

Theodore H. White Lecture
on Press and Politics

with

David Brooks

2012



HARVARD Kennedy School

JOAN SHORENSTEIN CENTER
on the Press, Politics and Public Policy

Table of Contents

History of the Theodore H. White Lecture and Biography of David Brooks	5
Biographies of Cynthia Tucker and David Nyhan.....	7
Welcoming Remarks by Alex S. Jones.....	9
Awarding of the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism to Cynthia Tucker.....	9
The 2012 Theodore H. White Lecture on Press and Politics “Election 2012: The Big Questions” by David Brooks.....	14
The 2012 Theodore H. White Seminar on Press and Politics.....	33
Alex S. Jones, Director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy (moderator)	
David Brooks, T.H. White Lecturer; columnist, <i>The New York Times</i>	
John Dickerson, chief political correspondent, <i>Slate</i> magazine; political director, CBS News	
Jennifer Hochschild, Henry LaBarre Jayne Professor of Government and Professor of African and African American Studies, Harvard University	
Cynthia Tucker, 2012 Nyhan Prize recipient; columnist, Universal Press Syndicate	
Amy Walter, political director, ABC News	



The Theodore H. White Lecture commemorates the life of the reporter and historian who created the style and set the standard for contemporary political journalism and campaign coverage.

White, who began his journalism career delivering the *Boston Post*, entered Harvard College in 1932 on a newsboy's scholarship. He studied Chinese history and oriental languages.

In 1939 he witnessed the bombing of Chungking while freelance reporting on a Sheldon Fellowship. In 1959 White sought support for a 20-year research project, a retrospective of presidential campaigns. After being advised by fellow reporters to drop this academic exercise, White took to the campaign trail, and, relegated to the "zoo plane," changed the course of American political journalism with the publication of *The Making of a President*, in 1960. The 1964, 1968, and 1972 editions of *The Making of a President*, along with *America in Search of Itself*, remain vital documents to the study of campaigns and the press. Before his death in 1986, White also served on the Visiting Committee at the Kennedy School of Government; he was one of the architects of what has become the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy.



David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in September 2003. He has been a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, a contributing editor at *Newsweek* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, and he is currently a commentator on PBS's *NewsHour*. He is the author of *Bobos In Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* and *On Paradise Drive: How We Live Now (And Always Have) in the Future Tense*, both published by Simon & Schuster. His most recent book is *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love,*

Character, and Achievement, published by Random House in March 2011. Mr. Brooks joined *The Weekly Standard* at its inception in September 1995, having worked at *The Wall Street Journal* for the previous nine years. He is a frequent analyst on NPR, and his articles have appeared in the *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Forbes*, *The Washington Post* and other magazines.



Cynthia Tucker is a columnist for Universal Press Syndicate. She is also a commentator on TV and radio news shows. Tucker was editorial page editor of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* newspaper for 17 years, where she led the development of opinion policy. More recently, she was that newspaper's Washington-based political columnist. In 2007, Tucker won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary. She has received numerous other awards, including Journalist of the Year from the National Association of

Black Journalists. In addition, she is a Visiting Professor of Journalism and Charlayne Hunter-Gault Distinguished Writer-in-Residence at the University of Georgia.



David Nyhan was a columnist and reporter at *The Boston Globe* for 30 years. A graduate of Harvard College and a Shorenstein Fellow in the spring of 2001, Nyhan was a regular participant in Shorenstein Center activities before, during and after his Fellowship. Nyhan died unexpectedly in 2005. In his eulogy Senator Edward Kennedy said of Nyhan, "Dave was a man of amazing talent, but most of all he was a man of the people who never forgot his roots....In so many ways, but especially in the daily example of

his own extraordinary life, Dave was the conscience of his community." The hallmark of David Nyhan's brand of journalism was the courage to champion unpopular causes and challenge the powerful with relentless reporting and brave eloquence. In his memory, the Shorenstein Center established the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism.

The Theodore H. White Lecture

November 15, 2012

Mr. Jones: Good evening and welcome to all of you. I'm Alex Jones, Director of the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, and I'm very happy to welcome you here tonight. This is a big night for the Shorenstein Center. It's a highlight of our year, without question. We are now marking our 26th anniversary. As some of you already know, the Shorenstein Center was founded in 1986 as a memorial to Joan Shorenstein Barone, a truly remarkable television journalist who died of breast cancer after a distinguished career.

Her father, Walter Shorenstein, endowed the Center as a place for a focused and searching examination of the intersection of press, politics and public policy. Walter Shorenstein not only made the Center possible, but remained vitally interested in what we do and was our unstinting supporter and friend. Two years ago, after a long and extraordinary life, he died at 95 and we miss him, mourn him. He was above all else a great citizen. And the Theodore H. White Lecture and the David Nyhan Prize are to recognize that same kind of engaged activist citizenship from a journalistic perspective.

With us tonight are Walter's son, Doug Shorenstein, and daughter, Carole Shorenstein Hays. Please join me in expressing appreciation and respect to the Shorenstein family. (Applause)

A bit later you will hear from our Theodore White lecturer, David Brooks. But first I have another task to perform, which is also an honor. In 2005 we at the Shorenstein Center lost another great and much admired friend, David Nyhan. Many of you did not know David and I want to speak of him briefly as we this year bestow the eighth annual David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism. David Nyhan was a man of many parts, a devoted family man, a loyal pal, the best company in the world. I can still feel the glow he imparted as a Fellow at the Shorenstein Center. Tonight we honor David Nyhan, the consummate reporter and political journalist, which is the role that occupied much of his life and at which he could not be bested.

David was a reporter and then a columnist at *The Boston Globe*, and his work had both a theme and a character. The theme was almost always power, political power. And also especially the abuse of political power by the big shots at the expense of the little guys. He also loved politicians. Were he with us today he would have just been coming off the 15-round brutal slug fest for the White House, which he would have engaged tooth

and claw. But he would not have been predictable. He was always surprising his readers with his take on things because most of all, David Nyhan was his own man and he called them as he saw them.

In his memory and honor, the Nyhan family and many friends and admirers of David Nyhan have endowed the David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism to recognize the kind of gutsy, stylish, relentless journalism that David embodied. Dave's wife, Olivia, is with us tonight, as are his children, Veronica, Kate and Nick and other members of the Nyhan family. Please join me in expressing our regard and affection. (Applause)

This year's David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism is awarded to Cynthia Tucker. I doubt there is a single person in this room who has not read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It's set in a small town in Alabama. It is remarkably like the town that its author, Harper Lee, grew up in, Monroeville. You will recall that Harper Lee's next door neighbor in the summer was a little boy named Truman Capote. I don't know what they put in the water in Monroeville, but it must be a powerful writing elixir because that is also the hometown of Cynthia Tucker who was born there in the days when the town was still right out of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Cynthia went to segregated schools until she was 17. And I would bet that living the civil rights movement, literally living it, had a lot to do with making her one of the South's and the nation's most vibrant liberal voices. She graduated from Auburn University and then went to work for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* back in the days when it was literally true that the paper said on its masthead, "Covers Dixie Like the Dew." That's no longer true. In 1980 she left the *Journal-Constitution* to go to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, which at that time, under editor Gene Roberts, also a southerner, was regarded as one of the nation's small handful of truly outstanding newspapers.

She wanted to go to Africa as a foreign correspondent and when *The Inquirer* ruled her too inexperienced she got the experience by quitting the paper and going to Africa as a freelancer. When she returned, it was to Atlanta where she settled. She had an op-ed column and she was home. She was a Nieman Fellow here at Harvard, became editorial page editor in Atlanta and in 2007 she was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for commentary. She has won many other awards and was recently named to the Hall of Fame by the National Association of Black Journalists.

Cynthia Tucker's style is direct and strong. She tells you what she thinks. And what she thinks is always in support of the little guy, the fellow that David Nyhan always championed. But she is hardly a down-the-line liberal spouting predictable views. Last month she declared that affirmative action for college admissions was over. "It's silly to suggest that President Barack Obama's daughters should get preference in col-

lege admissions,” she wrote. Instead she proposed something else. Highly selective colleges, she wrote, that top tier of institutions that accept only a small percentage of applicants should start offering preferences to promising students from poor and working class backgrounds, let’s say family incomes under \$50,000. If they did that, those institutions would still draw some racial diversity while also helping to close the large and growing chasm between the haves and the have nots.

Sounds to me just like what David Nyhan might have said. It gives me great pleasure to award the 2012 David Nyhan Prize for Political Journalism to Cynthia Tucker. (Applause)

Ms. Tucker: Thank you very much. I am deeply honored to receive this award and to stand in the company of the journalist for whom it is named and to stand in the company of those who have received it previously. I am taken by a remark that David Nyhan made, that in retirement he would miss the chance to “shine a little flashlight on a dark corner where wrong was done to a powerless peon, where a scarred politician maybe deserved a better fate, where the process went awry or the mob needed to be calmed down and herded in another direction.” I would like to think that I’ve done much the same thing, though I could not have put it so eloquently.

I think we’ve arrived at a moment when, as much as anything, the public needs the reassurance of commentary based on facts, not stereotypes; on evidence, not emotion; on empiricism, not biases. The recent election has been another powerful affirmation of a trend long underway: the browning of America and the increasing political power and social significance of darker-skinned Americans. While I see that as a continuation of the country’s long heritage as a mixing bowl, if not a melting pot, many white Americans, especially older white Americans, seem terrified by it. Because I’ve been writing about race and ethnicity for decades, from a southern outpost no less, I’ve seen that fear up close.

I think of a phone call that I received years back when I was still editorial page editor at *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* from a reader who sounded as if he were older, and I surmised was a reader from south Georgia. He was upset by a series of editorials that he had read that were the same old far-left liberal, nearly socialist stuff advocating full equality for women, for gays, and the continuing activism for full civil rights for black and brown Americans. And in exasperation he finally said to me, now they’re just telling me that everything I learned as a child was wrong. Quite frankly, I could understand how terrified that must have made him, how jarring that must have been.

But my response to that is not to say that, yes, you’re right. The 1950’s represent the full assent of American democracy and that’s as far as we need to go. Instead, my response is that we need to continue to talk about

these things and I will continue to write about them. Respectfully, of course, tactfully, I hope, but I will continue to write about them. I will continue to write that the Republican Party should give up on those tactics that focus on voter suppression and find ways to appeal to black and brown voters instead. I'll continue to write about the prison industrial complex and the harm it has done to black men. I'll continue to write that I have never met a child who chose to be born to a poor, single mother. There may be such children, but I've never met one. And it is surely in all of our best interest to do whatever we can do to help those children to become productive and law-abiding citizens, knowing full well that no

...shining a light in a dark corner not only illuminates injustice, but also reminds us that we are all in this democracy together.

race or ethnic group holds a monopoly on bigotry or stereotyping or simple selfishness.

I will continue to write as well about influential black interests who don't wish to share power with the rising Latino stakeholders and about political leaders of every color and every stripe whose only agenda is fame and fortune, their own. I continue to

have a deep and abiding faith in the journalistic enterprise—sometimes a faith that is almost a reckless enthusiasm, sometimes a faith that is more chastened, but a faith nevertheless in the simple idea that shining a light in a dark corner not only illuminates injustice, but also reminds us that we are all in this democracy together. Thank you so much for this award. (Applause)

Mr. Jones: Theodore H. White was a consummate reporter whose passion was politics. He came to Harvard on a newsboy's scholarship and went on to a very distinguished career as a journalist and also a historian. Indeed, Teddy White, as he was universally known, changed both political journalism and politics when he wrote *The Making of the President, 1960* about the Kennedy-Nixon campaign. For the first time he raised the curtain on the warts and all sides of presidential campaigns and changed campaign coverage forever. Ever since then Teddy White's insider candor and behind-the-scenes drama has been a staple of campaign coverage.

He followed his first book with three more *Making of the President* books in 1964, 1968 and 1972, and no one has yet surpassed those smart and groundbreaking examinations of what happens and why in the maelstrom of a political campaign. It is fair to say that Teddy White's heirs are the journalists of today who try to pierce the veil of politics, to understand what is happening and to then analyze and deliver the goods to those of us who are trying to understand. Certainly we're in a definite season for that

right now. Before his death in 1986, Teddy White was one of the architects of what became the Shorenstein Center. One of the first moves of Marvin Kalb, the Center's founding director, was to raise the funds and establish the Theodore H. White Lecture on the Press and Politics in his honor. Tonight Teddy's son David and his wife and daughter are here with us. Please join me in expressing our thanks. (Applause)

This year the White Lecture is to be delivered by David Brooks, one of the nation's most admired thinkers. I really don't think of him as a pundit, and my guess is that neither does he. He is rather someone who is a conservative thinker in the classic tradition. This is how he has described his brand of conservatism: "If you define conservative by support for the Republican candidate or the belief that tax cuts are the correct answer to all problems, I guess I don't fit that agenda. But I do think that I'm part of a long-standing conservative tradition that has to do with Edmund Burke, which is be cautious, don't think you can do all things by government planning. And Alexander Hamilton, he wanted to use government to help people compete in a capitalist society." That political philosophy has been enriched by a deep fascination with all kinds of things that I think could be said to fall under the heading in general of the human condition.

For instance, David's latest book is called *The Social Animal: The Hidden Sources of Love, Character and Achievement*. It is that mixture of politics and humanity that has made David Brooks an endearingly unpredictable voice and has made his op-ed column in *The New York Times* required reading for many of us. The core of his thinking for me is my sense that I am dealing with a man who, despite being a close observer of the world's follies, remains an optimist, a determined optimist, perhaps. I can honestly say also that I have never been more amazed by an op-ed column than the one he wrote in *The New York Times* on the eve of the Republican convention last summer, headlined "The Real Romney." It was that thing that is said to close on Saturday night, a satire. But it was a dead-on satire that seemed to cut in every direction at once. It was ostensibly an up-close and personal look at Mitt Romney. And it began, "Mitt Romney was born on March 12, 1947, in Ohio, Florida, Michigan and Virginia and several other swing states." (Laughter)

"He emerged, hair first, believing in America and especially in national parks. He was given the name Mitt after the Roman god of mutual funds and launched into the world with the lofty expectation that he would someday become the Arrow Shirt man." That was the gentle part of the column. It had lots of zingers. But perhaps this was to be expected of a man who, at 22, got his big break after he did a satirical profile of William F. Buckley Jr., which said for instance, "In the afternoons he is in the habit of going into crowded rooms and making everybody else feel inferior." But

they apparently loved it and offered him a job at the *National Review*. From what I have heard the Romney campaign was not so beguiled. (Laughter)

And I have read that David Brooks has now forsworn ever trying to be funny again. I hope that is not true. What is true is that he is not a reliable ally for any political figure. He has praised Barack Obama and pilloried him. He has lampooned Mitt Romney but essentially endorsed him for president this time around. He has a restless mind and is not bound by any kind of party loyalty, but to a set of principles that he feels, clearly feels, and goes to pains to express and explain in his columns—to the fury of some conservatives and to the equal fury of some liberals.

David Brooks was born in Toronto, grew up in New York City, took a degree in history from the University of Chicago. He has written many books, appeared in the pages of publications as diverse as *The Weekly Standard* and *The New York Times*, is a regular on PBS's *NewsHour* and a commentator on NPR. He is a man who reads and observes and, most of all, thinks. I am very eager to hear what he thinks about this moment in our political narrative. It is my honor to present the Theodore H. White Lecturer for 2012, David Brooks. (Applause)

Mr. Brooks: Thank you. It's naturally an honor and a privilege and humbling to be here, as humbled as a University of Chicago guy could be at Harvard. I've spoken and visited Harvard many times and I'll try to be brief because I know you didn't come here to hear me speak, you came here to hear yourself speak. (Laughter)

So I'll try not to get in the way of that. Let me say first of all it is a thrill to be back in Massachusetts. I have a rule with my punditry. I'll be interlocular with any liberal commentator as long as they are Catholics from Boston. So I do a PBS show with Mark Shields, we do a show called "Shields and Brooks" though we thought it should be called Brooke Shields to get a little better rating. (Laughter)

Mark has been doing it for a little while. Now it's called "Shields and Brooks." Before that it was "Shields and Gigot." Before that it was "Shields and Gergen," before that it was "Shields and Coolidge." I think before that it was "Shields and Thomas Aquinas." And so I do my PBS show with him, I do an NPR show with my close friend, E.J. Dionne, whose son James is a sophomore here at Harvard. And E.J. is the only person I know whose eyes light up at the phrase "panel discussion." He is also unlike journalists in that most of us are aloof. I always tell college students if you have the sort of personality where, if the whole football crowd is doing the wave and you sit still and you don't do the wave, then you have the sort of aloof personality required to be a journalist. But E.J. is a hugger. He is more a natural politician. As you know, politicians invade your personal space, rub your face, put their hands all over you. That's E.J. He is more of a people

person. I was in Aspen, Colorado, two summers ago getting in touch with the real America, and I was walking down the street and I see Bill Clinton standing there watching a high school jazz band. I go up to him and he starts talking to me about the quality of the saxophonist in the band and because he is him and I'm me, he has to drape himself around as he's talking. And because I'm me I'm cowering away, so we moved like 30 yards over the course of the song. (Laughter)

So E.J. has that ebullient personality and was a White lecturer. Now, for every young journalist there are certain older journalists who come before who have a formative influence on your life and, of course, I've had many. One of them—I was just in Kansas City this morning, I was reminded—one of them was Calvin Trillin, was a huge influence on my life. When I got to know him I once sent him an email: "I just wanted you to know, if not for you, I probably wouldn't have gone into journalism." But Trillin, being somewhat to my left, sent me an email back and it said, "Let's keep that between ourselves." (Laughter)

But another was Theodore White. Many people started with the *Making of* books and I certainly graduated and read them, though the first book I read was his history, his memoir, *In Search of History*, and I vividly remember the day at my summer camp as a teenager I read that book about being a Boston paperboy and coming here and seeing the life of a journalist. And then the second book I read was his Watergate book, *Breach of Faith* and it was a riveting look at that scandal. And of course, being me, most people thought the journalists were the good guys. I was like, Jeb Stuart Magruder is so cool, I want to do that. So it was just a huge influence and I'm grateful to be following him. And certainly an honor to be with Cynthia tonight.

Now, I'm going to talk about the election results and I think I'll follow a bit of what Cynthia said. The big takeaway from the election was that it marks a social transition. There are certain elections that are about social and historical transitions. The 1992 election was about a transition from a Cold War-style of leadership to a post-Cold War style of leadership. From George H.W. Bush to Bill Clinton, a more domestic-oriented, a less martial, maybe less imperial style of the presidency. The 2012 election was a shift from one demographic picture of America to another.

**The big takeaway
from the election was
that it marks a social
transition.**

**The 2012 election
was a shift from one
demographic picture of
America to another.**

And the first thing to be emphasized is that this shift is not anything daring and radical and new. Almost every company and institution has gone through the shift from a white-dominated America to a globalized, diverse America. The lagging indicator was government. And the especial lagging indicator was the Republican Party. Harvard made this shift in 1952. In 1952 this institution was a white male institution. Two-thirds of

And so [Harvard], in the 1950's, went through the transition that the Republican Party still hasn't gone through. They became more diverse, increasingly as the years went by, more modern, while still remaining Harvard.

the students who applied were admitted. If your father went to Harvard and you applied there was a 90 percent chance you would get in. The median SAT score for freshmen in 1952 was 583, which is fine but not where it is today. And it was the embodiment of the WASP culture.

Now, because I am a conservative I have some affection for that culture. I came from a Jewish background in New York where our phrase was think Yiddish, act British. (Laughter)

Jews in New York, we gave ourselves names. We're a certain genera-

tion, all these English WASP names so nobody would know we were Jewish. They were names like Irving, Sidney, Milton. Didn't exactly work. The WASPs that I grew up with among the main line of Philadelphia had a libido for the ugly. So the man would wear these duck pants, the women these floral gowns so they looked like hydrangea bushes walking down the street. But they did have a character code that I find admirable. And they did have a code of reticence that I find admirable. I remember covering the George H.W. Bush campaign where he came from that code and so the campaign staff could never get him to talk about himself. They would say, you know, you're running for president, tell them how great you are. And he said no, I don't want to. And they finally beat him up and two weeks later he would finally say, okay, I'll talk about myself. He'd give one speech, and his mom, who was then still alive, would call him and say, George, you're talking about yourself again and he would clam back up.

But that was one culture. And in early 1950's James Bryant Conant and Admissions Director Henry Chauncey decided, this can't be Harvard's future. Facing the Soviet Union, looking around at America, you've got to change what Harvard is. And so they, in the 1950's, went through the transition that the Republican Party still hasn't gone through. They became more diverse, increasingly as the years went by, more modern, while still remaining Harvard. In fact, remaining more Harvard maybe than they

were. So they preserved the essence of this place by transitioning. And by 1960 the median SAT score was not in the 570's, it was 680 and that's a tremendous change.

And they created a change in the culture. We now have a new style of elite. You go to an elementary school and you see the kids from some upper middle class suburb, they've got their 80-pound backpacks on, they're trying to get into Harvard. The moms are these characters I call uber-moms who are highly successful career women, have taken time off to make sure all their kids can get into Harvard. You can usually tell the uber-moms because they actually weigh less than their own children. (Laughter)

At the moment of conception they are doing little butt exercises, in the delivery room cutting the umbilical cord they are flashing little Mandarin flash cards so it can pass the admissions committee, raising their kids to be the junior workaholics of America. So this is the new Harvard. One of the lessons of this election is that the Obama Harvard defeated the Romney Harvard. That the new thing that Obama embodies defeated the reticent, more buttoned-down culture that Mitt Romney embodies. So this was a shift.

So what specifically is this shift that we're talking about? Well, part of it is the part that Cynthia talked about, the obvious part of ethnicity. When Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, whites made up 88 percent of the electorate. This time they made up around 72 percent of the electorate. If you just take that decline and assume the Republicans are essentially a 98 percent white party, then every four years the Republicans are losing on net 1.5 percent of their base, boom, boom, boom, boom.

And so that's not good. And the rise of Latinos and especially—I think most interesting of all in this election—the rise of Asian Americans who went three to one for Barack Obama. There's a group that is more educated than the average American, richer than the average American, more entrepreneurial. The people the Republicans celebrate voted three to one for the opponents.

I spent a couple of days last week looking at Pew research data on Latino values and Asian American values and two things leap out. One, a ferocious commitment to work, greater than the average white American. And second, great affection for those parts of government that help them

One of the lessons of this election is that the Obama Harvard defeated the Romney Harvard. That the new thing that Obama embodies defeated the reticent, more buttoned-down culture that Mitt Romney embodies.

work more. So when the Republican Party says it's government versus dependency, that just doesn't ring true to a lot of those people, no matter how rich and entrepreneurial they are. And so that's one, the ethnic shift.

But that's not the only shift. The second shift is the shift in household structures. In the old Harvard, in the old America, the 1950's, we were essentially a culture oriented around the two-parent family. Even in 1970, when you asked people, are people who don't want to have two-parent families, are people who don't want to have children, are they neurotic or psychotic? Seventy or eighty percent of Americans would say, yes, those people are strange. We were tremendously oriented around the two-parent family. Now, in 1980, nine percent of Americans lived alone. Today 28 percent of Americans lived alone. In 1990, 65 percent of Americans said children were required for a successful marriage. Now, 41 percent say that. Now there are more houses in America with dogs than there are with kids. So we have become domestically a much more diverse set of family structures.

In 1990, 65 percent of Americans said children were required for a successful marriage. Now, 41 percent say that.

And in this, by the way, we are the lagging indicator in the world. In Scandinavia 45 percent of the people live alone. In Singapore marriage rates and fertility rates have plummeted. In Brazil the fertility rate has gone from about 4.1 per woman to 1.7 per woman. So we are behind the curve in the diversity of family structure. And this translates into

political alliances. The Republican Party, Mitt Romney easily won among married people, including married women. Among single people Obama won. He crushed Romney, 62-35. So the second big shift after ethnicity is the shift in family culture.

The third big shift is what you might call the end of the rising tide. There had been a belief that a rising tide would lift all boats. And it was sufficient to campaign on the notion, I will improve the business climate and that improvement in the business climate will translate down to everybody else. That the economy is one thing basically. I think a lot of Americans no longer believe that and for good reason. The first reason that is no longer true is they just look at productivity rates and wage group. And these two are no longer linked. And so that's broken.

The second thing they do is they look at the inequality of social capital. And here I'm relying on work by Robert Putnam and others. When you look at people who are in situations where it's hard to gather social capital, no matter how the economy is doing they have trouble achieving social mobility. And so in 1964 high school educated families and college

educated families had essentially the same demographics, the same style of divorce rates, the same child rearing rates. Now there is a total discontinuity between these two groups. People with college degrees have about a third of the divorce rates, a third of the obesity rates, a third of the smoking rates. Putnam's work shows that over the last 20 or 30 years college educated people have devoted about \$6,000 per year per kid to each child's extra-curricular activities, to travel teams, to SAT prep, to oboe practice.

High school educated people don't have that kind of money. As a result, college educated kids do many more extra-curriculars. They are just much better prepared. So if you come from a family making \$96,000 a year your odds of getting through college are one in two. If you come from a family making \$36,000 your odds are one in 17. So basically the gap, it's not one economy anymore. So we're at the end of the rising tide era.

These are the three big transitions, Republicans have not done well in these transitions. I don't blame Mitt Romney. I think the party was a drag on him more than he was a drag on the party. I think he ran a pretty decent campaign. He doesn't have the natural social skills. If you ran into Mitt Romney in Aspen, Colorado, he wouldn't drape himself over you. But he learned to fake being a good politician, as so much else. (Laughter)

I remember covering him in New Hampshire during the primary and he was out campaigning with his six perfect sons, Bip, Chip, Rip, Skip and Lick and Dip. (Laughter)

And he goes into a diner and he introduces himself to each family at the diner and he asks them what village in New Hampshire are you from. And then he described the home he owned in their village. (Laughter)

And he goes around, the whole thing, and he's met like 30 people and he's memorized their names so when he goes out he first names them all. That's a level of political skill. People thought he was divorced from America. And he has a house with an elevator in the garage and I defended him from that. I said he has a lot of other houses with no elevators in the garages. (Laughter)

No, I thought he was a fine candidate. He was a good debater, better than most, and I thought a decent speaker by the end. The problem was not him, the problem was the party. And you can judge that by looking at the senatorial candidates versus him, even in places like Texas where the senator did worse than he did. So the party of conservatism, its job is to conserve. And its job is to defend the frontier ethos, a moral vocabulary that's been used to talking and in which has made the country great. And

I don't blame Mitt Romney. I think the party was a drag on him more than he was a drag on the party.

that is the virtue of the conservative party. But it does mean when you have moments of historical transition like the one we're now in, you're going to get caught on the wrong side of a lot of trends. And I think the Republicans got caught on the wrong side of these trends which I've described.

And now it's interesting, there is a debate within the party about what to do. First, do nothing, get a better candidate. Second, say the same stuff in Spanish. (Laughter)

Third, just fix immigration policy and fourth, which is the side of truth and justice, which is my side, which is it's about economic values. It's a terrible mistake, as I said, to divide everything between government activism and dependency, to link those two things because a lot of government programs don't lead to dependency, not Pell grants and not early childhood education. It's a big mistake to make big government the opposite of small government, and that is the core debate. Because for a lot of people some

It's a big mistake to make big government the opposite of small government, and that is the core debate.

parts of government are good, some are not. And if you're talking about big government and small government to a family that's trying to get their kid through community college, they think, what are you talking about?

So to me it's about economic values. It's about the Republican Party being the party of creative destruction, of

social mobility, of anything that will get people to work harder and make Democrats the party of economic security and equality. That's a normal debate to have. But that would involve changing our attitudes towards government. And we'll see if they can do that. I think it will take a couple of more defeats. The Democrats have obviously profited from being on the right side of these achievements. But I have to say they now face the consequences of these demographic shifts. First, the area of family diversity is an area of a lot of social chaos, especially for those where family formation is not happening and the breakdown of social capital, it goes with the destruction of family structures. What's the Democratic response to that? I think there is one but it hasn't really been articulated.

Second, the aging of society and the costs of debt. If you want to sustain the welfare state you really have to reform Medicare. What's the Democratic response to that? Third, economic stagnation caused by the gradual sclerosis of stable institutions. We have a tax code that is about 70,000 pages. We have a regulatory code that's 168,000 pages. As a result, partly of these problems and our human capital problems, the normal growth rate for the past 60 years was 3.3 percent a year. The projected growth rate for

the next 30 years, even after we get out of the recession, will be 2.3 percent. That difference between 3.3 and 2.3 is actually gigantic. It's 5,000,000 jobs over the next 20 years.

So how do you boost that up? The Democratic Party has become too addicted to cyclical stimulus and hasn't thought enough about structural change to raise the normal growth rate. Now, it's been funny over these years to watch President Obama. I was and remain a personal great admirer of him. I started with the Messiah era, when he would be carried into rooms by little cherubs and he would come down, what sort of wine would you like me to turn your water into? That sort of thing. (Laughter)

And he had, in those days, the wind at his back. And I loved covering him because the people around Obama felt so comfortable and so happy with themselves and the world. And so I would criticize him. Usually when you criticize a president or a candidate, a staffer will call you the next day and say, you're a complete and total asshole. With the Obama people they would call and say, David, we really like you, we respect your work, it's so sad you're a complete and total asshole. (Laughter)

But it would make you feel better about it. So they had that wind at their backs. And he had an ease and comfort about him and his self-confidence. But it's been interesting to watch him over the years, become more aggrieved with Washington, more hardened and more sour about what has to be done, more insular in who he trusts in the White House. Every White House I've covered has a smaller circle of trust than the one before and this has certainly continued the trend. And I think he's also replaced the big personalities

in the beginning of the first term with more loyal but less creative personalities. That each person with a principle personality left, like Larry Summers, was replaced by somebody with a staffer personality.

So it's become a more hardened group. And each successive interview you see him getting hardened. Not Machiavellian, but tougher and more bloody minded. And just Wednesday he had an off-the-record session with a couple of those columnists and that has certainly continued post victory. There's a sense there is a lot of nonsense going on in Washington and I'm going to take care of it. That would be the underlying tone. And so his attitude to the fiscal cliff is what it's been reported, he's raising what they ask for Republicans.

And frankly, in the short term, I have some doubts about his strategy about the fiscal cliff. In my view if you want to get a deal you have to give

Every White House I've covered has a smaller circle of trust than the one before and this has certainly continued the trend.

your opponents a chance to get to yes. You have to give them an avenue that does not require complete capitulation and humiliation. And I'm sure he's giving them that path. But I assume he'll win this fight over taxes. All the structures and all the public opinion polls are in his direction. My big concern is do you want to just get to the end of your term with the deficit at about three percent? Or do you want to fundamentally change the dynamics that are causing us to have a long-term debt problem? The fundamental structures. To me, the only way you can deal with the fundamentals is by having a deal, by doing it, both parties together, and walking off the cliff together.

If you're going to be so confrontational early in the term, you're never going to get that deal. You will solve the immediate fiscal cliff problem; you will not change the fundamental structures because you won't have laid the bipartisan predicate for that. And so that's what disturbs me about the strategy. Nonetheless, I think he's right on the merits, we should raise taxes on the top two percent. It won't do any economic harm at all. But I do think he has been changed by circumstances and having been bloodied, has become more bloody minded in a way that's probably not in our long-term interest.

Nonetheless, we go forward. A lot of work for people at Harvard to do. A lot of work for academics to do to solve these fundamental new circumstances by the shift. How do you create a national university amidst ethnic diversity? How do you create stable societies with new family structures? How do you restore the rising tide of social mobility? How do you create aging societies that are affordable? How do you create morally upright people in an age of intense individualism and personal freedom? These are tremendous intellectual challenges for anybody in an institute. So I've decided to spend a lot more time in academia. And I decided last year that I was going to go to the place most likely to provide the intellectual insights to yield the future. And so starting in January I'm teaching at Yale University. Thank you. Boola Boola. (Applause)

Was that supposed to be funny? (Laughter)

I think the game is this weekend, right?

Mr. Jones: David is going to answer questions.

Auden Laurence: Good evening. I'm a freshman at the college and I would like to ask you the following question on behalf of the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum Committee. Stemming from the writing you have done about qualities people had decades ago and also some of what you alluded to in your speech—strength, resilience, decision-making capabilities—what do you believe needs to happen in our world, whether it be in the education system or something else, that will foster these qualities as we look to the future?

Mr. Brooks: Those virtues you described? I have an answer to that because I spend a lot of time with college students looking into your souls and I'm really good at knowing what's in there. (Laughter)

I guess I would say one thing. First, I'm going to focus on the training of the young. When you take a look at the generation under 35, first, it's a generation of intense social repair. So all the social indicators that went south in the '60's are now heading in the right direction, mostly driven by demographics of people under 35. Crime is down by 70 percent, divorce is down significantly, teenage pregnancy is down by a third, abortion rates are down by a third, domestic violence is down 50 percent, all sorts of social indicators heading in the right direction because of young people. I think you're all going to have the biggest mid-life crisis in human history in about 10 years, but, until then. (Laughter)

Here is the one thing that I think is the essential trait for leadership that is lacking in basically a lot of the generations, including my own. And that's a sense, an acute awareness of personal weakness and how to combat against it. Just two quick statistics. In 1950, and this is my nostalgia for the old order, in 1950 the Gallup organization asked high school seniors, are you a very important person? And in 1950, 12 percent said yes. They asked the same question in 2005 and it was 80 percent who said yes. There is something called the narcissism test where psychologists give students a bunch of statements and they say, does this apply to you? And they're statements like, I like to be the center of attention, I find it easy to manipulate people, somebody should write a biography about me, things like that. And the median score in the narcissism test has risen by 30 percent over the last 20 years.

And so I would say that people, frankly, in the 1950's and none of us would ever want to go back there, just to make that clear, but were raised with a sense of character of weakness and the strategies you need to develop that. I'll just tell one quick story. Dwight Eisenhower, when he was eight he wanted to go out trick or treating. His mom wouldn't let him because he was too young, so he threw a temper tantrum, punched the tree in his front yard and bloodied all of his knuckles because he was in a temper tantrum. Mom sent him up to his room, made him cry for an hour, went up to see him and as she was binding his wounds, she quoted a verse, which was,

Here is the one thing that I think is the essential trait for leadership that is lacking in basically a lot of the generations, including my own. And that's a sense, an acute awareness of personal weakness and how to combat against it.

“He that conquereth his own soul is greater than he who taketh a city.” And Eisenhower said that was the most important conversation in his life because it taught him that he was weak and he needed to combat his sinfulness basically.

And I would say people like him and George Marshall and Francis Perkins, who were raised with that ethos, had an advantage in leadership skills. So that’s my nostalgia for the 1950’s.

Danny Hatam: Hi. I’m a second year grad student here at the Kennedy School. And I’m a Burkean conservative. And my question is about the social order inversion that you talked about, that Obama and the new social order defeated the Republican Romney version of the old order. But when you were speaking about George H.W. Bush, those Yankee qualities, the reticence, humility, introversion, caution, aren’t these exactly the kind of fundamentally conservative qualities that America just chose in Barack Obama?

Mr. Brooks: There is a strong Burkean case for Obama based on his sense of prudence. I do think he’s a very cautious person. Where I think he’s not a Burkean is that he has, I think, a strong faith in central planning. So he has a strong faith, say that if you get the smartest people in a room, then they can design a system that will solve problems. So for example, the American Affordable Care Act has this board to control the cost of Medicare, 17 people sitting in Washington to control the Medicare system. I don’t think Burke would think they know enough about reality to control it from Washington. The Dodd-Frank Finance Reform Bill, instead of having a dumb simple rule, like break up the banks, which to me would reflect a measure of epistemological modesty, we don’t know, we’re just going to do something dumb and simple, they have a very complicated rule that puts a lot of power in the knowledge, or a lot of faith in the knowledge of federal regulators, which I think is a faith unjustified. So in some ways he is a Burkean and he is certainly a Niebuhrian in foreign policy, but his faith in central planning separates him from that and makes him more technocratic, I would say.

David Marshall: I’m a visiting Fellow at the law school here. Where is the intellectual address now for the conservative movement in this country, because in this campaign, *The Weekly Standard*, Fox News, *The National Review*, all seem to have lost the plot utterly. Where is intellectual heart, where does the debate take place over the next few years?

Mr. Brooks: It’s walking down the hallway in Fox News. It’s looking for the opinion desk. (Laughter)

I guess first I don’t agree about those magazines. I do think there is a moment—it takes a bunch of elections in a row to defeat the tribal mentality. When I worked for Buckley, we were conservatives, we were not

Republicans. There was a sharp distinction. Republicans were the opportunists who would sell you out. And conservatism had its strength because it grew up out of power. And so people had neckties, Adam Smith necktie, Edmund Burke necktie. Liberalism, on the other hand, in those days grew up in power with the New Deal. And so liberals were less aware of their philosophic founders, but probably more programmatically astute. But over the years conservatism has been absorbed by the Republican Party in a tribal and conscious sense if not in a practical sense or distinct sense.

So to me you've got to look at people outside. And I would say the promising centers of conservatism are some of the young people, people under 40 who were never around for the Reagan Revolution and don't have a personal devotion to the mythology of what they think Reagan was. And so those are some people like my colleague, Ross Douthat, who went here. He wrote a book with a former colleague, Reihan Salam, which is more about a working class conservatism. And I think that's one very vibrant branch. I would read in a magazine called *National Affairs*, which is I think one of the smartest magazines, it's sort of a follower on to the public interest.

And the second, where I think there's a lot of intellectual creativity is in the bloggers surrounding a magazine called *The American Conservative*. There are a bunch of young people there who are more communitarian, a little more paleocon. And they speak to a conservatism which is not my style, but which is much more isolationism, an almost Buchananated foreign affairs, but I just find them very interesting and more Russell Kirkian-style conservatism.

And I have to say, if I were a complete opportunist starting a political party right now, I would take a younger version of Pat Buchanan and a younger version of Ralph Nader and merge them together. And I think you would really have something. It wouldn't be what I would want, but there would be a lot of energy for that. (Laughter)

Tom Snyder: I'm a senior at the college right now. I'm from Syracuse, New York. The 1950's were a really great time for Syracuse as they were for a lot of Rust Belt cities. What I'm interested in is what would modern day conservatism's economic policies, specifically free markets, do to bring

When I worked for Buckley, we were conservatives, we were not Republicans. There was a sharp distinction...But over the years conservatism has been absorbed by the Republican Party in a tribal and conscious sense if not in a practical sense or distinct sense.

back economic growth and economic stability to a place like Syracuse or Cleveland or Detroit, and if you could just elaborate on what you think it could do?

Mr. Brooks: I was in Erie, Pennsylvania, two days ago, which is sort of close there. It's a city that's hurting. And so it's funny, there's been a lot of 1950's nostalgia. Conservatives were nostalgic for the social structure of the 1950's. Liberals are nostalgic for the economic structures of the 1950's. And of course neither are coming back. And so my answer for places like Syracuse or Erie, I don't know if it qualifies as conservative, but I do think it's right. And it follows on the book that was written here called *The Race Between Education and Technology*. And it basically says you've got to start with human capital policies.

And to me, you have to start with stable families for kids in the first three or five years of life. I think building human capital is like nutrition, you start and you do a bit every day. And you would start with prenatal

...you have to start with stable families for kids in the first three or five years of life. I think building human capital is like nutrition, you start and you do a bit every day.

care, it would start with nurse-family visits for single moms, it would start with early childhood education, it would go up to charter schools, mentorship programs, Boys and Girls Clubs. My basic view is we do not know what causes poverty. And when there is a situation so complex you don't know what causes it you have to flood the zone and try everything at once, sort of Harlem Children's Zone type models. And so that's not an easy answer, because say you really do succeed with these kids,

it still takes 30 years until they are workers. So I don't know an answer for the 55-year-old guy who is laid off, but I do think that's the answer, sort of intense human capital policies at the bottom edge of the age scale.

Alex Remington: I'm a second year masters in public policy candidate. Thank you very much for coming. I wanted to ask about a couple of your recent columns. One, right before the election you wrote that you believe that Mitt Romney would be more able to effectively govern as a compromiser in the White House, would be more effectively able to reach across the aisle than Barack Obama, both because of the Democratic and Republican Parties that sit in the caucuses and also their personal styles. And then more recently you wrote a piece called "The Party of Work" in which you stated that the Republican Party needed to seriously engage in research to determine what sort of policies would foster that kind of human capital development you were talking about. Obviously that kind of policy devel-

opment takes time. If you were a strategist advising the sitting Republican caucus in the House and the Senate, in the next two to four years, working with this president again, still, what would you say to them?

Mr. Brooks: I guess the first thing is, and this was my comment about all the Super PACs, if I were sitting with a bunch of Republican billionaires, my message would be, spend less on marketing, more on product development. They spend hundreds of billions of dollars on ads and making the rebel bounce. Amy Walter probably knows this better than I, but I think I read this, that if you took all the ads that ran in Ohio in the last month and tried to watch them back to back it would take you 80 days, or something like that. So all that money, do we really think that was money well spent? So spend money on finding out what it takes for a kid in Syracuse or Akron to rise. And I'm a Hamiltonian. Hamilton, when he was 12 his mom died in the bed next to him. His father had run away. He was adopted by his uncle who died. He was adopted by his grandparents who died. So by 14 he had nothing. By 25 he was George Washington's Chief of Staff, war hero. By 35 he had helped write *The Federalist Papers*, a successful lawyer. By 45 or so he had retired as the Treasury Secretary.

It's a story of awesome social mobility. And that is the kind of system he helped design, through some industrial policy and a bunch of other policies to give poor boys and girls like him the chance to succeed. That tradition was taken up by the Whig Party. It was taken up by Abraham Lincoln in the early Republican Party. Seems to me

that tradition, giving people the tools to compete in a capitalist economy, is the missing tradition in American life. And you can't just be a party that's for freedom, you have to be for this mobility and marrying those two traditions is the way you do it. Republicans walked away from this tradition. And so I would tell them to study what Lincoln did, what Hamilton did, and then study what it takes today to rise and be mobile. That would be it.

Mark Diaz Truman: Hi. Thank you again for coming and speaking. I'm a second year public policy student here at the Kennedy School. I'm an American Latino. I'm from New Mexico and not honestly well served by either party. And one of my frustrations has been watching the Democrats and a one-party system not really deliver on some of the promises that they've made. Now, while my broader political allegiance tilts that way, I have a strong interest in seeing the Republican Party embrace this issue. What can Latinos do to get the Republican Party to be an opposition party on Latino issues?

Seems to me that tradition, giving people the tools to compete in a capitalist economy, is the missing tradition in American life.

Mr. Brooks: Well, you can infiltrate the party. But if you don't believe in its basic principles, well, I'm just saying what can people outside the party do? Well, inside the party, behave better, be nice, talk to them. I do think so much of our problems in the Republican Party and the Democratic Party are about epistemic closure, this phrase that has now dominated. And if you want an example of people who are in information cocoons, you know, Karl Rove sending somebody down the hallway, that's a perfect example. And just so liberals don't feel good, I want to recite some research that Jonathan Haidt puts in his book, *The Righteous Mind*, they took a bunch of conservatives and liberals and gave them questionnaires on a series of policy issues. And they said, answer these as you would like, to reflect your own views on taxes, abortion. And then they said to conservatives, answer it the way a liberal would answer it. And then they said to liberals, answer it the way a conservative would answer it. And conservatives were very good at predicting the mean liberal answer. Liberals are terrible at predicting the conservative answer. Liberals know very little about conservatives.

So the information closure goes both ways. But I do think it's one thing to talk about big government in the abstract and to talk about dependency in the abstract. And it's another thing to have face-to-face names and personal contact with people going through certain experiences. And so I do think it's as simple as making sure the next Mitt Romney spends a lot of time in your neighborhood or some other neighborhood. I do believe in that basic sensitivity. And by the way, I often ask people in government, especially academics, what did you learn being in government that you didn't know beforehand? And one of the answers I got from a recent president was there's a lot of passive/aggressive behavior in government that I didn't appreciate. Now that I'm president, I give an order, nothing happens.

But one of the answers I got was that I used to think government was like 75 percent policy making, and 25 percent personalities and relationships. Now I realize it's 98 percent personalities and relationships. It's about the intimate bonds. And if there are no intimate bonds with certain demographic groups there is going to be no ability to express that. And by the way, that is one of my problems with President Obama, who doesn't have the intimate bonds, let alone with Republicans, even with Democrats on Capitol Hill, but I know he does not think he needs to develop more intimate bonds. I just think that's a mistake.

From the Floor: Hi. My name is John. I'm a sophomore at the college. Thank you so much for your speech. Where do you think the Tea Party stands, and what do you think will happen to them and what do you think should happen with regards to the relationship between the Republican Party and the Tea Party?

Mr. Brooks: Well, I guess I have to say I at first thought they were a mixed but positive blessing for the Republican Party, simply because they brought so much energy and 2010 happened, but now I think it's very hard to argue they're a positive blessing. The Republicans would have at least, I think, four more Senate seats if not for their influence. I had lunch with the fourth most conservative senator in the Republican Party a couple of months ago. And he said, every day I think about being primaried. I think that somebody is going to run against me from the right. And if this guy, who is the fourth most conservative person in the Senate is afraid of being primaried, everybody's afraid of it. And watch Mitch McConnell for the next two years.

I do think they have a negative influence, first on a political level, and second, on the economic level by turning economic issues into culture war issues. They've imported the culture war style of arguing into economic discussions, which should be about dollars and numbers. And so I do think that's just psychologically harmful for the party. And so what do you do with a recalcitrant group that doesn't fundamentally believe in compromise? Well, the first thing you can do is exorcise them from the party, which is what frankly Bill Buckley did to the John Birch Society. But I think that, A, they're too big; and, B, they're not as marginal as the John Birch Society was. So you get them to change their mind without ever admitting they are changing their minds.

I was really struck by the fact that as Mitt Romney moved to the center there wasn't a peep from the Tea Party. They are fundamentally driven like most people in America today by partisanship, not by philosophy. And so if they see a Republican winning they'll be fine. But you just can't let them control the message.

Theresa Turan: Our political culture has become really coarse because of the role of money in it, especially the Supreme Court decision, *Citizens United*. I've been door-knocking since I was 16, I'm now 48. I had so many doors slammed on me in '10 that it really sent me reading a lot about that decision. I would like you to comment on its role and where we're headed.

Mr. Brooks: First, let me say, I think Steve Hess is here who said something I agree with, this is the worst campaign I've ever covered. It was just the most unpleasant, the least substantive. Romney was all over the place, Obama was almost entirely negative, the mood was bad. It was just rotten. I can understand why people are slamming doors. It was just the worst.

I do think [the Tea Party has] a negative influence, first on political level, and second, on the economic level by turning economic issues into culture war issues.

Second, as for the role of money, I think that is down the list in the causes. First, I have a somewhat heterodoxical and maybe wrong view of the role of money. I don't think money is very important in changing people's votes. I've seen various studies where they line up the amount of dollars spent and the margin of victory over the historic average for a district and there is no straight line relating money to results. It's just a scattering of dots with no pattern. So as I said, once you get up to a certain threshold of spending, all the money spent above that is just making the rebel bounce. I do not think money matters much in a presidential race, though it matters a little more down the ballot.

Second, I nonetheless think money is corrupting because politicians think it matters. And therefore they spend all their money, A, chasing the dollars; and, B, they just don't want pain. If they're in the House race and they want to reform taxes and they want to get rid of some loophole for an oil deduction and they know it's going to cause somebody to dump \$5,000,000 into their district against them, they're not going to do it. And I've had interviews with the Kochs and their deal is very simple. We will

I do not think money matters much in a presidential race, though it matters a little more down the ballot.

give you X millions of dollars to win, but if you vote against us, we will give X millions of dollars for somebody to run against you. It will be a one-to-one spend. So you always have to vote for us, you can never compromise with the other side.

And so that's the deal, that's a contract. And so that discourages compromise, it discourages offending those interests. So it has an effect on policy making. I don't think it has a big effect on elections, especially at the presidential level.

Felicity Spector: I'm a journalist for Britain's Channel 4 News. Basically right after the election there was a lot of comment about how this was now the dawn of a new liberal America. There were all these new women elected to the Hill, there were ballot initiatives supporting gay marriage, there are more lesbian and gay people in Congress. Do you think that's enough to overcome the deep partisanship, which has been building up for the last four years? President Obama came in in 2008 wanting to change Washington. He now wants to change Washington. Does Washington need to want to change itself and can you see that happening?

Mr. Brooks: Well, first, I'm not sure he wants to change Washington anymore. He just wants to fight by the old rules, but win this time. But I would say I think it's in the Constitution that each party after each election has to over-read its mandate. It's become a truism in Democratic circles to

say I don't believe in mandates. Nonetheless, we should get everything we want. And so I think they're doing a little of over-reading. It's worth mentioning that although this was a clear win for the Democrats, most congressional districts and probably most precincts were slightly more conservative in their voting patterns than they were four years ago.

This was not a liberal tide. This was an anti-Republican tide. I hope there are real political scientists here, but I have a bogus political science theory, which I admit is bogus, but it explains things to me. And it's based on a real political scientist by a guy named Samuel Lubell, who had a theory, we had a sun party and a moon party. The sun party is the natural majority party at that time and the moon party basks in its reflective glory, that's the minority party. And so the Democrats used to be the sun party after the New Deal, the Republicans were the sun party after the Reagan Revolution. And then in the '90's there were basically two—they were tied. My view right now is that we have two moon parties. We have two minority parties. And voters vote against whichever party they hate most at that moment. But it doesn't mean they're really affixed to the party they happen to elect in. And if you disagree with me, I can show you a lot of Republicans who were really happy after 2010. And so I think these mandates are extremely tentative. And so I do not think we've entered a liberal America. If you do the raw opinion poll I think probably 40 percent of Americans call themselves conservative, 20 percent call themselves liberal and 35 are in the middle there. That's a historic constant almost.

Mr. Jones: David Brooks, thank you so much.

Mr. Brooks: Thank you. (Applause)

Mr. Brooks: I just want to say one quick thing. I am teaching at Yale. I did go to Chicago. They're much better schools than Harvard. (Laughter)

But as I look around this room I see a lot of people who have taught me a lot, Howard Gardner, Nick Burns. I'm just appreciative of the intellectual power of this place. So I'm honored to have people I see in the audience here and I thank you.

Mr. Jones: Before we adjourn, David Brooks and Cynthia Tucker, as well as John Dickerson, Jennifer Hochschild and Amy Walter will be at the Charles Hotel, Kennedy Room, which is on the ground floor, tomorrow morning at 9:00 for a discussion about David Brooks' lecture. We hope that many of you will come. You are all welcome. Again, thank you all. Thank you, David.

This was not a liberal tide. This was an anti-Republican tide.

Theodore H. White Seminar on Press and Politics November 16, 2012

Mr. Jones: Good morning. We're very glad to have you with us. This morning we are going to take some time to have a conversation about what we heard last night. We don't have any set agenda except for the opportunity, initially anyway, for our group of panelists to respond to what they heard and for David to respond to them. We'll have a conversation among ourselves and then we will open it up to the audience.

Let me briefly introduce our panel. Cynthia Tucker is the Nyhan Prize winner. You saw her and heard her last night as well. Next to her is John Dickerson. He is the chief political correspondent for *Slate* magazine and political director of CBS News. Before that he covered politics for *Time* for 12 years, the last four as the White House correspondent. Next to him is our colleague here at Harvard, Jennifer Hochschild. She is the Henry LaBarre Jayne Professor of Government, Professor of African and African American Studies, and is also on the faculty of the Harvard Kennedy School. Her most recent book in which she was the co-author of was *Creating a New Racial Order: How Immigration, Multiracialism, Genomics, and the Young Can Remake Race in America*. And at the end, Amy Walter, political director of ABC News, who oversees all the political coverage on ABCNews.com, including The Note which some of you who are political junkies know is the way a lot of people start their day. She also guides the planning and editorial content of all the political news and provides on-air analysis on *World News with Diane Sawyer*.

I'm going to take the prerogative of the moderator to ask the first question. David, I found myself this morning trying to reconcile several things that you said last night. One was the importance of very early childhood education and the dearth of it. The other was the change in behavior that you noted in the younger generation in terms of things like drug use and sex. And the third was the narcissism that you also found. How do all these things fit together in your mind? Are they causal? Do they have very little to do with each other? How do you see it and especially and specifically what do you think should be done at those very early stages of a child's life that would have a profound effect?

Mr. Brooks: Well, the last question is the easiest. It's complicated. First, on the last question, what should be done, I mentioned briefly and I'm sure people know the marshmallow experiment, where it's about impulse

control at age four being incredibly predictive. And that just means growing up in a home where actions lead to consequences and children develop strategies to control their impulses.

Maybe a little less well known, though pretty prominent in the field is this thing called attachment. They can measure at 18 months how a child attaches, mostly to mom, but to a caregiver. And scientists in the University of Minnesota can look at 18 months, how they attach to mom and predict with 70 or 80 percent accuracy who is going to graduate from high school.

...it's hard to keep up if you haven't lived this hyper-pressurized, freakish sort of childhood that most of us ridicule but few of us actually renounce.

Because basically if you have a model in your head about how to build relationships, you're going to know how to go into a classroom and relate to teacher and relate to peers.

So those are some examples of what works. A book I highly recommend for anybody who hasn't read it is called *Unequal Childhoods* by Annette Lareau.

Her argument is that we have two different child rearing styles in this country. There is the style which she calls "concerted cultivation," which is basically the style that gets you into Harvard. And it's the parents driving the kids everywhere, highly scheduled, highly pressured. And the other style, which she says is more working-class style, the attitude is adulthood is hard, let the kids enjoy their childhood. And it's much more low pressure.

And her argument is that style is much more normal and the kids are happier and they don't whine. But it doesn't prepare them for the rigors of the meritocracy. And the paradox is that when the kids are 12, the cultivated kids seem older than the kids who have been left to have normal childhoods. But by the time they are 22, the kids from the working-class backgrounds have been through so many traumas that they seem older than the kids who graduated from college. And so there are pluses and minuses, but basically it's hard to keep up if you haven't lived this hyper-pressurized, freakish sort of childhood that most of us ridicule but few of us actually renounce.

So the thing to do is to get people involved in structured relationships with a lot of verbal interaction, with Boys and Girls Clubs, mentors, somehow you can enshroud them in stable relationships.

As for the state of the young, it's incredibly complicated. One, there is this period of social repair, which I think is built around, in some cases, this code of meritocracy, I have to be responsible if I'm going to get into college. But it's always worth reminding—I didn't do this enough last

night—whenever you talk about a social trend, you’re really talking often about two Americas. And so the college educated social trend is one thing, the less educated social trends are very different.

And then the final thing, so you can both have incredible social repair on the upside, which we have. College grads are basically living in 1950’s demographics, very low divorce rates. And then people down the income and education scale are living much, much different sorts of lives. My basic take on college students is that they are incredibly community oriented. Steve Trachtenberg of G.W. University says of his students and community service: I don’t know where these kids find lepers, but they find them and they read to them. (Laughter)

And so they are very community oriented. They’re very well intentioned, very hard working, astoundingly hard working, but they have not been given a vocabulary to talk about moral issues. And so one of the sociologists I like is a guy named Christian Smith at Notre Dame. He studied college students around the country and asked them, for example, name your last moral dilemma. And he found that 75 percent of them could not name a moral dilemma. And so they would say, well, I pulled into a parking space but I didn’t have enough quarters. And he would say, well, that’s a problem, it’s not really a moral dilemma.

And so they wanted to do what was right but they just didn’t have the vocabulary. And so what they would fall back on is what Alasdair MacIntyre called the motivism, which is whatever feels right for me is moral and if it doesn’t feel right for you, then it’s not moral for you. And it’s pretty hard

to have an argument if that’s your basis. And so this is a quick ramble through youth America of different strands. I’m not sure what it adds up to, but we’re not in moral decline, but we’re not living up to potential.

Mr. Jones: Let us invite these folks in. Cynthia, why don’t you begin. What did you hear last night and what are your thoughts?

Ms. Tucker: Well, I wanted to ask a related question about your observation of different household structures and how much that has changed, that that is also a big change in America. I’ve read your columns for a lot of years, David, and you have lamented in many columns the loss of the traditional family structure. Do you still believe that society should have tried to do more to keep that traditional structure, or are you more accommodated to the idea that it is gone, probably forever? And if it is gone forever,

[College grads are] very well intentioned, very hard working, astoundingly hard working, but they have not been given a vocabulary to talk about moral issues.

how does society accommodate itself to different family structures and the needs that they will bring? You've talked about early childhood education. Are there other deficiencies that you think we'll see because of the decline? And are there any advantages?

Mr. Brooks: I'm going to answer that, but I want you to give your answer too because I'm very curious to hear it. So my basic attitude is—I wrote a column on this this morning, which I wrote several drafts because I changed my mind in the middle. (Laughter)

It was about the decline of family structures around the world, and my first attitude is, this is terrible, holy crap, this is terrible. Because if we go into Japanese or German style fertility rates or Italian or Spanish style, we're just in trouble as a country. And so I'm very worried about falling fertility rates, which is happening all around the world and in places like Russia leading to just demographic catastrophes. So just one statistic, in 2050, I think, the average Chinese person will be 53, the average Japanese person about 52. I think the average American though will be about 40. So that's a good thing and we've got to preserve the fertility rates.

**...the marriage problem
is a male problem, that
there aren't enough guys
who are worth marrying.**

Nonetheless it's just inevitably true that the number of people living in two-parent households with kids is just dropping and it's going to drop,

just on the nature of the economy, the nature of our social structure, and basically a lot of people were coerced into living in those households and they would have been better off in the '50's if they had a chance to move out. So I think we should bias our domestic policy toward fertility and toward two-parent households and I would be much more aggressive about it with a bigger child tax credit, much more generous parental leave options when kids are young and with all sorts of help for young moms. And one thing I actually believe in, which is not a conservative belief at all, is increasing EITC and wage subsidies for young men to make them marriageable. My basic attitude, the marriage problem is a male problem, that there aren't enough guys who are worth marrying. (Laughter)

Mr. Dickerson: And yet they think very highly of themselves. (Laughter)

Ms. Hochschild: The EITC was originally Republican.

Mr. Brooks: That's true. But these days, increasing the EITC is not something you hear from Republicans too much. But at the same time you've got to acknowledge that we're not going back there and we're going to have large numbers of people who are not living in two-parent households. And so you've got to be open to what the writer, Jessica Gavora,

called the “hubby state,” meaning that we had this nanny state idea, but inevitably people who are single are going to ask the government to do things that formerly were done by extended families. So you’ve just got to be open to that. Okay, now you.

Ms. Tucker: Well, I’m a good liberal, David, unlike you. But my views about the traditional family structure are at least as confused as yours and maybe more so. I suppose I need to start this with a personal story because it highlights my confusion. I am a single mother via adoption. In my dotage, as my friends were sending their children off to college, I decided to adopt a newborn, which is either brave or foolhardy or reckless or some combination of those things. So I have the view that what we often discuss, particularly conservatives often discuss, as the pathologies that flow from single-parent households are not about one parent, they are about poverty. Because the one advantage that I have, having waited so long to become a parent, is that I have some resources. So I have a full-time live-in nanny who is keeping my child even now, while I’m here. So a lot of the difficulties that single mothers struggle with, who are in another income stratum, I don’t struggle with and, therefore, my child doesn’t struggle with. So that is my intellectual view. And I get my back up whenever I hear someone speak loosely and disparagingly of single mothers.

My emotional view could be told as something else because I grew up in the traditional two-parent home, and I wish that my child had a father. Here’s the interesting thing about the observations that David has made about the difference in income levels. In upper middle class America, middle class and upper middle class, most people are married. So my child goes to a Montessori School. I mingle at parent functions with all these people who are young enough to be mine. (Laughter)

But they are all married. They’re all married. And so my little girl’s friends all have fathers. And at least once a month she says the thing that absolutely breaks my heart. Mommy, where’s my daddy? Why don’t I have a daddy? Can you get me a daddy? And when she was two and we went to CVS for everything, she said, can you get me a daddy from CVS? (Laughter)

And so my intellectual views are one thing, but my emotional views about this are something else. Since David made me answer a question.

Mr. Jones: John.

...what we often discuss, particularly conservatives often discuss, as the pathologies that flow from single-parent households are not about one parent, they are about poverty.

Mr. Dickerson: Well, I'm going to ruin this and talk about politics.
(Laughter)

Because David came into this conversation about new family structures through the results of the political campaign. And when I hear the term "new family structures," I imagine us—and you will be there—in Iowa in 2015 and everyone in the Republican primary on stage railing against new family structures. I was thinking about all of these trends that you talk about and how the story line goes to take you from the realities that you outlined that manifested themselves in this election, how that gets to a candidate. And I was thinking about in 1996 being with Jack Kemp going to Watts when Jack Kemp did his tour of urban America. And the Dole campaign ultimately thought that was insane, but he did it. You read George Bush's speech to the 2000 Republican Convention, it's the kind of speech a Republican who worries about the future of their party would want every candidate to give. It was inclusive, it was about families, it was about education, it was a great speech. And so it's been there in the Republican Party, but how does that happen when you've got to run a primary in Iowa and then in South Carolina, in which if you talk about new family structures, you're going to be in trouble. So that's just one thing that strikes me.

**...is it a requirement
of the new voice in the
Republican Party...to end
the litmus testing of the
primary process...**

The question then that I wanted to ask you is, is it a requirement of the new voice in the Republican Party—who is going to then even be in a position to promote policies that will reach out to African Americans, will reach out to Hispanics, that will reach out to Asians in Northern Virginia—do they have to fight a civil war in the party first to end

the litmus testing of the primary process the way Bill Clinton essentially picked a fight after 1988 and said the party is out of touch, out of date and we've got to reach out to corporate America. We've got to shake off our old liberalism, become a modern party. And he started a fight within the party that then personally benefitted him, but that fight had to come first. And I wonder if you think that needs to happen, that fight, in order to clear the air so that you can have these policy discussions and then, B, who is the best warrior in that fight?

Mr. Brooks: Well, my first reaction is to note a paradox, which is that people in, say, Davenport, Iowa, rural Iowa or Pocahontas, Iowa, may talk right on the two-family structures, but they sure don't live it. To me the paradox is that you go to the most conservative parts of the country and people have these lofty, very articulated structures, we've got to have

two-parent families, when you look at the actual family structures in those places, they are incredibly diverse. Then you go to Berkeley, or dare I say Cambridge— (Laughter)

—and people say, oh, everybody should be open to all kinds of structures, but they all have two-parent families. And so if I could use the crude terminology, people in Alabama talk right and live left, and people at Berkeley talk left and live right. So I would say if you want to relate to people in a lot of those Republican primary states where they live, don't talk like a faux conservative, talking in categories that don't really relate to their lives, talk the way actual evangelical ministers talk who understand it. Their families are just dissolving. And that's what the evangelical churches are all about. So I would talk that way. Like when you're faking it you always do it wrong. So Mitt Romney was to some extent faking it. And Rick Santorum is actually not representative, certainly where a lot of Catholic churches are and certainly not where evangelical churches are. He's got a much different theology, which relates less well to the way people are actually living. So I would say I'm going to talk about the way you are actually living. And if you don't know, just read Charles Murray's book and you'll get how the white working class is living. So that would be my first.

The second thing, if you're going to pick a fight, pick a fight with the people who don't like RINOs. You're not going to get rid of the conservative base of the party, it's never going to be anything other than a pro-life party. But there has to be space for RINOs. And to me the problem with the Jim DeMints of the world or the Rush Limbaughs is not that they believe what they believe, but they don't allow people in the party who don't believe what they believe. And so I'm a big proud RINO. I think the RINO is a very noble beast.

I actually saw a video on YouTube of a rhino chasing away an elephant. Rhinos are better than elephants. (Laughter)

...people in Alabama talk right and live left, and people at Berkeley talk left and live right.

You're not going to get rid of the conservative base of the party, it's never going to be anything other than a pro-life party.

I don't think the party is ready for what Clinton did because I think you have to lose three elections in a row before you get ready for that.

I don't think the party is ready for what Clinton did because I think you have to lose three elections in a row before you get ready for that. But you've got to at least expand and do the work, you know, the compassionate conservatism. But I remember in the Bush White House after Katrina, when they finally got their act together and he went down to New Orleans and gave that speech with an agenda, the House Republicans wanted no piece of that. And so there has to be a little more compassionate conservatism. I'm the only American, maybe there are two in this room and only two in the country who actually really like compassionate conservatism.

Mr. Jones: Was it an important moment last week when Mitt Romney complained that he lost because of Democrats giving gifts to people and Bobby Jindal and some other Republicans spoke out strongly? Jindal's word was he is absolutely wrong, I disagree, absolutely categorical. Is that the start of the kind of fight you're talking about, John?

Mr. Dickerson: And actually, Mitt Romney, it was a gift he gave his party because now everybody can say he wasn't just a bad candidate, which he was, but he represented a very specific view, which was not his alone. I mean, why was he talking about that world view? Because he was sucking up to people who were giving him money. And there are enough people giving him money who believe that and are comforted by that world view that it's not just one lone crazy candidate saying it. So now he gives something for Bobby Jindal and others to push against, a public thing to push against, because the original 47 percent was kind of fuzzed over by the two months of a move back to moderation. So now Romney has reaffirmed the original comments on the 47 percent video, and he's offered himself as a nice foil for the future of the Republican Party.

Mr. Jones: So you think it was an important moment then?

Mr. Dickerson: Well, combined with the original 47 percent video. But in the debate over what the party needs to learn and lessons it needs to learn from this election, it was an important moment because it gives everybody a chance to line up, say exactly what they believe on this crucial question. Was it an act of trickery, which is essentially what Romney was saying, that Obama sneaked his way into the presidency by dangling gifts to various constituencies or was it a part of a fundamental shift in changing the electorate that the Republicans just missed?

Mr. Jones: Do you agree with that, David, you think it's important?

Mr. Brooks: Yeah, and the gift comment gets at the core role of government. If you think government is illegitimate, then those programs are gifts. But if you think government is in the business of helping people rise and succeed, then they are not gifts, they are programs. And so it's interesting that they moved so quickly on a comment that gets at the core belief system about the role of government.

Ms. Tucker: Could I ask David one last question about family structure? You named some programs that you think government should expand, which, as was noted earlier, one of them, the EITC, was originally a Republican idea.

Mr. Jones: Explain what EITC is.

Ms. Tucker: This is the earned income tax credit. Back in the '80's, before welfare was changed and people actually used to talk about, with a bit more credibility, welfare creating dependency than they do now because the rules for welfare changed. Many people believe that one of the ways you get people to work is by not taxing them heavily when they do so. If you make minimum wage and then they take taxes out of your paycheck, it doesn't look terribly attractive at the end of the week. With the earned income tax credit, people who are low-wage earners—not only do they not pay taxes, they may actually get some money when they file their income taxes. This was a way of making work pay off for people who are very low wage earners. And Republicans used to like this idea very much.

However, taken with their two ideas here, which were essentially Republican ideas which David just promoted, the earned income tax credit and additional child credits for people who have more children, that also was a Republican idea promoted by conservative Christians and the party mostly—we like for people to have more children, so we will give more tax credits for children. Those two ideas taken together, however, have helped push us up to a place where now 47 percent of people don't pay income taxes, which, as we all know has become code for half of the country being moochers, takers, snatchers, whatever it is we are. I pay taxes, but I'm black, so— (Laughter)

Mr. Brooks: You got a credit for that? (Laughter)

Ms. Tucker: So I haven't gotten my gift yet. I'm still waiting. So how do you, against that backdrop, persuade the party that these are good things? They used to be for them, before they were against them.

Mr. Brooks: Well, first the EITC was Milton Friedman's idea originally, so it has a Libertarian provenance, and Charles Murray has written a book that says we shouldn't have welfare programs, we should just give people checks, which I don't really agree with. But it has a proud Libertarian provenance. And the most interesting and maybe the only debate within the

If you think government is illegitimate, then those programs are gifts. But if you think government is in the business of helping people rise and succeed, then they are not gifts, they are programs.

...maybe the only debate within the Romney campaign was over the child tax credit.

Romney campaign was over the child tax credit. When he was writing up his welfare plan or his tax plan, the conservative Christians lobbied hard for an expanded tax credit and he shut them down, said no, I'm going to take the more business-like approach. I'm going to have flatter rates with fewer credits.

And I think that was a mistake.

But nonetheless, there are strong supports within the party for those ideas. And basically, this is not just a Republican problem. We have a government that is a big wealth transfer machine from young families to affluent old people. And basically we have to turn that around. It doesn't matter what party you are in, that's the essential formula for the next X number of years.

We have a government that is a big wealth transfer machine from young families to affluent old people. And basically we have to turn that around.

Mr. Jones: Jennifer.

Ms. Hochschild: Well, I'm the token academic and token political scientist. I have three points that I want to make, and you're invited to speak to any one of them. Congress has public ratings of something like 10 percent who trust Congress. I mean, they are down at the level of the number of people who think

the moon is made of blue cheese or that Hitler was really a good guy. And virtually all the incumbents get re-elected and have for the last however many years. So is this just the plain old incumbency effect and the plain old I like this guy even though I hate journalists in general kind of stuff?

What do we do about representative institutions that are supposed to be the institution of the people and the people repudiate it and then they re-elect the same guys that they just repudiated?

Mr. Dickerson: Most people don't even like me. (Laughter)

Ms. Hochschild: How on earth do we make sense of the House of Representatives? Both that they are so hated and then that they get re-elected. So it's actually two halves. What do we do about representative institutions when the people repudiate it and then re-elect the same guys that they just repudiated? So that's issue number one.

Issue number two is more of a prediction or question about Obama. Are

we going to see a whole lot of executive orders? Dream Act-type executive orders, recess appointments, the kinds of things that a president can do on his or her own without having to get through the Houses of Congress. Probably since World War II, maybe the Korean War, we haven't had an official declaration of war chugging its way through Congress.

And then the other big question is the post-racial society issue. There were 700 articles at least by academics after 2008 saying we're not a post-racial society. We might think we are, we might hope we are, a few journalists said we were at some point along the way, but we aren't a post-racial society. I completely agree, we are not a post-racial society. I think one of those articles would have been enough. (Laughter)

Mr. Brooks: I never remember actually saying we were in a post-racial society.

Ms. Hochschild: It's actually hard to find anybody who says that we were. But academics spent a lot of time insisting that we are not. And I am in that crowd, although I spend a lot of energy writing. You're absolutely right about the demography and the potential political implications. We don't need to go back to that argument in particular, but if you look at a child who was 10 in 2008, he or she is basically going through their entire adolescence with a man who declares himself to be black, even if he is demographically multi-racial, being the most powerful person in the world. How do we connect that with incarceration rates, poverty, terrible education? How do we think about where race is going in the United States, given the extraordinary transformation at the top and arguably worse situations for some people at the bottom? Is this all about poverty and not about race? Is it about the intersection between race and poverty and gender, because it's the black men who are predominantly being incarcerated, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Mr. Brooks: Well, first on the Congress—

Ms. Hochschild: You don't have to answer all of these.

Mr. Brooks: Well, I have little answers for the first two and total confusion about the third. So, first on the Congress, one of the things that interested me was why did Republicans keep the House? Was it because of redistricting? And the study I saw, and maybe there are other studies or at

How do we connect that with incarceration rates, poverty, terrible education? How do we think about where race is going in the United States, given the extraordinary transformation at the top and arguably worse situations for some people at the bottom?

**...but what leads to
higher approval ratings?
It's bipartisan action.**

proportioned. So in urban districts they just have huge numbers of votes. And then in a lot of the swing areas Republicans have smaller majorities, but they have majorities. So it's not redistricting.

Ms. Hochschild: I have a colleague who has done a lot of work with that and his answer is it's not redistricting.

Mr. Brooks: Okay, good. Because I just made up what I just said.
(Laughter)

**If a member of Congress
begins the sentence
by describing what
the other party thinks,
I know everything I'm
about to hear is probably
going to be false. You
just don't know.**

getting re-elected. But I had thought, and people had written this early in the cycle, we could have a revolt against both parties, a wave election. Charlie Cook wrote this, we could have a wave election against both parties at the same time, but we sure didn't see that. And maybe it's because people felt better about the country or they're just locked into their tribal partisanship.

Ms. Hochschild: So how do you govern with a 10 percent approval rate if you were a representative? Just ignore it?

Mr. Brooks: You can correct me if I'm wrong about the political science literature, but what leads to higher approval ratings? It's bipartisan action. And so to me that's what you do if you want to build your approval rating. So I think there is a nominal desire to do that. I have a dumb quota rule and you guys can tell me if you do it differently. If I interview a Republican, I interview a Democrat. It's just a dumb one-to-one rule, just to keep myself honest. And I'm always amazed how little they know about each other.

If a member of Congress begins the sentence by describing what the other party thinks, I know everything I'm about to hear is probably going

least quick studies, was that if the districts had been fairly apportioned, not with the funny lines, maybe Democrats could have taken six more seats. But it wouldn't have made a huge difference.

Basically, the Democratic vote is mis-

So the paradox is why did we have an election where only 30 percent of the country or maybe 40 think the country is headed in the right direction, and they threw all the bums back in. And Greg Mankiw here at Harvard had a good post. He had just seen the play *No Exit* by Sartre and that's where we are. We're all stuck in hell is other people, if you live in Washington. So we're just stuck. And I think it's basically the incumbency effect. People are just get-

to be false. You just don't know. So there are some friendships, but there's very little and we all know the reasons for that. Bob Schieffer, who John works with, told me a story, that one of the reasons we do the Sunday show is you spend a lot of time before the show in the green room chatting with the news makers, you can actually learn stuff. But Bob told me on a couple of occasions the Republicans and Democrats ask for separate green rooms. And that's like just a symbol, just total dysfunction.

Ms. Walter: That's sort of the irony of this election, is that we have the status quo election and yet you are hearing, at least now, we'll see if it continues, but you're hearing hints, especially from Republicans, that they are willing to compromise in a way that they weren't when they had the mandate from 2010. So status quo actually equals movement in this case. And I think that in the case of why they keep electing these people, what's your choice? You think they are all bums, so what's the difference? So the guy that's an incumbent is a bum, the guy who is running against him, you've seen \$10 million worth of ads saying that he kicks puppies down the street and he hasn't paid his taxes. You're like, alright, so I've got the guy in the terrible Congress or the puppy kicker. (Laughter)

Ms. Hochschild: Is there a deeper institutional problem here?

Ms. Walter: I think it's the establishment.

Ms. Hochschild: The institution that is supposed to represent the people.

Ms. Walter: Nobody believes it does. Well, the people don't believe they are being represented anywhere, which is sort of the broader question I wanted to get to with David. But whether it's Wall Street or whether it's corporate America, whether it's the church or whether it's professional sports, establishment is just widely panned, because nobody believes they are looking out for their interest.

Ms. Hochschild: And then they kick the bums back in.

Ms. Walter: And then they say, well, we don't have a choice. What are we going to do, right? And I think they look less and less to them to solve their problems.

Mr. Brooks: I think it's about tribalism and party ID. It's not even about ideology. One of my favorite political scientist books, I hope it's not been renounced by the profession, is called *Partisan Hearts and Minds*.

Ms. Hochschild: I taught it about two weeks ago.

**...whether it's Wall Street
or whether it's corporate
America, whether it's
the church or whether
it's professional sports,
establishment is just
widely panned, because
nobody believes they
are looking out for their
interest.**

Mr. Brooks: Excellent. One of the arguments it makes is that people pick their party on the base of social identity as much as philosophy. And I certainly think that's true of all of us. The pop version of that is Tom Wolfe's "Theory of the High School Opposite," which is that in high school you know who your social opposite is. If you're on the football team you know the drama team is your high school opposite and vice versa. And you pick your party affiliation on the basis of that. You know who you didn't like in high school. I'm not sure how I got there.

Quickly, on executive orders, one of the things that is striking to me is how passive Congress has become. When I started covering Congress they were intellectual entrepreneurs who were promoting things. Like Newt Gingrich or this guy Jim Courter or Bill Bradley, they had their own plans and now they just wait. They wait for the leadership or they wait for the

I think that inter-marriage may have a long-term role in how the attitudes are.

White House. And so it's weird how everyone just defers to the White House. It's not constitutional, it's just behavior now. So I do think there will be a lot of executive orders, most importantly on health care and financial regulatory stuff where they've got huge messes they now have got to make work.

And final, on the post-racial, I have no answers on this. My only question, and if you look at the inter-marriage rates for young people, my impression is they are rising reasonably significantly. My kids go to a private school in Washington called Georgetown Day School, which is incredibly left wing. They call the teachers by the first names and all that. Obama has looked at it and said this is left-wing crazy. (Laughter)

So if you go to the school it really brags about how diverse it is. But in reality, every kid there has one white parent and one black parent. So they all look exactly the same. I think that inter-marriage may have a long-term role in how the attitudes are. Say, a 25 year old, do they have different racial attitudes than a 35 and 45 year old?

Ms. Hochschild: Yes, the answer is yes. And it's often the case, depending on the attitude of the survey, that young adults across racial groups will agree more with each other than either does with people over 50 or 60 within their own race, including some things that in which both blacks and whites. Young adults are moving to the left on some issues and young adults are moving to the right on others. And they concur with each other more than either does with older, not true across all surveys and all questions, but to the very specific.

Mr. Jones: In this regard, how important is the simple fact that this country has re-elected a black man? Was that actually not an issue?

Ms. Hochschild: Well, Larry Bobo, my colleague who is a sociologist in the Afro-Am department, thinks this is a more important election than 2008. He said 2008, any Democrat who could more or less walk in a straight line would have won, given all the things that were going on, given, well, you know all the reasons. This is an election in which people looked long and hard at a man who identifies as black. We saw fewer pictures of his Kansas grandparents than we had in 2008. And he's screwed up some things. And he's done some things pretty well. And he kind of looks like a real person, and there was a reasonably viable alternative and we still reelected him. He got a smaller fraction of the white vote than he did last time, it was 43 percent last time and about 39, 40 percent this time. But that was enough.

Thirty-nine or 40 percent of whites voted for a guy who was flawed.

Ms. Hochschild: Thirty-nine or 40 percent of whites voted for a guy who was flawed. And in conjunction with all the other demographic changes we've talked about, that was enough. So Larry's argument, which I'm quoting because I agree with it, is that this is a more genuine statement about either support for electing a black man or being indifferent to the fact that he's black and support for whatever it is you supported in the Democratic Party. I don't think that solves the problem. The issue for me is the bottom 20 percent.

...this is a more genuine statement about either support for electing a black man or being indifferent to the fact that he's black...

Mr. Brooks: Can I just tell one quick Tom Friedman story? I don't think he'll mind me telling this story. He was having lunch at the Chinese Embassy post-election, with a bunch of Chinese diplomats. And they were, you know, your country is in decline, look at this, this is terrible, you can't solve your problems, you have rotten elections.

And he said, okay, we just had an election where a black guy ran against a Mormon. Now imagine China, an election where a Tibetan ran against a Taiwanese. (Laughter)

And so, which country has more cultural self-confidence?

Ms. Walter: Well, for Cynthia, as a fellow adopted parent, it is adoption month, so happy adoption month. Let me get that out.

Mr. Dickerson: My wife's adopted, can I get in on this? (Laughter)

Mr. Brooks: My parents claim I was adopted. (Laughter)

Ms. Walter: Everybody tell their story. So I wanted to get into what Jennifer and I were talking about here. You talked about this rising tide, the

fact that there is no longer that factor working, or at least a lot of people don't believe that the rising tide is going to help lift them. It coincides with this real decimation of the established order, this idea that corporations or business or any institution we once held high is in moral decline. The fact that those two things are happening at the same time, where does that leave folks, especially as they go into the ballot box thinking about the role that government can actually play in their lives. They don't trust that government can do it. They don't trust that any outside group can help them, so there is a sense that they are out there alone.

Mr. Brooks: I do think, A, I mentioned I think the most important polling data in politics is, do you trust government to do the right thing most of the time? And I mentioned that decline. The second thing, I think, one of the central discussions on whether a government—or a country can be governable is just how much social trust there is. And Frank Fukuyama wrote a book about this. And I covered the decline of the Soviet Union and the rise of Russia. And they essentially had no trust. And when you have no trust you think I'm just going to take what I can for myself.

Ms. Walter: Are we headed in that direction? Are you worried about that?

Mr. Brooks: I'm worried about that. On the one hand we say we have no trust in our public institutions, on the other hand—in this hotel there is an Avis counter. You hand them a credit card and they let you walk away with a car. So there's implicit trust built into our society in all sorts of ways. We still wait in line. So I think we tell pollsters we don't trust, but in fact we act like a society with a lot more social trust than we say. In Russia it really was true. Gail Sheehy went to Russia, the Soviet Union, back in the old days and she wrote a piece about it and she said I wanted to feel Russian on the flight over there, so I stole the salt and pepper off my tray on the Lufthansa flight and Tatyana Tolstaya reviewed her book for the *New Republic* and said if you want to feel Russian, you wouldn't have stolen salt and pepper, you would have stolen the tray, you would have stolen the cart, you would have stolen the airplane and you would have stolen the airport. (Laughter)

So that's what real social distrust looks like. And the only thing I would add is we probably have more than we say. The second point I would make is obviously it's in part because our institutions have screwed up, but I think in large measure it's because we're really bad followers. And it wasn't as if government was so fantastic in the 1920's or the 1890's. But people had some deference to authority because they thought, well, you know, it's tough, they're probably doing their best. We sometimes act—and here I'm going to become totally misanthropic—like an adolescent who discovers their parents aren't perfect and therefore they must be

terrible. And so I think a lot of this distrust is a lot of people saying they're idiots, if I were there I could do it perfectly. And I basically think it's a problem of bad followership and complicated attitudes towards authority.

Mr. Jones: Let me turn the conversation a little bit in the direction of politics in a retail sense, if I may. Do you think that without Barack Obama the Republican Party is going to have an inherent difficulty finding something to unify them to campaign against? I mean, the next time around. Is Barack Obama essentially very important to the Republican Party in terms of a viable, energetic political movement?

Mr. Brooks: There is now Nancy Pelosi. She's hanging around.

Ms. Hochschild: Hillary.

Mr. Brooks: Hillary will be tough.

They have respect for her. I would say, why is the party so anti-government? It's because it's the only thing they could rally social conservatives and economic conservatives around together. So that's why they became a very anti-government party. Because social conservatives wanted to educate their kids as they wanted and economic conservatives wanted to run their businesses as they wanted. So if they have to move off that anti-government, it becomes a problem. There is no reason social conservatives should be for capitalism—capitalism really is undermining the family in many respects. So that coalition, once you take out the anti-government piece, I think it becomes more fragile.

Mr. Jones: How much of it is anti-government and how much of it is pure hatred for Barack Obama?

Ms. Walter: That clearly wasn't enough this time around.

Mr. Jones: No, not enough, but at least it seemed to be a powerful motivating factor for a lot of people.

We sometimes act—and here I'm going to become totally misanthropic—like an adolescent who discovers their parents aren't perfect and therefore they must be terrible....it's a problem of bad followership and complicated attitudes towards authority.

...why is the [Republican] party so anti-government? It's because it's the only thing they could rally social conservatives and economic conservatives around together...There is no reason social conservatives should be for capitalism—capitalism really is undermining the family in many respects.

Ms. Walter: Yeah, I think they misread that. The president's approval rating was always somewhere around 48, 49 percent. So there wasn't that level where you can unite just around an agreed dislike among the base. The question is does Barack Obama turn into where George W. Bush was in 2006 or 2007, where he had approval ratings somewhere close to where Congress was. It was much easier to run against George Bush and what he stood for because at the end of the day, at the end of his tenure, it was failed policies overseas, a failed economy at home. Yes, of course you ran against Bush and everything that he stood for.

Now, you have Democrats looking wistfully at that time, right? Because they remember there was a compassionate conservative era at one point. And you have Republicans looking wistfully at the Clinton era, saying remember how great that was? It's such a good time. Bill Clinton would talk to us and he's so nice.

Mr. Brooks: Welfare reform.

Mr. Dickerson: There are two other differences with '04. When Democrats ran in '08, it wasn't just that people disliked George Bush, they wanted to end the residual policies that were still ongoing, namely the

One of the biggest parts of the Obama re-election is the fact that the Affordable Care Act is now basically safe.

wars. The question is whether there will be anything to rally around. It's basically safe now. One of the biggest parts of the Obama re-election is the fact that the Affordable Care Act is now basically safe. And that's extraordinary. He could do nothing in his second term, and the victory in the second term allows the ACA to exist and that's a huge part of this election.

But Republicans, you can hate the man, but even that didn't really work last time. And there are no policies that will be lingering on, except maybe the economy. We'll see what shape it's in. Democrats in 2004 basically thought a version of what some Republicans now think, which is basically Bush tricked the electorate by turning out a bunch of Evangelicals in Ohio, which is a version of what essentially some Republicans are saying now. And the interesting racial question will be do Republicans see this as an election like what happened in Ohio or an election that happened in Iowa? In Ohio the president won by turning out African Americans. Now, that's just Ohio. If you look at, for example, he lost white women in Ohio by seven points. In Iowa he won them with 58 percent of the vote. So the entire president's victory was not just Ohio, but some Republicans may think it is and therefore they will think, well, he just turned out African Americans in Cleveland, Cincinnati, and that's how he did it, which is

what Democrats thought in 2004 about George Bush. He just turned out Evangelicals in Ohio and that's it.

But there are a big, big number of Republicans who are saying, no, it's not just about Ohio. It's about Virginia and Florida and Iowa and Wisconsin and lots of other states where the president built a different kind of coalition. We need to fix ourselves and that self-reflection I think is what's different about what the Republicans are now going to go through that will move them off of just hating Obama.

Ms. Walter: And the state Republican chair in Maine said in rural Maine there were all these black people who showed up to vote. He's like, I've been to rural Maine, there aren't any black people there. (Laughter)

Ms. Hochschild: One of the things that ought to help that process for the Republican Party is the extraordinarily high Asian vote for Obama, which we were talking about last night. And the even more than usually high Latino vote for Obama. This isn't a black/white issue anymore. So, yes, Cincinnati and Cleveland, but the Asians are what, four or five percent of the electorate. I mean, they don't matter in terms of total numbers. But if there is ever a natural constituency for the Republican Party it's Asian Americans. And they work. So that ought to give some sense of, you know, we're really screwing up.

Ms. Tucker: That does remind me of a question that I have for David, since you're representing Republican thinking.

Mr. Brooks: I never said. (Laughter)

Ms. Tucker: I'm sorry about that. One of the things that has struck me about post-election analysis is that thinking Republicans have talked a lot about the Latino vote, what we have done wrong, we need to focus on Latinos. Some have talked about women, we need to get rid of the rape caucus, all that crazy stuff about rape. I haven't heard any Republican say we need to do something about attracting the black vote. Have Republicans just decided that well is poisoned, never mind, we're never going to attract the black vote?

**I haven't heard any
Republican say we need
to do something about
attracting the black vote.**

Mr. Brooks: I guess they haven't gotten to that stage yet. The Latino vote seems more gettable, partly, you know, we had a black candidate running. So I agree with you. I haven't heard anybody say that since the days of Jack Kemp. He would talk about it a lot. I think they may get there, but it does look like a hard vote to get, just demographically.

If I could stick up for the Tea Party for a second, I feel compelled to do that. I was very struck—the questions I got last night were very different

than the questions I normally get. Because normally I go to places where there are Republicans. (Laughter)

I was often addressed last night as the representative of the Republican Party, which believe me, all my Republican friends would think that's hilarious. But if I could just stick up for what I think is the crisis for the party and what they believe in, deeper than Obama, is that they believe that the country was built by a certain ethos, which is the individualist populist pioneer ethos. And when they say, or when Bill O'Reilly says our America is gone, I don't think that's solely just race code. I think it's this is how it was built, very small government, much smaller than anywhere else comparable in the world and individual responsibility, nuclear families, that's what built the country. And now it's shifting.

And a little of the Republican crisis now reminds me of the end of the frontier crisis in 1892 when they said, okay, we had the frontier, this is the experience that made us great, the frontier is closed, oh, my God. Demographics have shifted. It's going to undermine our ethos. And in fact, if you read western novels or go to western movies, the western novel was created by people around Theodore Roosevelt, a book called *The Virginian*, by Owen Wister. And that was an explicit attempt to revive the frontier ethos among the industrial world. And so they reinvented the frontier ethos to go with the industrial world. I think they invented it again, Reagan did, the frontier ethos to go with an entrepreneurial world.

Now we're in a different world. I think Republicans have to reinvent the frontier ethos to go with the new demographics and the new information economy.

Ms. Hochschild: Two colleagues of mine have a book on the Tea Party, which they did a fair amount of interviews. And they would, again, agree with you about the small government individualism, mythical or real. And

I think Republicans have to reinvent the frontier ethos to go with the new demographics and the new information economy.

part of what they point out is that many Tea Party members who were relatively old, I mean over 50, have the same argument about their own children, or at least the children of the next-door neighbors, as about those bad others. The fact of the narcissism, they're lazy, they hang out at home, they won't get a job, they think I owe them something.

Mr. Brooks: I would say that's got to be the perpetual human condition,

like Agamemnon was thinking, oh, these kids these days. (Laughter)

Ms. Hochschild: Agreed, but it does take it out of the racial dynamic and moves it into the individualism, earn your own way—

Mr. Dickerson: And as life expectancy continues, the longer they are alive to think that. (Laughter)

Mr. Brooks: These septuagenarians these days, they're rotten. Us nonagenarians we were—

Ms. Walter: One thing though, we talk about a lot about demographics, but we didn't really talk about social demographics, which was the fact that gay issues didn't play a part in this election, and yet they did, at the same time, sort of quietly. And for as big as the Asian vote is, the gay vote is probably equal in terms of about five percent. And shutting off that path has as much to do with losing the idea of where this country is going demographically than almost anything else.

Mr. Jones: Especially generationally.

Ms. Walter: That's right. So how do they balance that back? I know you talked a little bit about that last night, but is there a way for Republicans to embrace or to accept the reality of where we're headed?

Ms. Hochschild: The real question is why 25 percent of gays didn't vote for Obama.

Ms. Walter: Well, see, that was the Romney theory all along was the economy is going to trump everything else, right? So that's how we're going to get Hispanics, that's how we're going to get women. They're not going to go for the demagoguery of the Obama campaign. Because instead of understanding how people work, which is if you can't meet them at a basic level they're not going to get beyond that. So they're going to shut you down if you say I don't really think you should be here, but now that you are— (Laughter)

—you're going to totally love what I have to tell you about entrepreneurship. Your relationships mean nothing to me and in fact they are completely invalid, but I know you're a small businessman so you're going to love what I have to tell you. (Laughter)

Mr. Dickerson: It's the first door-to-door salesman to slam the door in their own face.

Ms. Hochschild: Class is always what it's all about, or economic woes.

Mr. Jones: You made it sound like last night that you think there's not much leverage there.

Mr. Brooks: Well, not for the current Republican Party. There has to be an urban Republican Party. You're not going to take the Rush Limbaugh

Your relationships mean nothing to me and in fact they are completely invalid, but I know you're a small businessman so you're going to love what I have to tell you.

There has to be an urban Republican Party.

audience and suddenly make it a New York City audience or a Boston audience. So you have to have a separate wing and the Republican Party has to be a coalition of people who are weirdly going together. And right now it's become very easy to cut out people. And how many times, maybe just because of who I am, how many times in a year does somebody say to me, you know, I used to be a Republican, but I'm not anymore. That happens hundreds of times, thousands of times a year to me. And so having an urban wing—

Ms. Walter: But aren't the same people, your point about Davenport and Cambridge, those people in Davenport have gay kids, relatives. They are supporting them maybe. They come over for Thanksgiving. So maybe they're more open to it.

Mr. Jones: Especially on a generational level.

Ms. Walter: Yeah. So is it not just trying to make it less urban and more like there are a lot of people who don't live in urban areas who are—

Ms. Hochschild: Primaries really matter here, right? Because if you only have 10 percent of the party voting in a primary it's unlikely to be—

Mr. Brooks: But even in the primary, did any of us hear gay issues raised in the Republican primary? I don't recall.

Ms. Tucker: Not explicitly. But to add to what Amy just said, I have about 50 students all told at the University of Georgia. And as a state institution it pulls most of its students from the state. And I am sometimes reminded of how conservative the homes are that they come from. And so I made a couple of assumptions about a couple of students that just turned out not to be true. I had a couple of students who just happened to sit in my office on different occasions and tell me what conservative homes they came from and they came from these very Christian homes and I'm a Christian and blah, blah, blah, which is code, to me, I hear that as having very conservative political views. As it turned out both these students voted for Obama, and in fact I had said to one of them, well, if you're looking for a topic to write about, maybe you want to write about your support for Mitt Romney. She looked at me and she said, I voted for Obama. So I think the party is missing.

Mr. Brooks: They were just trying to get A's. (Laughter)

Mr. Jones: This segues into something you said earlier that, if you would, please expand on it—you said, what's going on in the Evangelical churches? What is going on in the Evangelical churches, in that sense?

Mr. Brooks: Well, if you've got to ask a Jew from New York— (Laughter)

Well, to the extent that I know, I'll say a couple of things. First, and this is something that went on 20 or 30 years ago, the marginalization of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. And that happened a while ago and I

used to say Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell have only three constituencies, ABC, CBS and NBC. That's who was really building them up. And that didn't mean Evangelicals liked it when people outside attacked them, they didn't. But they were also embarrassed by them. So that happened a long time ago. What it shifted over to was a Rick Warren-style Evangelicalism, which was much more accepting of homosexuality, in part because Rick Warren and those people were doing so much work on AIDS, both in Africa and domestically. And two, a sense that we've really corrupted ourselves by being too in touch with the Republican Party. That the city of God has been corrupted by the city of man, basically, to use non-Protestant language I understand. And so they have moved away from politics and now when you go to Evangelical meetings, to the extent that I go to them, I've probably been to six in the past year, it's, first of all, they are all wearing black jeans. They've all got moussed up spiky hair. And it's like going to a TED conference, but maybe six months behind.

What it shifted over to was a Rick Warren-style Evangelicalism, which was much more accepting of homosexuality...

Mr. Dickerson: They only had one. (Laughter)

Mr. Brooks: So to the extent that there's big cultural gaps, I really don't think there are anymore. And when you go to Wheaton College, which is more of the cutting edge, they've moved away from the mega-churches. They don't like the mega-churches, because it's too shallow. They're moving more to the small groups movements and things like that. So I think it's at once still pretty religiously committed, but culturally no longer a dissident group looking at mainstream Americans saying, oh, that's corrupt. I don't think that's where they are anymore.

Mr. Jones: Does that square with your sense of these things?

Mr. Dickerson: Yes, although I think what David said last night is still in play, which is to say that may be where the culture is but the leaders of the movement are lagging indicators. So you still have to figure out what Ralph Reed does in the world. Does he come to this new place or is he still stirring up a donor base that is not of that world. That's kind of the 1980's.

Mr. Brooks: But wouldn't you say the fact that Ralph Reed has reemerged as the Evangelical leader a disgraced guy from the past, basically, the fact that shows that they are not generating new, vibrant actual leaders?

Mr. Dickerson: No, no. That's right. The question is whether you still have every single Republican candidate going to every one of the Faith

and Freedom events that he's hosting. Those are big events in the process and the party and when those are held again in the next cycle, will candidates go there? Will they say the same kind of things? I mean, remember when Mitch Daniels said there should be a truce on social issues, he was attacked by everyone. And all the other candidates used it as a way to

The question is whether you still have every single Republican candidate going to every one of the Faith and Freedom events...

define themselves by putting Daniels off. But also if you look at the field, I mean, Haley Barbour understands the evolution you're talking about, Bobby Jindal does. I think that certainly, I mean, Chris Christie is a fascinating figure because he is the urban Republican you are talking about basically. I mean, to the extent one exists.

Ms. Hochschild: Bloomberg?

Mr. Dickerson: I think he's too far—I mean, if RINOs are accepted in the party, then maybe, but I don't think Bloomberg is considered a Republican.

Ms. Walter: He's the white rhino.

Mr. Brooks: He's the unicorn. (Laughter)

Mr. Jones: Well, let me invite you to join this conversation.

Andy Glass: Thank you, Alex. I'm a former Shorenstein Fellow and I work in Washington for *Politico*. My question goes to the future of the Republican Party. So, in the Indiana primary this year, 10 percent of the registered Republicans in Indiana showed up. And of those 10 percent, 40 percent voted for Senator Lugar and 60 percent voted for the guy who lost. So my question is, is that a fundamental problem for the Republicans and can it be fixed?

Ms. Walter: Can I just raise one thing, which is I think you would find the exact same thing on the Democratic side in terms of the percentage that turn out. So in 2016 there is going to be as big of a challenge for the Democratic Party as there is for the Republican Party. Can a moderate Democrat make it through a primary? Can Mark Warner be the nominee? And I would argue probably not. Because the liberal factions of the party are going to want to push their own there. The other piece of it—that's why I get frustrated sometimes with a lot of the rhetoric that comes out, even out of voters' mouths—we recognize that we're all like this, we say one thing and then we do another. But for everybody who's upset about partisanship, for everybody who says they hate the process, why do we nominate these terrible people, then they either don't show up at the primary where they did have a choice. Or two, in the case of this state, it's terrible, we don't have moderates anymore, they're gone. Okay, well,

Scott Brown is doing a pretty good job. People liked him. Well, I mean, I can't send him back to Congress, he's a Republican, for God's sake. What? Republican? No, no, we're Democrats here. We vote for a Democrat. It happened in Connecticut, happened in Maine, happened in New Hampshire. And so this idea of, I vote for the person, not the party, that's fine, but it doesn't work that way. It's the voters who have to make that choice. And if they choose not to show up and if they choose to take the party label over person, then they're going to get the Congress they deserve. So there. (Laughter)

Melissa Ludtke: Hi, I'm a long-time journalist and also I'll add my name to the list of dotage, single, mother, adoptive. And it's to my child's perspective that I want to turn in just a moment. But I first want to say, David, if you ever want to meet the real Cambridge, come with me to the public schools of Cambridge. That's where my daughter's been for the last 11 years. And you'll see a very different Cambridge than the one you're talking about. And one that is thinking of taking Geoffrey Canada's idea from Harlem and bringing it in to one of our neighborhoods. And where one of my daughter's classmates was shot to death in a drive-by shooting at the end of the school year last year. So come and join me someday and I'll take you around to the public schools and you can meet a different Cambridge.

So let me talk for a moment from the prism of my 16-year-old daughter. Here's what her generation is telling me and I hear this in the back seat of the car when I drive them. They care about the environment. They care about climate change. And they notice what's happening. They see the floods. They see the hurricanes. They study this in school and here we've been for an hour and 15 minutes and the word climate change and environment has not yet been raised. Now, it came at the very end of this campaign and it was mentioned obliquely by President Obama recently in his list of things that he's thinking about. So I'm really curious what I can tell my daughter about what these parties are going to think about and do.

Mr. Brooks: Well, I just have three quick thoughts. First, practically, what's going to happen, I don't think we're going to get back to a cap and trade. I don't think there's going to be support for that. I don't think much is going to happen. Second, I do think fracking will serve as a bridge to renewables in some distant future, but it will be a pretty distant future

**It's the voters who have
to make that choice.
And if they choose not
to show up and if they
choose to take the party
label over person, then
they're going to get the
Congress they deserve.
So there.**

because the fracking revolution is just unstoppable. And I personally think it's an excellent thing. It's cleaner than coal, cleaner than oil and it's

I do think fracking will serve as a bridge to renewables in some distant future, but it will be a pretty distant future because the fracking revolution is just unstoppable.

just an economic boon. And I think one of the reasons Obama won Ohio is because of the really good economy in eastern Ohio because of the shale gas. So fracking is the future. And renewables are going to be pushed off until they are competitive and it's going to be a while.

And then the final thing, I personally think and people will disagree that the lesson of clean energy agenda over the last four years is that we should try

to have a carbon tax, but government should not play venture capitalists in solar and other things, industries that are really rotten industries to start with and things they probably don't understand. And so I'm for a carbon tax and if we had that as part of a tax reform, that would be great. But I think the lessons of the investments they've made in the clean energy firms have not been positive. Now you have all these firms who really just live off government subsidies. They're not real market firms.

Charles Cogan: I'm formerly CIA, now at the Belfer Center. I've had many occasions to observe these CoDels, these congressional delegations coming through American embassies abroad, cavorting, I should say, through American embassies abroad. And in some cases with incredibly over-the-top behavior. So I came up with the following formula. The House of Representatives is very representative. (Laughter)

Mr. Brooks: Can I just say, A, I totally agree with you. They call them the House of Representatives for a reason. But, B, I love CoDels, because the cavorting goes on, but that's their only time to get together. All the friendships are based on CoDels. These are congressional delegations that travel around the world.

John Carr: Hi. I'm a Fellow at the IOP. We've had more discussion on poverty today and more substance on poverty and African American men and family structure than we had in a year of the campaign. And why is that? I mean, the president in his campaign clearly made a decision they would not talk about it, ever. And every time Romney went near it, he blew himself up, talking about the 47 percent and now gifts. But when you look at the challenges facing the country, we have the highest rates of poverty we've had in decades. We have the transfer of income from low income younger families to higher income senior families, which I'm getting more supportive of as I get older. Republicans won't talk about family

structure because they're convinced the old structure is the only structure. Democrats won't talk about family structure because if you talk about it in the way you have, you're accused of trying to bring back Ozzie and Harriet. How do we have a candid real discussion of what's going on in lots of neighborhoods in a way that will lift up the poor? We're having a huge fight about how to treat the rich and no attention on how to lift up the poor.

Mr. Brooks: First, I just want to say, John has had this conversation before. If there's any living saints among us, it's probably that guy who worked for many years with Catholic Social Services in addressing these kinds of issues. If anybody can survive morally tainted Harvard University I think it's going to be John. (Laughter)

I asked this in an off-the-record interview with an extremely senior White House official about a year ago. And I said you are perfectly positioned to take on some of these family issues because of your background. And so we're never going to have a president as well positioned as he is. And so this person said, it's off the record, I'm being very subtle about this, it's fine for you to say, but if I did it I'd get hammered on the right for wanting to use government to address some of these issues. I'd be hammered on the left for exactly as you said, for trying to interfere in personal liberties and there is just no profit in them.

Mr. Dickerson: I talked to somebody very involved in poverty issues who tried to get this on the agenda as part of the campaign or just as a part of the White House in an election year.

Ms. Hochschild: This being poverty?

Mr. Dickerson: The question of poverty. Remember in the 2008 Democratic primary, John Edwards, who is now a punch line, was the candidate of poverty. And he changed the nature of the race in which every candidate suddenly had to come up with a way to talk about poverty in the Democratic primary, this wasn't the Republican primary. And so it was a big deal. And when Edwards dropped out Obama promised to take up his fight for poverty and that was the last time. And what this person I talked to, who works at the White House and works on poverty issues and wanted the president to lead or at least talk about it was basically was told, not in an election year, cannot talk about poverty in an election year.

How do we have a candid real discussion of what's going on in lots of neighborhoods in a way that will lift up the poor? We're having a huge fight about how to treat the rich and no attention on how to lift up the poor.

Mr. Brooks: Do we know if there is any actual evidence to support the idea that it's not a good political thing? I don't see why we should assume that to be the case.

Ms. Tucker: Well, because so many Republican voters already believe, if you look at the polls, that Obama favors black people. He has given government largesse to black people. Romney has reinforced that idea. So I think that is why Obama believes there is no percentage for him in this. Now, poverty is not just black. But for many, particularly Republican voters who hear the discussion, that's what they think. Let me say one

...I thought, this is great. Now, the whites are showing the same trajectory black people in urban areas like Detroit did 30, 40 years ago, the country will pay attention. That's what I thought. I was surprised about how wrong I was. Having the white working class in that same position didn't change the conversation.

more thing about this personally and this is going to sound perverse and perhaps is perverse. But when Charles Murray's last book came out, *Coming Apart*, I thought this, because Charles Murray writes about the decline of the white working class, and I thought, this is great. Now, the whites are showing the same trajectory black people in urban areas like Detroit did 30, 40 years ago, the country will pay attention. That's what I thought. I was surprised about how wrong I was. Having the white working class in that same position didn't change the conversation.

Ms. Hochschild: It's got to be something in addition to what you're saying, which is to say the Republicans whom you are describing weren't going to vote for Obama anyway. He had 47 other

reasons why they weren't. So he's always long since lost them, or maybe never had them. It seems to me the question is why poverty is so dangerous to talk about for Democrats, for Independents, for undecideds, for I don't much care about the election anyways. And maybe it's the association with race. But Democrats are pretty careful about that. I mean, this is just a way of reiterating the question from a minute ago. The Republicans can't be the explanation of why the White House wouldn't talk either about family, that was easier for me to understand. Why the White House wouldn't talk about poverty is what I don't understand.

Mr. Dickerson: I think because they thought the people you are talking about aren't going to turn out for you necessarily. The truly poor are not going to turn out for anybody. And perhaps the messages you send to the middle class undecided voters is—in this shrinking world where we

have a scarce number of resources, when the knife is wielded at the federal level and things are cut up and what's left of the federal government is portioned out, are you going to get yours? And if you talk too much about poverty the message to those who do vote are in the middle classes, it's going to go to somebody else.

Mr. Brooks: First, I would have told Romney, you're a billionaire or a millionaire from Bain, do what Bobby Kennedy did, spend the first part of the campaign touring West Virginia, touring Alabama.

Mr. Dickerson: Do what your dad did. His dad did a poverty tour of 29 or 19 different cities.

Mr. Brooks: I think it would have at least given him some sense. But I'm thinking it through my head, what polling data could possibly suggest that it's a mistake for the Democrats. The only thing I can think of is that there's this weird phenomena, when you look at who is most opposed to redistributionist policies, it's people making \$35,000 to \$45,000 a year. It's people just above who think, I worked my way up here and now they want to hand it to those people I left behind. And so maybe they were worried about that group.

**...when you look at
who is most opposed to
redistributionist policies,
it's people making
\$35,000 to \$45,000 a
year.**

Ms. Hochschild: That's still the case? I know that used to be. We haven't done a report on this recently.

Mr. Brooks: Yeah, I'm a journalist, so I don't know what used to be. I only know what exists in— (Laughter)

But I would say within the last year.

Mr. Jones: Yes, sir.

Leonardo Vivas: I'm here at the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy and I run a Latin America program there. Many of the arguments about capturing and integrating the Hispanic into America have been during the electoral cycle. So you say, okay, we have the immigration issue, that allowed Obama to capture that part of the vote, or you had a number of other issues related. But in a way what I think is lacking is how to bridge the gap more in terms of the cultural outlook for the future. To my mind the only deep reflection about the Hispanics in this country was made by the late Professor Huntington. He asked the question, who are we? I think he gave the wrong answer, but he asked the right question. Why don't you have this reflection about the Hispanics in the longer term?

Mr. Brooks: Well, I want to say, first, I agree, re-read Huntington's book after the election, just to see what he said. And as usual he is brilliant, but I do think he drew too sharp a distinction between the Hispanic

immigrant ethos and what he called the Anglo ethos. And there is another book just coming out by a scholar whose last name is Alba, called *The Blurring of the Culture Line* and it's about

It's a really complicated question of whether the cultural integration issues are going in the direction of further separation or further incorporation.

intermarrying. And he thinks the ethos differences are blurring as the intermarriage rate rises. So to me the Republican problem is the failure to understand the immigrant experience of all types, and how you actually rise and succeed today.

Mr. Jones: Jennifer, do you have a thought on this?

Ms. Hochschild: I think your comments last night I would agree with,

which is to say that immigrants don't see government as necessarily good or necessarily bad, what they desperately want is a foothold and a chance for their families. In some sense, it's a neither naturally Democratic nor a natural Republican constituency. There are big issues of cultural integration. But again, this is largely generational, not entirely, because young Latinos sometimes see greater discrimination and greater separation than their parents do. But young Latinos are also growing up with English, growing up with American culture, intermarrying at very high rates. It's a really complicated question of whether the cultural integration issues are going in the direction of further separation or further incorporation. And the Democrats have just done a better job. I think that Democrats are a little too complacent on this one because I think the natural instinct of small business, family, religious conservatism, individualism, patriotism is a stereotypically immigrant stance. And the Republicans are better on those issues.

Mr. Dickerson: But they have to stop slamming that door. You can't say self-deportation is—

I would say the original sin of the Romney campaign was thinking we can't beat Rick Perry unless we go to the right on immigration. That was a huge mistake.

Ms. Hochschild: I do not understand. I mean, that seems to be the single stupidest thing the Republicans have done in many decades, to put them on the wrong side of this extraordinary demographic transformation.

Mr. Brooks: I would say the original sin of the Romney campaign was thinking we can't beat Rick Perry unless we go to the right on immigration. That was a huge mistake.

George Mokray: I'm an independent scholar from Central Square. You talked about fertility. World fertility rates are still falling. The earned

income tax credit is not going to do anything if you are shooting blanks or your eggs have holes in them because of pollution. So I would like you to address that, if you would, coming up against the ecological and environmental realities of what we've done.

Mr. Brooks: I guess I think the drop in fertility is so rapid and so unrelated, I don't think it's related to the environment. I think it's related to family choices. People are marrying later and so there is just less time to have kids. They put more priority on spending a lot of resources on each kid rather than having a lot of kids. You've got two parents working, so there is just less time, there are bigger trade-offs. The drops in Asia are astounding. I mention in my column today the Singapore drop, drops from four and five kids down to one within one generation. And I don't think that's environmental, I think that's a booming economy and an economy where people think I've got to work 60 hours a week to keep up, I just don't have time. I think that's the basic.

Alexandra Raphael: I'm a first year student at the Kennedy School. Thank you all so much for being here. In 2008 we heard a lot about President Obama's team of rivals cabinet. And I'm curious, what do you think we're going to see in his second term and ideally in your opinion what should we see?

Mr. Dickerson: I think what David said last night is right. I don't see a team of rivals coming in this round at all. I don't see big strong egos of independent views coming in. That doesn't look like the roster so far of the names that have been out there. And he had rivalries even among his economic team—there wasn't supposed to be a team of rivals in there. And then that was where the great rivalry was. The rivalry was supposed to be with Hillary Clinton and maybe Judd Gregg if he'd stayed on at Commerce. But it wasn't supposed to be within his economic team and that's where it was the most interesting battle in the early part of the administration. This is not an answer to your question, but it's an unresolved one which, in terms of the second term, the lesson the president took appears to be that he needs to spend even less time dealing with Congress, both members of his own party and the Republicans.

And a lot of people saw that has a huge flaw of his first term. That he basically didn't want to do the business that he hates, which is dealing with the members of Congress, who he thinks are all pols and he didn't have to come up that way and so he's not familiar with the kind of trade-offs. And he seems really not interested at all in dealing with Congress. And he should probably fix that if he wants to get some of these other things done. And I just don't think constitutionally he wants to fix it.

Mr. Jones: Do you think Erskine Bowles has a place in this cabinet?

Mr. Brooks: Personally, I would like to see him as the Treasury Secretary. If I were advising the president I would tell him not to do it though, because it really would be a thumb in the eye on the left. And why cause yourself problems? But if he wants to please the David Brooks caucus, yeah. (Laughter)

Catherine Katz: I'm a senior here at Harvard. And one of the things that I love about Harvard is that it's a place that really values the diversity of people and opinion. However, what this election has really shown is that that is true unless you are a student or a person in the Harvard community who has a more conservative point of view. And so any kind of conversation, even about fiscal conservatism, turned into this anger about social issues. So in a place like Harvard where there is such a celebration of

...I always say this to college Republicans... you may think your professors have very simplistic ideas about politics, but remember they have very sophisticated ideas about what they're teaching.

diversity of points of view and opinion, if that doesn't really hold true, where is there going to be room for bipartisanship and bipartisan conversations when you can't even have that in a diverse place where that is celebrated, like at Harvard?

Mr. Brooks: Excellent question.

Mr. Jones: Don't say Yale.

(Laughter)

Mr. Brooks: Yale has the same problem. I was teaching at Yale at the start of the Iraq war and they had all these panel discussions. And there would be nine liberal professors and then they

would wheel out Donald Kagan who was the one conservative on the faculty. And the next night nine other professors and Donald Kagan, the next night nine other professors— (Laughter)

So here I'm sure it's like 15 professors, let's get Harvey Mansfield to come out, 15 more professors, Harvey.

Ms. Hochschild: He loves it. (Laughter)

Mr. Brooks: So I think it's a problem and so I wanted to go into academia, my parents are academics, and my choice was I'm not going to go there. I'm not going to be the only one. And so I went into journalism instead. So there is one choice is just to get away from it, which I think is a rational choice. The brave choice is to go into it, but you're really risking your career because you will face a lot of opposition for reasons that are illegitimate to the academic enterprise, I think.

The second thing to be said and I always say this to college Republicans, is that you may think your professors have very simplistic ideas

about politics, but remember they have very sophisticated ideas about what they're teaching. And I've seen a lot of the college Republicans will say, oh, these faculty members, they're all a bunch of lefties, I'm not going to listen to them. I'm not saying this to you, but I say this in general. Listen to them about their subject, because they really are very sophisticated. Don't think you're superior to them about their subject. But I do think it's a genuine problem at universities, the lack of intellectual diversity and the extreme disincentive for anybody right of center who wants to work in a place like this and be there for students who come in.

Ms. Hochschild: As one of those faculty who may or may not be sophisticated about my subject, there's a real self-reinforcing process here and I have a lot of sympathy for your concern, your comments. I'm very concerned about what you see. I teach race, ethnicity, immigration stuff. I teach a course called Power. It's hard to find really good conservative work to teach. And that's a reinforcing statement about what you just said, but it's actually those of us who seriously try. Charles Murray, maybe; Larry Mead, maybe. You can find two or three people, but it's genuinely difficult to make a syllabus much more representative.

Mr. Jones: Let me say, quite frankly, we at the Shorenstein Center are mindful of this. And quite frankly, we wanted to have David Brooks come because we did not want and do not want the Shorenstein Center or the Kennedy School to be a hostile environment to any ideas that are legitimate ones to be discussed. So I hope you have taken some comfort with having him in the mix.

Jimmy Tingle: I graduated the Kennedy School 2010. Great panel, thanks so much for having it. David touched on something that we don't really hear very much in the discussion of what's wrong with the society. And he mentioned that capitalism being a huge problem for the American family and an impediment. Would you please elaborate on that and what solutions do you see moving forward, how we can make capitalism more effective and better for everybody in the country?

Mr. Brooks: Well, I guess this is not cutting-edge philosophy, but capitalism reinforces personal choice, reinforces the idea that relationships are basically self-interested consumer relationships. It reinforces the idea that human beings are utility maximizing individualistic creatures. So that is, I think, the ethos that comes with the economic system. And to thrive in the ethos and have a healthy society you have to have an equal ethos that

**...capitalism reinforces
personal choice,
reinforces the idea
that relationships are
basically self-interested
consumer relationships.**

countervails all that. And so I would say the Puritans had an ethos that countervails it. Traditional religious societies have a countervailing ethos. And to me the creativity of America is that we have these two competing and contradictory ethos. And my line about my short description of

**...moral materialism...
drove America. But
as the religious side
gets less powerful, the
consumer side takes
over.**

American society is Europeans came here, however many hundreds of years ago, they saw the vast fertility of the land and they had two thoughts. First, that God's plan for humanity could be completed here and, second, they could get really rich in the process. And this moral materialism, which is sort of a Santayana line, drove America. But as the religious side gets less powerful, the consumer side takes over. And I

wrote a book a few years ago called *Bobos in Paradise* about people who are bourgeois and Bohemian and since then we've certainly seen the Bohemian ethos decline and the bourgeois ethos rise. And commerce begins to trump all competing ethos. And I think it's in Asia where you see it the most.

**...one of the causes of
wage stagnation is lack
of worker power.**

Aubrey Merpi: I'm a Master's in Public Policy candidate at the Kennedy School here. Mr. Brooks, last night you mentioned that Republicans ought to embrace a new economic order and shrug off this idea of a big paternalistic government versus limited government.

I'm wondering what role, if any, you think unions should play in this new economic order?

Mr. Brooks: I actually have some sympathy with the idea, and here I'm really not Republican, with the idea that one of the causes of wage stagnation is lack of worker power. I don't think it's the major one, but I do think

**...I do think unions,
private sector unions,
have a completely
legitimate role to play in
the balancing of power.**

unions, private sector unions, have a completely legitimate role to play in the balancing of power. If I were a canny Republican I would say I'm going to really aggressively champion private sector unions and try to divorce them from public sector unions, which I think are more the fiscal problem.

Bill Bates: Simpson and Bowles were on TV yesterday saying, we've made these promises, they're coming due that we can't cover. So in the short term how do we deal with it, but

more importantly, and David, you alluded to money going from the young to the old, how do we deal with these entitlement problems going forward and what's it take for us to get the political will to deal with them?

Mr. Brooks: The only two words that I haven't said is Zeke Emanuel. It's clearly my idea premium support is not going to happen, but Zeke Emanuel has another bunch of Medicare reforms that I think are more likely to get us away from the fee-for-service system. But to me getting away from fee for services is the key.

Ms. Walter: The other thing to remember, too, it is about how much of a factor Americans see this. You can listen to Simpson-Bowles, you can look into to all of the reporting about this. We obviously have serious issues ahead of us. And yet for the average person—and it kind of goes

back to my point about the structure and the lack of support for the establishment—but there is also a sense that, wait a minute, is this support really here? How do I trust that if you do all these things that I'm not going to be the one that loses out? Because it seems like any time you're talking about making these big structural changes, who is going to win and who is going to lose? It always seems like the little people

lose and the big people who are sitting in Washington cutting the deals are going to win. And I think that's where the Tea Party came from and I think you're going to see more and more of that, this idea that you guys talk about these big problems in Washington, and yet, when you go to solve it, how do I know that I'm not going to be taken for a sucker. Because I feel like everywhere I go I'm being taken for a sucker, whether it's big business, whether it's professional sports or now whether it's government and you get tricked.

And the other piece is just purely American. We are a country that loves to eat and loves to support the diet industry. We love to have magazines that are filled with all these people with six-pack abs and yet we have an obesity rate that has skyrocketed. So we don't want to deal with anything if we don't have to, because we can just pretend it's not there. And the same with this deficit. It's not really there 'cause it's not.

Bill Bates: But the time is running out.

Ms. Walter: Yeah, yeah, yeah, well, let's wait. Let's see. (Laughter)

Mr. Dickerson: And if we do go over the fiscal cliff and nothing happens on the Wednesday afterwards, which will be the case, then it would be like the debt limit. Remember where people said —

It always seems like the little people lose and the big people who are sitting in Washington cutting the deals are going to win. And I think that's where the Tea Party came from...

Ms. Hochschild: Crying wolf.

One last comment I have to make very quickly on children/adult. Kids under five don't vote and people over 65 vote a lot.

Mona Stein: Hi. I want to take issue about this Tea Party attitude about lamenting what used to be, like back in the 1700's. As a Jew I wouldn't be here. As a woman I wouldn't be able to speak unless my husband, which I don't have, gave me permission to show up in public. I couldn't be wearing pants, neither could Cynthia. If you were African American you were probably a slave. Bill O'Reilly, if you're a Catholic you wouldn't be having a good time either. I really believe it is their belief that that would be better for them, but they don't really think about what that means. So I would like anyone to comment on that. Thank you.

Mr. Brooks: Okay, well, first, I tried to say last night that none of us would want to go back to that. People like me wouldn't be allowed. There are so many problems with that culture. One of the ones that you read about in the biographies is the incredible emotional coldness of the fathers who did not know how to express their emotions towards their kids. And aside from the racism and the sexism and all the other stuff and the cruelty of the old culture, so I didn't mean to say we could go back. And frankly, I don't think the Tea Party wants to go back to even the 1950's. If you looked at the Paul Ryan budget, he was going to have government be about 19 percent of GDP. Now it's about 24–25. So it's not going back to where it was when Franklin Roosevelt took office, nine or wherever it was.

So I don't think they wanted to go back to the 1890's. They felt a sense of personal responsibility was being threatened. And I think that's what motivated them. I think we all understand the problems of the old Harvard culture or the old American culture and we're just not going back there.

Mr. Jones: David, you are always welcome at Harvard. (Laughter)
It's been wonderful to have you, Cynthia, panel, thank you so much.
(Applause)