

## A TALE OF TWO CULTURES

Joseph LaPalombara

My father died when I was four and, for complex family reasons, my mother sent me to live with one of my mother's childless sisters and her husband, Frank Vietri, who was illiterate. I "earned my keep" there by working in the grocery store he and my aunt, Carmela, owned. Uncle Frank's family lived in the small Italian town of Vietri, close to Naples, which is famous for its ceramics. At about ten years of age, he was put on a boat and entrusted to friends who were headed for the New World. Uncle Frank was expected not only to earn his keep, but also to remit some of what he earned to his parents and family. As with so many other Italians of his generation, that was the reason for his journey. .

177

Before my mother and her entire family migrated to the United States, she and several of her siblings had had some schooling in Italy. But that was the extent of their formal education, in Italy or in this country. They too, one way or another, were expected to find employment in the New Country.

I was and have remained a high school dropout. Most young people of my generation who turned sixteen in Chicago's "Little Italy" were expected to leave school, find a job, and help support the family; indeed, we actually relished the moment when this opportunity presented itself. This pattern was as true of girls as it was of boys. In the three-story building, owned by my uncle, two teenage girls from as many families found work in the laundry of Chicago's Congress Hotel – and, in the years of the Great Depression, that was considered a bonanza.

Except for a few books my maternal grandfather brought over from Italy, the house I lived in was bereft of literature. The first newspapers I saw, and later began to read, were in the Italian language, some published in Italy, a couple in the United States. There were also magazines lying around, including the *Police Gazette*, and a few dime novels.

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I remember frequent “intellectual” discussions about the relative merits of the different regions of Italy. Dante and the *Divine Comedy* were often referred to, and sometimes quoted, and everyone seemed ready to debate about lyric opera and its practitioners. The most heated discussions I recall were focused on Italian fascism and the figure of Mussolini, *Il Duce*. One seemed to have to choose sides, and there was a good deal of name calling. On one occasion, my grandfather ordered my stepfather out of his house, with the admonition never to return, because the latter had claimed the Fascists had invented a “death ray” capable of stopping dead in their tracks any enemy aircraft that might cross into Italy’s air space. I can still hear my enraged grandfather, Pietro Teutonico, shouting, “Vattene da qui e non metterci più piede!” (Get out and don’t set foot in here again.)

There was also a great deal of discussion about Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. If those in my neighborhood could have steered it through the Vatican, FDR would surely have been granted sainthood. His Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and other New Deal programs helped so many families hang on to their dignities and, in some cases, I am sure, to their lives.

Roosevelt is associated with one of my earliest political recollections. It was during one of his campaign visits to Miami, in 1933, that Anton Cermak, then mayor of Chicago, who was riding in an open car with the president, was assassinated. The gunshot was intended for Roosevelt, but the assailant missed. The event stunned even those who, like my family, lived on the Old West Side of Chicago, where violence of one kind or another was as daily an occurrence as the cries of peddlers and junkmen.

We lived in the Twenty-fifth Ward, known as a “zero ward” because that was the number of votes that the Democratic ward heelers, all ardent members of the so-called Kelly-Nash Machine of that era, hoped Republican candidates would receive. These ward heelers were immediately responsible for distributing food stamps, along with bags of coal in the dead of Chicago’s unmerciful winters. Privations of this kind sparked never-ending debates among Italo-Americans as to whether, all things considered, Chicago and the United States represented actual improvements over the economic conditions that had driven them to leave Italy. I don’t remember this particular argument ever having been settled.

The major axes of the Near West Side were Halstead and Taylor streets. This is the notorious section of Chicago about which generations of social scientists have written, focusing mostly on the pathologies it has long manifested. I was born on Loomis Street, in a house very close to where these two axes intersect, and lived within a few blocks of that same place for almost all of the years until I left Chicago for good, when I was nineteen. During Prohibition, and later in the Great Depression, this part of Chicago, like several others, was characterized by a combination of poverty and violence.

In the Chicago I knew, the two major authorities were neither the city nor the county governments. When we thought about organizations capable of keeping the

peace, our immediate points of reference were the Syndicate and the Catholic Church, roughly in that order. The ward heelers reinforced this imagery and understanding, in that it was through one or both of these institutions that influence was exercised or major local problems were resolved.

There have been many academic and journalistic studies of this aspect of Chicago. In so many of the city's neighborhoods, government itself would never have been able to function, with even minimal efficacy, without the collaboration of these two institutions. Both the Catholic Church and the Syndicate were much closer to the people, much more legitimate in their eyes, than any of the institutional manifestations of public authority, including and especially the Chicago police.

The Syndicate, of course, was the name given to the organized underworld in Chicago. One of its centers, in my Italian neighborhood, was the "Greek Restaurant" across the street from the Cook County Hospital. On Roosevelt Road, close to the famous Maxwell Street market, the dregs of which survive to this day, one found a similar Jewish center at "Gold's" restaurant. Irish, Polish, and other ethnic counterparts to these places could be found all over the city. People with all manner of problems were more likely to go to these places for help than to City Hall or, perish the idea, to one of the city's police stations.

In the Chicago neighborhood of my youth, it was universally understood that government was corrupt. It was common knowledge that public servants, including judges and officials associated with the courts, were "on the take" and could "be bought." I gained first-hand knowledge of this as a kid. We boys would typically play "craps" on the sidewalks, in part because they were safer than the alleys. Almost like clockwork, Squad Car 55 would make an appearance – not to break up the game or shoo us home, but simply to "cut the game," or collect a "piece of the action," even if this might involve, as it usually did, just a few cents, or perhaps a couple of dollars.

In my neighborhood, we believed that the treatment persons were accorded by public authorities was highly correlated with income. For example, if you were arrested, or even tried in court, and had enough money, you could use it directly to "buy" the cops, or a judge or bailiff, without having to pay bondsmen, who supplied money at blatantly usurious interest rates. America's social scientists who have written, sometimes brilliantly, about the so-called culture of poverty seem to me not to have made nearly enough of this particular dimension of urban life, or the high levels of alienation it produces. Where corruption is the norm, appeals to the so-called higher and more virtuous values are dismissed as just so much nonsense.

In addition to being poor, the Chicago I grew up in was also quite violent. Some of that violence cut across ethnic and racial lines. One moved across or out of a "Little Italy" into a "Little Poland" or "Little Ireland" at some risk. There was also racial violence, some of which I experienced personally, at a very low level. In order to get from my home to a junior high school, I had to walk up Lincoln Street, which was inhabited entirely by poor black families. To avoid having to pay a daily penny or two-

penny “toll” for unmolested passage, one had to fight one of the black age peers. I was lucky enough to fight Jimmy Rogers to a draw, a feat that won me right of free passage. To this day I believe that my first girlfriend latched on to me because it spared her these onerous payments.

This, you might say, was kid’s stuff. At another level, the infamous Haymarket Square Massacre of 1886 occurred on the edge of my neighborhood. The St. Valentine’s Day Massacre, which has reached mythic status, took place in 1929 in a garage located just a few blocks from where I was born. Five years later, John Dillinger was gunned down by the FBI outside the Biograph Theater at the northwest periphery of my neighborhood. And Frank Nitti, the notorious gangster associated with Al Capone and depicted in the film *The Untouchables*, had his funeral mass celebrated at the Church of St. Charles Borromeo (whose elementary school I attended). My younger brother, Dick, served as an altar boy on that occasion, for which participation one of the thugs handed him a handsome five-dollar tip.

The father of one of my earliest boyhood friends was killed in a fight right in front of the mom-and-pop grocery and meat market owned by my aunt and uncle. We lived in a flat behind the store and I began to work there when I was quite young. Diagonally across the street was the office of a lumber yard where Zio Vincenzo, as he was called in the neighborhood, served as night watchman. Promptly before ten o’clock each evening, he came in to buy his quart of milk and an “apple slice” pastry. I can still see him lying in a pool of his own blood, where they found him one morning, the victim of armed robbery. A few years later, my best friend’s girlfriend, who found out he was cheating on her, shot him in the mouth. They subsequently married and they laughingly recalled this episode when I visited them a few years ago in their upscale suburban home.

Events of the kind I am describing were commonplace in the Chicago where I spent my first nineteen years. The point I wish to stress about all of that violence is that it was part of the local “culture,” and also something to be avoided, if at all possible. Some of us were luckier than others. One of my St. Charles Borromeo classmates, who became a Chicago policeman, was found dead in the trunk of an automobile when he was still in his thirties.

That local culture had its own language, leavened by marvelous euphemisms. On Chicago’s Old West Side, if someone were to say, “Frankie is away at college,” or “Yeah, Pete is in his fifth year at college,” you knew immediately that this meant jail, not an academic institution. You understood that the person mentioned was actually doing time somewhere—in Chicago’s notorious Bridewell Prison, perhaps, or the state penitentiary at Joliet. In federal cases, where we knew judges could not be bought as easily, “college” meant the federal prisons at Leavenworth, Kansas, or Milan, Michigan.

Life, I hasten to add, was not unremittingly bleak. Hull House, of Jane Addams fame, is still located on Halstead Street, just a few blocks from where I was born. I

also frequented the Garibaldi Institute, created in my neighborhood by Chicago's very posh Fourth Presbyterian Church. Its rarely successful purpose was to bring some of the youngsters into the Protestant faith. Its clearly successful result was to keep some of us "off the street," and for this reason less likely to wind up in a "reform school."

The St. Charles Borromeo elementary school I attended had a similar social club, for Catholics, but I stopped going there after I was expelled from school in the sixth grade. One of the parish priests overheard my effort to explain to several classmates why the idea of the Immaculate Conception and virgin birth was a biological impossibility.

Our St. Charles teachers were nuns of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so you can appreciate the magnitude of my fall from grace! The nuns were not only ferociously demanding; some of them were also extremely good teachers. One happy result of this, for those few of us who actually paid attention, was an impressive ability to both write and, more important, parse an English sentence. I sometimes have wished that some of my Yale students had had to face the likes of Sister Mary Frances Helen, or the truly formidable Sister Mary Thomassia, both of whom remain very vivid in my memory.

My hostility to Catholicism and Catholic teaching, however, was so implacable that it led me to make a truly stupid misstep regarding my own educational development. When, on graduation, I was informed that I had won a four-year scholarship to St. Ignatius High School, a few city blocks from where we lived, I simply refused to enroll. Neither my illiterate uncle nor my pious aunt could persuade me to change my mind. Had I spent four years mixing with the Jesuit teachers at St. Ignatius, my life would have been quite different; I am sure that I would have been immensely better prepared to deal with what was to come later.

The first lucky accident in my intellectual trajectory involves a mentor of mine – really something of a guardian angel – whose name was Philip Ferrara. He was a professional gambler, although he also worked as a house painter when he "went tap," as they put it in my neighborhood (meaning to have been tapped of one's money). We called him Philly the Horse Player. He had an uncanny ability to win at cards, dice, pool, and so on. He would also invite opponents to play a modified game of "poker," in which each bettor's "hand" was determined by the numbered license plates of cars chosen at a distance as they passed our street corner. As with so many "high rollers," Philly's fatal weakness was an often uncontrollable urge to plunge all of his winnings on the three-horse parlay late in the day.

Philly's mother was the neighborhood "witch." Mrs. Ferrara was the person to whom we were taken, or to whom anyone would go, to rid oneself of the "evil eye." To achieve this small miracle, Mrs. Ferrara, for a fee, would carry on a somewhat scary ritual. It involved mumbling incantations before a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in front of which burned many votive lights, fueled by oil floating over water in glasses. She dipped her index finger into the glasses, dropping oil onto a water-bearing plate, in which she (and we in terror) would watch the oil spread. We neighborhood

boys were careful never to look her in the eye. It was well understood that what Mrs. Ferrara could remove, she could also implant!

One day when I was twelve, Philly the Horse Player took me to the neighborhood branch of the Chicago Public Library, where he sponsored and vouched for my membership, and I was issued my first library card. He then proceeded to instruct me as to what I should read. It was a mixed bag of books, and I'm no longer certain as to where (from Philly's instructions or as assignments in school) I first happened on some of the obvious ones like *Treasure Island*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Kidnapped*. But between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, when I dropped out of high school and ran away from home, I regarded this man as my "teacher." My addiction to whodunits (as well as crossword puzzles, at which he was expert) dates from this early life experience.

Under Philly's guidance, I read all of Dorothy Sayers and most of Arthur Conan Doyle, as well as S.S. Van Dine, who wrote a series of crime novels featuring a private eye named Philo Vance. Vance spoke only in long, complex, often supercilious sentences, which kept me wondering for many years whether anyone in England really spoke that way.

It was not until my sophomore year at college that I learned to pronounce words that begin with the "th" sound. Like the actors in the television series *The Sopranos*, I belonged to an American subculture where "da tings doze guys say ain't like deez tings we say onna Wes-side!" In fact, "da ting" or "dat ting" referred to by the hoods in so many American gangster movies would be essentially literal translations from the Italian expression "la cosa," used to describe the widest range of affairs, situations, and problems – as well as, simply, things!

I learned somewhat later, and to my surprise and admiration, that there was purpose in Philly's recommendations for authors. It turns out that several of them had a politically radical side. Van Dine, for example, wrote *I Used to Be a High Brow, but Look at Me Now*, a left-wing commentary on American society and economy. Along with the potboilers of Zane Gray, Philly had me read an awful lot of Jack London, whose radical political views were common knowledge, though not to someone like me in his early teens. Other powerful authors like Upton Sinclair, John Dos Passos, and James T. Farrell helped shape my early thinking. So, in another realm, did Clarence Darrow and another famous criminal lawyer around Chicago named Francis X. Bush.

At the beginning, I did not understand that my reading was being orchestrated by a man with a radical turn of mind. "Listen," Philly would say, "you have to read *The Iron Heel*. You have to read *The Jungle*." I was in the middle of reading *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, and discussing that disquieting book with Philly, when he said, "Let's go down to the yards and have a look." The scene, sounds, and smells of that terrible place have stayed with me ever since. Sinclair describes, in detail, what actually went into the preparation of the cold cuts and hot dogs for sale in our own store, and others like it in Chicago and around the country.

This was also the time when Farrell's classic *Studs Lonigan* trilogy was being published, and I was at the very beginning of my experience with this extraordinary mentor. When Philly asked what I thought about Studs, I replied that I envied him because, even though Studs had a terrible, always-shouting relationship with his parents, at least he did have parents, and I didn't have any. I meant that there were few words, to say nothing of ideas, which I could exchange with Uncle Frank. My Aunt Carmela was a fountainhead of incessant chatter that involved either the family, the neighbors, the Old Country, or the Catholic Church – and, regarding the latter, primarily the novenas she was undertaking to various of its saints. With my uncle, the longest conversations I ever had occurred between 4:30 and 5:30 a.m., when I accompanied him to the Randolph Street wholesale markets to help negotiate purchases of supplies for the store.

When I read something like *Studs Lonigan*, I'd think, "Wow, these Irish guys really have some sort of relationship with their parents." I wanted to have that too, but it never happened. The language in *Studs Lonigan* was the Chicago street language I knew best. And the raging fights about the Catholic Church were also something I envied, and wished there might be more of in my own Italo-American part of the city.

As a result of this reading, for the first time in my life I began to develop a kind of conceptual scheme that provided me with a way of explaining, or of better being able to understand, the gap between some of the easy generalizations that I was running into in school, and the reality of Chicago that I, and everyone else in my neighborhood, understood. To this day, I shudder when I think about what American children and young people, particularly those at the lower social-economic rungs of society, are taught in civics or social studies classes, and what they experience on a day-to-day basis, both at home and on the streets.

This gap was so great it made dropping out of school and running away from home a lot easier. Both of these steps infuriated Philly, as he was quick to let me know when I returned to Chicago, after "escaping" for several weeks. My mentor mistakenly assumed that I was too intelligent to fall into the terrible trap that was typical of teenagers in my neighborhood. We did manage to become friends again a few years later, but only additional accidents in my intellectual trajectory put me on a better path.

Where does a boy from Chicago go when he runs away from home? Almost certainly not to a place like Milwaukee, Peoria, or Indianapolis, but to one that is bigger and more exciting. I chose New York. I had another uncle there who kindly helped me find a job in an aircraft factory in Patterson, New Jersey, where there lived some shirt-tail LaPalombara relatives. This was far from the romantic change I had imagined, so, after a few weeks, I returned home to Chicago, arriving at our store about a half-hour after it opened in the morning. The only words I recall Uncle Frank muttering were, "Oh, so you come back?" Aunt Carmela was somewhat more vocal, but there was relatively little curiosity about where I had been or what I had done.

I didn't return to high school. Instead, I again went to work in the defense industry, in a plant that machined dies for thirty- and fifty-caliber machine guns. I learned a good deal, very quickly, about treating metals under very high temperatures, as well as operating a range of high-precision shop tools, from drill and punch presses to turret lathes, milling machines, and centerless grinders. When, at eighteen, I was exempted from the draft for physical reasons, I moved into a high-priority defense job at the Dodge Chicago plant that manufactured engines for the B-29 aircraft.

I was riding high. I had a nice-paying job. I had purchased a beautiful maroon-colored Chrysler New Yorker from a friend who had been drafted. To top that off, I began to date a beautiful young woman, a senior in a Catholic girls' high school, who happened to be the daughter of one of my junior high school teachers. And that's the basis of my next miraculous accident. Laura's mother quickly made it plain to me that her daughter would never be able, or permitted, to develop a serious relationship with any boy who had not completed a college education. I objected that college for me was out of the question because I was a dropout who had to work for a living.

She countered that I could go to night school, to which I consented, taking courses in trigonometry and English, along with another course in machine shop. She also cajoled me into taking a couple of correspondence courses, including one in U.S. history. Coupled with my day job, this routine left me little time for Laura, which is in part exactly what her mother intended.

After a semester or two of this exhausting life, my new mentor or teacher informed me that, because of the war and returning veterans, the University of Illinois would now admit, on probation, anyone who could pass an entrance examination, whether or not they had a high school diploma. At her insistence, I took the exam, passed it by a hair, quit my job, sold my Chrysler (which helped with tuition and board), and moved down to the university's main campus in Urbana.

To fortify myself for this radical change, I persuaded one of my boyhood friends and one of my coworkers at Dodge, both of them high school graduates, to enroll as well. They lasted only one semester. One flunked out, while the other returned to work in Chicago in his brother-in-law's butcher shop. The former wound up in prison; the latter became a multimillionaire owner of one of Chicago's public golf courses.

As for me, I was astonished by the ease with which I was able to meet and surpass the C average required to avoid being expelled at the end of the first semester, or first year. In fact, taking advantage of the university's postwar academic program of three full semesters per calendar year, I was able to graduate three years later, in 1947, with "high honors." Along the way, I was elected president of my senior class, appointed to Phi Beta Kappa, and selected for the university's coveted "Bronze Tablet" for highest academic honors.

I had fantasized that I would go on to law school, return to Chicago, marry Laura, and become a famous criminal lawyer. Alternatively, I had painted myself as a labor



lawyer, or, as some of my family perhaps hoped, a lawyer working for the Syndicate. What happened instead is yet another accident that took me, in less than four years, from the assembly lines of the Dodge plant to the Quonset-hut classrooms of Oregon State College at Corvallis. Without an advanced degree, I was appointed as an instructor in political science there, largely because of the shortage of teachers in the immediate postwar era when, because of the GI Bill, war veterans flooded American colleges and universities. Most of my students were ex-GIs and were older, sometimes by far, than my mere twenty-two years. My thought was to marry my first WASP girlfriend—who, despite her parents' strong objections, agreed to marry me—spend a few years accumulating a cash reserve, and then return to law school. Instead, I fell in love with teaching and research, and so decided on an academic career.

Working at Oregon State was much more demanding than doing precision grinding, setting up and operating lathes, or treating high-carbon steels. Because the college operated on the quarter system, I faced three preparations each quarter, three times a year. In my first very hectic teaching year, I was rarely more than a couple of chapters ahead of the students. And I taught everything—American national government, American state government, American municipal government, American county government, comparative government, and, on one occasion, the governments of Latin America, from which challenge I was mercifully removed after only one quarter. One “gut” course saved my life. It was called “Current Affairs,” the “text” for which was *Time* magazine! I can still remember devouring its reportage on India's independence, followed by the horrors of the separation of Pakistan from India.

I spent three years at Oregon State before going on to do graduate work at Princeton, where I met my friends David Apter and his wife, Ellie. Each summer at Oregon State, I had done graduate work at the University of Illinois and earned a master's degree there. It was a combination of the saturation teaching and the graduate courses I took at Illinois that changed my focus from an eventual degree in law to a doctorate in political science. By the time I got to Princeton, I had fallen in love with both teaching and academic research. I had already published a monograph on the initiative and referendum in Oregon, as well as an article on the same subject that appeared in a 1950 issue of the *American Political Science Review*. This type of background was not typical of those who enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Princeton's Department of Politics.

I cannot overestimate how important to my intellectual development were the few years I spent in Corvallis, Oregon. I arrived at Oregon State at the same time as Bernard Malamud, with whom I became friends. He was working on his novels *The Natural*, which brought him national and worldwide fame, and *Magic Barrel*. I was impressed not just by Malamud's wide-ranging erudition, but also by the fact that he was, more or less regularly, writing short pieces for one of the Brooklyn newspapers, as I recall, for five dollars an article.

Along with the Malamuds and several other, mostly unmarried, faculty members, my wife and I became involved with a social group that regularly met in the

home of a senior faculty couple. He was a professor of chemistry, she a professor of English; both held Ph.D.'s from the University of California at Berkeley. We read the *New Yorker*, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *Progressive*, *Partisan Review*, and lots of books, fiction and nonfiction, all of which, along with generous portions of alcohol, fueled our discussions that, especially on weekends, continued deep into the night.

In 1947-48, some of us formed the local branch of Henry Wallace's Progressive Party, only to leave it in disgust when a small but able group of Stalinists, including a distinguished professor of chemistry, managed to take over the organization. This happened for reasons that would have been immediately known, and fought, in major urban centers around the country. At Corvallis, however, the nice people were not inclined to keep meeting beyond midnight, and not many understood that the extreme ideologues on the far left would persist into the morning hours, if necessary, and wind up having the organization vote the sort of resolution, or take the kind of official action, that would force many of us to resign, which we did. As it turned out, those of us who left the Progressive Party foolishly wound up voting for Norman Thomas that November, forsaking Harry Truman.

Needless to say, these years constituted for me an informal but very significant type of "postgraduate" learning. The experience made it possible for me to arrive at Princeton as something more than a product of the mean streets of Chicago who, by way of several "accidents," managed to find his way into the doctoral program of an Ivy League university. Malamud was also indirectly responsible for this turn of events, in that he enthusiastically helped us to create an informal organization that we called the "We Who Are Going to Leave Corvallis Club." And so we did, Mary Jane McCue in English to the University of Kansas, Jack Cronin in American studies to UCLA, and Joseph LaPalombara in political science to Princeton. Bern Malamud was one of the last to leave, having hung around long enough to gather material for his roman à clef *A New Life*, before returning east to teach and write.

I don't want to be misunderstood to say that my intellectual learning began in Corvallis; several of my undergraduate teachers at the University of Illinois also provided a solid foundation for later and further growth. One was a man named Mulford Sibley, who taught political philosophy. I believe he was the only out-of-the-closet Socialist faculty member at the University of Illinois of that era. When he ran in one of Urbana's mayoralty elections, I helped in his campaign; he lost by a landslide. I had much more success in the two courses I took with Sibley, in one of which, drawing on Catholic philosophical writers, I wrote a term paper that argued the moral justification for using the lie as a political instrument. Professor Sibley awarded the paper an A plus, alongside which he penned the following laconic message: "May God have mercy on your immortal soul." Sibley later left Illinois for the University of Minnesota. It is to him that I owe my earliest readings of the likes of Hume, Berkeley, Descartes, Spinoza, Hegel, and Marx.

Two members of the Philosophy Department were Frank Murphy and Max Black. Murphy taught a powerful introductory course on Greek and Roman philosophers.

Max Black taught me logic. Shortly after I graduated, both of these men left Illinois for Cornell University. Talk about luck: if I had arrived at Illinois two or three years later, none of these outstanding teacher-scholars would have been available to me.

The fourth teacher, Charles Hagan, a political scientist, taught an unforgettable course on the relationship between business and government in the United States. I remember writing a long paper on the U.S. Senate's investigation of the Aluminum Corporation of America's wartime profiteering. The sense of shock I experienced over the behavior of one of America's most prominent corporations had an enduring impact on my own teaching and writing, both as a political scientist and as a faculty member in Yale's School of Organization and Management. I am still teaching a seminar at Yale—this time only to Yale seniors—that focuses on the reasons why, in America's version of market capitalism, so many corporations and banking institutions keep committing the kinds of misdeeds we have come to learn about since the Enron and subsequent scandals erupted a few years ago.

Even more important in the shaping of my intellectual and research interests is that Hagan introduced me to the writings of Arthur Fisher Bentley, a political scientist whom I consider one of the (unappreciated) intellectual giants of my discipline. Bentley wrote *The Process of Government*, published in 1908. It was so savagely reviewed by Charles Beard that Bentley simply left the University of Chicago, and the teaching profession, and retreated to his farm in Indiana. There he wrote a number of other important books, including several jointly authored with his friend and contemporary, John Dewey. Bentley anticipated much of what was to be my discipline's later development, in such works as *Behavior, Knowledge, Fact; Relativity in Man and Society; Linguistic Analysis of Mathematics*; and, with Dewey, *Knowing and the Known*. In 1895, a few years before the American Political Science Association was established, Bentley published *The Units of Investigation in the Social Sciences*. The fact that all of this went largely unnoticed by my profession until the middle of the last century tells us something about the groves of academe that I won't bother to discuss in this personal biographical sketch.

Bentley, unlike his contemporaries in political science, had read very widely across disciplines—in law and psychology, in history and philosophy, and, above all, in the nineteenth-century German precursors of modern sociology. I believe that if more of my professional ancestors had read Bentley carefully, we would not have had to have the so-called behavioral revolution in the 1950s, of which my friend and colleague David Apter and I were a part. Long before then, Bentley had alerted his professional colleagues, largely in vain, to the critical need to pay more careful attention to the creation of explicit theoretical bases for our generalizations about politics and the political process, as well as to more systematic empirical testing of these same generalizations.

One way or other, it is this “Bentleyan” approach that has continued, over a half century, to guide my work, my teaching, and my research. He conceived of the political process as something like a Hobbesian State of Nature, with continuous “warfare” tak-

ing place among competing “interests,” and especially those interests in any society that are able to organize themselves in order to pursue public policies that aggrandize them.

Bentley had the intuition to understand that, most of the time, this “warfare” is peaceful, carried on along the lines of, say, the “Queensbury Rules of Political Conflict.” His description of this essentially never-ending struggle is that it is carried on continuously: the “interests” that fail to get their way, or are defeated, in one political arena – for example, the legislature – will quickly shift their focus and activity to bureaucratic agencies that interpret and administer policies and laws. And if they are stalled or defeated there, they might shift their activities to the courts, or the mass media.

Formulations of this kind led me to understand how foolhardy it is to think about these struggles as ending in long-enduring political “victories.” Equally illuminating were Bentley’s insights that, in this type of “warfare,” as is true of military conflict, the resources available to the competing “interests,” including a resource like the quality of leadership, are factors that weigh critically in the determination of the outcomes of “skirmishes,” “battles,” or even “total war.”

From the very onset of my research career, beginning with the work on the initiative and referendum in Oregon that I mentioned earlier, much of the conceptual and empirical frameworks I have used derive from Bentley’s seminal formulations. As one of the twenty-three U.S. states that, in the Progressive Era, had adopted the initiative and referendum, Oregon provided me with a rich opportunity to assess the dynamics of “interest-group” politics in a number of different arenas, and regarding a wide range of public policy, and constitutional, issues.

In effect, at least two-thirds of my published output represents my efforts to apply and, where possible, to improve upon or modify the formulations about politics that I learned from the writings of this scholar, and from a few others of that generation whose works I admired. I have tried to show not only that the struggle over the creation and distribution of things people value is essentially never-ending in nature; in addition, I have sought to underscore that some of the organized interests in society, because of the resources they control or can access, tend to gain and maintain a disproportionate amount of these valued things.

Needless to add, this particular intellectual and research focus harks back to the conditions and the environment in which I spent my earliest years in Chicago. It did not take much reading of philosophy or anything else to convince me that political power and influence are highly valuable assets that are, however, most unevenly distributed and even more unevenly, unfairly, and often also unethically exercised. It quickly dawned on me that much of what I came to understand about how Chicago was governed, and about why people and groups were treated so differently and unfairly by public authorities and institutions, was true of the United States as a whole. And when I went into comparative politics, and began to look at and write about a variety of political systems, it became clear that many of these formulations (to be sure, with some careful modifications) could be applied worldwide.

Arthur Fisher Bentley not only seemed to understand all of this (much more, I might add, than do even a goodly number of today's political scientists); he also provided a solid conceptual and theoretical basis for explaining why the inequality that grows out of political struggle is essential ubiquitous, even among democracies where it is assumed that equality represents a central value of such political systems.

In Oregon, I was avidly interested in discovering whether the newer institutional forms that permitted more direct citizen participation in the legislative and constitutional processes would have a significant positive influence, for example, on the ability of society's marginal groups to have their own interests prevail. Alas, by and large my conclusion has been that this salutary effect, presumably desired by most of those who theorize about democracy, remains extremely elusive and problematic.

In graduate school my attention turned to Italy, where I've conducted field work for several decades. Even there my focus has been on the more or less structured influence over public policies and their implementation exercised by different organized interests. I started out looking at organized labor, then at organized business, and then at organized Catholicism. I later did some work, and wrote a book, on the ways in which these and other organizations impinge on economic planning and decision making in Italy.

Over the years, I have helped to create something like a cadre of American scholars, some of whom have gone on to do extremely interesting and innovative research on Italy's political system, which remains one of the more arcane and is therefore very difficult to explicate. After four decades of trying my hand at this, I published my *Democracy, Italian Style*, a book that, to the surprise of some of my students, is less systematic than they might have expected, but, for me at least, much closer to capturing a better understanding of those aspects of Italian politics that remain so elusive, and so resistant to systematic analysis and characterization.

The second intellectual focus of my work falls under the broad rubric of political development—more specifically, the influence exercised by political parties and bureaucratic organizations on the creation or transformation of political systems. This particular activity absorbed about fifteen years of my professional life, much of it in association with the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Comparative Politics, of which I was a member. That committee, for better or for worse, had a direct influence over the ways in which comparative politics is researched and taught in American and foreign universities. Its sponsorship of a number of international conferences, its program of research grants, and a series of volumes edited by several of its members constitute, I believe, a noteworthy intellectual achievement, of which I was honored to be a part. I also owe a debt of gratitude to several of the then more senior members of this committee, prominent among them Gabriel Almond, whose chair at Yale I inherited; Taylor Cole, who, as editor of the *American Political Science Review*, published several of my early papers; and, above all, Sigmund Neumann, another generous mentor who helped to shape my thinking.

My intellectual trajectory has been quite variegated and eclectic. In the early 1970s, I joined with John Perry Miller, then dean of Yale's Graduate School, and a few other faculty members to create the School of Management, where I taught on and off before I retired. So I know something about management schools, both in this country and abroad. I helped rewrite the curriculum of one in Milan. Another one, in Tel Aviv, I helped to create from scratch, although it went under after only a year, for lack of capital.

Also purely by accident, about thirty years ago, I began some activity as an industrial consultant to several major multinational corporations in the United States and in Europe. Among other things, I wanted to learn at first hand what it is about business enterprises of that scale that makes them politically powerful, as well as, in some instances, pathological. I wanted to understand why the staffs of these companies – thousands of people who are very bright, very ambitious, and by and large very moral – sometimes behave collectively in ways that do irreparable damage to the environment, to the people who work for these same companies, to others who are their pensioners, to the consumers who are injured by their products, and so on. Arthur Bentley's early work, as well as that of now-retired Yale colleagues like Charles Lindbloom, helped me to sort out these and other aspects of America's corporate "interests." I also translated this aspect of my professional life into the foundation for a seminar, "Global Firms and National Governments," that I am still offering for juniors and seniors at Yale.

There is also a journalistic dimension to my professional life. I write regularly, largely about American politics, for a small chain of Italian newspapers. And I am the editor in chief of a beautiful magazine called *Italy Italy*, whose mission it is to introduce readers to the so-called Italian places-in-between, as well as to aspects of Italian society and industry that do not appear in your typical tourist guide.

Along with my addition to the *New York Times* crossword puzzle, a habit I picked up long ago from Philly the Horse Player and the *Chicago Tribune*, I also enjoy presenting and watching good movies, an activity in which my colleague Alan Trachtenberg is helping me to hone my analytical skills.

Yale, where I have now spent more than half of my life, has been a perfect place to exercise the variegated intellectual activities I have described. The university not only permits such promiscuity, it actually welcomes and, in many ways, encourages it. This has made it possible for me, for so many years, to share the extraordinary variety and quality of intellectual company this university provides. In the somewhat unorthodox trajectory I have described, this would surely qualify as one of the more striking pieces of good fortune to come my way.