the weekly Standard

JANUARY 30, 2017 $5.99

THE TRUMP ERA

WEEKLYSTANDARD.COM

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January 30, 2017 • Volume 22, Number 20

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COVER BY GARY LOCKE

The Fine Art of Changing the Subject

If you hadn't noticed, the election of Donald Trump has led to some, well, *tension* in social settings. Weeks after the vote, families gathered for Thanksgiving and the college kids were just too, too appalled by their parents' deplorable Trumpism to even talk about it. Come Christmas the snowflakes were downright bitter.

Family get-togethers may be one of the rare social settings where people who don't necessarily share political views nonetheless mix. The office is another, one where political talk might normally be politely tucked away but, following the rise of Donald Trump, has become fraught and seemingly inescapable.

More's the pity, says "etiquette expert" Sharon Schweitzer. The founder of a consultancy called Protocol & Etiquette Worldwide, Schweitzer has advice for how "to navigate those post-inauguration thorny political discussions." The advice seemed tailored to the Trump supporters trying not to be outed at cocktail parties. Thus, she suggests you "exercise your right to privacy."

The Scrapbook can just picture the awkward modern moment: What do you do when the seething Hillary supporter who just happens to be your company's CEO goes on an anti-Trump tirade and invites you to join

in the sport? That's when you could use some "authentic statements in your arsenal," Schweitzer says. Such as: "After such a contentious election and the inauguration, I'm keeping my opinion to myself. I appreciate your interest and wish you the best in 2017." Nobody will guess where you stand!

Here are a few more Schweitzer-suggested "Phrases to end a post-inauguration political conversation before it gets heated." They range from the abrupt ("It's nice to meet you, enjoy the rest of [event]. Excuse me.") to the stilted ("Mike, thanks for that post-inauguration update. Sally, as our host you mentioned a best-selling book you were reading. Will you share more please?") to the non sequitur ("Post-inauguration 2017 will be interesting. Who has spring break plans?").

Okay—Judith Martin she ain't. But credit Schweitzer (though she might not describe her efforts this way) with trying to equip Trump supporters with some basic strategies for escaping business affairs where they're being bullied. You don't have to take it. Nor do you have to ruin your career prospects. Instead, you can always just look into the middle distance and say to no one in particular, "Who else has seen the new exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum?" Works every time. ♦

The Long Goodbye

Even with a packed schedule of farewell speeches and his final presidential press conference, Barack Obama managed to find time for exit interviews in his last few White House weeks: There was the *60 Minutes* sit-down, the Lester Holt love-fest, an NPR snoozer, David Axelrod's "Axe Files" podcast, and, who knows, maybe even a Q & A with the *Petaluma Argus-Courier.*

But of all these elegiac essays, none compares with the profile in the *New York Times* limned by the paper's chief literary critic, Michiko Kakutani. It begins with the sort of measured judgment we've come to expect of the *Times* where Mr. Obama is concerned: "Not since Lincoln has there been a president as fundamentally shaped—in his life, convictions and outlook on the world—by reading and writing as Barack Obama."

Barack Obama, center, as a sixth-grader at Honolulu's elite Punahou School in 1972

What is it about Obama that inspires public intellectuals to such piffle? Isn't it enough for Obama's admirers to admire the man without the puffery? And it's not only puffery that comes next, but puffery on stilts. "Like Lincoln," Kakutani says, "Mr. Obama taught himself how to write." *Obama taught himself to write?*

Lincoln had legendarily little in the way of formal schooling (he would

ABOVE, DAVID CLARK; BELOW, NEWSCOM

describe his education as "defective"). Obama, by contrast, went to the most exclusive private school in Hawaii, followed by stints at Occidental College, Columbia University, and Harvard Law School. If Obama had to teach himself to write, the Punahou School has some explaining to do.

But Kakutani doesn't mean that Obama had to teach himself spelling and syntax and grammar. No, what she seems to mean is that no one had to give the future president pointers in writing moving prose. He discovered and developed that talent all on his lonesome. But when and how did Obama find what Kakutani calls his "elastic voice capable of moving easily between the lyrical and the vernacular and the profound"?

It was in those protean days of community organizing in Chicago, when he wrote short stories about the people he met, "working on them after he came home from work," Kakutani writes.

In describing the flavor of these stories, Obama is quick to stress his own maturity and eloquence. "There is not a lot of Jack Kerouac open-road, young kid on the make discovering stuff," he tells the *Times*. "It's more melancholy and reflective." Kakutani likened his work to that of a young Dostoyevsky (actually, she didn't—but The Scrapbook suspects that was simply an oversight).

Now that these short stories are known to exist, only one question remains: Which will come first, their collection and publication in a slender, achingly handsome volume or the Nobel Prize for Literature? ♦

This Week in Trumpoplexy

'Kids at Barack Obama Elementary have known only one president. Many fear the next.

"Overnight their world had shifted, and now the students at Barack Obama Elementary had a pressing question for principal Megan Ashworth: Would the name of their school change?

AND HE FADED QUITE SLOWLY... UNTIL ALL THAT WAS LEFT WERE HIS FAILED POLICIES.

"Would they, the Maryland kids wondered, attend Donald Trump Elementary School?" (*Washington Post*, January 18, 2017). ♦

Whose Neighborhood Is It Anyway?

Whether Barack Obama returns to the craft of short stories or makes with the memoirs, chances are he will be doing much of his writing not in Chicago, but in Washington, where he and his family have chosen to reside.

The ostensible reason for the Obamas' decision is that their younger daughter is halfway through high school, and her parents are reluctant to yank her away from friends and classmates. This reason may even be genuine. But cynics tend to think, and Obama's admirers hope, that the ex-president wants to maintain a partisan presence, in what is now Donald Trump's Washington.

Whatever the reason, count The Scrapbook among the minority of local residents who are not so pleased with the former president's choice. As things stand, the purview of the Secret Service in the life of the nation's capital continues to grow: Security is tighter than ever; more avenues and exits and entrances are permanently blocked; and several times daily,

The Obamas' new Kalorama digs

PAUL J. RICHARDS / AFP / GETTY

downtown traffic comes to a high-alert standstill when, say, Joe Biden grabs lunch. (Please, Mike Pence, just order a pizza.) To extend this supreme annoyance to a residential neighborhood—even a ritzy one like Kalorama—will make daily life in Washington, D.C., a little less convenient.

Obama's decision is unusual, too. Former presidents are a little like retired ministers or ex-college presidents: As a courtesy to their successors, they tend to clear out of town when they lay down their burdens. Thomas Jefferson went back home to Monticello; Harry Truman moved into his late mother-in-law's house near Kansas City; Jimmy Carter returned to Plains, while Gerald Ford relocated to Palm Springs. Only Woodrow Wilson—who had been felled by a stroke and owned no permanent residence—hung around in the capital. Yes, the Clintons did take a place in D.C., but that was in addition to the house in Chappaqua—the way you know the New York address was their primary residence is that's where they put the email server.

Of course, Barack Obama is welcome to live wherever he wants. But Washington, as they say, is not a very big town, and Obama's choice to stick around and play the local hero strikes The Scrapbook as all-too-typically ungracious. ♦

Must Listening

Don't miss the new episode of "Conversations with Bill Kristol," the video series in which The Weekly Standard's editor at large talks philosophy, politics, and culture with big thinkers. A case in point is the most recent program, which features that most worthy of worthies, Scrapbook colleague (and Weekly Standard senior editor) Andrew Ferguson.

In a far-ranging discussion Ferguson offers his thoughts on television: E.B. White thought that the creation of PBS "was the promise of television being fulfilled because it was going to be public," when in practice, now "you turn on a PBS station and you're likely to see doo-wop groups."

And on politics: In the contest between George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton in 1992, Ferguson says he was confident whom the voters—picking between a "World War II hero" and a "guy who talks about his underwear"—would choose. "Of course," Ferguson notes, "I was totally wrong."

Ferguson could not be further from wrong, though, in his assessment of higher education. The author of the trenchant and amusing *Crazy U*, Ferguson remains one of the most compelling critics of the modern university. Not even counting the collapse of intellectual standards, Ferguson says, colleges have made themselves absurd. Such as:

> The way they've given themselves over to marketers. The whole huge edifice that is designed to do nothing but get [students] to borrow money so that they can buy a product that is demonstrably not worth what they say it is. Two things about college. One is people who graduate from it don't really learn a lot. That has clearly been demonstrated. And it costs too much. . . . You have a failed product that sells at an inflated price, [yet] everybody is under social pressure to gain access to it.

Watch the whole thing at ConversationsWithBillKristol.org. ♦

the weekly Standard
www.weeklystandard.com

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, first week in July, and third week in August) at 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $5.99. Back issues, $5.99 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1152 15th St., NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005.

BPA WORLDWIDE

The Doctor Is In

Last week, I finally defended my dissertation at the University of Chicago.

This was a long time coming. A *really* long time. When I first enrolled at the U of C back in 2002, Barack Obama was my state senator. In the time it took me to earn my Ph.D., he went from the Illinois legislature, to the United States Senate, and finally to the White House. So sensitive was I to this unfortunate juxtaposition that I made sure my dissertation defense was scheduled before January 20. That way, I could at least say I finished my degree before he was my *former* president.

What took me so long to finish? I can't really blame the progressivism of the academy or the drivel that higher ed produces every year. For starters, the University of Chicago does not really indulge in the trivial. If anything, the school takes itself a little too seriously: While browsing through the university bookstore last week, I discovered a shirt advertising all the Nobel laureates who had been students or faculty at the university (yes, it included Obama for his Peace Prize . . . no, I didn't buy it). The political science department in particular is a place where people study serious subjects like Aristotle, Congress, or NATO. And while it is liberal, that is actually not a bad thing for a conservative. There is nothing better than a civil disagreement with a serious person.

No, the peculiarities of the modern academy cannot explain away the delay. The truth is that it was nobody's fault but mine that the degree took me so long to finish.

I always found it very enjoyable being a student. The good professors would assign books that I hadn't read before, structure the subject matter in a way that made me reexamine my prior beliefs, and facilitate meaningful classroom discussions. And what did I have to do in return? Usually write a couple papers and take a test or two—all of which demonstrated that I had learned what they taught me. Rarely did I have to come up with my own ideas. And when I did, it'd probably be for the very end of a 25-page paper. No big deal.

BRITT SPENCER

But a dissertation is a different animal altogether. I had to come up with an original argument, rooted in the existing scholarly research but challenging it in some meaningful way, elaborate it over the course of about 250 pages, then defend it to three specialists in the field.

In fact, it didn't matter how good I was in learning other people's ideas. To write a dissertation, I had to have an idea of my own. I tried to think of one all through my mid-20s, but I could never come up with one that fit the bill. So I pretty much gave up, though I remained enrolled in my program. Over the last 10 years, I've written plenty of articles, as well as two books. I believe I've grown as a writer, so it always bugged me that I never came up with an idea that would work for a dissertation. Then I hit upon one, about two years ago.

When I was working on my last book, I was really bothered by how badly James Madison is treated these days. We're in the midst of an Alexander Hamilton boomlet—which is fine by me—but pro-Hamilton writers still do not understand what Madison was all about in the early days under the Constitution. I had an idea about what was motivating Madison, and that became the dissertation.

Ironically, once I came up with the idea, it only took me about 16 months to write the whole thing. Turns out, that was the missing piece of the puzzle. One good idea.

On the flight home from Chicago, I was reading a biography of the Kinks. The first quarter of the book is about their travails as working-class kids in postwar London. It's an engaging read, but there are a million stories identical to that of Ray and Dave Davies. Why was I reading about *them*? It's because Ray had an idea for the five-chord riff that leads off "You Really Got Me," and Dave had an idea to play it loud.

"Huh. I guess I'm just like Ray Davies," I thought to myself as the plane reached its cruising altitude. But I quickly shrugged off that grandiose thought with a quiet chuckle: "I'm comparing myself to the Kinks? Ugh. I'm *already* letting this degree get to my head!"

Jay Cost

the weekly Standard

The Leak War

As journalistic bombshells go, CNN's January 10 report on President Trump was explosive: "Classified documents presented last week to President Obama and President-elect Trump included allegations that Russian operatives claim to have compromising personal and financial information about Mr. Trump, multiple U.S. officials with direct knowledge of the briefings tell CNN."

CNN noted a number of the documents were compiled by a former British intelligence agent and reportedly presented to Obama and Trump by four of America's most senior intelligence officials—Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, FBI director James Comey, CIA director John Brennan, and NSA director Admiral Mike Rogers. The report was noticeably bereft of specific details about the information in the documents.

Clapper and Brennan

NEWSCOM

Enter *BuzzFeed*, which followed up by actually publishing the 35-page dossier at the heart of CNN's report. It was an opposition research report that had been circulating in D.C. for months. No one had reported on its existence—save *Mother Jones*'s David Corn—because the allegations were outrageous and unverifiable. Some of the claims were demonstrably false, as *BuzzFeed* itself admitted ("the report contains errors"). The report, it turned out, had been commissioned and compiled by Fusion GPS, a shadowy opposition-research firm with a reputation for doing black-bag work, primarily at the behest of Democrats, though the original paymasters for the Trump dossier may have been Republican. Fusion GPS last made national news in 2012 for harassing Romney donors during Obama's reelection campaign.

BuzzFeed's publication of raw, unverified accusations that Trump had, among other things, hired Russian prostitutes was a shocking departure from American journalistic standards. But in hot pursuit of clicks, *BuzzFeed* may have served one useful end: They exposed the rotten foundation underlying CNN's ominous-sounding news. Had they not done so, Trump might have been inaugurated under a cloud of baseless speculation and calls for congressional investigations. The real question is why CNN's heavyweight journalists—one of the four bylines was none other than Carl Bernstein—would sign off on allegations of such dubious provenance, when their own report admits they had "not independently corroborated the specific allegations."

The obvious answer is the news value of the incoming and outgoing presidents having been briefed on the existence of the dossier. But these briefings are highly classified. So how did CNN learn what it reported? The likeliest source would be one of the top intelligence officials, whose imprimatur would have given CNN the confidence to run with the story. The scenario is all too plausible. It wasn't that long ago that Democrats—who today are outraged to hear even a discouraging word uttered about the probity of the intelligence community—were themselves outraged at Clapper for misleading Congress about NSA surveillance programs. Brennan, for his part, has been publicly criticizing Trump in harsh terms. And Democrats have their own well-known axe to grind with Comey.

Make no mistake, there is a leak war against Trump going on. The breathless revelations in the press that Trump's incoming national security adviser, Michael Flynn, has been repeatedly calling the Russians—something only intelligence officials are likely to know about—is proof enough of that. There are of course many reasons why an incoming national security adviser might be speaking to foreign interlocutors, and there has been no presidential transition in modern times without the incoming team of officials having such contacts with their foreign counterparts. Trump officials later said Flynn called to offer condolences on Russia's assassinated Turkish ambassador and, again, to offer condolences about a plane carrying a Russian choir shot down over Syria. This seems plausible, though no one not on the calls can know for sure. But the ominous spin the press put on Flynn's phone calls is alarmism for alarmism's sake.

There are substantive reasons to be concerned about the Trump administration's Russia policy, and there are serious and unanswered questions about the potential entanglement of Trump's finances and Russian interests. A sober and responsible press corps would focus on such things. And intelligence professionals, for their part, can share their fears with oversight committees on Capitol Hill; they best serve their country by leaving politics to the politicians.

If the intelligence community is just now sounding alarms about Russia's creeping influence, then they weren't doing their jobs under the last president. And if they can't orchestrate a media campaign less clumsy than this one against Trump, one wonders how skilled they really are. By desperately lobbing spurious accusations, not only have leakers from the intelligence services created a spectacle that has embarrassed the country in the eyes of foreign leaders more than it has embarrassed the incoming president, they may have insulated President Trump from needed criticism when he holds the reins of power.

—Mark Hemingway

After Obama

Eight years ago, reflecting on the inauguration of President Barack Obama, I wrote a piece that made two arguments, which may be worth briefly revisiting.

First, I suggested that January 20, 2009, "marked the end of a conservative era." This proved to be true. Despite the impressive renaissance of aspects of conservatism in the Tea Party efforts of 2010 and sporadically among Republicans in Congress throughout the Obama years; and despite the fact, as I argued then, that "conservatives have been right more often than not—and more often than liberals—about most of the important issues of the day," Donald Trump's nomination and election did confirm the end of the Reagan era. A new conservatism based on old conservative—and liberal—principles is possible. Indeed, it's necessary. But it's not going to be simply a continuation or even a revival of the conservatism of 1980 to 2008.

My second suggestion—perhaps more a hope than a suggestion—was that President Obama could herald the restoration of a healthier liberalism. I quoted Harvey Mansfield from 1978: "From having been the aggressive doctrine of vigorous, spirited men, liberalism has become hardly more than a trembling in the presence of illiberalism. . . . Who today is called a liberal for strength and confidence in defense of liberty?" I asked whether a revived liberalism of strength and confidence in defense of liberty was possible. "Can Obama reshape liberalism to be, as it was under F.D.R., a fighting faith, unapologetically patriotic and strong in the defense of liberty?"

Well, perhaps Obama could have revived such a liberalism. But he manifestly did not. He didn't even try. Ask those yearning or fighting for liberty from Tehran to Moscow, from Cuba to the Middle East. And so a liberalism that once fought for liberty, which had already degenerated into a progressivism that took liberty for granted, became a progressivism that doesn't even seem particularly concerned about liberty. And the nationalist populism that rose in reaction shows a lamentable inclination to forget about liberty as well, especially if the cause of liberty requires sacrifice or long-term effort.

The old conservatism has faded. The recent progressivism has failed. The standard of liberty trails in the dust, unattended by either of the major parties, neglected by the cravenly politically correct and the aggressively politically incorrect. But surely there are those who can see beyond progressivism and look above populism. It is their task today to raise a standard of liberty to which the wise and honest can repair.

—William Kristol

The Trump Era Begins

What we've seen is what we'll get.

BY FRED BARNES

Ronald Reagan loved Washington but disliked the government. George W. Bush hated Washington but liked the government. Donald Trump loathes both Washington and the government.

This is why Trump won't make many accommodations in style or attitude as president. He dislikes Washington and nearly everything in it. His advisers have long since given up on persuading him to act "presidential." Newt Gingrich says the new president is bringing the whole Trump package we saw in the primaries and general election to the White House.

Gingrich actually calls it the full "Donald J. Trump." It consists of bludgeoning what he dislikes the most—political correctness, the left, and those who attack him. Those targets will get no relief. Nor will the bureaucracy, Washington's cast of busybodies who once worked in government and never left, and the press.

Trump will tweet. He will boast. He will speak candidly rather than communicate Washington-style through leaks, gossip, and insinuations. He will be paranoid, having written in *Trump: The Art of the Comeback* that the "slightly paranoid end up being the most successful." He will disappoint Republicans who believe they've tamed him. He will warm up to Democrats willing to do business with him, if there are any.

In the days before his inauguration, he delivered a demonstration of some of what's to come. He boasted at a posh D.C. dinner that 147 diplomats and ambassadors were in attendance. "Never been done before," he said.

When he criticized Democratic congressman John Lewis, Democrats, politically correct Republicans, and the media were appalled. Lewis was identified as a "civil rights icon." Though he was elected to the House in 1986 and has voted a straight party line ever since, his civil rights background has generally made him off-limits to attacks.

But not with Trump. When Lewis said Trump was illegitimate as president, Trump unloaded on him in tweets. Lewis said he would boycott the inauguration. He had said the same about George W. Bush after the 2000 election and skipped that inauguration too. The episodes looked similar, except I don't recall a response by Bush to Lewis.

On the matter of Trump's business interests, he ignored the advice of two "ethics" experts—former lawyers for Presidents Bush and Obama—who insisted he must put his holdings in a blind trust or something equivalent.

They might think so, but the law says otherwise, and Trump prefers to have sons Eric and Donald run the Trump Organization while he's president. The ethics duo "have been exploiting the situation to drag out their 15 minutes of fame unconscionably," Holman Jenkins wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*.

The press anointed them arbiters of what Trump should do, though he is free to do what he wants, legally speaking. Jenkins referred to them as aphids, "sap-sucking insects [and] unfortunately the aphid side of life is the side Washington specializes in." They were too small for Trump to acknowledge.

Polls, even bad ones, are too big for Trump to ignore. His approval numbers are historically low for an incoming president. He has two lines of attack. The polls are "rigged" by the same people "who did the phony election polls," he tweeted three days before his inauguration. Or Democrats were over-polled, driving down his approval rating. He's

THOMAS FLUHARTY

Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard.

closer to being right on the second.

Given the political division in the country and the media's obsession with finding fault with Trump, he'd be smart to pay little attention to polls. Gingrich has a better idea. Trump isn't in the same situation as Reagan in 1981. He's more like Margaret Thatcher in her first two years as British prime minister. He should learn from her.

Her poll numbers were dreadful. The press was so critical of her, she stopped reading newspapers. She was called illegitimate. Her agenda—for instance, crushing a coal miners' strike and closing unprofitable mines—seemed unachievable. But she was tougher than her enemies and defeated them.

Is Trump capable of doing what Thatcher did? I suspect he thinks so. He's a believer in suppressing thoughts of failure. As a young man, he listened to sermons by Norman Vincent Peale, the author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*. He regards Peale as the greatest speaker he ever heard.

Trump believes in himself. And why not? He defeated a gang of 16 for the GOP nomination and whipped Hillary Clinton, once seen as a candidate for coronation. He did it largely without help from consultants, pollsters, and strategists.

I think Trump is tougher and smarter than his adversaries. That could lead as easily to blunders as to successes. But unlike Obama, he's willing to compromise. In that, he's more like Reagan, whose legacy is permanent. Obama's won't be.

Democrats and progressives may be too blindly anti-Trump to cooperate. But it's not Trump's policies they revile. What progressives detest about Trump "has mainly to do with appearance, attitude, style, and language," Barton Swaim wrote in the *Washington Post*.

If progressives were smart, they would recognize the possibility of dealing more productively with Trump than with a principled conservative. "But I'm not sure they're smart," wrote Swaim. I'm not either.

And that will leave Trump with the job of draining the swamp full-time. ♦

In Some Ways, He's a Bit Like Ike

Our first nonpolitician president since Eisenhower.

BY BRET BAIER

During the 1952 campaign, Dwight Eisenhower boldly announced that if he won the presidency, "I shall go to Korea." He believed he could broker peace in the Korean conflict, which had reached a stalemate under Harry Truman. About two months before he took office, Ike flew to Korea on a visit that would set the stage for the end of the Korean War six months into his presidency.

President Truman was outraged that a president-elect would step into foreign policy in such a direct way. It was an audacious break with protocol. But the public was behind Ike, and, more important, the North Koreans and their Chinese allies took him seriously. In their eyes, he was not the inexperienced president-elect but the revered general who meant business. He had credibility with them that Truman lacked. When I was researching and writing my new book, *Three Days in January: Dwight Eisenhower's Final Mission*, I was intrigued by this story. I thought it demonstrated how a nonpolitician could shake things up.

Ike's Korean venture immediately came to mind when President-elect Donald Trump broke decades of U.S. China policy by having a direct phone conversation with the president of Taiwan. The Obama administration was horrified that Trump would trample on such delicate soil before he'd even assumed office. Trump's detractors immediately howled that it was a gaffe, only to learn that the call had been planned. Trump, it seems, is operating under the same premise—if something is not working, try a new way.

The comparisons between Eisenhower and Trump are irresistible, even if the contrasts are obvious. As the first nonpolitician to be elected president since Ulysses Grant, Eisenhower came into office determined to do things differently and fix what wasn't working. He had a healthy distrust of professional politicians and, much like Trump, wanted a cabinet of doers, not operatives. A journalist joked that Eisenhower's cabinet consisted of "eight millionaires and a plumber." (The plumber was his secretary of labor, the leader of a plumber's union.) Some of Ike's choices might have been made by Trump—such as Charlie Wilson, the CEO of General Motors, as secretary of defense, a real outlier move, comparable to Trump's selection of Rex Tillerson, chairman and CEO of ExxonMobil as secretary of state.

In Trump's view, successful diplomacy is a matter of being a tough negotiator and dealmaker, and Tillerson has certainly been that in countless foreign undertakings on behalf of his company. President Trump is betting he'll bring those skills to work for the American people. For defense, Trump has made another surprise choice—retired general James Mattis, who, without a congressional waiver, would not even have been eligible for the job. The ideal of civilian control of the military is so essential to American governance that military officers are banned from serving as secretary of defense for seven years after retiring. Mattis had no trouble getting his

Bret Baier is the chief political anchor of Fox News Channel and the anchor and executive editor of Special Report with Bret Baier. *His new book,* Three Days in January: Dwight Eisenhower's Final Mission, *has just been released.*

waiver, but Eisenhower might not have approved. As a general himself, Ike was sensitive about not filling his administration with military men. He was afraid of giving the impression that he saw the White House as a war room, and he valued the civilian counterpoint.

HIDDEN HAND VS. 140 CHARACTERS

One of Eisenhower's greatest strengths was what political scientist Fred I. Greenstein called his "hidden hand" style. This quality allowed him to mask his true intentions until the time was right, playing his cards carefully, just as he did at his beloved game of bridge.

Trump's penchant for surprise and redirection of media focus can at times have similar effects. Trump often talks about his ability to size up the strengths and weaknesses of others and thus find ways of working with them and getting what he wants. He likes to keep people in suspense. On the other hand, Trump's Twitter feed reflects a more impulsive style (like his tweets about the tepid ratings of his former show *The Apprentice* that went after the show's new host, Arnold Schwarzenegger). The instant response, instant reaction mode of Twitter can come across as rash and undisciplined, especially when it is employed late at night. Trump's supporters love his off-the-cuff tweets, but most experts say they may not serve Trump well once he's in office. Governing is a very different matter than campaigning. That said, most "experts" were wrong about the election results.

THE RUSSIA QUESTION

One of Eisenhower's top priorities as president was to establish a working relationship with the Soviet Union—and this seemed a tantalizing possibility after the death of Stalin. Ike's openness came from his personal experience with the Russians during World War II when they served as our allies to defeat Hitler. He was inspired by their enormous courage and sacrifice, and he could never bring himself to see them as evil. He believed that our two nations could find points of agreement on major issues, even if our ideologies were vastly different. He waged a slow and steady effort for compromise, always making it clear that he was willing to retaliate if the Soviets stepped out of line, but always hoping for a better outcome.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Eisenhower with Charlie Wilson at an inaugural ball in Georgetown, January 1953

In 1959, near the end of Ike's second term, it looked as if he had achieved a breakthrough when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev visited the United States. After Khrushchev made a tour across the country, the two leaders settled in for a private time at Camp David, where the woodsy setting inspired an unexpected intimacy. They watched westerns together after Khrushchev admitted he shared Ike's love for them and talked in an unusually warm and personal manner. At the end of the visit, Khrushchev invited Ike and his family to visit him the following year in Moscow, but it never happened. The downing of a U.S. spy plane over Soviet airspace refroze relations.

Then, as now, the relationship between our nations was complicated and often dangerous. The Russia Trump will meet is different from the old Soviet Union—perhaps less ideological and more concerned with traditional national interests—despite Russian president Vladimir Putin's posturing. President Trump believes he can establish common ground with Putin, and Ike might favor that goal, but he would also advise caution, knowing well how quickly circumstances can change and how adeptly Putin uses his own "hidden hand." The hacking ahead of the election that U.S. intelligence officials are convinced was directed by the "highest levels" in the Russian government further intensifies the split between how the new president has talked about potential U.S.-Russia relations and how his party has viewed the Russian threat. Trump's reflexive retorts on Twitter questioning the intelligence that blames Russia for the hacking is counterbalanced by his choice of former Indiana senator Dan Coats to be his nominee for national intelligence director. Coats has a long public history of speaking out about the geopolitical threat posed to the United States by Russia.

THE BIGGEST CONTRAST

In the weeks before he took office, President Trump created buzz by not taking all of his daily national security briefings, choosing to say, "if something changes come tell me." Were Eisenhower alive he would issue a strong warning similar to one he gave John F. Kennedy during the weeks and days before the latter took office. In drawing comparisons, it might surprise people to know that Trump and Kennedy have one very significant characteristic in common: an apparent disdain for the vast national security apparatus. Ike once said he thought Kennedy viewed the presidency as "an institution that one man could handle with an assistant here and another there." Trump, with his small circle of close advisers, may share that penchant.

Repeatedly, President Eisenhower explained to President-elect Kennedy the significance of national security

briefings—with everyone in the room, vigorously debating options. Kennedy clearly brushed off the counsel, and quickly dismantled much of Ike's structure once he took office. The result: Months into his presidency Kennedy made a fateful decision on the Bay of Pigs invasion that led to the Cuban missile crisis the following year. Kennedy later called it a disaster.

But Kennedy then knew where to turn for advice—to the former President Eisenhower, whom Kennedy flew to Camp David to consult. "No one knows how tough this job is until he's been in it a few months," Kennedy said to Ike at a Camp David meeting after the Bay of Pigs fiasco. Eisenhower replied, "Mr. President, if you will forgive me, I think I mentioned that to you three months ago." After researching Eisenhower for *Three Days*, I'm almost certain Ike would likewise advise Trump that while the president is the ultimate decision-maker, he needs that guidance every day.

Trump can be a risk taker, but he makes risk-reward calculations designed to win the high stakes game of foreign policy. For him, winning is everything—he notoriously despises "losers"—so his determination to strike a new tone and strategic approach on foreign policy is fundamentally based on the belief that he can succeed where others have failed. Richard Nixon thought so too. In December 1987, when Trump was first considering a run for the presidency at the age of 41, he gave an interview to Phil Donahue, arguing one of his favorite themes—that our allies must compensate the United States for its military protection. The appearance earned him a letter from Nixon, whose notable foreign policy achievements included a normalization of relations with China. Nixon wrote to Trump, "I did not see the program, but Mrs. Nixon told me that you were great. . . . As you can imagine, she is an expert on politics and she predicts whenever you decide to run for office you will be a winner!" Trump says he plans to frame the letter and hang it in the Oval Office. ♦

Affairs of State

Not all Rex Tillerson's challenges will come from abroad. BY JEFF BERGNER

The secretary of state is usually thought of as the principal cabinet position, and indeed he or she is first among cabinet officers and fourth in line overall to succeed the president. But when Rex Tillerson shows up at Foggy Bottom, he will discover a department that faces many challenges, not all of which arise from international actors. There are deeper structural challenges confronting the State Department that have evolved over time and fundamentally altered the role the agency plays in U.S. foreign policy. A realignment is both necessary and possible.

One might be tempted to think that since the United States has been actively engaged around the globe since the end of World War II, this should be a golden age for the department. But Congress and the executive branch have created a number of strong rival institutions that did not exist for most of our nation's history. It has been fairly said that Dean Acheson was the last secretary of state to whom the president looked exclusively for guidance on foreign policy issues.

The first rival of the State Department is the National Security Council (NSC) and particularly the national security adviser. The national security adviser usually sees the president first in the morning and last in the evening, a proximity and access that offer considerable power. Presidents have used the NSC in various ways, some leaning more and some less heavily on it—but even the least-used NSC is always an important source of policy ideas and not just the coordinating body it was designed to be. In the case of President Obama, who kept foreign policy-making tightly controlled by the White House, the NSC staff ballooned to nearly 400 professional employees. It is no surprise that Hillary Clinton seemed unable to point to any significant accomplishments during her tenure as secretary of state.

A second and even stronger competitor is the Department of Defense. This is true for reasons having to do with policy, programs, and personnel. The undersecretary of defense for policy sits atop a policy-planning staff of roughly 4,000. One might compare it with the much-vaunted State Department policy planning staff (about which legends go back to George Kennan) that employs a staff of 20-30. Meanwhile, the Defense Department maintains programs—many referred to as "train and equip"—in countries throughout the world. The dollar value of these programs exceeds the dollar value of State Department programs in many countries. Often these programs have the added advantage of being run by regional combatant commanders, who have close ties not only to their reciprocal militaries but to the governments of recipient nations. Finally, as to personnel, there is simply no comparison between State and Defense. Which department can dig new wells if they are required? Which can deliver massive amounts of food or other emergency relief supplies? Which can provide security for its people who go out into the countryside in dangerous settings? Which can build new facilities or repair old ones?

A third major competitor of the State Department is the intelligence community. Historically, the State Department exercised America's foreign reporting function. American diplomats never had a corner on

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information coming out of foreign countries, but they were certainly first among equals in being able to report to Washington what was occurring abroad. This has all changed. Since the end of World War II the United States has maintained a vast intelligence empire that has expanded with every new technological development. Beyond the reporting and analysis of human agents, we have satellite intelligence, signals intelligence, and a total of 17 separate intelligence agencies. A sure sign of the erosion of State's reporting function is the very limited role of the State Department's own intelligence arm, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. The work of this small group is entirely derivative, dependent on other intelligence collection agencies for its information, justifying its continued role by appeal to its superior—but scarcely demonstrated—interpretive skills.

Consider also how the historical negotiating function of the State Department has been eroded by the creation of the Special Trade Representative. Prior to 1962, the State Department was the lead agency on trade negotiations. No longer. State is now but one of numerous departments and agencies that make up the interagency trade negotiating team, represented by a bureau of economic affairs and a tiny staff reporting to the undersecretary for economic affairs. Similarly, many other cabinet departments have assumed a major role in international economic policy. The Treasury Department, for example, maintains a large international division that not only manages international monetary policy issues and regulatory standard-setting, but is also tasked with enforcement of international economic sanctions.

In addition to bureaucratic competition, the evolution of technology—in particular communications technology—has also eroded the traditional role of the State Department. The State Department is by no means the only or even the most important channel in which information from abroad is passed along to Washington decision-makers. Today Americans are everywhere—businesses, students, tourists, not-for-profit organizations, church groups, and others all reside and work abroad. Foreign newspapers, periodicals, phone conversations, Skype and email exchanges—all offer avenues by which an abundance of information is generated about foreign governments, trends, and possibilities. Ambassadors no longer occupy a unique and privileged position abroad but, rather, look increasingly like anachronisms.

THOMAS FLUHARTY

Technology has changed outbound communications as well. No longer are ambassadors needed to craft messages from the U.S. government, much less to use their judgment and creativity to shape American policy positions. Detailed input to American embassies comes regularly from Washington. Ambassadors are regularly supplied with "talking points" and tasked to deliver these to recipient governments. Emails and cables go regularly to our embassies abroad instructing them on the finest and most nuanced points of the messages to be delivered. Moreover, foreign governments frequently learn about American government decisions, well in advance of when American ambassadors might share news with them.

Given these challenges, how can the State Department play a leadership role? How should the new secretary think about his role? Obviously, a special relationship with the president is beneficial in navigating the interagency process and its all but certain conflicts. Apart from this, one must accept the fact that the State Department is not operating in territory that it has all to itself. It will inevitably have to work within the interagency process and find a way to make the most of it. This can be done successfully only through the tried and true process of having more and better ideas than its competitors. This in turn will mean breaking certain longstanding and self-imposed cultural limits, in particular moving beyond the functions of negotiating and reporting in which the department has traditionally engaged.

A good place to begin would be for the new secretary and his team to think through a set of broad goals that will guide them over the next four years. It is all too easy to fall into the trap of becoming totally reactive, allowing the urgent to drive out what is important, and becoming mired in day-to-day crisis management. The new secretary and his team should ask: What would success look like at the end of four years? What are we trying to achieve? Here are a few ideas:

(1) A Russia with which the United States cooperates in areas of common interest, but which understands American resolve in areas of difference.

(2) A China that has ended its threatening behavior in Asia and plays a constructive role in the world economy and political order.

(3) A North Korea without Kim Jong-un and without nuclear weapons, or a Korean peninsula without North Korea altogether.

(4) An Iran whose geopolitical pretensions have been reduced to a more normal level.

(5) A Cuba without Raúl Castro, which has opened up its economic and political system.

6) A Venezuela without Nicolás Maduro, which restores Venezuela's traditional freedoms.

(7) A Saudi Arabia that no longer finances radical Islamism.

(8) A strong NATO alliance in which all partners meet minimally agreed levels of participation.

(9) A Palestinian population that understands that it too must play a constructive role if there is to be peace, much less a two-state solution.

(10) A reformed foreign assistance program that focuses on what actually works and leverages trade and investment for economic development.

These are outcomes that could provide a template for creative policy-making. The department could think through and craft policies—diplomatic and economic, political and military—that are in the service of these goals. This would require new and far bolder thinking than the department has displayed in many years. These would include setting out clear policy markers (for example, no Iranian close approaches to U.S. ships in international waters), upending and creating new regional alliances, conditioning foreign assistance and contributions to international organizations on pro-American policies and votes, expanding covert programs, and a host of other policies. Even career officials, who will not at first welcome changes to time-honored ways of doing business, might in the end find much here to support, not least restoring State to a lead role in foreign policy-making.

Inevitably the State Department will spend much time responding to crises and to events that we cannot yet envision. But if that is all it does, it will have ceded its agenda to others. Far better to lead. ♦

The Prime Minister Goes All In

Britain's exit from the EU will be wholehearted.

BY DOMINIC GREEN

'Brexit means Brexit," Theresa May said in July 2016 when she replaced David Cameron as Britain's prime minister. Since then, May has continued to insist that Brexit will mean Brexit, but without offering even a taste of what Brexit means. Would it be a "hard Brexit," cutting Britain off entirely from Europe's markets? Or would it be a "soft Brexit," in which Britain regained control of its borders and parliamentary sovereignty, while retaining membership in the single European market?

Theresa May means what she says.

As of January 17, we know that May meant what she said. Speaking at Lancaster House in London, the prime minister laid out a 12-point program for the restoration of Britain's sovereignty. "The United Kingdom is leaving the European Union," she said. "My job is to get the right deal for Britain as we do." Her plan amounts to a soft path to a hard Brexit. How hard is up to the other 27 states of the EU.

Britain, May said, will regain control of its borders and create a system of "controlled" immigration: "You cannot control immigration overall when there is free movement to Britain from Europe." The jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice will be canceled: "Because we will not have truly left the European Union if we are not in control of our own laws."

May acknowledged that if Britain recovered control over immigration policy and legislation, it could not remain in the EU's single market, and would have to leave its customs union too. She seeks to negotiate new terms, a "bold and ambitious free trade agreement" that would give British companies "the maximum freedom to trade with and operate within European markets—and let European businesses do the same."

Members of the EU's single market are not allowed to make trade deals with nonmember states. Once Britain leaves, it will be free to negotiate with the rest of the world. Talks are already afoot with China, Brazil, India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Gulf states. Prospects for the biggest prize, a trade deal with the United States, have improved since last April, when President Obama warned the British that if they dared to vote for Brexit, they would find themselves "at the back of the queue." With the Trump administration imminent, Britain, May said, is at "the front of the line."

Still, as May and the EU negotiators know, the short-term consequences of Brexit will depend on the terms of Britain's economic exchanges with the

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EU. In 2015, Europe accounted for 44 percent of Britain's export trade: 220 billion pounds out of 510 billion. The percentage has fallen from 60 percent in 2000, due to the growth of non-European markets and the weakness of the eurozone, but Europe remains essential to British exporters. May wants to sustain the "frictionless" transit of goods and services in both directions across the English Channel, and between the Republic of Ireland, which will remain an EU state, and Northern Ireland, which will leave the EU along with the rest of the United Kingdom.

"Our policy is having our cake and eating it," foreign secretary Boris Johnson promised last September. Britain, Johnson said, could obtain a deal that would limit the movement of workers and immigrants, but retain tariff-free terms for the movement of goods.

Yet EU leaders have been adamant that this will not be possible. Some have suggested that Britain should be punished, *pour encourager les autres*. "There must be a threat, there must be a risk, there must be a price," French president François Hollande asserted in October. If the union allowed the British to benefit from leaving, then other countries might follow.

After Johnson expressed his desire both to possess and ingest the cake of prosperity, Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, called "the cake philosophy" a "pure illusion." Tusk had a gastronomic proposal of his own. "To all who believe in it, I propose a simple experiment. Buy a cake, eat it, and see if it is still there on the plate." Britain was either in or out of Europe, with no deals or concessions. "The only real alternative to a hard Brexit is no Brexit, even if today hardly anyone believes in such a possibility."

After May's speech, there is no real alternative, and nobody believes in no Brexit. Tusk did not respond sweetly to May's speech. "No cakes on the table for anyone," he threatened, "only salt and vinegar." Guy Verhofstadt, the EU's Brexit negotiator, added some edible metaphors of his own on Twitter: "the days of UK cherry picking and Europe a la cart [sic] are over."

Presumably, Tusk was not referring to salt and vinegar potato chips. This British delicacy does not form a significant part of the country's exports to the rest of the EU. The suspension of free trade between Britain and the other 27 EU states may, however, cost a great deal in tariffs. But if that happens, it is Mr. Tusk and the people of the EU states who will be getting the salt and vinegar. According to an October projection by the think tank Civitas, Britain will get the biggest slice of the tariff cake.

London papers from the day after May's speech

If May cannot negotiate a trade deal with Brussels, trade exchanges between Britain and the EU will probably default to the World Trade Organization's Most Favoured Nation terms. Based on 2015 figures, tariffs on British businesses exporting to Europe would total 5.2 billion pounds. But they would cost EU businesses exporting to Britain 12.9 billion pounds—more than twice as much.

Apart from being a net contributor to the EU's budget in Brussels, the U.K. is also a net importer of EU goods. In 2015, when Britain's exports to the EU were worth 220 billion pounds, Britain paid 290 billion for EU imports. Tariffs would cost the economies of 22 of the 27 remaining EU states more than they will cost Britain. German businesses will pay 3.4 billion pounds on exports to Britain, but British businesses selling exports to German businesses will pay 0.9 billion. French businesses will pay 1.4 billion pounds on exports to Britain, but British businesses selling to French companies will pay 0.7 billion. Depreciation in the value of sterling might increase these imbalances, by reducing the cost of British exports.

May cautioned that the imposition of tariffs by the EU would be "an act of calamitous self-harm." The leaders of the EU are aware of the trade figures. She also warned against "trying to hold things together by force, tightening a vise-like grip that ends up crushing into tiny pieces the very things you want to protect." This, though, is the logic of the EU, a brazenly undemocratic entity whose animating principle is not the freedom of its citizens or the profit of its businesses, but the perpetuation of its own power.

May has an alternative plan for the worst-case scenario: "change the basis of Britain's economic model." Britain could deregulate its financial sector even further. EU businesses would lose access to the financial markets in the City of London, and the City would become an offshore bank for European tax-evaders.

"The British people are not going to lie down and say, 'Too bad, we've been wounded,'" May's finance minister Philip Hammond told the German newspaper *Welt am Sonntag* on January 15. "We will change our model, and we will come back, and we will be competitively engaged."

And what will happen if an already unpopular EU passes the cost of teaching the British a lesson to its taxpayers? Let them eat cake. ♦

LEON NEAL / GETTY

Ridicule Didn't Work

The Sokal hoax and its lessons.

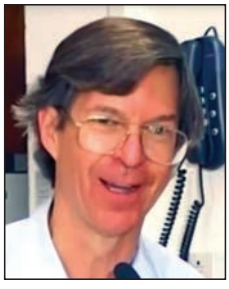
BY JAMES PIERESON & NAOMI SCHAEFER RILEY

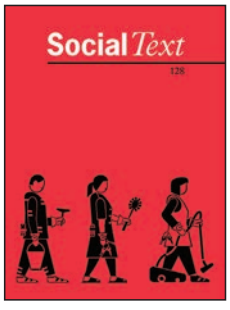
Twenty years ago, the academic journal *Social Text* published an article with the trendy title "Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity." The article claimed that quantum gravity is nothing but a social and linguistic construct that physicists are trying to pass off as a genuine account of the universe around us. Theoretical physics, the article concluded, is just a bunch of meaningless words and symbols.

The actual meaningless words and symbols were those in the article itself, which consisted of high-flown gibberish. It was a postmodern spoof of postmodernism.

The article, author Alan Sokal would later write, was "a pastiche of left-wing cant, fawning references, grandiose quotations, and outright nonsense," all "structured around the silliest quotations" by postmodernist academics. He hoped by his hoax to make an important point: that humanities professors under the influence of postmodern doctrines had discarded basic standards of logic and proof and were prone to believe—even publish—utter silliness.

Today most academics working in the humanities appear to have dismissed the Sokal hoax as a minor mishap in the unfolding of an important intellectual trend. Yes, there was some discomfiture, but neither the journal nor its editors suffered any long- term damage as a result of the hoax. *Social Text* is still published by Duke University Press. The intellectual currents of postmodernism persist.





Above, Sokal in 2009; below, a recent issue of Social Text

No lessons seem to have been learned from the hoax: The trends that Sokal spoofed remain trendy in academic liberal arts. "You might have thought that humanities scholars, and particularly those working in subfields of cultural studies, would have been mortified with embarrassment, like a pretentious man who got caught mistaking his son's finger-paintings for Jackson Pollock originals," says intellectual historian Wilfred McClay. "But they weren't much embarrassed, and those fields have not suffered noticeably."

Postmodern academics have vigorously guarded their reputations—and their turf. Postmodernism was designed to challenge and undermine traditional institutions just as much as it was designed to undermine traditional literary analysis. But Sokal turned the tables on them, undermining the enterprise of postmodernism itself. James Ceaser, professor of political science at the University of Virginia, says the newfangled linguistic theorists were very much not amused: "They reacted like bourgeois academics, condemning [it as an] attack on the standards of academic integrity."

Though the Sokal hoax may not have changed academia, it certainly helped to alter the public's view of it. As McClay notes, "the Sokal controversy (and the nonresponse to it) have contributed in their own small way to the erosion of claims to expert knowledge made by academic professionals in this country and around the world. The general public is increasingly disinclined to trust experts, and to see expert knowledge itself as politicized and tendentious." This is true: By now the public is skeptical of expert claims in a variety of fields, whether they come from scientists making large claims about climate change, pollsters predicting election outcomes, or psychiatrists positing that gender is a social construct that can be altered by surgery.

It appears that Sokal himself was

SOKAL: YOUTUBE

James Piereson is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute. Naomi Schaefer Riley is a senior fellow at the Independent Women's Forum.

'A Pastiche of Left-Wing Cant'

An excerpt from Alan Sokal's submission to *Social Text*: "But deep conceptual shifts within twentieth-century science have undermined this Cartesian-Newtonian metaphysics[1]; revisionist studies in the history and philosophy of science have cast further doubt on its credibility[2]; and, most recently, feminist and post-structuralist critiques have demystified the substantive content of mainstream Western scientific practice, revealing the ideology of domination concealed behind the façade of "objectivity."[3] It has thus become increasingly apparent that physical "reality," no less than social "reality," is at bottom a social and linguistic construct; that scientific "knowledge," far from being objective, reflects and encodes the dominant ideologies and power relations of the culture that produced it; that the truth claims of science are inherently theory-laden and self-referential; and consequently, that the discourse of the scientific community, for all its undeniable value, cannot assert a privileged epistemological status with respect to counter-hegemonic narratives emanating from dissident or marginalized communities. . . ." ◆

only trying to make a narrow point against the postmodernists, which was to limit their theories to their own academic bailiwicks and to keep them out of the hard sciences. It is, in other words, perfectly all right to undercut the liberal arts, social sciences, and the law by positing they are merely "social constructs," but another thing altogether to make the same claims against consequential fields such as physics or medicine. Indeed, Sokal now seems to believe that this lack of trust in the experts is due more to the anti-intellectualism of the public than to distrust of flaky academic theorizing. Presumably that's what he meant when he told the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that "George W. Bush and his friends . . . showed where science bashing can lead in the real world."

Sokal's original hoax may have ridiculed "left-wing cant" but it did little to blunt the ascendancy of the left on campus. Fewer professors today would dare to take on the postmodernists in the manner Sokal did two decades ago. This should serve as a warning to those who think that professors in the hard sciences might act as a check on the absurdities committed by their colleagues in the humanities. Academe is now much more of an ideological monolith than it was two decades ago.

The general public has made no such movement to the left. Which means that over the decades, the gulf between academe and the taxpayers called upon to support it has widened. The tension between town and gown is growing, McClay points out, in part because highly ideological fields such as gender and race studies have broken out of the academic hothouse and into the mainstream of American life and politics.

As there is no longer any serious check on extremism from within the academic world, that check is going to have to come from the public at large as expressed through politics and elections. In this sense academia is no different from any other sector of American life: If it cannot regulate itself, it may eventually find itself regulated by others, and in ways not to its liking. ♦

See No Evil

A tale of two New Year's Eves.

BY PAULINA NEUDING

Jimmie Åkesson with the 'kind of wristband that works against sex offenders'

Stockholm

On New Year's Eve 2015, more than 600 women and girls were victims of sexual assault at the Cologne Central Station—the worst mass sexual attack in peacetime Europe. A massive effort by the German police prevented comparable chaos this past New Year's Eve.

Similar abuse was reported in Sweden a year ago, albeit on a smaller scale. In Kalmar, for instance, more than 30 women reported that they had been surrounded and sexually assaulted by groups of men. As in Cologne, the recurrence of such attacks seems to have been prevented this December 31, although the police effort was much smaller than in Germany—92 police officers were on patrol in the Swedish capital of Stockholm, compared with an extra 1,700 in Berlin.

How was it possible that such small forces in Sweden prevented a repeat of last year's calamity?

One answer could be that Swedish women simply took extra precautions. According to Kalmar police, there were unusually few women and girls at the New Year's celebration in the town square this year. The contrast reflects a profound difference in how Germany and Sweden—the two countries in Europe that have received the highest number of asylum seekers in recent years—manage crime related to asylum immigration, specifically large-scale sexual harassment.

This New Year's Eve in Cologne, about 1,500 police officers were assigned to the streets, more than 10 times the number in 2015. Large groups of North African males were held up and registered at the square where most attacks took place last year, after police received reports of "highly aggressive" men on trains bound for the city center. Passengers that fit the profile of the previous year's offenders were questioned and registered. Anyone without valid identification was

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made to leave or taken into custody.

Unsurprisingly, the strategy has sparked a debate on racial profiling in Germany. Cologne's chief of police, Jürgen Mathies, stressed that the actions were based on very distinct profiling after last year's events, in accordance with traditional police work, and that they had nothing to do with racism. The chairman of the Federal German Police Union, Ernst Walter, argued strongly that last year's atrocities likely would have recurred without the strategy of prevention:

> The offenders we were looking for were not a gray-haired 60-year-old man or a family. Consequently, we obviously let North African families through the controls. The offender profile we had was of a young man of North African origin. And when they attack in masses, they must also be controlled in masses.

This kind of straight talk from Swedish police, or any Swedish authority, is unthinkable. Swedish prime minister Stefan Löfven proudly claims that he runs the world's first "feminist cabinet." (Sorry, Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau.) Still, it has yet to protect women's right to move freely in public spaces.

The attacks in Cologne on New Year's Eve 2015 affected Sweden in an unexpected way. When Swedish media reported that the overwhelming number of suspects in Germany were migrants, it was a break with established guidelines: Unlike in Germany, media in Sweden only rarely report the ethnicity of suspected or even convicted criminals.

After the events in Cologne, that changed and news stories of similar incidents suddenly surged; group attacks against women were reported not only from New Year's celebrations, but also from Swedish swim centers and music festivals.

In early January 2016, Eriksdalsbadet, Stockholm's main swim center, decided to separate men and women in jacuzzis as a consequence of sexual harassment by "unaccompanied minors"—a group consisting mainly of Afghan males who seek asylum in Sweden as minors but are often older. Police also had to be called in to patrol the center.

Less than two weeks after the Cologne attacks, the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* revealed that there had been similar abuse at the summer music festival We Are Stockholm in August the previous two years. Numerous young men, again mainly "unaccompanied minors," surrounded and attacked young girls—a modus operandi described by the organizers as a shocking "new phenomenon." In 2015, police made 200 suspects leave the festival area.

After the news reports, a district police chief in Stockholm, Peter Ågren, admitted in a now-notorious statement that the incidents were covered up out of fear of "playing into the hands of the Sweden Democrats"—the country's anti-immigration party. Similarly, Sweden's national chief of police, Dan Eliasson, told German magazine *Der Spiegel*: "But we did not go public—at the time the topic did not have the status that it got after the events of Cologne."

While both police and the city authorities of Stockholm knew of the attacks, they allowed them to continue for two years with no warning to the teenagers at the festivals or their parents.

This is not the only time Swedish authorities have exhibited a curious lack of interest in crime against women by immigrant males. In January 2016, a Swedish-Lebanese employee at an asylum center for unaccompanied minors, 22-year-old Alexandra Mezher, was stabbed to death by an adult man seeking asylum as a minor. When asked on Swedish public television about the murder, Eliasson answered:

> I am obviously heartbroken for everyone involved, of course. For the person killed and their relatives. But also for the young guy who commits such a dreadful event. What has that person been through? What circumstances did this guy grow up under? What trauma does he carry with him? This whole refugee crisis shows how unfair life is in many parts of the world and we need to try our best to help.

Later, Eliasson expressed regret over his response and its focus on the perpetrator, but it didn't take long until he again showed his unwillingness to take violence against women seriously. In advance of last summer's pop festivals, Swedish police took a number of precautions. An unusually large number of police officers were assigned to We Are Stockholm in August, and for the first time surveillance cameras were put to use.

The one action that caught everyone's attention, however, was the distribution by the police of rubber wristbands with the words "Don't grope." Eliasson explained this in an interview: "We wanted to make guys aware, that this [groping] is a crime. In plain Swedish, Don't do this kind of crap."

The wristbands sparked a fierce debate in Sweden, and Eliasson was accused of turning a serious issue into a PR stunt, rather than combating it with traditional police methods. Jimmie Åkesson, chairman of the anti-establishment Sweden Democrats, brought a prop with him on stage during a speech in July: "There is only one kind of wristband that works against sex offenders," he said, showing the audience a pair of handcuffs.

This month, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, a government agency, reported what it called "alarming" new figures: The number of women who state that they have been victims of sex crimes more than doubled from 2012 to 2015, from 1.4 percent to 3 percent of the female population. Thirty-one percent of Swedish women report feeling insecure or afraid in their own neghborhoods in the evening—an increase of 25 percent from 2015. Twelve percent stay in at night out of fear of being assaulted.

Last March, staff reported that fewer women and girls now visit the Eriksdalsbadet swim center. As in Kalmar, girls and women seem to take new precautions in public arenas.

The rise in women's insecurity is the highest recorded by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention since its surveys were introduced in 2006. But at least their country boasts a feminist government. ♦

Wandering in the Wilderness

What will Bill Clinton do now?

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

Clinton campaigning in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, in the fall

So what now for the 42nd president of the United States? Will Bill Clinton become, in the political world, the equivalent of those TV actors who had a top-rated series once upon a time and are now reduced to doing cameos on quiz shows? He has been around for so long that it is difficult to imagine his ever going away.

He did not go away, certainly, after leaving office. He needed to stay "relevant" for the first couple of years because he was, in the words of his spouse, "dead broke," and had bills to pay, his and hers. So there was the inevitable book. And there were the speeches. It didn't take long for him to become, first, solvent, then rich, and then hog rich.

But with Bill Clinton, it was never about the money. His appetites were always more visceral. The hunt for dollars could never be as thrilling as the hunt for votes, power, and celebrity . . . among other things.

There was his wife's political ambition and the intriguing possibility that he might make it back to the White House as her . . . *what?* First gentleman? First dude? Didn't make any difference what you called it, he would be back. He wanted it badly. So badly that he lost control and said uncharacteristically tone-deaf things that hurt her when she was campaigning against Barack Obama in 2008. Among other indelicate statements, he called Obama's line on his opposition to the Iraq war "the biggest fairy tale I've ever seen," and charged that the Obama campaign "played the race card on me." Them's fighting words.

But Clinton knows when to fold 'em. He was a good soldier and played his part in getting Obama reelected. He gave a boffo nominating speech for him at the 2012 Democratic convention. He was still in the game, and there was Hillary's second try in 2016 to think about. Not to mention those high-dollar speeches and the running of the Clinton Foundation.

Then came the 2016 campaign, the last hurrah as it looks now, where he redeployed the phrase "change maker" from the race against Obama and helped beat back the Bernie Sanders challenge. He gave a convention speech that bordered on mawkish (but what the hell, it was a political convention), bringing up the time his wife's water broke before the birth of their daughter. Then he turned on the rhetorical jets. "Hillary will make us stronger together," he said. "You know it, because she spent a lifetime doing it. I hope you will do it. I hope you will elect her. Those of us who have more yesterdays than tomorrows tend to think more about our children and grandchildren."

But he was wrong-footed now and then on the campaign trail. He sneered about the opposition of the "coal people" in West Virginia—the very voters he explicitly appealed to, back when he was campaigning for himself. And he sometimes wandered off message, as when he said of Obamacare, which his wife was promising to defend, "You've got this crazy system where all of a sudden 25 million more people have health care and then the people who are out there busting it, sometimes 60 hours a week, wind up with their premiums doubled and their coverage cut in half. It's the craziest thing in the world."

It became necessary to "walk that back," as they say.

Of course once the election was over, and the season of recriminations had begun, there were stories about how he had attempted to get the campaign to pay more attention to the neglected and disaffected white voters who were the instrument of his wife's defeat. It would have been a hard sell, especially after Bernie Sanders had so effectively painted Hillary Clinton as

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Wall Street's best friend. And even if she had learned the words, she would never have mastered the music, which came naturally to him.

So she lost. And in the postmortems all this came out, along with some lingering speculation about the visit Bill had paid to Attorney General Loretta Lynch when their separate jets were parked at the same airport in late June. Because of that meeting, she recused herself from the task of deciding whether Mrs. Clinton should be indicted over her mishandling of classified information, once the FBI had concluded its investigation into her use of a private email server while she was secretary of state. She would defer, Lynch said, to the recommendation of the FBI director. That did not go well.

"James Comey cost her the election," Bill Clinton said to the editor of a local newspaper, during a chance meeting at a local bookstore a few days after the voting. If so, he had himself to blame. But Bill Clinton has never done well with the shouldering of blame and is ungracious in defeat. He remained defiant throughout the Monica Lewinsky ordeal. In that bookstore conversation, the local editor asked Clinton if he thought Trump was "smart."

"He doesn't know much," Clinton said. "One thing he does know is how to get angry white men to vote for him."

It can't be easy for any ex-president, the exile from the stage. The world of politics and celebrity has been to Bill Clinton as the oceans are to a great shark. If he stops swimming, the shark dies. But there will be another big fish swimming the same waters, and Barack Obama is now a far brighter and newer star than Clinton, with minimal ethical baggage and no lost elections on his résumé. He will be in much hotter demand than a man who has been out of the White House for 16 years.

And as the Obama operation shifts from campaigning to legacy-buffing, Clinton's place in history will be, inevitably, diminished. Those long-ago Clinton years were a time of relative peace and undeniable prosperity. He had the wind at his back with the digital revolution coming on, the baby boomers hitting their peak earning years, and the end of the Cold War diminishing the need for large-scale defense spending.

But all that now seems forgettable. If his wife had won in her quest to become the first woman president, the legacy would have been secure. It would have been conclusively established that the country yearned for a return to those times when the NASDAQ hit a new high every day and the federal budget was in surplus. Now, those almost seem like outlier years.

Even the leaders we remember tend to get boiled down to a catchphrase or two. Think of FDR's "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Or John F. Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you." For Ronald Reagan, we all remember "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

And for Bill Clinton? What else but "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky."

At the inauguration of Donald Trump, one imagines his mind wandering on stage, thinking something he hasn't thought in a long time: "Now what?"

Hard to imagine that he will cope well with irrelevance. ♦

Critics with Bombs

A German court rationalizes an attack on a synagogue.

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

On January 13, 2017, a German regional court ruled that a lower court had been correct to find no anti-Semitism in the attempt by a group of Muslim men to burn down a synagogue in the city of Wuppertal.

The failed firebombing attack had occurred in 2014, during the Israeli conflict with Hamas in Gaza. In 2015 the lower court found that the men had intended their actions as a protest against Israel—with the result that the adults in the group deserved to have their sentences suspended, freeing them from jail time. And now, after review by a superior court, the German legal system has affirmed that German synagogues are legitimate targets of protest against Israel.

Remember this moment, for the German courts have exposed the mechanism by which opposition to Israel proves indistinguishable from opposition to Jews.

Perhaps at one point, a distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism was notionally possible. But those days have been gone for many years, lost in the mists. And now, even the attempt to make the distinction becomes a way of insisting on a Jewish difference. "Anti-Zionism is the new dressing for the old passion of anti-Semitism," as the French writer Bernard-Henri Lévy tried to tell a New York audience on January 11—and it is perhaps worth noting that the synagogue in Wuppertal was built on the site of a previous synagogue, destroyed by the Nazis on Kristallnacht in 1938.

To see the logic at play, suppose that three white men had attacked a traditionally black church in Birmingham, Alabama, scrawling graffiti and trying to set the church on fire. Caught and convicted, they were sentenced to a year in jail—with the jail time suspended. Yes, the judge explained, they had been unlawfully violent and thus deserved to be convicted. But he suspended their sentences because their purpose in attacking the African-American church had not been to harm

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The synagogue in Wuppertal; a Berlin protester (below) insists on a distinction ('Jews against Zionism and anti-Semitism') that has increasingly become a refuge for scoundrels.

Americans but to protest the failure of the Nigerian government to halt the kidnapping of schoolgirls by the radical African militia Boko Haram.

Or suppose something similar, but this time in Manila. After a court in the Philippines convicted several citizens of defacing a local mosque, the judge suspended their sentences—on the grounds that, however illegally they had behaved, they were engaged in legitimate political protest over the oppression of Christian guest workers by the Islamic government in Saudi Arabia.

And then suppose that three men in Germany were arrested for throwing a Molotov cocktail at a synagogue. After their conviction, however, their sentences were suspended—again on the grounds that their admittedly illegal violence was motivated by a desire not to hurt German Jews but by a legitimate wish to protest the policies and actions of the foreign state of Israel. They were, as the court explained, trying to draw "attention to the Gaza conflict" and so had not been motivated by anti-Semitism.

Only the last of these three events is true, of course. But more to the point, only the last is even imaginable. Black citizens of the United States are never taken as symbolic representatives of African governments. For that matter, imagine the outcry if a judge condoned violence against the places of worship of native citizens who happened to be Muslim—because a distant government was doing something objectionable.

And then we have the Jews. If trying to set fire to a local synagogue is merely a criticism of Israel, then every Jewish house of worship is a symbolic embassy of a foreign power: a stand-in for the nation-state of Israel. And Germans prove not to be Germans when they attend a synagogue. The salient fact is instead that they are Jews.

The psychology by which anti-Zionism falls into anti-Semitism has been on display for years. We saw it in the United States in 2014 when a Temple University student punched a Jewish undergraduate and called him "kike" for arguing about Israel. And in 2015 when UCLA and Stanford student boards were caught interrogating non-Israeli applicants about Israel, just because they were Jewish.

What the German courts have revealed, however, is not so much the psychology as the logic by which anti-Semitism has returned to the West. A strong case can be made that modern anti-Zionism was always a subterfuge, born from an anti-Semitism trying to disguise itself. But now even the need to wear that mask seems gone. The German Muslims who attacked the Wuppertal synagogue in 2014 took Germany's Jews as representatives of Israel, and in 2017 the German courts agreed, simply as a matter of law.

Think about that for a moment. Once non-Israeli Jews have been legally recognized as symbols of Israel, not even a ray of daylight can slip between opposition to Israel and opposition to Jews. We needn't pretend anymore. Needn't nod sagely and agree that anti-Israeli groups—the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movements, for example—could theoretically avoid singling out American and European Jews. Needn't listen when the tattered old subterfuge is trotted out again to excuse attacks on synagogues.

Once and for all, anti-Zionism equals anti-Semitism. German courts have told us so. ♦

IMAGES: NEWSCOM

The Soap Opera Comes to an End

Farewell to 'The Clintons'

By Noemie Emery

Picture *The Clintons* as a top TV series that made its debut in January 1992, as Bill and Hillary appeared on *60 Minutes* on Super Bowl Sunday to refute charges that Bill had had a fling with a chanteuse called Gennifer Flowers. It peaked in 1998 with the gigantic impeachment debacle (a loser for everyone except Hillary), was renewed for 16 more seasons after Bill left office, sustained by the ongoing, aspirational "President Hillary" saga, and then wrapped up in a sensational six-hour special, featuring a stunning reversal of fortune that tied it all up with a bow. If the arc of *The Kennedys* showed a decline into squalor from consequence—from PT-109 to Chappaquiddick, and from "Ask Not" to rambling liberal welfare state platitudes—*The Clintons* held one note throughout, the gripping tale of two Ivy League grifters from Yale law school, attempting to parlay their gifts into a husband-and-wife presidential succession, in the face of the inconvenient truth (as Al Gore might have put it) that the female half of this presidential equation had no political talents at all. When we last tuned in, it was 2007, and Hillary, having survived the storm-ridden early years, seemed on a glide path to achieving her lifelong ambition (see "Days of Their Lives: The Hillary and Bill show, America's longest-running soap opera," June 4, 2007). But the scriptwriters, ever resourceful, still had some surprises in store.

In an obvious play for a young, diverse audience, the writers phased in two exciting new characters, slender in form and exotic in provenance, who rerouted the plot in unforeseen ways. One was "Huma Abedin," born in Michigan to two Muslim parents, who spent most of her young life in Saudi Arabia before she began her career in the Bill Clinton White House. There she soon became Hillary's political daughter, filling the glamour gap with her slim figure, great clothes sense, designer-grade wardrobe, and fabulous sheets of dark hair. At the same time, "Barack Obama," an unlikely fusion of Kansas and Kenya, had burst on the scene with a "Yes, we can!" vision of national greatness, unbounded ambition, no sense of deference to his elders, and no sign of knowing that 2008 was supposed to be "Hillary's turn." Only *Camelot*, over 40 years earlier, had dared to attempt such a plot twist, and Bill Clinton, who was inspired to run for the White House when he shook John Kennedy's hand at the age of 16, was reduced to sputtering rage, and then shock and horror, as JFK's lineal heirs and his one living brother deserted the Clinton camp and embraced the usurper. It was a setback the Clintons never expected to suffer, and the lesson they took was that next time—and there would be a next time!—they would lock things down early and give no rival an opening. Their money and power would be overwhelming; their control so complete that nothing could threaten it. And so—once Hillary became secretary of state in the administration of the man who defeated her—the private email server was born, a safeguard against prying reporters and disloyal government employees.

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Ironically, this exalted new position was seen at the time as a résumé-booster that would enhance her mystique in her next run for office. But instead it opened the way to the path of destruction, when it allowed her worst traits—a hunger for money and a Nixonian-strength paranoia—to grow and flourish. Almost all former presidents can use their careers as an excuse to print money, but the Clinton Foundation was in a class by itself, combining the clout of both a past president *and* a likely future commander in chief, allowing them to play off one another in audacious and devious ways: Pay a huge fee for retired President Bill Clinton to speak to your audience, and you have also done a big favor for future President Hillary. In the meantime, think of what she could do for you as the nation's top diplomat, whose decisions and influence affect the fortunes of people all over the globe. Bill Clinton's speaking fees soared (to $750,000 at least once) while Hillary was secretary of state and then a presidential hopeful and would fall just as fast once she lost the election, to absolutely nobody's surprise.

Almost all former presidents can use their careers as an excuse to print money, but the Clinton Foundation was in a class by itself: Pay a huge fee for retired President Bill Clinton to speak to your audience, and you have also done a big favor for future President Hillary.

Suspicions arose that it was largely to hide the quid pro quos of the Clinton Foundation from the press and the public that the insecure private server came into existence at all, but in 2015 critical pieces about the foundation began to appear in the media. The server itself became a sensation starting in March of that year, and Hillary, who hoped to make history as the first woman president, began making history instead as the first serious candidate for president to be under investigation for possible federal crimes. For a year and a half, Democrats lived with the fact and the fear that at any time their nominee could be indicted, leaving them high and dry and without a plausible replacement. The optimists believed that the FBI would never dare urge an indictment of a nominee of a major political party who was running for president, while the pessimists feared that the very existence of the investigation—even without prosecution—would leave suspicions to muddy the waters. Then, in July 2016, the director of the FBI made the formal announcement that the bureau had recommended no charges be filed, though he seemed to suggest that perhaps there had been wrongdoing. And there matters stood for some time.

Meanwhile, a subplot that was a popular favorite had begun to return to the fore. A hit from the first moment she appeared on the show, Huma Abedin had been embraced by *The Clintons*' audience as a boon to the glamour-starved feminist Democrats, proof of the fact that pantsuits were not all there was. They cheered in 2007 when she scored her first feature in *Vogue*, impossibly slender in a stunning red outfit, hailed as a houseguest of Oscar de la Renta to show off her glitz bona fides. Oscar himself designed her gown three years later, when she wed ambitious young congressman Anthony Weiner on a posh old estate on the tip of Long Island, becoming part of an up-and-coming power couple, pronounced man and wife by Bill Clinton himself. They mourned with and for her when she found out, along with the universe, that her new husband had a habit or hobby of sending pictures of his genitals over the Internet to many strange women, leading to his forced exit from Congress, the end of her hopes to be first lady of something and of his public career.

Citing the resemblance to the course set by Hillary (who had suffered her own share of public embarrassments), they supported her choice to stay with her husband (for the sake of their child, who was born some months later). A year or so later, they would back her decision to support him in his plan to get back into politics as a changed man who was wholly repentant and sought to resume his career by becoming mayor of New York. They mourned again for her weeks later when Weiner lost the primary, having proven himself neither changed nor repentant, though they were less supportive this time of her decision, taken, she said, for the sake of their child, not to dump him for good. Like Bill and Hillary (after 2000 and Monica), the couple thereafter led separate lives, so much so that a rapturous profile called "I'm With Her" about Abedin's ties to the woman whom *Vogue* still believed would soon be the first woman president referred to the putative husband in only a handful of sentences in eight or so pages of print. Before the magazine left the newsstands, a new instance of sexting—this time with his young son in one of the pictures—blew the façade of the marriage apart.

This was not the end of the damage done by this caper: Just two months later FBI director James Comey announced the investigation of Hillary's server had just been reopened, due to a new cache of emails found on the laptop that Weiner had shared with his wife. After the election was lost, the Hillary team would insist this was the moment and incident that had stopped her momentum.

But at the time, as events unfolded, it seemed that the damage was fleeting and minor. "Clinton's campaign was so confident in her victory that her aides popped open Champagne on the campaign plane," the *New York Times* reported. The long-running *Clintons* saga seemed a cinch to be renewed for at least four more years, even if viewers had grown less enthusiastic over time. But the script for the ending, planned to be read live as the actors first saw it, was known at the time but to God.

It was CNN's Brian Stelter who would later reconstruct the timeline of the finale, as the Scriptwriter in Heaven dropped clue after clue, seeding suspicion till it turned to doubt, doubt till it became shock and then stupefaction, as the course of the evening's events sunk in. "We learned about the night in two steps," Nate Cohn told Stelter. "First was the Florida early vote. It just didn't come in for Clinton like we thought it would." "The assumption was that once Florida started behaving differently, that was going to continue," said *Time*'s Michael Scherer. Eight o'clock came, and North Carolina was acting like Florida. "The sweep that the exit polls had predicted just wasn't happening," Fox's Chris Wallace said. "By 9 o'clock we knew something was 'off' with the prediction," PBS's Judy Woodruff noted. "There's definitely this moment around 9 P.M.," said Cohn, when Wisconsin started behaving like Florida and North Carolina. "THAT'S when I started writing my Trump-wins piece," Cohn told Stelter. "I thought, if Wisconsin's gone, then Pennsylvania's gone, and maybe Michigan's gone," said *Face the Nation*'s John Dickerson. "It was a gradual realization," said CNBC's John Harwood. "It wasn't fully realized I think until 11 or midnight—when it was like, 'Wow, she IS going to lose.'"

At midnight, the Clinton sources stopped talking to reporters. "Late in the evening the emotional axis was crossed," Susan Swain of C-SPAN told Stelter. "The Clinton crowd registered tension, anxiousness, then shock and disbelief." At 1:36 A.M., the AP called Pennsylvania for Trump, putting him at 264 votes in the Electoral College, and Wisconsin made it official at 2:31. "President Trump may be something that everybody needs to get used to," Chuck Todd had told his NBC panel a few hours earlier.

What we also had to get used to was that the show had been canceled. *The Clintons* was over, just when we thought it might go on forever, leaving only a vast, echoing silence behind, and unanswered questions of why here and why now. Perhaps at the end they had exhausted our patience. Perhaps they already were running on empty. Perhaps a lifetime of sins had caught up to them. Or perhaps God had just said, "Enough." ♦

Regulatory Reform

A new approach for the Trump era

By Christopher DeMuth Sr.

President Trump may not be a full-spectrum deregulator in the Ronald Reagan tradition. He hasn't had much to say about the Food and Drug Administration or Federal Communications Commission—two favorite targets of regulatory reformers—and he sometimes sounds like an antitrust activist. But he has made it clear that economic growth and job and business formation will be his first domestic priorities, and that reforming taxation and regulation will be his primary paths to these objectives. In regulatory policy, his administration will be ambitious and results-oriented. It will focus on dramatic reductions in energy, environmental, and labor market controls; on easing permitting restrictions on transportation, pipeline, and other infrastructure projects; and on reforms to financial regulation to encourage business lending.

The Trump administration's initial regulatory steps will be executive actions, while Congress begins with tax and Obamacare legislation and perhaps Dodd-Frank reform. President Trump is likely to do some immediate things on his own, such as approving the Keystone and Dakota Access pipelines. These will be akin to President Reagan's instant decontrol of petroleum prices in January 1981, demonstrating his personal resolve and differences from his predecessor. He will issue a passel of new executive orders, one of them beefing up the review of agency regulations by the Office of Management and Budget under a cost-benefit standard and adding a requirement that agencies withdraw two existing rules for every new one they impose. There will be directives to the regulatory agencies to postpone the effective dates of late-term Obama administration rules, and to review these and other inherited rules with an eye toward revision or rescission.

At the agencies, the new managements will take immediate aim at the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan, the Labor Department's overtime rule, and others that are legally dubious, at odds with President Trump's economic goals, or both. They will mount a concerted effort to liberalize federal permitting, environmental impact statements, and restrictions on energy exploration and development. Several Obama-era initiatives lying outside the immediate jobs-and-growth agenda will be caught in the initial sweep. One hopes these include the Education Department's rules to maintain control over K-12 schools in defiance of the 2015 Every Child Succeeds Act, and the havoc its Office for Civil Rights has wreaked through intimidating "Dear Colleague" letters to college administrators and school boards.

In these endeavors, the Trump administration will be aided by a feature of American government that conservatives have been complaining about for years—Congress's delegation of expansive lawmaking authority to executive agencies. Most of the regulatory measures President Trump has already telegraphed are well within the bounds of existing statutory authorities (some will pull back Obama administration rules that actually exceeded the statutes, such as its Clean Power Plan). Current statutes afford many further opportunities for executive actions that would profoundly improve economic performance. *National Affairs*, the quarterly journal edited by Yuval Levin (a contributing editor to this magazine), has just published a splendid booklet propounding such reforms for the FDA and FCC as well as energy regulation.

It is likely, however, that executive actions to eliminate growth-inhibiting and other harmful policies will fall short of President Trump's ambitions. Many of the worst regulatory excesses are deeply embedded in prescriptive statutory laws and in agency cultures that those laws have fostered. The EPA's preferred approach to environmental protection is command-and-control regulation of every jot and tittle of industrial production, an approach that freezes technology and suppresses private economic incentives and innovation. The Obama administration's devotion to green energy and suspicion of private markets greatly reinforced these tendencies, and the EPA has sometimes exhibited a shocking indifference to economic and public health evidence and individual rights. So Scott Pruitt, the new EPA administrator, will be contending with a hostile workplace environment from day one. And no matter how well he masters the bureaucratic ropes, he will still be dealing with decades-old, badly outmoded statutes, such as the Clean Air and Clean Water acts, which greatly limit the possibilities of

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DAVE MALAN

constructive reform. The same is true of the energy, labor, interior, and transportation agencies and statutes.

In these circumstances, the Trump administration's regulatory relief ambitions will eventually require legislative collaboration. The Gingrich-era Congressional Review Act (CRA) may be used to dispatch a few Obama "midnight regulations" but is of little use beyond that. There is interest on Capitol Hill in enacting something like the REINS Act, which passed the House twice in recent years and again in early January—but REINS, like CRA, is designed for blocking regulatory excesses rather than empowering positive reforms. The Administrative Procedure Act (APA), which sets the framework for agency rulemaking and judicial review, is due for a major upgrade—but that will not help with the immediate priority of revising embedded regulations. Something more is needed for the task at hand. Let me suggest a variant of the REINS proposal, one geared to executive initiative rather than legislative reaction.

REINS stands for Regulations from the Executive In Need of Scrutiny. The REINS bills require that major agency regulations be approved by both houses of Congress, under expedited legislative procedures and up-or-down floor votes, before they can take effect. REINS has been styled as an effort to rein in unaccountable bureaucrats through the threat of a legislative veto. But what happens when Congress *approves* an agency rule? Here the procedure has a feature that has so far been little noticed. A REINS-approved rule would have been issued by Act of Congress (with the president's signature, as for all statutes, but that is a foregone conclusion for a rule the president's administration had drafted). It would be more than a mere agency pronouncement interpreting and applying one of its "organic" statutes such as the Clean Air Act. That means the procedure could short-circuit the lengthy and unpredictable legal challenges that invariably confront major regulations as soon as they are issued.

The REINS bills treat this feature as an avoidable complication. They say that an affirmative vote does not approve the substance of a rule, much less incorporate its policies into statutory law, but only permits the agency to *issue* the rule—still subject to full-fledged judicial review. The effect of this hair-splitting is uncertain. Administrative law is about agency discretion under the organic statutes. It is doubtful that a court would hold that a rule issued with Congress's formal review and approval was, as the

APA puts it, "arbitrary, capricious, [or] an abuse of discretion." On the other hand, if a REINS-approved rule clearly violated an agency's organic statute, a court would probably strike it down.

I propose that this feature be adapted for a new procedure that, just for fun, I will call REFORM—Referrals from the Executive For Regulatory Modernization. Under REFORM, the president would refer selected regulatory reforms to the House and Senate and urge their prompt consideration and approval. Where an agency rule departed from a reasonably clear statutory provision, or from judicial interpretations of a broad or ambiguous provision, the agency would explain the departure and the reasons for its new approach. The reasons could not, for the REFORM procedure, be sheer policy preference—rather, they would be limited to improving the agency's pursuit of the missions Congress had already assigned to it. Such reasons might be to vindicate broader policies of the statute in question; to eliminate confusions arising from conflicting statutory provisions; to clear away obsolete provisions; to improve agency performance based on its experience and evidence with the existing provisions; to better reconcile the agency's missions with each other or with other congressional policies; or to overturn errant court decisions.

Under REFORM, Congress would approve the rule itself, not just its issuance. And, in cases of uncertain statutory authority, the submitted rule would be accompanied by suggested, surgical statutory revisions, and Congress could enact the revisions along with its approval of the implementing rule. REFORM-approved rules would still, of course, be subject to judicial review on constitutional grounds. So if the FCC submitted a rule prohibiting broadcasters from criticizing the Trump administration, and Congress approved the rule, it would still be vulnerable to First Amendment challenge, with a sure and certain result. But if the FCC submitted a rule abolishing its own "net-neutrality" Internet controls, and Congress approved, that would be the end of the matter as far as the courts were concerned.

The REFORM procedure in this simple form would not require expedited congressional consideration and up-or-down floor votes. These have been important features of the REINS bills and of several successful precedents in executive-legislative collaboration—the military base-closing and trade liberalization exercises of recent decades. All have been based upon Congress's committing itself in advance to waiving customary legislative procedures for specified executive submissions, especially the requirement that bills be passed by authorizing committees before moving to the floor, and the usual rules permitting floor amendments.

A REFORM initiative without expedited procedures would be fine with me. I would like to strengthen the congressional committee structure rather than weakening it further, and reforms of the sort I have in mind should be supported by the authorizing committees. There is already of bit of precedent for a president's asking Congress to share responsibility for important regulatory policy decisions, even in the absence of congressional precommitment. Mitt Romney, in his 2012 presidential campaign, said he would submit major rules for congressional approval even in the absence of a REINS statute. And there is talk of President Trump's submitting the Paris climate change agreement to the Senate for treaty consideration rather than withdrawing or seeking to revise it on his own. But REFORM, to be effective, would require some advance consultation between the administration and congressional leaders, and this could certainly involve some procedural precommitment on executive submissions limited to mission-enhancing reforms such as those I've listed.

The REFORM proposal is geared to President Trump's bold ambitions and businessman's impatience with bureaucratic delay. If it worked, it could achieve reforms that were both deeper and faster than solely executive actions limited by the installed base of regulatory statutes and judicial decisions.

But it also holds promise for two larger improvements in Washington politics and national policy. First, it would be a stab at developing a new form of executive-legislative interaction—one that balances the executive's advantages of initiative and policy specialization with Congress's advantages of representation and the citizen's perspective. The controversies and failures of President Obama's unilateral actions to circumvent Congress, on matters ranging from immigration to fossil fuels to transgender bathroom rules, illustrate the need for such innovation. The REINS proposal, and the antecedent base-closing and trade-liberalization programs, were efforts to contrive more productive modes of interaction. REFORM would build on them. (But President Trump may not wish to emphasized the trade-liberalization precedent.)

Second, many energy, labor, and environmental regulatory statutes are archaic and counterproductive, and barnacled with court decisions over disputes now long forgotten—yet efforts to modernize them have repeatedly failed. Several years ago, Professor David Schoenbrod of New York Law School and several academic colleagues collaborated with environmentalists and business executives to develop a promising consensus upgrade to the Clean Air Act. But when he described the proposal to congressional leaders, they seized up in terror at the thought

of Congress's taking on a task so herculean and fraught with political symbolism. Reforming the Clean Air Act *tout court* will be as legislatively complex as tax and health care reform, and is not going to find its way onto the congressional must-do agenda any time soon.

There are, however, many specific provisions of the Clean Air Act that have kept the EPA from pursuing incentive-based environmental policies and that are at war with other parts of the act. Some provisions permit the balancing of benefits and costs and the institution of "cap and trade" marketable permit programs, and have been used to mediate environmental and economic goals with great success, as in the gasoline lead-phasedown program in the 1980s. Other provisions either forbid such approaches or have been read by courts (rightly or wrongly) as doing so, and have upended the agency's efforts to achieve important statutory goals such as reducing "downwind" interstate pollution. One of the many counterproductive results of conflicting statutory language is that the EPA's "New Source Review" program has evolved into a de facto ban on new industrial facilities in some parts of the country, even those that would incorporate sophisticated control technologies that were inconceivable at the time the statutory provisions were adopted. EPA rules to harmonize the act's provisions in favor of consistently weighing costs and benefits, and harnessing market incentives to pollution reduction, would be perfectly suited to the REFORM procedure. This is a case where an agency's well-documented successes with some statutory provisions would make a compelling empirical case for reforming others that have hobbled its pursuit of Congress's environmental protection mission.

Today's regulatory statute books are rife with opportunities to modernize regulations, many of them central to the Trump agenda. Environmental impact statements and other permitting hurdles have become obstacles to the most benign and urgent infrastructure improvements.

Today's regulatory statute books are rife with similar opportunities, many of them central to the Trump agenda. Environmental impact statements and other permitting hurdles have become—with the aid of incessant litigation that a REFORM procedure could largely foreclose—obstacles to the most benign and urgent infrastructure improvements. Gasoline ingredient standards have produced a Boschian carnival of self-serving economic interests and policy perversions. Energy efficiency standards have been triumphs of green symbolism over actual results, and are increasingly out of step with progressive energy technologies. For bipartisanship, nothing could beat repealing the complex statutory ban on the incandescent light bulb, enacted in George W. Bush's 2007 energy legislation, which has been left in the dust by LED and other new lighting technologies. The ban is in abeyance for now, thanks to an appropriations rider, but it should be abolished outright to permit the current, market-driven advances to proceed unencumbered.

And here is a REFORM for correcting a particularly regrettable instance of judicial legislating. "Disparate impact" policies in employment and finance have turned America's historic civil rights achievements of the 1960s into anti-opportunity bludgeons. They subject innocent, effective, nondiscriminatory job and lending criteria to regulatory attack based on crude, post hoc racial regression analyses—or even, in a notorious recent Consumer Financial Protection Bureau action, to regressions against last names that are deemed statistically more likely to belong to African Americans. The result is to discourage meritocracy and business development wherever minorities may be involved. Disparate impact was fashioned by judges—freely improvising on the civil rights statutes with no doubt the best of intentions—but has since found its way into several agency rules and a few statutes. Returning nondiscrimination policy to its statutory roots would be a noble as well as job-propelling cause.

As my last for-instance suggests, REFORM could address highly controversial regulatory problems as well as those more narrow and technical. But the larger point should not be missed. Proceeding with statutory reform incrementally, and at an intensely practical level, would hold significant advantages. Excessive abstraction and symbolism go hand in hand with excessive partisanship and legislative gridlock. Reforms in the form of specific rules that demonstrate concretely how agencies will implement them, accompanied by empirical evidence and argumentation addressed to goals congressional majorities have already embraced, could narrow disagreements and pave the way for both political and policy progress. They could also help to improve bureaucratic cultures—for there are many in our regulatory agencies who are sincerely devoted to their statutory missions, who realize better than anyone how bad laws and court doctrines entangle and confound those missions, and who would welcome the opportunity to be judged by results rather than rhetoric. ♦

'La Divina Commedia di Dante' by Domenico di Michelino (1465)

The Divine Mr. D

The epic journeys of Dante Alighieri. BY JAMES MATTHEW WILSON

On March 25, 1300, a 35-year-old Florentine poet and politician set out on a long journey afoot in search of redemption. His destination was the eternal city. The poet in question, of course, was Dante Alighieri, and the city was not heaven, but Rome.

During the months leading up to that centenary year, pilgrims had begun to converge on the city, paying visits to the tomb of Saint Peter in hopes of earning a jubilee, a plenary indulgence that would eliminate the temporal punishment due for sins. This mass pilgrimage had begun as a spontaneous act of popular piety; but in February, Pope Boniface VIII issued a bull establishing jubilees as church doctrine. In a time of political fragmentation, Boniface's pronouncement reaffirmed a spiritual unity that transcended it. But such a move also advanced his hopes of drawing the various national monarchies and city-state communes of Europe (that had emerged with the decline of the Roman Empire) into a new "theocratic" order.

The lowborn son of a small-time moneylender, Dante had already established himself as a leading vernacular poet, a distinguished student of philosophy, a gifted Latin rhetorician, and a reliable politician among the White Guelph party of Florence. Later that

Dante
The Story of His Life
by Marco Santagata
translated by Richard Dixon
Harvard, 496 pp., $35

James Matthew Wilson teaches literature at Villanova. His new book The Vision of the Soul: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in the Western Tradition *will be published in June.*

year, he would serve as a prior to the governing council of his city. Even as he made his way to Rome, Dante could look back on his life as one of modest but definite success.

Within two years, however, he would flee Florence, an exile under a death sentence. Unprotected by any right of citizenship, he would be forced to search not only for work and patronage, but for the security of his life, in an age marred by family vendettas and factional warfare.

Most of us know Dante for having undertaken a different kind of journey on that day. For while the date of Dante's pilgrimage to Rome is in dispute, March 25 is definitely the day on which his visionary epic, *The Divine Comedy*, begins. In that poem, Dante, lost in a dark wood, undertakes a spiritual pilgrimage through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, a journey of conversion that will instruct him and his reader in the moral structure of God's providence and the intended order of human history.

Guided by his poetic forefather Virgil and, later, the saintly love of his youth, Beatrice Portinari, Dante's soul would be reordered to the way of virtue, and his mind would enter into the deep mysteries of heaven and earth until it became fitted for a final ecstasy at the height of heaven, the vision of God. The world through which he moves is what Dante himself will call a "polysemous" one, where we see layer upon layer of literal and allegorical significance disclose itself in such a way that every line of the poem becomes a kind of epiphany.

The Divine Comedy's vision of the world has an intellectual depth and integrity that has yet to be exhausted even after 700 years of serious scholarship. Dante's is a story about the changing of his own life, and his hope for a regeneration of the corrupt, bellicose, and chaotic Christendom of his day. But Dante's poem has changed many lives over the centuries, and encountering the world of his vision—which is at once intellectual and passionate, dramatic and yet sculpted with a fine logic—has led innumerable converts to the Roman Catholic church.

In this studious, authoritative, but reductive new biography, Marco Santagata seeks to fill in the literal details of Dante's life as the poet shuttles between triumphs and disappointments on the road to the completion of his great poem. Santagata depicts a Dante who feels himself to be "different and predestined" from the very beginning, and one who persists, despite personal disappointment and the failure of his political hopes, in "a stubborn faith in his own mission, the conviction that he, alone, would triumph in the end, and that his poem would reverse" the course of history.

Florence was a center of commerce and Dante a son of the rising bourgeoisie. But he was a strident opponent of the new wealth of finance, because it undermined what he saw as the true conditions of nobility, which Aristotle's *Politics* defined for him as "virtue and ancient wealth." Dante spared no effort to ennoble himself and to overcome the liability of his father's reputation as a usurer. He joined the Florentine aristocracy in serving as a cavalier during Florence's continuous skirmishes with hostile cities.

Military service qualified him for a role in Florentine politics, but Dante turned initially to the study of poetry and philosophy. By 1295, when he published his book of prose and verse, the *Vita Nuova*, he had already won a reputation as a learned vernacular—as opposed to Latin—poet. That work would show him as a philosophical poet of love, as well, whose great discovery is that of a new theme, the praise of his lady. Beatrice had died in 1290, but the figure of her spiritual beauty inspired the poet to the pursuit of virtue.

Only then did he enter public life. He sought to become what we would now call a public intellectual, his "civic" poems arguing for two things: first, to define nobility as a consequence of spiritual and moral virtue, rather than a product of birth; and second, to show himself as just such a spiritual aristocrat. It seems to have worked. Eric Voegelin used to argue that spiritual order was the necessary source of political order. The virtuous poet therefore became a worthy politician. Unfortunately, the rest of his White Guelph party showed a singular lack of prudence at every turn; they would be routed and exiled by a rival faction and never regain power.

Dante's gifts as a Latin rhetorician made him a far more important figure in exile than he had been as municipal philosopher. His fine words negotiated and secured alliances for his White party, but every battle ended in defeat. As Santagata has it, after only two years, Dante would feel the call of study luring him away from increasingly hopeless partisan activities, and so he retired to the ancient university city of Bologna to undertake two major prose works.

In *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante flashes a speculative genius regarding the nature and origins of language, all in the vain effort to convince Italian academics of the worth of vernacular poetry. In the *Convivio*, a second book of prose and verse, Dante shows his exhaustion with the continuous strife produced by bourgeois finance and the meddling of the church in politics so that no unified political order could emerge. He proposes that true aristocrats—those, that is, who come from "ancient wealth"—reform themselves in virtue and reassert themselves once more to bring back an empire that can rein in both local factionalism and ecclesiastic corruption.

Alas, in 1306, Bologna fell to the same civil war that had ruined Florence, and Dante was forced to flee, his treatises never finished. In the coming years, however, three remarkable events would give Dante cause for hope. First, friends in Florence would help him to seek a personal pardon that he might return home in exchange for repudiating the White Guelph cause. (That was easy; the Whites were the party of the pope.) Second, Henry VII was crowned king of Germany (1308) and proposed to assume the mantle of Holy Roman emperor. And finally, it seems that someone smuggled out of Florence the manuscript to a poem Dante had begun just before his exile.

Dante resumed work on that poem, called *Inferno*. Its early cantos, argues Santagata, are in the voice of a Dante still seeking to act as a spiritual aristocrat for his fellow citizens. Its later ones decry Florence's moral failings—but in a way that would show to the Florentines in power that Dante merited a return from exile.

Santagata's account of the rest of the comedy—*Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*—is similarly structured. His attentions are given over almost entirely to Dante's geographical movements at a given time: whom he needed to flatter to advance his personal fortunes or political hopes, and how those things are reflected in the poem. Indeed, at times, his priorities seem to be backwards, as if the purpose of interpreting a passage of the poem is to determine where Dante happened to be living when he wrote it rather than how Dante's geographic and political position might help us better understand the poem.

William Blake illustration from 'The Divine Comedy' (1824-27)

No one can read the *Comedy* and doubt that Dante's hope for Henry VII, or someone else, to reunite Christendom under a temporal empire capable of reforming church and society alike was close to his heart. But Santagata's interpretation of the poem does not so much capture Dante's local, political concerns as it does reduce the poem to a disjointed series of such items, so that one canto is about the absence of a noble emperor, while another constitutes Dante's attempt to remake his pedigree as that of an aristocrat by birth.

At one moment, he is writing merely to praise a patron, while at the next, he has left that man behind and is in search of other support for his work. *Paradiso* XVI seems to be about setting up shop at Verona, while a few cantos on, in *Paradiso* XXI, Dante is reflecting on the "peace" he finds after settling under new patronage in Ravenna.

All these elements are to be found in the poem, to be sure: Dante, even as he stares into the divine light of God, cannot help but glance back to berate Florence for its degeneracy. But most readers of the poem will see these local political concerns as subordinate to Dante's spiritual vision, and Santagata has almost nothing to say about all that.

The scholarship here is so careful and balanced that I hesitate to take issue with any of it. But at one point, Santagata's interpretation seems so obviously misguided as to give symbolic expression to the limited view of Dante offered in the book as a whole.

One of Dante's most important prose works is a letter dedicating the still-unfinished *Paradiso* to Cangrande della Scala. The opening paragraphs lavish praise on the patron; those that follow propose to interpret the poem in terms of its "polysemous" literal and allegorical, or "mystical," meanings. In brief, Dante shows us that his poem merits the kind of complex exegesis proper to works of Scripture, and that, like Scripture, it will reveal depths of philosophical and prophetic meaning to reward such attentions.

Whether Dante actually wrote the letter has long been contested. So how does Santagata solve the question? By chopping the letter in half. The early, politic words to Cangrande are authentic, he tells us; the rest was probably fabricated by later admirers of Dante who wanted to use allegorical interpretations to "soften" the political and antipapal edges of his poem by refocusing it on purely spiritual matters.

This conclusion is improbable. The letter's discussion of mystical exegesis and philosophy are not (as Santagata claims) unworthy "commonplaces" but indications that Dante knew the Parisian scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas, which still constituted the controversial forefront of modern learning. Furthermore, the account of spiritual interpretation elaborates ideas found in the *Convivio*, of which Dante's authorship is undisputed. It is as if Santagata cannot accept that Dante's letter could be, at once, both a piece of political rhetoric and a brilliant spiritual document; or that the *Comedy*, for all its immanent political anguish, finally sublimates every detail to the spiritual vision of the poem as a whole.

Everyone who already loves Dante is in Marco Santagata's debt for his establishing, and with such rigor, the precise literal movements of the poet's life. But this will lead no one to discover why Dante is worth loving. For that, one needs to have an eye for the rich "polysemous" cosmos of spiritual pilgrimage that Dante fashioned out of the wreckage of a life spent walking the steps of an exile. ♦

B&A

Up from Macaroni

What's pasta is prologue.

BY PIA CATTON

As if America isn't going through enough already, here's a news flash: Our nation is to blame for propagating the story that Marco Polo introduced pasta to Italy from China. This "persistent" whopper was, in no uncertain terms, "conjured up by the Americans," writes Kantha Shelke. In 1929, an American trade magazine, then called *Macaroni Journal*, ran an ad depicting Marco Polo in the China Sea with an Italian crew including a sailor named Macaroni. The fine fellow comes ashore with tales of women making strings of dough—and Polo names the product for him.

"The story inspired countless advertisements, restaurant placemats, cookbooks and even movies, and the tongue-in-cheek advertisement turned into a seemingly unshakeable legend," writes Shelke in this engaging entry in Reaktion Books' Edible Series. By bursting this delicious dumpling, Shelke is also making a larger contention: Pasta and noodles developed in "different but complementary culinary traditions." No wet-noodle argument here. This debate is apparently hotter than Shrimp Fra Diavolo: "Unlike the works of other writers, there will be no attempt in this book to link the two culinary realms."

Pasta and noodles. Two houses, both alike in dignity.

The dividing line does not take long to emerge. Ultimately, the difference comes down to durum wheat, the essential ingredient that gives pasta many of its best qualities. When durum wheat, as opposed to bread wheat, or emmer wheat (farro), is ground it becomes semolina flour, allowing pasta to be shaped easily, dried, and shipped without losing texture or spoiling.

Pasta and Noodles
A Global History
by Kantha Shelke
Reaktion, 144 pp., $19.95

The West had durum wheat; China did not. The Chinese spent centuries eating millet gruel. And having grown tired of such pleasantries, they discovered wheat flour could be used to create an infinite variety of succulent shapes, from noodles to steamed buns to dumplings. Wheat-based foods and a noodle-making ability grew in the Han dynasty (206 B.C. to A.D. 220). Additionally, the Chinese tradition of fresh noodles "cooked as soon as they were formed, or even while being formed," is a defining element of the culture.

Even if Marco Polo had managed to bring noodles to Italy from his 13th-century travels in China, dough and pasta already had long developed in the West. The Greeks had a word for what was probably flat strips of dough: "laganon," possibly used in the first millennium B.C. The Romans adopted and spread the food, though durum wheat was not yet used. The first-century poet Horace mentions in his sixth book a dish of leeks, chickpeas, and lasagne. A Western reference to boiled noodles appears in the 5th-century Jerusalem Talmud. "The debate, in Aramaic, was whether or not noodles violated Jewish dietary laws," writes Shelke.

Her research into pasta's ancient past makes a convincing case that the food was developing concurrently all around the Mediterranean in different forms and uses. Which is also handy as she seems keen to dismiss the Italians' "point of national pride that they invented pasta." She doubts the evidence for the Italian case, which includes Etruscan tomb bas-reliefs purported to show noodles made from durum wheat. But she's at least willing to spot them on the whole Marco Polo thing: Pasta has pan-Mediterranean origins, which means that while it isn't exactly "Italian," it's probably not imported from China, either. (And now we know who to blame for that.)

This book's charm comes in the section on how pasta flourished in regions of Italy, particularly in 18th-century Naples and Sicily. Pasta was sold in special shops where men kneaded dough with their feet. Bakers wanted to sell pasta, but the *vermicellari*, or pasta-makers, formed guilds to protect their turf. Commedia dell'arte actors used bowls of macaroni in characters' acts, and at this time, the food

MIRRORPIX / NEWSCOM

Pia Catton, editor of Dance.com, is coauthor of The Comfort Diner Cookbook.

was eaten with the fingers. Of course, waves of Italian immigrants brought their cuisine to America, where Shelke points out that regional habits emerged, such as the peculiarity of East Coast Italian Americans calling tomato sauce "gravy."

After delving into rich details of pasta—including how Thomas Jefferson wrote out his own recipe and had a machine shipped over from Europe—the author blitzes through the culinary world of noodles. It could be retitled *Pasta . . . and Noodles.* Given the many nations and extreme variety of noodles, though, this zippy world tour is impressively succinct. It could be helpful to anyone who wants quick references on how to cook Hokkien-style noodles (boil for one to two minutes and finished by being boiled or fried briefly before serving) or the history of instant noodles. And of course, that history also connects directly to American food trends, particularly the current, and overwhelming, interest in ramen.

In 1958, the founder of Nissin Foods, Momofuku Ando, invented instant noodles, those wavy bricks of noodles that have provided sustenance to generations of college students. In 2004, chef David Chang opened Momofuku Noodle Bar in New York, causing a sensation by elevating simple foods like ramen and fried chicken. Momofuku still draws long lines, and its popularity has inspired all manner of Asian street fare restaurants and food trucks.

Pasta, by contrast, is less trendy today. Giant bowls of spaghetti with classic red sauce are menu items best tasted in suburban restaurants, though there are boomlets of chic Italian comebacks. But pesto? Fettuccine Alfredo? Given the speed of American food trends, these dishes now sing the songs of the 1980s. You might as well watch MTV and call someone at a pay phone after dinner.

One trend that Kantha Shelke does not take up, understandably, is the American obsession with avoiding carbohydrates and gluten. While glutens can spark allergic reactions, the push to avoid carbohydrates has spawned "paleo" diets, which restrict an otherwise contemporary person to eating like a paleolithic caveman. The diets are heavy on meat and vegetables—which could have been hunted and gathered—but no pasta, no noodles.

For anyone who has ever painstakingly made a lasagna and found out one's guests have gone "paleo," Shelke offers this nugget: "Prehistoric humans roasted ears of wheat and burned the thick covering to get to the kernels, which they then consumed without further preparation." So there. If prehistoric man was popping straight wheat, then have another bowl of tortellini—and enjoy it. ♦

B&A

Humanitarian Relief

A new look at the life and works of Herbert Hoover.

BY GEORGE H. NASH

Herbert Hoover
A Life
by Glen Jeansonne
New American Library, 464 pp., $28

Since his departure from the White House in 1933, it has often seemed that Herbert Hoover is the Rodney Dangerfield of American politics: He gets no respect. On the left, he has long been castigated as a presidential failure: a dour and rigid reactionary who did little to combat the Great Depression. More recently, on the right, he has been denounced as a protectionist and progressive whose misguided interventionism converted the economic downturn of 1929 into a calamity, paving the way for a descent into a collectivist quagmire under Franklin Roosevelt. Routinely rated by many historians as a mediocrity in the Oval Office, Hoover has become a political orphan, unwelcome in liberal and conservative pantheons alike. Particularly in popular folklore and mythology, he survives as a symbol of hapless ineptitude and hard times.

Glen Jeansonne is determined to liberate Hoover from these perceptions. A professor emeritus of history at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, he has written well-received biographies of Huey Long and Elvis Presley, as well as numerous other books, including a recent study of Hoover's presidency. In Herbert Hoover he has found a subject far less flashy than Elvis or Huey Long, but deserving of far more scrutiny—a man he dubs "the most versatile American since Benjamin Franklin."

Jeansonne is hardly the first person to have written a biography of Hoover. But here he has composed the most comprehensive one-volume biography of Hoover to date, and in terms that will come as a revelation to many readers. And what an amazing story he has to tell. Born in Iowa in 1874 to Quaker parents and orphaned before he reached the age of 10, Hoover never graduated from high school. Yet he managed to enter Stanford when it opened in 1891 and graduated with a major in geology: his entree to his chosen profession of mining engineering. From then on, his rise in the world was meteoric: By the age of 24 he was superintendent of a gold mine in the desolate outback of Western Australia, and one of the best-paid young men in the world. By 27 he had managed a gigantic coal mine in northern China

George H. Nash, author of The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945 *(1976), has written several volumes on the life of Herbert Hoover.*

and, with his intrepid wife Lou Henry Hoover, had survived a harrowing brush with death in the Boxer Rebellion. By 1914, at the age of 40, Hoover, based in London, had traveled around the world five times and had business interests on every continent except Antarctica. He was worth well over a million dollars and stood at the pinnacle of his profession.

After the outbreak of World War I, Hoover, still in London, founded and directed the all-volunteer Commission for Relief in Belgium (CRB), a private, but ultimately government-subsidized, institution that imported and provided desperately needed food supplies to more than nine million Belgian and French citizens trapped between the German Army of occupation and the British naval blockade. His 1914 emergency relief mission quickly evolved into a gigantic humanitarian enterprise without precedent in world history: an organized rescue of an entire nation from starvation—in the middle of a war. By 1917, he was an international hero.

When the United States entered the war against Germany, Hoover left day-to-day supervision of the CRB to others, returned home to America, and became head of the U.S. Food Administration, a specially created wartime agency of the federal government. "Food Will Win the War" was his slogan. It was Hoover's job to direct food conservation campaigns, prevent runaway inflation of food prices, and devise policies that would ensure an exportable surplus of foodstuffs to America's beleaguered allies. As food administrator and a member of Woodrow Wilson's war cabinet, he became one of Washington's most important officials.

At the close of hostilities in 1918, Wilson dispatched Hoover to Europe to organize food distribution on a continent lurching toward catastrophe. There, for 10 grueling months, he coordinated American-led efforts to organize the distribution of food to suffering people in more than 20 countries. A little later, between 1921 and 1923, Hoover's American Relief Administration (ARA) administered a massive relief program in the interior of Soviet Russia, where a horrible famine—Europe's worst since the Middle Ages—had broken out. At its peak of operations, the ARA fed upwards of 10 million Russian citizens a day.

Between 1914 and 1923, Hoover directed, financed, or assisted a multitude of international relief endeavors without parallel in the annals of mankind. The monetary value of this aid, measured in today's currency, exceeded $60 billion. Tens of millions of people owed their lives to his exertions. As someone once said, Herbert Hoover was responsible for saving more lives than any other person in history.

Acclaimed as the "Napoleon of Mercy," Hoover came home in 1919 to stay, his mining career now behind him. He was only 45 years old. In 1920, he attempted—fitfully and furtively—to gain the Republican presidential nomination; he did not succeed, but he impressed the winner, Warren Harding, who invited Hoover to join his cabinet.

During the 1920s, Hoover ascended still higher on the ladder of public esteem. As secretary of commerce under Harding and Calvin Coolidge, he became one of the three or four most important men in American public life. The range of his interests and influence was staggering: It was said of Hoover that he was secretary of commerce and undersecretary of every other department. He even took time to write a book, *American Individualism* (1922), in which he expounded his understanding of America's exceptional sociopolitical system and principles. In 1927, with Coolidge's approval, Hoover orchestrated the rescue and rehabilitation of more than 600,000 victims of a tremendous flood on the lower Mississippi River—the worst natural disaster in American history. The very next year, with his reputation at its zenith, he was overwhelmingly elected president—and without ever having held elective public office.

Now came the harrowing ordeal of the White House years and Hoover's struggle to defeat the Great Depression. During his tormented presidency, he strained to return his country to prosperity while guarding its traditional political moorings, only to be repudiated at the polls. In March 1933, the man hailed a few years earlier as the "Great Humanitarian" left office a political pariah, maligned and hated as no other American leader in his lifetime.

And then, astonishingly, Hoover rose slowly from the ashes of his political immolation. Instead of retreating in silence into the political wilderness, the former president boldly reentered the arena and refused ever after to fade away. In 1934 he published a second book of political philosophy, *The Challenge to Liberty*, which trenchantly critiqued the New Deal and other forms of statism and launched its author on what he called a "crusade against collectivism." Raising high the alternative banner of "historic liberalism," Hoover became the intellectual leader of the Republican party in the 1930s and relentless opponent of what he perceived as the New Deal's assault upon a free society and the constitutional order.

For more than three decades, in fair political weather and foul, Hoover stuck to his guns and his principles. He was an eloquent and unashamed exponent of what we now call American exceptionalism. He built up his incomparable archive and nascent think tank, the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, which he came to regard as his greatest benefaction. He seemed indefatigable; even in his 80s, he worked up to 12 hours a day. Between the ages of 85 and 90, he published seven books—not counting two enormous memoirs of his postpresidential years that did not get into print until long after his death.

When Hoover died in 1964, he had lived more than 90 years, including a full half-century in the public eye. It was a record that, in sheer scope and duration, may be without parallel in American history, and this is the action-packed and multifaceted life that Jeansonne depicts with sympathy and verve in this fast-paced biography.

The author is particularly effective

Hoover and friend (1935)

in delineating Hoover's extraordinary accomplishments as secretary of commerce and his daringly activist response to the Great Depression—a record wholly at variance with the legend that he was passive. Although conceding that Hoover "lacked political skills" and committed certain policy errors, Jeansonne insists that the embattled chief executive was "both human and humane" and "does not deserve to be pilloried as the scapegoat of the Great Depression." And while some on the left have portrayed Hoover as a timid, inflexible ideologue, Jeansonne sees him differently: "He was too intellectually honest for the times, which were saturated with hypocritical intrigue." The Hoover Jeansonne presents is a man of exceptional intelligence, resourcefulness, and rectitude—an idealistic Quaker who persevered in adversity and, by the end, earned himself a strong measure of redemption.

As Hoover scholars well know, it is challenging to compress his astoundingly productive life between two covers. For the most part, Jeansonne performs his daunting task satisfactorily—although there were times when I might have wished that the book had been a bit longer and dealt with various topics in greater detail. Drawing largely on existing scholarship and some early journalistic biographies, the author has produced a spirited reappraisal of a figure once described as "an enigma easily misunderstood."

No doubt, some will take issue with aspects of Jeansonne's revisionism. For example, he frequently refers to Hoover as "the Quaker" and asserts the centrality of Hoover's birthright Quakerism in the formation of his character, temperament, and philosophy—an issue on which biographers have differed over the years. He does not mention recent scholarship pointedly questioning Hoover's conduct as a mining engineer and financier in Australia, China, and London before 1914. It would have been helpful if Jeansonne, whose own account of Hoover's business career is highly laudatory, had addressed this critique. *Herbert Hoover: A Life* also contains a number of (mostly minor) inaccuracies that should be corrected in a second edition.

Still, Jeansonne has achieved what I take to be his principal objective: an accessible, informative, and sympathetic biography of Hoover for the intellectually oriented general reader. Above all, he punctures the lingering stereotype of Hoover as a cold, uncaring chief executive who did too little to relieve the nation's economic and social distress.

In an age of glib soundbite certitudes that pass for knowledge, this is a useful contribution. But what of the other (conservative) stereotype that Hoover was a meddlesome progressive who did *too much* and, thereby, made the Depression much worse? Today's conservative/libertarian indictment of Hoover's presidency boils down essentially to three complaints: that in 1929, just after the Crash, he pressured business leaders into a foolish freezing of wage levels, in defiance of free-market economic orthodoxy; that in 1930, he caved in to political pressure and signed the ruinous Smoot-Hawley tariff; and that in 1932, he sought and signed into law, at precisely the wrong time, a massive tax increase, arguably exacerbating the Depression.

Jeansonne seems aware of the dissatisfaction with Hoover on the

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right—he cites Amity Shlaes's *The Forgotten Man* (2007) and Murray N. Rothbard's *America's Great Depression* (1972) in a footnote—but other than (correctly) stressing Hoover's fiscal conservatism, aversion to bureaucratized government, and preference for localized and voluntaristic measures, he does not confront the conservative case against Hoover systematically. He does state that the Smoot-Hawley tariff "did more harm than good" and that Hoover should have vetoed it—while suggesting that the tariff's economic importance has been exaggerated. He says nothing about the ultimate provisions, and alleged consequences, of the 1932 tax hike, but does note that the federal government that year was "trapped in a vise." Tax receipts were plummeting while government expenditures for public works and relief were rising, at a time when nearly everyone (and not just Hoover) believed in the necessity of a balanced budget.

As for Hoover's wage-freeze policy of 1929-31, Jeansonne properly highlights it as an example of Hoover's unprecedented presidential activism in response to the Crash; but he seems unfamiliar with the recent contention (by free-market economists) that Hoover's policy, however well intentioned, led to a disastrous increase in unemployment.

But Jeansonne more than compensates for this lacuna with his perceptive treatment of Hoover's postpresidential years, when the onetime Bull Moose Progressive—now outflanked by those far to his left—became an outspoken paladin of the right. Before nearly anyone else, Hoover discerned the intellectual challenge posed by the New Deal, and fought it unceasingly, on the plane not of name-calling but of ideas and principles. Hoover believed that he was engaged in a fateful contest for the American mind and political soul, a contest demanding every ounce of his formidable energy. And he did not flinch.

Jeansonne may raise some eyebrows with his claim that Hoover was "the single most important bearer of the torch of American conservatism" between his presidency and the advent of Ronald Reagan. But he has a point. In the larger sweep of the 20th century, Hoover, the unflagging anti-New Dealer, contributed mightily to the critique of ever-aggrandizing statism, a critique now integral to American conservatism. It was one of his most enduring legacies and worth remembering today. Moreover, thanks to Professor Jeansonne, we now have a new and welcome opportunity to reexamine the remarkable life of Herbert Hoover: engineer, humanitarian, statesman, philanthropist, and political philosopher. He left plenty for today's Americans to ponder—and respect. ♦

B&A

Things of Nature

Of trees and butterflies, and the appreciation thereof.

BY PAUL DI FILIPPO

The Long, Long Life of Trees
by Fiona Stafford
Yale, 296 pp., $30

Rainbow Dust
Three Centuries of Butterfly Delight
by Peter Marren
Chicago, 320 pp., $30

The study and contemplation of nature is surely one of the sovereign balms of human existence, and two superb new books offer essential pleasures and benefits in spades.

In *The Long, Long Life of Trees*, Fiona Stafford, while exhibiting rigor and precision in her depiction of these essential (and beautiful and inspiring) entities, ventures far beyond simple textbook facts and into the realms of myth, legend, history, and folklore, completing the circle from science to culture. In lyrical, impressionistic prose, which does not lack gravitas, she weaves trees into the daily lives of humans.

It opens with "Buds, Bark and a Golden Bough," her essay on the importance of trees to society—both in a utilitarian and in a soulful manner—and to her own life. And we learn from the start that Stafford can take a personal anecdote—the pine cone on her desk and its holiday origins—and expand the example into a multiplex net of sophisticated and primeval associations. Each of her subsequent chapters focuses on one type of tree, and it's instructive to name them all to demonstrate Stafford's expansive remit: yew, cherry, rowan, olive, cypress, oak, ash, poplar, holly, sycamore, birch, horse chestnut, elm, willow, hawthorn, pine, apple.

Of course, tree aficionados will lament the omission of their favorite. (I would like to read her on the ginkgo, whose messy fallen fruits crush so satisfyingly underfoot in the autumn.) But Stafford offers so much of interest, on every page, that even the offended will relent. She combines sharp taxonomic, pictorial, and biological details with references to the tree's significance in art, religion, medicine, technology, gastronomy, romance, literature, agriculture, warfare, and other facets of human existence. Here she is, in science mode, on the olive.

> Fossilised olive pollen in the cauldron of the volcanic Greek island of Santorini suggests that olive trees were growing [in the Mediterranean] some 40,000 years ago, though the ancestors of the domesticated olive

Paul Di Filippo writes science fiction in Providence.

(*Olea europaea*) may have originated in Mesopotamia. Olive trees are slow growers, but once established in suitable situations, they just keep on going . . . thriving in temperatures of 40 degrees and above. From Spain to Syria, from Turkey to Tunisia, olive groves stud the dusty slopes with silver-green.

In every chapter—all illustrated by a wide spectrum of artists—Stafford teases out the roles that her various specimens have played in the hearts, minds—and purses—of humans.

Poplars have always offered an easily renewable source of materials for joiners. The lightweight wood was right for shoe heels, clogs and wagon wheels, not to mention the bowls, trays and fruit punnets for which the wood is still in demand. The light color of the timber also made it popular for floorboards. These trees provided living poles for vines and hops, while their twigs were made into brooms and the juice of their leaves was turned into remedies for earache.

'Mulberry Tree' by Vincent van Gogh (1889)

Stafford's species become almost human in their own rights, a notion reinforced by her treatment of individually famous trees, perished or extant.

From the Bull Oak in Warwickshire, so called because of the bull that habitually reversed into the gnarled wooden cave to look out at the rain from under the clustering leaves, to the massive Cowthorpe Oak in Yorkshire, whose curved outline and hollow trunk inspired the design of the Eddystone Lighthouse, every tree had its own idiosyncrasies. The Greendale Oak at Welbeck in Nottinghamshire was large enough to accommodate a road, allowing the Duke of Portland's carriage to pass through its trunk, as if through a triumphal arch.

While good with etymology, and even up to speed on genetic engineering and the future of trees, Stafford's real delight lies in the arcane and startling.

By the time Nicholas Culpeper compiled his classic *Complete Herbal* in 1653, the link seemed incontrovertible: under his entry for the Willow Tree, he wrote, simply, "The Moon owns it." Since bruising and boiling the leaves in wine was then recommended for the concoction of a surefire antidote to lust, it seems that assumptions about the tree were still being influenced by the classical associations of the moon with Diana, goddess of chastity (this may well have been at the root of all the sad, lovesick songs of disappointed swains).

Of course, trees are often home to butterflies, as we learn early on in Peter Marren's splendid account: "Purple Emperor butterflies spend most of their lives up in the sunlit canopy of English woods, descending only to drink from puddles or to imbibe some life-enhancing substance from dog shit or roadkill. Unless you are in luck, you need binoculars to get a good view of the dark butterflies forty feet overhead." And so we have an easy transition from Stafford's volume to *Rainbow Dust*.

But beware: There will be whiplash in the transition. Whereas *The Long, Long Life of Trees* is almost entirely upbeat, Marren's "attempt to write a personal 'cultural life' of British butterflies and to try to give a sense of their lasting appeal" is suffused with melancholy and a twilight nostalgia. The hobby that once captivated many is now more or less extinct and, worse, deemed barbaric. And butterflies themselves are under environmental stresses: "[I] fear for the future of the butterfly, but also for the barren world we are creating for ourselves," writes Marren.

But this state of affairs does not stop Marren from recalling the joys that butterfly-collecting has brought him, and countless others, since its origins in the late 17th century. And along the path of his easygoing, even meandering, narrative we visit any number of personages, some exceedingly eccentric.

The arrangement of the chapters is charmingly serendipitous: The first three are devoted to butterflies in general, and a couple of special species, rich with personal anecdotes. Then, in "Gatekeepers: Collecting with Jean Froissart, John Fowles and Vladimir Nabokov," we take a detour to examine societal attitudes towards butterfly-collecting through the lens of distinguished writers. And we learn about the history and conventions of butterfly naming, with revealing observations about collectors such as this one:

[Baron Charles de Worms's] field attire was typical of many insect collectors: an old tweed jacket, a couple of tattered old pullovers and a satchel bulging with nets and boxes. When chasing the Purple Emperor he carried a pocketful of ripe blue cheese which he would spread over gateposts in hopes of luring the butterfly, notorious for its love of smelly products, down from the treetops. An earlier generation sometimes wore cork-lined top hats in the field. They were useful receptacles for pinned insects. One collector even absent-mindedly kept his bottles and boxes in his hat, only to have them spill out whenever he raised it to a lady. ♦

B&A

Shallow Fences

Something gets lost in the translation from stage to screen. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

Seeing August Wilson's play *Fences* on Broadway in 1987 was one of the highlights of my theatergoing life. This study of a 53-year-old garbageman named Troy Maxson—who struggles every moment to maintain his dignity and restrain the rage of a black man in 1950s Pittsburgh who was denied his chance to play baseball in the segregated major leagues—simply overpowered me. Troy is one of the stage's master talkers, a peerless storyteller and raconteur despite (or perhaps because of) his illiteracy. He creates legends about the house he owns, the joys of his marriage to the wife he supports, and takes unabashed pride in the fact that he gets through the week without exploding at the daily humiliations of his existence.

Fences is the story of how Troy hurts and betrays everyone he knows and loves because he cannot talk himself out of the hunger for a larger life than the one he has painstakingly, and even heroically, built. *Fences* is constructed on the model of *Death of a Salesman*, but while it doesn't quite match Arthur Miller's play for raw power, it does not have to strain for the social significance Miller sought to layer falsely onto his small family tragedy. Willy Loman is not undone by powerful forces; he is, in the end, a weak and deluded man. Troy Maxson is a man with greatness inside him brought down low by a structural social injustice August Wilson does not need to spell out for us.

Troy was played, in that 1987 Broadway production, by James Earl Jones in a landmark performance that can only be described as titanic in its impact. If what you know of Jones is the voice of Darth Vader, you have no idea how colossal he could be in his own person at the height of his acting powers. Full of high good humor and cheer, Jones's Troy seemed like he could go off like an atomic bomb at any moment. When his teenage son asked plaintively why Troy doesn't like him, Jones rumbled in his great basso voice:

> Who the hell say I got to like you? What law is there say I got to like you? . . . You live in my house, sleep you behind on my bedclothes, fill you belly up with my food. . . . I ain't got to like you. . . . Don't you try and go through life worrying about if somebody like you or not. You best be making sure they doing right by you.

This speech, much abridged here, is one of the great moments of the American theater—a classic stage confrontation between a lesser and a greater power in which what matters most goes unspoken.

But it's not one of the great scenes in recent American movies, and that is the problem with the new film adaptation of *Fences*, of which Denzel Washington is both director and star. Washington's Troy Maxson is not a force of nature, a great-souled man, a King Lear trapped in Pittsburgh. He's a smart, wily, angry, likable guy, and he can't make you believe (as Jones did) that he might actually and genuinely dislike his own son—or as happens at the play's most staggering moment, that he might be so disfigured with rage that he could kill his own child. Washington is a wonderful actor, but either because he can't or couldn't bear to, he never reaches the raw depths James Earl Jones plumbed before him. He gets the charm but he mimes the fury—and so does his movie, which simply cannot produce the pity and terror that Aristotle tells us are the generative power of the stage tragedy.

Fences
Directed by Denzel Washington

This isn't to say that *Fences* should not be seen. It should. It's a careful and highly respectable version of Wilson's play. Washington played Troy in a revival on Broadway in 2010, and he is clearly such an admirer of Wilson's astounding way with theatrical dialogue that he wanted to replicate it as closely as he could. He is joined in his efforts by Viola Davis, who plays Troy's loving and loved and betrayed wife Rose about as perfectly as anyone could play anything. She's so good, in fact, that she throws the movie a bit out of whack. Rose herself says that she has submerged herself in Troy to her detriment, so it does something odd to the dynamic between the characters that Rose steals the show.

I can think of only two adaptations of American plays that work better on screen than they do on the stage. One is Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys*, which is far sharper and funnier and uses the crumbling New York of the 1970s as a beautiful analogue to the crumbling old man played by Walter Matthau. The other is *Glengarry Glen Ross*, David Mamet's Pulitzer Prize winner. Mamet wrote the screenplay and helped his own original script inestimably by adding the now-classic opening monologue delivered by the awesome Alec Baldwin to set up the competition that drives the action. And the director, James Foley, took Mamet's script and gave it cinematic life by moving the characters beautifully around and about the two-bit Chicago neighborhood near the low-rent office filled with the play's crew of real-estate shysters.

Denzel Washington set himself a nearly insuperable challenge in attempting to make a memorable movie out of *Fences*. His impulse was admirable and the movie is not a failure. But it's not really a success, either. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

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