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all specific myths, collective narratives, and institutions. All these are ways through which even a non-religious and secularized democratic society teaches individuals how to tame their freshly reawakened [after God's death] insatiable desire and will to power.⁴

It is the acknowledgement of precisely this necessity as well as the concomitant "sense of limits" [as Lasch used to say] that has always driven the best intellectual representatives of this "reactionary" and "Tory" heterodoxy within the Left: from Orwell's democratic antitotalitarianism to Arendt's reinterpretation of the notion of conservatism, from Lewis Mumford's and Jacques Ellul's critique of modern technology to Simone Weil's rejection of the equation of human emancipation with the notion of indefinite expansion of productive forces, and from E. P. Thompson's rehabilitation of William Morris's "romantic anticapitalism" [against Engels's dismissal] to Albert Camus's critical acceptance of modernity. Castoriadis's conception of freedom as autolimitation should be considered the most recent effort to rethink democratic and emancipatory politics following the philosophical principles of this tradition—that is, within a framework that rejects the "denial of the natural limits on human power and freedom" that lies in the core of "progressive optimism," a framework rooted instead in the acceptance of the "tragic character" of human existence.

Progressivism and its discontents

Castoriadis traced how this worldview materialized in the Ancient Greek tradition, whereas Lasch, a historian by training, systematically studied basic aspects of 19th and 20th century American history and culture. If Lasch's intellectual quest has actually been "a search for another way of achieving America,"¹⁰ that is because his radical cultural and political criticism of postwar American society has always been nurtured by his striving to bring to light a largely forgotten conception of democracy and equality together with the political and intellectual forces that historically defended it. This quest ranged from his initial efforts to save from oblivion the original, Populist flavor of American socialism, prior to its eventual "Europeanization" in the years after the Russian revolution,¹¹ to his devising of a historical genealogy of democratic and/or populist anti-progressivism¹² and his ultimate discussion of the original meaning of such central notions of American ideology as democracy and social advancement.¹³ Lasch's main argument has always been not only that the idea of Progress has nothing to do with democracy and freedom but that, what is more, it was actually in the name of this same Progress that American society gradually came to be dominated by oppressing and alienating forces that crush the individual and dismantle communities, forces such as industrial capitalism, technology, state bureaucracy, and the corporate and public organizations that serve them. In other words, it is precisely this systematic undermining of every traditional custom and social bond that reduces the individual to an alienated consumer, stripped of even its slightest and most elementary autonomy and independence,¹⁴ constantly demanding the help and assistance of every kind of expert. This fundamental dependence transforms the individual into a patient, thus giving rise to what Lasch calls, drawing on Philip Rieff's work, "the therapeutic state."¹⁵

This gradual substitution of popular culture by mass culture and technocratic manipulation is carried out in the name of the hypothetically necessary fight against all those "prejudices" and "archaisms"—Adam Smith's "acts of settlement"—that presumably block the way to Progress and Enlightenment. One must therefore explicitly attack the ideology that views traditional popular culture as inherently "reactionary" and "stagnant" and, thus, as *a priori* incompatible with democracy. According to Lasch, the political forces that most faithfully incarnated this ideology were the Progressive reformers and Wilsonite liberals, whose aim had been to "modernize" society with a view to rendering the masses more fit to function within the nascent system of bureaucratic industrial capitalism. Within the New Deal Coalition such technocratic liberalism still managed to maintain contact with the working people; with the emergence of the New Left and its eventual influence on liberal—and Democratic—politics, the Liberals' "anti-conservative" proclivities took on a new life. Contempt for ordinary people (or at least suspicion towards them) was from now on considerably exacerbated, partly because of a growing fetishization of ethnic minorities that was reinforced by Second Wave feminism's tendency to demonize white males and partly due to the overall predisposition of the Baby Boomers towards a "creative" and "nomadic" hippie lifestyle based on a general "arty" outlook that favors "creativity" and "spontaneity" to the detriment of traditional values associated with such classically capitalist—and therefore also petty-bourgeois and even proletarian—notions as "work" and "organization."¹⁶

Henceforth, the ethos and culture of petty-bourgeois and white working-class people was increasingly considered to be the "patriarchal" and "racist" archenemy to be combated—especially since the latter had begun to rally themselves as the "Silent Majority" who essentially approved the repression of the New Left during the "Chicago 68" events by giving Nixon two consecutive victories. Frederick Dunton rationalized those changes in his infamous manifesto, *Changing Sources of Power* [1971], and the Democratic Party reinvented itself on the basis of this analysis of the social forces through the reforms implemented by the McGovern Commission: the New Deal Coalition was dismantled and the working class was abandoned in favor of the "New Politics" electoral base of the "young" (i.e. white college students, professionals-to-be) and the "minorities."

Exacerbated by the tendency of the "lyrical generation" (as Quebecer scholar François Ricard calls the Baby Boomers) to "nurture, at all cost, its need for rupture and restart,"¹⁷ the liberal-progressive offensive against popular culture took a new turn, contributing to the triggering of the famous "white backlash" and of the "culture wars" that have been determining American

political life ever since. The Baby Boomers' ascendancy made their values and lifestyle dominant, rendering the breach between common people and the oligarchy even deeper. How could this new dominant class rule and rationally govern American society given that its ethos was shaped by this "lyrical" predisposition that one finds in such famous declarations of faith as the Situationists' insistence to "Live without dead time and enjoy without restraints,"¹⁸ in Norman Mailer's idea that the hipster-as-a-cultural-dissident should live life according to a perception of time that takes the form of an "enormous present, which is without past or future, memory or planned intention,"¹⁹ or even in the hippie-eseque, individualist invocations of the "psyche" and the "soul" that fill the pages of *Changing Sources of Power*?²⁰ Lasch never undertook such a close examination of the Baby Boomer mentality, as his—otherwise intransigent—criticism of the New Left remained mostly political. Nevertheless, the essentially anthropological analyses of the post-'60s American society and culture that we find in Lasch's best-known books, *The Culture of Narcissism* and *The Minimal Self*, offer us a perspicacious vision of the social consequences of a way of life based on such "lyrical" premises, whereas the articles comprising *The Revolt of the Elites* dissect the irresponsible ethos of these new "lyrical" oligarchs who no longer desire to effectively rule society so much as to flee it.

Making America Great Again: ever-emerging "fascism" and the permanence of the "politics of display"

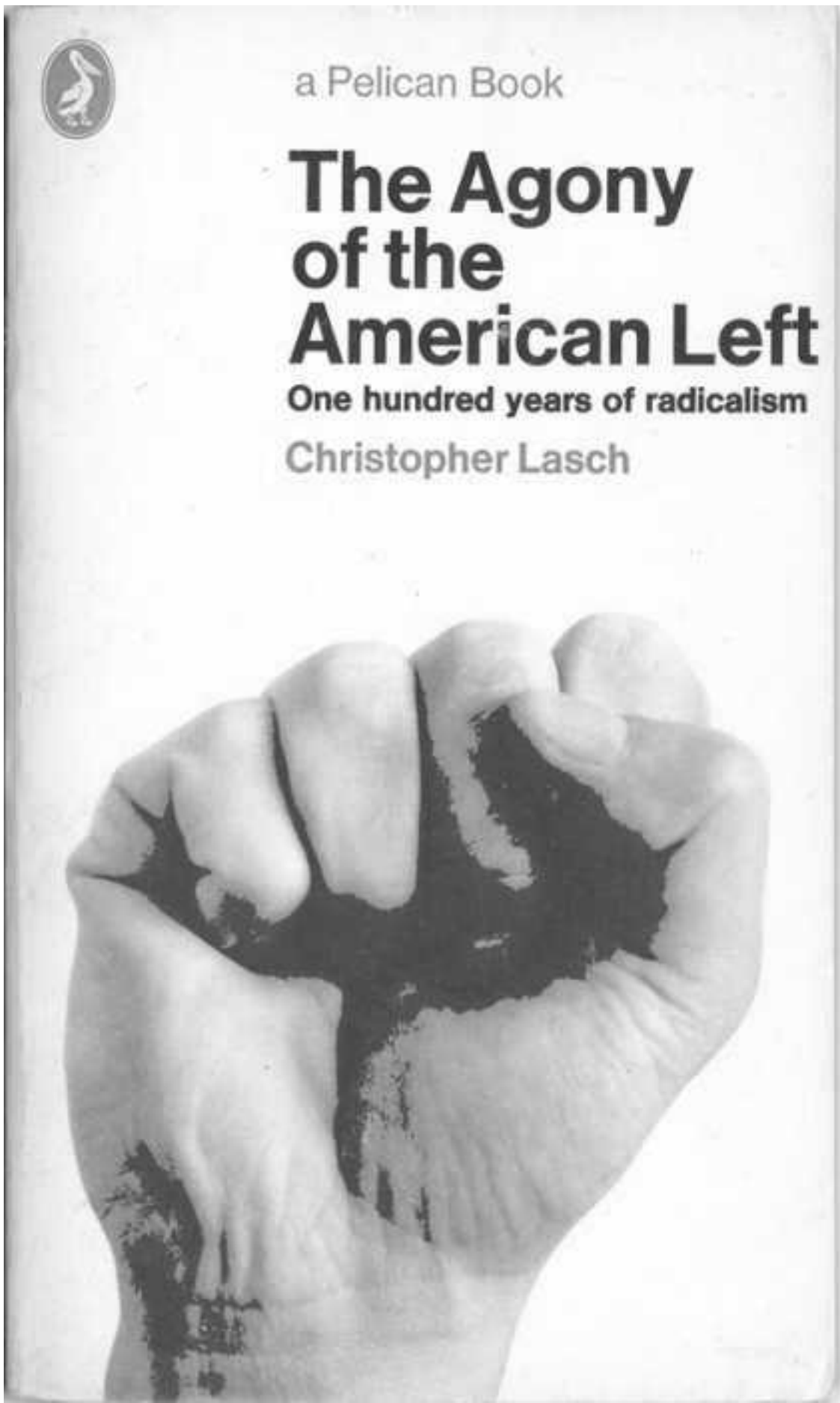
Reading the American press as well as liberal, leftist, and anarchist publications, the foreign observer gets the impression that a considerable part of Americans have been living in deep fear since November 8, 2016, as if their worst nightmare had finally come true and America were being rapidly transformed into a semi-totalitarian society. It is not simply disappointing but profoundly terrifying to realize that today's left appears to be so theoretically bankrupt that its members are not only seriously debating whether Trump is a dictator²¹ and a Nazi²² but also seem to be genuinely persuaded that Trump is promoting a new kind of fascism.²³ It would be vain and hopeless to try to explain to these self-proclaimed Marxists that fascist regimes do not emanate from the individual desire of some megalomaniacal bully or even from a plot orchestrated by a small group of fanatics (and in the case of Trump's group of dilettantes, even the organizational capacities necessary for this seem to be lacking). Dictatorships of all sorts (from "ordinary" military juntas to fascist and hardcore totalitarian regimes) arise in times of crisis when the existing social, economic, and political structures are unable to cope with extraordinary events that affect the very fabric of the institutions in place. The role of fascist social movements is precisely to resolve such insurmountable contradictions through a reactionary or autocratic "revolution." If they succeed in doing so, it is because there are established social forces that support or actively tolerate those social or military movements, whether it be the European bourgeoisie in the case of fascism and Nazism, or the foreign policy of the U.S. state in the case of Latin American banana-republics and military juntas.

Nothing of the sort exists today. Furthermore, American society remains a republic (a "bourgeois democracy") and not an autocracy—in other words, it remains a social and political regime that incarnates a certain spirit of liberty through institutions capable of counterbalancing executive power and even of resisting Trump's "well-documented authoritarian impulses"²⁴ through means both political and legal.²⁵ And, of course, no fascist tradition ever existed in America. From the glorious times when the first "rebel" group took arms to preserve its cultural particularism (the infamous "Peculiar Institution") against Yankee encroachment, up to Timothy McVeigh and contemporary "militias," American far-right extremists view themselves as anti-federal "rebels," ready to secede from the "Union" rather than try to take command of the State apparatus (let alone establish some form of dictatorship). For them, the current state of affairs is the real dictatorship to be taken down, the Washington "Big Government" Moloch in the face of whose docile bureaucrats we proudly wave our yellow "don't tread on me" flags.

"Fascism wants Baptism coast to coast"²⁶

Why, then, do various tendencies of contemporary liberalism accept as a legitimate issue of debate and serious consideration such an irrelevant and exaggerated hypothesis? I am not referring here simply to the most paranoid versions of contemporary anarchism that had considered modern Western oligarchies to be totalitarian even before Trump decided to seek the G.O.P. nomination. On the contrary, I have in mind some clearly less incoherent people on the Left who, nevertheless, seem to believe that contemporary "bourgeois democracies" [that is the liberal, constitutional oligarchies of Western countries] are constantly on the verge of sliding into totalitarian forms of domination.

Every excess in the use of state power is seen as a proof of this scenario, from Guantanamo to police shootings of African-Americans. It is an old habit that goes back to both the political and cultural wings of the Counterculture of the 1960s. The prevailing sentiment of "alienation amidst abundance in a world where it is ever harder to locate the centers of oppressive control"²⁷ that nourished those movements gave rise to a claustrophobic and fatalist reading of Western societies as being subject to totalitarian forms of control. What is more, in the context of the "lyrical" utopianism of this era and its concomitant notion of freedom as transgression of limits, everything that was not in accordance with our deepest hopes and desires was to be perceived in a semi-apocalyptic manner as "fascist" and "racist." Thus, the obsession with fascism became one of the cornerstones of the '60s mentality. Fascism could be found everywhere in those days: the New Left was referring to American society as "Amerikkka," Wes Wilson "rerouted" the American flag by replacing stars with swastikas (in his 1967 work *Are We Next?*), Ralph Steadman created a star-spangled skull with swastikas



Front cover of the paperback edition of Christopher Lasch's *The Agony of the American Left*, originally published in 1969.

in the place of its absent eyeballs for the cover of Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72*, feminists were describing Dirty Harry as fascist, and so on.

In the meantime, the rise of the so-called "identity politics" further contributed to the proliferation of the usage of such vague notions as "fascism" and "racism," since from now on it was the very fabric of society—no longer just its political and legal "superstructure"—that was considered oppressive. Given those movements' suspicion towards white, middle-America, "fascism" soon became a question of identity and cultural habits. No longer did fascism signify a certain type of political regime, but a *mentality*, hence its close relation with the term "patriarchy." In a certain way "fascist" is the postmodern equivalent of "reactionary."

Trumpism: a distorted form of democratic politics?

Much of the obsession with Trump-the-fascist stems from this version to what he represents culturally. That is why Hillary is not equally perceived as an enemy of the feminist cause, even if she is a ruthless careerist who allowed herself to be publicly humiliated in order to avoid compromising her chances of higher political appeal. The same goes for her husband's famous "Sister Soulgah moment" back in 1992 [that nobody seems to remember anymore]. If we are so eager to dub Trump a fascist and a racist, what should we have said then of Clinton, who crucially promoted the "Law and Order" policy of mass incarceration and refused to review the notorious de facto racist 100-to-1 sentencing disparity aimed at black and powder cocaine that targeted poor black crack addicts? The liberal and leftist eagerness to view Trump as some sort of harbinger of the Apocalypse suits very well the Democrats' plans, since they can now present themselves as the legitimate keepers of the democratic and antiracist faith and, at the same time, avoid any discussion of their own disastrous choices that have alienated a great mass of their traditional constituents, pushing them to the right.

Besides, given not only Trump's promises concerning the economy but his vocal repudiation of globalization as well, voting for him should be considered the far more rational choice for "middle" Americans compared to voting for the traditional, pro-globalization and openly anti-liberal Republican candidates. Not that Trump is going to keep his promises—he cannot, for the simple reason that the contemporary globalized economy cannot be undone by imposing tariff barriers. The irrationality of his temper and the repulsive nature of his personality notwithstanding, for his core constituency of white, working-class voters Trump's proclaimed policies are justifiably seen as far more relevant to their basic class interests than anything proposed so far by both Republicans and Democrats. From this perspective, what should have shocked us in the first place is the continuous and persistent vote of these same folks for the market-adulterated neoconservative Republicans from the 1980s on.²⁸ At least with Trump this suicidal habit seems to have taken a less paranoid turn, since Trump's victory signifies a rejection not only of liberal "coastal elites" but of the Republican—and, as such,

fundamentally pro-globalization—establishment as well. After having elected such market fundamentalist clowns as Reagan and Bush the younger, why not try a Populist clown in Trump? As has been the case with Brexit and with a great part of Le Pen's popularity in France, what we are dealing with here is a blind and irrational albeit utterly legitimate insurgency against the revolting, predatory elites of whom Lasch spoke.

If we take into account Trump's declared esteem for P. T. Barnum,²⁹ Philip Roth is right in evoking Melville's novel *The Confidence Man* as a possible source of inspiration for any effort to understand the billionaire's mind.³⁰ If the Trump election really does represent such a "radical discontinuity," as some observers believe,³¹ it is not so much because of the content of his declarations as due to how he behaves as a politician. It is a discontinuity with the technocratic consensus that has reigned at least since World War II. As such, the Trump victory is to some extent reviving some of the most extravagant features of the Populist tradition. Sociologically speaking, Trump resembles a curious blend of Barry Goldwater and Ross Perot, as he represents a kind of gilded paleo-conservatism. And, at the same time, his anti-establishment posture is reminiscent of such legendary Wall Street con men as "Jubilee Jim" Frisk," the Donald Trump of the nineteenth century,³² who achieved "wide popular acclaim as a kind of Wall Street Robin Hood" by declaring, amongst other things, "I was born to be bad."³³

In Trump's case, it is not so much "the romantic aura of democratic adventure" that turns "roughness into heroism"³⁴ [since he is no self-made man] as the desire to see the political establishment humiliated. The declaration of war against both political correctness and the media, passing through the extensive use of Twitter and going so far as to invent the bizarre notion of "alternative facts," is the most extreme way to achieve this humiliation. And given that the media, "Washington," and the universities are bastions of the meritocratic and technocratic wing of the American elites, this neo-Populist attack against the establishment should logically lead to an open embrace of irrationalism—and in this sense, birtherism was just the beginning. Shocking as all this might be to some, this political outlook contains as core elements two basic ingredients of the American Populist tradition, both stemming from this tradition's profound—and democratic—suspicion towards any form of titled expertise. To use Richard Hofstadter's terminology, we have to deal here with both American anti-intellectualism and a certain "paranoid style" that has time and again characterized this country's political life.³⁵ It is this irreverence towards both bureaucratic etiquette and the technocratic expertise that accompanies it that so greatly shocks contemporary liberals and a large segment of leftists, as both groups adhere to the meritocratic oligarchy's technocratic and politically correct mentality.

Even Trump's collaboration with such a far-right feminist theorists such as Martha Nussbaum, Nancy Fraser, or Camille Paglia notwithstanding, contemporary feminism is still being dominated by the spirit of its Second Wave predecessor that raises feminine experience to an absolute and, thus, considerably simplifies the nature of today's gender relations. It most notably neglects the fact that contemporary women are far more independent than before the 1960s and, as such, should also be held accountable for some of today's ills. In this sense, the major problem that no one seems to address is the incapacity of a large percentage of women [and LGBT people] to give a positive and coherent meaning to their newly acquired liberty. But how could they have done otherwise, given the overall cultural disintegration that characterizes contemporary Western societies?

It should not therefore be considered a paradox that in the midst of today's "gender trouble" and identity crisis many celebrities of current antifeminist discourse come from utterly non-conservative milieu— from the openly gay provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos to ex-pornstars Jenna Jameson and Tila Tequila.

This new kind of non-patriarchal, Hugh Hefner-esque sexism is proper to our post-bourgeois era of consumerist permissiveness and has, consequently,

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conspirationist as Steve Bannon serves the project of attacking the political establishment. Bannon, an admirer of Andrew Jackson who, in his own words, "come[s] from a blue collar, Irish-Catholic, pro-Kennedy, pro-union family of Democrats,"³⁶ was infuriated with Wall Street's attitude towards "common folks" like his father whose savings suffered a severe blow from the 2007 subprime crisis. It was then that Trump's new Chief Strategist, who had been a Reaganite in his youth and "as hard-nosed a capitalist as you get"³⁷ witnessed his spiritual rebirth into a Populist sworn opponent of the bankers. Evidently, this is the dark side of the moon, a Jacksonism on steroids boosted by apocalyptic warmongering and a Leninist-inspired revolutionary language.³⁸ But the core elements of this mix emanate directly from some common, classic traits of the American political tradition that have been systematically marginalized from public life. As we have already seen, they serve today to express the blind anger of large groups ("the forgotten men and women of our country" as Trump himself has put it) that feel abandoned by the ruling elites and especially by their meritocratic-technocratic wing, the one that supports the Democrats.³⁹

Revolutionary politics in the age of narcissism: a dead end?

Speaking of liberalism, then, what about the anti-Trump resistance? Strolling through the pages of a recent (February 6, 2017) issue of *Time*, which is dedicated to the Women's March ("The Resistance Rises; How a March Becomes a Movement"), and observing the photos of some of the activists, one cannot help but remember the words that Norman Mailer uttered when, strolling around Chicago's Loop in August of 1968, he bumped into a group of Yippies preparing to clash with the National Guard: "were these odd unkempt children the sort of troops with whom one wished to enter battle?"⁴⁰ This obsession with the "The Whole World is Watching" strategy, a strategy that reduced politics to a TV show, stems from a rather "expressionist" style of politics, a "politics of display" (according to Todd Gitlin) that seeks mainly to impress spectators rather than to create a set of viable democratic counter-institutions. According to this idea, society will rally to our cause not by viewing such institutions at work, but rather by being enthralled by our slogans and spectacular activism.

A typical characteristic of this mentality is the use of out of measure, "lyrical" declarations that are in stark contrast with the movements' real capacities—recall Occupy Wall Street's basic slogan, "we are the 99%." It is as if theatrically were the only thing that mattered for this post-modern type of social movement, led principally by middle-class, digital technology-addicted liberals and leftists who carry on with the countercultural idea of politics-as-happening. It is as if the main goal of politics were to seek visibility rather than equality. No wonder that the matrix of this kind of militancy is identity-politics, an effort to render the culture of discriminated minorities visible and respected in the public sphere through both spectacular activism and administrative-technocratic action. Christopher Lasch repeatedly castigated the mediatic mentality of the New Left⁴¹ and carefully underlined the differences between the Civil Rights movement of the South and the "activist" forms of Black Nationalism that developed in the North by imitating the spectacle-friendly and "lyrical" paradigm of white New Left militants.⁴²

Examined from this perspective, the main problem of the Second and Third Wave feminisms—as well as of the rest of the "identity" movements that emerged through the '60s and '70s—is their fundamental adherence to the "activist" paradigm that obliges them to vacillate between "expressionistic," mediatic activism and technocratic lobbying.

Furthermore, most of today's activists share a mentality bred on the logic of artificial protective barriers such as political correctness, "trigger-warnings," and "safe spaces," barriers that reign supreme not only within American campuses⁴³ but inside contemporary leftist subculture as a whole. This "coddling of the American mind"⁴⁴ has some serious and damaging effects on a large part of contemporary liberal and leftist militancy, whether by generating a naive and utterly unjustified optimistic utopianism [that, for the most part, ends in blind activism] or sentiments of fear and scorn towards middle America [or its European equivalent].⁴⁵ The frailty of character that transforms politics into a rationalization of irrational sentiments is nothing more than the alternative version of Lasch's "minimal self," a form of politics that very adequately expresses the dominant ethos of our narcissistic culture and its fragmented human type. As George Carlin once put it, speaking of politically correct language, "soft language is for soft people."

The end of identity liberalism?⁴⁶

Feminist theorists such as Martha Nussbaum, Nancy Fraser, or Camille Paglia notwithstanding, contemporary feminism is still being dominated by the spirit of its Second Wave predecessor that raises feminine experience to an absolute and, thus, considerably simplifies the nature of today's gender relations. It most notably neglects the fact that contemporary women are far more independent than before the 1960s and, as such, should also be held accountable for some of today's ills. In this sense, the major problem that no one seems to address is the incapacity of a large percentage of women [and LGBT people] to give a positive and coherent meaning to their newly acquired liberty. But how could they have done otherwise, given the overall cultural disintegration that characterizes contemporary Western societies?

It should not therefore be considered a paradox that in the midst of today's "gender trouble" and identity crisis many celebrities of current antifeminist discourse come from utterly non-conservative milieu— from the openly gay provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos to ex-pornstars Jenna Jameson and Tila Tequila. This new kind of non-patriarchal, Hugh Hefner-esque sexism is proper to our post-bourgeois era of consumerist permissiveness and has, consequently,

little to no affinity with the traditional paternalistic and "conservative" sexism. Henceforth, the basic pillars of contemporary, anti-patriarchal feminist analysis should be revised. In the context of today's sexually "liberated" culture, where sexual identities have become de facto much more fluid than during the bourgeois era, the obsession with the deconstruction of "heteronormativity" and the effort to bring forward some supposedly rebellious transgenderism highlight how the disintegration of Western culture affects even those who are supposed to combat it.

Furthermore, contemporary sexism is to some extent an attempt to outbid what is being perceived as the excesses of political correctness. A rise of sexist discourse has accompanied Trumpism's anti-establishment offensive. The response to this bullying cannot begin by denying that political correctness and trigger-warning logic have gone way too far and are now working perfectly well as a tool for justifying the right-wing backlash. The fact that white woman Trump voters weren't dissuaded by the "grab 'em by the pussy" affair highlights the breach that separates them from contemporary feminism's "soft" trigger-warning mentality. Paglia's "street-smart feminism," on the other hand, could be considered as a possible application of the "reactionary Left" idea in the field of gender politics. What we need is a new feminist paradigm that would break with the identity-politics matrix by stressing the demand of autonomy: by reminding us of the need for limits, coherence, and responsibility. The problem, in other words, is not just that of trying to reconcile "redistribution" and "recognition" [as Nancy Fraser puts it] or of trying to better understand their supposedly necessary intertwinement. The real question is how to escape this general tendency of discriminated and oppressed groups to cluster around their proper "experience" and, consequently, to resort to the politics of victimization. What we need instead is a sort of "gender Populism," a conception of discriminated groups not as innocent victims to be protected by an enlightened State but as people fighting for their freedom and their dignity.

Any attempt to capitalize on the Women's March dynamic towards the creation of a permanent anti-Trump movement will probably suffer from the inherent contradictions of any "alliance" built around a coalition of special interest groups that raise their particular experience to an unquestionable absolute. Even from an electoral point of view, the Democrats' strategy of transforming women and minorities into lobbies to be allied to the liberal segment of American oligarchy [the so-called alliance between "communities of color, educated whites, Millennials, single women, and seculars"]⁴⁷ didn't work out for Hillary. This same strategy, which the Democrats have pursued since the 1970s, can bear fruit only for limited periods of time; and in any case, far from being democratic and emancipatory in the least, it tends, on the contrary, to debate politics into a negotiation between special interest groups and enlightened technocrats. It is politics without people, an attempt to address inequality by applying "therapeutic" principles to the realm of politics. As Christopher Lasch observed in 1992 with regard to Hillary's pedagogical doctrine, such a conception of politics is founded on the premise that minorities are victims in need of bureaucratic tutelage.⁴⁸

Both Lasch and Castoriadis argued that a lobbyist approach such as this undermines the very fabric of democratic politics itself: the sentiment of engaging in a common cause.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, this same attitude is shared by the majority of contemporary leftist and anarchist organizations. "Antifascism" and "antiracism" is nothing more than an infatuation with the minorities with whom we are supposed to ally in order to combat the fascist proclivities of yeoman America. The inherent political logic of every possible variation of the "coalition of the ascendant" tends towards what Christophe Guilluy has very pertinently described as a "racialization of the social question."⁵⁰

Having emerged through the liberal white guilt that shaped so much of '60s political ideology, contemporary leftism and anarchism tend to believe that class politics can nowadays be adequately summed up as the exploitation of a colored underclass by the white [and cisgender] majority. Anything white is demonized as patriarchal and proto-fascist, whereas anything colored and/or transgendered is glorified as inherently victimized and—why not?—potentially subversive. It goes without saying that one of the gravest political consequences of this utterly false reading of today's class relations is the negligence of white poverty: since the only poor and exploited are (by definition) the members of colored and non-heteronormative minorities, rightwing populism is nothing more than a conscious act of minority-hate; white poverty or unemployment—if they really exist—are just excuses for racism. The "refusal of empathy for Trump's voters"⁵¹ is the logical consequence of this tendency to spontaneously perceive the common man of today as racist and sexist scum—or, in Hillary's words, as a "basket of deplorables."

The Left is dead—long live the Left?

Is this situation irreversible? And if not, what could be done to attempt to escape this cul-de-sac? No one knows. However, we could begin by acknowledging that what should principally preoccupy us, as far as social theory is concerned, is not whether America is becoming more and more fascist but rather why today's working people have been so eager to insistently ally themselves with their proclaimed class archenemies during these last decades. Does this question teach us any lessons on the current state of the Left, and on the '60s political heritage more generally? Is it linked in any way to the Left's demise as a popular emancipatory social movement? And what could this mean for a possible reemergence of emancipatory politics?

If there is anything that the study of Lasch's books could teach us, other than his pertinent remarks on the causes of failure of the most prominent political movements of the 1960s, it would be the need to be vigilant against Progressive and liberal encroachment upon any genuinely democratic and emancipatory political project. This theoretical work is currently being undertaken in Europe, where individual thinkers [such as Michéa] and political movements [such as

the radical ecological de-growth movement] of what I termed the "reactionary left" are trying to reinterpret the quest for freedom and social justice in a way that radically breaks with the cult of Progress. We urgently need to go beyond the anti-patriarchal or "anti-authoritarian" paradigm and begin to elaborate a new social philosophy articulated around the notion of limits and the concomitant idea that the core of the genuinely democratic type of freedom that we advocate lies in our capacity to impose limits to ourselves. This conception of emancipation as autolimitation is all the more true and relevant now that economy and technology are out of hand—the result of successive pushes towards deregulation that have deprived even contemporary oligarchies of any capacity to restrain mechanisms that seem to have gone berserk.

As Lasch tried to demonstrate, speaking of the so-called "white backlash" that followed the cultural revolution of the '60s, what people have been so desperately seeking since the '70s is *not* more "Progress," a further shuttering of barriers and limits. Globalization, the advances of digital technology, and the glorification of desire and "revolt" by contemporary "hipster" and "alternative" mass culture have done the job and continue incessantly to systematically destroy not just "patriarchy" but every form of coherent and meaningful existence. In this sense, "white backlash" should be seen largely as a desperate cry against the societal and moral consequences of the transformations that have reduced capitalism to a blind, rapacious mechanism of destruction.⁵¹

Right-wing, reactionary populism and Neoconservatism have been unscrupulously hijacking this legitimate despair since 1968. To be sure, even if we left aside all those political imposters,⁵² there would still be people within the white poor who are genuinely racists (and not just in the Deep South). Besides, as it has meticulously been shown, there have always been tensions between class and race within American labor movement.⁵³ Such considerations should in no way lead us to the fatalist conclusion that every effort to regain the trust of the so-called "flyover country" is vain and useless and that emancipatory politics should consequently be reduced to the desperate "antifascist" activism that is currently in vogue. It is of the utmost necessity that any political group or organization eager to fight for equality and social justice struggle with the following question: Are we capable of casting off the burden of our liberal and progressive biases, which were exacerbated beyond repair during the '60s, and of embracing a radically new understanding of the meaning of freedom? **IP**

1 That is, politics inspired by the principles of the so-called *direct* democracy, which is the only democracy worthy of the name.

2 See, for example, Gilbert T. Sewall, "Donald Trump and the Ghost of Christopher Lasch," *The American Conservative* (April 5, 2016), available at <www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/donald-trump-and-the-ghost-of-christopher-lasch/>.

3 See Eric Miller, *Hope in a Scattering Time: A Life of Christopher Lasch* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010).

4 On Orwell's "Tory anarchism" in its relation to the novelist's overall democratic socialist political engagement, see Peter Wilkin, "George Orwell: The English Dissident as Tory Anarchist," *Political Studies* 61, no. 1 (March 2013): 197–214.

5 Michael Ignatieff with Cornelius Castoriadis and Christopher Lasch, "Beating the Retreat into Private Life," *Listener* (March 27, 1986): 20–21.

6 In this regard, *Moby Dick* is not just an allegory of the "American soul," as D. H. Lawrence had suggested [in his essay, "Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*"], but of Western modernity as a whole [since the Yankee spirit has been the purest incarnation of the modern worldview]. The story of Captain Ahab's hubris and subsequent nemesis is the story of the West's fundamental incapacity to tame its own, newly liberated, creative and destructive powers.

7 Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 530.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Andrew J. Bacevich, "Family Man: Christopher Lasch and the Populist Imperative," *World Affairs* (May/June 2010), available online at <www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/family-man-christopher-lasch-and-populist-imperative>.

11 In Christopher Lasch, *The Agony of the American Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969).

12 Lasch, *True and Only Heaven*.

13 See, for example, Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), Chapter Three.

14 "Mass Culture Reconsidered," *democracy* 1, no. 4 [October 1981]: 7–22.

15 "Life in the Therapeutic State," chap. 9 in *Women and the Common Life: Love, Marriage, and Feminism*, ed. Elizabeth Lasch-Quinn (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997).

16 See in this "creative revolution," the analysis of Thomas Frank on his *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998).

17 François Ricard, *La génération lyrique. Essai sur la vie et l'œuvre des premiers-nés du baby-boom* (Castelnau-le-Lez, Clématis, 2001), 72.

18 See the closing phrase of Mustapha Kayati's famous 1966 pamphlet, *On the Poverty of Student Life: Considered in its Economic, Political, Psychological, Sexual, and Particularly Intellectual Aspects, and a Modest Proposal for its Remedy*, trans. Ken Knabb, available online at <www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/sil/poverty.html>.

19 Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster" (1957), in *Advertisements for Myself* (London, Panther Books, 1968), 271.

20 Castoriadis traced how this worldview materialized in the Ancient Greek tradition, whereas Lasch, a historian by training, systematically studied basic aspects of 19th and 20th century American history and culture. If Lasch's intellectual quest has actually been "a search for another way of achieving America,"¹⁰ that is because his radical cultural and political criticism of postwar American society has always been nurtured by his striving to bring to light a largely forgotten conception of democracy and equality together with the political and intellectual forces that historically defended it. This quest ranged from his initial efforts to save from oblivion the original, Populist flavor of American socialism, prior to its eventual "Europeanization" in the years after the Russian revolution,¹¹ to his devising of a historical genealogy of democratic and/or populist anti-progressivism¹² and his ultimate discussion of the original meaning of such central notions of American ideology as democracy and social advancement.¹³

21 See the introductory note to the collection of articles "Trump: A Resister's Guide," *Harper's Magazine* (February 2017), p. 25.

22 Steve Fraser, *Wall Street: America's Dream Palace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 103.

23 Ibid., 102, 103.

24 Ibid., 104.

25 See Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963) as well as his "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," *Harper's Magazine* [November 1964], 77–82, 85–6.

26 D. Von Drehle, "Is Steve Bannon the Second Most Powerful Man in the World?," *Time*, February 2, 2017, available online at <time.com/4457645/steve-bannon-donald-trump/>.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid. "A party guest recalled meeting him as a private citizen and Bannon telling him that he was like Lenin eager to 'bring everything down, and destroy all of today's Establishment.'"

29 See on those elites Thomas Frank's *Listen Liberal: Or, Whatever Happened to the Party of the People?* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2016).

30 Norman Mailer, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago: An Informal History of the Republican and Democratic Convention of 1968* (New York: NYRB Classics, 2008), 144.

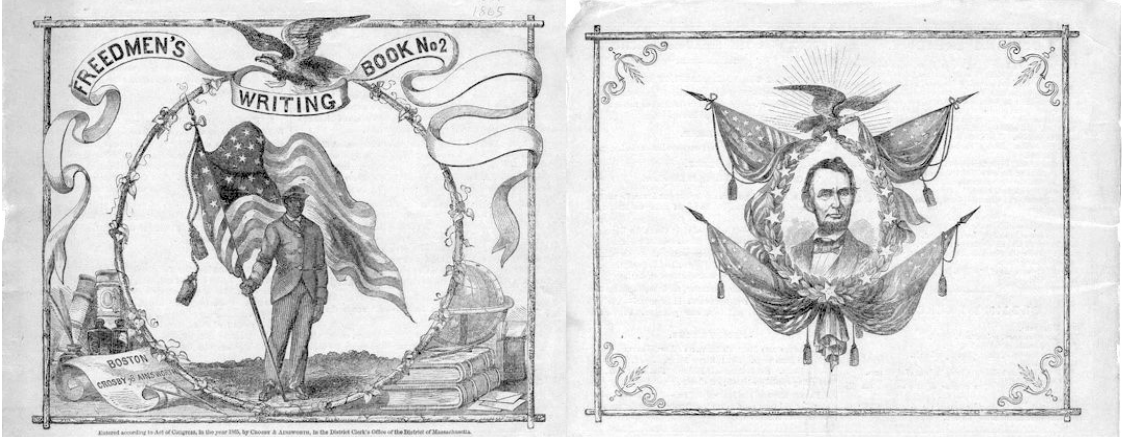
31 See "Mass Culture Reconsidered."

32 In his article, "Black Power: Cultural Nationalism as Power," chap. 4 in *Agony of the American Left*.

33 For an overview of

The ironies of Trump’s education policy

Laura Lee Schmidt



Writing books used to teach penmanship during Reconstruction.

ON JANUARY 23, TWO DAYS AFTER his inauguration, President Trump issued a draft order for visa reform proposing to regulate the H-1B visa, which among other things, allows CEOs in Silicon Valley to hire high-skilled foreign-national engineers who work for less in exchange for visas. This reform could increase wages down the line; it could bring more American workers into the ambit of innovation, and increase the ranks of the skilled; it could bring tech hiring practices into the public awareness. Its speculative intent definitely miffed tech CEOs, though.¹ Trump’s lack of motive to articulate what he is doing has not swayed people from their certainty that it will surely end in disaster—and judging from the urgency of some of these claims, probably personal disaster. Not so for the workers who voted for him, to whom his policies have remained faithful.

Trump has not acted on his draft order yet, mostly because of the outcry against his executive order that halted immigration and asylum from seven nation-states (which also rankled tech). The order was geared to national security, but Trump has associated workers with immigration from the first. The protests papered over the question of workers and focused on moral judgment. They were pacified by decisions by regional courts, which upheld the order’s suspension by appealing to education. Minnesota and Washington’s claims of injury (which is necessary to rule against an executive order) were that the order would hurt their public research universities by restricting the movement of faculty from those countries. Alongside the tech CEOs, the research universities have proffered proprietary definitions of immigration as “the free circulation of people,” in other words, the signature of labor—for surplus value and the social rules it engenders. Many who do not support Trump’s order have questioned the validity of the ruling, but what’s done is done: it revealed that education has a special knack for concealing its own role in the game of capitalism.²

The administration has chosen not to argue the point, however weak the ruling: Trump will instead issue a new order. Indeed, Trump has been rather mum on education—not like Ronald Reagan, who wanted to dissolve the Department of Education. If his other words and acts loudly proclaim a crisis of capitalism hitting American workers and the political establishment’s silencing of them, he has publicly clarified less about the potential free education plays in that crisis, and more or less repeats Republican positions on schooling. His Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, whom he nominated at the close of November, also repeats, in a soft nasal tone, all the usual Republican watchwords. She decries public monopolies, favoring instead charter schools and states’ authority, and she attributes public schools’ failure to lacking market choices, etc. As education loudly comes in to “defend the status quo,”³ it might yet open up a possibility that has not been available for a while: to critically think about education by discerning some of its politics.

After the Financial Crisis of 2008 drove many millennials to seek higher education, it has been awash with emotion. This inflated the ranks of academia, increased contract-hiring, and reignited the “culture wars.” The more these labor conditions were publicized, the more productive schooling became for coping. Rather than teaching how to deal with the world, education has muddled thinking about it. Kanye West captured one facet of the psychological typology in 2007: “Scared to face the world, complacent career student.”⁴ The career student’s debt briefly stoked his sympathy for Occupy Wall Street in 2011, which lent an “anti-capitalist” mien to politics that Iraq War protest could not provide. Since 2008, it might have seemed as though the tides of Marxism were coming in—in with Obama—but it was just neoliberalism bridging the growing space between a whole generation and its entrance into life itself. The Democratic Party used the first decades of the new millennium to curry the emotional neediness that contemplating this fate seems to inspire, and with it, made education into its ideological binding agent for depoliticized people.

That DeVos—daughter of a billionaire auto-parts-manufacturing tycoon, sister of the founder of the private security firm Blackwater, wife of Amway scion and owner of the Orlando Magic—whetted great resistance amongst liberal, left Democrats attests to the moral authority of education and its ideological power. Of course, many Democrats under Obama worked with DeVos; many supported charter schools; and Obama’s second Secretary, Arne Duncan, fell out of favor because he lost the unions with his neoliberal agenda. Lily Eskelsen Garcia, the current president

of the largest union today, the National Education Association, has said, “Betsy DeVos is an actual danger to students—especially our most vulnerable students. She has made a career trying to destroy neighborhood public schools, the very cornerstone of what’s made our nation so strong.”⁵ It’s incredible how strong the association with Democrats and education now is when you consider how before the twentieth century, the Democrats as a political party were against education. But because education has helped make critical social issues incomprehensible through neoliberalism, the history of it too has been divested of political import as though education had little to do with thinking itself.

Since schools cropped up in the American colonies, and especially after the American Revolution, education has been rooted in a freeholder’s prerogative to send his children to school—it is a bourgeois right. During antebellum industrialization, cities around the expanding country developed sizable systems for “universal free education,” but the uneven absorption of people into the labor market, failed liberal revolutions in Europe, and slavery in America seemed to cast doubt on that claim. All three of these things factored into the Civil War, and a proper national system of public education in America sprang from the political-legal aftermath of Reconstruction. Radical Republicans pushed for the creation of a Bureau of Education (with a non-cabinet Secretary of Education) to collect information on education across the country while contracting out the construction of schools for emancipated youth in the South. Education certainly figured into cultural opportunities opened by emancipation, but that is because emancipation extended a bourgeois right of free labor to the whole country; Radical Reconstruction subordinated the resulting state to the political authority of Northern victory in the Civil War, and Radical Republicans used education to bolster this political domination. Not quite as effective as federal troops deployed to enforce Reconstruction, but a provocation all the same.⁶

With these changes came great political resistance. After 1876, when the two parties current to this day brokered Republican Rutherford B. Hayes’s presidency in exchange for granting Democrats’ wish for amnesty for ex-Confederates and an end to federal Reconstruction, the inflating scholastic bureaucracy and abundant labor unrest that followed financial crisis marked a shift in the politics of capitalism. In 1880, after Republicans elected their presidential candidate James Garfield, civil rights lawyer Albion Tourgée published an essay called, “Aaron’s Rod in Politics,” in which he commended the party for including education in its platform. Education had become necessary in light of the “new point of departure” of the Civil War. Democrats sneakily co-opted the votes of freedmen, who tended to vote Republican but whose lingering high rates of illiteracy facilitated electoral swindle. Democrats formed alliances with embittered ex-slave-owners, and a coalition that literally spoke of itself as “the South” and spoke too on “the South’s” behalf, hid all this reality from voters.⁷

Tourgée was not merely claiming freedmen needed to be brought into a public sphere of opinion—that was a longstanding demand for free men black and white. There was something more urgent about the political tenor of education after Reconstruction. Political comprehension had to extend beyond the elections to grasp the stakes of the Civil War, which he likened to revolution and whose thwarting he anticipated. He named his essay after the staffs Moses and his brother Aaron wielded that performed miracles, and commanded authority over the Israelites; education represented “miraculous authority” in politics. It allowed people to learn to desire and achieve higher historical goals. The Democratic Party encouraged its suppression, and the South used that racket to gain domination over the political scene that emerged from Reconstruction, an act which Tourgée at least, seeing the power of education, called counterrevolution.

In the 1880s and ’90s political parties vied for the votes of a group of Southerners whose votes were rescinded by Jim Crow by the end of the century. But during those two decades, the Populist Party promoted bourgeois rights for both black and white workers as they attempted to penetrate the South, and the party seemed capable of facilitating political education. But the South was “the South,” and alongside Northern juridical resistance to Populism, racial superstition was absorbed into law. Racism provided poor whites with high priests, the ex-slaveowners and their hangers-on who made it feasible for the Democratic Party to Latinize and present before Congress. Jim Crow, the ghastly product of the failure of Reconstruction, stripped away many basic rights, and it begot lasting racist segregation of public schools

which used education to divide and conquer workers.

At the same time, in the same context, a set of reforms to public schools, Progressive Education, integrated psychological theories formulated by experts and experimenters from the American research universities, which had gained clout with the state bureaucracy by the turn of the century. Concepts like “content of children’s minds” were useful for evaluating the performance of schools, and were adapted to scientific management strategies for maximizing “efficiency” and “output,” although it remained unclear exactly what the product was.⁸ This collapsed pedagogy, or what ought to be taught and how, into management of schools. These scientific innovations helped to neatly divide the estimation of the value of public schooling in two: the social task of spending on the one hand, and the execution of the legal right to schooling on the other. The literal unification of pedagogy and management under the rubric of democracy (and the party that stood for it) separated out spending issues, which by the power of gravitational pull coalesced into an ideological issue.

Milton Friedman came up with the voucher system in 1955. He thought that the state should pay for schools, but not run them. So far, Trump has left unpolished the neoliberal patina of school choice and charter schools. He has also just moved to take out the school restroom transgender protection guideline that the Obama Administration included under the Title IX Act (1972), which forbids schools that receive any federal aid from prohibiting based on “sex” the use of educational programs and facilities. Setting aside for a moment the ire this has drawn from Democrats and left liberals, Trump has argued that the guideline does not fall under federal law, which also includes federal money for private school programs. It might appear to be a partisan move, but it has concerned even Betsy DeVos, who expressed private chagrin with respect to Trump’s restroom reversals.⁹ She might not have the legal expertise to grasp the scope of the reversal, but her interest in a major moral appeal made by the Democratic Party shows how greatly the Democratic Party’s inflections defend the neoliberal status quo. It also points to the fact that, on education, the space between Republican and Democrat is incredibly blurry.¹⁰ Trump stands out against the background.

What both parties tend to say about education betokens a fear of its powers. The most provocative thing about DeVos might be how bluntly she says that public schools, such as they are, have failed. For her, as for most Republicans, the failure of public schools just means teachers’ unions have failed “the nation’s children,” and it translates to a hysterical defense of parents’ choice over what school their kids attend, as though each and every missed opportunity to choose were the result of organized labor knocking at the door, kidnapping the child. But in the paranoid, bipartisan language of neoliberal public education, where “teacher” does not mean “union thug,” it conjures the martyr of a community. Public schools are tools for equality for the Democrats and left liberals, the closest thing to a social welfare ideal. That makes teachers combatants of generational poverty and holds them responsible for the decline of schools: an impossible feat. But both parties fear what education—mass, public, or universal—really invokes, politically, which is the education of the proletariat.

Luckily for them, there is no active pursuit of this, although there is something uncanny about Trump’s orientation to workers.¹¹ In the weeks following his declaration of his candidacy in the summer of 2015, onlookers were already embroiled in nomenclature, until a consensus was reached that here was a populist, like Berlusconi, who sometimes leans fascist, like Mussolini. That is the logic of the absence of a socialist party, our realm, in which the enfranchisement of workers smacks of populism, which always was a threat to the Democratic Party. Populism is not a word Trump uses, but its use against him only sows confusion amongst everyone *but* him.

The charges of stupidity may have suited the era of George W. Bush (and brought out his artistic vision, years later), but they do not suit Trump. Not taking him seriously—not feeling intellectually tasked by the 63 million voters—is a personal choice which, like homework, is only forced the extent to which one believes the teacher assigns it out of abuse of authority. The incoherence introduced into education throughout the twentieth century has helped obscure what an achievement millions of peoples’ education would actually be. At its best, public education’s failure in America, legible through Reconstruction’s failure, insinuates how the social and cultural desires encapsulated in “education” could only be achieved by revolution.

Trump does not want revolution, of course. He does defend the American Revolution. What remains opaque to him is the Civil War and Reconstruction, in which the politics of workers’ education gifted to America a historical legacy of the proletariat. Early in his bid to run for president, claiming to reduce the number of “anchor babies,” Trump did briefly toy with the idea of taking away birthright citizenship, the very thing that made the slave a citizen of a bourgeois republic, and a great political achievement expressed in the Fourteenth Amendment. Trump could never have undone that, because he cannot change history.

Trump’s own experience and education lie in the purview of “industry”: in turning a profit, managing managers who hire a workforce, working with contractors, and contracting deals. He is a capitalist, and so are the members of his executive cabinet. The

deal is an art, not a social science. The knowledge he calls for is speculative; it makes you think, and it is not about facts. He manifests no interest in pedagogy. He is not a Democrat or Republican vying for seats to protect special business interests, and he does not tremble at the ideological proposition of mass education because he does not have the historical interest. The simple point he seems to make is that education has impeded on progress—meaning capitalism.

Trump acts to save capitalism on its own terms, a feat which is of course impossible. In a tragedy, the protagonist does not know the full weight of his words. The spectator, however, must try to learn. He too suffers the enunciations. The spectator’s suffering culminates in a tragedy’s argument, which comes crashing down as a revelation of fate, laying waste to the spectator’s own righteousness, for it too lies in the revelation’s path. For tragedy to be more than cheap revelry in knowledge and certainty, the spectator has to risk learning a lesson from the protagonist, who never claimed to be his teacher.

The drama that has been unfolding for the past several months only really just began with the inauguration of its protagonist, President Trump. What would make it a sad story is if no one were watching. It behooves the spectator’s edification—and surely no one would deny him this goal—to coldly observe Trump’s embrace of the worker’s genius of productivity, that which would “make America great again.” He says this earnestly, but the phrase exudes the irony of a classical tragedy. And with respect to education, he seems to anticipate the irony and sticks to textbook Republican values, but his thinking surely goes beyond that. If education got in the way of progress under neoliberalism, imagine what its fulfillment by a proletariat educated as only the bourgeois dreamed could do. Maybe it could change the rules of the game. **IP**

1 Elizabeth Dwoskin and Todd Frankel, “Tech Firms Debate how Strongly to Protest Trump’s Order,” *Washington Post*, January 30, 2017.

2 Jeffrey Toobin, “The Ninth Circuit’s Vulnerable Decision,” *The New Yorker*, February 11, 2017, available online at <http://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-vulnerabilities-in-the-ninth-circuits-executive-order-decision>.

3 Trump tweeted after DeVos’ confirmation: “Senate Dems protest to keep the failed status quo. Betsy DeVos is a reformer, and she is going to be a great Education Sec. for our kids!” Donald Trump, Twitter post, February 7, 2017, 5:14 a.m., <twitter.com/potus/status/828955104082526208?lang=en>.

4 “Good Morning,” Graduation. Chung King Studios, Sony Studios. September 11, 2007.

5 Emma Brown, “Teachers Unions Mount Campaign Against Betsy DeVos, Trump’s Education Pick” *The Washington Post*, January 9, 2017. Available online at <www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/teachers-unions-mount-campaign-against-betsy-devos-trumps-education-pick/2017/01/08/1b60f2d2-d452-11e6-a783-cd3fa950f2fd_story.html>.

6 This was encapsulated in the Reconstruction Amendments (the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments), which covered emancipation, citizenship, and limited the states’ powers to curtail these rights.

7 Albion Tourgée, “Aaron’s Rod in Politics,” *North American Review* 132:291 (February 1881), 139-162: 141.

8 Around the time that Frederick Winslow Taylor published his theories on time-discipline in factories in 1914, they had been around for decades, such that educational reformer and journalist Joseph Mayer Rice devised Scientific Management in Education, a startlingly literal adaptation of Taylor’s works to schools. The point was to render learning less “mechanistic” by calculating the amounts of time that ought to be spent on a certain lesson. G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904); John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916).

9 Richard Perez-Peña, “Though Polite in Public, DeVos Is Said to Get Her Way,” *New York Times*, February 24, 2017.

10 The Obama administration’s educational track record especially confused the matter. Obama’s second secretary lost the back of the unions—very grave in Democratic circles—with his standards-based policies. Valerie Strauss, “Democrats reject her, but they paved the way for her nomination” *Washington Post*, January 21, 2017. Available online at <www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/01/21/democrats-reject-her-but-they-helped-pave-the-road-to-education-nominee-devos/?utm_term=.79aa778f2320>.

11 After the election, left progressives tried to piggyback off Trump’s “populism” while washing their hands of his “nationalism,” all in an attempt to win back the Democratic Party for Bernie Sanders. Seth Ackerman, “A Blueprint for a New Party,” *Jacobin*. November 6, 2016. Available online at: <www.jacobinmag.com/2016/11/bernie-sanders-democratic-labor-party-ackerman/>. They conceive of a labor party as a workers’ party, but use an essentially neoliberal notion of workers: obscured by education, but also ignoring its political importance. This was anticipated last December by Chris Cutrone in “The Sandernistas: The final triumph of the 1980s,” *Platypus Review* 82 [December 2015], available online at <platypus1917.org/2015/12/17/sandernistas-final-triumph-1980s/>, and in a postscript in the context of Trump and the primaries, “The Sandernistas,” *Platypus Review* 85 [April 2016], available on line at <platypus1917.org/2016/03/30/the-sandernistas/>.