

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

VALUES

for values
of values

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138



Dear Mrs Clinton:

It was great to meet you at the tribute to Robert Kennedy the other night. Our family will never forget the graciousness that you and the president and you showed to us that evening. I couldn't help thinking that you and he are fighting for the same things that Uncle Bobby fought for and so in a way we feel that you are spiritual kin.

At your suggestion I am forwarding the reading list from the course that Robert Coles and I teach together as well as some other materials that I thought might interest you including an eloquent defense of you by Peter Stienfel's. As I said that evening, I think you are absolutely right to focus on the need for a public philosophy that deals with the moral- ethical- spiritual dimension of political life and reclaims the discussion from right wing conservatives. Its not only responsible and necessary to do so but it is also good politics. Its important that some overarching moral vision connect the disparate elements of your political program in the public mind.

I hope its not presumptuous of me, but you asked me for some ideas so here are some .

I hope you'll continue to talk about these issues, you might even consider giving another speech expanding on the ideas that you touched on in in Austin. I think you can strengthen the points that you made it in the Austin speech and protect yourself from the charges of vagueness by doing a few things :

First ,You need to put your conceptual ideas in the context of the ongoing story of American democracy. (Arthur Schlesinger would be a good resource for more ideas and examples from American history in this regard .) Connect your contemporary discussion of morals and meaning very specifically to democratic theory and to American history -from the moral concerns of the Greeks in the Athenian polis, to the puritan ethic of citizenship and community to DeTouqueville's emphasis on the importance of civic virtue to Lincoln's remark that " you cant separate moral questions from political questions" to Roosevelt's statement that "The presidency is

preeminently a place of moral leadership, all our great Presidents were leaders of thought at times when certain historic ideas in the life of the nation had to be clarified, that is what the office is - a superb opportunity for reapplying , applying in new conditions the simple rules of human conduct to which we always go back" Even the Reagan presidency understood but misused this American moral impulse.

You are calling for a rethinking those concerns in the contemporary context to draw energy from the distinctive moral visions and religious traditions that comprise American pluralism .

Second, show how the concerns that you have about moral ethical matters are reflected in the specific policy initiatives of the Clinton administration and in the decisions in your personal life Morality, values, and a sense of responsibility to others can live and flourish only in common life. It seems to me you are trying to build not only a sense of national community, as democrats have traditionally done (comprehensive health insurance reflects this) but also the strengthen the forms of civic associations- families, neighborhoods, religious, communities, small businesses, etc. , that foster greater personal and social responsibility and civic virtue. Some examples of programs of the Clinton administration that do this that spring to mind are National Service, Community banking. support for primary care medicine and support for the family leave bill (the re must be many others of which I am not aware)

You are also calling on individuals as well . Ultimately this effort to reanimate our common moral life is dependent on individual not just governmental efforts (the metaphor of a covenant I thought describes this common effort well). Perhaps talking in a somewhat confesional mode about how you struggle to be a better daughter, a better mother, a better wife and a better citizen might connect these broad concerns to your personal story

If you decide to do anther speech It might add weight and credibility to your message to speak about your concerns in a public setting alongside a few of the serious and morally credible political thinkers and activists who believe that collective political life is intimately connected to individual conscience and and moral awareness, and who are talking about the same concerns as you in different contexts Vaclav Havel is the first one that springs to mind, there are others such as well such as Desmond Tutu and Adam

Michnik who are equally concerned and articulate about these issues and who carry equal weight with the press.

 I know that this fall Vaclav Havel is scheduled to come to the 100th anniversary of the Henry street settlement house in New York . This setting which combines spiritual concerns with a history of social activism might be an ideal location to deliver a speech followed by a discussion .

One final suggestion is that meet privately with a small group to help you to help draft a speech or talk through some of these ideas there are four people who I would suggest: Dr Robert Coles I think is one of the most thoughtful and original contemporary thinkers about moral concerns, has thought and written about these issues with respect to children from a psychological and social perspective. He wrote many speeches for my uncle Bobby on these themes and seems to be able to approach these issues in a way that defies categorization by the right or left: Arthur Schlesinger and Michael Sandel who understand the political and historical context for the discussion; and Doris Kearns Goodwin who has written speeches for my uncle Ted for years and who has incredibly fine moral instincts and sound political judgement. I would be happy to get this group together for you in Cambridge or Washington if you are interested. I would also be happy to arrange a forum event at Harvard or the Kennedy Library to talk about these concerns with a well known, supportive and thoughtful group in the context of a public setting if you would like to do that as well . Please let me know if I can help with this or anything else.

Godspeed to you ,and keep fighting. As my uncle Bobby used to say "perseverance makes honor bright "

Best ,

Steven Smith

THE LITERATURE OF SOCIAL REFLECTION

Robert Coles, Randy Testa, Amber Barnarto, Jeff Beedy, Ellen Kennelly Brown, Eleanor Cunningham Carrie, Tyler Chapman, Mike Curtis, Derek Evans, Barak Goodman, Jennifer Greeley, Jim Hart, Maggie Hart, Chris Hollern, Gordon Marino, Bruce Baird-Middleton, Rob Neugeboren, Firkins Reed, Max Rovner, John Burnham Schwartz, Hugh Silk, Steve Smith, John Strucker, and Geralyn White.

The course will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays at eleven for lectures and at times to be arranged for weekly sections of an hour-and-a-half. Attendance in sections is required.

During the term short papers or presentations will be assigned in section; a longer essay will be required in January in lieu of a final examination. (Although this must be approved by the Committee on the Administration of Educational Policy, this approval has been given regularly.)

A packet of short required readings is available at the General Education Office (2nd Floor, Morton Prince House, 6 Prescott Street. This packet is required, and the cost is nominal.

Many of the writers, photographers, and film makers whose books, photographic collections and films are assigned, shown or suggested in this course have struggled hard to reconcile scholarly, literary, artistic interests and pursuits with moral concerns: the person of relative privilege or good education who wants to document the condition of those less fortunate, or evoke their situation in short stories, poems, novels, or visually—but who himself/herself lives "another life," so to speak. Still others whose work will be read or viewed have tried to understand not only how various "different" people live, but to what ultimate (explicitly avowed, implicitly held) moral or religious or philosophical purpose, if any, they adhere. In the course, we will try to compare various modes of social observation; and at the same time explore the ethical issues that confront those men and women who want to change the world in one way or another, those ordinary people caught in a particular historical crisis, and not least, those who try to make sense of what others initiate politically, struggle with psychologically, endure socially.

CALENDAR AND READING LIST

I. DIRECT SOCIAL DOCUMENTATION: THE LITERARY AND JOURNALISTIC TRADITION

Week of September 16: James Agee and Walker Evans, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (Ballantine paperback edition), first section up to "Shelter," and sections entitled "Education" and "Work"; Robert Coles and Ross Spears, Agee (Holt, Rinehart and Winston); Charles Baxter, "Gryphon" (in packet); Richard Yates, "Dr. Jack O'Lantern" (in packet); Tobias Wolff, "In the Garden of the North American Martyrs" (in packet).

Recommended Reading: Walker Evans, interview in the New Republic, November 13, 1976, reprint on reserve.

Weeks of September 23 and 30: George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier (Harcourt Brace paperback); Robert Coles, Children of Crisis, Volume II, Migrants, Sharecroppers and Mountaineers, Robert Coles, The Old Ones of New Mexico (University of New Mexico Press).

Recommended Reading: Clancy Sigal, Weekend in Dinlock, (Houghton Mifflin); Emile Zola, Germinal (Penguin); James Hurley, Portrait of a Decade (Louisiana State University paperback -- on reserve); William Stott, Documentary Expression and Thirties America (Oxford University Press paperback -- on reserve); Dorothea Lange and Paul Taylor, An American Exodus (Arno Press hardback -- on reserve); Robert Coles, Dorothea Lange: Photographs of a Lifetime (Aperture hardback -- on reserve); Davis Pratt, The Photographic Eye of Ben Shahn (Harvard University Press hardback -- on reserve).

II. ORDINARY AMERICAN, SO-CALLED WORKING CLASS MEN AND WOMEN: SEVERAL ANGLES OF VISION

Week of October 7: William Carlos Williams, long poem Paterson, parts one and two; and William Carlos Williams, White Mule, the first novel in a series known as the Stecher Trilogy; and William Carlos Williams, The Doctor Stories, edited by Robert Coles (all, New Directions paperbacks).

Week of October 14: Raymond Carver, Where I'm Calling From (Vintage); Raymond Carver, Fires (Vintage); Raymond Carver (in packet). Raymond Carver, A New Path to the Waterfall (Atlantic Monthly Press). Tobias Wolff, Back in the World (Bantam Books); Richard Ford (in packet).

Week of October 21: Tillie Olsen's short stories that make up Tell Me a Riddle (Dell paperback); Robert Coles, "Next Door But Across an Ocean" (reprinted from Harvard Magazine -on reserve).

Recommended Reading: America and Lewis Hine (Aperture hardback -- on reserve); Robert Frank, The Americans (Grove Press hardback -- on reserve); Eliot Wigginton, ed., The Foxfire Book (Doubleday paperback); Robert Coles, William Carlos Williams: The Knack of Survival in America (Rutgers paperback).

III. WAYS OF SEEING RACE

Week of October 28: Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man (Random House paperback); Robert Coles, The Moral Life of Children (Houghton-Mifflin), chapters to be assigned; James Alan McPherson, "Going up to Atlanta," (in packet).

Week of November 4: Flannery O'Connor, "The Displaced Person," "The Artificial Nigger," "Good Country People," "Everything That Rises Must Converge," "The Enduring Chill," "The Lame Shall Enter First," "Revelation," and "Parker's Back" -- all contained in The Complete Short Stories (Noonday paperback).

Recommended Reading: James Agee and Helen Levitt, A Way of Seeing (Viking hardback -- on reserve); Robert Penn Warren, Who Speaks for the Negro (Vintage); Robert Coles, Flannery O'Connor's South (LSU Press); Alice Walker, "Beyond the Peacock: The Reconstruction of Flannery O'Connor," in In Search of Our Mother's Gardens (Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich -- on reserve); Ralph Ellison, Shadow and Act (Random House); Eliot Liebow, Tally's Corner (Atlantic -- Little, Brown paperback).

IV. INTELLECTUALS AND THE RELIGIOUS SEARCH

Week of November 11: Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness (Harper and Row); Georges Bernanos, The Diary of a Country Priest (Carroll and Graf); Ignazio Silone, Bread and Wine (Signet); Leo Tolstoy, Confession (Norton); Robert Coles, Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion (Addison-Wesley); Elie Wiesel, Night (Bantam); Elie Wiesel, "Why Christians Can't Forget the Holocaust" (in packet).

Recommended Reading: Robert Ellsberg, By Little and By Little (on reserve); Dorothy Day, Loaves and Fishes (on reserve).

Week of November 18: Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God (University of Illinois); Jane and Robert Coles, Women of Crisis (Addison-Wesley); Simone Weil Waiting for God (Harper and Row).

Recommended Reading: Simone Petrement, Simone Weil (Pantheon Press); Robert Speaight, Georges Bernanos (Harville Press); Robert Coles and Daniel Berrigan, The Geography of Faith: Conversations Between Daniel Berrigan, When Underground, and Robert Coles (Beacon Press); Alice Walker, "Zora Neale Hurston: A Cautionary Tale and Partisan View," and "Looking for Zora," both in In Search of Our Mother's Gardens.

V. AN AMERICAN KIND OF EXISTENTIALISM

Week of November 25: Walker Percy, The Moviegoer (Noonday Press paperback); John Cheever, The Collected Short Stories... (selections to be announced); Leo Tolstoy, The Death of Ivan Illych and Other Stories, title story and "Master and Man"; Robert Coles, Children of Crisis, Volume V: Privileged Ones (Atlantic - Little, Brown), chapters to be assigned.

Recommended Reading: Walker Percy, The Message in the Bottle, Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 (Noonday paperback); William Alexander Percy, Lanterns on the Levee, with an introduction by Walker Percy (Louisiana State University Press); Walker Percy, The Last Gentleman (Noonday Press); Walker Percy, Love in the Ruins (Noonday Press); Walker Percy, Lancelot (Farrar, Straus and Giroux); Walker Percy, The Second Coming (Farrar, Straus and Giroux); Robert Coles, Walker Percy: An American Search (Atlantic-Little, Brown).

VI. HISTORICAL CHANGE: MORAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND SOCIAL COMPLEXITIES

Weeks of December 2 and 9: George Eliot, Middlemarch (Harper and Row paperback), or Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (Signet/New American Library), or Charles Dickens, Great Expectations (Bantam Books).

Recommended Reading: Middlemarch: Critical Approaches to the Novel, edited by Barbara Hardy (Oxford University Press); "Middlemarch: A Note on George Eliot's Wisdom" by Isabel Armstrong, in Critical Essays on George Eliot, edited by Barbara Hardy (Routledge Press); George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, by L. W. Berle (Folcroft Library Edition); Irony in Mind's Life, by Robert Coles (New Directions paperback).

Israel's in the chants of the crowd.

The growing fundamentalism in Gaza and the unbridled Palestinian nationalism on the West Bank are as much a threat to the Hashemite Kingdom as they are to Israel, perhaps even more so. Hussein also must fear the possibility that Israel, if confronted by a rapidly deteriorating situation, may decide on unilateral action that could leave Jordan in an impossible situation. He is said to fear genuinely that, if pushed to the wall, Israel will not hesitate to expel thousands of Palestinians over the Jordan river. Though most analysts in the West scoff at this suggestion, as do most Israelis, Hussein knows that the possibility of this happening is not totally theoretical. He himself, after all, expelled tens of thousands of Palestinians to Lebanon, and mowed down hundreds more when confronted by similar circumstances in September 1970.

The pitfalls here are clearer than the paths toward progress. Even if Hussein throws himself into attaining a solution based on the American proposals, many fear that what is being offered to the Palestinians is too little too

late. Others fear that even the mainstream Palestinian population on the West Bank and in Gaza—the merchants and professionals—who support Hussein in private, will not dare move in defiance of the mood in the streets.

Yet the consequences of inaction are perilous. The Israel Defense Force will undoubtedly find the means to suppress the riots with growing efficiency and less international attention, but they will not cause the symptoms generating the unrest to disappear. If anything they will only deepen the frustration, strengthen the radicals, and accelerate the cycle of violence and counterviolence that is leaving neither victor nor vanquished, but only victims on both sides.

HIRSH GOODMAN

Hirsh Goodman is military editor of the *Jerusalem Post* and visiting fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

A public philosophy for American liberalism.

DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNITY

BY MICHAEL J. SANDEL

AS THE CAUCUSES and primaries approach, the Democratic candidates for president have yet to stir the public imagination. This cannot be due to any shortage of ideas. These candidates have offered bushels of proposals—to restore American competitiveness, reduce the budget deficit, reform military spending, improve education, and collect taxes more efficiently. They have even debated the “ideas issue” itself. When Gary Hart re-entered the race brandishing ideas like weapons, his rivals rightly replied that they had ideas too, and had been discussing them all along.

There is nothing wrong with ideas in politics, but something is missing from this campaign that new ideas cannot cure. What the Democrats need is not more ideas but a larger idea, a governing vision. Beyond the policies and proposals, they need a public philosophy.

For half a century, the Democratic Party was sustained by the public philosophy of New Deal liberalism. Democrats and Republicans debated the role of government in the market economy, and the responsibility of the nation for the collective provision of basic needs. The Democrats

won that debate, and elected every president but Eisenhower from 1932 to 1964.

In time the Republicans stopped attacking the welfare state and argued instead that they could manage it better. But the New Deal agenda continued to define the terms of debate, and the meaning of liberalism and conservatism. Liberals favored a greater federal role in the social and economic life of the nation, conservatives less.

Between these alternatives flowed the rhythms of American politics. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has written that American politics moves in cycles, from activism to quietude and back again. Since progress demands passions that cannot last for long, liberalism advances by seasons, punctuated by conservative interludes that set the stage for further reforms.

Thus the complacent Republican '20s gave way to the activism of FDR and Truman, which receded in turn to the languid years of Eisenhower. A time of consolidation prepared the way for renewed political exertions, for Kennedy's call to “get the country moving again,” and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. By the end of the '60s, exhausted and divided, the country collapsed into Richard Nixon's awkward embrace.

This account of the political pendulum explains the pre-dominance of the Democratic Party in recent times. Al-

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though it assigns to each party a distinctive vocation—the Democrats reform, the Republicans repose—it casts the Democratic Party as the primary agent of moral and political improvement. And so, for half a century, the Democrats have been. The welfare state took shape under Democratic auspices, and the great issues of the 1960s—civil rights and the Vietnam War—were fought out not between the parties but within the Democratic Party.

If the cycles of American politics hold up, 1988 should be a Democratic year. If the world turns as the conventional wisdom suggests, eight years of Ronald Reagan will have left a country ripe for reform.

BUT THERE IS reason to think that the cycle has stalled, the pattern dissolved. By the 1970s the New Deal agenda had become obsolete. The alternatives it posed lost their capacity to inspire the electorate or animate meaningful debate. Voter turnout steadily declined from the '60s to the '80s, party loyalties eroded, and disillusion with government grew. Meanwhile, politicians groped to articulate frustrations and discontents that the reigning political agenda did not capture. From the left and the right came a politics of protest. In the 1972 primaries, pollsters found to their surprise that many supporters of George Wallace favored George McGovern as their second choice. Despite their ideological differences, both appealed to a tradition of populist protest.

In 1976 Jimmy Carter brought the Southern and progressive strands of populist protest together in a single candidacy. Like Wallace and McGovern, he campaigned as a political outsider, a critic of the federal bureaucracy and the Washington establishment. But Carter's presidency only deepened the discontent he had tapped as a candidate. Four years later another self-described political outsider, Ronald Reagan, ran for president by running against government, and won.

In different ways, both Carter and Reagan spoke to anxieties that the New Deal agenda failed to address. Both sensed a growing fear that, individually and collectively, we are less and less in control of the forces that govern our lives. Despite the extension of rights and entitlements in recent decades, and despite the expansion of the franchise, Americans increasingly find themselves in the grip of impersonal structures of power that defy their understanding and control.

By the 1970s a generation weaned on ever-rising standards of living and unrivaled American power suddenly confronted a world it could not summon or command. A decade of inflation and declining real wages undercut Americans' confidence that we could shape our personal destinies. Meanwhile, events in the world at large symbolized the loss of collective mastery—in Vietnam, a war we could not win, in Iran, a hostage-taking we could not avenge, and in 1987, a stock market crash that even the experts could not explain.

To make matters worse, the flow of power to large-scale institutions coincided with the decline of traditional communities. Families and neighborhoods, cities and towns, re-

ligious and ethnic and regional communities were eroded, leaving the individual to confront the impersonal forces of the economy and the state without the moral or political resources that intermediate communities provided.

It is clear by now that Ronald Reagan's presidency did not address the worries and longings his candidacy effectively evoked. For all the talk of "America's moral revival," it neither restored our sense of self-mastery nor reversed the erosion of community. The Marines in Lebanon, the failed attempt to trade arms for hostages, the Wall Street plunge, and a gaping trade deficit are all era reminders of a world spinning out of control.

Still, Democrats will not reap the fruits of Reagan's presidency until they learn from his success at speaking the language of self-government and community. Oddly enough, a new public philosophy for American liberalism has nothing to learn from Ronald Reagan's conservative conservatism.

Political genius is more instinctive than deliberately cultivated, especially so in the case of Reagan. His genius was to bring together in a single voice two contending strands in American conservatism. The first is individualistic, liberal, and laissez-faire, the second communal, traditional, and Moral Majoritarian. The first seeks a greater role for the individual in public life, the second a greater role for moral authority.

Individualist conservatives believe people should do as they please so long as they do not harm others. They are the conservatives who talk about "getting government off people's backs." Communal conservatives, in contrast, believe government should affirm moral and religious values. They want to ban abortion, restrict pornography, and restore prayer to public schools. While the first favor a volunteer army in the name of individualism, the second favor conscription in hopes of cultivating virtue. The first oppose the welfare state as a coercive charity; the second favor a welfare state that promotes conservative values.

Reagan managed to affirm both ethics without choosing between them. In his capacious conservatism, Milton Friedman met Jerry Falwell, and the two coexisted for a time. But Reagan's political achievement was simply to make bedfellows of libertarian economists and fundamentalist preachers. It was to draw from conservative ideals a set of themes that spoke to the troubles of the time.

AND HERE LIES the lesson that American liberalism has still to learn: the themes that resonate most deeply came from the second strand, the communal strand of conservative thought. For all Reagan's individual liberty and market solutions, the most powerful part of his appeal was his evocation of communal values—of family and neighborhood, religion and tradition. What Reagan stirred was a yearning for a life that seems to be receding in recent times—a life of larger meanings, on a smaller, less impersonal scale than the nation-state provides.

To their political misfortune, Democrats in recent years have not spoken convincingly about self-government and community. More than a matter of rhetoric, the reas-

eral political theory. For, unlike conservatism, any liberalism lacks a second voice, or communal predominant impulse is individualistic. Laissez-faire conservatives, liberals believe that it should be neutral on moral and religious questions rather than affirm in law a particular vision of the liberals would leave individuals free to choose values for themselves. They believe government protect people's rights, not promote civic virtue. It offer a framework of rights, neutral among ends, which its citizens may pursue whatever values they have.

ALTHOUGH THEY SHARE the ideal of a neutral state protects individual rights, individualist conservatives and liberals disagree about *what* rights are fundamental about what political arrangements the ideal of requires. Conservatives emphasize private property, and claim that freedom of choice is most fully in an unfettered market economy. Liberals reply genuine freedom requires certain social and economic sites, and so argue for rights to welfare, education, health care, housing, and the like. So, for half a century, the argument has gone. In battle with laissez-faire conservatives, liberals used the welfare state in the individualistic language of rights and entitlements. For example, the Social Security system was set up from the start to resemble a private insurance scheme rather than a social welfare provided by payroll "contributions," not general taxes. FDR rightly thought this would assure its political survival.

Compared with the social democracies of Europe, the American welfare state draws less on notions of communal solidarity and social solidarity and more on notions of individual rights. Given the individualism of American political culture, this may have been the only way to win broad support for the public provision of basic human goods. Political considerations aside, liberals are troubled by the by strong notions of self-government and community. If government is not neutral, they ask, then what prevent an intolerant majority from imposing its values on those who disagree? Didn't the struggle for civil rights show that "local control" can be a code word for that "community" is the first refuge of prejudice and intolerance? And hasn't the rise of the religious right the danger of mixing morality and politics?

When Democrats do speak of community, they usually mean the national community. FDR argued for "extending national life, the old principle of the local community encouraged Americans to think of themselves as citizens bound in national community. More recently, politicians have used the family as a metaphor for the ties of national citizenship. Urging the Great Society, Lyndon Johnson saw "America as a family, its people bound together by common ties of confidence and affection." In 1968, Walter Mondale and Mario Cuomo also compared the nation to a family. As Mondale proclaimed, "Let us be a

community, a family where we care for each other, knit together by a band of love."

But the yearning for community can no longer be satisfied by depicting the nation as a family or a neighborhood. The metaphor is by now too strained to carry conviction. The nation is too vast to sustain more than a minimal commonality, too distant to permit more than occasional moments of participation.

Local attachments can serve self-government by engaging citizens in a common life beyond their private pursuits, and by cultivating the habit of attending to public things. They can enable citizens, in Tocqueville's phrase, to "practice the art of government in the small sphere within their reach."

Ideally at least, the reach extends as the sphere expands. Civic capacities first awakened in neighborhoods and town halls, churches and synagogues, trade unions and social movements, find national expression. For example, the civic education and social solidarity cultivated in the black Baptist churches of the South were a crucial prerequisite for the civil rights movement that ultimately unfolded on a national scale. What began as a bus boycott in Montgomery later became a general challenge to segregation in the South, which led in turn to a national campaign for equal citizenship and the right to vote. But more than a means of winning the vote, the movement itself was a moment of self-government, an instance of empowerment. It offered an example of the kind of civic engagement that can flow from local attachments and communal ties.

FROM THE New Deal to the Great Society, the individualistic ethic of rights and entitlements offered an energizing, progressive force. But by the 1970s it had lost its capacity to inspire. Lacking a communal sensibility, liberals missed the mood of the discontent. They did not understand how people could be more entitled but less empowered at the same time.

The anxieties of the age concern the erosion of those communities intermediate between the individual and the nation, from families and neighborhoods to cities and towns to communities defined by religious or ethnic or cultural traditions. American democracy has long relied on communities like these to cultivate a public spirit that the nation alone cannot command. Self-government requires community, for people aspire to control their destiny not only as individuals, but as participants in a common life with which they can identify.

But the public philosophy of rights and entitlements left Democrats suspicious of intermediate communities. From the New Deal to the civil rights movement to the Great Society, the liberal project was to use the federal government to vindicate individual rights that local communities had failed to protect. Unable to fulfill the longing for self-government and community, Democrats allowed Ronald Reagan and the religious right to capture these aspirations and bend them to conservative purposes.

This abdication was politically costly, for as Reagan has shown, the communal dimension of politics is too potent

was also philosophically unnecessary, for intrinsically conservative about family or community or religion. To the contrary, conditions, traditional values cannot be vindicated by conservative policies. This can be seen in Reagan's vision he evoked.

Reagan's proposed solution to the erosion of self-government is to shift power from the federal government to the states and localities—to cut federal domestic spending, to decentralize and deregulate. A revitalized federalism would restore people's control over their lives closer to home. Meanwhile, a less activist federal government would strengthen traditional values by encouraging communities to legislate morality in the areas of family, homosexuality, and school prayer. Each was bound to fail, because it ignored what led to the growth of federal power in the first place, including the growth of corporate power on a national and international scale.

Federalism was designed to promote self-government by dispersing political power. But this approach presupposed the decentralized economy pre-1930s. As national markets and large-scale industry replaced the political forms of the early republic, the state's ability to self-govern. Since the turn of the century, the concentration of political power has been a concentration of economic power, an attack on democratic control.

A government without decentralizing the power that Reagan proposed, is only half a federalism. At the endpoint of self-government, half a federalism is none. Leaving local communities to the state's decisions made in distant places does nothing; if anything it diminishes their ability to self-govern.

Reagan's conservative policies cannot answer the needs of the community. The greatest corrosive of community are not liberal judges but features of the economy that conservatives ignore. These include the mobility of capital, with its disruptive effects on neighborhoods, cities, and towns; the concentration of power in large corporations unaccountable to the community they serve; and an inflexible workplace that denies men and women to choose between advancing their careers and caring for their children.

Reagan's presidency was an evocative practical failure. In both respects, it offers a lesson to inform a public philosophy for American self-government.

American must learn the language of self-government and community. It needs a vision of self-government that goes beyond voting rights, important as they are. And it needs a vision of community that harnesses an array of civic resources intermediate between the individual and the nation.

A vision of exhortation can rejuvenate communities. People identify with them and have reason

to participate in them. So Democrats need a revitalized federalism of their own, and should begin to debate the political responsibilities best suited to local control. A Democratic theory of federalism might begin by defining the basic rights of national citizenship, and seek ways, consistent with those rights, of giving local communities a greater role in the decisions that govern their lives. It might ask, for example, how to enhance local control of schools consistent with nationally assured rights to racial equality and a decent education for all citizens.

Third, Democrats must acknowledge, as Republicans do not, that any meaningful devolution of political power requires reform in the structure of the modern economy. They need policies to deal with the unprecedented mobility of capital, the unaccountable power of large corporations, and the adversarial relations of labor and management. A public philosophy that put self-government first would focus less on macroeconomic issues such as budget deficits and tax rates and more on questions of economic structure. And it would address these questions not only from the standpoint of maximizing GNP, but also from that of building communities capable of self-government on a manageable scale.

In this respect, it would recall an older debate in the progressive tradition, a debate about the economic arrangements most amenable to democratic government. Some New Dealers favored national economic planning as a way of preserving democracy in the face of economic power, others anti-trust policy and economic decentralization. Earlier in the century, the New Nationalism of Theodore Roosevelt opposed the New Freedom of Woodrow Wilson. Despite their differences, the participants in those debates understood that economic policy was not only about consumption but also about self-government. Democrats today would do well to recover that insight of their progressive forebears.

FINALLY, Democrats should overcome the impulse to banish moral and religious discourse from public life. They should reject the idea that government can be neutral. A public life empty of moral meanings and shared ideals does not secure freedom but offers an open invitation to intolerance. As the Moral Majority has shown, a politics whose moral resources are diminished with disuse lies vulnerable to those who would impose narrow moralisms. Fundamentalists rush in where liberals fear to tread. The answer for liberals is not to flee moral arguments but to engage them. In any case, liberals have long been making moral arguments, often explicitly so. The civil rights movement "legislated morality," and drew without apology on religious themes.

In recent years liberalism has faltered because of its failure to argue for a vision of the common good. This has conceded to conservatives the most potent resources of American politics. A public philosophy of self-government and community would reclaim those resources for liberal purposes, and enable Democrats to resume their career as the party of moral and political progress. □

Michael Sandel

POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER



"Justice," the class that Michael Sandel teaches to undergraduates at Harvard University, has the largest attendance on campus. Leading his students through works by Plato, Aristotle, Locke, and Immanuel Kant, he helps them to understand that they have a stake in ideas about the common good, distributive justice, and democracy. While earning his Ph.D. at Oxford, he began writing his book *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*. In this and other writings, Sandel is concerned with the civic challenge of our times—self-government.

MOYERS: What do you think are the questions we should be asking as we move now toward the twenty-first century?

SANDEL: The first is whether self-government is possible under modern conditions. And if so, what do we need to do to revitalize it? I don't think the answer to either of those questions is obvious. We know that a certain minimal, not-very-demanding democracy is possible—

MOYERS: One votes for whomever one can identify on the ballot—

SANDEL: Right. We do vote in elections, and that's something. That's of great moral and political importance, especially in contrast with countries around the world that don't enjoy such freedom. But that isn't genuine, full democracy. It's not the kind of democracy that Jefferson, for example, had in mind for this country. Or that even some of the Progressives of the early twentieth century had in mind for this country.

MOYERS: A lot of Americans are congratulating themselves because of the apparent triumph in Eastern Europe of liberal democratic capitalism as an aspiration over communism. Do you think that battle is over?

SANDEL: George Bush, in his inaugural address, said that for the first time in this century we no longer have to debate long into the night about which system of government is best; we know. That seems wrong to me.

No one worth taking seriously is debating very long into the night defending communism. But the real question now is: *what* do we know? What do we have that we're so proud of? Democracy, to be sure, yes. But what counts as democracy? What's the meaning of democracy? Is democracy just a question of counting up people's preferences and managing their self-interests in a way that satisfies them as the consumer society might satisfy their consumer preferences? Or is democracy a more demanding thing, something that makes a claim on the moral character of its citizens and demands of them an exercise of self-government that is more than just pursuing their preferences in the public realm as well as in the market? It seems to me that's a debate that's very

to confront very soon.

MOYERS: This isn't something only Harvard professors should be thinking about, is it?

SANDEL: I certainly hope not. The questions are philosophical questions, but the aspirations that they speak to and the political circumstances that give rise to them are the concern of every citizen of this country. To be a citizen in a democracy means being a little bit of a philosopher.

MOYERS: What has happened to our public life? We've seen a trend for years now—declining voter turnout, eroding party loyalties, diminished confidence in government.

SANDEL: There's a widespread sense that power is located in distant places and, individually and collectively, we're less in control of the forces that govern our lives. This is happening despite the fact that individual rights and entitlements have actually expanded in recent years. People have a sense that something has gone wrong with the enterprise of self-government.

MOYERS: You've said that we're facing a world that we can neither summon or command.

SANDEL: Yes. The present generation was weaned on a confidence in America's unrivaled power in the world and a faith in unprecedented growth in the domestic economy. It comes as a source of great frustration that suddenly we no longer seem to be the masters of our collective life in the way that we had come to expect.

MOYERS: That old notion is weakened—that the individual matters, that I can signify, that I'm an autonomous individual in a self-governing political culture.

I had an interesting experience after reading your essay in which you wrote about how de Tocqueville in the nineteenth century marveled at our custom of town meetings. He said, "The town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science. They bring it within the people's reach." Just after I finished that article, I picked up the *New York Times* to read the story of a New England town that has stopped holding its town meetings. No one had the time or the deep desire to come. And I thought, "What takes its place?" The institutions that used to inform our public spirit—the local precinct, the party, the church, the neighborhood association, the community—have all been rendered impotent or irrelevant to many people's concerns.

SANDEL: Yes. There are still forms of public life that can command the allegiance and the participation of their members, but they're on the defensive, and they're in danger of being eroded. Politicians in recent years have tried to speak to these frustrations—Jimmy Carter in his way; Ronald Reagan in his. Reagan used largely nostalgic terms, talking about small-town morality and the neighborhood, but he didn't address those genuine concerns with any political programs that could begin to satisfy those aspirations.

MOYERS: Reagan talked about traditional values while espousing a modern free-for-all economy that undermines those same values. As you point out, capital flight and the power of the modern corporation have rendered communities almost helpless before forces that decide their fate from thousands of miles away.

SANDEL: It's not simply that the nation-state is controlling the economic forces which the local community can no longer control. Even the nation-state now is

increasingly disempowered in the face of capital mobility and international markets. What was once a problem for local self-governance only is now becoming a challenge to governance even at the level of the nation-state.

MOYERS: Think of the contradiction right now in Eastern Europe. They want the consumer goods this new international economy can generate, but as the coercive rule of the Communist Party diminishes, they are threatened with a breakup into ethnic and religious and linguistic groups that threaten the consensus which they need to compete in this world.

SANDEL: It's true, yes. And the problem of the nations within Europe is now suddenly arising again after forty years of Soviet domination that suppressed that whole question. In a way, encompassing different nationalities within one country—the question of how they can express their autonomy, whether through federal systems or local systems—is going to be a serious question for the Eastern European countries as well as for Western Europe and North America.

MOYERS: What about the United States? Do you see us reweaving ourselves into more viable smaller groups that satisfy the need for some sense of belonging?

SANDEL: There have been gestures in that direction, but for the most part so far, those attempts have been more symptomatic than constructive. The Moral Majority made this point. It spoke to the sense of a certain emptiness in American public life,

was wrong with the Moral Majority was not that it tried to bring morality and religion into the public realm, but that its vision of morality and religion was narrow and cramped.

the sense that our public life is not a place where people can address larger questions of meaning. So fundamentalists tried to fill the public space which had been left empty by the political agenda with a very narrow and intolerant version of morality and religion. The impulse to try to achieve, within public life, some way of expressing larger concerns was authentic and admirable. What was wrong with the Moral Majority was not that it tried to bring moral-

ity and religion into the public realm, but that its vision of morality and religion was narrow and cramped.

MOYERS: What's clear after a decade is that we're not getting a new sense of our public life either from the militant moralism of the fundamentalist right or from militant secularism.

SANDEL: I think that's true. The moral of the story is not that we have to banish religion and morality from public life, which was very much the reflexive impulse of many mainstream politicians. The better response would be not to flee moral argument in politics, but to engage in it, to make it better, to offer a richer, more pluralistic, more democratic moral vision, drawing in some cases on religious traditions and on religious arguments. One of the lessons of the Moral Majority is that a public life that's empty of moral meanings or larger meanings is not a place that's safe for pluralism and toleration. To the contrary, it's a place that's all the more vulnerable to narrow moralisms and intolerance.

MOYERS: What do you think is the moral base for pluralism?

SANDEL: There are two philosophic grounds for pluralism. One is it's a fact of our life. We're never going to persuade people to change. We have different conceptions of the good life, so let's just try to accommodate and put up with the diversity that's hopelessly with us.

A better philosophical ground for pluralism is to appreciate the distinctive goods that these different ways of life represent. Not just to put up with them, but actually to try to cultivate them through the educational system, and through the content of our political debate, to appreciate and to draw energy from the distinctive moral visions and religious traditions that comprise American pluralism.

MOYERS: I agree with that, but you're running right into the buzz saw of reality. Let's just take two examples: abortion and homosexuality. If the state says that it's a woman's right to choose an abortion, isn't the state, in effect, saying that for those women who choose it, abortion is a good?

SANDEL: Abortion is a very good example of the problem with the version of liberalism that tries simply to set aside moral and religious controversy. It's important to see what the mainstream Democratic and Republican parties share in the way of philosophical assumptions. For all their differences about how big the role of the federal government should be or how generous or skimpy the welfare state should be, what they share is the idea that government should try to be neutral on moral and religious questions. In a pluralistic society like ours, they say, you can't hope to affirm in politics, or even to entertain in politics, controversial moral and religious conceptions, because that will tear us apart. The debate is largely conducted in the language of rights, on the assumption that to argue in the name of rights avoids taking a stand on controversial moral and religious questions.

MOYERS: In other words, the government will not try to decide that abortion is good or bad morally, but will leave it to the individual to decide.

SANDEL: That's right, but that isn't a compelling way of dealing with the abortion question. Even though our public philosophy aspires to neutrality and tries not to take sides on moral and religious questions, in a case like abortion it's impossible not to. Either abortion will be permitted or it won't, under these or those circumstances underlying that decision will be some implicit, maybe unacknowledged answer to the question of who is right in the debate over when life begins in the relevant moral or political sense.

MOYERS: That's what I was trying to say. If the state agrees with a woman that it's her decision to terminate a pregnancy, the state is implicitly, it seems to me, admitting that for her, abortion is a moral good. It is sanctioning the view of abortion as a moral good for her.

SANDEL: Not necessarily approving it as a moral good, but at least saying that it's morally permissible. That rejects the position of the Catholic Church, for example, which says it isn't. The way to address that issue is not to pretend to neutrality that can never be achieved, but to try to draw on the various moral and religious arguments and traditions that confront that question politically.

MOYERS: Are you saying that the state should play a positive role in bringing the different theologians and moral philosophers together to arrive at a definition of abortion that would be acceptable to the body politic?

SANDEL: Yes, ideally. At the level of the Supreme Court, it's disingenuous ~~in~~ trying to decide this question to deny that they have to confront the moral and religious questions that arise. And politically, yes, the debate would be informed and enriched and perhaps made more politically manageable if we were to explicitly admit in political discourse the competing moral and religious views, rather than to try to set them aside.

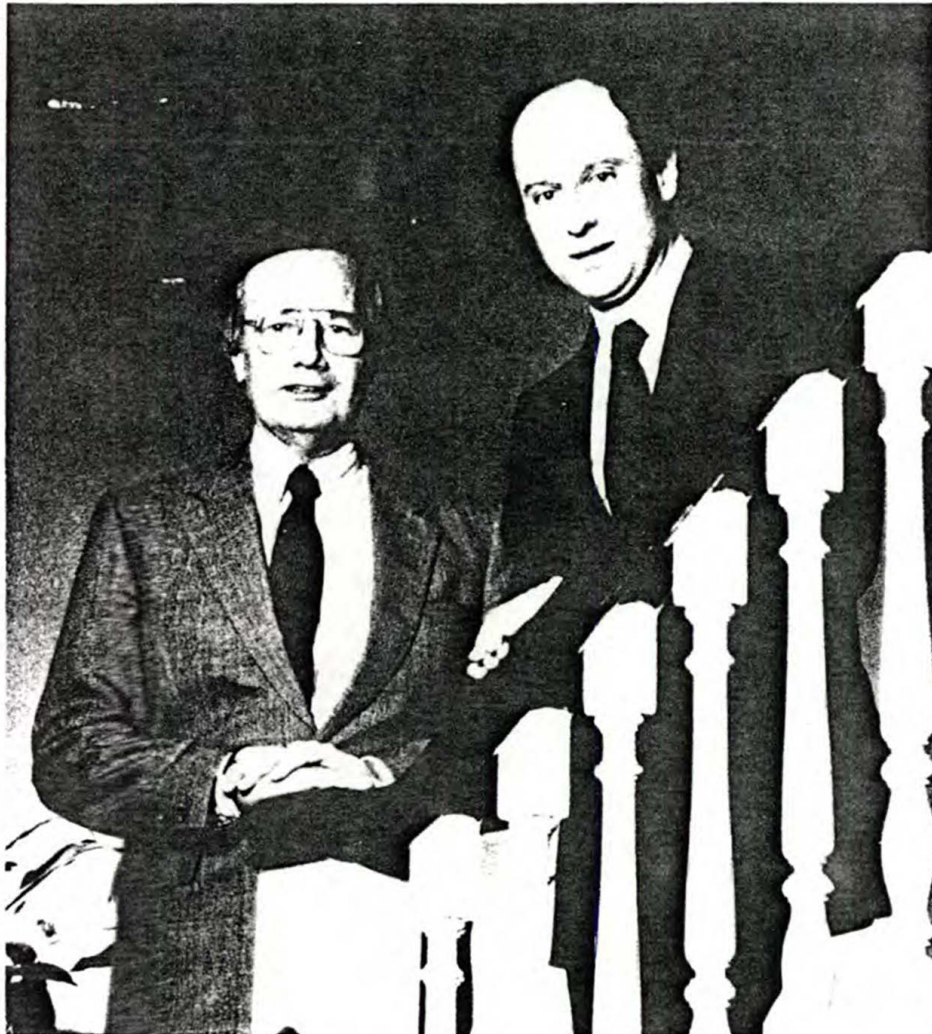
MOYERS: Isn't that what the Supreme Court did when it said that abortion is permissible in the first months of pregnancy? It was saying, in effect, that abortion is morally permissible during that period of time, but in the third trimester, it's not morally permissible. So the Supreme Court, as one arm of government, was in fact doing what you have suggested.

SANDEL: They were taking a moral stand in that respect. But they weren't explicitly saying that they were taking a moral stand. They weren't acknowledging that they were making a judgment that was consistent with some moral and religious views and inconsistent with others.

MOYERS: But isn't that the necessary strain of a democratic state: you are not supposed to choose between the Catholic position on abortion and the Congregational position on abortion?

SANDEL: But how could the Supreme Court do otherwise? The question really is how explicit it will be about what it is doing. To what extent should the Supreme Court acknowledge what it can't avoid doing, namely, making decisions about law that presuppose some answer to the moral and religious questions? Let me give you an example that's far removed from the abortion case and that for most people cuts the other way.

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Back in 1858, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas debated the question of whether moral judgment should play a part in political decisions. Douglas's position was a precise parallel to the position of those who today say, "Let's keep moral and religious convictions out of political debate." He said, "Let's not take a stand on the morality of slavery. Let's just leave that to the territories to decide for themselves." Lincoln said, "That's wrong. You can't separate moral questions from political questions. Slavery should be treated as the moral wrong it is and so it should be banned from the territories."

MOYERS: Well, I agree with Lincoln. Do you?

SANDEL: I do agree with him. In fact, in one of his perorations in the final debate with Douglas, he said, "Isn't it false statesmanship to try to make policy based on caring nothing about the very thing that people care the most about?" He drew laughter from the audience. But it was a telling point against Douglas. I think that's right.

MOYERS: And the parallel today?

SANDEL: In the case of abortion, for the most part, people who argue for the woman's right to choose want also to say that they're not making any moral judgment. The state shouldn't make any moral judgment at all. I'm sympathetic to their actual position. But I disagree that you can really defend that position without acknowledging that you are taking a stand in a moral and religious controversy. So, in that respect, Lincoln's position in his debate with Douglas—that morality has to play a part in politics—actually argues for those who would say the abortion question can't be separated from the moral and religious controversy that surrounds it.

Abortion is a morally difficult choice. There are powerful arguments, serious arguments, both ways. What I resist, though, is the thought that runs through liberal political philosophy and also the actual opinions of judges: that in allowing women to choose for themselves, we're rising above moral and religious questions.

MOYERS: Okay, now let's take homosexuality. If the state says that what consenting adults do in private is their business, isn't the state, in effect, requiring that for those who practice homosexuality, it's a good? That, of course, deeply offends those who believe it's a sin. So, in effect, the state is taking a moral stance.

SANDEL: If that were the reason the state gave for saying that what people do in the privacy of their own homes is their business, then that would be taking a moral stand. But in their recent opinion in the case of Michael Hardwick of Georgia, the Supreme Court refused to strike down the antisodomy law. They said it didn't violate privacy rights. The four dissenters on the court said, much as you've said, that it should be up to the individuals to make their own choice. But I think the dissenters' argument is misplaced.

I agree with the result they reached. I agree the law should have been struck down. But the dissenters simply took the position that people should be free to make their own choices in private. The analogy that's often used in these cases is with pornography: if people want to watch pornography in the privacy of their own homes, they should be allowed to do it. But when they use pornography as an analogy for homosexual intimacy, they demean the very practice that they would defend. They demean it by saying homosexuality is not analogous to heterosexual intimacy, which the court has protected, but that the relevant analogy is to a base practice that we put up with so long as it's done in private.

This is a weak case for toleration. It accepts the practice, not by affirming that there may be some human good realized by the practice, but instead by saying it's a

MICHAEL SANDEL

...hing that we should put up with because we'll never get agreement about it. It
't cultivate appreciation for the diverse ways of life people may pursue. It doesn't
ate appreciation for the distinctive goods that different ways of life represent. It
ill of those questions aside and says, maybe it's a bad thing, maybe it's a base
But let's just put up with it. Because otherwise, we would come apart at the

JOYERS: Are you suggesting that the Supreme Court should try to encourage an
ciation for the good as defined by consenting homosexuals?

SANDEL: Well, I'm suggesting a form of argument for those who would argue
the court.

JOYERS: You're certainly arguing that the state should not be neutral on these
s.

SANDEL: No. I don't think the state can be or should be neutral on moral issues.
k that at its best, public life is a kind of civic education. The relevant education
e questions of toleration and pluralism is an education in the appreciation of
ctive ways of life. The content of the pluralism, not just the fact of it, is
thing that our public life should address and appreciate.

JOYERS: But as you said, for the state to argue that there is a good in abortion or
osexual intimacy is to take a stand against the teachings of, say, the Catholic
ch in this regard. Isn't that another form of majoritarianism, where the majority
es what's good, even though the minority does not accept it morally or reli-
ly or philosophically?

SANDEL: That's a real worry—the tyranny of the majority. One of the reasons
philosophical liberals leave religion and morality out of politics and out of the
s just that worry about the majority imposing its own convictions and prejudices.
answer to that majoritarian threat is to try to appeal to a richer conception of
ocracy than just adding up votes. At its best, democracy fosters argument and
ce and political discourse about the good life, about the common good.

JOYERS: If our public debate changed in response to some of the things you're
g, what would we be hearing differently? How would we be speaking differently?

SANDEL: To some extent, we would be speaking in ways that we naturally,
ally speak, just as you and I sit here and debate this. We would be speaking the
for example, that the Catholic bishops spoke, when they appealed to their own
ous traditions but made arguments directed toward the larger public on issues of
ear deterrence or economic justice or abortion. We would appeal without embar-
ment to moral and religious traditions in the hope that they might inform public
ce, rather than contaminate it with intolerance.

JOYERS: But ultimately, the state would have to take sides.

SANDEL: Yes. Ultimately, the state does have to take sides. The strength of a
al system is that there are different levels of government and different forms of
c life that can decide different questions. At more local levels, we can give more
ine expression to people's collective identities and to their aspiration to work
common good in public, not just in private.

JOYERS: You said that in recent years liberalism has faltered because of its
re to argue for a vision of the common good. Why has that happened?

*If I have a right to something, say
if I have a right to free speech, it
can't be one thing in New York
and another thing in Alabama.*

SANDEL: I think partly it's for laudable reasons. After all, liberalism from the New Deal to our time has been combatting some genuine and seemingly intractable ills. One of them is racism. In fighting the civil rights battles, local control was often a code word for racism and prejudice. So liberals, rightly, wanted to argue for rights that would belong to all

American citizens. If I have a right to something, say if I have a right to free speech, it can't be one thing in New York and another thing in Alabama.

But when our idea of what counts as a right is enlarged beyond legal and political rights to social and economic rights—to a minimum income, say, or a minimum level of education for my children—we tend to provide them at the largest, most comprehensive level of political association. For us, this has meant the nation rather than the community or the state. That has the effect of draining political importance from those smaller forms of political association. That's one reason that contemporary liberals have not been as alive as they might be to the importance of local communities to self-government.

MOYERS: Is that the real flaw of liberalism? That by attending only to needs at a national level we are neglecting the localism of America?

SANDEL: Well, smaller forms of political association and of community life are necessary if public life is to have a genuinely civic dimension and address the moral character of citizens without imposing values that people may not genuinely share. So it's community for the sake of a civic project that's my concern, and that seems to be missing from the reigning public philosophy.

MOYERS: In part, it's missing because the sources of it have disappeared. We don't live in small towns anymore. The town meeting has been interred. People live in one state and work in another. They don't have time to be volunteer firemen. Or to go to town meetings—if there were town meetings. Are you suggesting that we put something back in the bottle that no longer exists?

SANDEL: No, and that's the difficult thing about it. It may be that geographical location may no longer be available as a primary source of community. So I think the question is: what other forms of genuine political community and public life, less expansive than the nation-state, are available? Some of the answers may come from religious traditions. Others may come from social movements, from protest movements. One of the shining examples of political communities that actually did provide an exercise in civic education is the civil rights movement. It wasn't just a way of achieving certain ends politically. It was also, itself, in the debates, in the arguments, and in the sympathies and public awareness that it generated, an embodiment of the kind of civic life that citizenship in a democracy ideally realizes.

MOYERS: How would we define this republic as a caring and sharing community?

SANDEL: On rare occasions, we can act from a sense of shared purposes as Americans. Historically, those have been times of war or crisis. That explains the attempt, in times of peace, to galvanize a sense of shared purpose in the name of a war on poverty or war on crime. But the shared self-understandings on the national level are hard-won and will only be available at best as glimmers, as brief moments.

So even as we try to be alive to the possibility of a shared national American culture, we shouldn't rest everything on that national commonality. We should also appreciate and cultivate and foster, in our political life, the particular forms of life in communities and convictions and moral and religious traditions that make for the

Political and Social Reflection - course syllabus-
Robert Coles-Stephen Smith

This course will examine the perspective of writers and philosophers towards questions political life and personal and civic identity. There will be a weekly meeting of two hours, and a requirement of three hours of community service each week as well as a final paper of 10 to 20 pages. Class size will be limited to 23 people, of which 5 will be drawn from outside the Kennedy School. Preference will be given to graduating Kennedy school students. Students must list the course first on their study card in order to be admitted. No student absent at the first class meeting will be admitted.

Readings will include: All The Kings Men -Robert Penn Warren, The Great Gatsby - F Scott Fitzgerald , Bread and Wine Ignazio Silone, My Son's Story-Nadine Gordimer, Democracy -Henry Adams, Prison Letters- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters to Olga - Vaclav Havel, Moral Man,Immoral Society -Reinhold Niebuhr ,The Death of Ivan Iliyich - Leo Tolstoy . In addition there will be selected readings from Against the Current - Isiah Berlin,and The American Political Tradition - Richard Hofstadter. as well as other readings on reserve in the library of the Kennedy School each week. All books are available at the Coop.

Political activity often poses life's essential questions most intensely. The political novelists and writers in this course attempt to illuminate aspects of our individual and common life and suggest a particular moral vision. Among the issues that they consider are; the question of belief in something and in ultimate meaning, the question of a moral order beyond ideology, the question of ends and means, the question of when and how to compromise, the question of resisting societal and institutional pressure, the nature of human nature, the relationship of politics to religion and faith, the nature of education for public life, and the connection of public and private life. We hope to discuss some of these issues during the course of the term.

Hillary's politics have meaning



**WILLIAM
McKENZIE**

The semi-smoldering debate over Hillary Rodham Clinton's call to develop a new "politics of meaning," as the first lady put it in an April 6 speech to University of Texas at Austin students, is perhaps dismissible as a squabble among cultural elites about sidebar issues. Mrs. Clinton says we need a political message that deals with the "alienation and despair and hopelessness" — the "crisis of meaning" — that produces adolescent violence, drug abuse and teen-age pregnancies, among other things.

In response to Mrs. Clinton and her supporters, who include television producer Norman Lear, comes this witty yet biting *New Republic* reply: "It's good to hear that the first lady is pro-meaning. But before signing on, one question: What on earth are these people talking about?"

Columnist Charles Krauthammer likewise takes on the Hillary crowd for coming belatedly to the recognition that moral values, or the lack thereof, affect public life. Mr. Krauthammer reduces the "new politics" call to this point: "For a generation, liberals have been trying to recapture the 'social issues' and 'values' from conservatives. The call for spiritual renewal is a way to get back into the game."

Indeed, liberals who have primarily looked to the state for answers have been a key part of America's secularization and have been particularly uncomfortable with the idea that spiritual

values affect public policy. And, yes, a discomfiting element of touchy, feely-ishness is at work in the Clinton White House's attempts to "rediscover" spiritual values. *Time* magazine reports that taciturn Lloyd Bentsen, whose "inner nature" was shaped by the gut-it-up Depression/World War II era, calls his fellow Clintonites "the huggiest bunch" he's ever seen.

But let's give Mrs. Clinton a break. Her point about developing a public ethic that stretches beyond programs and policies is not all new.

Recently, Jimmy Carter and George Bush each stressed that government alone cannot solve large social problems. Mr. Carter correctly challenged his countrymen in 1979 to search for the root causes of what he termed a "crisis of confidence." And while it's now fashionable to decry Mr. Bush's notion of a "thousand points of light," individuals and private organizations do play an important, albeit overlooked, role in resolving public problems.

So when Hillary Rodham Clinton is described, as the *New York Times Magazine* did recently, as more "preacher than politician" who seeks a "new Reformation," her tag should not be considered unique nor unworthy. Her insightful company includes Vaclav Havel, the Czech playwright/president whose political activism sent him to jail. Mr. Havel pointedly told a group of fact-oriented economists last year: "We have to abandon the arrogant belief that the world is merely a puzzle to be solved, a machine with instructions waiting for use. . . . Sooner or later politics will be faced with (the) task of finding a new, postmodern face."

Now, realpolitik sorts will dismiss finding new postmodern faces as hokum. Give me a legislative bill, or a fat ol' federal program, but, please, don't ask me to consider moral messages.

Their reasoning breaks down in the face of modern challenges. Consider the new film *Menace II Society*, whose message should be seriously considered by political leaders: A burgeoning subculture exists in America's cities for whom life's value cannot be distinguished from death's existence. The film's point is as clear as it is political in repercussion: For some youths, death through drugs, gang warfare or predatory violence is on a par with living.

To be sure, urban America can benefit from programmatic solutions. Fully funding Head Start programs, increasing prenatal care initiatives, expanding earned income tax credits, putting more cops on the beat and renewing education systems are among the measures that can make a difference.

But so, too, is it necessary to have a moral message that begins, as Mrs. Clinton's does, with emphasizing individual dignity. Her "politics of meaning" includes moral values she traces directly to her Methodist upbringing: the Golden Rule and Christ's commandment to love thy neighbor as thyself.

In those ethical statements, she says, is "an underlying assumption that you will value yourself, that you will be a responsible being who will live by certain behaviors that enable you to have self-respect, because, then . . . comes the capacity for you to respect and care for other people." That may sound vague to some, but Mrs. Clinton's search for a new "meaning" in politics may be on to something.

William McKenzie is an editorial writer and columnist for The Dallas Morning News.

No Rose Garden

The name of Hillary Rodham Clinton's old law firm is popping up in some unexpected places.

Last month, Little Rock, Ark.'s Rose Law Firm appeared on D.C. Superior Court's civil docket—as a defendant. Rose has been sued by an economic consulting firm seeking more than \$100,000 in unpaid bills from the law firm.

According to the May 14 complaint, the law firm in July 1991 had hired Boston-based Charles River Associates Inc. (CRA) to help in a patent-infringement case involving two manufacturers of parking meters; the defendant was represented by Rose. The suit for unpaid bills was filed in D.C. Superior Court because most of the work on the patent-infringement case was performed by CRA's D.C. office.

The contract with CRA was signed by then Rose partner Webster Hubbell, who has since left the firm to become associate attorney general at the Justice Department. Hubbell was also the attorney on the patent-infringement case, filed in federal court in Arkansas.

As of March 1992, Rose had paid \$34,000 to CRA, leaving a debt of almost \$123,000, the complaint states.

Thomas Overstreet Jr., vice president of CRA, who works in the company's D.C. office, says that the debt is not a result of Rose's being dissatisfied with CRA's services and refusing to pay.

"I suspect it has something to do with their client not paying them, but I don't know," says Overstreet, who bills at a rate of \$250 an hour, according to court papers. "It hadn't anything to do with the quality of our work."

Ronald Clark, managing partner at the Rose firm, declines to explain the dispute. He does say, however, that the debt "certainly has nothing to do with any financial problems at the firm."

CRA provides litigation-support services and economic analysis related to mergers and business competition. It is being represented by John Burke Jr. of the D.C. office of Boston's Foley, Hoag & Eliot. Burke declines comment.

Clark says that settlement talks are being conducted out of Little Rock by phone and have not required a lawyer in Washington.

"Superior Court Watch" appears alternately in this space with "Federal Court."

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INITIALS: JH DATE: 6/11/2014

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

July 30, 1993

TO: Hillary Rodham Clinton

FROM: Anne Bartley

RE: Possible Next Steps in Your Call for a National Spiritual and Moral Renewal

In rereading your Austin speech and your subsequent interviews, you voice many, deep, and complex themes that articulate a political, spiritual, and moral challenge of vast magnitude and national necessity. The question is not whether to embrace the challenge but how to do it in such a manner that the values that are at stake are best served.

A Small Meeting and Possible Participants

I was delighted when Melanne asked me to write a memo for you on a small meeting of people who would be appropriate for you to talk with privately and off the record. In your interviews you talked about many things you want to explore and accomplish. In this first meeting I see you beginning in a more organized way to carve out time to discuss with others who have thought deeply about the same topics you have.

Following is a preliminary list of people, some I know and others I have heard about or have read their work. Who gets selected depends on what you want to accomplish in this meeting. Once we get a focus for it I can do further preparation and planning.

Some possible participants:

*James M. Wall

editor for "The Christian Century," Methodist background

*James Davison Hunter

author of Cultural Wars: The Struggle to Define America, among other books, professor of Sociology and Religious Studies at the University of Virginia

*Bill Moyers

well-known, thoughtful producer and interviewer of PBS shows, concerned about the issue; has talked, read, and produced shows dealing with many aspects of it; has been at the White House and understands the political dimension

founder of Sojourner, an activist Christian organization, network, magazine, and community in D.C.

*Ernie Cortes

Lead organizer of the Southwest Industrial Areas Foundation region, MacArthur Fellow; intellectual, reader, thinker, and organizer on how to create social change with a spiritual and moral base; soon to be at Harvard on a visiting fellowship

*Kathleen Kennedy Townsend

activist for community service, author of articles, "A Rebirth of Virtue: Religion and Liberal Renewal," "The Bible and the Left," among others; understands the political dimensions but as a member of an unique religious and political family

*Robert N. Bellah

author, with others, of Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life which explores in interviews, "What gives meaning and coherence to your life?" among other questions

*Martin E. Marty

Senior Editor of "The Christian Century" and author and commentator on Religion and American Society

*Jay Rosen

Professor of Journalism in New York, has studied the workings of the secular media in regard to these issues

*A. James Reichley

author of Religion In American Public Life, a Fellow at Brookings Institution

*Taylor Branch

author of Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63, among other books

*Garry Wills

author of Under God: Religion and American Politics, among other books

*Cornel West

African-American theologian and philosopher, Professor of African-American Studies at Princeton, author of Race Matters, among other publications; calls for the need for race-transcending leadership

*Looking for a thoughtful Christian conservative

much interesting work is being done by the responsible Christian conservatives

These 4 people are recommended by Steven Smith:

*Dr. Robert Coles

Steven Smith writes, " I think (he) is one of the most thoughtful and original contemporary thinkers about moral concerns, has thought and written about these issues with respect to children from psychological and social perspective. He wrote many speeches for my Uncle Bobby on these themes and seems to be able to approach these issues in a way the defies categorization by the right or left."

*Arthur Schlesinger and Michael Sandel

"who understand the political and historical context for the discussion." Mr. Sandel is also a Professor of Political Philosophy at Harvard University and has written many articles and books, such as Liberalism and the Limits of Justice, "Morality and the Liberal Ideal," " Democrats and Community," etc.

*Doris Kearns Goodwin

"who has written speeches for my Uncle Ted for years and who has incredibly fine moral instincts and sound political judgment."

Large Vision and Goals: Organizing and Shaping

In reflecting about all that you want to accomplish, I recommend that you do regular small meetings. They can be organized in different ways, some to focus on particular topics, others where participants' articles or other readings be read beforehand and serve as the shaping element for the discussion.

I am still in the process of organizing the themes that you have raised. Following is a very preliminary list of some of the topics for discussion:

- * history and cultural implications of past American religious battles-- the Revivalist Movement, anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism, the Temperance Movement, etc.

- * an overview of the prevalent world views that are held by Americans today and through which Americans are trying to make sense of their lives and have meaning in today's society

- * preconditions for individuals to change attitudes,

behavior, etc.--what is fostering and inhibiting such preconditions; case studies of some social changes; people changing as an individual, as part of a family, in community

- * preconditions for institutions to change--governmental, intermediary, etc.

- * language--the problem of talking about new ideas without using old language, images, symbols; developing language that means something and does not signify old thinking

- * what is beyond right and left, liberal and conservative, Democrat and Republican

To learn from nature, I suggest that you plow the field, seed it, nourish with water and not rush a natural deepening. The themes that you have raised are large and worthy of some organized and focused time.

Cultural/Political/Religious Dynamics in American Society Today

The controversy stirred up by your Austin speech on April 7 and subsequent articles is indicative of public and private social/political/religious dynamics implicit to this discussion and particularly involving the First Lady. Following is a beginning list of factors that shape the context of such discussions.

1. The lack of capacity by the press to deal with public articulation of deeper issues, especially of a religious or moral nature.

2. The essential political character of the Office of the First Lady.

3. The "cultural wars" that are intensely and passionately being fought by polarizing religious and secular organizations "...around our most fundamental and cherished assumptions about how to order our lives--our own lives and our lives together in this society....(It is) finally a matter of moral authority...and competing moral visions (which) are at the heart (of this cultural conflict)... Our most fundamental ideas about who we are as Americans are now at odds." (James Davison Hunter, Cultural Wars: The Struggle to Define America, page 42)

4. Most Americans are somewhere in the middle of these polarizing world views. Some are very hungry for meaning in their lives as William Raspberry has noted and Robert Bellah has documented. Other Americans are seemingly not, yet, as LBJ noted, for many Americans their transcendent belief is, "I am an American." From time to time they get pulled into this passionate battle of world views for what that means.

5. The unfortunate self-promoting and caricaturing efforts of Michael Lerner to capitalize on the publicity of "politics of

meaning" to the obscuring of its message.

6. The abdication and uneasiness by the Democrats and liberals with religion, family and community values.

7. The consequences of rights-based liberalism to the exclusion of the common good and recognition of family and community values. The use of rights as the basis for much policy, programs and laws.

Recommendations for Not Speaking About " It," Rather Acting From " It"

In my role as Chair of the Faith and Politics Institute, I talked with a few experienced and thoughtful colleagues regarding a First Lady speaking publicly about public life with spiritual and moral values. They reinforced my initial thought that you should not speak at this time.

Everyone emphasized that given the essential political nature of the Office of the First Lady that you could not speak without your words automatically being politicized, as you already know. The speaking about it should remain in private for distancing from the unfortunate Lerner/"politics of meaning" controversy and for allowing time for the small meetings and specificity of strategy, developing language, etc. Even though your speaking is appreciated by many, given your position, your words get used for others' purposes and, in the final analysis, at this point, it is counterproductive to what you are trying to accomplish.

In the meantime since religious and moral values are also symbolic, the expression of them can be done very powerfully and metaphorically by what you do, who you see, and where you go. You are already doing this. I have heard how people were touched with the time that you took to be at your Father's bed side, are inspired by how you spend time with Chelsea, remember what you say and how well you listen when you are at a hospital talking with patients, etc. These are powerful ways to get your message across about families caring for each other, personal responsibility, connecting to each other, etc. In otherwords, "...remolding society by redefining what it means to be a human being..." is what you are already doing by your own example and which could possibly be rethought for new ways.

I heard and agree that one of the best ways to talk about morals and spiritual values in individual lives and society is to be very concrete and specific. You are doing that in taking a program like Health Care and telling stories about how it affects real people in real ways is giving people something tangible in which they can find meaning. In using personal anecdotes from your own family and life and, thereby, illustrating a value, gives people connection with you. Given the right circumstances, it can be a creation of meaning and community right there in the moment of your speaking. When you spoke at the University of Pennsylvania

Commencement regarding the controversy over the freedom of speech issue, the segment I saw on the news was your telling about your growing up, learning to argue with your Father and what values that taught you. It was very powerful and memorable.

Michael Sandel writes, "Open-ended though it may be, the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity--whether family or city, tribe or nation, party or cause. In the communitarian view, these stories make a moral difference, not only a psychological one. They situate us in the world and give our lives their moral particularity." ("Morality and the Liberal Ideal: Must Individual Rights Betray the Common Good?", "The New Republic," May 7, 1984)

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend told me that the most powerful and inspirational speeches she remembers were her Father's during his last campaign. He would speak about a program and then illustrate what it would mean in people's lives using specific language so that his listeners could understand the program, what it might mean to them in their lives, and feel connected to him personally and to his vision.

David Ramage's Invitation to Address the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, Chicago, August 28-September 4

Melanne asked me to talk with David Ramage about his invitation to you to address this. In the context of the above I would recommend that you not speak.

It is a Parliament that is very ecumenical with a large listing of Eastern and Middle Eastern religions. The names were many I recognized, some associated with the "New Age." Although Thich Nhat Hahn (whom I have studied with, admire, and would recommend that you meet sometime for he is wise and a master), the Dalai Lama and others have so much to offer in practice and readings and it's true the goals you are about are global, however, your context is American and should be grounded in American lives and the American experience.

The timing of this, late August and early September, is too soon. I think the Michael Lerner/"politics of meaning" still lingers and your appearance would revive it. David and the other religious leaders at the Parliament know you are with them. Your appearance would only fan fires best left to die down without furthering your own goals.