

With the Grain

## SOTU Color Commentary

### COMMENTARY

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Tuesday, President Donald Trump delivered his second State of the Union address. I'd like to comment on what I saw, but I have to admit something:

I didn't see it.

To my credit, I did listen to the whole speech. I've suggested in the past, listening to an audio account — the car radio, in my case — is the most impartial way to absorb the Presidential message.

You see ... well, really you don't see. That's my point. Shun the visual images, and only then can you isolate the President's message from all the partisan antics in the audience.

The State of the Union (SOTU) address left the realm of the statesmanlike in favor of the childlike. It's not important whether you believe in the President's message or not. Mocking is the name of today's game. Anymore the opposition feels compelled to turn the SOTU into a primetime version of *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo* meets *The Apprentice* with measureless whining and back-sass.

The SOTU has become a badly orchestrated kindergarten pageant: a marshmallow-drama of catcalls, phony applause, the Pelosi clap-back, smug glances, Cheshire cat smiles, and politically correct stinky-faces.

It wasn't always that way. The SOTU was a tradition-rich display of prestige, protocol, and majesty. It often was our only look inside our government, a televised glimpse into the augustness of those serving our nation.

There were vestiges of tradition, Tuesday, I'll admit. For the most part, however, nobility took the same path that manners took years ago, straight into the abyss.

And for what gain? Overnight polling determined that 74% of those tuning in approved of the President's message. Pollsters quickly added that most of the people willing to tune in already favored the President. Seems like a wanton waste of perfectly good immaturity, if you ask me.

If you did watch the SOTU on television, you were treated to seeing dozens of women lawmakers wearing white dresses. By wearing white, the intention was to celebrate the record number of female lawmakers elected to Congress this term, paying homage to the suffragettes of the early twentieth century.

Nevertheless, I stumbled over the irony that an incoming class of legislators, who ran on a platform of bringing government together, chose to start their careers by setting themselves apart.

But you know, maybe they've got an idea. What if all the various factions in government dressed according to their agenda? The environmentalist could wear green. The hawks could wear gunmetal grey. The pacifists, yellow. The socialists, red. And so on ...

Talk about diversity!

It would sure make it easy for us to know where everyone stands. In the blink of the camera's eye, we could identify the political agenda of everyone in the room.

I can see it now. The television camera will pan the SOTU audience. We will witness a scene awash in hues, each color rank and file, shoulder to shoulder to the next — like one giant box of crayons poised to dazzle us with creativity and imagination.

Instead, what we get nowadays is a room full of bratty children.

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