

FRIDAY: WHEN THE BEAU BREAKS AND BRAKES

In this roundup: Brexit breaks, Turkey's troubles trebled, shattered guardrails.

I've been trying to get a handle on culture in the United Kingdom, to understand why the country is both so divided about its membership in the European Union and the nature of its identity. One of the places I've looked has been fashion, which is an outward expression of cultural identity and values.

British GQ and Vogue worked together on a video series looking at four different major movements in UK fashion. I have to admit I'm both enlightened and confused after watching them. I've embedded the first one here, and offer the rest as links.

(1) The Lad | (2) Modern Dandy | (3) New Traditionalists | (4) New Romantics

There isn't a direct correlation with cultural segments in the U.S. so it's difficult to translate what some of these mean. Lad culture, for example, is somewhat like our blue collar men and yet it's also like high school and college jock culture. But then neither of these U.S. groups would own up to being a culture with a differentiated sense of style.

I think Americans will understand both the New Traditionalists and New Romantics most easily. They'll recognize the correlates in their own U.S. culture. They'll also recognize how segments of these three UK movements – Lad, Traditionalists, Romantics – might cleave with Remain or Brexit.

The one part of this series I found most odd was the Modern Dandy – these British literally did not know the roots of their own dandyism even when pointing to Beau Brummel. Brummel rebelled

against the excessively ornate fussiness of pre-Regency fashion and is responsible for the adoption of trousers and white dress shirts as standard men's wear (not to mention daily bathing). Brummel ultimately shaped global expectations of men's business attire and our standards of hygiene. The contemporary dandies interviewed may grasp the notion of differentiation, but they don't know their own history.

Not unlike the U.S., the UK has an identity crisis. It's changed in ways it doesn't fully understand and it's out of tune with some of its own history. And while white nationalists like those in Ukip believe the UK should be more homogeneous, the UK hasn't been for as long as it's been a center of global business – even the monarchy is not lily white. We're witnessing a struggle for control of identity, and it's touch-and-go as to which faction will win.

Brexit breaks and brakes

- UK's high court rules Article 50 'divorce' can't proceed without Parliament's decision (Business Insider) – Investment banker and claimant Gina Miller argued the use of royal prerogative to exit the EU without parliamentary debate and approval would deny UK citizens their civil rights. The additional danger in proceeding with Brexit under royal prerogative is that the UK has no constitution and operates based on precedent.
- PM May and Brexit plans

discombobulated after court ruling (Guardian) – Kind of put a big kink in May's stated plans to pull a hard Brexit by the end of March 2017. An appeal is currently planned.

- Ireland does not want to return to hard border with Brexit (Guardian) – Sanity. What a relief.
- Loss of some UK trade due to hard Brexit not critical to Germany (Twitter) – Chief economist at the Centre for European Reform Christian Odendahl lays out the case that unity of EU27 far more important to German economy than making things easy on UK during Brexit.
- Sagging oil prices worse on BP than on Shell (euronews) – Not clear how much of the hit to earnings is due to losses from currency devaluation as GBP continues to slide due to Brexit.
- Is Brexit like American colonies' breakaway? (Wall Street Journal) – Nah. I'm not seeing it. Or at least the power dynamic is very different between UK-US and UK-EU. What is the same between these two breaches in relationship are the

flawed assumptions made by UK's right-wing then and now. A key difference is that the US doesn't have the risks of royal prerogative exercised without a constitution.

Nostalgia may have spawned Brexit (The Malcontent) – Oh, the good old days, when houses were affordable and fewer brown-skinned climate/war refugees showed up on the doorstep.

Turkey troubles treble

- Internet throttled, social media choked overnight (Turkey Times) – Erdoğan's standard M.O.: shut down the internet and social media so that no one can report to the outside world what he's doing to throttle democracy. VPNs are also targeted this time since the government knows they are used to bypass censorship.
- Turkish police raid homes and arrest opposition party members (Andalou Ajansi) – This is insanity, like a U.S. president ordering the FBI to arrest the leaders of any other political party. The HDP had support of six million Turkish voters. HDP

is the third largest political party holding more than 1/3 of the seats in parliament and the representative party of the Kurdish minority.

- Car bomb detonated after HDP arrests, PKK blamed (USA Today) – Is this a prompt retaliation for political arrests? Whatever it is, instability is increasing in Turkey.
- EU worried about HDP members (Twitter) – High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the EU Commission Federica Mogherini expressed great concern for HDP members arrested; held phone meeting with Turkish officials.
- ISIS claims responsibility later in the day for car bombing (The Star) – Unfortunately, many pro-Erdoğan supporters were riled up against PKK by the time ISIS piped up. Expect even greater hostility toward the Kurds.

Longread: A conservative's POV on this election

Yeah, yeah, I know, David Frum, whatev. But his op-ed for The Atlantic is quite good, examining 'guardrails' of democracy Trump's candidacy has broken. Which is all well and good – a

conservative recognizes the serious threats to democracy – but what will conservatives do to fix this mess? Will they ever look carefully at their ownership of this dumpster fire they stoked pushing Movement Conservatism to excess, and begin to build a rational escape toward sanity?

A little over four days – mere hours – away from the end of this debacle we call a general election. Rest up.