building that kind of common purpose—of putting electoral power behind the movements that are organizing from below and pushing for their vision. ■

*People are constantly accusing me of being hopeful just because I haven't completely given up. Is that really what qualifies as hope these days?*



The Cuban flag is shown on the left side of the page, featuring a red triangle at the top with a white star, a white triangle at the bottom, and a blue triangle on the right. The flag is partially obscured by a red diagonal shape at the bottom right of the page.

# CUBA: HAVANA AND VIÑALES

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It's a critical moment for progressives to serve as “citizen diplomats” because President Trump has abandoned civil diplomacy with Cuba, as well as with so many other nations. And it is *vital* to do so—to support the socioeconomic changes that are taking place in Cuba and to contribute to an informed, reasoned debate over what a better US policy should be.

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THE  
**Nation.**TRAVELS

(continued from page 4)

To begin with the obvious, Trump seeks a world in which the Trump Organization and what's now being called the Trump dynasty can flourish. This may seem trivial compared with the grand themes of the past—"making the world safe for democracy" it's not—but it's likely foremost in his mind. He clearly wants to be remembered as one of America's greatest presidents, with giant statues and other monuments to his glory. He also seeks a global environment in which his progeny can build Trump Towers virtually anywhere on the planet. This is not a world riven by perpetual military conflict or made uninhabitable by thermonuclear devastation. Although Trump is unlikely ever to articulate a pacifist message, his intense desire to promote the Trump brand abroad and ensure a legacy of personal greatness mitigates, to some degree, any inclination he may possess to engage in reckless military action against putative enemies.

In line with this outlook, Trump is open to grand bargains with erstwhile adversaries, as long as such agreements can be portrayed as burnishing his legacy of greatness. Yes, he characterized the Iran agreement as a "bad deal" and pulled out of the INF because it purportedly advantaged Russia. But he is not opposed to accords with those countries per se. If he can oversee an agreement that is viewed as producing significant advantages for the United States, he'll jump right on board.

There is, of course, another side to this coin: Trump prefers dealing with fellow autocrats who can join him in a private room with no one else but interpreters and hammer out a deal. Trump's affinity for foreign dictators has long been noted, but

it will require further scrutiny in Bolton's absence. Hard-line Republicans, with their abiding loyalty to Cold War precepts, continue to profess adherence to anti-communist shibboleths like freedom, liberty, and democracy. This naturally aligns them with the NATO countries against Russia and with Japan and South Korea against China and North Korea. But Trump, for all his bluster, shares none of these premises. His core values are accumulating private wealth, promoting the Trump brand, ensuring the continued supremacy of white people, silencing detractors and journalists, and perpetuating the dominance of fossil fuels. Any foreign leaders who profess similar values are likely to be welcomed at the White House; those who don't can expect a cold shoulder from Washington, whatever their historical ties to this country.

With Bolton gone, Trump is likely to reorganize the NSC staff in ways more to his liking. (Most of the figures now being considered as Bolton's replacement are administration loyalists with no ax to grind.) How this will play out in terms of specific issues cannot be foreseen, but it could ease the way for fresh talks with the Iranians and a new summit with Kim Jong-un of North Korea. Also possible is the convening of new arms control talks with the Russians, possibly increasing the odds for survival of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, due to expire in February 2021.

This is not to say that Trump is wholly allergic to the use of military force. Indeed, some US military response to the recent drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities—claimed by the Houthi rebels in Yemen but which Pompeo said were directed by the Iranians—is likely. Armed confrontations between US and Chinese naval vessels in the South China Sea are also conceivable. But extended US intervention and nation building, as undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan, is not a likely option.

At the same time, we should expect increased US backing for right-wing strongmen like President Andrzej Duda of Poland and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary. Accompanying this trend will be growing support for anti-immigrant measures worldwide, a retreat from advocating LGBTQ rights abroad, intensified attacks on international efforts to curb the use of fossil fuels, and the accelerated use of trade sanctions to punish insufficiently servile enemies and allies. Whether these developments will, in the end, outweigh any benefits that might arise from Bolton's departure remains to be seen, but it should be clear that it will be Trump's agenda that dominates US foreign policy from now on, not that of his subordinate. **MICHAEL T. KLARE**

*As The Nation went to press, Trump named Robert C. O'Brien, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs at the State Department, to replace Bolton. O'Brien, whom Trump interviewed for his previous job, described the president as "the greatest hostage negotiator in history."*

## COMIX NATION

MATT BORS



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Katha Pollitt



## Exonerating Aunt Lydia

*Margaret Atwood's The Testaments gives the sadistic female misogynist undue credit.*

LABOR

### Who's the Boss?

Uber and Lyft have long been dogged by criticism over their drivers' working conditions, and state governments have done little to bring the companies' practices in line with existing labor standards. That is set to change with the passage of Assembly Bill 5 in California, which Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom is expected to sign. The law will make it harder to misclassify employees as independent contractors and could give more than a million California workers labor protections like the minimum wage, health benefits, and sick leave. This will apply to workers in many industries, but AB5 is receiving international attention because it could require Uber and Lyft to consider their drivers as employees.

Yet Tony West, Uber's chief legal officer (and presidential candidate Kamala Harris's brother-in-law), insists that Uber does not owe its drivers benefits or the right to unionize because driving "is outside the usual course of Uber's business, which is serving as a technology platform for several different types of digital marketplaces." When AB5 goes into effect in 2020, Uber says it will keep classifying its drivers as independent contractors, setting up years of court battles. And it's not just Uber: The food delivery app DoorDash has vowed to spend \$90 million on a campaign to overturn AB5 by a ballot initiative in 2020.

AB5 is a huge step for California workers in and out of the gig economy, but the fight to protect workers from misclassification is far from over. —Spencer Green

When I first read *The Handmaid's Tale* decades ago, I thought Offred was a wimp. She's living in a violent, misogynist Christian theocracy, raped and impregnated, forbidden to read, and sees hanged corpses on her mandatory daily walk—and she misses hand cream?

In fact, Offred's lack of obvious heroism was one of the novel's strengths. It let the reader identify with her and see daily life in Gilead in all its grinding, mundane awfulness. It's the source of the novel's strange, indelible aura of eerie depression. Besides, was Offred really so wimpy? If you had to live as a reproductive slave, thinking about small lost comforts might help you avoid the fates of feistier characters: mutilated, executed, or shipped off to die in a radioactive wasteland.

The wonderful TV series manages to capture the book's ominous mood while casting Elisabeth Moss as a more daring and energetic Offred. This makes for a more exciting, plotty narrative, and it might even have gotten to Margaret Atwood, because her just-published sequel, *The Testaments*, is fast-paced, full of action and suspense, with quick crosscuts among its three narrators. The novel is shot through with dry humor and clever touches and culminates with the end of Gilead—not a spoiler, because the first novel ends, like the sequel, with an academic conference on Gilead studies from the safe post-theocratic future.

The book is tremendous fun: I binge-read it in a day and a half. That's a tribute to Atwood's skill as a storyteller, because I have questions about the inner logic of her dystopia.

The major narrator is, of all people, Aunt Lydia, the sadistic and fanatical enforcer of women's subjection in the original book. (She's a more central character in the TV show, deliciously played by Ann Dowd with a prim little ghost of a smile.) "Aunt Lydia" has become a synonym for prissy reactionaries like Phyllis Schlafly who enforce patriarchal norms in return for a bit of power, but surprise—the Aunt Lydia of *The Testaments* is a closet feminist playing a very long game. As a family court judge brutalized during the Gileadean takeover and given the choice to join or die, she's been collecting dirt on the

Commanders, the ruling male elite, for years. Her complicated plan to get the truth about Gilead's rulers out to the free world involves the two other narrators: a bold Canadian teen and a lonely young Gileadean woman whom Aunt Lydia saved from a scary forced marriage. And it succeeds. Her revelations set off the downfall of the regime.

In *The New York Times*, Michelle Goldberg has suggested that Atwood is giving the truth too much credit. I agree with her. It's a sobering thought to a writer that none of the many shocking and sordid disclosures about Donald Trump have damaged his popularity with his base. Atwood's assumption that the truth could bring down a regime is the human rights version of the old hope of the oppressed Russian peasantry: "If the czar only knew!"

There's another kind of wish fulfillment at work in *The Testaments*. Women like Aunt Lydia, Atwood seems to be saying, may be more on women's side than you think,

even if circumstances force them to gouge out some eyes or supervise the occasional stoning. Power in the separate women's sphere is, after all, real power, although limited, and one of the things Aunt Lydia and her fellow senior Aunts do in the beginning is to maximize their independence by banning men from their residence, Ardua Hall. It's not clear how Aunt Lydia has used her power to help women, beyond framing a male sex criminal or two. It's hard not to be reminded of the nuns who ran the cruel Magdalene Laundries and mother and baby homes of Ireland. Didn't they say they were helping women, too?

*The Testaments* reads as if Atwood wanted to exonerate her magnificently evil creation twice over: Aunt Lydia cooperated to survive and to bring down the patriarchy. But the Aunts of the world need no exculpatory rationale. The cooperation of women is essential to any society,



*The Handmaid's Tale sequel reads as if Atwood wanted to exonerate her magnificently evil creation twice over.*



including misogynist ones. Even ISIS has its female devotees, now busily tormenting “heretic” women in Syria. “Aryan” German women adored Hitler, even as he deprived them of their rights. The Nazis made good use of separate-sphere ideology, too, putting mothers on a pedestal, giving girls and women their own organizations with traditions and banners and uniforms.

As long as there are privileges to hand out as well as punishments, as long as basic material needs are supplied and there is enough religious or nationalistic or ideological fervor to keep things exciting, it is not that hard to get women to go along, just as men go along.

Even if Gilead succeeded in brainwashing its citizens into Christian fundamentalism, it could never have lasted in its harsh original form. The society promoted too much punishment and not enough pleasure. The only entertainment was religious mania, executions, and for

lucky women, babies. Except for the elites who enjoyed a steady supply of homemade fancy desserts, even the food was terrible—ersatz cheese and soups made out of kitchen scraps. The Romans had the right idea: bread and circuses. And plenty of hand cream.

If it had managed to end its wars and become more prosperous, Gilead might have come to resemble Saudi Arabia, a theocracy where banned imports find their way in, a subject caste does the hard work, much foreign media is censored or banned, and only a few people have to be tortured and beheaded as an example to others. There are plenty of Aunt Lydias in Saudi Arabia; they’re instrumental to the functioning of every country where women are subordinate, including our own.

And when those regimes are overthrown, there will be plenty of Aunt Lydias who will claim they had a hand in it. ■

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*There are plenty of Aunt Lydias in Saudi Arabia; they’re instrumental to the functioning of every country where women are subordinate.*

**SNAPSHOT** / RICARDO MORAES

## Amazon Apocalypse

A tree burns as a tract of land is cleared by farmers in Rio Pardo, Brazil, on September 15. Since Jair Bolsonaro became president, the number of fires in the Amazon has jumped 85 percent. In August, smoke traveled 1,800 miles and darkened the skies in São Paulo, the most populous city in South America.

### NEW AIR FORCE ANTHEM

“Air Force says it sent crews to Trump’s Scottish resort up to 40 times.”

—*Politico*

Calvin Trillin  
Deadline Poet

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,  
Foreign threats ready to quell.  
As we fly, we begin to ponder  
Cushy nights in a Trump-owned hotel.  
We’ve reserved the accommodations  
And we know the president’s thrilled.  
The minibar is not too far.  
And Trump makes out as citizens are billed.



# LOVE AT FIRST BYTE

In this excerpt from his new memoir, *Permanent Record*, published exclusively in *The Nation*, the world's most famous whistleblower describes his first adventures in cyberspace.

EDWARD SNOWDEN

**I** WAS JUST SHY OF MY NINTH BIRTHDAY WHEN MY family moved to Maryland. We lived in Crofton, halfway between Annapolis and Washington, DC, where the developments all have quaint names like Crofton Towne, Crofton Mews, The Ridings. Crofton itself is a planned community fitted around the curves of the Crofton Country Club. (The fact that a country club is at the center tells you everything.) Our street was Knights Bridge Turn, a broad, lazy loop of split-level housing, wide driveways, and two-car garages. I had a Huffy ten-speed bike and delivered *The Capital*, a venerable newspaper published in Annapolis, whose daily distribution became distressingly erratic, especially in the winter, especially between Crofton Parkway and Route 450, which, as it passed by our neighborhood, acquired a different name: Defense Highway.

For my parents this was an exciting time. It took my father just forty minutes to get to his new posting as a chief warrant officer in the Aeronautical Engineering Division at Coast Guard Headquarters, at the time located at Buzzard Point in southern Washington, DC. And it took my mother just twenty minutes to get to her new job at the National Security Agency, whose boxy futuristic headquarters, topped with radomes and sheathed in copper to seal in the communications signals, forms the heart of Fort Meade.

It was soon after we moved to Crofton that my father brought home our first computer, a Compaq Presario 425, list price \$1,399 but purchased

at his military discount, and initially set up—much to my mother's chagrin—smack in the middle of the dining-room table. From the moment it appeared, the computer and I were inseparable. If previously I'd been loath to go outside and kick around a ball, now the very idea seemed ludicrous.

This Compaq became my constant companion—my third parent, second sibling, and first love. It came into my life just at the age when I was first discovering an independent self and the multiple worlds that can simultaneously exist within this world. That process of exploration was so exciting that it made me take for granted and even neglect, for a while at least, the family and life that I already had. Another way of saying this is I was just experiencing the early throes of puberty. But this was a technologized puberty, and the tremendous changes that it wrought in me were, in a way, being wrought everywhere, in everyone.

**From the moment it appeared, the computer and I were inseparable. Going outside to kick around a ball now seemed ludicrous.**

My parents would call me to get ready for school, but I wouldn't hear them. They'd call me to wash up for dinner, but I'd pretend not to hear them. And whenever I was reminded that the computer was a shared computer and not my personal machine, I'd relinquish my seat with such reluctance that as my father, or mother, or sister took their turn, they'd have to order me out of the room entirely lest I hover moodily over their shoulders and offer advice.

I'd try to rush them through their tasks, so I could get back to mine, which were so much more important—like playing *Loom*. As technology had advanced, games involving *Pong* paddles and helicopters had lost ground to ones that realized that at the heart of every computer user was a book reader, a being with the desire not just for

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Edward Snowden worked as a contractor for the CIA and NSA. Currently, he serves as president of the board of directors of the Freedom of the Press Foundation.

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Excerpted from *Permanent Record* by Edward Snowden, published September 17, 2019, by Henry Holt and Company. Copyright © 2019 by Edward Snowden. All rights reserved.



Burke 19

sensation but for story. The crude Nintendo, Atari, and Sega games of my childhood, with plots along the lines of (and this is a real example) rescuing the president of the United States from ninjas, now gave way to detailed reimaginings of the ancient tales that I'd paged through while lying on the carpet of my grandmother's house.

*Loom* was about a society of Weavers whose elders create a secret loom that controls the world, or, according to the script of the game, that weaves "subtle patterns of influence into the very fabric of reality." When a young boy discovers the loom's power, he's forced into exile, and everything spirals into chaos until the world decides that a secret fate machine might not be such a great idea, after all.

Unbelievable, sure. But then again, it's just a game.

Still, it wasn't lost on me, even at that young age, that the titular machine of the game was a symbol of sorts for the computer on which I was playing it. The loom's rainbow-colored threads were like the computer's rainbow-colored internal wires, and the lone gray thread that foretold an uncertain future was like the long gray phone cord that came out of the back of the computer and connected it to the great wide world beyond. There, for me, was the true magic: with just this cord, the Compaq's expansion card and modem, and a working phone, I could dial up and connect to something new called the Internet.

**N**OWADAYS, CONNECTIVITY IS JUST PRESUMED. SMARTPHONES, LAPTOPS, desktops, everything's connected, always. Connected to what exactly? How? It doesn't matter. You just tap the icon your older relatives call "the Internet button" and boom, you've got it: the news, pizza delivery, streaming music, and streaming video that we used to call TV and movies. Back then, however, we plugged our modems directly into the wall, with manly twelve-year-old hands.

I'm not saying that I knew much about what the Internet was, or how exactly I was connecting to it, but I did understand the miraculousness of it all. Because in those days, when you told the computer to connect, you were setting off an entire process wherein the computer would beep and hiss like a traffic jam of snakes, after which—and it could take lifetimes, or at least whole minutes—you could then pick up any other phone in the house on an extension line and actually hear the computers talking. You couldn't actually understand what they were saying to each other, of course, since they were speaking in a machine language that transmitted up to fourteen thousand symbols per second. Still, even that incomprehension was an astonishingly clear indication that phone calls were no longer just for older teenage sisters.

From the age of twelve or so, I tried to spend my every waking moment online. The Internet was my sanctuary; the Web became my jungle gym, my treehouse, my fortress, my classroom without walls. If it were possible, I became even more sedentary. If it were possible, I became even paler. Gradually, I stopped sleeping at night and instead slept by day in school. My grades went into free fall.

I wasn't worried by this academic setback, however, and I'm not sure

that my parents were, either. After all, the education that I was getting online was far better and even far more practical for my future career prospects than anything provided by school. That, at least, was what I kept telling my mother and father.

My curiosity felt as vast as the Internet itself: a limitless space that was growing exponentially, adding webpages by the day, by the hour, by the minute, on subjects that I knew nothing about, on subjects that I'd never heard of before—yet the moment that I did hear about them, I'd develop an insatiable desire to understand them in their every detail. My appetite wasn't limited to serious tech subjects like how to fix a CD-ROM drive, of course. I also spent plenty of time on gaming sites searching for god-mode cheat codes for *Doom* and *Quake*. But I'm not sure I was able to say where one subject ended and another began. A crash course on how to build my own computer led to a crash course in processor architecture, with side excursions into information about martial arts, guns, sports cars, and—full disclosure—softcore-ish goth-y porn.

**When a young boy discovers the loom's power, he's forced into exile—until the world decides a secret fate machine might not be such a great idea, after all.**

**I**T WAS LIKE I WAS IN A RACE WITH THE TECHNOLOGY, IN the same way that some of the teenage boys around me were in a race with one another to see who'd grow the tallest, or who'd get facial hair first. I found it so demanding I started to resent my parents whenever they—in response to a particularly substandard report card or a detention I received—would force me off the computer on a school night. After repeated parental warnings and threats of grounding, I'd finally relent and print out whatever file I was reading and bring the dot-matrix pages up to bed, studying in hard copy until my parents had gone to bed themselves, and then I'd tiptoe out into the dark. Guiding myself by the glow of the screen saver, I'd wake the computer up and go online, holding my pillows against the machine to stifle the dial tone of the modem and the ever-intensifying hiss of its connection.

**To this day, I consider the 1990s online to have been the most pleasant and successful anarchy I've ever experienced.**

How can I explain it, to someone who wasn't there? Younger readers might think of the nascent Internet as way too slow, the nascent Web as too ugly and unentertaining. But that would be wrong. Back then, being online was another life, separate and distinct from Real Life. And it was up to each individual user to determine for themselves where one ended and the other began.

This was so inspiring: the freedom to imagine something entirely new, the freedom to start over. A typical GeoCities site, for

example, might have a flashing background that alternated between green and blue, with white text scrolling like an exclamatory chyron across the middle—Read This First!!!—below the .gif of a dancing hamster. But to me, all these quirks and tics of amateur production merely indicated that the guiding intelligence behind the site was human, and unique.

Computer-science professors and systems engineers, moonlighting English majors and basement-dwelling armchair political economists were all only too happy to share their research and convictions—not for any financial reward, but merely to win converts to their cause. And whether that cause was PC or Mac, macrobiotic diets or the abolition of the death penalty, I was interested. I was interested because they were enthused.

As the millennium approached, the online world would become increasingly centralized and

consolidated, with both governments and businesses accelerating their attempts to intervene in what had always been a fundamentally peer-to-peer relationship. But for one brief and beautiful stretch of time—a stretch that, fortunately for me, coincided almost exactly with my adolescence—the Internet was mostly made of, by, and for the people. Its purpose was to enlighten, not to monetize, and it was administered more by a provisional cluster of perpetually shifting collective norms than by exploitative, globally enforceable terms-of-service agreements. To this day, I consider the 1990s online to have been the most pleasant and successful anarchy I’ve ever experienced.

I was especially involved with the Web-based bulletin-board systems or BBSes. You could pick a username and type out whatever message you wanted to post. Any and all messages that replied to your post would be organized by thread. Imagine the longest email chain you’ve ever been on, but in public. There were also chat applications, like Internet Relay Chat, which provided an immediate-gratification instant-message version of the same experience. You could discuss any topic in real time, or at least as close to real time as a telephone conversation.

Most of the chatting I did was about how to build my own computer, and the responses I received were so considered and thorough, so generous and kind, they’d be unthinkable today. My panicked query about why a certain chipset for which I’d saved up my allowance didn’t seem to be compatible with the motherboard I’d already gotten for Christmas would elicit a two-thousand-word explanation and note of advice from a professional tenured computer scientist on the other side of the country. I attribute this civility, so far removed from our current social-media sniping, to the high bar for entry at the time. After all, the only people on these boards at the time were the people who could be there—who wanted to be there badly enough, who had the proficiency and passion—because the Internet of the 1990s wasn’t just one click away. It took significant effort just to log on.

Once, a certain BBS that I was on tried to coordinate casual in-the-

## THE FIRST THING I EVER HACKED WAS BEDTIME.

It felt unfair, being forced by my parents to go to sleep—before they went to sleep, before my sister went to sleep, when I wasn’t even tired. Life’s first little injustice.

Many of the first 2,000 or so nights of my life ended in civil disobedience: crying, begging, bargaining, until—on night 2,193, the night I turned six years old—I discovered direct action. The authorities weren’t interested in calls for reform, and I wasn’t born yesterday. I had just had one of the best days of my young life, complete with friends, a party, and even gifts, and I wasn’t about to let it end just because everyone else had to go home. So I went about covertly resetting all the clocks in the house by several hours. The microwave’s clock was easier than the stove’s to roll back, if only because it was easier to reach.

When the authorities—in their unlimited ignorance—failed to notice, I was mad with power, galloping laps around the living room. I, the master of time, would never again be sent to bed, was free. And so it was that I fell asleep on the floor, having finally seen the sunset on June 21, the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. When I awoke, the clocks in the house once again matched my father’s watch.



flesh meetings: in DC, in New York, at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. After being pressured to attend—and promised extravagant evenings of eating and drinking—I finally just told everyone how old I was. I was afraid that some of my correspondents might stop interacting with

me, but instead they became, if anything, even more encouraging. One guy offered to ship me secondhand computers through the mail, free of charge.

I might have told the BBSers my age, but I never told them my name, because one of

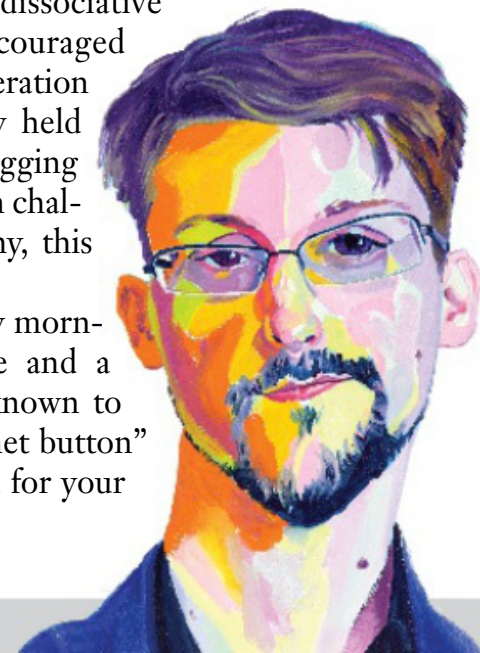
the greatest joys of these platforms was that on them I didn’t have to be who I was. I could be anybody. I could take cover under virtually any handle, or “nym,” as they were called, and suddenly become an older, taller, manlier version of myself. I could even be multiple selves. I took advantage of this feature by asking what I sensed were my more amateur questions on what seemed to me the more amateur boards, under different personas each time. My computer skills were improving so swiftly that instead of being proud of all the progress I’d made, I was embarrassed by my previous ignorance. I’d tell myself that squ33ker had been so dumb when “he” had asked that question about chipset compatibility way back, long ago, last Wednesday.

**F**OR ALL OF THIS COOPERATIVE, COLLECTIVIST FREE-CULTURE ETHOS, I’M not going to pretend that the competition wasn’t merciless, or that the population—almost uniformly male, heterosexual, and hormonally charged—didn’t occasionally erupt into cruel and petty squabbles.

But in the absence of real names, the people who claimed to hate you weren’t real people. They didn’t know anything about you beyond what you argued, and how you argued it. If, or rather when, one of your arguments incurred some online wrath, you could simply drop that screenname and assume another mask, under the cover of which you could even join in the mimetic pile-on, beating up on your disowned avatar as if it were a stranger. I can’t tell you what sweet relief that sometimes was.

In the 1990s, the Internet had yet to fall victim to the greatest iniquity in digital history: the move by both government and businesses to link, as intimately as possible, users’ online personas to their offline legal identity. Kids used to be able to go online and say the dumbest things one day without having to be held accountable for them the next. This might not strike you as the healthiest environment in which to grow up, and yet it is precisely the only environment in which you can grow up—by which I mean that the early Internet’s dissociative opportunities actually encouraged me and those of my generation to change our most deeply held opinions, instead of just digging in and defending them when challenged. To me, and to many, this felt like freedom.

You could wake up every morning and pick a new name and a new face by which to be known to the world—as if the “Internet button” were actually a reset button for your  
(continued on page 26)



**One of the greatest joys of these platforms was that on them I didn’t have to be who I was.**

“**T**O BE HONEST, I’M WORRIED,” SAYS DAOUA Gueye. “The future is almost black. To be an optimist, you have to see what’s next. And right now we can’t see anything. Everything is dark.” He shrugs. “We’re truly cornered.”

We are standing in a field just outside Bargny, a bustling seaside town of 70,000 people some 30 kilometers southeast of Dakar, Senegal’s capital. For decades, Bargny has suffered from severe industrial pollution. The town hosts a hulking cement factory—one of the largest in West

Africa—that has flecked Bargny with toxic dust since 1984. Over the past 10 years, two other threats have emerged.

A mere 100 meters east of where Gueye and I stand, a new coal-fired power plant—Senegal’s first, in operation since last fall—waffles in the afternoon heat. Mounds of coal lie at the base of its three chutes, which slope up toward the red-and-gray-striped chimney. The chimney’s thin shadow points, like a stern finger, to the southeast, where rising sea levels and storm surges caused by climate change exact a devastating toll.

Worse, the two threats are linked. The power plant



“THE

occupies the precise spot that was once designated a site of relocation for those affected by the rising sea. “People lost their homes because of coastal erosion,” Gueye explains. “We are threatened by that. And then when they needed to move, the power plant took that land.”

In a sickening irony, Bargny is trapped between the causes and the effects of climate change. Residents say their town is under siege. “It’s as though we’re being compressed,” Gueye reiterates as we walk past the crumbling seaside houses. “Seriously. There is a future in which Bargny will disappear.”

So far, the town has refused to yield to that future. Gueye is one of the leaders of RAPEN, a local activist organization that was formed when the Senegalese government began construction on the power plant in 2014. For five years, RAPEN has tried to hold off threats from both sides. “Our first goal is to protect us from the sea,” Gueye announced in 2016. “Our second goal is to fight the coal power plant.”

And yet amid Bargny’s resistance—part and parcel of it, perhaps—there is an element of despair, a hopelessness particular to our era of climate crisis. It’s a

**Trapped between the effects of climate change—and the causes—this Senegalese town is fighting for its life.**

**DANIEL JUDT**



**“SEA EATERS”**  
**Climate Injustice Hits Home**

despair that runs through Gueye's words. *The future is almost black. We're truly cornered.*

This is the first article in a series about the idea of climate justice—a concept that has only recently come into widespread use. In the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement, the word “justice” appears once, buried in a nonbinding preamble that coyly notes the “importance for some of the concept of ‘climate justice’”—in scare quotes, no less!—“when taking action to address climate change.”

Four years later, a huge rhetorical shift has occurred: The idea of justice is now at the forefront of the climate debate. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poland last December, the official theme was a “just transition” away from a carbon economy—a big change from Paris. (Though that didn't stop the Polish government from attempting to twist “climate justice” into a defense of coal mines.) At the UN Climate Action Summit in New York this September, we'll likely hear a fresh chorus of calls for a just transition, a just economy, a just distribution of emissions, and so on. Justice is finally becoming an important term in climate politics. We need to know what it means.

This series tries to define climate justice from the ground up: to ask what justice means for communities already confronting the dual crises of failing climate politics and runaway climate change. Bargny, a small town fighting both of those crises at once, seemed a good place to start.

But the activists and residents I met there steered me to a different question. To understand what climate justice would mean in a place like Bargny, they insisted, we must first take the full measure of the injustice that needs resisting. And they are right: Before we focus on climate justice, we need to grasp the nature of climate injustice.

In Bargny, the outward signs of that injustice—the rising sea, the power plant—are unmistakable. What is less clear but more revealing, once grasped, is how the injustices of climate change and climate politics are changing the way that the residents of Bargny think about life on a fundamental level. We often hear about how climate change creates climate refugees: It forces people to search for a new space in the world. The residents of Bargny are facing a different form of displacement, less visible but no less pernicious. They are becoming homeless without leaving home.

**In the entire 2015 Paris Agreement, the word “justice” appears just once, buried in a nonbinding preamble that coyly notes the “importance for some of the concept of ‘climate justice.’”**

## II: LOSING THE MOST

**“N**O REGION HAS DONE LESS TO CONTRIBUTE to the climate crisis,” former UN secretary general Kofi Annan wrote of Africa in 2015, “but no region will pay a higher price for failure to tackle it.... All countries stand to lose” from climate change, he continued, but “Africa will lose the most.”

Senegal, just north of the equator and nestled on the West African coastline, is no exception to Annan's rule. The country contributes almost nothing to global carbon emissions. Senegal emitted six-tenths of one metric ton of carbon dioxide per capita in 2014, which put it around 150th out of 195 countries. In the same year, the US emitted nearly 17 tons per capita—almost 30 times as much.

And yet Senegal, along with its West African neighbors, stands to suffer some of the worst effects of climate change. Farming communities are already experiencing severe drought. Average temperatures are expected to increase 1 to 3 degrees Celsius by 2060, which would cripple rain-fed agriculture.

The nation's coastal regions, meanwhile, are reeling from harsher storm surges and unrelenting erosion. In a middle-of-the-road scenario, sea levels along the Senegalese coast could rise a whole meter by 2100. That could destroy much of Senegal's industrial infrastructure, 90 percent of which hugs the coastline. It could also displace over 100,000 people: Nearly 70 percent of Senegal's population lives in coastal zones. President Macky Sall has begun to relocate some residents of the hardest-hit areas. In the northern city of Saint-Louis, the World Bank is sponsoring a \$30 million effort to support the 10,000 seaside residents who live in high-risk flood areas or have been displaced.

For Fary Ndao, a prominent Senegalese environmentalist, this injustice—contributing to climate change the least, affected by it the most—should be the starting point for any conversation about climate justice in the region. “We have to stress that Senegal and most African countries contribute very little to global warming,” Ndao says. “Senegal is a victim. That is the first thing to say.”

In Bargny, however, many people feel this black-and-white breakdown between contributors and victims doesn't apply. Senegal may well be a victim on an international level, where most discussions of climate justice tend to take place. But that doesn't stop it from creating its own victims, too. If Senegal is a victim, Bargny's residents insist, then Bargny is the victim of a victim—the innermost babushka in the Russian doll of climate injustice. For them, Annan's words apply one level down: All of Senegal stands to lose, but Bargny will lose the most. One fisherman expresses this with jarring bluntness. “Africa is the trash can of the world!” he yells. “And Bargny is the trash can of Senegal.”

**On the beach:** Pirogues, sleek Senegalese fishing boats, in Bargny, which loses three to four meters of coast each year.







### III: WHAT THE SEA ATE

**“THE SEA ATE.”** THIS IS THE METAPHOR OF CHOICE in Bargny. Everyone I spoke with, from the fishermen in the port to the women at the market to the activists in their offices, used that phrase to describe what has happened to their coastline and their lives.

Walk along that coastline, and the metaphor immediately makes sense. A sandy beach slopes up to a line of low-slung concrete houses standing precariously on a berm. Storm surges and rain-fed high tides have carved out jagged chunks along the berm’s edge. It does indeed look as if the sea has gnawed at the shore.

The erosion began in the 1980s, Gueye tells me. At first, the cause was poor coastal management farther north, near Dakar. But since the early 2000s, the rate has worsened. Storm surges have become fiercer and more common; Hurricane Fred in 2015 was especially bad. Between the surges and the rise in sea level—which will significantly accelerate in the coming decades, scientists now say—Bargny is currently losing three to four meters of coast each year.

“It’s visible, no?” Gueye says with a touch of perverse pride. It is. We pass multiple homes with their sea-facing walls torn off. You can peer inside the rooms like those in a dollhouse. It rained heavily last night, and Gueye points out the latest damage: The berm beneath a house has crumbled, leaving half of the outermost room dangling over the beach with nothing beneath it. The room is unsafe, the owner tells us. He’ll have to knock it down tomorrow.

More striking still is what is no longer visible. For in the years since Bargny began its fight against the power plant, the sea has already eaten many things.

The sea ate homes. Some it swallowed in their entirety. Abdou Diouf, 56, a fisherman and father of seven, lost his home in 1998. (“The sea ate it,” he says. “It eats, and it eats, and it eats.”) He had no money to move or rebuild. And even if he did, he says, he couldn’t go any-

#### Behind the scenes:

A shack for smoking fish. Behind it, a coal-fired power plant built on land that was supposed to be for residents displaced by the rising sea.

**If Senegal is a victim, then Bargny is a victim of a victim—the innermost babushka in the Russian doll of climate injustice.**

*Daniel Judt is a Rhodes scholar at Oxford University, where he studies political theory. This is the first of a three-part series on climate justice.*

where; he needs to be by the sea to fish. He moved his family to a friend’s house. They are still there.

Others the sea has merely nibbled to the bone. Diouf tells his story in the living room of Fatou Samba’s home. Fatou Samba is one of the leaders of the *femmes transformatrices*, the women who smoke, salt, and process fish. The sea began to enter her house last year, slow but persistent, taking one room at a time. “The sea will reach the rest of your house this year,” says Gueye, looking at Fatou Samba across the room. “I’m sure you’ll lose it.” Fatou Samba agrees in the same matter-of-fact tone. Later, when I ask if she’s afraid, she says no, “but we’re used to it. Always, you have to know that tomorrow, the sea could come.”

These are just two stories out of hundreds. Fatou Samba leads me outside and points 20 meters out to sea, where a line of pirogues—sleek wooden Senegalese fishing boats—bob on the waves. “There were houses out there by those boats,” she says.

The sea ate work. In the 1990s, Fatou Samba and her colleagues—more than a thousand women—smoked fish on the coastline. Two decades ago, flooding drove them to another field, a massive stretch of open land well away from the water. It was arduous work to carry the fish there and back. But at least it was safe.

**THE SEA ATE WORSHIP.** IN 2015 IT DESTROYED ONE OF the town’s mosques. The town built another. In 2017 the sea ate that one, too. When I ask a group of fishermen about this, they gesture toward a single concrete stump that peeks out of the ocean with every second wave. “That was our mosque.”

The sea even ate the dead. With the mosques went a cemetery. For many people I talk to, this was the worst of Bargny’s losses. “Our ancestors are in the sea now,” says one fisherman, causing another nearby to laugh bitterly. The symbolism carries real force. Bargny is a Lebou community, an ethnic group in western Senegal known for its traditions of farming (okra, tomatoes, mint) and fishing.



A source of livelihood in Bargny for generations, the sea is to the Lebou what the plains are to a Kansan. “The sea belongs to us,” insists Ndeye Yacine Dieye, the president of the Association for Coastal Preservation in Bargny.

The fact that this relationship is now being reversed—that Bargny increasingly belongs to the sea—demands a brutal, perhaps impossible shift in the way its residents understand the world. The sea has eaten more than concrete and furniture and mosque tiles and graves. It has consumed the ideas and values that those physical objects sustained. These abstract losses are difficult to document. But they are even more difficult to live with.

In Bargny, no one seems able to keep pace with them. One problem with climate change, a common refrain goes, is that it happens so slowly. Here the opposite is true: The sea is undoing Bargny’s past faster than its residents can reorient to the present. The result sometimes seems to be a stunned helplessness. “We can’t do anything else,” says Diouf, when I ask whether he will keep fishing. To a group of fishermen, the question appears absurd. “What? Where would I go?” says one. “Look,” another says, “we’ll just keep building barriers” against the waves. “We just don’t have a choice.”

While the sea ate the past, Bargny tried to build a new future. In 2006 the then-mayor designated a tract of land less than a kilometer from the coast—and right next to the new work site where Bargny’s women processed fish—as a relocation site for those displaced by the sea. The site, named Miniam II, combined with an earlier site, Miniam I, were divided into 1,433 plots. Diouf remembers that government officials “took our names, gave us the plots, and said, ‘You own this now.’”

**Water margin:** A sea level rise of just one meter could destroy much of Senegal’s industrial infrastructure, 90 percent of which hugs the coastline.

**“The sea belongs to us,” says Ndeye Yacine Dieye. But residents in Bargny are trying to cope with the fact that their town increasingly belongs to the sea.**

At the time, he continues, “we didn’t have the means to build there.” So he and most of the others began saving up. The few who had more to spare built foundations for their new homes. But before anyone could move, says Diouf, “the power plant took it all.”

#### IV: “BARGNY IS SUFFOCATING”

**H**E MEANS THIS LITERALLY. IN 2009, ABDOULAYE Wade, Senegal’s then-president, declared the majority of land in Miniam I and Miniam II necessary for public utility and sold it to Senelec, the national energy company. “The state took the land from the people,” says Fatou Samba, “and everyone lost. Nobody was left with anything.”

The plant, residents learned, would be a complicated international affair: a \$228 million initiative financed by the African Development Bank, the West African Development Bank, and a Dutch development bank called FMO. Since Senegal has no coal reserves, the fuel—386,000 tons per year—would have to be imported from South Africa, first by boat to Dakar harbor and then by truck 35 kilometers southeast to Bargny. According to officials, the plant would provide 12 percent of Senegal’s electricity production by 2052. It would also “suffocate Bargny” in the process, Gueye says. “Senegal gets electricity, yes, but we’ll die little by little.”

A shift in national politics didn’t help. In 2012, Sall defeated Wade in the presidential election. Sall, who was reelected by a comfortable margin this year, called for a modernized economy by 2035—a program he dubbed Emerging Senegal. To get there, he promised “disruptive changes” in energy policy. He aggressively pursued

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foreign investment in oil and solar energy (including, in 2017, West Africa's largest solar power plant in Santhiou Mékhé) and, to a lesser degree, in coal.

By that time, the winds were already turning against coal, and international investment was declining. But in Bargny, where the contracts were already signed, Sall's administration stood firm. Mouhammadou Makhtar Cissé, formerly the head of Senelec and now Sall's minister of energy, was notably blunt. "It isn't the fumes from the Sendou coal-fired power plant that are a danger for Senegal," he said in 2018. "It's poverty. And to reduce poverty... we have to deal with the distribution of electricity." The website for the power plant puts a positive twist on Cissé's sentiment, proclaiming, "Bargny lights up Senegal."

The spin didn't persuade the town's residents. "The emergence of Bargny isn't about imposing a coal power plant on us," says Ndeye Yacine Dieye. Her voice trembles with anger. "Bargny is worth more than that."

Furious about the unexpected loss of their future homes, the residents banded together. Local community leaders, Gueye and Fatou Samba among them, formed an organization, RAPEN (an acronym in French for the Network of Associations for the Protection of the Environment and Nature). For five years, they tried to prevent the power plant from going into operation.

RAPEN's headquarters, a single room fittingly located right next to Senelec's Bargny offices, bears the marks of those years of resistance. On one wall, several cardboard signs with thick black text—"Bargny is suffocating," "Bargny wants to live"—frame a large banner displaying the words "Bargny wants to live without the power plant!" On the other wall are pictures of the protests and meetings where such banners were waved and slogans chanted. The room, like its occupants, looks determined but worn down.

They tried local politics. Gueye ran a yearlong education campaign about the dangers of coal in every neighborhood in Bargny. In 2015, RAPEN organized Bargny's own Conference of the Parties to mimic the Paris negotiations: expert panels, slideshows, presentations, even theater. Thousands of people showed up, many in shirts that read "No to coal!" and "DeCOALanize Africa!"

They tried international legal action. In 2016 the activists filed a complaint with the plant's three funders, arguing that it existed "in total disregard for the rules of [Senegal's] Environmental Code." In article L13, the code specifies that power plants must be at least 500 meters from homes and "institutions receiving the public." The Bargny plant, they said, was just 206 meters from the nearest home and 395 meters from a health center in Miniam—a contention that several journalists have since confirmed. Worse still, the plant compromised "local climate change adaptation measures" by blocking the 1,433 plots for "families affected by coastal erosion." RAPEN asked the funders to conduct a formal compliance review.

Despite these efforts, the construction continued. The African Development Bank commissioned a review and, upon receiving the report in 2017 (which remains unpublished), asserted that the plant would comply with Senegal's environmental code, promised further review, and allowed the project to proceed. In November 2018, coal began to burn.

Staring up at the power plant, Gueye reckons that Bargny has one final shot. "The only option we have right now," he says, "is to bring a complaint against the state through the courts. That's the last bullet in our gun." It is a bullet that RAPEN doesn't intend to waste. Its members have recruited a small army of international environmental organizations for legal aid and activist training. The day I arrived, the RAPEN war room was packed with Bargny organizers for a Skype meeting with 350.org.

Yet it might be too late. The plant is already running, and if the Senegalese courts deny the complaint, Bargny will have exhausted its avenues of legal recourse. At this point, Gueye says, without a hint of irony, "That's the only thing that can get us out of the water."

#### V: TEMPORAL HOMELESSNESS

**R**ECENTLY, ENVIRONMENTALISTS HAVE BEGUN TO argue that climate change leads to new forms of injustice, particularly through the way it affects our idea of time, and coined terms to describe those effects. One is "climate grief," or mourning the loss of an ecosystem, coupled with the fear that other losses will follow. Another is "solastalgia," a form of homesickness one gets when one is still at home. Like nostalgia, solastalgia carries a sense of losing one's past.

But what is happening in Bargny is in some respects worse than climate grief or solastalgia. What is happening is a loss of the past and the future simultaneously. The effect of climate change—the rising sea—has destroyed the past; a contributor to climate change—the power plant—has blocked the future. When the people of Bargny say they are cornered, they mean more than cornered in space. Bargny is experiencing a loss of place in time.

It is a rare feeling, but not without precedent. In the essay "How Much Home Does a Person Need?" Austrian Jewish philosopher and Holocaust survivor Jean Améry describes his exile as a kind of temporal homelessness. "Suddenly, the past was buried and one no longer knew who one was," he writes. And as he grew older, the future, too, faded from view. For an old man in exile, "the future is no longer around him and therefore also not within him. He cannot plead change. He shows the world a naked present."

The people of Bargny are now living in the naked present. Their past is buried beneath the waves, and the future  
*(continued on page 25)*

**What is happening in Bargny is the loss of the past and the future simultaneously.**

**Everything is dark:** When the people of Bargny say they are cornered, they mean more than cornered in space.





# 5



## The Below 2 Degree Road Map

# 2

ZOË CARPENTER

The United States will be a nonentity at this fall's UN climate summit. But the 2020 election is a chance to change the game.

# 10

**I**N APRIL A GROUP OF OIL COMPANIES—INCLUDING BP, EXXONMOBIL, and Chevron—made a \$4.3 billion bet off the coast of Azerbaijan, in the Caspian Sea. The companies approved a plan to expand deepwater drilling operations there, boosting oil production by as much as 100,000 barrels a day—taking advantage of “world-class assets,” in the words of one executive. But according to a recent analysis by the think tank Carbon Tracker, the Caspian Sea investment, along with a number of fossil fuel projects approved by major energy companies in 2018 totaling \$50 billion, makes financial sense on one condition: if countries around the world fail to rein in carbon emissions enough to meet the goal of the 2015 Paris Agreement, which aims to limit the rise in average global temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels. Many of those energy companies have voiced support for the climate accord in public, but in the private rooms where investment decisions are made, they are essentially wagering that it will fail.

It’s easy to feel pessimistic about the future of the international climate pact, with the task so ambitious and the stakes so high. The accord rests on voluntary commitments from countries to lower their emissions—a structure that the climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe has compared to a potluck dinner: Each nation brings a different dish, in the form of an emissions reduction plan, to the table, in the hope that the cumulative result will be a feast to save the planet. But when the Paris Agreement was signed in 2016, it became clear that the initial commitments made by individual countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions would send the world hurtling past 3°C degrees of warming. Today few of the world’s largest emitters are on track to hit even those targets. Meanwhile, this past July was the hottest month ever recorded. People in Iceland held a memorial for a mass of ice once called Okjökull, which lost its status as a glacier in 2014—the first due to climate change. In Alaska the water in the Kuskokwim River grew so warm that salmon appear to have died from heart attacks.

But the Paris Agreement is still in its infancy. To its defenders, one of its most important features is that it “was deliberately written to improve over time,” according to attorney Susan Biniarz, who was the State Department’s lead climate negotiator from 1989 through the end of the Obama administration. At its core, the agreement is less a plan than it is a process for countries to assess and update their individual commitments to climate action. Signatories are asked to present more ambitious targets for reducing their emissions every five years, with the next round of plans due at the end of 2020. To build momentum for this ratcheting up, world leaders will meet in New York City on September 23 for a Climate Action Summit, and UN Secretary General António Guterres has asked countries to arrive with “concrete, realistic plans” for strengthening their pledges over the next 14 months. This next stage in the Paris process presents a crucial test: Can

countries reconcile their commitments with global goals?

A report released last year laid out just how tight the time line for action is. According to the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world needs to decrease emissions roughly 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030—in just 11 years—and get them to net zero by 2050 in order to limit warming to 1.5°C, a threshold that models indicate would be far easier to adapt to than 2°C or more of warming. “The summit is critically important as a galvanizer,” said David Waskow, the director of the World Resources Institute’s International Climate Initiative. “One can’t get where we need to go by 2050 in terms of decarbonization without this next decade being one of serious, aggressive action on climate. That’s the message that came from the IPCC’s report a year ago, and that’s the message leaders need to take to heart. If they don’t do that in the next 18 months, if they don’t put us on that pathway where we take significant action over the coming decade, the 2050 objectives will become incredibly difficult to achieve.”

One leader is expected to be conspicuously absent from the summit: Donald Trump. After he announced his intention to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement (which can’t officially happen until 2020, for procedural reasons), some observers worried that it would sap other countries’ ambitions. Instead, the US has largely been isolated—although State Department representatives continue to try to influence negotiations behind closed doors—as other countries move the process forward. “We know his position,” French President Emmanuel Macron said after Trump skipped a climate session at the G-7 meeting in August. “We did not have [an] objective to convince him to return.” The strategy seems to be to ignore Trump and hope that someone else is elected in 2020.

**“The atmosphere is not impressed by speeches and plans. It’s only driven by emissions.”**

—Alden Meyer,  
Union of Concerned  
Scientists

**Beginning of the end:** For the US to meet its Paris Agreement targets, natural gas plants like this one in North Dakota will have to be phased out.



**I**F THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE WINS THE PRESIDENCY next year, he or she will need to tackle climate change immediately to get the United States on track. The organization Climate Action Tracker considers the US “critically insufficient” in meeting the Paris targets, thanks in part to the Trump administration’s rollback of policies like the Clean Power Plan, the bedrock of the Obama administration’s Paris pledge. But aligning domestic policy with the 1.5°C temperature target would require action far more radical than simply undoing Trump’s work and restoring Barack Obama’s. So far, only a few Democratic candidates have laid out climate plans that acknowledge the speed and scale of what’s needed.

All the major candidates on the Democratic side have said they’d recommit the country to the Paris process, and all have embraced an



#### Climate strikers:

A new global youth movement is putting pressure on governments around the world to live up to the Paris Agreement.

**The fact that net zero carbon emissions by 2050 has become mainstream for Democrats obscures just how significant it is.**

ambitious long-term target in line with the agreement: reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The fact that this target has become mainstream for Democrats obscures just how significant it is, as *Vox*'s David Roberts has written. Hitting it would require an unprecedented political and economic transformation, starting pretty much right now.

For that reason, what matters more than the 2050 target is what presidential candidates pledge to do in the next decade, said Leah Stokes, an assistant professor of climate politics at the University of California at Santa Barbara. "If you say, 'Look, we've got to be doing this by 2030 so that we're on track to doing things by 2050,' you're having to make harder choices that are not just 'Hey, let's have a more fuel efficient car—but it's still a combustion engine,'" she said. The kinds of policies that the US would need to adopt to get on this trajectory are far more radical than raising fuel efficiency standards or imposing carbon taxes—both of which "are great," Stokes continued, "but they do not drive technological innovation or deep decarbonization. They are really about efficiencies at the margins of a fossil-fuel-based system."

Looking at commitments on this shorter time scale makes it easier to see differences in the candidates and their climate plans. Some, like former vice president Joe Biden and Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar, simply don't have many concrete targets in the near term or specific plans for implementation. This is a long Democratic tradition, Roberts points out. Thanks to Republican obstructionism, Democrats have been able to embrace far-off goals while rarely having to commit to any aggressive, immediate action that might cost them political capital—the failed attempt to pass a cap-and-trade bill in 2009 being one exception.

Washington Governor Jay Inslee distinguished his candidacy by embracing specific, immediate action on policy change in his suite of climate plans, some of which have been adopted by Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren. Inslee, who ended his presidential bid in August, argues that "vague promises or love letters to 2050 will not get the job done." In his plan, he called for a 10-year mobilization—a time frame that mirrors the Green New Deal—including a winding down of fossil fuel production nationwide and a carbon-neutral electricity sector by 2030. Significantly, he spelled out some of the big policy changes needed to meet his goals: ending the use of coal and banning the sale of internal combustion vehicles by 2030, for instance.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders also embraces a tight, ambitious time line in his massive \$16 trillion climate plan, which, his campaign

said, factors climate change "into virtually every area of policy." He wants to fully decarbonize transportation and electricity by 2030—a colossal undertaking, particularly since Sanders also wants to end the use of nuclear energy, which would make rapid decarbonization more difficult. Sanders says his plan would lower US emissions by more than 70 percent from 2017 levels by 2030—well beyond the IPCC goal.

There are valid questions about the feasibility of targets this ambitious, particularly given the political barriers. A major roadblock is the filibuster, which makes it largely impossible to pass significant legislation through the Senate

without at least 60 votes. Sanders, who has resisted calls to abolish the filibuster, said he could enact his plan through reforms like restoring the requirement that senators stand up and speak in the Senate chamber in order to filibuster and through a legislative process called reconciliation, although it applies only to budget items. Warren, along with California Senator Kamala Harris, wants to do away with the filibuster altogether. And a number of candidates have outlined ways they could use executive action to circumvent Congress.

Despite the Democratic candidates' unanimous pledges to the Paris framework, not everyone seems comfortable acknowledging that the brutal math of the atmosphere means stranding most of the coal and the oil and the gas that companies are betting they'll be able to unearth for decades to come—and declining to build new infrastructure to burn it. According to a paper published this year in *Nature*, all of the power plants, buildings, vehicles, and other infrastructure already built will, if operated for their full expected lifetimes, send the world across the 1.5°C threshold. More than 170 new natural gas plants have been proposed or are under construction in the United States alone.

**A**FTER SEVERAL YEARS OF RECORD-SETTING temperatures and political backsliding, it's easy to forget that some things have changed for the better since the Paris Agreement took shape four years ago. For one thing, renewable energy has become far cheaper. "If you look at what countries thought they were committing to do in 2015 and the costs of their plans, we've now had four years of falling costs," said Steve Herz, a senior attorney with the Sierra Club. "Everything they said they would do in 2015 is much cheaper now on the energy side than it was then. We're sort of moving out of this narrative of 'Who's going to bear the costs of these emissions?' It's not all about costs; it's also about opportunities. That's most obvious in the energy sector."

And a new youth climate movement, which has organized strikes around the world this September, is raising the political temperature. "If you combine the spotlight that the summit's going to put on the issue and on which countries are willing to walk the talk and which countries



so far aren't—combine that with the youth mobilization, you start to build some pressure on the system to get more compliant with the Paris program," said Alden Meyer, the director of strategy and policy for the Union of Concerned Scientists and a close observer of international climate negotiations.

"From the scientific perspective, the atmosphere is not impressed by speeches and plans. It's only driven by emissions," he continued. "There's a reason why this is so hard. There are tremendous vested interests in countries around the world that benefit from the status quo, and the fossil fuel industry is very active, as it has been for decades on this issue, in trying to slow down and block meaningful action." The industry is betting against the Paris process because it's the easiest thing to do. That's what the climate movement has been working so hard to change—to make *not* responding to the climate crisis impossible for industry and political leaders alike. ■

*(continued from page 21)*

is no longer around them and therefore also not within them. When, in RAPEN's headquarters, I ask bluntly, "What is Bargny's future?" the room falls silent. After a moment, one man, an imam with an intense glare and raspy voice, barks, "If it weren't for the power plant, we would have all rebuilt our houses over there. We could have started a new life." But the power plant has ended that hope, and everyone there seems to know it. Fatou Samba shakes her head and mutters, "Uncertain...uncertain." And then Gueye: "The future of Bargny—" He stops short. "Well, Bargny doesn't have a future."

And yet there's a painful irony to Gueye's words. "The future is almost black. Right now we can't see anything. Everything is dark." He says them in a field next to the wall of the power plant. Barring a

successful suit against the state or a radical and unexpected shift in events, the plant is Bargny's future. Gueye speaks his words while standing at the site where that future is literally in plain sight. The future is visible in Bargny—painfully so.

Gueye was saying something more profound and more frightening, something that cuts to the heart of climate injustice. The future is visible, but it isn't comprehensible. Yes, there will be a town called Bargny in that future, perhaps with the same people I met there, perhaps with those people's children. But that will be a future in which the identities and ideas that the community of Bargny uses to make sense of the world will have lost their physical roots.

This is the kind of loss that we see in moments of extreme trauma and devastation, like war or perhaps Améry's exile. What is happening in Bargny makes it clear that climate change causes this kind of trauma, too. Gueye hints at this as we walk from the power plant toward the ocean—back from the incomprehensible future to the disappearing past. "Today, with all these threats," he muses, disconcertingly stoic, "perhaps the people themselves will become disoriented. That's the threat. Our social structure will be degraded. That's what's dangerous. We will lose our values." He searches for the words. "A kind of shell shock."

We have always had to change our lives. But to change so much that is fundamental while the wick of time burns at both ends—that is something different. What is happening in Bargny is a kind of existential injustice, once rare but now increasingly common: a loss of the places and environments that we use to hold our values steady. The future continues, and we continue to live in it. But in a more profound way, nothing makes sense anymore.

When we talk about justice in the era of climate crisis, this loss is where we have to begin. ■

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# POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

HOSTED BY TRNN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS  
STEPHEN JANIS AND TAYA GRAHAM

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life. In the new millennium, Internet technology would be turned to very different ends: enforcing fidelity to memory, identarian consistency, and so ideological conformity. But back then, for a while at least, it protected us by forgetting our transgressions and forgiving our sins.

My most significant early encounters happened not on BBSes, however, but in a more fantastical realm: the pseudo-feudal lands and dungeons of role-playing games, MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role-playing games) in particular. In order to play *Ultima Online*, which was my favorite MMORPG, I had to create and assume an alternative identity, or “alt.” I could choose, for example, to be a wizard or warrior, a tinker or thief, and I could toggle between these “alts” with a freedom that was unavailable to me in offline life, whose institutions tend to regard all mutability as suspicious.

I’d roam the *Ultima* gamescape as one of my “alts,” interacting with the “alts” of others. As I got to know these other “alts,” by collaborating with them on certain quests, I’d sometimes come to realize that I’d met their users before, just under different identities, while they, in turn, might realize the same about me. Sometimes I just enjoyed these interactions as opportunities for banter, but more often than not I treated them competitively, measuring my success by whether I was able to identify more of another user’s “alts” than they were able to identify of mine. These contests to determine whether I could unmask others without being unmasked myself required me to be careful not to fall into any messaging patterns that might expose me, while simultaneously engaging others and remaining alert to the ways in which they might inadvertently reveal their true identities.

I loved these games and the alternative lives they let me live, though that love wasn’t quite as liberating for the other members of my family. I was spending so many hours playing *Ultima* that our phone bills were becoming exorbitant and no calls were getting through. My sister, now deep into her teen years, became furious when she found out that my online life had caused her to miss some crucial high-school gossip. However, it didn’t take her long to figure out that all she had to do to get her revenge was pick up the phone. The modem’s hiss would stop, and before she’d even received a normal dial tone, I’d be screaming my head off downstairs.

**I**F YOU’RE INTERRUPTED IN THE MIDDLE OF, SAY, READING THE news online, you can always go back and pick up wherever you left off. But if you’re interrupted while playing a game that you can’t pause or save—because a hundred thousand others are playing it at the same time—you’re ruined. You could be on top of the world, some legendary dragon-slayer with your own castle and an army, but after just thirty seconds of CONNECTION LOST you’d find yourself reconnecting to a bone-gray screen that bore a cruel epitaph: YOU ARE DEAD.

I’m embarrassed nowadays at how seriously I took all of this, but I can’t avoid the fact that I felt, at the time, as if my sister was intent on destroying my life—particularly on those occasions when she’d make sure to catch my eye from across the room and smile before picking up the downstairs receiver, not because she wanted to make a phone call but purely because she wanted to remind me who was boss. Our parents got so fed up with our shouting matches that they did something uncharacteristically indulgent. They switched our Internet billing plan from pay-by-the-minute to flat-fee unlimited access, and installed a second phone line.

Peace smiled upon our abode. ■

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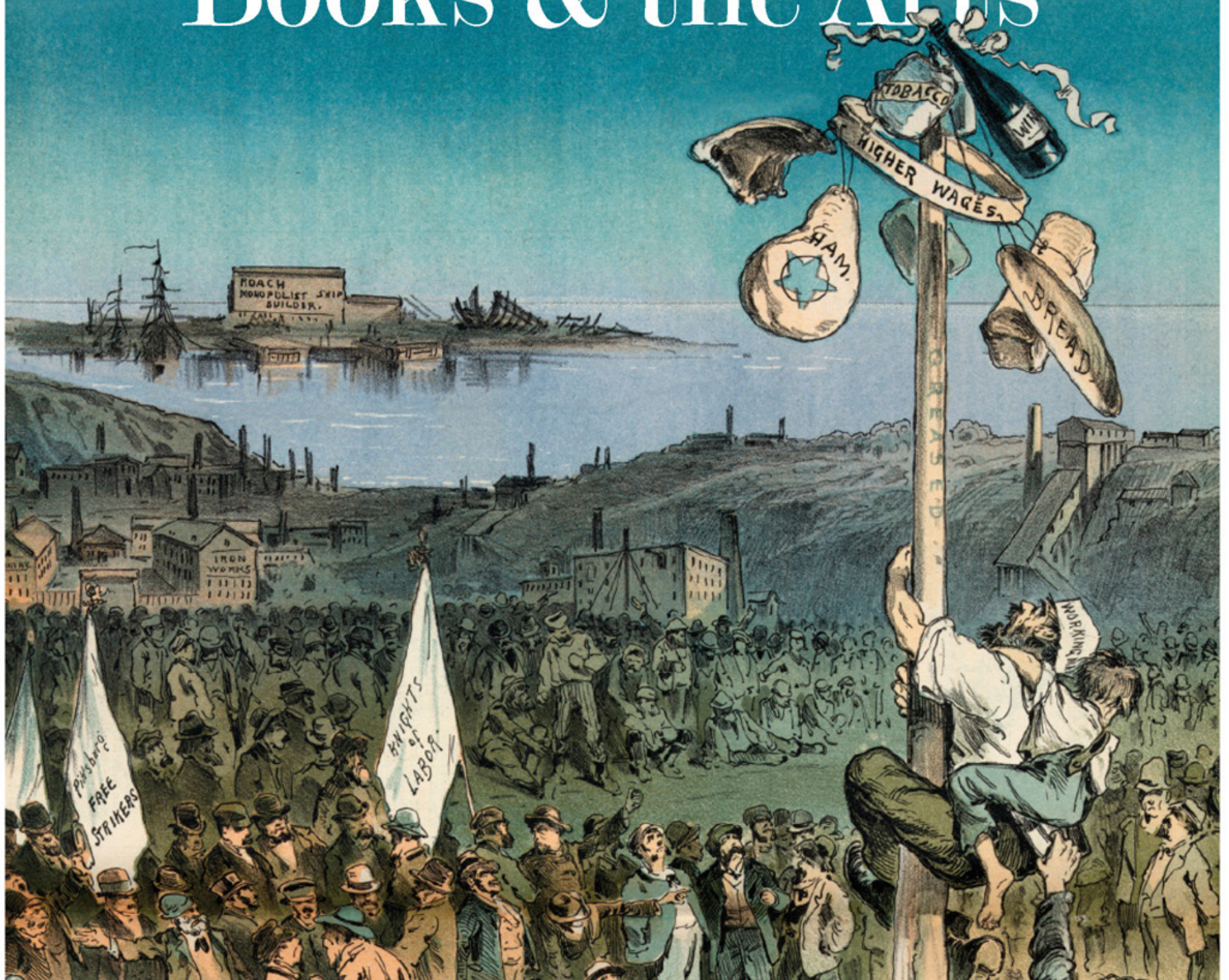
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# Books & the Arts



## THE VERY SOUL OF THE REPUBLIC

Equality's vexed meaning in Gilded Age America

by ERIC FONER

**A**ll men are created equal." Today, it is difficult to appreciate the radicalism of Thomas Jefferson's almost matter-of-fact pronouncement in the Declaration of Independence. The 18th century was a world of inequality, grounded in deeply rooted hierarchies of class, race, gender, and religion. The Declaration of Independence tied the new American nation's fate to the ideal of equality. Jefferson's

*Eric Foner is the DeWitt Clinton Professor Emeritus of History at Columbia. His new book, out this fall, is The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution.*

words provided a standard by which people could judge their society and, not infrequently, find it wanting. Ever since, a perceived lack of equality has been the catalyst for powerful social movements in the United States and abroad.

Equality may be, as Jefferson wrote, "self-evident," but its precise meaning is not. Like freedom, equality has always been what philosophers call an "essentially contested concept," one that is a subject of disagreement and that possesses multiple meanings. Does it suggest equality of opportunity or equality of economic condition? Does it apply primarily to how one is treated in the public sphere, or does it reach into the

intimate realm of the family? Equal legal and political rights frequently coexist with widespread economic inequality. Equality for some often involves inequality for many others. The equality of white men has historically rested on the subordination of nonwhites and women. The rallying cry of equality has been, to borrow a phrase from the Italian historian Franco Venturi, a "protest ideal"—a critique of the existing order more than a clear blueprint for changing it.

In the aftermath of American independence, the lexicographer Noah Webster described equality as "the very soul of a republic." Indeed, by the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville and countless other

visitors from Europe were struck by the pervasive claims to equality found in American life. But there was also, of course, a glaring exception: the impenetrable barriers that excluded black Americans, whether slave or free, from the enjoyment of anything remotely resembling equality.

The Civil War and Reconstruction sought to eradicate these barriers, destroying the institution of slavery and rewriting the Constitution and laws in an attempt to guarantee equal rights regardless of race. Yet the nation soon retreated from the work of racial equality, and at the same time an expanding industrial capitalism gave birth to a class of plutocrats who dominated large sectors of the economy and exercised inordinate influence on politics. As Charles Postel shows in his new book, *Equality: An American Dilemma, 1866–1896*, the years that Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner dubbed the Gilded Age produced a widespread sense that something was seriously amiss in the American economic and political order, and a variety of mass citizen movements arose aiming to secure greater equality.

Postel, who teaches history at San Francisco State University, is best known for his 2007 book *The Populist Vision*, winner of the Bancroft Prize. That book succeeded in the difficult task of reinterpreting a movement—the People’s Party of the 1890s—that had already attracted the attention of historian heavyweights, including Richard Hofstadter and Lawrence Goodwyn. Hofstadter’s Populists were prototypes of what he called the “paranoid style” in American politics (a concept that has recently enjoyed a new lease on life as a too-easy explanation for the electoral success of Donald Trump). Imprisoned in nostalgia for a lost golden age of small-scale farming, the Populists, Hofstadter claimed, were prone to irrational and xenophobic conspiracy theories to explain their economic plight. Goodwyn’s Populists, on the other hand, were proto-socialists who rejected 19th century capitalism in favor of a cooperative commonwealth in which both government and the economy were able to operate on democratic principles. Postel offered a correction to both. He showed that, contra Hofstadter, the Populists were forward-looking men and women who embraced technological change, were comfortable with modern means of transportation and communication, and understood all too well the inequities of the economic system they confronted in the 1890s. In contrast to Goodwyn, Postel made a convincing case that they embraced the capitalist marketplace, so long as the rampant power of giant

## Equality

*An American Dilemma, 1866–1896*

By Charles Postel

Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 400 pp. \$30

corporations and national banks was curbed by the federal government.

In some ways, *Equality* is what Hollywood would call a prequel to Postel’s first book. It offers a lucid, thoroughly researched account of three mass movements of the 1870s and ’80s that sought to redress various forms of inequality in Gilded Age America: the Grange, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Knights of Labor. All three were national in scope, had a strong impact on politics, and attracted the support of hundreds of thousands of Americans, and all were key participants in the public debate over equality. What interests Postel is not only how these movements defined equality and tried to achieve it but also how, in his view, they could not escape—and sometimes participated in—the post-Reconstruction rollback of the rights of black Americans. Rhetorically, all three elevated solidarity—among farmers, women, or laborers—to a cardinal principle, but all fell short of transcending the divide of race.

Postel begins his book with the Grange. Founded by federal bureaucrats after the end of the Civil War as a fraternal order to promote scientific agricultural practices and lessen the social isolation of rural America, the organization quickly grew to more than 20,000 local affiliates, with a combined membership in 1875 of over 800,000. The Grange demanded political equality among the nation’s regions and economic equality between farmers and city dwellers. Its rules prohibited the discussion of politics, but Grangers inevitably entered the political arena, since they believed that state and national legislation was essential to redressing economic inequality. Reflecting the enhancement of government power resulting from the Civil War, Grange-affiliated legislators in many states enacted laws to regulate the rates that railroads charged farmers to ship their goods, and they called on the federal government to construct publicly owned railroad lines in order to increase competition and reduce the cost to farmers of shipping their crops to market. Equality for the Grangers meant an end to economic monopolies and the special privileges they enjoyed such as the lower rates that railroads offered to large-scale shippers.

The Grange, Postel argues, was dedicated to a vision of equality, but the organization

illustrated the difficulty of putting equality into practice. It claimed to represent all farmers, but the interests of black sharecroppers in the South were hardly the same as those of plantation owners, and Grangers favored the latter at the expense of the former. Mainly speaking for land-owning farmers, they ignored the needs of landless agricultural laborers. Gender equality also proved difficult to achieve. The organization recruited rural women and employed female lecturers. But men dominated the ranks of Grange officials, and female members complained that it was hard to get a word in edgewise at local meetings. In the end, the reality of equality never matched the rhetoric.

Postel turns next to the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Originating in the 1870s in the Women’s Crusade against the liquor trade (in which groups of women knelt in prayer outside saloons, sometimes entering them to smash bottles of alcoholic beverages), the WCTU quickly expanded to become “the most extensive and powerful women’s organization in U.S. history.” At its peak, it claimed 150,000 dues-paying members. While its cry was “home protection,” the WCTU ended up bringing a generation of women into the political arena, and its longtime president, Frances Willard, became one of the leading public figures of the Gilded Age.

The WCTU had wide-ranging aims. It campaigned not only for Prohibition but also for women’s suffrage (since it believed that men would never vote to outlaw alcohol) and for sexual equality in the workplace, legal system, and family. It called for cooperative housekeeping, insisting that men undertake their fair share of domestic responsibilities, and for the establishment of free kindergartens to help relieve the burden of child-rearing. The organization recruited women regardless of race.

Finally, Postel turns to the Knights of Labor, which evolved from a secret society of Philadelphia garment cutters founded in 1869 into a national labor organization with some three-quarters of a million members by the mid-1880s. Like the Grange and the WCTU, the Knights consisted of numerous local branches, or assemblies. Anyone could join, with the exception of a few categories of nonproducers: bankers, lawyers, and liquor dealers. Members included trade unionists, greenbackers (who wanted the government, rather than private banks, to control the currency), devotees of a single tax on land (Henry George’s panacea for ending economic inequality), anarchists, and socialists. Uniting this hodgepodge was the conviction that rising economic inequality was under-

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**(SOUND FAMILIAR?)**

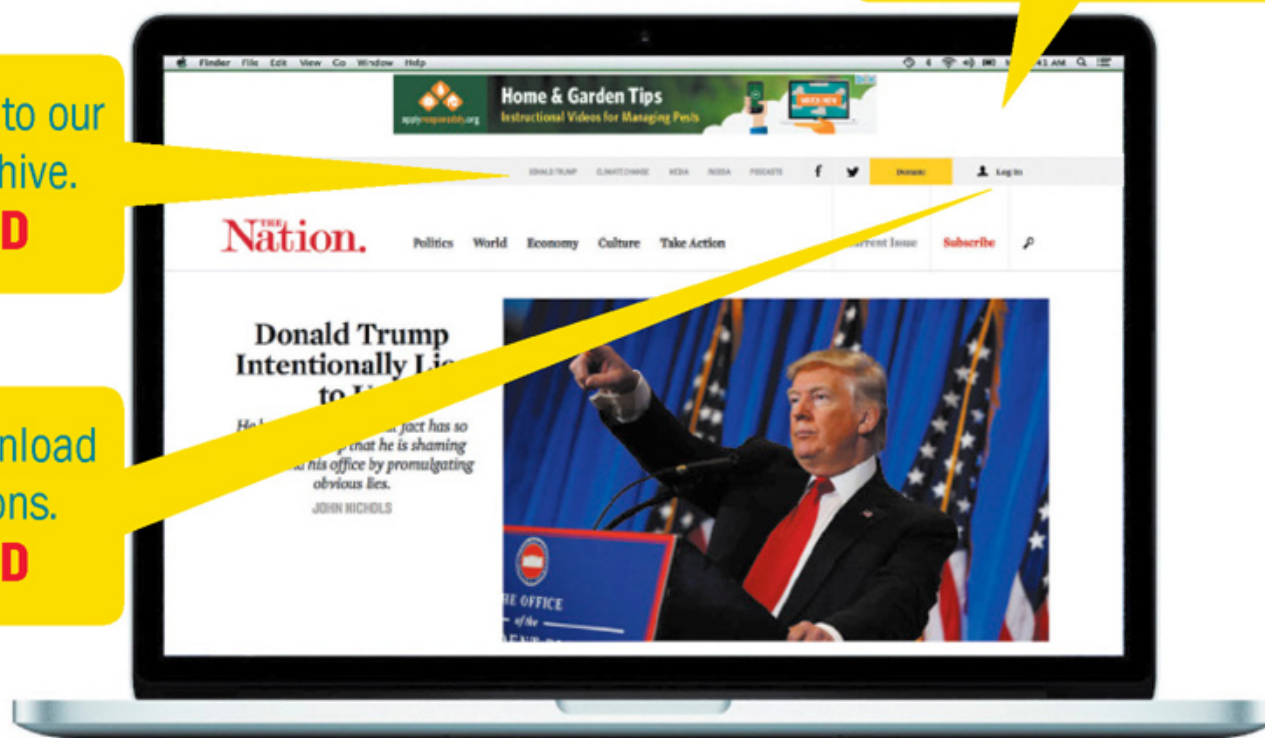
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mining the promise of the American Revolution and that the wage system should be replaced by a vaguely defined form of cooperative production that would move society beyond the battle between labor and capital to a harmonious, equitable future. The first organization to recruit extensively among the lowest-paid and least-skilled workers, the Knights proclaimed the solidarity of all labor and welcomed black and women workers, although it could not escape prevailing prejudices against the Chinese, whom it barred from membership.

**M**uch of Postel's history will be familiar to scholars of late 19th century American history. Where he breaks new ground is in his focus on how the national orientation of the Grange, the WCTU, and the Knights of Labor led them to embrace a "white nationalist framework of sectional reconciliation." The struggle against slavery cast a long shadow over the Gilded Age. The era's radicals often viewed it as a model for their own activism. Yet because of their desire to organize nationally and to recruit members regardless of their Civil War loyalties, these groups played an important role in disseminating a view of that conflict in which slavery played only a minor part and Reconstruction was considered a disastrous mistake. This had dire consequences for black Americans and for an ideal of equality that transcended racial difference.

The Grange offers the starkest example of how an organization that attempted to unite Northern and Southern farmers in a common enterprise ended up becoming an agent of white supremacy. The Grange's stated principles said nothing about a racial qualification for membership. In practice, however, the organization displayed no interest in recruiting Southern black tenants, sharecroppers, and farm owners or, for that matter, Chinese or Mexican agriculturalists in the West. In the South, Grange leaders gravitated toward the white planter class and adopted the Southern white view that the "unreliability" of free black labor lay at the root of the region's economic problems. In parts of the South, Granges became adjuncts of the white-supremacist Democratic Party. In some areas, their leadership even overlapped with that of the Ku Klux Klan, whose aims included restoring planters' control over the black agricultural labor force. The Grange's understanding of equality ended up encompassing whites alone.

Far more complex was the experience of the WCTU when it came to race. Frances

Willard grew up in an antislavery household; her father was a Free Soil member of the Wisconsin legislature and a pre-Civil War acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln. For a time, the organization reflected the egalitarian impulse so powerfully strengthened by the end of slavery. The WCTU welcomed black women as members and encouraged black men to vote in local referendums on banning the sale of liquor. The prominent black activist, writer, and orator Frances Ellen Watkins Harper worked closely with Willard in the WCTU. But so did Sallie Chapin, a member of a prominent former slaveholding family whose brother had been a leader of the secessionist movement in South Carolina. Chapin's presence, Postel notes, gave Southern branches of the WCTU "sterling pro-Confederate credentials."

As the tide of postwar egalitarianism receded, the WCTU's willingness to flout prevailing racial mores also waned. In the 1880s, the group continued to recruit black members, but to avoid accusations of promoting "social equality," it increasingly organized them into separate local branches. By the 1890s, Harper had been eased out of the WCTU's leadership. She and the anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells took Willard to task for failing to speak out against the wave of lynchings that spread across the South, often in the name of protecting white women from assault.

As for the Knights of Labor, its principle of working-class solidarity (except for the Chinese) officially encompassed African Americans. The Knights' national leader, Terence V. Powderly, insisted that the interests of black and white workers were identical. He demanded that black members be treated fairly within the organization and reprimanded white members who failed to do so. In 1886, when the organization held its national meeting in Richmond, the former capital of the Confederacy, Powderly appeared on the platform with black New York labor leader Frank Ferrell. When the hotel housing the New York delegation refused to provide Ferrell with a room unless he agreed to take his meals in the kitchen, the entire delegation moved to other accommodations. Nonetheless, many white Knights viewed black workers as low-wage competitors who should be excluded from membership, and those willing to let them join often insisted that they be segregated in their own local assemblies.

During the mid-1880s, the Knights of Labor experienced a meteoric rise and, after a series of defeats in strikes against railroad companies, an equally swift decline. In the

South, most whites had left the organization by the end of the decade. As they withdrew, Postel notes, African Americans moved to "make the Knights their own" and to use it for their purposes. By the early 1890s, the majority of Knights in the South were black cotton pickers, lumbermen, and domestic workers. But no longer part of an interracial coalition, black Knights faced the same kind of violent repression that had helped to end Reconstruction when they tried to take collective action. In 1887, in response to a strike for higher wages by black workers in the Louisiana sugar fields, the local all-white militia murdered at least 30 strikers, with little protest from white current or former members of the Knights.

**P**ostel's account illuminates in new ways the failure of the Grange, the WCTU, and the Knights of Labor to live up to their pronouncements about equality. We learn a great deal about the obstacles to transforming the abstract ideal into lived experience. We gain an enhanced respect for the pre-Civil War abolitionist movement, one of the few predominantly white movements in our history to make the rights of African Americans central to its agenda. But what is missing from the narrative is sustained attention to the aspirations, priorities, and definitions of equality of black people themselves. African Americans appear in the narrative primarily as victims of racism and of the inability of radical movements to rise above it.

As the examples of Harper, Wells, and the WCTU show, black activists felt no hesitation in criticizing reform organizations for acquiescing—or worse—in racial inequality. But we do not learn how the advent of what the historian Rayford Logan called the "nadir of American race relations" affected the way that black Americans approached their struggle for equality. Many black members of the WCTU and the Knights, for example, seem to have felt that being organized into racially segregated branches, while demeaning, was a price worth paying to secure white allies in a larger struggle. Flawed allies are better than none at all, and as the system of Jim Crow and disfranchisement was erected in the South, black people seeking social change did not have the luxury of demanding perfection.

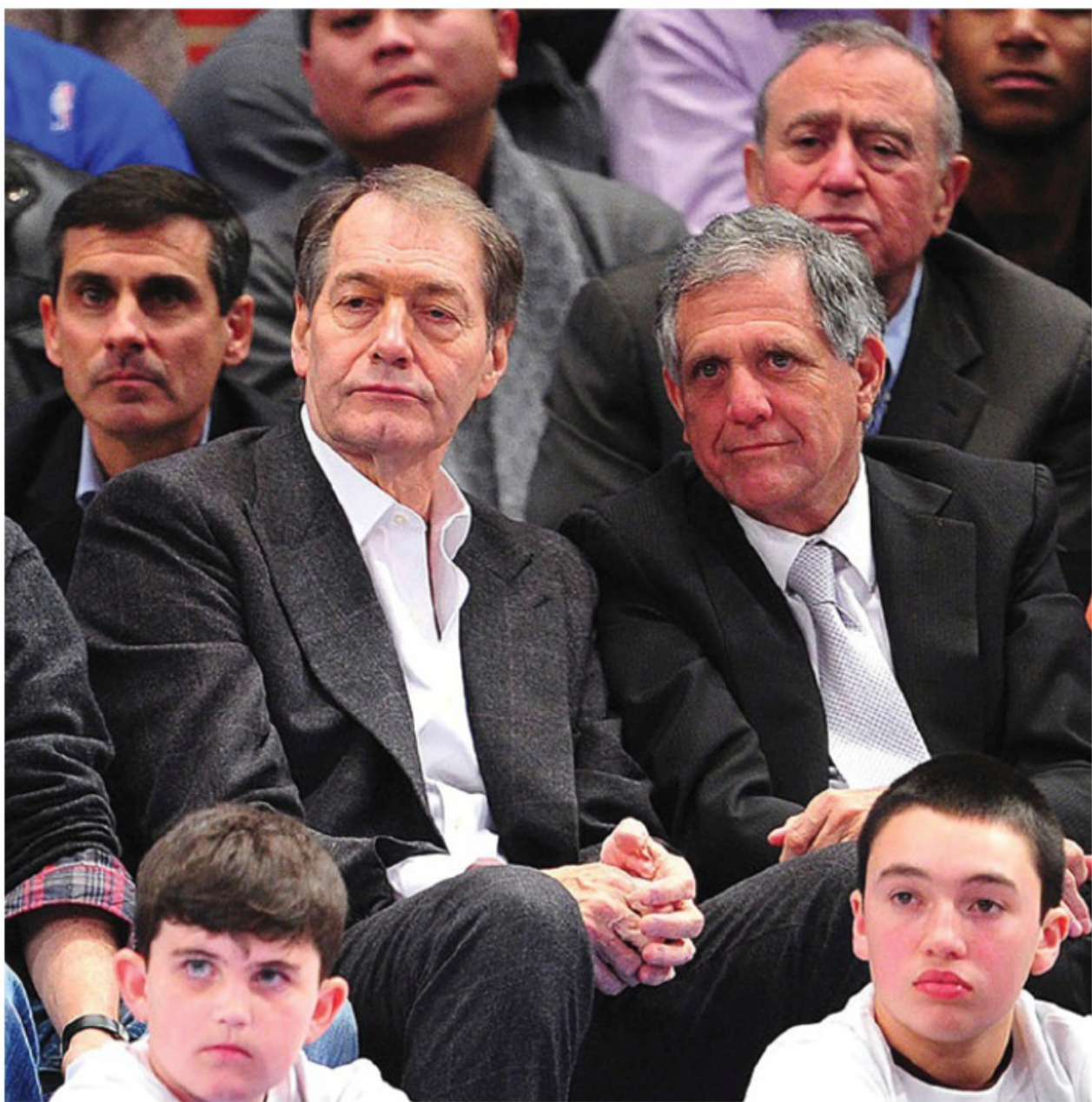
Even though many veterans of the Grange, the WCTU, and the Knights joined the People's Party, that great movement of the 1890s receives surprisingly little attention in Postel's account. Populism, he writes, "marked the cresting of the post-

Civil War egalitarian wave,” but presumably he felt that he already told their story in his previous book. Had he continued into the 1890s, he would have been able to discuss the balance between racial exclusion and inclusion in the Populist movement. Despite many examples of Populist racism, solidarity across the color line was not unknown. Most notable, perhaps, was the fusion movement that enabled a coalition of black Republicans and white Populists to win control of the government of North Carolina from 1894 to 1898. Echoes of that achievement persist as an inspiration for North Carolina’s biracial progressive resistance, led by the Rev. William Barber. It deserves more than the brief mention it receives here.

**P**ostel’s subtitle evokes, no doubt intentionally, Gunnar Myrdal’s classic study of American racism, *An American Dilemma*, published in 1944. For Myrdal, the dilemma was essentially psychological. It existed in the divided mind of white Americans who professed a commitment to equality yet refused to acknowledge how the condition of black Americans made a mockery of the country’s egalitarian ideals. The dilemma that Postel asks us to confront is somewhat different: the fact that the post-Civil War farmers’, women’s, and labor movements, all committed rhetorically to equality and solidarity, could not escape—indeed, often embraced—the trap of racial exclusion.

Today, the Grange survives in some rural areas as a social center rather than a political movement. The WCTU continues to exist but has long since been superseded by other groups demanding gender equality. The Knights of Labor disappeared long ago, but its principle of solidarity among all laborers inspired movements from the Industrial Workers of the World to the Congress of Industrial Organizations as well as today’s fight to raise the minimum wage.

Thanks to Occupy Wall Street, the presidential campaigns of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, the work of the French economist Thomas Piketty, and more generally the dysfunctionality of contemporary capitalism, equality—or the widespread lack thereof—again occupies a prominent place in political debate. Beyond the fate of the individual organizations it covers, *Equality* reminds us of a homegrown radical heritage that critics of today’s deeply unequal America can be inspired by and must improve upon. The ideal of equality remains as radical as it was in Jefferson’s day. But equality limited to some is not equality. ■



# A MAN'S WORLD

Reckoning with misogyny in the age of Me Too

by CLIO CHANG

**I**f the Me Too movement exploded with a reported story, its backlash began with an apology. “I so respect all women and regret what happened,” the disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein wrote in a long-winded response to *The New York Times*’ article. “I cannot be more remorseful about the people I hurt.”

Weinstein’s apology, which veered between subjects like the National Rifle Association, Jay-Z’s album *4:44*, and his mom (“I won’t disappoint her”), was too ridiculous to be taken seriously. But it marked the beginning of a genre: Like accursed clockwork, it seemed that every man who found himself facing even minor consequences for

his mistreatment of women was suddenly issuing an apology. These letters ranged from semi-self-exonerations, such as the one composed by Matt Lauer—“some of what is being said about me is untrue or mischaracterized, but there is enough truth in these stories to make me feel embarrassed and ashamed”—to those that deflected, such as the one written by Dustin Hoffman—“I have the utmost respect for women and feel terrible that anything I might have done could have put her in an uncomfortable situation.” Some, like the one proffered by Charlie Rose, posited that he was just part of the greater learning curve and that “all of us” were evolving together and “coming to a newer and deeper recognition of the pain caused by conduct in the past.” Others, like the one written by comedian Louis C.K., claimed that he was going to “step back and

*Clio Chang is a politics reporter whose work frequently appears in Jezebel, The Intercept, The Nation, and The New Republic.*

take a long time to listen,” before stepping forward a short nine months later.

The slew of apologies from men raised an implicit question: If they no longer felt good about what they allegedly did, if they felt “ashamed” and “terrible,” does that change our collective understanding of who they are and their past actions? They did not feel like misogynists—they had the utmost respect for women! But if they treated women terribly, what could they be?

In her new book *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, Kate Manne offers us a way out of this bind with a wholesale rethinking of what misogyny is and how it works. Misogyny is perhaps most often defined as a hatred of women, a set of hostile attitudes held and acted upon by men. Manne calls this a “naive conception” that focuses our attention on what the Weinstens and Lauers of the world feel deep inside. What she proposes instead is that we move the definition of misogyny away from what men feel and toward what it might mean “from the point of view of its targets or victims.” The measure of misogyny, in other words, should no longer depend only on the words of men but instead focus on the unequal and often hateful systemic experience foisted on women. “Agents,” Manne says in the second chapter, “do not have a monopoly on the social meaning of their actions.”

Manne’s insistence that we should focus more acutely on women’s experiences seems like a simple and sensible recentering of our attention, but it has broad implications. Her book is an attempt to construct a conceptual scheme around misogyny that is political rather than individual. If we begin to understand misogyny from the perspective of women, we begin to see its systemic and collective nature. As Manne writes, “What matters is not deep down, but right there on the surface.”

**M**anne is a philosopher by training. While others might approach the subject focused on the larger sociological implications of misogyny, Manne is concerned with first principles and definitions. In *Down Girl*, she employs her skill in rigorously examining and parsing the moral and theoretical quandaries that emerge in the work of developing the concept of misogyny. Yet her results are nearly similar to those that might be expected from someone working in the field of sociology or political analysis: *Down Girl* offers us a compelling and wide-ranging understanding of what misogyny is and how we should define it, as well as a sense

## Down Girl

*The Logic of Misogyny*

By Kate Manne

Oxford University Press. 368 pp. \$27.95

of the politics that should follow from such a definition.

In organizing the hierarchy of her terms, Manne places misogyny within an overarching patriarchal order that she describes, plainly and simply, in terms of a “man’s world.” In a “man’s world,” we find much more than just misogyny. We find a whole system organized around gendered forms of inequality and domination, a heteronormative economy in which men are asymmetrically entitled to certain goods and women are expected to provide them.

Manne lists numerous examples of how this man’s world works and of the things that men are warranted to take under this order, including “social positions of leadership, authority, influence, money, and other forms of power, as well as social status, prestige, rank, and the markers thereof.” Women, on the other hand, are expected to produce “feminine-coded goods,” not only in the form of domestic and reproductive work but also in the form of social and emotional labor, from “affection, adoration, indulgence” to “simple respect, love, acceptance, nurturing, safety, security, and safe haven.”

In Manne’s view, sexism and misogyny are distinct entities that are produced by this man’s world, and both work in the service of patriarchy. But she also notes the differences between them: Sexism, Manne argues, is the ideology that rationalizes the patriarchy by “naturalizing sex differences,” while misogyny is the “law enforcement branch of a patriarchal order” that works to maintain it. As she puts it, “Sexism wears a lab coat; misogyny goes on witch hunts.... Sexism has a theory; misogyny wields a cudgel.”

While sexism claims that in the “natural” order of social organization, women act as emotional and social caregivers and men are the recipients of this emotional and social production, misogyny is the means by which to enforce this naturalization of gendered inequality. When women violate this “natural” order—whether by refusing to give these things or, worse, by taking “masculine-coded goods away from dominant men”—then the enforcement mechanism of misogyny kicks in to put them in their place.

Manne illustrates this difference with Donald Trump, who, she argues, is not necessarily a sexist in practice but is cer-

tainly a misogynist. As she notes, Trump hired women as executives in his company, “which suggests he doesn’t underestimate [all] women—rather, he needs to control them, and head off the risk of their outshining him.”

In Manne’s conception, not only does misogyny punish women; it also rewards them when they work to serve the patriarchy and enforce its gendered norms. It’s no secret that many (usually white) women have a lot to gain on a personal level in doing so; just look at Hope Hicks, Ivanka Trump, and Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Not all of Manne’s assertions are necessarily radical; in fact, at times they seem quite obvious. Take her concept of “himpathy,” which she describes, among others things, as the “excessive sympathy sometimes shown toward male perpetrators of sexual violence.” Manne gives the example of Brock Turner, the Stanford swimmer who sexually assaulted an unconscious woman and received only a six-month county jail sentence. Aaron Persky, the judge in the case, made sure to highlight Turner’s feelings when explaining his controversial decision: “Mr. Turner came before us today and said he was genuinely sorry for all the pain that he has caused to [the victim] and her family. And I think that is a genuine feeling of remorse.” In the judge’s telling, Turner was a golden boy; Persky’s main concern was “the severe impact” that a more considerable conviction would have on such a person. While moral biases like “himpathy” are certainly prevalent, the term makes a tendency within contemporary culture seem more complex than it actually is. Sometimes, portmanteaus are better left on the drawing board.

Or take Manne’s argument that misogyny need not entail the hatred of all women. For many, this might seem patently obvious: Misogynists have daughters, wives, and mothers they love. As Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who has been accused of several instances of sexual assault and misconduct, said with a straight face during his Senate testimony, as he described his dedication to coaching his daughter’s basketball team, “All the girls I’ve coached are awesome.”

This is not to say that there is no value in tackling these arguments. But it unfortunately means that Manne must give a lot of space to exactly the perspectives and behaviors she hopes we can get past. While many of the structures she builds out are sound and she admits that the book is focused on “describing the state of affairs” and she leaves it largely “open how (much)



to apportion blame, to whom, and how we might go about improving the situation,” at times one wishes Manne would move past that base and direct a little more energy toward developing a more affirmative theory of gendered equality that might serve as a way to resist the man’s world.

Where this limitation is clearest is in her final chapter, which she dedicates to dissecting Hillary Clinton’s loss in the 2016 election. Manne lays out a careful case showing how misogyny worked against the first woman nominated for president by a major US party. She writes, “Someone like Hillary Clinton is frequently cast in the moral role of usurper. And unsurprisingly so (which is of course not to say justifiably); she threatens to take men’s historical place or steal their thunder.” And because women are disproportionately expected to be caring, Clinton, who bucked against this expectation, was at a much greater risk of “seeming nasty, mean, unfair, and callous.” That a majority of white women who voted chose Trump was also to be expected under Manne’s conceptual framework, in which misogyny acts as an enforcement mechanism. “Women police other women,” she rightly notes, “and engage in gendered norm enforcement behavior.” But the book does not address how Clinton, or any politician, might have been able to help break through a system defended by misogyny. As Moira Weigel wrote in her review of the book, “I wish Manne the analytic philosopher could have engaged more with other feminist traditions—particularly the leftist feminism that emphasises material conditions and history.” Doing so would have created a fuller, more historical framework that would point us more directly toward the way forward. As Weigel adds, “The left feminist tradition suggests that there is a way to change a society defined by ‘asymmetrical giving’: through better social provision of those same goods, through such mechanisms as family leave, childcare, healthcare, care for the elderly, equal wages.”

As much as Clinton has been extensively subject to the policing arm of misogyny, she has also benefited from enforcing the patriarchal order herself, both in moral ways (her continued defense of her husband over Monica Lewinsky) and material ones (her support of neoliberal, anti-welfare-state policies). “Sexism is bad, always, of course,” as Charlotte Shane put it in a *Baffler* article, “but if you came to me with news that someone used a gendered insult against Betsy DeVos, I’m going to respond like a dad who’s tackling a major home plumbing

problem completely beyond his skills: ‘I’m kind of busy right now, pal!’” As the world burns around us, a lack of prioritization can be as deadly as anything else.

**D**espite these limitations, Manne’s greater argument still stands and offers us a forceful new point of focus—that misogyny targets women because they are women in a “man’s world” rather than because they are women in a “man’s mind.” Perhaps the most compelling application of the book is this political understanding of misogyny. She may not direct our attention toward solutions, but she does remind us that the problems of sexism and patriarchy are collective and structural, not individual, and they therefore require movements and institutional change. As Manne argues, defining misogyny solely as a problem spawned by a few (or even many) bad apples renders it “a matter of psychological ill health, or perhaps irrationality, rather than a systematic facet of social power relations.” By concentrating on the experience of women and by seeing that misogyny is not dependent on individual misogynists (while still not exonerating them) but on its service to a greater patriarchal order, Manne allows us to better understand the ways in which misogyny works as an institutional force.

She may have a very specific construction of misogyny, yet she isn’t alone in making the argument that feminist analysis needs to be structural first. In recent years, as the limitations of the *Lean In*, girlboss ethos have become more broadly obvious, a more political and socialist feminism has reentered the mainstream, one that sees the idea of a feminist meritocracy as a sham. Liberal feminism’s representation-first focus has done little to reform a precarious world; it has left many women who are not in a position to “lean in” to find themselves in even greater positions of inequality and forced to suffer even worse forms of disempowerment and violence. While there may be more individually empowered women than ever before and more individual men who have been removed from powerful posts since the emergence of Me Too, our institutions and our social system have remained patriarchal.

Manne’s pointed redefinition of misogyny helps us reckon with the need for institutional change. Consider, for example, the Me Too apology tours. As *The New Yorker*’s Jia Tolentino wrote, discussing former public radio hosts John Hockenberry and Jian Ghomeshi after they were accused of sexual

harassment and, in Ghomeshi’s case, also of assault and then given thousands of words in esteemed literary publications to expound on what the revelations did to them: “In all of the cases that I heard about, it seemed to me essential, as a bare first step, for the man in question to understand that his experience is not inherently more important than the experiences of women, to acknowledge what he did, and that it was wrong. This is the minimum precondition for the better world we’re struggling toward. It is amazing, if not surprising, how many of the men in question are incapable of it.” It’s a sentiment that, as Tolentino notes, is hard to imagine in practice. Can a world where we shift the narrative away from men and their feelings toward women and their experiences exist without a considerable reworking of how power, influence, capital, and rank are distributed in society?

In July we got another reminder of this reality with Jane Mayer’s rehabilitative profile in *The New Yorker* of Al Franken, who resigned from the Senate after eight women accused him of forcibly kissing or groping them. Much of the article is focused on him, the politicians who now regret calling for his resignation, and inaccuracies in the account of his initial accuser; less space is given to the stories or perspectives of the seven other accusers. Instead, we hear about how Franken himself feels and even are told how—in response to Mayer relaying comments from a woman who told *Politico* that he tried to kiss her in 2006 at a taping of his Air America show—he begins to cry. He claims that there was a misunderstanding, that he was likely just trying to thank her. Mayer notes that he is “stricken” when he hears the woman’s comments. At the center of Mayer’s profile is the question of Franken’s intent, not the experience of his accusers. Mayer asks the woman from the Air America show if what he did was a sexual advance or not, to which she responds, “Is there a difference? If someone tries to do something to you unwanted?”

The first step toward a better world is to begin to imagine that an alternative reality is possible. One in which men like Franken and Hockenberry and Ghomeshi don’t get to define their actions by how they themselves feel about them but in which we try to form institutions and social practices that are, at their root, free of the misogyny that enforces the patriarchal order. Manne’s proposal to construct a framework that focuses on women’s experiences is a start toward that imagining. The question is how long we’ll be stuck here. ■



system that responds to these questions in a suitable way. This is the approach taken by Martin Hägglund in his searching new book, *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom*. A professor of comparative literature and humanities at Yale, Hägglund brings to his argument an unusually wide array of resources—philosophical, literary, and political—that he braids together into a passionate case for democratic socialism. His claims are not primarily economic, nor are they grounded in considerations of fairness or utility. We should endorse socialism, he insists, because it is the only arrangement of society that answers to our fundamental conception of ourselves as beings concerned with our own finitude. We are, Hägglund observes, fragile creatures who exist without any “final guarantee” in the success of our commitments. Our lives are precarious, but it is our unrestrained investment in this precious life that leads us to socialism and the creation of a society that can afford us genuine fulfillment. “You cannot shut down your sense of uncertainty and risk without also shutting down your capacity to feel joy, connection, and love,” he writes. And it is this sense of uncertainty and risk—the possibility that everything might not hold together—that underwrites our worldly commitment to one another; if we were not finite, such commitment would not be possible at all.

This concern with our own finitude is what Hägglund calls “secular faith.” In a series of chapters that address key thinkers in the canons of philosophy and religion—Augustine, Kierkegaard, Marx, and Martin Luther King Jr.—Hägglund attempts to show how this secular faith has served and should continue to serve as the necessary condition for all of our worldly actions and thus why socialism and secular faith naturally complement each other. Most provocative are those portions of *This Life* in which Hägglund tries to show how traditional religion fatally misconstrues the value of human life by locating it in an eternal realm beyond mortal bounds. We must commit not to eternity, he argues, but to our own worldly being. Yet like a belief in eternity, this commitment to the finite world is every bit as much a leap of faith.

Hägglund understands, of course, that talk of secular “faith” sounds paradoxical and may invite misunderstanding. He is not interested in secularism in the juridical or institutional sense, as in the Jeffersonian “wall of separation” between church and state. Nor is Hägglund concerned with the question that might trouble a specialist in

# EITHER THIS WORLD OR THE NEXT

Do we need to give up God to embrace socialism?

by PETER E. GORDON

**W**hy should we be in favor of socialism? Many thinkers—philosophers, economists, sociologists, political theorists—have labored over this question and advanced arguments of various kinds. Some appeal to fairness: Only a fundamental change in the distribution of property and social goods will arrange society in such a way that capital and inherited wealth do not award advantages mainly to a privileged few. Others invoke the idea of human flourishing: People can realize themselves and achieve true

happiness only if they have the freedom to pursue their individual and collective goals, and they can do that only if they do not find their life paths obstructed at every turn by economic need. Then there is the instability claim: As an economic system, capitalism is intrinsically unsound and, quite apart from any moral considerations, will eventually collapse under the weight of its dysfunction, even if we seek to allay its difficulties through stopgap efforts in social welfare and massive incursions of foreign debt.

A different and rather novel sort of argument for socialism is that we must return to the most rudimentary philosophical questions concerning what we take human life to be and why we care about it at all. We will then come to the conclusion that socialism is the only political and economic

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comparative politics—whether a socialist system can thrive only in a broadly secular culture—though this question haunts his book. His quarry is more elusive and more philosophical, while his conclusions are more tendentious.

*This Life* is a work of great originality that dares to tackle some of the most contested questions in philosophy and religion. But for a book that tries to turn us toward the concrete facts of this-worldly life, its conception of religion is remarkably abstract. Häggglund never truly reckons with egalitarian movements, past or present, that were animated by religious belief. More troubling still, his arguments suggest a stark choice: Either you are a religious believer whose eyes remain fixed on eternity, to the exclusion of all worldly things, or you are not a religious believer (even if you say otherwise), since what you truly value most are the worldly attachments and material needs that make socialism a meaningful form of life.

Häggglund devotes a great share of his book to readings in the history of philosophy. His chief illustrations are Christian: In chapters on Augustine and Kierkegaard, he argues that both thinkers are essentially at war with their own better insights. They want to uphold the value of human life but ultimately obscure this value by placing their confidence not in time but in eternity. Likewise, in sections on Marx and King, he demonstrates the power of a secular faith that directs its energies toward the transformation of this world, even if King understood himself to be acting from religious motives. Ultimately, Häggglund wants to claim that socialism is incompatible with religion and that it can be intelligible only as a manifestation of our secular faith.

Häggglund begins with Augustine as the thinker who perhaps did more than any other to set the terms for Christian belief. Augustine's pursuit of salvation promises an end to all worldly cares, and yet, Häggglund argues, even Augustine could not resolve the conflict between his faith in God and his fidelity to the world. Of one friendship, Augustine writes that it was "sweet to me beyond all the sweetnesses of life"—a sign, Häggglund suggests, that beneath his official declarations of attachment to eternity, even Augustine felt an "intense attachment" and vulnerability to "the rhythms of time." But this means Augustine could not help but betray his own teachings.

When he turns to Kierkegaard, Hägg-

## This Life

*Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom*

By Martin Häggglund

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lund identifies an even more striking case of the ambivalence between religious and secular faith. In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard meditates on the biblical story of Abraham, who is prepared to obey a divine command to slaughter his son Isaac as a demonstration of his faith and yet believes that through this sacrifice, Isaac will somehow be restored to him. Here, too, Häggglund writes, we can detect a hidden moment of secular faith. Try as hard as he may to turn his back on the world, even Abraham cannot wholly forswear the deeper if paradoxical commitment to worldly life he seems ready to surrender.

For Häggglund, the examples of Augustine and Kierkegaard show us that even the most esteemed Christian thinkers remain poised in indecision between their religious and worldly commitments. Secular faith, it turns out, has long lay coiled in the heart of religious thinking, but Häggglund feels they are essentially incompatible and we must try our best to liberate the secular from its religious husk. His interpretations are dramatic but strongly dualistic, leaving us with the impression that only the secular deserves salvation while religion by definition has no love for the world. For Häggglund, as for Kierkegaard, the biblical story about Abraham and Isaac serves as a lesson in the necessity of absolute belief: Inward faith must overrule our outward commitments to society. But the tale also contains other lessons. When an angel intervenes to stop Isaac's death, Abraham is reminded that his social commitments are sacred and should be trusted even more than a voice from the heavens. Read this way—from the end rather than the middle—the tale appears not as a panegyric to religious faith but rather as a warning against fanaticism.

This is an insight Häggglund seems to miss. Throughout its history, religion did not need to await the arrival of secularism to spawn its own criticism; it already contained the kinds of challenges that would become commonplace in the modern era—voices that railed against moral indifference and demanded that the pious turn their fullest attention to injustice in this world.

To be sure, Häggglund himself wants to interpret his chosen texts with an eye to their inner tensions. Following the method known as "immanent critique," he wants to expose contradictions by showing the dissonance between religion's stated norms

and its actual commitments. To demonstrate that something is wrong with the life we currently lead, we need not invoke any transcendent ideas beyond that life; we simply need to identify the self-contradictions. Häggglund wields this method as a cudgel against religion. He fastens his attention only on those moments when religion might appear to be in conflict with itself but fails to see that religious traditions have often anticipated his objections.

For perhaps obvious reasons, when Häggglund turns to Marx's this-worldly critique of capitalism, he is far more charitable. Marx, Häggglund argues, is an exemplar of secular faith. He knew that there were no norms beyond his social and historical moment to which he could appeal to identify the depredations of capitalism, so instead he developed his critique by showing how capitalist society did not live up to its own principles. Liberal capitalism sought to uphold the ideal of freedom above all else, Marx noted, but ultimately the system it created undermined this ideal. Overcoming the unfreedom it has produced thus demands that we redirect our attention toward what Häggglund calls the "free time" that capitalism has colonized. Marx, Häggglund concludes, is the great exemplar of secular faith, awakening us to the priority of our freedom as finite beings. This interpretation of Marx, which draws some inspiration from the late Marxist theorist Moishe Postone, has moments of great originality. In Häggglund's book, this chapter plays a pivotal role, serving as the primary illustration as to why socialism and secular faith belong together, and why humanity must look past religion if we are to find our freedom.

When Häggglund turns to Martin Luther King Jr., however, his interpretation invites serious controversy. King poses a challenge to Häggglund's dualism between religious and secular faith, since he intertwined worldly activism with Christian belief and apparently saw no contradiction between the two. To his credit, Häggglund grapples with King's example, but he does not shy away from his boldest conclusion: When King appeals to God in the cause of worldly justice, Häggglund asserts, he simply cannot mean "the religious notion of an eternal God." By insisting that "the struggle for social freedom" is "an end in itself," King proves himself to be a devotee of secular faith even if he sometimes invokes an otherworldly language.

Häggglund insists on this verdict, even

when he quotes the famous lines from King's final speech in Memphis on April 3, 1968:

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we as a people will get to the promised land.

This speech, Häggglund tells us, does not convey "a vision of eternal life," nor is it "a vision of the new Jerusalem." Instead it is "a vision of what we the people can achieve, a vision of the new Memphis."

One can perhaps appreciate why Häggglund would reach such a conclusion. By the end of his life, King had begun to shift his priorities from the struggle for civil rights and integration to more radical demands focused on economic redistribution and a fundamental transformation of American society, and Häggglund sees this as a shift not just in politics but also in metaphysics. Embedded in King's radicalism, he argues, is a devotion to the world that cannot be squared with a religious devotion to eternity. King, it turns out, is a knight of secular faith.

Seen in a historical light, Häggglund's argument may strike us as highly dubious. There is a long tradition of Christian socialism in the United States and in Europe as well. Häggglund not only ignores this tradition; he risks a serious misunderstanding of King's activism when he omits the most moving lines that come toward the end of the Memphis speech. "So I'm happy tonight," King told his audience. "I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord."

Häggglund's scholarship and his political commitments are both to be commended. But his readiness to pronounce upon the true coherence of King's innermost motives strikes me as audacious in the extreme. Though I can hardly claim any expertise regarding the civil rights movement, even a superficial understanding of its history would suggest that for King and many of its other participants, there was no essential contradiction between politics and prophecy. Their Christianity was intrinsic to their sense of what they were doing as political agents, and they would have been surprised to learn that they were mistaken about the innermost sources of their own actions.

To be sure, Häggglund is not interested

in professed motives; he is interested only in the philosophical coherence of human conduct. But his interpretation of King as a secularist is nevertheless an indication that something in *This Life* has gone awry. The book rarely descends from the lofty heights of philosophical speculation to make contact with the long and complex empirical record of religion in the world. This record is so rich that it would take more than a lifetime to master all of the relevant sources. But with his extraordinary confidence in his definitions, Häggglund does not refrain from offering a final verdict on what religion has been and what it can be. "Neither Jesus nor Buddha nor Muhammad," he writes, "has anything to say about freedom as an end in itself." This is not accidental, he continues, because from a religious perspective, "what ultimately matters is not to lead a life but to be saved from being alive."

**P**art of Häggglund's difficulty, it seems, is that he is too quick to see in religion only a stark choice: either this world or the next. Either you invest all of your values in the here and now or you evacuate your life of all meaning by turning to the afterlife. This either/or choice looks suspiciously Kierkegaardian, but it poorly captures the lived reality of Christianity. Nor does it speak to the complexity and variety of its teachings. Although I am not a Christian, I recognize why these teachings might still inspire. Consider, for example, the astonishing doctrine of the incarnation itself, a mystery that Christian theologians have interpreted in myriad ways. Among its most powerful insights is that even the eternal cannot remain unscathed. When I gaze upon an image of Christ in agony upon the cross, I am confronted with the moving if terrifying idea that God, too, can be finite. The divine is not beyond time but actually descends into time and suffers all of the passions of humanity.

This is the paradoxical idea that has inspired so many Christians across the millennia and has turned them, quite often, not away from the world but toward it, demanding that they treat each individual as a miraculous apparition—an image of God. Latin American liberation theology helped inspire Gustavo Gutiérrez in Peru and his allies in Brazil and elsewhere to interpret Christianity as a revolutionary praxis that sought not to escape from the world but to transform it from within by emancipating the poor and the oppressed. In the North Atlantic, Christian socialists once stood on the front lines in the battle for economic

justice. Häggglund ignores this complicated record, I suspect, since it does not accord with his tidy distinction between this life and the afterlife.

In many religions, incidentally, the promise of an afterlife does not beckon quite so brightly as Häggglund seems to believe. In Judaism, for example, moral concern is directed squarely toward this life alone, while the promise of an eternal life beyond death appears with relative infrequency. Hell, or Sheol, is a realm of boredom, not endless punishment (though the rabbis do speak of Gehenna as the place for those who are wicked). Heaven is not a gated community that awaits the pious as their final reward; it is a dwelling place for God alone. Ethical conduct is its own reward. Maimonides, arguably the greatest of the medieval Jewish philosophers, insisted that a human being can never transcend the bounds of finitude to unite with the eternal. Similar themes also appear in the writings of his Muslim contemporaries Al Farabi and Avicenna. Incidentally, Maimonides and Avicenna were not just metaphysicians but also physicians, caretakers of the body as well as the soul. In the history of religion, this is hardly uncommon. The great virtuosos of spiritual tradition were not, as Häggglund implies, all monastics taking flight from the world. Just as often they were spiritual reformers, leveraging eternal values for the sake of mortal life.

**D**oes it really matter that Häggglund gets so much of the history of religion wrong? Maybe so, maybe not. More pertinent to his purpose are questions of metaphysics and philosophy, and when it comes to those, his erudition is on grand display. He has much to say that is truly instructive in his readings of Augustine, Kierkegaard, and Marx. Häggglund also offers some fascinating remarks on the multivolume writings of Karl Ove Knausgaard. Only in a brief section on Adorno does Häggglund really stumble, when he dismisses Adorno's thinking as essentially "religious." It's a striking claim, since the esteemed philosopher of dialectical negation was at heart a materialist who invoked religious concepts only for the sake of this-worldly criticism. The idea of redemption, for example, is of value for Adorno only as a standard that casts light on the world's distortion; the reality of redemption "hardly matters."

Quarrel as one might with certain details in his textual interpretation, Häggglund is a discerning critic whose command of the

philosophical tradition is formidable. For his own philosophical authorities, he appeals chiefly to Hegel and Heidegger as well as Marx. In fact, much of the language of Hägglund's book is identifiably Heideggerian, and the core premises that animate his arguments are ones that will be recognizable to those who have read *Being and Time*.

For Hägglund, as for Heidegger, the history of religion is essentially the history of a metaphysical error. Ultimate value is assigned to a timeless ground beyond the world, with the pernicious consequence that humanity has adopted a posture of world denial or nihilism. For Heidegger, the proper domain of human concern is our own "worldhood," since this is the realm in which we devote ourselves to the things we care about most. But our worldhood is never anchored in eternity. If we have a stake in our life, this is because it is thoroughly temporal. Our being is "at issue" only because it must come to an end. On this point, Hägglund proves himself a faithful disciple of Heidegger. "Most fundamentally," he writes, "I must live in relation to my irrevocable death—otherwise I would believe that my time is infinite and there would be no urgency in dedicating my life to anything." Later in the book, Hägglund repeats this claim in even bolder terms: "Life can matter only in light of death."

But is it only death that gives life meaning? Though he returns to this assertion throughout his book, Hägglund never truly offers a clear explanation as to why finitude confers value. Suppose you tell me that global warming will overtake the earth within a year and that nothing we can do will prevent the catastrophe. The sense of inevitability might not encourage action but instead awaken feelings of disabling fatalism. Finitude, it seems, is hardly a necessary condition for caring about life; it might even inhibit me from caring at all. Now suppose I believe in karma: Even the simplest act in my current life will bear upon who I will be in the life to come. In this case, it seems that a belief that points beyond my death might very well encourage me to care a great deal about each and every aspect of my present conduct.

Such examples suggest that Hägglund is too quick to affirm the place of finitude as the source of all meaning and too eager to blame religion for our flight from the world. In fact, when we consider religious

traditions in all of their extravagant diversity, we may begin to wonder how religion can be assigned any singular doctrine at all. For many religious believers, the recognition of a higher meaning beyond life is precisely why they care so much about their moral and political conduct in this world. I suspect this was the sort of sentiment that animated King in his political struggles, and a similar sense of worldly commitment has inspired Christian socialists and liberation theologians alike.

For all of its this-worldly pathos, *This Life* elevates its existential insights to a set of invariant truths that are conspicuously indifferent to worldly fact. Although I have no personal interest in an eternal life, I don't suppose I am the only one to doubt the shopworn truism that the anticipation of my death is the highest condition for my life's meaning.

This may sound like a discovery of great pathos, but it is one that holds true only for certain cultures and at certain moments in history. Nor does it help that the ponderous bromides of mid-20th-century existentialism bear an unfortunate resemblance to self-help literature. ("My time with family and friends is precious," Hägglund tells us, "because we have to make the most of it.")

Still, let us suppose for the sake of argument that we accept Hägglund's distinction between secular faith and religion. The first directs us to time and asks us to accept that life matters only in the light of death. The second turns us resolutely to the afterlife and bids us grant that life matters only in the light of eternity. Here, we confront the most poignant irony of the book: It assigns to death the role of an *ens realissimum*, or highest reality, that bears an uncanny resemblance to the God it has displaced. For the believer, God is the ultimate source of value. For Hägglund, it is finitude. This, I suspect, may be a sign that he has not fully escaped the matrix of Christianity. The old distinction between time and eternity remains in place; only their values have been inverted.

This is perhaps unsurprising, since Hägglund is deeply invested in a philosophical tradition that inherited a great many of its metaphysical problems—and even its language—from the Christian tradition. But what should trouble us about this inversion is that it rehearses the same game of epistemic superiority that religious believers

have used in their endless battle against those who do not believe. The religious believer is certain that the unbeliever is in error. Hägglund is no less certain that the believer is in error. To be sure, certain religious traditions have also counseled humility: If we cannot know the ways of God, they have reasoned, then we should not dare to judge the ways of humanity. This doctrine of apophatic (or negative) theology ranks among the most powerful themes in the history of religion. A secular philosophy that places a similar emphasis on human finitude might be expected to sustain a similar posture of epistemic humility and an openness to doubt. But in Hägglund's book, such virtues are in short supply.

There is one last question that we might ask of *This Life*: Is it really necessary or even prudent to build up the political case for democratic socialism with appeals to metaphysical first principles? Hägglund's birthplace, Sweden, has long stood as a paradigm of social democratic success; it also ranks among the most secular countries in the world. So perhaps it should not surprise us that he sees secularism and socialism as wedded in a coherent philosophical worldview. But it is chastening to think that a great many of the people with whom we share the globe today still define themselves as religious. This is especially the case when one looks beyond the most privileged regions of Northern Europe and the urban centers of North America.

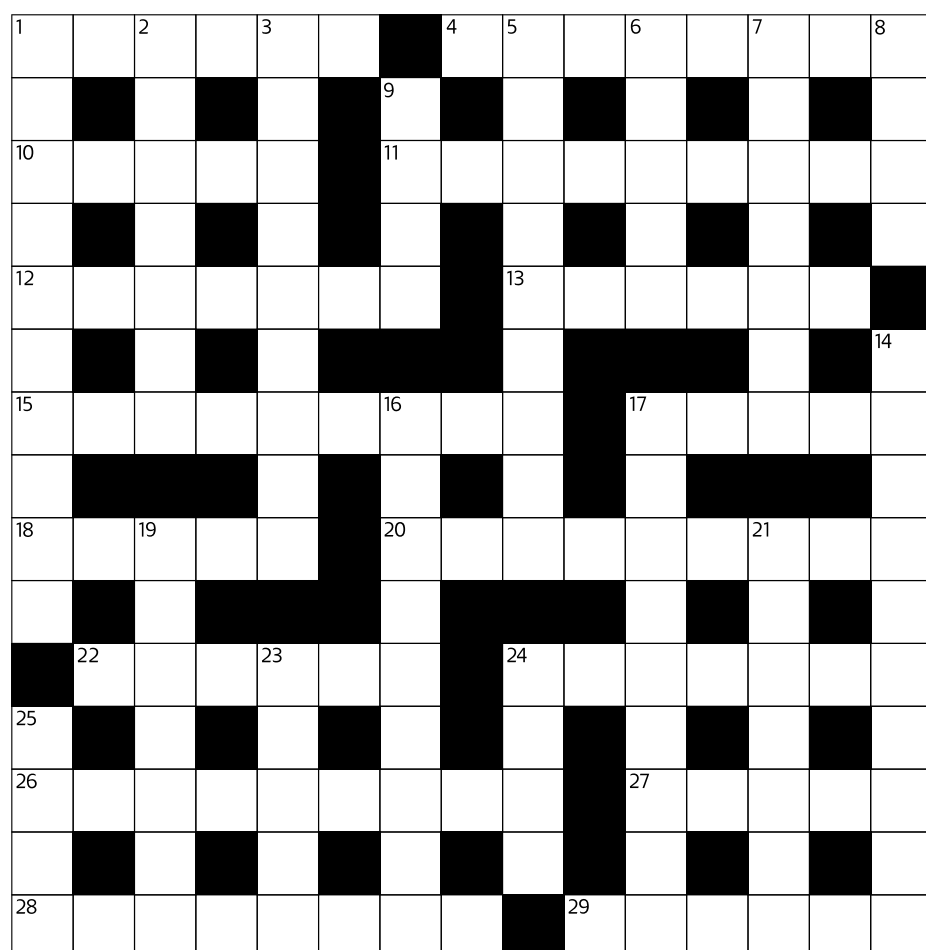
In the cool eyes of the unbeliever, these people subscribe to beliefs that may appear misguided or even foolish. But we should still find a way to speak not for these people but with them, especially when it comes to the political arrangements that will benefit us all. Dismissing their beliefs as the wrong metaphysical grounding for socialism will not get us terribly far. But if we direct our attention to more material and political concerns—to housing, health care, education, economic equity, and popular rule—we may realize that the old battle lines between the secular and the religious are losing their grip.

Whether we really need to bind together politics and metaphysics in the way Hägglund does remains an open question, but given the urgency of the tasks that confront us, it may be best to forgo the task of metaphysical grounding altogether. When it comes to economic justice, after all, the most compelling arguments are political, not metaphysical. ■



# Puzzle No. 3510

JOSHUA KOSMAN AND HENRI PICCIOTTO



## ACROSS

- 1 and 14D At the 11th hour, securing bishop left in the custody of libertine singer-actor (6,10)  
 4 Excerpt from “Essay on a Radish”—this might be the last word (8)  
 10 Assembled blue blanket with front trimmed (5)  
 11 Political dealings in Nixon/Reagan era (9)  
 12 In the absence of leadership, gender pride muddled through (7)  
 13 Make a mistake stuffing dessert in state capital (6)  
 15 Divide and draw these bananas (9)  
 17 Classic movie (*King and I*) about alpha male (5)  
 18 Said, “Uncle, do mire mire?” (5)  
 20 The author dines irregularly with long-suffering man—that’s a crime (6,3)  
 22 In Milan, you committed to one suit from the tarot cards (6)  
 24 Coach in chaotic terrain (7)  
 26 Showed the last thing to happen in a performance of Beethoven’s Ninth? (9)

- 27 Thorough analysis involves African country (5)  
 28 Named item nearly came first (8)  
 29 Again, enter and peer randomly to take in toy packaging (6)

## DOWN

- 1 Knave, taking shot, wore out fearsome beast (10)  
 2 Bit dog, perhaps, after small nibble (7)  
 3 Made a cross and buried around back of tomb (9)  
 5 Insects surrounding mobile device (electronic)—they’re on the other side of the world (9)  
 6 Oxygen covering large part of the earth! (5)  
 7 A couple of animals (hare or rhea, for instance) (7)  
 8 A jump on the ice can lurch at first (4)  
 9 Potato salad ultimately underlies rise of shipping company (4)  
 14 See 1A  
 16 Bob, for example, is on TV separating ethyl radical (9)  
 17 Soak injured badger leg (9)  
 19 Traps manuscript file at last, encased in retro crap (4,3)  
 21 Ray and Juan breaking up for a month (7)  
 23 Tulip mysteriously casting shadows on the ceiling (5)  
 24 From bottom to top, improve a text’s ebb and flow (4)  
 25 Something useful for cutting through strange daze (4)

## SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3509

ACROSS 1 letter bank 9 [h]OLDER

10 PUR(CHASE)R 11 AR(CHE)TY + PE

12 A + [e]MONG (rev.) 13 anag.

14 A(DOLE)SCENT 17 pun 19 rev.

22 P + LEAD 23 anag.

26 IN TENT + I + ON 27 PLAN O

28 pun

DOWN 1 AB + DUCTS 2 CUR + FEW

3 IMP-LY 4 CARD + [h]EALER

5 RE + HEARSE 6 L IS SOME

7 COL[d] + A 8 B(RIGHT)EN

13 EL + LIP + SIS 15 anag.

16 CR (rev.) + EDEN + CE 18 SHE(LT)ER

20 PREP + ARE (rev.) 21 rev. 24 P + INCH

25 POT + S (rev.)



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