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VENDLER'S SHAKESPEARE
MARGARET BOERNER

WE WANT YOUR CHILDREN

Government daycare is a bad idea. The Clintons love it.

DANIELLE CRITTENDEN & DAVID FRUM

the weekly Standard

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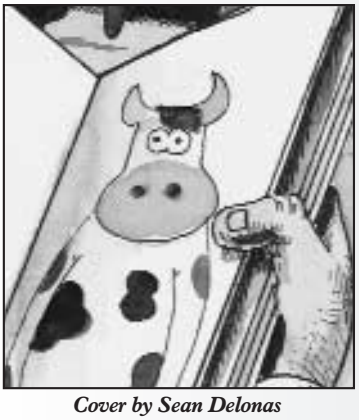

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Books & Arts

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Alfred Kazin Clutches at Strauss

Alfred Kazin, who sometimes passes for America's most venerable literary critic, casually perpetrated a drive-by infamy last week. In an essay honoring Murray Kempton in the *New York Times Book Review*, Kazin gratuitously smeared Adm. Lewis L. Strauss, who in a long and controversial career was private secretary to Herbert Hoover, an investment banker on Wall Street, a wartime naval strategist, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, and secretary of commerce. In a discussion of the sainted J. Robert Oppenheimer, whom Strauss opposed, Kazin remarked *en passant* that Strauss "pronounced his own name 'Straws' to make himself sound less Jewish."

This would be a hilarious allegation if it were not so contemptible. Strauss was as prominent a Jew as could be found in the United States for four decades. If Strauss was out to disguise his faith, he could not have done a poorer job of it.

He was a member of numerous Jewish organizations, assuming a leading role in many of them. In the summer of 1939, he was in Europe, attempting to rescue Jews from Germany. For over 10 years, he was president of Temple Emanu-el in New York. He once refused to eat a ham lunch that Queen Elizabeth served him. And until his death in 1974, he was in the forefront of Jewish philanthropy, donating large chunks of his fortune.

Kazin's lame excuse for the libel is that he heard it from people, long ago. The truth is that Strauss grew up in Richmond, Va., and, like other southerners, pronounced the name "Straws." (So had his father and grandfather.) Presented with this explanation, Kazin would have none of it, insisting that anyone saying "Straws" had to be trying to pass. With Strauss's Jewish credentials, Kazin was irritably unimpressed.

The truth is, Lewis Strauss had no interest in making himself appear other than as he was. He was notoriously blunt, bold, and proud—even if he pronounced his name as a Virginian, rather than as a German. Strauss was an honorable man—more than can be said of Kazin.

Back to the Flack Business

Last month, the Heritage Foundation issued a report, authored by analyst Kenneth Weinstein, cataloguing various relationships between the Clinton White House and powerful Washington lobbies. Included was a discussion of the lucrative federal contracts and intimate Clinton ties of liberal PR hack Victor Kamber. Specifically, Weinstein mentioned a possible source of conflict-of-interest: that the Kamber Group had "housed" Back to Business, an organization set up to defend the Clintons from scandal allegations. Wrote Weinstein: "Congress should investigate to determine whether the Kamber Group's Department of Labor contract served, in effect, to subsidize Back to Business."

The *Washington Post*'s Bill McAllister quoted Kamber as expressing outrage. "The Heritage Foundation has crossed the line into legally actionable territory with its knowingly false disparagements," Kamber said. One Kamber vice president said of Back to Business, "We rented them space."

But the *Post* failed to note that the relationship was in fact more intimate than that, which Tucker Carlson reported in these pages in January 1996. "Like, we don't have an actual Back to Business office," said employee Stacy Beck. Kamber Group senior vice president Lynn Cutler was Back to Business's only officer. The Kamber Group also "handled" all the operations of Back to Business, making Cutler—bizarrely—her own client. Back to Business and the White House even had mutual friends, like Asiagate hero Johnny Chung, who gave Back to Business $25,000 and with Cutler's help set up a meeting with U.S. ambassador to China James Sasser. Two congressional committees are reportedly looking into Kamber's operations. We look forward to more Kamber outrage, under oath this time.

The Pity Party

The Democrats have been whining, disingenuously, about fund-raising—not the scandal, but the real thing. Mike McCurry, the White House press secretary, insisted the other day that President Clinton has to continue raising campaign funds like a madman because "Republicans are outspending Democrats five to one." Democratic senator Dick Durbin of Illinois was even gloomier: "No matter what we do, the Republicans will still outspend us five to one," he said. Five to one? Can this new Democratic talking point—already being repeated mantra-like by some journalists—be right?

The answer is no. It's a canard designed to promote Democrat-style campaign-finance reform. The five-to-one figure comes from 1997 races for governor of Virginia and New Jersey and for a House seat on Staten Island—but it doesn't refer to what the *candidates* raised and spent. In New Jersey, for instance, public financing meant the

Scrapbook

candidates spent the same. And the figure doesn't take into account the money labor unions devoted to 1997 races. Nope, the basis for the claim is simply this: The Republican National Committee spent five times more than the Democratic National Committee in those contests, with much of the disparity resulting from $800,000 the national GOP spent on TV ads in the Staten Island race (where the DNC spent zero). That's all, and even that isn't likely to happen again. In 1996, the DNC spent roughly the same amount as the RNC.

SUNY Buffaloed

The avant-garde dies but never surrenders, and it seems to have taken its last, brave postmodern stand at the State University of New York. To browse in SUNY Press's latest catalogue of literary and cultural studies is as affecting, in its way, as the end of *Beau Geste*: one last, lingering look back—in the failing, winter light of 1997—on that 1970s dawn in which it was academic bliss to be a handicapped Chicana lesbian, but to be the victim of incest was very heaven.

It's there at SUNY Press—in titles like *Un/Popular Culture: Lesbian Writing After the Sex Wars* or the essay on "Re(his)tor(iciz)ing Captivity and the Other" in *Creating Safe Space: Violence and Women's Writing*—that proud slash and those gallant parentheses still parade like doomed and dusty sentinels in the far-flung outposts of the decaying colonial empire of French intellectuals. It's there in Albany that the nostalgic reader may still find brave, new studies published with such marvelously dated titles as *Transgressing Discourses*, *Gendering Classicism*, *Agonistics*, or—beyond parody—*From Hegel to Madonna: Towards a General Economy of Commodity Fetishism*.

But it's unfair to single out particular volumes; nearly the entire SUNY catalogue is beyond parody. Robert Samuels's *Hitchcock's Bi-Textuality* is promoted with the promise that it combines "an articulation of Lacan's theory of ethics; a discussion of recent theories of feminine subjectivity and queer textuality; and close readings of Hitchcock's films." Laurel Davis's *The Swimsuit Issue and Sport* unsmilingly explains how *Sports Illustrated* "tramples women, gays, lesbians, people of color, and residents of the postcolonized world," using its swimsuit issue "to secure a large male audience by creating a climate of hegemonic masculinity."

For New York taxpayers wondering what their university system does with their money, The Scrapbook is proud to report that SUNY Press—with its new catalogue of deconstructive, postmodern screeds about race, class, and gender—is doing exactly what an academic publisher should: carefully preserving a cultural moment that would otherwise have faded entirely away.

Thernstrom vs. Clinton

The high point of the presidential town meeting on race in Akron came when the president tried to bully scholar Abigail Thernstrom on the subject of affirmative action. "Abigail," he asked, "do you favor the United States Army abolishing affirmative-action programs that produced Colin Powell? Yes or no? Yes or no?" Faced with giving a straight answer to a crooked question, Thernstrom gave an intelligent response, noting that "these preferences disguise the problem" and showing herself to be a good deal more rational on the subject than the president. Not to mention less rude.

For the record, The Scrapbook would welcome a letter from anyone in the White House familiar with the president's speaking career who can present a *single instance* of the president's giving a simple "yes or no" answer to *any question* asked *anywhere* in *any venue* in the entire course of his presidency.

Casual

Id, Ego, Superego, Automobile

My car died last weekend. It was a quiet death, sudden though not unexpected—she had given me 149,941 glorious, palindromic miles; but I miss her just the same. Actually, I more than miss her—I'm terrified at the prospect of life without an automobile.

I'm a child of the suburbs, and we, as a breed, are distinct from city dwellers and farm folk. People who grow up in the city don't have cars; half the places they go are a stone's throw away, parking is a nuisance, and they can always take the bus or subway. People in the country live so far from everything that getting there and back is a chore; as an economist friend of mine would say, their utility-per-mile ratio is low, so their interactions with automobiles are major events. But suburbanites are just the right distance apart: too far to walk, and near enough to make driving easy.

So we drive everywhere. To the city, to the movies, to the 7-11 for milk. We spend so much time with our cars that they're the fourth part of our psyches: id, ego, superego, and automobile. We *have* to have cars, because without them, we're cut off from humanity. Man is a social animal, and being carless is distressing stuff.

Unfortunately, this isn't the first time I've suffered a car loss. When the tow truck rolled carefully into the parking garage at the mall last Sunday to carry my dear departed away, I had a flashback to four years ago, when my first was taken from me.

Late in my junior year of college, a friend asked to borrow my car to drive to an interview at the Project for the Republican Future in Washington. "Sure," I said, smiling. "Just bring her back in one piece."

A few hours later the phone rang. My friend was worked up. "So," I asked eagerly, "did you get the internship?"

"Well, uh, yeah . . . ," he answered nervously.

"Great!" I said. "So where'd you park the car?"

"There has," he said deliberately, "been a problem."

All sorts of horrible images flew through my mind: my Oldsmobile with its front bumper dangling from the body, held by a few colored wires; my Oldsmobile with a dent above the passenger rear tirewell. What if, I thought with a gasp, the lovely brown car that took me to my prom were to wind up disfigured by one of those dreadful replacement body panels whose color doesn't even approximate a match?

"Okay," I said, steadying myself, "what happened? Did you blow out a tire? Tires are fine, I can replace a tire."

"Jonathan," he said, "it blew up."

Relieved, I laughed. Cars don't blow up, so he must be exaggerating. And normally when people exaggerate, I thought, the problem isn't that serious. "What do you mean it blew up?" I said. "What happened?"

"It blew up."

"As in the muffler fell out or the engine stalled?"

"As in fire trucks and explosions. Blew up," he said quietly.

I was too shocked to speak, but I could listen, and in the course of the next ten minutes, he explained it all. He had been driving home on I-95 when he heard a loud pop, followed by a steady stream of smoke from the front end of the car. He pulled over and got out to take a look at the engine, but before he could open the hood, he saw orange flames lick out from the underbelly. He calmly walked back, grabbed his things from the passenger seat, and stepped away a few paces. Then that Oldsmobile, my beloved first car, exploded. Just like on the *A-Team*.

Within minutes, two fire-engines arrived on the scene and hosed her down. A mechanic from a service station just off the next exit showed up and explained to my friend proudly that he had called the fire department when he "seen the pillar of thick black smoke all the way from my garage." He said he "just knew something was exploding on the freeway!"

"But I got the internship," my friend added wanly.

It was a difficult time for me. Coping with the loss was hard enough, but, worse, the corpse of my car was waiting for me to identify in an automotive morgue in Maryland. Then, adding insult to injury, the New Jersey DMV spent weeks arguing with me. They kept demanding I return my license plates.

The final battle with the DMV came almost two months after my car had passed on. "We have to have those plates before you can register your new car," a squat woman wheezed at me with a voice that only Philip Morris could love.

"I honestly don't have them," I explained. "My car blew up."

"Cars don't blow up," she snapped.

"You would think so," I answered, "wouldn't you."

Jonathan V. Last

Call Me Mad

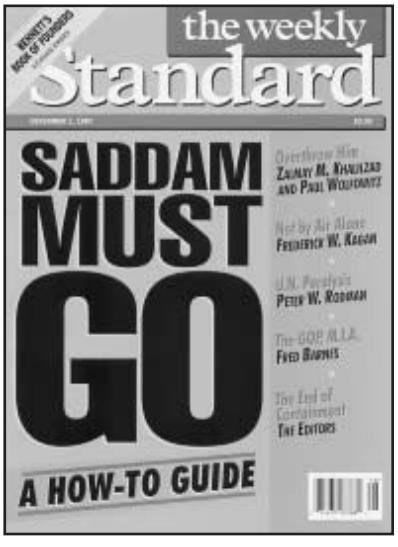
I was not surprised that my long-standing feud with Michael Isikoff would end in the caviling abuse he wrote for your magazine ("The Secret Life of Ambrose Evans-Pritchard," Nov. 24). It was inevitable that he would retaliate, I suppose, after I called him a counterfeit on live radio, though I never imagined that he would overplay his hand with such gauche ineptitude. I would suggest that his review be seen as the exhibit of a trickster at work, a cautionary warning for those who still harbor illusions about his professionalism.

I notice that Isikoff does not challenge the specific facts in my book. This is not for lack of trying, I'm sure. Nor does he challenge the authenticity of the official documents cited in the text or reprinted in large numbers in the appendix. He simply ignores them, preferring to rebut allegations in a general way by embellishing them beyond recognition and then deeming them farfetched, scurrilous, and inherently unbelievable.

Isikoff may not like my "conspiracy compendium," as he calls it, but I wish he had the honesty to get the conspiracies right. He keeps thickening the brew for better effect. I never said, of course, that Kenneth Starr orchestrated the intimidation of crime-scene witness Patrick Knowlton in the Vince Foster case. It would be a preposterous allegation, which is precisely why Isikoff fabricated the claim. Knowlton blames elements in the FBI, not the independent counsel, for his harassment, and he has filed a civil-rights suit against the bureau. His complaint against Starr is very different. He suspects that the Office of the Independent Counsel in Washington—namely Brett Kavanaugh and John Bates—abused the grand-jury process by trying to discredit him—insinuating, falsely, that he was homosexual.

I never said that the "murder" of Vincent Foster "throws into doubt the durability of the republic." Somebody else said it, and in any case that person was referring to the cover-up rather than the death itself. The passage attributed to me was reported speech. My book does not decide whether the death was suicide or murder, as Isikoff knows full well. It asserts only that the death scene was staged, and that Kenneth Starr is too timid to deal with it.

This journalistic legerdemain of putting others' words into my mouth is so pervasive in Isikoff's review that it amounts to malicious distortion. You can tell when he is fibbing because he resorts to paraphrase instead of quoting directly from the book. Omission, however, is Isikoff's chief instrument of polemic. The episodes do not make sense because he willfully deprives them of sense. Jerry Parks, the Clinton campaign-security chief who was murdered in Little Rock in September 1993, is reduced to a mere "private investigator," the victim of a local business dispute. His wife Jane is portrayed as a drug user, as if she were mentally unstable. Isikoff, with his trademark lack of gallantry, neglects to mention that the drugs are for multiple sclerosis. He insinuates that she is one of the "oddballs, drug dealers, prostitutes, and borderline psychotics" who supposedly make up my list of sources. It is true, of course, that most of my sources are ordinary Americans, without rank or influence, but I am proud of that achievement. I would prefer to make my judgment on the death of Vince Foster, for instance, by interviewing the crime-scene witnesses and paramedics who were present at Fort Marcy Park that day rather than by calling a friend at the Justice Department for a quick steer.



Isikoff chose not to mention that half of the victims of the Oklahoma bombing have filed lawsuits against the U.S. government, with over 300 family members in one suit alleging outright that the blast was a sting operation that went awry. They took this drastic step because they obtained documents revealing that an undercover informant for the ATF named Carol Howe had infiltrated a bombing conspiracy among a neo-Nazi group in eastern Oklahoma with ties to Timothy McVeigh. One of the neo-Nazi ringleaders, Dennis Mahon, had targeted the Oklahoma City Federal Building for "destruction through bombing," according to a debriefing that Howe gave to the FBI two days after the blast.

What does Isikoff have to say about Carol Howe, the central figure of the 108-page section on the Oklahoma bombing? Not a word. He ignores her FBI debriefing and the series of monthly reports written by her ATF case officer before the bombing, which indicates that a German named Andreas Strassmeir was instigating a terrorist campaign of "bombings" and "assassinations." Nor does he mention the cable traffic from the U.S. embassy in Bonn to the State Department, days after the blast, discussing Andreas Strassmeir in relation to the Oklahoma bombing. Instead of confronting the evidence linking Strassmeir and his neo-Nazi friends to the bombing, Isikoff pretends that it does not exist.

Isikoff states that "whatever Strassmeir's ties to McVeigh (if any), there is absolutely nothing to suggest either one of them was in the government's employ at the time of the bombing." Absolutely nothing? How does he account for the documents showing that the FBI muscled in to prevent the ATF from arresting Strassmeir on "terrorism/firearms" charges in February 1995, or for the fact that Strassmeir was allowed to leave the United States months after the bombing without being interviewed by the FBI? Is Isikoff not surprised by the refusal of the prosecution in Denver to release a CIA document on Strassmeir to the McVeigh defense team, in defiance of a court order? How does he explain the undisputed fact that Strassmeir, a former Navy officer, came to America with the purpose of working undercover for the Justice Department? If Isikoff finds "absolutely nothing" in this, he is a most incurious journalist.

Correspondence

Over the years, I have come to regard Michael Isikoff as the chief propagandist for the permanent institutional government in Washington. It is quite fitting that he should review *The Secret Life of Bill Clinton*, because my book is, above all, an indictment of the leadership class that has risen to power in your country. He is the amanuensis of those without honor.

Call me mad, if you will, or a conspiracy theorist, or a "blithering idiot." That's fine. At least I was never a collaborator.

AMBROSE EVANS-PRITCHARD
LONDON, ENGLAND

MICHAEL ISIKOFF RESPONDS: ***My apologies. I would have been happy to disclose my longstanding feud with Evans-Pritchard had I only been aware of it. His denunciation of me on "live radio" escaped my attention. Still, I am grateful he has refined his conspiracy theories in ways that are not at all apparent in his book. His new contention that he is agnostic on the question of whether Foster was murdered or was simply the victim of a "staged death" suicide seems especially curious: Chapter 15 of his book is devoted to arguing that accounts of Foster's depression were "concocted." "Take that [the depression diagnosis] away," he writes on page 231, "and there is nothing left to sustain the ruling of suicide. Nothing."***

Evans-Pritchard is correct that the line about Foster's death's throwing into doubt "the durability of the republic" belongs not to him, but to one of his allies, James Dale Davidson. It is paraphrased approvingly by Evans-Pritchard and cited in my review as an example of the demented views endorsed in the pages of **The Secret Life of Bill Clinton.** ***Jerry Parks was not the "Clinton campaign-security chief." He owned a company that provided security and janitorial services to the building in which the Clinton campaign was located. My reference to the pharmaceuticals that helped Parkes's wife recover supposedly long-buried memories of Clinton's crimes was quoted from Evans-Pritchard's own words. I'm sorry I never got around to Carol Howe. A onetime Tulsa debutante who sported a swastika tattoo, she is certainly one of the "oddballs" I referred to in my description of Evans-Pritchard's sources. She did indeed turn government informant for a while (after a falling out with her neo-Nazi boyfriend) and seems to have reported vague talk among her confederates about blowing up federal buildings prior to the Oklahoma City bombing. But lots of crazy people talk about lots of things. No reliable evidence ties Howe's friends to the activities of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols. None of the documents reproduced by Evans-Pritchard in his appendices or quoted in his book comes close to establishing the vast government cover-up he alleges. I could, of course, go on; but my superiors at the "permanent institutional government" have ordered me not to, content to let the delusional rantings in Evans-Pritchard's letter speak for themselves.***

Advise, Consent, and Grill

You complain in your editorial that nomination hearings are "largely *pro forma* affairs" ("Advise and Dissent," Nov. 24). In most cases, that is true, but you misunderstand the reason why. Hearings enable senators to ask about problems they have with the nominee's views or background. Problems are rare because the vetting process is thorough. Each nominee is examined by the White House, the Department of Justice, the FBI, and the Senate Judiciary Committee in advance of any hearing.

If a nominee survives the screening and is given a hearing, it is precisely because the chairman and most majority members are satisfied with the nominee. Thus most hearings consist of a round of questions intended to confirm that the nominee possesses a basic grasp of legal principles and will apply the law appropriately. Indeed, in-depth questioning is rarely fruitful because, as you note, most nominees are well-coached and will not say anything objectionable.

You focus on the nomination of Judge Virgil Ware to the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Ware once campaigned for President Nixon, was appointed to the Santa Clara Superior Court by Gov. Pete Wilson, and was nominated to the U.S. District Court by President Bush. With these credentials, Judge Ware seemed to be one of President Clinton's finest nominees. Since Ware had no known problems, he was not extensively grilled at his hearing.

Such grilling is reserved for nominees with known or suspected problems—nominees like Bill Lann Lee, whom Republicans subjected to the kind of searching analysis that you seek, and Judge Frederica Massiah-Jackson, who was questioned at the same hearing as Judge Ware. Because of concerns raised by pre-hearing vetting, Judge Massiah-Jackson was asked a series of questions, which ultimately led six Republican senators (including myself) to vote against her in committee.

Two final points: First, as you point out, Judge Ware withdrew his nomination after admitting that he lied about being the brother of a black boy shot to death by white teenagers in Alabama in 1963. Yet there was no way to elicit this in the hearing; even the FBI failed to discover Judge Ware's lie. Second, you criticize Judge Ware's summary of the *Adarand* case, but he described the case accurately, using language almost identical to Justice O'Connor's statement of the holding.

SEN. JON KYL
WASHINGTON, DC

THE EDITORS RESPOND: ***Much of the criticism Sen. Kyl and his Republican Judiciary Committee colleagues have received for their handling of President Clinton's judicial nominees is false and unfair. That was the thrust of our editorial. And it's true, as Sen. Kyl points out, that Judge Ware gave a (more or less) accurate account of the Supreme Court's*** **Adarand** ***ruling during his confirmation hearing. But our point was that*** **Adarand** ***does not directly speak to the question Ware was actually asked.***

Rethink the Flat Tax

I greatly appreciated your editorial "Second Thoughts on the Flat Tax" (Nov. 10). The editors did a very good job of showing that, while Rep. Dick Armey's flat tax is a step in the right direction, some of the details have yet to be worked out. Indeed, we do not want to be seen as insensitive to the middle class. We want to be seen as champions of the middle class and champions of the tax cut they rightly deserve.

DAVID A. PENDLETON
MINORITY WHIP
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HONOLULU, HI

the weekly Standard

Wanna Bet?

One morning this past April, Terri Lynn Revere parked in the sun outside Landry's Café in Bridge City, Louisiana, where she proceeded to play video poker virtually non-stop for more than four hours. When Revere pulled herself away around 2:30 p.m., the boy she was baby-sitting, two-year-old Jared Sternbergh, was still inside her locked van, just where she'd left him. Except that now he was comatose, with a body temperature of 107.5 degrees. Jared was rushed to a local hospital. He died the next day.

LeRoy Iverson drove out of Los Angeles on May 24 and headed toward Las Vegas. Shortly after midnight, he crossed the Nevada state line and stopped at the Primadonna Hotel. Iverson dropped off his two children at a basement video arcade in the hotel's basement. Then he took a seat upstairs in the casino. At 3:00 a.m., his children—and 40 other unsupervised minors—were still playing in the arcade. At 5:00 a.m., security guards found seven-year-old Sherrice Iverson in a restroom. She had been raped and strangled.

Three months ago, on August 29, Sgt. Gail Baker of Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia, drove the quick mile to Jasper County, South Carolina. At the State Line Casino, she played video poker for seven and a half straight hours, until her husband arrived to fetch her. When Sgt. Baker finally got home, around 9:30 p.m., she noticed that her daughter, Joy, was no longer breathing. The ten-day-old infant had been alone in the car the whole while. She had also been dead, of acute dehydration, since 4:00 p.m.

All three of these are cases of gross negligence. The adults involved cannot be excused by the fact that they were in the grip of an obsessional vice at the time; they remain entirely responsible for their actions. But they are not responsible for the vice itself—for the opportunity and inducement to behave so ruinously. In this respect, at least, blame must be spread much more broadly. Because the vice in question is gambling. And in modern America, gambling is unique among habits of personal and collateral destruction. It is a vice widely administered, subsidized, and promoted by government.

The nation made no conscious, discrete decision to de-moralize and embrace betting this way. It happened piecemeal, with little thought or debate at any given moment. Most state governments, for most of this century, banned most forms of gambling. In support of these bans, federal law contained a near-total prohibition against advertisements for "any lottery, gift enterprise, or similar scheme, offering prizes dependent in whole or in part upon lot or chance." But in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, a dozen states, beginning with New Hampshire, fixed on the voluntary lottery as a "fair" and "efficient" source of new operating revenue—one much less likely to roil voters than a broad-based tax increase. These states all said they were instituting lotteries to achieve some unimpeachable goal, like "financing the schools."

This was a lie. Lotteries are not "fair"; they are a regressive assault on the poor. Neither are lotteries efficient; state treasuries net only about half the total proceeds. Nor do lottery revenues "finance the schools"; instead, they simply displace previously existing tax dollars—or disguise additional spending elsewhere in a state's budget.

In January 1975, foolishly eager to accommodate all this dishonesty, Congress exempted state lottery agencies from the federal ban on gambling promotion. So the dishonesty intensified and metastasized. Hungry for more cash from an ever larger pool of "players," lotteries mounted large-scale, aggressive ad campaigns. It worked. Other states aped the model. Today, 37 states and the District of Columbia, with a total population comprising the vast majority of Americans, spend nearly half a billion dollars each year to flack their lotteries. "You can get rich quick, and you should try," we are told; bourgeois virtue be damned.

The country's cultural and political resistance to the expansion of gambling has been grievously dulled by years and years of such relentless official propaganda. More than half the states are now home to full-scale casino operations, owned either by Indian tribes or licensed private corporations. Congress has seen fit to exempt the Indians, too, from the federal gambling-promotion ban. In fact, that ban now applies *only* to the private casinos. And even this last restriction may well soon end.

When it does, what are the casinos likely to do? They function in a profit-regulated, increasingly satu-

rated market. So they must compete for customers on the basis of "brand differentiation" alone. Given the chance, in other words, they will probably advertise. And they will probably do so in a very big way, in every state whose laws sanction any kind of gambling—which means very nearly everywhere. Video images of Atlantic City roulette wheels will become as familiar to your children as the Wendy's hamburger man.

Alarmist? Not really. It could begin to happen in a matter of months. The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in a case involving two Nevada television stations, has recently struck down the casino-advertising ban on First Amendment grounds. Under existing constitutional guidelines, accurate advertising of lawful commerce may be regulated only so as directly and narrowly to advance a substantial government interest. The Clinton administration contended that there was such an interest embodied in the law: the "federal interest in discouraging public participation in commercial lotteries, including casino gambling, and thereby minimizing the wide variety of social ills that have historically been associated with these forms of gambling." But the Ninth Circuit was not impressed. Having already acted to legalize advertising by every imaginable kind of gambling enterprise *except* private casinos, the court concluded, the federal government may no longer plausibly assert an interest in discouraging gambling generally.

U.S. solicitor general Seth Waxman has until December 23 to appeal this decision to the Supreme Court. He probably will, and the court will probably accept the case, as almost always happens when a federal statute is ruled unconstitutional. Then, we expect, things will probably go badly. The Ninth Circuit was right, after all: The federal government has actively abetted state governments in the vigorous promotion of gambling. It cannot suddenly pretend to be a principled gambling opponent.

Unless, that is, the House and Senate act to repair the dikes. They have very few options. Congress might seek to reenact the pre-1975 general ban on gambling ads. Or Congress might quit fooling with advertising altogether and seek to enact a ban or restrictions on gambling *directly*, as a matter of federal law. In either case, needless to say, Congress would be ferociously opposed by the states, by the Indian tribes, by publishers and broadcasters, and by well-funded casino lobbyists. It's hard to imagine this Congress even *thinking* about such moves, isn't it?

It should never have come to such a pass. But it has. We are on the verge of a full and abject national surrender to the culture of gambling. Unless the country somehow shakes itself awake on this issue, the Terri Lynn Reveres and LeRoy Iversons and Sgt. Gail Bakers will be with us—and on our consciences—forever.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Reno ♥ Clinton

by Tod Lindberg

Republicans eagerly declared that they weren't surprised by Attorney General Janet Reno's decision last week not to seek an independent counsel in the Democratic fund-raising scandal. It's hard to find anyone in the GOP who doesn't think the fix is in—that the Justice Department and Reno are twisting themselves and the law into pretzels to avoid siccing an independent counsel on Bill Clinton or Al Gore.

Republicans are fond of citing Reno's own 1993 congressional testimony on the independent-counsel statute. At that time, the attorney general noted an "inherent conflict whenever senior executive branch officials are to be investigated" by the Justice Department. An independent-counsel investigation ensures the appearance of fairness, she said then. And exoneration by an independent prosecutor, should that be the result of the investigation, is more credible than exoneration by an official of the same administration.

Given Reno's 1993 view, Republicans (and others) have asked how she can avoid seeking an independent counsel now. The Democratic fund-raising imbroglio potentially involves the president, vice president, key political aides at the White House, and senior officials at the president's reelection campaign and his national party headquarters. The answer is quite simple, really: Janet Reno has changed her mind about the independent-counsel statute. True, she hasn't said as much. On the other hand, how often do political figures admit they were wrong? The point is that since shortly after the law was reenacted in 1994, everything Reno has done suggests she regards the independent-counsel statute as ripe for prosecutorial abuse—a point Republicans used to make all the time in the days when their friends were the ones in the crosshairs.

Reno and the independent-counsel law got off to a

bad start and never recovered. In 1993, during a period when the law had lapsed, Reno appointed Robert Fiske special counsel to investigate the burgeoning Whitewater scandal. After Congress reauthorized the law, she went to the judges of the D.C. circuit, who actually select independent counsels, and sought to have Fiske continue his investigation in accordance with the law. The court declined to appoint him, in a move that stunned Washington, instead replacing Fiske with Kenneth Starr, whose reputation as a GOP partisan quickly became an article of Democratic faith.

True, Reno has gone back to the D.C. circuit seeking prosecutors to investigate other Clinton officials—former HUD secretary Henry Cisneros and former agriculture secretary Mike Espy, among them. These inquiries are still going on, much to the disgust of Democrats. But Reno has gone to court on at least two occasions to oppose efforts by those two counsels to broaden the scope of their investigations. She has also clashed with Starr, seeking to block his access to material the White House claimed was protected by attorney-client privilege. Reno has declined as well to unleash independent counsels in the White House travel office and FBI files matters, heaping them instead onto Starr's plate.


Kent Lemon

And to top it off, Reno has steadfastly refused to use her discretionary authority under the independent-counsel law to seek a counsel in the Democratic fund-raising scandal. She has instead relied on the mandatory provisions of that law, arguing that the conditions under which she *must* seek a counsel have not been met. If she really thought now what she thought in 1993, she would long ago have gone to the D.C. circuit to ask for a special prosecutor.

It is, all in all, a portrait of an attorney general profoundly at odds with the law she is sworn to enforce and willing to go to some lengths to avoid it. Has she gone too far? Republicans certainly think so. Whether you like it or not, the law's the law and needs to be enforced, not tortured into some new meaning. And, as it happens, this much-vaunted "independent-minded" attorney general seems independently to reach exactly the conclusion a partisan Democrat would want her to reach, every time.

What's a Republican to do? Well, put her on the witness stand and grill her, of course, and keep the heat on in the press. But that's not all. Senate Governmental Affairs Committee chairman and erstwhile fund-raising investigator Fred Thompson, in his initial blast in response to Reno's decision, hinted at the possibility of congressional toughening of the independent-counsel statute to preclude further Reno-esque misinterpretation.

Bad idea. In fact, if Republicans could take a step back from the trenches in their war over campaign fund-raising, they might just notice that they're fighting on the wrong front.

For 60 days at least, ever since Reno started the clock on her preliminary investigation under the independent-counsel statute—and in fact for a much longer period, when the question was whether Reno would actually start the clock—virtually all the attention on the fund-raising scandal has been directed at: Janet Reno. Now, whatever else may be true, Janet Reno didn't rent out the Lincoln Bedroom, suck up cash from Indonesian billionaires, or figure out a multi-million-dollar way around those pesky campaign-finance laws. That was somebody else—somebody who must be just delighted that all the heat these days is directed at the attorney general.

That's the independent-counsel statute at work. Since the attorney general makes the decision, all eyes turn to the attorney general—not to the alleged perpetrator. And it's the attorney general's view of the alleged perp that's the issue—not so much the actions of the alleged perp himself.

Imagine a world without the independent-counsel law. There wouldn't be as much hammering at Janet Reno; the hammering would be at the White House. One question would be: How can the president preside over an investigation into his own conduct? Shouldn't he himself order the attorney general to

appoint an outsider of high stature and impeccable credentials to look into the matter? Actually, you don't have to imagine such a world. Those were precisely the circumstances that led to the appointment of Robert Fiske to investigate Whitewater. At the time, Janet Reno said she was perfectly capable of doing the job. Nobody listened. Instead, they demanded to know why Bill Clinton thought this was proper. In the end, he caved; he was the one who told Reno to bring in an outside counsel.

If Republicans really want an investigation, they ought to get rid of the independent-counsel law, which mainly serves these days to deflect attention from where it ought to be focused—on the president. Oddly enough, the truth is that if Congress did vote to repeal the law, Bill Clinton would have good reason to veto it. At the moment, it serves him well.

Tod Lindberg is editorial-page editor of the **Washington Times.**

The U.N. Rewards Saddam

by John R. Bolton

You might think the United Nations would want to punish Saddam Hussein for disrupting and nearly killing the U.N.'s own efforts to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Instead, the U.N. Security Council last week effectively rewarded him. Not only did the council extend the misnamed "oil-for-food" program at current levels—a loophole in the sanctions that lets Iraq export roughly $2 billion worth of oil every six months. It also offered him the prospect of increasing those sales *and* loosening the U.N.'s controls over the proceeds of those sales.

Michael Ramirez

Thus, just six weeks after he barred Americans from participating in U.N. arms inspections, Saddam Hussein now has the best of both worlds: The U.N. ban on weapons of mass destruction is materially impaired, and the economic sanctions are in danger of collapse.

Saddam has won on both fronts thanks to an inattentive and erratic U.S. policy. Three weeks without U.N. inspections undoubtedly allowed the Iraqis to roll back months if not years of weapons-monitoring work by the U.N. Special Commission. That was ample time to disperse and conceal facilities for research, production, and storage of mass-terror weapons. Even worse, however, is the likelihood that the Clinton administration will, in the near future, accept a weakening of economic sanctions—regardless of whether Iraq is subverting the work of the weapons inspectors.

President Clinton has found it rhetorically easy to concentrate on the clash over weapons inspections. Iraq's conflict with the U.N. inspection team was straightforward, easy to explain and understand, and highly visible. The mandate of the U.N. Special Commission is limited to the indisputable threat posed by weapons of mass destruction; its operations have little impact on Iraqi society at large; the global arms-control "community" understands and supports the U.N.'s efforts; and the inspectors have been highly successful since the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

By contrast, the economic sanctions are broad in their impact, diffuse in their implementation, and—bluntly stated—hard to get excited about. Nonetheless, and although far from perfect, the sanctions regime has materially impeded Iraq's ability both to rebuild its conventional military and to acquire weapons of mass destruction. The sanctions reinforce and support the work of the U.N. inspection teams by highlighting Iraq's continuing pariah status and its enormous uncertainty and risk as a commercial partner. With sanctions substan-

tially lifted, Saddam's maneuvering room and options for purchasing weapons materials in world markets would be dramatically enhanced. The difficulty of preventing his acquisition of weapons of mass destruction would be magnified accordingly.

Saddam clearly understands the mutually supporting roles of the U.N. Special Commission and the sanctions; the Clinton administration, for its part, has been utterly unable even to articulate this point, let alone deal with it. Saddam also understands that sanctions have real enemies in the West. While many analysts deride sanctions generally as ineffective, Saddam has somehow succeeded in convincing much of international opinion that sanctions are causing terrible suffering to innocent Iraqis.

Thus, Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and now U.N. high commissioner for human rights, recently opined: "I want to bring to the public's concern the incredible suffering of the children and old people" caused by Security Council sanctions against Iraq. U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan essentially bought this line last week when he supported an increase in the permissible amount of Iraqi oil sales. Prominent conservative and liberal commentators in this country have agreed.

But this is nonsense. From the adoption of Resolution 661 on August 6, 1991, the U.N. sanctions have *always* expressly allowed Iraq to import medicines and food for humanitarian purposes. After the Gulf War, the sanctions were substantially eased, and they have been eased further (too far, in my view) by the various "oil-for-food" resolutions. There are not, and have never been, any international impediments to Iraq's attending to the humanitarian needs of its citizens, if it really wanted to do so.

The suffering of the Iraqi people since 1990 has not been the result of sanctions. It stems directly from the policy choices of Saddam Hussein. This is a man who has used poison gas against his fellow citizens. He has condemned them to starve, sicken, and die in order to free up resources to purchase military and other supplies in international markets. And we can be sure that the extra money Saddam would make from an easing of sanctions would be similarly spent on his needs, not the Iraqi people's. His goal has been to ensure the survival of his government, not the survival of his citizens. All that an easing of sanctions will accomplish is to hand a clear victory to Saddam's propaganda campaign, to acquiesce in the big lie that we, and not Saddam, are the cause of Iraqi suffering.

That Saddam Hussein has successfully befuddled so many Western analysts is a sign of just how desperately in trouble the sanctions now are. Holding the sanctions regime in place against Iraq will require the Clinton administration to demonstrate a strong will, focused attention, and persistence in military and diplomatic efforts.

Every indication is that the administration is about to cave. We can be certain that other rogue governments will be watching closely.

John R. Bolton, senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute, was assistant secretary of state for international organizations in the Bush administration.

The World's Poor Are Richer

by Max Singer

AT FIRST GLANCE at the World Bank's *1997 World Development Report* is very depressing. The latest numbers make it look as if the old claim is true, that "the poor are getting poorer" around the world. But numbers don't always mean what they seem to.

The bank's new report shows incomes declining in "low income countries" by about 1.4 percent per year over the decade from 1985 to 1995. And things looked just about as bad for the lower-middle-income countries: Their incomes went down by about 1.3 percent per year over the same decade. Now, China and India, with almost as many people as these two groups combined, are not included in these averages, and their incomes grew at over 6 percent per year. But it is still bad news indeed if, on average, incomes in countries with more than 2 billion people were going down for 10 years.

Since I was surprised to hear that the years 1985-'95 had been so bad for the poor countries of the world, I looked more closely at the statistics. Where the World Bank had divided countries into "low income" and "lower middle income," I divided all the countries for which they provided data into "ordinary countries" and "former Communist countries," mostly the countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union or its empire in Eastern Europe.

It turns out that the incomes of ordinary poor countries (other than China and India) didn't go down at all; they grew at a respectable average of 2 percent per year from 1985-'95. But in the former Communist countries, incomes dropped by 5.4 percent per year. This is a devastating collapse, though probably not quite as bad as it looks, because incomes in Communist countries were overestimated in 1985.

The poor aren't "getting poorer," then. Instead, countries that had the misfortune of being Communist are getting poorer—or they were already poor and are now simply being measured more realistically. Combining these countries into a group with others that weren't Communist (while excluding China and India) conceals the real source of increasing poverty in a handful of countries.

Thus there's no need to be depressed or surprised. Most of the world's poor countries are growing nicely. Overall, the 59 "ordinary" poor countries—with 1.3 billion people—grew by an average of 22 percent during the decade. China and India—with 2.1 billion people—grew by 80 percent. There are 17 "ordinary" poor countries that are getting poorer, but they are very small, with only 150 million people in all. A third set of countries, with some 428 million people, also showed declining incomes. Most of these are countries that were strongly affected by communism or other special circumstances that made their experience atypical.

Besides the accidentally misleading categories and the overestimates of Communist income in 1985, there is a more subtle way in which the World Bank's numbers (and much past experience) may be misleading us about the future. In recent years there has been a major change in thinking in the poor countries, which is gradually leading to changes in economic policy that may have dramatic effects in coming years. Throughout the postwar period, most poor countries were dominated by socialist and national-planning ideas that created immense obstacles to growth. In recent years, these ways of thinking have been greatly discredited. Now there is increased appreciation, especially among younger people, of the efficiency of markets and competition to deliver economic growth—as well as more real fairness. Maybe we should think of the impressive overall growth in poor countries during the half century after World War II as an indication of what they can accomplish with one hand tied behind their backs. Since almost all now have two hands free, we should expect growth to be faster in the future.

THE NEARLY 500 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE FORMERLY COMMUNIST COUNTRIES ARE THE BIGGEST POVERTY PROBLEM IN THE WORLD TODAY.

It is certainly unfortunate for the nearly 500 million people in the formerly Communist countries that their incomes fell during this period; they are the world's biggest poverty problem, even if their decline is not as great as the statistics indicate. But their difficulties are not the usual problems of poverty; they are the results of their special experiences with communism, war, and revolution. We shouldn't let their misfortune and the World Bank categories confuse us about the favorable state of the struggle against ordinary poverty.

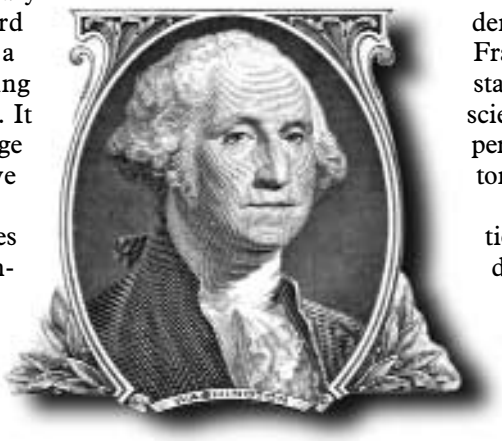
Max Singer is the author (with Aaron Wildavsky) of **The REAL World Order: Zones of Peace/Zones of Turmoil.**

Erasing George Washington

by Alvin S. Felzenberg

CHANGE THE NAME of the nation's capital and of the bridge that spans the Hudson? Remove the statues of our first president from Boston Common, Wall Street, the state capitol in Richmond, and hundreds of town squares? Close Mount Vernon? Level the Washington Monument and the famous square that bears his name at the base of Fifth Avenue, for which a Henry James novel is named? Kick him off the quarter and the dollar bill?

These measures may not be far away if the latest venture in political correctness becomes a national fad. This fall, the Orleans Parish School Board in New Orleans voted unanimously to re-name George Washington Elementary School for Dr. Charles Richard Drew. The action conforms with a board policy that forbids naming schools in honor of slave owners. It is the twenty-second name change under the policy in the past five years.



To be sure, Dr. Drew deserves to be honored. A respected scientist, he served his country well in World War II, first by devising ways to preserve blood plasma and then by protesting the army's policy of segregating plasma by the donor's race. Like Thurgood Marshall and Ronald McNair, an astronaut killed on the shuttle *Challenger*, whose names also replaced those of slaveholders on New Orleans schools, Dr. Drew is a worthy role model for children.

But those earlier name changes sparked less controversy. Marshall and McNair replaced Confederate generals. One might argue that Generals Lee and Beauregard fought to dismember the union and continue the enslavement of what was then one eighth of the population. If so, they offered children attending schools named after them examples of valor, but valor in the service of preserving and extending slavery. Marshall and McNair were heroes to all Americans.

What about Washington? Is the man who did more than any other to win American independence and create institutions that provided the basis for both emancipation and civil rights in the same league as ardent segregationist "states rights" politicians and former members of the Ku Klux Klan?

The local activist who led the campaign to rename the schools thinks so. He says that, "to African Americans, George Washington has about as much meaning as David Duke."

In fact, Washington ranks with George Mason as one of the few founders who actually freed their slaves. In his will he manumitted them upon the death of his wife and provided funds for the education of the young and the care of the elderly among them.

Furthermore, unlike many of his contemporaries, Washington did not tolerate the taking advantage of women slaves in his care, a policy that caused a visiting foreign officer to complain. Nor would Washington sell a slave against his or her will. He refused to break up families at the auction block. Given that some persons were defined by their race as property, he made those decisions at financial sacrifice. Northerners such as Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin, abolitionists from the start, could remain true to their consciences without incurring political, personal, or financial risks. Washington could not.

But the moral-absolutist position of the school board spares students and teachers the burden of considering the dilemmas Washington confronted. Nor will their school's name invite students to ponder the relevant questions: Would the South have entered the struggle for independence if forced to abandon slavery? Could independence have been won without the South? Which was of greater concern to the one third of colonists who favored separation from England—independence or slavery? Would slavery have been ended without independence?

For that matter, what drew 25,000 African Americans into the ranks of Washington's army? How were they treated while they served, and how did they affect the outcome of the war? What did they think of Washington?

Do not suspect for an instant that removal of Washington's name from an elementary school in New Orleans will prompt such discussion. Published accounts to date suggest the contrary. Meanwhile, hold on to your dollar bills. They could become collectors' items.

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America's True Child-care Crisis

Kids Need Their Mothers, Not Government Daycare

By Danielle Crittenden and David Frum

Feminist bookstores sell T-shirts emblazoned with the slogan, "What part of No don't you understand?" It's a question that might fairly be asked of President Clinton. A majority of Americans have made unmistakably clear their aversion to government-controlled child care. But this aversion has not impressed daycare advocates in the least. A quarter of a century ago, President Nixon vetoed the first of their plans to thrust millions of children into the care of the same sort of people who run the public schools. Seven years ago, President Bush and the Republicans in Congress beat back the latest institutional daycare scheme. Undaunted, the president and the first lady are now ready to try once more. The question is: This time, will Republicans' nerves fail them?

Over the past few months, Bill and Hillary Clinton have prepared the country for the announcement of a big government daycare initiative in January's State of the Union address. "People have to be able to succeed at work and at home in raising their children," the president told the White House Conference on Child Care this fall, which brought together 100 experts, most of them advocates of institutional daycare. "And if we put people in the position of having to choose one over the other, our country is going to be profoundly weakened."

But of course putting people in a position where they are pressured to choose work over parenthood is exactly what the president and the first lady intend to do. And despite the ideological euphemism that pretends that child-rearing impinges equally on men and women, "people" in this case of course means mothers. The public policy of the United States already piles economic burdens on women who opt to care for their own children. The president's plan would pile on some more. By attempting to convince Americans that a daycare center offers an adequate substitute for maternal care, the president and the first lady are only intensifying the powerful cultural messages that scorn in-person motherhood.

Early reports of the Clintons' legislative plans reveal a determination to subsidize and encourage daycare from the earliest weeks of infancy. Already, as the Cato Institute reminds us, federal, state, and local governments pay 40 percent of the cost of child care. The administration seeks to go even further: It is expected to ask Congress to approve a series of initiatives—federal subsidies, tax incentives—that would encourage women to place their babies and toddlers in daycare. The Republicans will be tempted to split the difference—to approve the tax incentives and vote down the subsidies—while avoiding all debate over first principles. But isn't the formation of the character of the next generation of citizens an important enough problem to merit a debate over first principles? We can all agree that America is suffering from a child-care crisis. But what is this crisis: Is it that children spend too little time in the care of strangers? Or too much?

You can learn a lot from outbursts of mass hysteria. Repeatedly over the past decade, the country has been shocked by accusations of the most bizarre and atrocious child abuse at daycare centers: from the McMartin pre-school in southern California to the Amirault case in Massachusetts to the Little Rascals case in North Carolina, and many more besides. District attorneys, judges, child-welfare workers, and dozens of pairs of parents persuaded themselves—despite a near total absence of evidence—that children had been sodomized, tortured, and abused in satanic rituals. How could so many people have fallen for such manifestly implausible stories? The answer is that guilt is a powerful and insidious emotion.

Tell parents that their child is miserable in daycare because he wants to be at home with Mom, and they

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will block their ears. That explanation of their child's unhappiness reflects badly on them. But tell them that their child is miserable because a satanic lunatic is raping him with a broom handle, and all the guilt and anxiety that they have been suppressing will explode in a cathartic outburst.

The satanic-abuse cases remind us how fraught with emotion the whole topic of daycare is. Hundreds of thousands of parents are placing their kids in daycare centers for seven, eight, or ten hours a day. They want reassurance. They want to be told that daycare is just fine for their kids: that it promotes socialization, that it enhances their vocabulary, that their babies will be as emotionally secure among a handful of caring strangers as they would be with Mom. And indeed, there are self-described experts who will tell parents just that. They will say that, to the extent daycare is harmful, it is only because it is "bad" daycare, or because the providers lack a graduate degree in early-childhood development, or because staff turns over too frequently. This is the spin that many news stories gave to an April report by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which found that prolonged time in daycare damaged the emotional bond between mothers and their children.

Audaciously, the White House seized on this study as good news. Because the study found that the harmful effects of daycare were apparently greater in some situations than in others, the first lady trumpeted it at the White House child-care conference as demonstrating the need for federal funding and regulation. The study, which comes from an arm of the federal government's National Institutes of Health, is ongoing and the results are in fact tentative and inconclusive. Still, a careful reading of it leaves in place the commonsense conclusion that non-family care of very young children is inherently risky. Equip every daycare center with floor-to-ceiling Fisher-Price geegaws, confer advanced degrees on every staffer, pay them all lavishly—the fact remains, it is still institutional care. As Dr. Diane Fisher, a clinical psychologist and authority on child development, observed in an interview with the Independent Women's Forum, "No matter how high quality the center is, the children still take their naps in little rows of mats on the floor, children still sit in the corner sucking their thumbs and waiting for mommy."

And parents know it. Mrs. Clinton and her friends hope to fend off daycare skeptics in Congress by claiming overwhelming public demand for a national daycare system—citing as proof the now-familiar statistic that nearly 60 percent of the mothers of preschool children work for wages. But look at working women's choices more closely, and what you see is a desperate determination by all but a handful of highly paid professional mothers to care for their children close to home.

No matter how often feminists tell us that Ozzie and Harriet are dead, the truth is women want to stay home with their young children if they possibly can. Only about one-third of the 7.2 million married women with children younger than 3 work full-time. A Roper poll of women's attitudes toward work, which has been conducted periodically since 1974, finds that a substantial majority (53 percent to 41 percent) of married women would prefer to stay home with their young children if they could—and that this majority has been growing since 1985.

And when mothers of young children do work, married or not, they shun institutional care. There are about 19 million children under age 5 in the United States. About 10 million of those children have mothers who work. Only about 1.8 million of those children are in daycare. More than a million and a half of those children of working mothers are cared for during working hours by their grandparents, another 1.6 million are watched by their fathers, and close to one million are minded by some other relative. Parents, in other words, show a marked aversion to the sort of care that the daycare advocates want to foist on them.

Daycare advocates have responded with a swinging counterattack. A 1995 survey of "family care"—daycare in small groups provided by relatives and neighbors in their homes—conducted by the pro-daycare Families and Work Institute deemed only 9 percent of these settings "good." It concluded that the rest of these children would do better in institutional daycare. Why? Because friends and relatives watch children only as a "favor," while the professionals in the centers are doing it for a living. And indeed, a strong whiff of disdain for the child-rearing aptitude of ordinary people wafts all through the pro-daycare case.

The fatal combination of snobbishness and ideological rigidity has doomed national daycare projects in the past—most recently in 1990, when conservatives in Congress were able to substitute the present tax credit for the daycare subsidies liberals sought. It's tempting to hope that once again conservatives need only delay the administration's plans to defeat them. But there's good reason to fear that, over the longer haul, a strategy of delay will probably fail.

However little they want to pop their kids into institutions, millions of Americans—whether they work 10 hours or 40—still experience the care of their

children as a huge, never-ending, all-consuming problem. The executive frantically gulping down every detail of the Louise Woodward au pair trial; the claims adjuster who suspects that the neighbor she pays to watch her kids is plopping them in front of the TV all day; the former welfare recipient who must rouse her kids at 5:00 a.m. to get them to a church basement before she's due at her hotel cleaning job—in this one gripping preoccupation, they're all sisters. Many of these working mothers have friends who don't work outside the home, and they know that those other mothers are holding their babies, talking to them, playing with them, watching what they eat, and generally treating them as the most important people in the world. And they know that their own children are, in most cases, receiving distinctly second-class treatment by comparison. They feel guilty, anxious, envious, and defensive—an explosive mixture. In the debate over national health care, Republicans could ask Americans, "How's *your* health care?" in reasonable confidence that most would reply, "Pretty good, actually." In the debate over national child care, the advocates of an expanded government role are tapping into a pulsing vein of parental dread and dissatisfaction.

Sean Delonas

What can Republicans say? They will be tempted to buy off the daycare advocates with an expansion of the child-care tax credit, as they did in 1990. As the federal deficit attains zero, somebody is bound to propose this. The trouble is, increasing the federal tax credit will tilt the economics of family life even more deeply against at-home mothers. The tax credit can only be used against the lower of two spousal incomes: A family in which the mother stays home cannot benefit from it.

Look at the effect of the credit on the decision-making of a reasonably typical middle-class family. Mr. Kowalski earns $35,000 as the assistant manager of a hardware store. He hasn't had a raise in five years, and since the birth of their second child two years ago, the Kowalski family has begun to feel pinched. He considers taking a second part-time job that would pay another $12,000. If he lives in a high-tax state, that extra $12,000 will be worth about $7,000 after taxes. Alternatively, Mrs. Kowalski can work half a day, for the same $12,000. Thanks to the child-care tax credits, her work will actually bring home about $4,000 more than the same labor by her husband. Outcome: Mrs. Kowalski probably goes to work.

Most people engaged in politics have a hard time saying that this is an unsatisfactory outcome. They know that they'll be accused of "wanting to send women back to the home," of joining the "backlash." And it's especially hard for them to think of the Kowalskis' decision as unsatisfactory because, in the world of people engaged in politics, most women not only work but experience their work as liberating. Tell a woman working on Capitol Hill that you think the mothers of young children should stay at home with them, and she'll clomp you on the head with her cellular phone. Say it on the floor of Congress, and brace yourself to be sledgehammered with press warnings that you are alienating women voters from the Republican party.

But it's worth remembering that women with interesting, fulfilling jobs (like men, for that matter) represent a tiny minority of the workforce. There are about 100,000 female lawyers in America. More than 600,000 women work as receptionists, more than 1 million work as waitresses, and close to 2 million work as bookkeepers. Nearly 80 percent of working women earn less than $26,000 per year. These women by and large do not experience the world of work as a liberation from the drudgery of child-rearing. For them it is work that is drudgery and child-rearing that is fulfilling.

This is not to suggest that conservatives should be urging women to quit work en masse. With the average woman bearing only two children, such attitudes are obviously out of date. But conservatives can say this to the modern woman: You are probably going to live 80 years. You will probably work for almost 40 of those years. But for six or seven or eight of those years, you will be a mother to very young children. Do you really want society to try to reinvent itself so that you can delegate the care of those babies to strangers? Or would you rather society tried to figure out how to

help you to care for them yourself, and then return to work once your children are in school? Feminists will insist that anyone who utters these sentiments is committing political suicide. But that's not what the polls say.

The question is, of course, *how* to help the mothers of young children stay home. Part of the job involves changing cultural attitudes, persuading at-home mothers that they should not be embarrassed for their choice, persuading society to respect and honor their work, and persuading working women to try to speak a little more politely to them. (A good start would be a first lady who could refrain from sarcastic quips like, "Well, I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies.") There's reason to hope that this cultural shift has already begun: It's hard to imagine a Laura Schlessinger attracting a national radio audience in 1977 by urging women to stay home with their kids.

But we must also recognize that, for many women, remaining in the workforce when their children are young is an act of economic necessity. Some of these women are single mothers: Nearly one out of three American children is growing up in a home headed by a woman who either never married or is divorced or separated. Conservatives are sometimes accused of hypocrisy because we encourage married women to stay home with their young children while believing that single mothers should work rather than take welfare. But there's no analogy between a married couple who sacrifice the wife's contribution to the household income so that she can care for their children and an unmarried mother dependent on the state. Half of all the children in the United States will live in a single-parent household at some point before the age of 18. It's clearly not feasible for the government to play husband to half the women in America. Single mothers will have to work. That's another reason why single motherhood is such an enormous social problem.

Married women also often feel obliged to work. Some simply need the money. But many others are practicing economic self-protection. Absenting oneself from the workforce is costly. In fact, women's tendency to interrupt their careers to care for their children is the main cause of the notorious pay gap between the sexes. If a woman could be sure that her husband would stay with her, the cost might well be bearable. She might in that case tell herself, "Well, *my* income when I return to work won't be as high as it might have been, but the two of us are earning enough together, and we'll share the satisfaction of knowing that our kids are being cared for properly." But no woman can be sure. So she must make her life choices defensively, staying in the workforce—even though she might not want to, even though she could afford to leave it—to protect her work history in case of divorce.

Combine the women who must work because they are single mothers and the women who feel they should work to protect themselves lest they become single mothers, and you realize that what looks at first like a child-care crisis is in reality a symptom of America's larger marriage crisis. Understanding the child-care problem in these terms clarifies an otherwise puzzling mystery. We are endlessly told that women "nowadays" cannot afford not to work. This is at first glance baffling: How can it be that women cannot afford to stay home now when they could afford it in the vastly poorer America of 1955 or 1935? The answer is that then they could count on sharing their husband's income for life, and now they cannot.

Of course there are real limits on what public policy could (or even should) do to shore up marriage. But if the alternative is a multibillion dollar federal day-care policy intended to absorb child-care costs that would not exist in an America where more families stayed together, the justification for intervening on behalf of marriage becomes rather stronger than it might otherwise be. Two practical reforms spring urgently to mind.

First, by all means let Republicans expand the tax credit for child care if they feel it appropriate or necessary to do so. But at the same time, let them follow the advice offered in these pages by David Blankenhorn and Allan Carlson, and enact "income-splitting" into the tax law: Permit husbands whose wives don't work to allocate half their money for tax purposes to their spouse. Under such a rule, Mrs. Kowalski could stay home, Mr. Kowalski could take that second job, earn his $47,000, and each of them would be taxed at the rate on $23,500. That would better account for the value of the wife's work in the home, correct some of the distorting incentives of the current tax code, and send a strong signal to American families that their government recognizes and applauds maternal child-rearing.

Second, states should revive the old concept of alimony in divorce law for the benefit of at-home mothers. When a 25-year-old woman leaves the workforce for eight years to rear her children, she loses more than eight years' income: She virtually guarantees that her income at age 40 will drop below what it would have been had she remained at work. If she makes that sacrifice, she is relying on her husband's fidelity. And that reliance should be protected, just as it would be in any other contract. If her husband

divorces her at 40, he should owe her more than just child support till the kids reach 18: He should owe her a continuing claim upon his future income, in recognition of the benefit he derived from her work raising the children. (There's actually evidence that the husbands of at-home women earn higher incomes than the husbands of working women: the Jenkins-can-you-get-on-the-next-plane-to-Jakarta effect. If so, that strengthens even further the at-home wife's claim on her husband's future income.)

In the 1970s, when states amended their divorce laws to eliminate alimony, feminists justified the change on the explicit grounds that it would flush women out of the home and into the workforce where they belonged. The revocation of the old promise that marriage meant "assured support as long as they live," wrote the feminist sociologist Jessie Bernard in her influential 1972 textbook, *The Future of Marriage*, "may be one of the best things that could happen to women. It would demand that even in their early years they think in terms of lifelong work histories; it would demand the achievement of autonomy. They would have to learn that marriage was not the be-all and end-all of their existence." But when women are forced to think in terms of lifelong work histories, there is a cost to be paid, and it is all too often paid by their children.

It may seem breathtakingly radical to argue that the solution to the daycare problem involves imagining ways to help mothers of young children to stay home. But if it does, that only exposes how baldly the proponents of universal government daycare are lying when they dress up their demands as "child advocacy." They are championing a utopian vision of women's liberation. They are zealously pursuing the ambition of the public-sector unions to recruit thousands of federally funded daycare workers. They are even paying attention to the electoral need of the Democratic party for a respectable-sounding excuse for higher taxes and more federal spending. But the interests of children rank among the least of their concerns.

What infant children need is their mother: their *own* mother, even if she's not the greatest mother in the world, even if she lacks a graduate degree. The difficulty that America's children have in getting her attention, the economic risks that America's mothers run if they give their children those few short years of care in infancy, the care they yearn to give—*that* is America's true child-care crisis. And the solution lies not in subsidizing daycare to free Mom to go to work to pay the taxes to fund daycare; the solution lies in identifying ways to aid and protect mothers who want to do society's most important job themselves. ♦

Meet Rev. Moon, Mass Marriage Maestro

By Matt Labash

For all of Rev. Sun Myung Moon's good qualities—his business acumen, his robust self-esteem as "Lord of the Second Advent," his dynamic leadership of one of the century's most durable cults—he's a disaster of a wedding coordinator. The food is bad, there's no cash bar, the entertainment doesn't show—and sometimes the spouses don't either.

On November 29 at Robert F. Kennedy Stadium in Washington, D.C., Moon conducted a mass wedding of 2,500 couples—mostly foreign imports from the dwindling rolls of his Unification church, whose members are known pejoratively as "Moonies." The wedding was the capstone of the multimillion-dollar World Culture and Sports Festival that unfolded over Thanksgiving week. The festival included art exhibits, concerts, and sporting events, as well as eight academic conferences that had scholars and other conferees discussing science, religion, and the media.

The ostensible long-term goal of such gatherings is the promotion of world peace through family, marriage, chastity, and so on. It's a banal notion that we can all get behind—and for honoraria that have topped $100,000, many celebrities and politicians

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have. The more immediate purpose is the promotion of Sun Myung Moon, who for decades has suffered from a very literal Messiah complex, claiming that he will ultimately establish the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth through his mass marriages. The academic conferences lend a much-needed veneer of sanity to the whole operation and are held regularly by Moon's myriad organizations, most notably the Family Federation for World Peace.

The sheer weirdness of the Washington spectacle was exemplified by the inaugural address of the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (whose name is in keeping with the creepy one-world-under-a-bad-Moon theme). At the Hilton Towers, Mayor Marion Barry implored a roomful of Unificationists, most of them Asian and listening through U.N.-style headsets, to "spend as much money as you can." Intent on impressing the panel of scientists there to discuss such topics as neutrino emissions of supernova explosions, Barry boasted that, in college, "I was trained as a chemist . . . but I moved from molecules to people." And then he moved back to crack—although the irony apparently did not translate.

The "True Parents," Sun Myung and Hak Ja Han Moon

The mass ceremony does not confer legal matrimony, but it is considered spiritually and eternally binding within the church. Unificationists now insist on calling it a "blessing," a dubious euphemism. Moon selects spouses after contemplating their pictures. He often matches people who have never met, don't speak the same language, and don't even find out whom they're marrying until days before the ceremony. As a bonus, connubial consummation is often prohibited for up to three years after the wedding. (*Mazel tov!*)

It may seem distasteful to be yoked by a stumpy Korean who sports tacky boutonnieres the size of babies' heads and whose matchmaking involves playing Fifty-two Pick-up with your 8 by 10, but it is all in keeping with the church's theology. Unificationism teaches that Jesus failed in his intent to restore mankind to its Edenic state, getting crucified before he could marry John the Baptist's younger sister, a union that would have yielded sinless children. Fortunately, Moon was called in 1936 to bat clean-up for Christ, charged with restoring the Kingdom along with his lovely wife Hak Ja Han (his second according to Moon, his fourth according to former Moonies). Together as the "True Parents," they are to complete the job that Christ could not finish through the holy sacrament of mass weddings. Strangely, what any Christian would consider a bizarre sacrilege has been given tacit support by the family-values folks—from George Bush to Ralph Reed—who regularly show up for Moon's conferences.

What becomes immediately clear after exposure to the particular pool of newlyweds in Washington is that there is no surfeit of material for a Most Eligible Bachelor/Bachelorette contest. For many, to be inflicted on a stranger who wouldn't dare contest Moon's divine appointment is perhaps the last, best chance at companionship. According to the "couples' profiles" disseminated to the media, a Russian economics student named Andrey, for instance, "studies martial arts, works as a security guard and lives with his grandmother."

Sébastien Jean is a 24-year-old house painter with a Mick Fleetwood ponytail and rings of silver Gothic crosses—"Jesus is my bro'," he explains. Over lunch with his fiancée, whom he met two weeks prior, he tells me he doesn't love her, won't comment on whether he finds her attractive, and isn't even sure she likes the music of his hardcore industrial band. Still, he's elated: "How many people get to start completely fresh and don't have to worry about breaking up, or if this person is going to leave me?"

The wedding's surrealism quotient would make André Breton beg for recess. Black vendors outside RFK Stadium, who normally hawk Million Man March paraphernalia, tried to sell chocolate sweet-potato wedding cakes to bespectacled Korean brides while circumnavigating ex-Moonie protesters. The former Moonies claim the movement engages in

deceptive recruiting methods, keeps recruits from contacting their demonized parents, and makes members sleep 11 to a van while traveling the country selling cheap trinkets and flowers, with no health benefits or salaries—in order to enrich Moon and offset the costs of gatherings such as this one.

On the stadium's field, brides in puff-sleeved wedding gowns and grooms in dark suits and maroon ties took their places in tight formations of metal folding chairs. With the rigorous uniformity of artificial flowers and Men's Wearhouse suits, it looked like the Stepford wives attending a Maoist prom. Around the couples' chairs were trench coats (though some of the brides wore the coats over their dresses) and commemorative tote bags stuffed with heating pads and boxed reception lunches containing some sort of curried vittle and a cube of wedding cake.

One particular section of the stadium contained a disproportionate number of solo brides, as their fiancés couldn't get travel visas, forcing them to put on their own rings after sliding off their satin gloves while balancing framed pictures of their mystery grooms. Organizers corralled the media in suites high above the field, forbidding us backstage access and a chance to work the stadium crowd. We were allowed on the field only in 10-minute, tightly controlled press pools. After shaking my media escort, I spent most of my time trying to find somebody who could speak English. Even when I succeeded, the most candid quotes I got were along the lines of, "Rev. Moon knows best." The one time I managed to escape to the concourse, there appeared to be traditional jitters, as brides stood in long lines outside the restrooms, gathering their trains to keep them from getting soiled by the detritus of Redskins' games past.

The couples sat in formation all day, with breaks filled by pulsating dance remixes, as martial-arts troupes feigned a lot of crotch-kicking for no apparent reason. The ceremony itself opened with the dramatic arrival of the "True Parents," Moon and his wife, who descended a red-carpeted staircase as if high-stepping through an MGM musical. They wore typically understated gold-trimmed holy robes and his-and-her crowns, along with Pat Boone-ish white loafers, which could be seen when Moon's frock caught a gust of wind.

Before sitting on his throne, Moon hocked up the vows in Korean, asking the assemblage to promise to inherit "the tradition of the Unification Family" and "the will of God and the True Parents." One would think such vows, coming from a man who has advocated an "automatic theocracy" and promised to "conquer and subjugate the world," would give pause to nonbelievers. But there was an ecumenical showing of clergy from Christian and Eastern religions. The Moons removed their gloves to sprinkle selected couples with holy water. (In the past, Mother Moon has reportedly cut the homebrew with her breast milk.) And Moon's representatives throughout the stadium did the same to the audience at large, while remaining wary of splattering the leather-coated Fruit of Islam, who were working security in case a distraught bride made a mad dash for Louis Farrakhan, who was also onstage.

The promised "cavalcade of stars" never quite materialized—though some of the non-Moonies in the two-thirds-full stadium had paid as much as $70 for the entertainment portion of the program. The only face-time I secured with "celebrities" was with "Hollywood" Brown and "Sugar Bear" Capers, two former Harlem Globetrotters so marked down that they used

to play for the 'trotters' stooge team, the Washington Generals. An errant tip from a roadie had me passing a malicious lie around the press box that Gloria Estefan would be singing. It turned out to be Gloria del Paraguay, a heavily rouged South American songstress who belted John Denver covers in an operatic tremolo. Organizers offered small consolation, saying Gloria was so beloved back home, "she travels with a diplomatic passport."

As the brides sat frozen on the field, an anonymous Neil Diamond knock-off in a ruffled maroon suit nearly shook himself off his lifts while singing "Coming to America." In the press box, conservative talk-show host Armstrong Williams was outcrooning the faux Diamond while adding hand motions and loudly accusing the impostor of lip-synching. Williams, one of many media types who have received VIP treatment from the Moonies, had come to see Whitney Houston.

Many others had too, though she never showed up. After getting rough press for headlining the new Messiah's media spectacular, Houston came down with a mysterious illness and forfeited a million-dollar payday. Such low comedy is always part of the fun at a Moonie gala—though the greater reward lies in listening for the joint-popping genuflection of respectable and sane people who defer to him whose name means "Word of Shining Light." Earlier this year at a Washington dinner, Moon gave an exegesis of the concavity and convexity of "human sexual organs." How could he pull off such dinner-chatter deviance? Shortly afterward, he said, "God likes me. . . . Nobody can oppose me." He also distributed a speech in which he discussed oneness with one's own body: "When you defecate, do you wear a gas mask? . . . If you are near someone defecating, you will quickly move a good distance away. But when you smell your own feces, you do not even notice it." In case the point was missed, he went on: "Did you ever taste the dried mucus from your nose? Does it taste sweet or salty? It's salty, right? Since you can answer, you must have tasted it! Why did you not feel that it was dirty? It was because it was part of your body."

But his grossing out a roomful of Washington luminaries hasn't led them to censure Moon. His conference speakers frequently justify their appearances by saying they had no idea the meetings were sponsored by Moon, by blaming it on their agents, or by saying the conferences themselves have nothing to do with Moon's theology. Whitney Houston and CNN's Lou Dobbs, who was also scheduled to appear in Washington but canceled, both said they hadn't known the events were affiliated with Sun Myung Moon. But Unification officials provided journalists with copies of Houston's contracts, which clearly disclosed the sponsor. As for Dobbs, Arnaud de Borchgrave, the editor-at-large of the Moon-founded *Washington Times*, maintains his representations weren't quite on the level: "He agreed to speak, it was my idea, he's an old friend, and his p.r. department decided against it. Of course he knows [of the Moon sponsorship]."

Since Moon began spreading money around official Washington 15 years ago to paper over his demented rants, his cult-leader image, and his 13-month felony conviction for tax evasion, his apologists have grown much faster than his church membership. Sen. Orrin Hatch has called Moon "a religious alternative to communism." Sen. Trent Lott has lobbied on the Senate floor for the Moon-sponsored "True Parents Day" (which is now on the national calendar as a watered-down "Parents' Day"). Jerry Falwell and Ralph Reed are but two evangelicals who once turned down Moon money, then later wet their beaks. Jack Kemp, Gerald Ford, and Jeane Kirkpatrick have all seen paydays at Moon fests. And George Bush, who in a single year made 12 Moon-sponsored appearances, has traveled to Japan and Buenos Aires at the Moons' behest. His total take has been estimated at $10 million, and Bush continues to insist Moon's organizations are about "strengthening the family."

SINCE MOON BEGAN SPREADING MONEY AROUND WASHINGTON 15 YEARS AGO, HIS CHORUS OF APOLOGISTS HAS GROWN FASTER THAN HIS CHURCH.

Many conservatives jumped on board in the 1980s, when Moon proved himself a staunch anti-Communist, funding the contras and lavishing junkets abroad. But Moon functions have despotic, authoritarian accents that would do North Korea's late Kim Il-sung proud. Moon has his "World Culture and Sports Festival." Kim had his "International Sports and Cultural Festival." Kim called himself the "Great Leader." Moon calls himself the "True Father." When photographing the Great Leader, North Korean cameramen took pains to avoid capturing the unsightly tumor on the back of Kim's neck. Moon, too, has his protective spear-carriers.

De Borchgrave, confronted with one of Moon's subjugation-of-the world statements, responds, "I just don't believe he ever said that." Frequent federation

speaker Maureen Reagan, like other conservatives, is comfortable in the pocket of the Moon propaganda machine. "I've met some of the nicest, most educated people just trying to make a better world," she says. "That may sound incredibly naive. But I could take a little naiveté at this point." ♦

Wishful Thinking on War

The National Defense Panel Gets It Wrong

By Frederick W. Kagan

The Pentagon cannot fully be trusted to plan its own future. With this sensible thought in mind, Congress established last year a group of experts to provide an independent evaluation of the Pentagon's vision of the future of America's armed forces—particularly as expressed in the Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review, released earlier this year. This National Defense Panel issued its report last week, to considerable hoopla and acclaim. The panel was supposed to consider the future "unencumbered by Pentagon policies, Congressional constituencies, or budget constraints."

Unfortunately, the panel's report is also unencumbered by reality. Relying on a Buck Rogers vision of future Information Age warfare, the report takes for granted that we are at the beginning of a "revolution in military affairs" based on developments in information technology. The report asserts that we have entered a period of "strategic pause," in which we will face only relatively small and manageable challenges to our security in the near future. It belittles the notion that America's armed forces should be prepared to fight two nearly simultaneous "major regional contingencies" (MRCs), a notion that has driven American strategic planning since the Gulf War. It argues that we should downsize our forces even more in order to pay for the "transformation strategy" that alone, it claims, will produce the armed forces we must have in 2020. These cuts would be on top of the 30 percent reduction that America's armed forces have already suffered over the last decade, a reduction that has stretched our capabilities thin.

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The report is fundamentally misguided. In the first place, although developments in technology, and information technology in particular, are changing war, it is by no means clear what war will look like at the end of those changes. Second, the determination to maintain the capability of fighting two nearly simultaneous regional wars does not result from "Cold War thinking," but rather from a rational evaluation of America's responsibilities. The need for such a capability has been reinforced by the current tension with Iraq, which reveals that our armed forces are already too thinly stretched to deal comfortably with even one MRC. And third, there can be no such thing as a "strategic pause" for the United States. We cannot afford to step back from the world, focusing on domestic security and domestic concerns while preparing the armed forces of the future. The report ignores the critical role the United States can and should play in shaping a future that suits us. It ignores the fact that if we keep our armed forces strong even as we transform them, we can do better than prepare for the next war: We can deter it.

The Armed Forces of the Future

The panel's report rests on the premise that a "revolution in military affairs" (RMA) is now occurring and that we therefore need to begin to field a "revolutionary" new force. Is this so?

The report defines an RMA as "a discontinuous change usually associated with technology but also representing social or economic changes that fundamentally alter the face of battle." But RMAs are not brought about by social, economic, or technological changes. They occur when one or more nations find a way to exploit these changes through doctrine, organization, and strategy, to transform war.

A previous period of apparent "strategic pause" illuminates this problem. In the two decades between World War I and World War II, few military thinkers doubted that tanks and aircraft would transform war fundamentally—some spoke even then of a revolution in military affairs. But the French and the British guessed wrong about what the RMA would bring. As a result, the French bought the wrong tanks and developed the wrong organization and doctrine, while the British relied on bombers, ignoring their ground forces almost completely. The Germans taught both what the RMA really was by inflicting catastrophic defeats on them in 1940. The Germans succeeded by combining new technologies with existing forces, which they then shaped by a new doctrine into a devastating weapon. The French and the British were not stupid—they were just wrong. An incorrect image of the RMA had become fixed in the minds of political and military leaders alike.

We are in danger of making a similar mistake now. The National Defense Panel report admits that we are only at the beginning of an RMA, but goes confidently on to predict that information technology will make it possible to "disperse the fog of war." In pursuit of this mythical capability, the panel demands that we slash readiness and manpower to pay the cost of fielding a new Information Age army. It does not say, however, what that army will look like, because it cannot. It is now too early to create the army of 2020; the nature of the current RMA is still unclear. We are in serious danger of repeating the French and British mistake of the interwar years by buying the wrong machinery and relying on the wrong systems. In fact, the defense-panel report inadvertently makes clear that the defense procurement system must be revamped. For any system that requires us to know precisely what war will look like and what systems will be needed in 2020 is bound to fail. If we follow the panel's suggestions, we will sacrifice our ability to deal with current and near-future crises in favor of vague promises of a revolution to come.

The Present Danger

The panel's recommendations rely on another false assumption: that "we are in a relatively secure interlude following an era of intense international confrontation." It is true that we face no threats from any "peer competitor" as we did during the Cold War, and that no state or coalition of states can plausibly menace the survival of the United States as the Soviets once did. It does not follow, however, that we face no threats to our national interests, or that those threats are not powerful and dangerous, as the last month and a half with Iraq has made clear. Above all, it is by no means clear that the world will get safer as time goes on, as the report appears to assume.

The panel points out that current U.S. policy—that of maintaining the capability of engaging in two nearly simultaneous MRCs—has its origins in the need to contain both Iraq and North Korea. Its report concludes that the current force structure has the combat power to fulfill this mission "with the support of allies," a dubious proposition. First, we are unlikely to have the support of allies at the necessary levels to deal with Iraq. Second, even a cursory glance at the American force structure shows that we do not have the capability to fight both North Korea and Iraq at the same time.

But the most dangerous misapprehension in the report is that, if we can manage the Korean situation diplomatically and the Iraq situation with the support of allies, the need for the two-MRC capability will vanish. But the two-MRC strategy is not predicated on a hostile Iraq and a hostile North Korea; it is predicated on the simple fact that a one-MRC capability is, in fact, a no-MRC capability. Presidents cannot be expected to deploy so high a proportion of our armed forces to one conflict that they are left with nothing in case trouble arises elsewhere. In each such crisis, America would be faced with an unacceptable alternative: either fight one conflict with no reserves and no ability to deter or defeat another, opportunistic foe; or, more likely, fight in defense of important interests in important regions. Indeed, the defense-panel report itself unwittingly makes the case for the urgent necessity of maintaining a two-MRC capability: The "two-theater war concept is predicated on the belief that the ability to fight more than one major war at a time deters an enemy from seeking to take advantage of the opportunity to strike while the United States is preoccupied in another theater." If we lose this deterrence capability, we are more likely to fight major wars sooner than 2020.

Shaping the Future

In contemplating the future, the panel considers four likely scenarios of international relations, ranging from the worst, "chronic crisis," to the best, "shaped stability." The report suggests that we "hedge" and ensure that we are prepared for all contingencies by developing and deploying the Information Age armed forces that will do the trick. But that is the wrong way to plan. We should decide that a "chronic crisis" in 2020 is an unacceptable outcome and that "shaped sta-

bility" is essential. The United States is the only power that can shape stability, and this fact needs to drive our defense strategy. Unfortunately, the underlying passivity of the panel's report dictates a course that practically ensures that we will not have the military power—and therefore the will—to shape a reasonably stable world.

To accept the notion that we are in a period of "strategic pause" and security, and that we can "take risks" now in order to field the forces necessary in 2020, is to abdicate America's world responsibilities and to jeopardize our security. If we do not maintain strong enough armed forces even as we modernize, we will not be able to oppose regional aggression in Iraq or elsewhere. We will not be able to restore and maintain stability in critical regions like Bosnia. We will not be able to reassure allies like South Korea and Japan that they are secure. And above all, we will not be able to make clear to would-be aggressors that we will defeat them. The perception of our weakness will itself encourage more dangers. Our allies, fearful for their own security when we no longer seem able to guarantee it, will begin to rearm, triggering fears among their competitors and instability in critical regions.

In time, our continued withdrawal from the international scene may create the very peer competitors that we most fear, in the form either of large national states or of coalitions that oppose our interests. In short, we will fail to shape a stable future, ensuring that our armed forces, whatever they look like in 2020, will see a lot of action.

Technology is important, yes; force modernization is critical. But so is maintaining our national security today and tomorrow—and, even more important, shaping a future in which American forces are unlikely to be tested. As long as budget constraints require that modernization in the future come at the expense of force structure in the present, no "transformation strategy" can work. We need to spend less time hoping for transformations and instead have the courage to think the unthinkable: This may be a period of relative peace and "strategic pause," but, still, we need to spend more money on defense. ♦

Shakespeare Etherized Upon a Table

Helen Vendler Vivisects the Bard

By Margaret Boerner

Helen Vendler is "a woman of power in the ivory tower," according to the *New York Times*—a "kingmaker" and "arguably the most powerful poetry critic in America." A University Professor at Harvard, she has written ten books on poetry; she sits on the Pulitzer Prize board and the grant panel of the Guggenheim Foundation, nominates for the MacArthur "genius" awards, and reviews incessantly for the *New Republic*, the *New York Review of Books*, and the *New Yorker*. Widely applauded as America's greatest "close reader," she has now produced *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, a commentary on each of the 154 sonnets in the 1609 edition of Shakespeare. Complete with a compact disk of the sonnets read by Vendler, it is a work, she tells us, "that those interested in the sonnets, or students of the lyric, or poets hungry for resource may wish to browse in." It is also astoundingly bad.

Certainly anyone with less imposing credentials can hardly have hoped to see so elephantine a "little handbook" into print. The early and pre-publication reviews of the book have been almost fawningly respectful. And that is proof of just how powerful the sixty-four year-old critic has become, for *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* succeeds mostly in making the obvious arcane, elevating the banal, printing up lecture notes, and rabbitting on for nearly seven hundred pages.

The sonnet is not a poetic form native to English. Its Italian inventors in the thirteenth century originally arranged its fourteen lines in two sections, each held together by rhyme: an *octave* (eight lines typically rhymed *abbaabba*) and a *sestet* (six lines typically rhymed *cdecde*). This tight form would later find a home in English (with John Milton's beautiful seventeenth-century sonnets, for instance). But the version used by Shakespeare in the late 1500s has an altogether looser structure: three four-line quatrains and a final tacked-on pair of lines forming the couplet, the whole rhyming *abab, cdcd, efef, gg* (which lets in seven rhymes rather than five, a boon in rhyme-poor English).

Helen Vendler

Chas Fagan

The best way to explain Vendler's attempt to deal with all this may be to point out that what's true in her own university press's behemoth isn't new, and what's new isn't true. When she says, for instance, that "successive quatrains 'correct' each other" but "are not repudiated as *un*true," the first thing that comes to mind is that no serious reader has ever thought otherwise. But Vendler transforms this commonplace into cabalism by attaching to each poem a list of "Key Words" linking the three quatrains and the couplet. And she makes it a marvelous example of the question-begging triumph of critical method over poetic fact when she appends one of her occasional lists of "Defective Key Words," the *missing* words that would have knit together a sonnet if only they had happened to be there.

Similarly, she gives for each poem what she calls the "Couplet Tie"—the words in the body of the sonnet that are repeated in the concluding couplet. So, for example, in the

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much-loved Sonnet 116, *Let me not to the marriage of true minds*, the "Key Word" is *love* and the "Couplet Tie" is made through *love, no, never, ever*. Who could quarrel with this? It's all true—except when it isn't. Particular words *may* link the metaphors in a sonnet, but they cannot hold it together *as a poem*—especially since Shakespeare typically terminates his metaphors, his rhymes, and his sentences all together at the end of each quatrain. The simpler truth is that the *form* Shakespeare employs necessarily delivers his sonnets piecemeal, however magnificent and psychologically penetrating the fragments may be.

Up until now, especially in her reviews, Vendler's prose has been workmanlike. But something seems to have come disconnected when she turned to Shakespeare, for she lards her work with such monstrosities as *contraptionness*, *directed-vector actions*, *shared speech thoughts, discourse category, synonymous performative act,* and *cyclicity*. Some readers will perhaps be unable to distinguish the *necessitarian* from the *necessaritarian*, but all will be glad to learn that the *osmosis* of Shakespeare's *compartments of discourse* is *directed by an invisible discourse-master*.

Vendler discharges this battery of simultaneously obscurantist and self-congratulatory jargon against, for example, Sonnet 116:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no, it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Celebrating these familiar lines, Vendler declares, "the performative speech-act of Platonic fidelity in quasi-marital mental love cannot be qualified; if it is qualified, it does not represent love. . . . The poem entertains, in the couplet, the deconstructive notion of [the couplet's] own self-dissolution." Of the sonnet's *star to every wand'ring bark*, she claims, "But of course the hyperbolic, transcendent, and paradigmatic star is the casualty of the refutational reinscription contained in the third quatrain. The vertically conceived star cannot be reinscribed in the matrix of the metonymic hours and weeks of linear sublunary mortality." (Alas, poor star! is perhaps the only thought possible after digesting that "But of course.")

Helen Vendler
The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets
Harvard University Press, 672 pp., $35

Insofar as one can sort out Vendler's reading of Sonnet 116, it indicts readers for finding in the poem "a definition of true love." We should know such an interpretation is "untrue, and not simply incomplete," because the poem is really a "rebuttal" to "an anterior utterance by another which the sonnet is concerned to repudiate." Ordinary readers "prefer to think of the sonnets as discursive propositional statements rather than as situationally motivated speech-acts, [and thus] remain condemned to a static view of any given sonnet."

Vendler even claims that "No reader, to my knowledge, has seen [Sonnet 116] as a coherent refutation of the extended implied argument of an opponent, and this represents an astonishing history of critical oversight, a paradigmatic case of how reading a poem as though it were an essay, governed by an initial topic sentence, can miss its entire aesthetic dynamic."

The patronizing tone of this is heard more often from pompous graduate students (for whom any "critical oversight" is "astonishing") than from major literary critics. But the tone permeates *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* and—despite a profusion of *pro forma* nods to those less well versed than Vendler—slanders her intended audience.

In defense of ordinary readers, it ought to be pointed out that nearly everyone who's looked at Sonnet 116 has noticed the "implied argument of an opponent" in the poem's use of weddings. The marriage service in the Book of Common Prayer asks the congregation to "allege and declare any *impediment* why they may not be coupled together in matrimony." The line beginning "O no" obviously means that the speaker is countering an opponent's list of impediments to love. Vendler seems not to imagine anyone else can see that the quarrel between speaker and opponent is "extended." Nor does she consider that the speaker *himself* might be "the opponent"—the one who has to answer his own worries about commitment and protests too much: "Let *me* not . . ."

Samuel Johnson once observed that Shakespeare's sonnets can become "entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject." Philip Sidney, John Donne, George Herbert, John Milton, and William Wordsworth all wrote better formed, less slapdash sonnets. But Helen Vendler is intent on turning Shakespeare's careless genius into a fastidious (and esoteric) genius.

One consequence is her compulsive toying with trivia. She's capable of rightly dismissing as "fundamentally uninteresting aural doodles" the repetition of *tew* sounds in the first quatrain of Sonnet 38, *How can my Muse want subject to invent*. But that does not stop her from dwelling, for example, on "an arbitrary pattern in vowel/diphthong plus *n*" in Sonnet 53, *What is your substance, whereof are you made*. Nor does she refrain from fiddling interminably with a cryptanalysis of the letters *h-e-w* in each

line of that beautiful trifle, Sonnet 20, *A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted*—about which even she is forced to conclude lamely, "If this anagrammatic play is in fact intended, the sonnet becomes even more fantastic than its theme suggests."

Her potentially interesting discussion of "receding through panels of time" in Sonnet 30, *When to the sessions of sweet silent thought*, peters out into limp praise of Shakespeare's "enormous power to order intellectually recalcitrant material into lyrically convincing schemes." After all her insistence upon "Couplet Tie," Vendler fails to show that the poem's talk of *things past* does indeed lead to a real consolation in the concluding couplet—and not just the whistling in the dark that it seems: *But if the while I think on thee (dear friend) / All losses are restored, and sorrows end*.

As a pretext for discussing Sonnet 130, *My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun*, Vendler embarrassingly sweats out her own fictitious poem (a mock-up, as it were, of the sonnet to which Shakespeare's is supposedly a "reply-poem"). Why doesn't Vendler just devote the space to a *real* Renaissance love poem? (She does condescend to footnote a specimen but fails to notice how the old five-finger exercise she cites—*Her lips more red than any Coral stone; / Her neck more white, than agèd Swans that moan*—generates what her own creation does not: an odd contentment in the reader, worth Shakespeare's interest.) Vendler calls Sonnet 130 "a defense of the woman as she is," but it is a bagatelle probably better read as a caution to fellow poets more dazzled by poetic tropes than by real women.

There is an episode in David Lodge's hilarious 1984 academic novel *Small World* where those arriving at a conference on literary theory receive "a handout which looked like the blueprint for an electric power station, all arrows, lines, and boxes." Vendler's own byzantine blueprints—her charts of "interconcatenation"—exemplify a clapped-out, 1970s brand of literary criticism known as "Stylistics." Spawned by what T. S. Eliot derided as the "lemon-squeezer school," it is the source of the anagrams, diagrams, and typographical tricks Vendler inflicts upon her readers.

To the excesses of this school, the deathblow was delivered in 1973 by the literary critic Stanley Fish (infamous for his own excesses) when he wrote that it results in interpretations "simultaneously fixed and arbitrary, fixed because [patterns] are specified apart from contexts, and arbitrary because . . . it is in contexts that meaning occurs."

Vendler writes that she does "not regard as literary criticism any set of remarks about a poem which would be equally true of its paraphrasable propositional content." And as a result she has been reluctant to address psychological drama or historical context—or race, class, and gender. For this, her earlier work has received considerable praise from both liberal critics (who see her defending a higher ground of art for art's sake) and conservative critics (who see her dismissing the hip cant of the radical academy and returning to the close-reading "New Criticism" of the 1950s). But in Vendler's unacknowledged version of "Stylistics," what has actually happened is that form has swallowed up function, and the only drama left is the drama of syntax.

In the end, the "close reading" that Helen Vendler undertakes in *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* proves so microscopic that her Shakespeare cannot be distinguished from her Wallace Stevens or her George Herbert or her Jorie Graham or her anyone else.

In the same way that frogs dissected down to their individual cells stop being frogs, she slices poetry down to the meaningless. It's particularly sad to watch such vivisection performed on Shakespeare, and "browsing" through the resulting gore for occasional insights is something no one should have to do. ♦

Six Welders and a Funeral

The Full Monty *Hits the Fast Track*

By Daniel Wattenberg

Remember when Pat Buchanan "discovered" unemployment in New Hampshire during the 1992 presidential campaign? And shocked George Bush and the political press by flirting with 40 percent of the GOP primary vote? Outside shuttered shoe factories in the snow, he suddenly understood the political blind spot among cocooned journalists and free-trade intellectuals—both liberal and conservative—back in Washington. In a governmental capital that manufactures nothing heavier than hot air, many seldom if ever encountered discarded assembly-line workers. The cultural elitism of limousine liberals was matched by the technical elitism of limousine laissez-fairistes.

Being Pat Buchanan, he overstated his case at the time (even some journalists and intellectuals felt job insecurity during that most white-collar of recessions), but he had a point. Too many in Washington, cloistered from the local aftershocks of rapid technological change and capital flight, forget that unemployment, even temporary, is hell.

And they keep forgetting. The biggest surprise of this fall's political season was the failure of President Clinton and Speaker Gingrich to gain congressional approval of "fast-track" trade authority, which would have allowed the president to negotiate trade pacts that cannot be rewritten by Congress. Beltway journalists, pundits, and free-market mandarins underestimated the grass-roots fear and anger provoked by fast track.

Daniel Wattenberg, a contributing editor to George*, last wrote for* The Weekly Standard *about the novelist Anne Rice.*

Coincidentally or not, the biggest surprise of the fall movie season has been *The Full Monty*, a bittersweet tale of British steelworkers left for scrap when their steel mill in England's blighted industrial north shuts down. Those mandarins surprised by the failure of fast track might want to catch up with this word-of-mouth British movie smash. Sometimes it takes an imported movie with a cast speaking barely recognizable English to explain the pockets of dread and distress scattered through their own backyards.

Rich in serious themes handled with the deftest of comic touches, *The Full Monty* has surpassed *Four Weddings and a Funeral* in England as the top-grossing British movie ever—and become a very profitable film. Made for $3.5 million, it has grossed more than $133 million worldwide, $31 million of that in America. And that's before a planned Oscar promotional blitz for the film, directed by Peter Cattaneo and written by Simon Beaufoy. Not bad for six welders and a funeral for British heavy industry.

When the steel mill in deindustrializing Sheffield shuts down, Gaz and his newly unemployed mates learn that losing a job means losing more than a paycheck. Gaz, unable to maintain child-support payments to his ex-wife, faces the loss of visitation rights to his son. His overweight friend Dave becomes impotent.

Plant foreman Gerald exudes pride in his petit-bourgeois superiority to the working class boys on the shop floor. He confronts unemployment with such a stiff upper lip that he is unable to tell his wife the bad news—for six months.

Scrawny, pale, red-headed Lomper is jobless, friendless, and suicidal. In a conversation with Gaz and Dave—characteristic of the movie's feeling for the comedy in despair—he eliminates possible methods of suicide one by one. Jump off a bridge? Nope, afraid of heights. Drowning? Can't swim. Okay, proposes Dave, just have a mate run you over with his car. Haven't got a mate, Lomper objects. "I'd mow you down sooner than look atcha," offers Dave.

In a city where the working-class ideal of masculinity is dying along with the steel industry, the women are flocking to a nightclub offering a travesty of masculinity, a revue of Chippendale-style male strippers. At first, Gaz is contemptuous of the spectacle: "Some poof gettin' his kit off." Then he learns the revue's nightly take is ten thousand pounds. Soon he is assembling his own chorus line of male strippers out of Sheffield's reserve army of the unemployed.

One problem: Gaz and his friends aren't built like Chippendale dancers. Okay, two problems: They can't dance either—except for the man named Horse, who knows the Funky Chicken but has a "dodgy hip." If they want to top the sculpted pros, they'll have to go "the full monty" (British for "the whole nine yards"). In other words, they will have to bare all—caboodle and kit too. In a way, they have learned Adam Smith's secret of comparative advantage. (While there are some rear-view shots of male caboodle, this is not *Boogie Nights*; the kits are left to the imagination.)

Make no mistake: the movie's politics are leftish and luddite, straight out of Britain's Labour party before Tony Blair. Robert Carlyle, who stars as Gaz, is a former union organizer attracted to the role by the film's anti-Thatcherism. The politics and theme of *The Full Monty* are similar to those in the American *Roger & Me*, Michael Moore's 1989 documentary about the effects of closing a General Motors plant in Flint, Michigan.

Tom Hilton / Twentieth Century Fox

Unemployed Brits rehearse in The Full Monty.

In spirit, however, the two are worlds apart. The American film was maliciously satirical—not just toward the board-room mercenaries who closed the plant, but toward the parochial boosterism and polyester values of a Midwest factory town. The British film is gentle, genial, empathic. The story-telling techniques of *Roger & Me*—the video stalking of GM chairman Roger Smith and Moore's sardonic voice-over—were self-infatuated; the documentary's real star was Michael Moore's ideological self-love. The camera is self-effacing in *The Full Monty*, and the reflexive protectionism built into the fictional story's premise quickly recedes in favor of quirky, mostly believable character development.

The film's concerns are not limited to class politics. Its subordinate themes revolve around gender politics, and there is some table-turning sexual humor. In the course of conditioning for their big night, for example, the men pass around a girlie magazine. When Lomper naively disparages one girlie's breast size, Dave has an alarming thought. Objectification cuts both ways, and they're about to strip in public. "What if four hundred women say, 'That one's fat, that one's old, and that one's a pigeon-chested tosser?'" Funny in context, if a little predictably feminist.

But the movie's allegiances are not always so predictable. Screenwriter Beaufoy seems to have figured out that class politics and cultural politics sometimes clash: A class liberal can be a cultural conservative. In fact, a big question posed by the movie is the one that feminism never answers: What happens to men, especially blue-collar men, in a postindustrial era of sexual equality in the workplace? Confronted with the prospect of economic obsolescence and social obsolescence at the same time, they are in for some uncomfortable self-examination at a minimum. What is their function in the family, exactly? Home-security guards? On-site, residential maintenance men? Stud animals?

Before I am lynched with an Adam Smith necktie, let me stipulate that the economic benefits of free trade in expanding exports and lower prices to consumers outweigh the costs. We owe everything from low inflation to energy-efficient American cars in some part to lively international economic competition.

But the politics of free trade are counterintuitive: Its benefits are diffuse, while its costs are highly concentrated and painful. A constituent who has lost his job harvesting flowers to duty-free Colombian competition is apt to punish a congressman who has voted for a free-trade mea-

sure. But a constituent who is paying slightly less for flowers imported from Colombia isn't even likely to notice, much less to say thank you to a free-trader on election day with flowers—or a vote.

The chattering class, especially its laissez-faire section, is liable to underestimate this emotional discrepancy between the winners and losers in international economic competition. Backbenchers in the House of Representatives who read their constituent mail and run for reelection every two years are finely attuned to it, and that's part of the reason fast track will have to wait till next year.

The Full Monty is a timely reminder of how tough economic change is on those caught unprepared. Before trying for fast track again, it wouldn't hurt the cause if free traders adjusted their rhetoric to accommodate some benevolent acknowledgment of those caught flat-footed by economic change. It is possible to cheer for the creativity of capitalism without standing aloof from its destructive side-effects.

Of course, aloofness is only one expression of elitism. Condescension is another. Pat Buchanan and other protectionists should not condescend to the victims of capitalist change: Even victims can improvise, adapt, and overcome—and go the full monty with senses of humor intact. ♦

B&A

Gospel of the Saucepan

Julia Child's Conversion of America

By Pia Nordlinger

Long before pesto came to America—even before penne and sun-dried tomatoes—an odd-looking woman with the body of a valkyrie and the voice of a pixie turned American cooking upside-down. Extolling French cuisine for the common cook, she replaced the perception of eating as nourishment and cooking as punishment with the idea that food exists mainly for enjoyment. Watching the mad glint invariably in her eye and the smudge of flour usually on her nose, Americans found her utterly captivating. And they were absolutely right to.

Michael P. McLaughlin

Pia Nordlinger is a reporter for The Weekly Standard.

Julia Child spent her first thirty-six years as a food philistine and every year thereafter as a gastronomic missionary. Armed only with her faith in good food, she set out to save Americans from their culinary sloth and dining depravity. Beginning in 1961 with her evangelical *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, her successful crusade to improve the American palate moved to television with *The French Chef* in 1963 and continues to this day.

One of Child's most devoted admirers, Noël Riley Fitch, has written a new biography that seeks to account for the triumph of the Cult of Julia. In her title, at least, Fitch draws near the answer: Julia Child did indeed have an *Appetite for Life*. But the biographer gets lost in the relentless cataloguing of details and drowns the simple explanation of Child's appeal.

The truth is that America took to Child first of all because she was messy and made mistakes. "I was infatuated with her," her husband's niece remembers from their first meeting. "She was the kind of person who would drop things." She certainly possessed a zeal for conversion that Americans typically find unappetizing. But the country accepted Child as its teacher because her humor and awkward physical presence seemed somehow to offset her near-religious intensity. Her simultaneously laughing and sincere approach to the world's most highbrow cuisine has made her a permanent American icon.

Born in California in 1912, Julia McWilliams had an early interest in food that extended only to the quantities necessary to fuel her unflagging energy and her growth to a towering adult height of six feet, two inches.

From her wealthy family's California cooks, her experience of New England food at Smith College, and her haunting of New York's lunch counters after college, she absorbed with gusto the standard American fare of the day: hardy, boiled, and bland.

But then she met Paul Child in China during World War II. Both found Army food unsatisfying—Julia perpetually hungry and Paul perpetually disgusted—and they hunted out the best local cuisines. Something of an artist, an intellectual, and an epicure, Paul introduced his future wife to fine food, wine, and conversation. Fitch hints that Julia would have learned on her own, but that's not quite right: It was Paul, a much more worldly person, who channelled Julia's energetic love of all life into a relish for the good life.

Recognizing that "If I was going to catch him, I would have to learn to cook," she enrolled in a cooking class upon her return home. It did not

prove a promising first step toward greatness: An attempt at Béarnaise sauce congealed into a mass of lard at the table and an unpunctured duck exploded in the oven.

But despite her only minor advances in cooking, she and Paul were married in 1946. Her misadventures in the kitchen continued: She describes her try at broiled chicken, "I put it in the oven for twenty minutes, went out, came back, and it was burned; I needed better directions." But then Paul received a diplomatic appointment to France, and of her first French meal—oysters *portugaises* and sole *meunière*—she later declared, "The whole experience was an opening up of the soul and spirit for me. I was hooked, and for life, as it turned out."

Enrolling in culinary classes, Child threw herself into cooking—so much so that Paul called himself a Cordon Bleu widower and her devotion made her a favorite student of chef Max Bugnard, himself the pupil of the famed chef Auguste Escoffier.

After graduation, she developed a working friendship with two French women, Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle. Their first joint project was a school: *l'Ecole des Trois Gourmandes*. Teaching American embassy wives the basics of French cooking, the courses were directed to the "servantless cook" who had to prepare a meal and entertain on the same evening (a concern Child would maintain in all her later work). In 1952, Beck and Bertholle published *What's Cuisine in France*, a small American edition that achieved little notice. When they attempted a larger work, their publisher suggested that they use an American collaborator. The legend of Julia Child was about to begin.

It took eight years for Child to rework for Americans the recipes Beck and Bertholle provided. In her passion to share her new knowledge, Child decided that this book—unlike earlier compendiums—would explain everything to readers who knew nothing about French cooking. Her recipe for *cassoulet*, for instance, runs six pages while the same dish in Escoffier's traditional French cookbook is only half a page. Insisting that it "must be Frenchy French, though practical for the U.S.," Child sent a typed copy of every recipe to three friends in America for local testing.

The instructions for *œufs brouillés* (otherwise known as scrambled eggs) is a perfect example of the attention given to the cooking—and includes one of the most helpful sentences ever to appear in a cookbook: "Nothing will seem to happen for two to three minutes."

When *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* at last appeared in 1961, it was not without critics. Some reviewers objected to the Americanizing of French classics. The *New Yorker* denounced the use of canned bouillon and salmon. Craig Claiborne, food critic of the *New York Times*, lamented the absence of recipes for puff pastry and croissants.

Noël Riley Fitch
Appetite for Life
The Biography of Julia Child
Doubleday, 569 pp., $25.95

But overwhelmingly the book won lavish praise. Claiborne went on to claim that the "comprehensive, laudable, and monumental work . . . will probably remain as the definitive work for nonprofessionals." The highbrow food writer James Beard declared, "I only wish that I had written it myself." Child was invited to the *Today Show* and to Bloomingdale's to give demonstrations. With Beck, she toured the country publicizing their work and holding classes.

One cause of the book's success in 1961 is difficult to recover in 1997. It's possible to overstate the universal badness of American food before Julia Child, but there were no doubt some dark deeds done in the name of cookery. Fitch observes, "The *Ladies Home Journal* advertised: 'Learn to cook in five meals!'—meaning learn to open tins, pudding boxes, and frozen vegetables." *The Boston Cooking School Cookbook*, with its famous Jell-O molds, was the most influential cookbook until 1931, when *The Joy of Cooking* made a small step forward. Poppy Cannon, editor of *House Beautiful* and author of *The Can Opener Cookbook*, once instructed CBS viewers to make vichyssoise from frozen mashed potatoes, one leek, and a can of Campbell's Cream of Chicken soup.

Child, however, was hardly unique in decrying frozen dinners. In 1961, the country watched agog as Jacqueline Kennedy ensconced a French chef in the White House. Dining became more interesting when Claiborne began his weekly restaurant reviews and wrote *The New York Times Cookbook*. Peg Bracken's *The I Hate to Cook Book* gave way to *The I Love to Cook Book*. In November 1962, *Life* magazine ran an issue wholly dedicated to food. Americans were traveling abroad and eating out more often.

The real cause of the unique success of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* lies rather in the fact that Julia Child proved an astonishingly good writer—her elegant prose the perfect vehicle for her endlessly complete instructions. The recipe for soufflés takes a page just to explain how to beat egg whites by hand: "The glory and lightness of French soufflés are largely a matter of how voluminously stiff the egg whites have been beaten and how nicely they have been incorporated into the soufflé base. Both beating and folding are perfectly simple operations when you know the reasons behind the directions."

A few months after the book's initial promotion, Child was invited to an interview on a Boston educational-television program. "It was my idea to bring on the whisk and the bowl and hot plate," she recalls. "Educational television was just talking

heads, and I didn't know what we could talk about for that long, so I brought the eggs." Calls and letters poured into the studio, and in 1963 the Cult of Julia began when *The French Chef*—the name chosen because it fit local television listings—hit the airwaves.

On television, as Fitch tiresomely reminds the reader, Child's six-foot-two frame seemed incommensurate with her subject. The odd picture she made seemed even odder when paired with the high-pitched, slightly nasal, almost French lilt of her voice. But Child's imperfections worked in her favor. She could become excited, almost hysterical, in the process of teaching, but her burning desire to instruct came across as warm encouragement—the eccentric charm of someone who wanted to make everyone love cooking as much as she did.

In one now-famous episode, she flipped a potato pancake out of the pan and told the audience, "Remember, you are alone in the kitchen and no one can see you!" In another, a loud bell rang in the studio as someone needed to use the freight elevator. Since the show could not be edited, Child said to the camera, "That must be the plumber. About time he got here. Well, he knows where to go."

The French Chef was not the first television cooking show, but it was the first to hold the attention of the general public. Some people watched for cooking advice, some watched for fun (the mail suggested that small children and non-cooking men were among the viewers). She drew Ivy League wives and Greenwich Village painters—some of whom, Fitch reports, initially thought the show a parody.

Laboring with Simone Beck to produce *Mastering the Art of French Cooking II*, Child stopped filming in 1966, only to return from 1970 to 1973. Closing the program after more than two hundred episodes, Child went on to create over the next twenty years six further television series, most of them accompanied by cookbooks compiling the recipes and techniques demonstrated on air. Filled with dazzling color pictures and indulging trendier tastes, the books are considerably less significant productions than either volume of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*.

Child's viewers and their affection, however, have only expanded as the years have gone by. In 1980 she moved to ABC's "Good Morning America" for a wider audience than PBS could provide. A year later she helped found the American Institute of Wine and Food. In 1982, she stopped writing her column for *McCalls* in order to became the food editor of *Parade*. Her eightieth birthday, in 1992, saw lavish celebrations in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles. Harvard University, Child's neighbor of thirty-two years, awarded her an honorary degree in 1993, and she was featured at the Smithsonian's "Gala Celebration" in 1995.

Julia Child once said that all she did was "take the la-dee-dah out of sauces." But in doing so she changed more than she could have imagined. She wrote in the foreward to a biography of James Beard that during his lifetime "the American people were transformed from dutiful students of 'home economics' to true aficionados of food and wine." She graciously failed to mention that the change took place during her lifetime as well—and that she is largely responsible for it. ♦

BCA

Parmet's Last Gentleman

Wrong on Reagan, Right on Bush

By Fred Barnes

This is the first comprehensive biography of President George Bush by a respected historian, and it's pretty good. Also, pretty bland. Given the subject, what else would you expect? We do learn an awful lot about Bush, however, including many things I didn't know after having covered Bush's national political career rather extensively. "Pets were very important to George and Barbara," according to author Herbert Parmet, professor emeritus of history at City University of New York. Bush frequently got massages at the White House, with nurses concentrating on chronic tightness in his shoulders and neck. I'm not poking fun at this trivia, only pointing out how encyclopedic Parmet's biography really is. There are big revelations too, such as how skeptical Bush truly was about seeking reelection in 1992. His personal diary, to which Bush gave Parmet access, makes that clear, as well as Bush's almost instant qualms after picking Dan Quayle as his running mate.

Herbert S. Parmet
George Bush
The Life of a Lone Star Yankee
Scribner, 576 pp., $32.50

What's amazing about Parmet is that he actually seems soft on Bush. He doesn't have a fresh theory about Bush's life or presidency, accepting the conventional view of Bush as a moderately conservative patrician who rose spectacularly to the occasion in Desert Storm. And Parmet doesn't credit Bush with great accomplishments, aside from winning the

Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard.

Gulf War. But he does portray Bush as a highly competent, sometimes wise leader who did his best while confronted with two huge and insurmountable problems. One was having to please Republican right-wingers while getting along with a liberal Democratic Congress. The other was cleaning up after what Parmet casts as the failed presidency of Ronald Reagan.

Parmet's dislike of Reagan is stronger than his sympathy for Bush. He goes out of his way to trash Reagan and the folks who supported him, and he does so unconvincingly. Reaganites are "déclassé fanatics, ideologues, crude, even vicious and bigoted." Worse, they're raving nativists. George and Barbara Bush, Parmet writes, regard them as "extremists who were intolerant of opposition, a culture to be suffered and, if possible, to be overcome." As for Reagan, Parmet buys the line popular among liberals and journalists in the 1980s but now being revised, even among them: Reagan was a boob, manipulated by his staff, who didn't restore economic health to America. After Reagan's "injudicious" tax cuts in 1981, "Americans lived happily with the illusion of a healthy economy," Parmet says.

So Bush inherited a very tough economic situation, at least as Parmet sees it. And raising taxes was unavoidable in 1990. "What with the budget impasse in facing mandatory spending cuts under the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings cap, which could further weaken an already uncertain economy, Bush knew he had little choice," Parmet writes. Those who said otherwise, like Newt Gingrich, were only helping his enemies, Bush confided in his diary.

Did Bush really have no choice but to break his pledge not to raise taxes? Of course he had a choice, just as he had one when confronted by Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait. It wasn't mandatory that Bush deploy half a million American troops in the Persian Gulf and oust Saddam. Bush chose to do that, and carried it off brilliantly. Parmet makes exactly this point: It was Bush's call. Yes, he left reporters with the mistaken impression he was unsure about what to do and was stiffened in his resolve by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. But he didn't need stiffening, Parmet says, since he'd decided within days, maybe hours, of Saddam's invasion that the United States would have to respond militarily. Then he methodically put together a coalition to back his decision. It doesn't occur to Parmet, but should have, that Bush had the option of doing something similar on the economy: deciding against a tax hike and organizing a coalition behind him.

Parmet is worth reading despite his wrongheadedness about Reagan and Bushonomics. His scoop, the Bush diary, clicks in as Bush is preparing to run for president in 1988. (Starting in late 1986, Bush spent five to ten minutes each evening dictating to the diary.) Bush is not very introspective or reflective, but his musings are often revealing without being explosive. Perhaps Parmet was not given full access to the diary. To acquaintances, Bush has read aloud portions in which he's biting in his assessment of colleagues, appointees, and friends like James Baker, his secretary of state. Little of this appears in Parmet's book. But we do find that Bush loathed the press even more than he let on publicly ("sniping, carping, bitching . . . the newsboys of the world"), feared Mikhail Gorbachev's demise would be a world disaster, and didn't like GOP Senator Al D'Amato of New York.

My favorite diary jotting is from March 13, 1991. Bush was riding high, basking in the success of Desert Storm. Yet he felt victimized by "the cynical liberalism" of the Washington press corps. He means liberals who've lost faith in liberalism but still loathe conservatism, even in mild Bushian forms. Bush got that right. ♦

Chief of Staff Erskine Bowles set the new tone at a meeting in his office last month when he admonished presidential adviser Sidney Blumenthal and other aides for chatting during the planning session on the race initiative. "If you don't have anything to contribute to this meeting, get the hell out," Mr. Bowles scolded. Two aides left, but later returned.

—*The Wall Street Journal*, December 3, 1997

Parody

PROGRESS REPORT

TO: Mr. and Mrs. Blumenthal

FROM: Bill Clinton, President

RE: Your son's deportment at White House meetings

COMMENTS:

During our last parent/president meeting, I said we would keep you informed about Sidney's behavior. I am sorry to report that we have seen no improvement. After the Donna Shalala-custodial closet incident, I sent Sidney off to the Vice President's office for a stern talking to. Sidney was warned that one more episode like that and he would have to leave the White House and become editor of the New Republic. His behavior improved for a few days, but recently there has been deterioration. He continues to rack up unexcused absences from the 7:30 senior staff planning sessions, he loudly chews gum at domestic policy meetings but does not have enough to share with the whole Cabinet, and he dissected the lizard the Riady family gave to me as a special gift. He is exerting negative influence on some of the younger and unpolished members of the administration, such as the Secretary for Housing and Urban Development.

Perhaps you read that Sidney was asked to leave a planning session for my race initiative. As you know, racism is a scar that mars the history of this great nation and is an issue that allows me to appear in public and do my chin thing. We cannot afford to have our strategy sessions disrupted by a few troublemakers who want to spend their time gossiping about Tina Brown's calves. We all like Sidney. He has been a member of this administration—whether on our payroll or not—since 1992. And we don't want to have to take drastic measures. We would hate to see Sidney join Webb Hubbell, David Watkins, Susan McDougal, Lani Guinier, and the literally thousands of others who have been sacrificed to preserve our political viability. But we will do what we have to do.

To head off that eventuality, we suggest you send Sidney to a specialist who might be able to locate some syndrome or something that would qualify Sidney for protection under the Americans with Disabilities Act. At a minimum, Hillary suggests that Sidney take up smoking, which can have such a calming effect. We will also continue to work with you to help Sidney grow into a productive member of this administration.