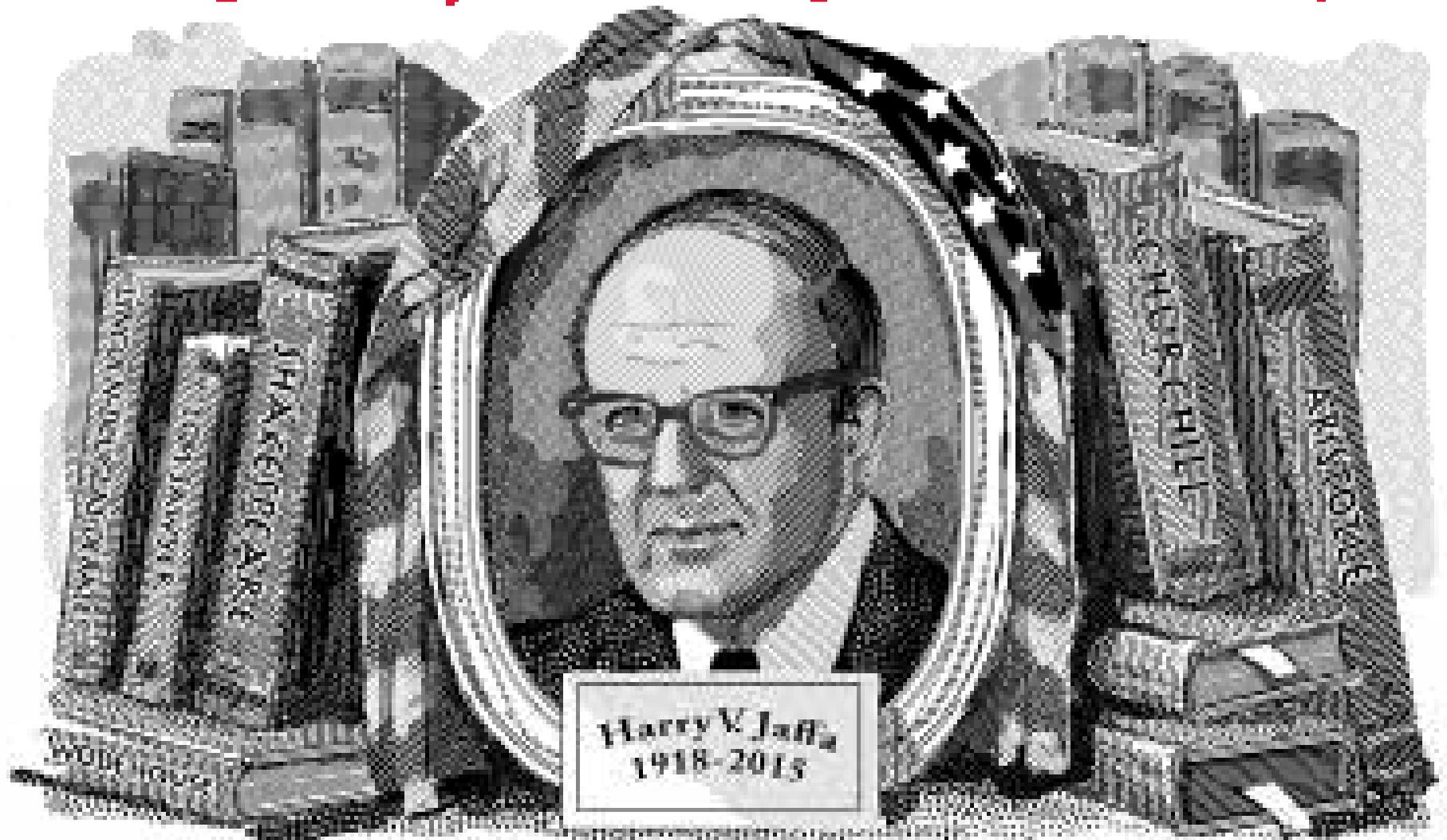


VOLUME IV, NUMBER 1, WINTER 2014/15

CLAREMONT

REVIEW OF BOOKS

A Journal of Political Thought and Statesmanship



The American and European

Abraham Lincoln, the Anglophobes, Aristotle, Big Government,
Charles Hobbs, the Declaration of Independence, Diversity, Israel,
the Living Constitution, Martin Gilbert, Modern Liberalism, Natural Rights,
Philosophic Writing, Reform Conservatism, the Republican Party,
Thomas Aquinas, and William Shakespeare

by

Garret Alexander, Benjamin Balint, Michael Berenson, Martha Bayles,
John Chesney Briggs, Timothy W. Burns, Christopher Caldwell, Michael S. Green,
Harvey C. Mansfield, Matthew J. Peterson, David Peyer-Jones, Jeremy Rossouw,
Steven B. Smith, William Voegeli, John G. West, and C.J. Wolfe



A Publication of the Claremont Institute

PRICE: \$6.95

ISSN: 0009-3155

SCOTT WALKER, UNPLUGGED

by Charles R. Kesler

FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS GOVERNOR SCOTT WALKER OF WISCONSIN has had the unpleasant experience of running the gantlet of the American and British press. Do you believe in evolution, they asked him. What is President Obama's religion? Can a college dropout be a good president?

To these impertinent questions the governor granted only desultory replies. Liberals and conservatives alike have criticized him, not realizing that if he had answered more candidly and thoughtfully he would have been in even deeper trouble. The press, not to mention the political class in general, can be so ill-tempered and ill-educated that it forces intelligent politicians to hide their intelligence, like President Ronald Reagan in the famous *Saturday Night Live* skit, who, after a shambling, grandfatherly greeting to a visiting Girl Scout, immediately began barking orders to his staff, quoting Montesquieu, and speaking Arabic and German *am Telephon*.

Here is what I imagine the governor wanted to say, if only he had been on *Saturday Night Live* and not on the campaign trail surrounded by media hounds and political consultants. As a member of the press myself, I can't of course reveal my sources for this conjecture.

Reporter: Governor Walker, what religion is President Obama?

Walker: God only knows.

R: You mean you don't believe the president when he says he's a Christian?

W: Did you believe him when he used to say he was against gay marriage as a matter of "sacred principle," and in favor only of civil unions?

R: Well, his views evolved.

W: Yes, very conveniently, and that's one reason I'm skeptical of evolution. But my point is that, strictly speaking, only God really knows what is in the heart of any man. For ordinary purposes, though, I take a person at his word: his religion is whatever he says it is.

R: So you admit Obama is a Christian?

W: Yes, I understand it's a sacred principle with him.

R: What about evolution? You said you had to "punt" on that one. Are you afraid of offending the yahoos of the religious right?

W: Actually, the religious Americans I know are more like Houyhnhnms than Yahoos.

R: [Momentary silence.] Could you spell that for me?

W: You can look it up in *Gulliver's Travels*. That's a book. But never mind. I did say I had to punt on evolution, not because I wanted to

spare religious conservatives' feelings, though, but because I wanted to spare the reporter's. Can you imagine asking such a silly question?

R: By silly you mean hard?

W: I mean he didn't even distinguish between evolution within a species and evolution between species. He didn't wonder what it would mean to "believe" in a hypothesis. He didn't distinguish between evolution as a first or final cause, and evolution as an efficient cause. Above all, the question displayed the same credulous attitude towards science that Obama exhibits every time he proclaims that science has settled this question or that. Did it never occur to him that science is as much, or more, about unsettling than settling things?

R: You're evading the question.

W: I'm preparing to answer it. If by evolution you mean the materialist process which, by natural selection and a convenient sequence of physical accidents, has guided the development of life from the single-cell organism to the modern liberal intellectual, then no, I'm not buying it. And there are plenty of contemporary philosophers and natural scientists who don't, either. Some are proponents of intelligent design; others are not. Thomas Nagel, for example, emphatically in the latter camp, argues that such a materialist conception of nature is "almost certainly false."

R: Whoa, are you saying you don't believe in evolution?

W: I don't believe in "believing" in evolution. As an explanation of changes within species, evolution has a lot going for it. Even on a grander scale, as I pointed out in my later statement on the subject, evolution and belief in God are not incompatible.

R: How do you have time to read books by philosophers?

W: I don't. That's why I read the *Claremont Review of Books*.

R: So do you think a man with a high school education is qualified to be president?

W: That's a good one. I attended Marquette University for three and a half years and left to take a full-time job.

R: Your professor in a class on the politics of the Third World said you "seemed utterly bored."

W: I was, in *that* class. Have you ever taken a course on Third World politics?

R: But how can a man without a college degree possibly handle the job of president of the United States?

W: I dunno. Ask Abraham Lincoln.

Claremont Review of Books, Volume XV, Number 1, Winter 2014/15. (Printed in the United States on March 6, 2015.)

Published quarterly by the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy, 1317 W. Foothill Blvd, Suite 120, Upland, CA 91786. Telephone: (909) 981-2200. Fax: (909) 981-1616. Postmaster send address changes to *Claremont Review of Books* Address Change, 1317 W. Foothill Blvd, Suite 120, Upland, CA 91786. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope; or may be sent via email to: crbeditor@claremont.org.

Send all letters to the editor to the above addresses.

Editor: Charles R. Kesler

Senior Editors:

Christopher Flannery, William Voegeli

Managing Editor: John B. Kienker

Production Editor: Patrick Collins

Assistant Editor: Lindsay Eberhardt

Contributing Editors:

Kathleen O'Toole, Joseph Tartakovsky

Art Director: Elliott Banfield

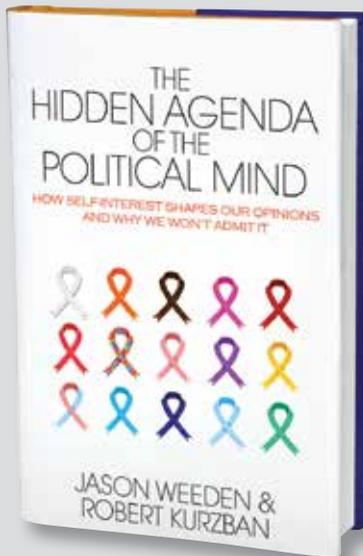
Publisher: Michael Pack

Publisher (2000–2001): Thomas B. Silver

Price: \$6.95 per copy; \$27.80 for a one-year subscription; \$55.60 for a two-year subscription; \$83.40 for a three-year subscription. Add \$17 for all foreign subscriptions, including those originating in Canada and Latin America. To subscribe, call (909) 981-2200, or contact subscriptions@claremont.org.

Visit us online at www.claremont.org/crb. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors, the Claremont Institute, or its board of directors. Nothing in this journal is an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill or influence the election of any candidate. All contents Copyright © 2015 the Claremont Institute, except where otherwise noted.

Changing the Conversations that Change the World



The Hidden Agenda of the Political Mind

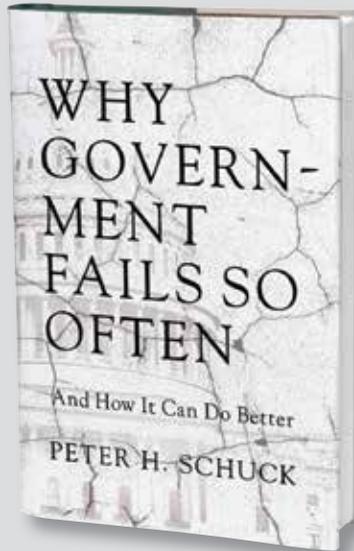
How Self-Interest Shapes Our Opinions and Why We Won't Admit It

Jason Weeden & Robert Kurzban

"Weeden and Kurzban are brilliant thinkers who provide a broader, deeper, and occasionally unsettling new perspective on how our self-interest influences our choices—even choices made by those of us who cherish the belief that we are not motivated by self-interest. Read it and weep, or laugh."

—Douglas T. Kenrick, coauthor of *The Rational Animal*

Cloth \$29.95



Why Government Fails So Often

And How It Can Do Better

Peter H. Schuck

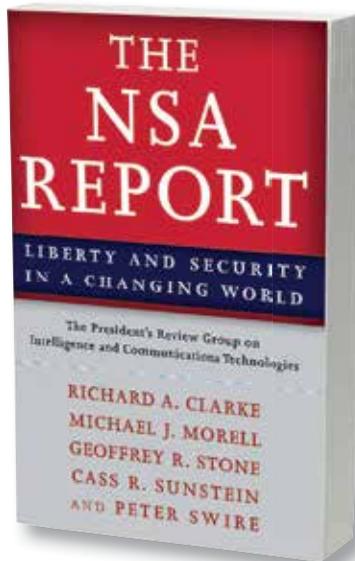
"This lively and authoritative account of government failure deserves to be read by advocates of all political persuasions. . . . This admirable work offers compelling evidence that government might do far better by doing far less."

—Gene Epstein, *Barron's*

"An essential manual for 21st-century policy makers."

—Yuval Levin, *Wall Street Journal*

Cloth \$27.95



The NSA Report

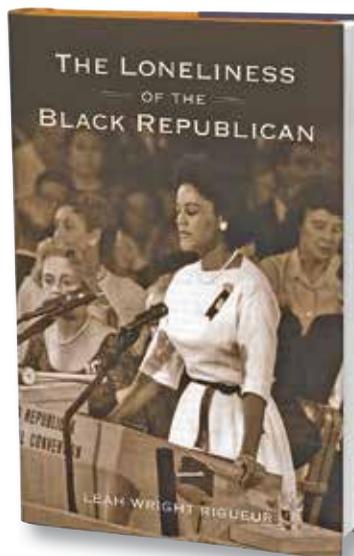
Liberty and Security in a Changing World

The President's Review Group on Intelligence and Communications Technologies: Richard A. Clarke, Michael J. Morell, Geoffrey R. Stone, Cass R. Sunstein & Peter Swire

"A remarkably thorough and well-reasoned report calling on the government to end its bulk phone-data collection program and to increase both the transparency and accountability of surveillance programs."

—*New York Times*

Paper \$16.95



The Loneliness of the Black Republican

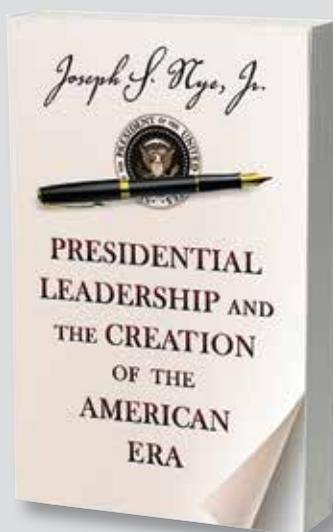
Pragmatic Politics and the Pursuit of Power

Leah Wright Rigueur

"Wright Rigueur has produced an extraordinary political and social history of the experiences of African Americans in the modern Republican Party and her book is the first to take seriously the role black elites played in the party's internecine politics. With impressive archival research and rich accounts, this book makes a major contribution to history, African American studies, and political science."

—Alvin B. Tillery, Jr., Northwestern University

Cloth \$35.00



Presidential Leadership and the Creation of the American Era

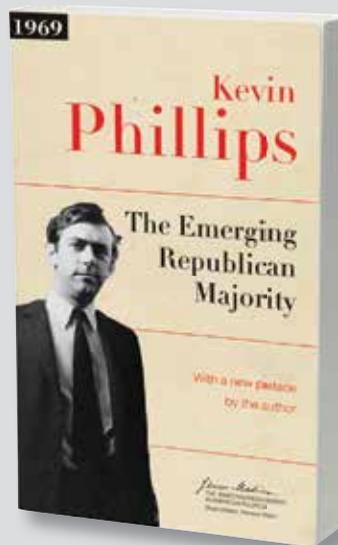
Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

"The US presidency sounds far more powerful than it usually is. Scholars, journalists and presidents routinely exaggerate its potency. Joseph Nye's slim volume on presidential leadership offers an elegant antidote to many of the myths."

—Edward Luce, *Financial Times*

The Richard Ullman Lectures

Paper \$19.95



The Emerging Republican Majority

Kevin Phillips

With a new preface by the author and a new introduction by Sean Wilentz

"A remarkable book."

—Alan Brinkley, *New York Times Book Review*

"In the political business very few people deserve the appellation 'genius.' Kevin Phillips is decidedly one of them."

—James Carville

Paper \$29.95