

March 2, 2015

Roger Simon posts on the new new new anti-Semitism.

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It's over. And how it's over. You don't need a poll to tell you that, but a [new one](#) just conducted by Trinity College and the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law tells us that 54 percent of self-identified Jewish students in 55 college across the country experienced or witnessed anti-Semitism during the 2013-2014 school year. Whoa! Welcome to the University of Berlin. ...

We now have a post by David Harsanyi saying there's nothing unpatriotic about challenging the president on Iran. Just because it follows Roger Simon's essay on the new new new anti-Semitism, it does not follow we're suggesting the same for Barry. He is ignorant, but not necessarily anti-Semitic. He is though, anti-British; which is a perfect example of his ignorance. One of the finest episodes in human history was the success of the anti-slavery movement which started in England with people like William Wilberforce. The eradication of an institution that had been part of history for thousand of years in just a few decades was a major accomplishment. The president's removal of Churchill's bust from the oval office upon his first day in office illustrates his ideological shortsightedness, historical stupidity, and the fact his mind was warped by the "legends" of both his father and his grandfather. That screed aside, we can proceed with Harsanyi.

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Considering Fallows' views on the Iraq War, he should probably know better. Devotion to Obama is not the same as loyalty to your country. The opposition party, in fact, has a responsibility to disrupt the president's agenda if they truly believe it's the wrong path for the nation. This is why we have political parties. And this is why I'm pretty sure many anti-war liberals believe that the Hillary Clintons and John Kerrys of the world failed the country leading up to the Iraq War.

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George W. Bush,” said former presidential candidate. “We all know what happened with that decision.”

Yes, Netanyahu supported the Iraq War, but he did not send Americans to fight—nor will his upcoming speech. Kerry, on the other hand, engaged in a cynical voted for/voted against charade driven by his own political ambitions. But there is a bigger falsehood—let’s call it presumption—here. Critics of Netanyahu act as if opposing Obama’s Iranian deal is tantamount to declaring war on Iran. In the long run, allowing Iran to become nuclear power may well mean war. We don’t know. ...

More from [Jennifer Rubin](#).

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And [Streetwise Professor](#) spotted more administration foolishness.

John Kerry has criticized Russian actions in and lies about Ukraine. He hinted that further sanctions could be forthcoming, and that the head of the FSB could be targeted.

Wait a minute. Just last week the head of the FSB was considered a worthy participant in the debate on the subject of terrorism: he headed the Russian delegation to the Countering Violent Extremism Summit. How ludicrous, and schizo, is that? The guy goes from interlocutor to persona non grata in a period of mere days. To quote Casey Stengel: can’t anybody here play this game?

Any sanctions forthcoming will likely have the opposite of the intended effect. Putin will interpret them as demonstrating a lack of seriousness, a token response meant to keep up appearances, rather than as a serious challenge. He will view such actions as a green light, not a yellow let alone a flashing red. He will understand that he faces an irresolute, incoherent, and timorous opposition, and will act accordingly.

For a treat, we have an interview with Camille Paglia in [America Magazine](#). This wanders so, but as with anything associated with Paglia there are some gems.

... Identifying yourself as a “dissident feminist,” you often seem more at home with classical Greek and Roman paganism than with postmodern academia. How has this reality affected your public and professional relationships?

I feel lucky to have taught primarily at art schools, where the faculty are active practitioners of the arts and crafts. I have very little contact with American academics, who are pitifully trapped in a sterile career system that has become paralyzed by political correctness. University faculties nationwide have lost power to an ever-expanding bureaucracy of administrators, whose primary concern is the institution's contractual relationship with tuition-paying parents. You can cut the demoralized faculty atmosphere with a knife when you step foot on any elite campus. With a few stellar exceptions, the only substantive discourse that I ever have these days is with academics, intellectuals, and journalists abroad.

In your view, what's wrong with American feminism today, and what can it do to improve?

After the great victory won by my insurgent, pro-sex, pro-fashion wing of feminism in the 1990s, American and British feminism has amazingly collapsed backward again into whining, narcissistic victimology. As in the hoary old days of Gloria Steinem and her Stalinist cohorts, we are endlessly subjected to the hackneyed scenario of history as a toxic wasteland of vicious male oppression and gruesome female suffering. College campuses are hysterically portrayed as rape extravaganzas where women are helpless fluffs with no control over their own choices and behavior. ...

John Fund makes sense of the Net Neutrality/Internet fight.

Today's vote by a bitterly divided Federal Communications Commission that the Internet should be regulated as a public utility is the culmination of a decade-long battle by the Left. Using money from George Soros and liberal foundations that totaled at least \$196 million, radical activists finally succeeded in ramming through "net neutrality," or the idea that all data should be transmitted equally over the Internet. The final push involved unprecedented political pressure exerted by the Obama White House on FCC chairman Tom Wheeler, head of an ostensibly independent regulatory body.

"Net neutrality's goal is to empower the federal government to ration and apportion Internet bandwidth as it sees fit, and to thereby control the Internet's content," says Phil Kerpen, an anti-net-neutrality activist from the group American Commitment.

The courts have previously ruled the FCC's efforts to impose "net neutrality" out of bounds, so the battle isn't over. But for now, the FCC has granted itself enormous power to micromanage the largely unrestrained Internet. ...

Roger Simon

The New New New New Anti-Semitism

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At the same time, the [David Horowitz Freedom Center](#) has published a "Top 10" academic institutions for Jew hatred with two Ivies — Columbia and Cornell — at the top. Representatives of Columbia are already crying foul, but with [Rashid Khalidi](#) director of their Middle East studies department, what do they expect? He's not exactly an impartial academic, more like Mahmoud Abbas with better credentials. (Abbas got his PhD in Moscow for a [thesis denying the Holocaust.](#))

I can understand why the university would be concerned, however. A lot of parents, not to mention alumni and donors, are probably a bit perturbed to see the institution at the top of such a list. More importantly, how about prospective students? If I were a young person, I wouldn't want to apply at this point. The idea of Columbia with a *judenrein* student body, given the overwhelming contribution of Jews to the university's past, is as tragic as it is hard to fathom.

But then, as we all know, American academia is just part of the global zeitgeist, albeit a shameful and especially dangerous part. And the manner in which Benjamin Netanyahu's speech before Congress is being treated by the administration gives cover to this kind of behavior, even enhances it. The recent statements of Susan Rice, who has turned into a kind of all-purpose, prevaricating hatchet woman for Barack Obama, are astonishing. The thought that the woman who serially lied to us about Benghazi is condemning Netanyahu while herself about to speak in front of AICPAC gives a new fascist spin to the word "chutzpah." The slogan of the German Communist Party in the early thirties was "*Nach Hitler Uns!*" (After Hitler us). Perhaps the new slogan for a third Obama term should be "*Nach Benghazi Uns!*"

So is there anything new about the new new new new anti-Semitism? No, there isn't. As usual the Jews are the canaries in the proverbial coal mine. And you all know what comes next.

The Federalist

There's Nothing Unpatriotic About Challenging Obama On Iran

This is exactly why we have political parties

by David Harsanyi

This administration values a future relationship with Iran more than it values the historic relationship it has with Israel.

Unless there's reversal [in the reported deal with Islamic Republic of Iran](#), all the superficial talk about this extraordinary friendship between Israel and United States isn't going to mean much. And the histrionics surrounding Benjamin Netanyahu's planned speech in front of a joint session of Congress only confirms that there are plenty of people who are happy about it.

First, Americans were supposed to be outraged because Netanyahu engaged in a breach of protocol. Then we were supposed to be outraged because the speech would be given too close to the upcoming Israeli election (Tim Kaine is [still using this excuse](#) for his own boycott). But if the Israel elections—and President Obama's done about everything possible to weaken Netanyahu's position—are so problematic, then the controversy should be centered on the behavior of the prime minister, not the substance of his argument. That's not the case, is it?

Administration mouthpieces warn us that the once-special relationship between the nations will collapse under the weight of a single speech—and some of those warnings have come with a hint of [anticipation](#). The real victims of Netanyahu? [American Jews](#). Critics suggest that challenging the president while he is in the middle of foreign policy deal-making is both a bit unpatriotic and dangerously partisan.

But the problem isn't protocol, Israeli elections, patriotism, or partisanship. It's the fact that Netanyahu is going to make a powerful argument against enabling Iran to become a nuclear power. Many Americans will hear it—or of it. Many Americans will agree.

And for many on the Left, a nuclear Iran is seen as inevitable or innocuous. James Fallows [at The Atlantic](#) has written a string of confused pieces that [suggests](#) Iran is not a threat to Israel and argues that anyone attempting to weaken the president's position in the Iranian negotiations is exhibiting dual loyalties. (You'll note that supporters of the Jewish State are either cowards who clap for Israeli prime ministers because they are compelled to do so by dark forces, or cowards who are under the spell of wicked special interests.)

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Yes, Netanyahu supported the Iraq War, but he did not send Americans to fight—nor will his upcoming speech. Kerry, on the other hand, engaged in a cynical [voted for/voted against](#) charade driven by his own political ambitions. But there is a bigger falsehood—let's call it presumption—here. Critics of Netanyahu act as if opposing Obama's Iranian deal is tantamount to declaring war on Iran. In the long run, allowing Iran to become nuclear power may well mean war. We don't know.

We do know some other things. Whereas Obama looks to be comfortable with the expansion of Iranian power with proxies in Syria and Lebanon, our allies in Israel may not feel the same way. Obama may be comfortable with idea that Tehran can develop powerful centrifuges that puts them in a position to build a bomb within a year, but that reality is probably unsettling for the Sunnis and Jews in the area. In fact, former CIA deputy director Michael Morell [says that a potential Iran nuclear agreement](#) would limit Iran to the number of centrifuges needed for a weapon but not enough for the imaginary nuclear power program it wants.

And, yes, Iran, which may [also have tested](#) sinking aircraft carriers using ballistic missiles, always keeps its word. Obama, though, repeatedly [promised that Iran would not be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons](#). Yet, reportedly, he is willing to allow a deal to sunset after 10 years. This, in effect, allows Iran to work towards its goal under the protection of the United States. Israel could not attack Iran's program during this time, even if it had the capability.

So the question is: What does the United States gain from entering a deal like this?

Netanyahu may mention some of these apprehensions. Obama's National Security Adviser Susan Rice [says the visit is](#) "destructive of the fabric of the relationship." It seems unlikely that Rice would ever use the word *destructive* to describe Iran's obsession with obtaining nuclear weapons ... but "partisanship," now, that's really corrosive. The fact is that the alliance with Israel has never been much of a partisan issue in the United States. Not until now. And even today only a handful of reliably anti-Israel politicians and a few Obama loyalists are skipping the speech so far. According to Gallup, [70 percent of Americans still have a favorable view of Israel](#).

What's truly unprecedented isn't only the partisanship or the speech, it's what Abraham Miller [perfectly articulated](#) in the *New York Observer*:

Barack Obama will go down in history as the American president who enabled the Shi'ite theocracy to become the region's hegemonic power and looked the other way while Iran developed the bomb.

So while there is plenty of criticism aimed at the aggressive methods of Netanyahu in Israel, there will also be widespread agreement among nearly all political denominations in the Jewish State regarding the substance of his speech and the warnings about a nuclear Iran. Surely, hearing out the case of an ally that is persistently threatened by Holocaust-denying Iranian officials doesn't need to come with this much angst from Democrats. But if it does, it's worth asking why.

Right Turn

[Who are you going to trust on Iran?](#)

by Jennifer Rubin

Secretary of State John Kerry ran into a bipartisan buzzsaw at the [House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on Wednesday](#):

California Republican Rep. Ed Royce, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, told Kerry at a hearing that members of the panel have serious concerns about the direction of the more than 1-year-old talks, which are at a critical juncture. Negotiators are rushing to try to meet a March 31 deadline for a framework agreement between Iran and the US and five other world powers.

"I'm hearing less about dismantlement and more about the performance of Iran's nuclear program," Royce told Kerry. "That's particularly disturbing when you consider that international inspectors report that Iran has still not revealed its past bomb work."

New York Rep. Elliot Engel, the ranking Democrat on the committee, expressed skepticism too. Engel noted news stories claiming that negotiators are willing to ease limits on Iran's enrichment production during the later years of an accord in order to bridge the differences between the two sides over how long an agreement should last.

"We're hearing troubling reports on the scale and duration of the program that Iran may be allowed as part of a deal," Engel said.

Kerry, who voted for the Iraq war, at one point said Netanyahu couldn't be trusted because he supported the war. Aside from the unmitigated chutzpah, it is not true. [Israel](#), as has been [widely reported](#), had [significant qualms](#) about the war and came under Scud missile fire. Netanyahu, of course, was not prime minister at the time; Ariel Sharon was. Elliott Abrams, who was deputy national security adviser under President George W. Bush and oversaw the Israel relationship, tells me, "Senator Kerry was famously for the invasion of Iraq before he was against it. Prime Minister Netanyahu, then a cabinet member, was — like Prime Minister Sharon — worried that the United States was going after the wrong target, Iraq, when they worried more about Iran. The assertion that Israel pressed for the invasion of Iraq is wrong, and is usually heard from the loonier anti-Semitic circles. Secretary Kerry owes a lot of apologies today." Indeed, anti-Israel fanatics on the far right and left blame Israel for pushing the war, so maybe that is where Kerry got this from. But his accusation disproves his point: Netanyahu is actually far more credible on Iran since it is his country that is immediately threatened and it is he who accurately predicted Iran's march to acquire a bomb.

[The Post's Fred Hiatt](#) recently listed a number of false assurances and misguided predictions by the Obama administration. He concluded, "This litany of unfulfilled assurances is less a case of Nixonian deception than a product of wishful thinking and stubborn adherence to policies after they have failed. But inevitably it will affect how people hear Obama's promises on Iran, as will his overall foreign policy record. . . . Islamist extremists are stronger than ever; democracy is in retreat around the globe; relations with Russia and North Korea have worsened; allies are questioning U.S. steadfastness." Indeed there is a world leader who deserves deep skepticism on his judgment about Iran; it's President Obama.

Frankly, the administration's snit over the Netanyahu speech has rightly been seen as abject panic. The world leader most credible on Iran from the country that 70 percent of Americans support is coming to debunk the plan to let Iran keep its nuclear infrastructure — in direct contravention of the administration's public statements and private assurances to our allies in the region. The administration's lame effort to discredit the prime minister and start a partisan rumpus — led by two of the least credible foreign policy officials in recent memory (Susan Rice of "it was a video" fame on the Benghazi attack and John Kerry, whose previously threatened that the United States could not protect Israel unless it made a peace deal) — is nearly as pathetic as its negotiation posture with Iran. It is no wonder that the administration refuses to concede a deal must be approved by Congress. With each passing day, the administration's credibility slips deeper into the abyss and the likelihood of bipartisan rejection of the Obama-Clinton-Kerry Iran diplomatic debacle increases.

Streetwise Professor

[Incoherence on Display: The FSB Head Transformed From Interlocutor to Persona Non Grata in a Week](#)

by Craig Pirrong

[John Kerry has criticized Russian actions in and lies about Ukraine. He hinted that further sanctions could be forthcoming, and that the head of the FSB could be targeted.](#)

Wait a minute. Just last week the head of the FSB was considered a worthy participant in the debate on the subject of terrorism: [he headed the Russian delegation to the Countering Violent Extremism Summit](#). How ludicrous, and schizo, is that? The guy goes from interlocutor to *persona non grata* in a period of mere days. To quote Casey Stengel: can't anybody here play this game?

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America Magazine

[The Catholic Pagan: 10 Questions for Camille Paglia](#)

by Sean Salai, S.J.



Camille Paglia
Credit: © Michael Lionstar

Camille Paglia is an American cultural critic who serves as the [University Professor of Humanities and Media Studies at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia](#), where she has taught since 1984. She received her B.A. from the State University of New York at Binghamton in 1968 and her M.Phil and Ph.D degrees from Yale University in 1971 and 1974, respectively.

Her six books are [Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson \(1990\)](#); *Sex, Art, and American Culture* (1992); *Vamps & Tramps: New Essays* (1994); *The Birds, a study of Alfred Hitchcock* published in 1998 by the British Film Institute in its *Film Classics Series*; *Break, Blow, Burn: Camille Paglia Reads Forty-Three of the World's Best Poems* (2005), and [Glittering Images: A Journey through Art from Egypt to Star Wars \(2012\)](#). Her third essay collection is currently under contract to Pantheon Books.

Professor Paglia was a co-founding contributor and columnist for Salon.com, beginning with its debut issue in 1995. She has written numerous articles on art, literature, popular culture, feminism, politics, and religion for publications around the world—most recently including TIME and the Sunday Times of London. Her essay, “Theater of Gender: David Bowie at the Climax of the Sexual Revolution,” was commissioned by the Victoria & Albert Museum for the catalog of its major exhibit of Bowie costumes, which opened in London in 2013 and is currently touring internationally.

Although raised Catholic in an Italian-American family, Professor Paglia left Catholicism in her youth and embraced the sexual revolution. Nevertheless, she still cites Italian Catholicism as the strongest influence on her personal identity. On Feb. 22, I conducted the following email interview with Professor Paglia about her secular work and its Catholic influences.

You’ve been teaching at University of the Arts since 1984. What do you love most about your job?

There is no doubt that my commitment to the vocation of teaching is part of my Catholic heritage. I view classroom teaching as a discipline and duty, a responsibility to convey the legacy of the past to the next generation. As I strictly monitor attendance and enforce order, I sometimes ruefully feel like a teaching nun from the over-regulated era of my upstate New York youth! I have a powerful sense of the descent of modern education from the medieval monasteries and cathedrals, whose Gothic architecture has been imitated on so many college campuses here and abroad. My faith in that nurturing continuity is certainly diametrically opposed to the cynically subversive approach of today's postmodernist theorists, who see history as a false or repressive narrative operating on disconnected fragments.

Despite your teaching schedule, you’ve found time to speak and write a great deal, including your last book in 2012. What’s your next big project?

For the past five years, I have been researching Paleo-Indian culture of Northeastern America at the end of the Ice Age, as the glaciers withdrew. I am particularly interested in Neolithic religion, which was focused on elemental nature, a persistent theme in my work. I have been studying Native American tribal history and doing surface collecting of small stone artifacts. Professional archaeologists and anthropologists have tended to gravitate toward Indian lifestyle issues like kinship patterns, governance, hunting strategies, food preparation and fabrication of tools, clothing, and shelter. I have found surprisingly few attempts to approach Native American culture from the perspective of world art and world religion. There is a puzzling gap in the record, and I hope to be able to make a contribution. However, this challenging project will be long in the making. In the meantime, I am preparing for my third essay collection, which is under contract to Pantheon Books.

Identifying yourself as a “dissident feminist,” you often seem more at home with classical Greek and Roman paganism than with postmodern academia. How has this reality affected your public and professional relationships?

I feel lucky to have taught primarily at art schools, where the faculty are active practitioners of the arts and crafts. I have very little contact with American academics, who are pitifully trapped in a sterile career system that has become paralyzed by political correctness. University faculties nationwide have lost power to an ever-expanding bureaucracy of administrators, whose primary concern is the institution's contractual relationship with tuition-paying parents. You can cut the demoralized faculty atmosphere with a knife when you step foot on any elite campus. With a few stellar exceptions, the only substantive discourse that I ever have these days is with academics, intellectuals, and journalists abroad.

In your view, what’s wrong with American feminism today, and what can it do to improve?

After the great victory won by my insurgent, pro-sex, pro-fashion wing of feminism in the 1990s, American and British feminism has amazingly collapsed backward again into whining, narcissistic victimology. As in the hoary old days of Gloria Steinem and her Stalinist cohorts, we are endlessly subjected to the hackneyed scenario of history as a toxic wasteland of vicious male oppression and gruesome female suffering. College campuses are hysterically portrayed as rape extravaganzas where women are helpless fluffs with no control over their own choices and behavior. I am an equal opportunity feminist: that is, I call for the removal of all barriers to women's advance in the professional and political realms. However, I oppose special protections for women, which I reject as demeaning and infantilizing. My principal demand (as I have been repeating for nearly 25 years) is for colleges to confine themselves to education and to cease their tyrannical surveillance of students' social lives. If a real crime is committed, it must be reported to the police. College officials and committees have neither the expertise nor the legal right to be conducting investigations into he said/she said campus dating fiascos. Too many of today's young feminists seem to want hovering, paternalistic authority figures to protect and soothe them, an attitude I regard as servile, reactionary and glaringly bourgeois. The world can never be made totally safe for anyone, male or female: there will always be sociopaths and psychotics impervious to social controls. I call my system "street-smart feminism": there is no substitute for wary vigilance and personal responsibility.

Briefly put, what is post-structuralism and what is your opinion of it?

Post-structuralism is a system of literary and social analysis that flared up and vanished in France in the 1960s but that became anachronistically entrenched in British and American academe from the 1970s on. Based on the outmoded linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and promoted by the idolized Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault, it absurdly asserts that we experience or process reality only through language and that, because language is inherently unstable, nothing can be known. By undermining meaning, history and personal will, post-structuralism has done incalculable damage to education and contemporary thought. It is a laborious, circuitously self-referential gimmick that always ends up with the same monotonous result. I spent six months writing a long attack on academic post-structuralism for the classics journal *Arion* in 1991, "Junk Bonds and Corporate Raiders: Academe in the Hour of the Wolf" (reprinted in my first essay collection, *Sex, Art, and American Culture*). Post-structuralism has destroyed two generations of graduate students, who were forced to mouth its ugly jargon and empty platitudes for their foolish faculty elders. And the end result is that humanities departments everywhere, having abandoned their proper mission of defending and celebrating art, have become humiliatingly marginalized in both reputation and impact.

What audience do you write for?

I have always written for a general audience interested in ideas. I believe culture critics should address the reader in a lucid, vivid and engaging manner. In college, I was very drawn to the lively, transparent writing style of early 20th-century British classicists like Gilbert Murray and C.M. Bowra. Academic writing needs to purge itself of its present provincialism, insularity and pseudo-French preciosity and recover the colloquial robustness and earthy rhythms of natural English.

In your view as a classicist, what can the ancient Romans and Greeks teach us as human beings?

Following my culture-hero, Oscar Wilde, I do not subscribe to the implicitly moralistic assumption that literature or art "teaches" us anything. It simply opens up our vision to a larger world—or allows us to see that world through a different lens. Greco-Roman culture, which is fast receding in American higher education, is one of the two foundational traditions of Western civilization, the other being the Judeo-Christian. These traditions twined about and influenced each other for centuries and produced the titanic complexity of the West, for good and ill. To ignore or minimize the Greco-Roman past is to put intellectual blinders on—but that is exactly what has been happening as colleges are gradually abandoning the big, chronological, two-semester freshman survey courses that once heavily emphasized classical antiquity. The trajectory is toward "presentism," a myopic concentration on society since the Renaissance—a noble, humanistic term, by the way, that is being ruthlessly discarded for the blobby new Marxist entity, "Early Modern."

You grew up as an Italian-American Catholic, but seemed to identify more strongly with the pagan elements of Catholic art and culture than with the church's doctrines. What caused you to fall away from the Catholic Church?

Italian Catholicism remains my deepest identity—in the same way that many secular Jews feel a strong cultural bond with Judaism. Over time I realized—and this became a main premise of my first book, *Sexual Personae* (based on my doctoral dissertation at Yale)—that what had always fascinated me in Italian Catholicism was its pagan residue. I loved the cult of saints, the bejeweled ceremonialism, the eerie litanies of Mary—all the things, in other words, that Martin Luther and the other Protestant reformers rightly condemned as medieval Romanist intrusions into primitive Christianity. It's no coincidence that my Halloween costume in first grade was a Roman soldier, modeled on the legionnaires' uniforms I admired in the Stations of the Cross on the church walls. Christ's story had very little interest for me—except for the Magi, whose opulent Babylonian costumes I adored! My baptismal church, St. Anthony of Padua in Endicott, New York, was a dazzling yellow-brick, Italian-style building with gorgeous stained-glass windows and life-size polychrome statues, which were the first works of art I ever saw.

After my parents moved to Syracuse, however, I was progressively stuck with far blander churches and less ethnic congregations. Irish Catholicism began to dominate—a completely different brand, with its lesser visual sense and its tendency toward brooding guilt and ranting fanaticism. I suspect that the nun who finally alienated me from the church must have been Irish! It was in religious education class (for which Catholic students were released from public school on Thursday afternoons), held on that occasion in the back pews of the church. I asked the nun what still seems to me a perfectly reasonable and intriguing question: if God is all-forgiving, will he ever forgive Satan? The nun's reaction was stunning: she turned beet red and began screaming at me in front of everyone. That was when I concluded there was no room in the Catholic Church of that time for an inquiring mind.

You've certainly written a lot about your early experiences of Catholic art, iconography and saints. Who were the Catholic artists and personalities who most inspired you as you grew up in the America of Doris Day?

It's no coincidence that the first women intellectuals who impressed me in adolescence had been raised Catholic and wrote eloquently about it: Simone de Beauvoir (*Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*) and Mary McCarthy (*Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*). Later, Germaine Greer, another rebellious Catholic girl, became and remains my favorite feminist. Catholic doctrine, however personally limiting, trains the mind with its luminous categories and rigorous discipline. Medieval theology is far more complex and challenging than anything offered by the pretentious post-structuralist hucksters. For most of his career, my father taught Romance Languages at a Jesuit school, LeMoyne College, where I took a course in logic from a Jesuit professor one college summer. For centuries, the Jesuits have been world-famous for their keen and penetrating minds and their agile argumentation. My familiarity with Jesuit analysis must surely have helped produce my later instant scorn for the confused and pointless morass that is post-structuralism.

What is your impression of Pope Francis so far?

Francis seems like an affable gust of fresh energy after the near-sepulchral persona of the prior pope, who seemed strangely stiff and reserved for a Bavarian. So that's a big positive, in terms of captivating young people around the world and inspiring them toward charitable social action. However, I am somewhat baffled by the cat-and-mouse game that Francis seems to be playing with the media. Is he or is he not signaling his support of revolutionary reforms in Catholic doctrine?—particularly as it applies to sexuality. As a veteran of the 1960s, I of course strongly support the sexual revolution. But as a student of comparative religion, I have to say that when the Catholic Church trims its doctrine for politically correct convenience, it will no longer be Catholic.

National Review

Comrades for Net Neutrality

The powers behind the FCC's muscling of the Internet

by John Fund

Today's vote by a bitterly divided Federal Communications Commission that the Internet should be regulated as a public utility is the culmination of a decade-long battle by the Left. Using money from George Soros and liberal foundations that totaled at least [\\$196 million](#), radical activists finally succeeded in ramming through "net neutrality," or the idea that all data should be transmitted equally over the Internet. The final push involved [unprecedented political pressure](#) exerted by the Obama White House on FCC chairman Tom Wheeler, head of an ostensibly independent regulatory body.

"Net neutrality's goal is to empower the federal government to ration and apportion Internet bandwidth as it sees fit, and to thereby control the Internet's content," says Phil Kerpen, an anti-net-neutrality activist from the group American Commitment.

The courts have previously ruled the FCC's efforts to impose "net neutrality" out of bounds, so the battle isn't over. But for now, the FCC has granted itself enormous power to micromanage the largely unrestrained Internet.

Back in the 1990s, the Clinton administration teamed up with Internet pioneers to promote a hands-off approach to the new industry and keep it free from discriminatory taxation. Many still prefer that policy. Nicholas Negroponte, founder of the MIT Media Lab and the charity One Laptop Per Child, says that net neutrality “doesn’t make sense” because “the truth is, not all bits [of data] are created equal.”

Will Marshall, head of the Progressive Policy Institute (which was once a favorite think tank of Clinton Democrats), [issued a statement](#) that net neutrality “endorses a backward-looking policy that would apply the brakes to the most dynamic sector of America’s economy.”

But such voices have been drowned out by left-wing activists who want to manage the Internet to achieve their political objectives. The most influential of these congregate around the deceptively named Free Press, a liberal lobby co-founded in 2002 by Robert McChesney, a University of Illinois communications professor.

His goals have always been clear. “At the moment, the battle over network neutrality is not to completely eliminate the telephone and cable companies,” he told the website SocialistProject in 2009. “But the ultimate goal is to get rid of the media capitalists in the phone and cable companies and to divest them from control.” Earlier in 2000, he [told](#) the Marxist magazine *Monthly Review*: “Our job is to make media reform part of our broader struggle for democracy, social justice, and, dare we say it, socialism.” When I interviewed him in 2010, he admitted he is a socialist and said he was “hesitant to say I’m not a Marxist.”

In essence, what McChesney and his followers want is an Unfree Press — a media world that promotes their values. “To cast things in neo-Marxist terms that they could appreciate, they want to take control of the information means of production,” [says Adam Therier](#) of the blog TechLiberation.

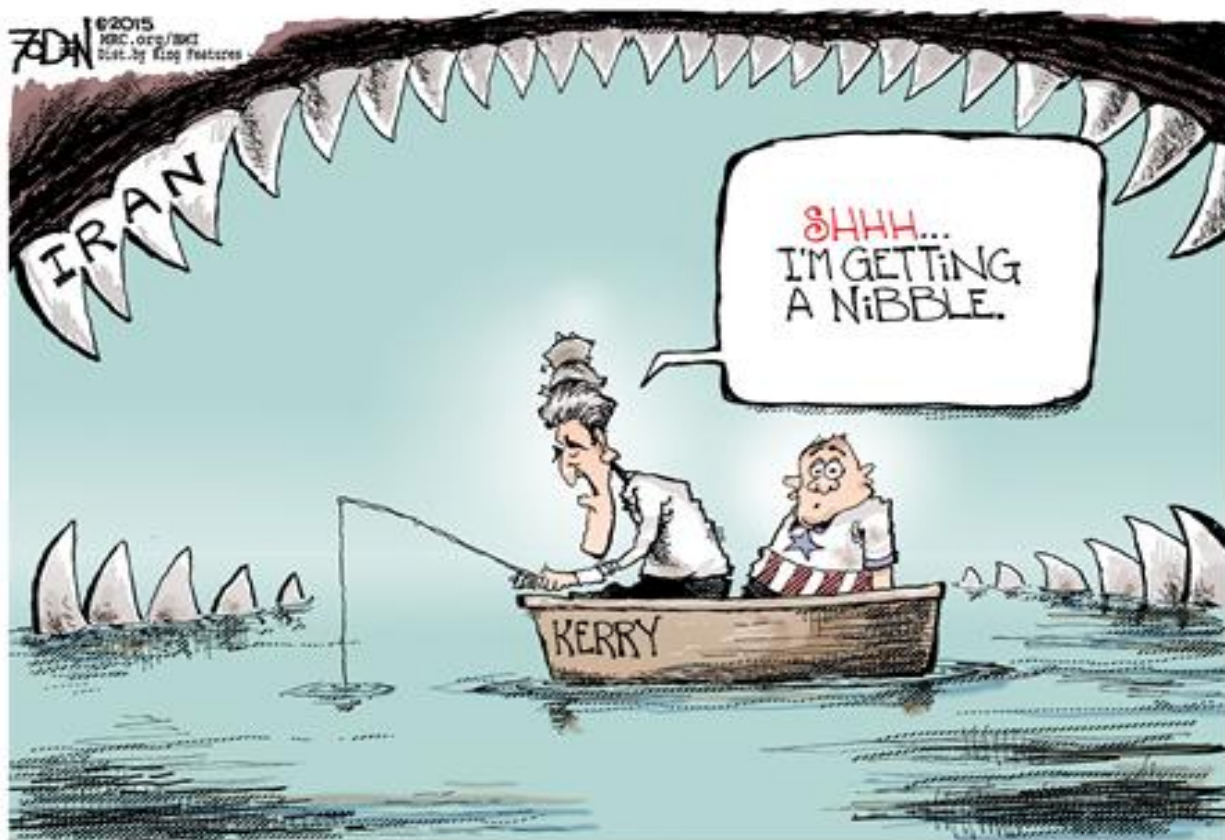
Certainly McChesney seems blind to the dangers of media control on the left. In 2007, he co-authored a [remarkable survey](#) of the media under Hugo Chávez’s already clearly thuggish regime in Venezuela: “Aggressive, unqualified political dissent is alive and well in the Venezuelan mainstream media, in a manner few other democratic nations have ever known, including our own.”

Despite his astonishingly radical goals, McChesney’s Free Press group was able to leverage foundation cash and academic “research” into an influential force behind net neutrality. Julius Genachowski, President Obama’s first FCC chairman, hired Free Press’s Jen Howard as his press secretary. The FCC’s chief diversity officer, Mark Lloyd, has co-authored a Free Press report demanding regulation of political talk radio. The FCC’s National Broadband Plan cited research from Free Press and other left-wing groups backing net neutrality more than 50 times.

The battle for control of the Internet isn’t over. Over two-thirds of the House and Senate are on record as opposing FCC regulation of the Internet, and a new president could change the policy overnight in 2017 even if the courts don’t block it.

But for now, the “media reform” movement led by McChesney and his allies can claim bragging rights for their Saul Alinsky-style outflanking maneuver on Internet regulation. They financed the research behind the idea, installed their political allies in power, got the government to consider them experts on the issues they cared deeply about, and finally ran roughshod over both Congress and an initially reluctant FCC chairman. Conservatives should study how the Left won on this issue even as they acknowledge and fight the illegitimacy of many of the results.







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