

men, an Alaskan who said no to Washington (though she really didn't), a maverick who rode shotgun to another maverick.

Conservatism has not only depended upon outsiders; it also has seen itself as the voice of the outsider. From Burke's cry that "the gallery is in the place of the house" to Buckley's complaint that the modern conservative is "out of place," the conservative has served as a tribune for the displaced, his movement a conveyance of their grievances.⁴² Far from being an invention of the politically correct, victimhood has been a talking point of the right ever since Burke decried the mob's treatment of Marie Antoinette. The conservative, to be sure, speaks for a special type of victim: one who has lost something of value, as opposed to the wretched of the earth, whose chief complaint is that they never had anything to lose. His constituency is the contingently dispossessed—William Graham Sumner's "forgotten man"—rather than the preternaturally oppressed. Far from diminishing his appeal, this brand of victimhood endows the conservative complaint with a more universal significance. It connects his disinheritance to an experience we all share—namely, loss—and threads the strands of that experience into an ideology promising that that loss, or at least some portion of it, can be made whole.

People on the left often fail to realize this, but conservatism really does speak to and for people who have lost something. It may be a landed estate or the privileges of white skin, the unquestioned authority of a husband or the untrammelled rights of a factory owner. The loss may be as material as money or as ethereal as a sense of standing. It may be a loss of something that was never legitimately owned in the first place; it may, when compared with what the conservative retains, be small. Even so, it is a loss, and nothing is ever so cherished as that which we no longer possess. It used to be one of the great virtues of the left that it alone understood the often zero-sum nature of politics, where the gains of one