the weekly
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GOOD ART... AND BAD

DAVID GELERNTER ON TITIAN

ANDREW FERGUSON ON THE NATIONAL GALLERY

ROGER KIMBALL ON CLEMENT GREENBERG

the weekly Standard

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 35 • MAY 18, 1998

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Jonathan Broder's Plagiarism of the Week

Last week in these pages, Philip Terzian summarized the plagiaristic career of *Salon* magazine's Jonathan Broder, an ardent exponent of the view that Bill and Hillary Clinton's problems are the work of a vast right-wing conspiracy. Terzian pointed out that Broder, a serial plagiarist, really shouldn't be calling other journalists dishonest, and shouldn't be getting such an easy ride in the mainstream media.

Now Daniel Pipes, editor of the *Middle East Quarterly* and an occasional contributor to The Weekly Standard, offers further documentation of Broder's own dishonesty. Writes Pipes: "While reading an article on Syria by a reporter named Nolan Strong in the Dec. 12, 1991, issue of the *Jerusalem Report*, I found many pieces of information lifted from my recently published book, *Damascus Courts the West: Syrian Politics, 1989-91* (Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1991), but no mention of my book. I wrote the *Jerusalem Report* to complain and shortly after got a call from none other than Mr. Jonathan Broder, during the course of which he explained that he was 'Nolan Strong' and then offered an excuse about being rushed by a deadline and somehow omitting to credit my study. Mr. Broder, in other words, doesn't just plagiarize in his own name but does so pseudonymously as well."

Pretty impressive. We sense a potential new feature here. If you have been a victim of Jonathan Broder, either eponymously or pseudonymously, please send details to *I Was Plagiarized by Jonathan Broder*, c/o The Scrapbook, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036. For new examples of Broder's industriousness, The Scrapbook promises to come up with a suitable prize—probably something stolen from *Salon*.

Joe Biden, Historian

And while we're on the subject: The Scrapbook's favorite reformed plagiarizer in the U.S. Senate, Delaware's Joe "Don't Make Any More Neil Kinnock Jokes, Please" Biden, made the most confusing case possible for a good cause, NATO expansion. Said Biden, portentously: "World War I, World War II . . . By the way, for those wars to get to France, they had to roll into Poland first on the way." Dan Kennedy of the *Boston Phoenix* gave Biden a well-deserved lesson in history and geography on this one, for which The Scrapbook, for obvious reasons, hastens to give Mr. Kennedy full credit.

Still Vicious

The Scrapbook is really, really pleased to report that Special Mudslinger to the President Sidney Blumenthal just had a very bad PR week. Extended excerpts from his recent speech at Harvard are circulating around Washington (courtesy in part of last week's Weekly Standard editorial). Blumenthal issued a truly extraordinary slur in the speech against Kenneth Starr's deputy, Hickman Ewing. A "religious fanatic," the ill-bred Blumenthal called him.

This presented a problem first for White House press secretary Mike McCurry. Are presidential aides allowed to say things like that, a reporter wondered at one of McCurry's daily briefings? Honest Mike was not prepared for such a trick question. As a general rule, McCurry responded, the president doesn't think it appropriate to cast "dispersions" on anyone's faith. But look, he went on, haplessly: No one at the White House is sufficiently familiar with Hickman Ewing's faith to judge whether this particular dispersion was accurate or not.

In other words, maybe he is a fanatic. Better luck next time, Mike.

Meanwhile, Family Research Council president Gary Bauer has fired off a letter to the president demanding that he fire Blumenthal immediately. Sid's remarks about Ewing were "an impermissible act of religious bigotry," Bauer wrote.

Still in the hopper: a similar letter, already signed by more than 50 members of the House—including speaker Newt Gingrich.

Of course, Bill Clinton would never ditch a friend like Sid Blumenthal over a mere political controversy, would he? The Scrapbook isn't sure. We're going to call Lani Guinier and see what she thinks.

Scrapbook

Marxman

We may no longer be able to praise the *Communist Manifesto* for its accuracy in predicting the end of capitalism. We may no longer be able to laud the incendiary tract for its power to incite the proletarian masses to throw off their chains and rise up against the bourgeoisie. But Sunday before last in the *New York Times*, in his "commemorative salute" on the 150th anniversary of the book's publication, Columbia University professor Steven Marcus found one last reason to praise Marx's writing. The *Communist Manifesto*, it turns out, is an astonishing work of art: "an extraordinary piece of writing, an enduring masterpiece that immediately catches up readers in its transpersonal force and sweep. The compressed formulations of its compacted paragraphs survive as aphorisms far beyond their original context."

Oh, the *Manifesto*—as Marcus admits—may have "prematurely announced" the doom of the West, and it may have led to the slaughter of millions. But what is that compared with the fact that it "possesses a structural complexity and a denseness of thematic play that we ordinarily associate with great works of the literary imagination"?

Announcing in its opening sentences that "a specter is haunting Europe—the specter of communism," the *Manifesto*-as-novel seems to be a Gothic tale. Its metaphors quickly segue, however, first to the world of fairy tales, then to the Arabian nights, and at last—by a "generative fecundity"—to intimations of "Goethe's Faust, Byron's Manfred, Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, and a host of other modern and mythological dramatizations."

To the untrained reader of great fiction, this looks like a mess, but for a critic of Marcus's stature, the disorganization proves how profoundly organized the *Manifesto* actually is: "Such trains of metaphoric figures and images are part of the dense local entwinements that constitute the microstructure of the *Manifesto*'s linguistic fabric and argument."

Ah, the microstructure! That would be the sort of thing one spots after a few microbrews. Then again, Marcus may be on to something. The artistry of the Communists has long been underappreciated. It may have led to the Great Hunger and the Cultural Revolution, but what poetry there is in Chairman Mao's Little Red Book! It may have led to murder and torture, but what drama there is in Lenin's writing! And the gulag? It seems almost churlish to object to Stalin's inspired performance art.

Only in California

A riveting clipping from the April 23 *Fresno Bee*: A marriage-counseling session in that city's St. James Episcopal Cathedral turned into a shootout between husband and wife, both of whom, it turned out, had armed themselves before therapy. Luckily, neither of them was a very good shot. The two ended up in the hospital in fair condition. The Rev. Bud Searcy caught The Scrapbook's eye with this original bit of theology: "It's a good thing [the husband] was drinking because he could have hit her more." Even better was the anonymous friend of the couple, who must be auditioning for *Jerry Springer*: "I know [the wife] loves him. I think she was trying to help him."

Casual

Herd Instinct

Okay, maybe in some sense they deserve what they get, but I still can't help feeling sorry for the baby boomers. They're like a gigantic herd of wildebeests starving to death because their own hooves have trampled all the grass.

When they decided en masse sometime around 1982 that they had to buy a house *that minute*, they triggered one of the greatest real-estate inflations in history—only to discover, when the time came to sell and trade up eight years later, that they had created one of the greatest buyer's markets in history for the baby busters who followed them. Now they're doing it again, frantically plowing all their money into stocks, bidding up share prices in a buying frenzy that can only be compared to—well, to the housing frenzy of the 1980s. Somebody ought to ask all those old Woodstockians, Has it never occurred to you that your 50 million fellow boomers will be liquidating their portfolios to finance their retirement at exactly the same time you will?

Thirty years ago, the boomers' parents were demanding, If you are such individualists, why do you all listen to the same music, wear the same pants, and affect the same haircut? Today, those same individualists are all buying the same stocks at the same moment. And brute demographics tell us that just as the price of coonskin hats, chardonnay, sport-utility vehicles, and now Viagra shot up when the boomers decided they wanted those things, so the stock market will rise as long as the boomers have worked themselves into hysteria about saving for their old age. Alas, brute demographics also tell us that sometime around 2010, America will enter into the most prolonged bear market in history, as geezer boomers unload the shares they bought in the 1980s and 1990s.

Call it nemesis. The boomers unleashed the sexual revolution, only to find themselves at the fertility clinic 25 years later. They brought the drug culture of the Beats to suburban shopping malls, only to find their own kids toking at 12. They once pored over the writings of Frantz Fanon and Herbert Marcuse for insight into the instability and injustice of capitalism. Now they are betting their life savings that the one part of capitalism exempt from instability and injustice is the New York Stock Exchange. Good luck!

> I BOUGHT THOSE SHARES WITH THE SAME MISGIVING WITH WHICH I SPENT AN ENTIRE WEEK'S ALLOWANCE ON AN ELTON JOHN LP IN 1974.

Don't misunderstand: I'm part of this trend. I'm a boomer myself, albeit one born on the boom's unfashionable post-1958 back slope. Nor am I some fearless investment contrarian. I too am busily buying overpriced stocks for my retirement plan, including some Merck at 30 times earnings as recently as last month. I bought those shares with the same misgiving with which I spent an entire week's allowance on an Elton John LP in 1974: a dark internal suspicion that peer pressure had just manipulated me into doing something incredibly foolish.

Who wants to miss out on this fantastic market rally, no matter how irrational one suspects it is? But the very same herd panic that has stampeded the boomers into stocks will, one day, stampede them all out again. How to avoid being trampled by the boomers? Well, as Lyndon Johnson discovered, there are just too damn many of them to fight. Much wiser to do what Dr. Spock suggested and humor them: Anticipate where they are going and get there first.

If I were cleverer about these things, I'd buy real estate in the spots to which the boomers will want to retire—Idaho, maybe, or British Columbia. (One thing we know: It won't be Florida. At age 70, the boomers will still be rebelling against their parents.) I'd write a mass-market paperback about how rude and disrespectful teenagers are these days, and I'd start planning another one, to come out in about 15 years, saying that, just as the time had come in the 1960s to talk frankly about sex, so the time has come in the 2010s to talk frankly about incontinence. I'd buy myself a partnership in a funeral home.

As it happens, I am not at all clever about these things, and so I will probably just go on buying Merck at ever-rising multiples. And when the day comes that I'm selling shares for a fraction of the price I paid for them, I'll do my best to think philosophically about the disaster. After wrecking things far more precious and seemingly much more permanent, how on earth could the boomers be expected to spare my little portfolio?

David Frum

Is Clinton Doomed?

I enjoyed William Kristol's prophetic piece, "Clinton's Fate" (May 4). After all, I love fiction. I especially enjoyed Kristol's claim that when the American public is "forced to face the facts" about our president "they will turn on him. They will realize that the president's shameless lying has been an attempt to corrupt the entire country by making it complicit, by acquiescence, in his own corruption."

Please! The public knows already. The facts are plain and their acquiescence is obvious. And it still doesn't matter. They don't care.

Let me offer a different, more realistic scenario regarding Clinton's future. Kenneth Starr will follow all of the recommended steps that Kristol laid out in his fantasy. He'll file his report with Congress and he'll get his indictments. There will be hearings and trials and charges.

To any thinking person, the evidence he will offer will be completely damning of our president. The mainstream media, instead of realizing that Bill Clinton is not worth defending, will consolidate their forces and will be full-scale Clinton apologists. And any Republican who suddenly develops a spine and speaks out against Clinton or his tactics will be vilified. In other words, what we have been experiencing so far will go on and on and on. And the American people still won't care.

Face it, people. We're stuck with this degenerate in the Oval Office until the 2000 election. Our only hope is that our fellow Americans will learn from the ugly saga that will unfold from Starr's investigation and not repeat their voting mistakes in the future. Tell me: Have they given us any reason for hope?

Bob Chichester
Biloxi, MS

I think William Kristol underestimates the dynamic that explains the staying power of Clinton and the Democratic Left, which remains the most potent force in American politics.

Kristol says that once the whole truth comes out about the Lewinsky case and the subsequent cover-up, the president will get his deserved comeup-

Correspondence

pance at last. Yet what is it that we don't already know about Bill Clinton? And what have a plethora of investigations really accomplished? Prior to the 1994 congressional elections, many were saying, "Wait until after the election. If the Republicans gain control of Congress, those Clintons will finally have to face the music." Well, the hour has come and gone and the man and his conniving wife are still with us.

I hope Kristol is right about Clinton's fate. Otherwise, I may have to leave California and go back to New Hampshire in order to seek political asylum.

GENE WRIGHT
LAGUNA NIGUEL, CA

William Kristol seriously underestimates the character and accomplishments of Chief Inspector Jacques Clouseau, comparing him unfavorably to Victor Hugo's Inspector Javert, who "never gave up and did, after a fashion, get his man."

Not only did Clouseau never give up, but he *always* got his man, in part because the criminals he pursued were almost as ridiculous as he was. So our first trailer-park-trash president and Clouseau would go well together. They were made for each other, and Clinton deserves no better.

RICHARD BRASHARES
GLENSIDE, PA

Demoting Highways

Fred Barnes needs a history lesson about the Embarcadero Freeway ("In Praise of Highways," April 27).

In the early 1950s, Caspar Weinberger, the California state assemblyman from northeast San Francisco, opposed construction of the Embarcadero Freeway. He did this even though the road would be paid for by the federal and state governments, with no local costs.

He opposed it because he believed it would lower property values. Forty years later he was proven right.

After the earthquake-damaged freeway was removed, nearby property values jumped over 300 percent. San Francisco environmentalists and counterculture types celebrated the road's removal, but they should know that it was conservative Cap Weinberger who understood before anyone else the folly of the Embarcadero Freeway.

Highway booster Fred Barnes should give Cap a call.

MAYOR JOHN O. NORQUIST
MILWAUKEE, WI

A Series of Firsts

I am afraid Noemie Emery erred in suggesting that Theodore Roosevelt "named Jews to the Supreme Court" ("The Fall of the Party of Conscience," May 4). Woodrow Wilson named the first Jew to the Supreme Court, Louis Brandeis, and no president has named "Jews" to the high court. I believe Emery intended to say that T.R. was, with the appointment of Oscar Straus as first Secretary of Commerce and Labor, the first president to put a Jew in the cabinet. That appointment led to the wonderful, perhaps apocryphal, story of how T.R. publicly proclaimed that he was not naming Straus because he was Jewish, but because he was the best man for the job. T.R. then called on an informal adviser, financier Jacob Schiff, to confirm this. Schiff allegedly said something like, "That's right, Mr. President. You said to me, 'Jake, who's the best Jew I can appoint Secretary of Commerce?'"

PAUL H. BLACKMAN
ARLINGTON, VA

Groping for Power

Noemie Emery exquisitely defined the unholy alliance feminist leaders form with powerful, self-centered politicians who can advance their agenda ("The Four Swordsmen of the Feminist Apocalypse," March 30). The feminists sacrifice their ideals and their integrity for power, and the politicians share their power for the illusory glow of idealism and respectability.

Power in a free society is important in that it provides the energy necessary for constructive change. But those who wield power are easily corrupted when not constrained by a strong sense of character.

Parent/child, teacher/student, president/intern are all relationships of power and dependency. When these connections foster trust and respect, they perform a vital function. They provide a steppingstone to maturity and acceptance of one's responsibility to others. But when those who possess much power and little character damage those they are sworn to help, they bring dishonor to themselves and to those who believe in them.

SELWYN MILLS
GREAT NECK, NY

Teutons Under Every Bed

My compliments to David Frum for his disturbing review of contemporary trends in world history ("As the World Turns," April 27). I suspect, however, that his assessment of the motives of academic Europhobes—that they just want something to belong to and something to hate—was written tongue-in-cheek.

The "project" of detaching the triumph of the West from the emergence of the liberal political economy is merely the most recently opened front in the long-running war between liberalism and authoritarianism, and in our century between liberalism and socialism. Academicians have since won great victories for authoritarianism and socialism on the epistemological and ethical fronts through the propagation, from generation to generation, of German idealism, existentialism, and poststructuralism. These intellectual programs, when they do not convert their students to socialism outright, at least tend to spoil them for liberalism. The assault on history described by Frum is little more than a mopping up.

WILLIAM CARPENTER
ST. PAUL, MN

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the weekly Standard

The Presidency Is Vacant

It is worth recalling, at this troubled point in our political history, why we have a president in the first place. There are many reasons; ours is a sophisticated constitutional design. But the simplest reason is among the most important: The president exists to be respected.

There must be "energy in the Executive," in Hamilton's famous words from Federalist No. 70. "A feeble Executive implies a feeble execution of government," and a vigorous executive implies power vested "in a single hand." But in a democracy, executive power is ultimately an expression of popular will. And so, for the president's single-handed authority to remain energetic and secure, the people must retain confidence that he is exercising it safely and honorably. Which is another advantage to having a solitary chief executive—a man who, as Hamilton put it, "from the very circumstance of his being alone, will be more narrowly watched and more readily suspected."

The president, in other words, is the necessary leader. And to protect his necessary leadership, he must earn the public trust and esteem that comes from constant exposure and inspection. He must be answerable, *available*. Especially when, Federalist 70 suggests, some "national miscarriage or misfortune" arises that can be resolved only by "strict scrutiny into the secret springs of the transaction."

Now, then. How well is our current president fulfilling this central executive mission—and thereby husbanding the indispensable prestige and potency of his office? He is not fulfilling it well. Because he is not fulfilling it at all.

More than 100 days have now gone by since the Monica Lewinsky story broke into view and the nation was presented with serious and overwhelming circumstantial evidence that its president has been involved in tawdry and criminal activity. On only seven of those days has Bill Clinton allowed himself to be confronted with questions concerning the matter. And he has never yet responded to a single one of them in a meaningful fashion.

In a series of interviews on January 21, the president simply issued a blanket assertion, without explanation, that he had not maintained an "improper sexual relationship" with Lewinsky and "didn't ask anybody to lie" about it. "And I think that's all I should say right now."

The following day, during a White House photo-opportunity with Yasser Arafat, Clinton allowed as how people "have a right" to inquire about Lewinsky and promised that "we" will answer those inquiries as soon as "we" can, "at the appropriate time." How about right now, he was asked? "Thank you," the president replied. Nothing more.

Two weeks later, at a joint White House appearance with British prime minister Tony Blair, Clinton repeated his general declaration of innocence. He then announced that he had already "told the American people what I think it essential for them to know about this"—and that "I do not believe I should answer specific questions." What about news reports that he had recently acknowledged, in a sworn deposition, having had an affair with Gennifer Flowers? "I am not going to discuss that." What about Monica Lewinsky? "I'm not commenting."

Five weeks after that, during an Oval Office picture-taking session with Thai prime minister Likphai Chuan, pool reporters again requested information or reaction from the president concerning Lewinsky and Paula Jones. Those reporters were promptly expelled from the room by Clinton's press aides.

One month after *that*, on an Air Force One flight back from Africa, the president sat for a pre-arranged interview with *Time* magazine. Halfway through the conversation, *Time* raised Kathleen Willey's fresh allegations against him. Clinton cut the question off: "I'm not going to talk about it." Does the president at least regret having placed himself in a number of potentially "compromising" situations? "I have no further comment on these things." How does the president feel about Kenneth Starr's ongoing independent-counsel investigation? "I won't depart from my policy of not commenting on Mr. Starr." On what grounds has the White House invoked executive privilege to

block grand-jury testimony by Clinton's top staffers? "I'm just not going to talk about that."

At his first solo press conference of the year, April 30, Bill Clinton stated flatly that he had "nothing to add" to public knowledge of the Lewinsky controversy. He said he thought it was "important" that he remain silent—that he was "in some ways the last person" who should come forward. Clinton said he was "not involved" in ongoing administration efforts to withhold potential testimony by members of his Secret Service detail, and "should not comment" on those efforts. He said he "cannot comment" on White House assertions of executive privilege. Clinton similarly declined to comment on Kenneth Starr. And "I have nothing else to say."

Finally, last week, standing next to the prime minister of Italy at the White House, the president listened to a brief question about executive privilege, and replied: "I can't comment on it."

Thus, in sum, we have the president as Melville's Bartleby, the defiant cipher who blandly disdains to do precisely what circumstances most demand of him—in Clinton's case, that he make himself, in the midst of uproar about *his* behavior and the actions of *his* subordinates, publicly and transparently accountable.

America is confronted here with something more ominous than the desperate stonewall of an ordinary, cornered politician. No president is an ordinary politician; the Constitution does not grant him that luxury. The presidency, instead, must be both the primary engine of our government and the locus of national respect that is that engine's fuel. This president, Bill Clinton, has explicitly forfeited such respect. When he was asked April 30 whether he was "willing to live with these questions hanging over you for the rest of your administration," he responded with just one word: "Absolutely." At that very moment, it seems to us, Clinton effectively recused himself from the fundamental responsibility of his office. The presidency is vacant.

In their prescience, the Framers worried aloud what would happen if executive responsibility were concealed in darkness—and thereby eviscerated. It would become nearly "impossible," Hamilton wrote, "to determine on whom the blame or the punishment of a pernicious measure, or series of pernicious measures, ought really to fall." And in the attendant confusion, even citizens willing to undertake that necessary but "unpromising" task of judgment would themselves unfairly "incur the odium" of scandal and controversy.

This, too, has come to pass. Kenneth Starr, mercilessly smeared by the president's defenders, is now among the least popular of living Americans. Newt Gingrich, already unpopular, is now winning fresh and widespread opprobrium for his brave and intelligent criticism of constitutional dysfunction in the White House. No less an eminence than David Broder of the *Washington Post*, acknowledged "dean" of American political journalism, last week scored Gingrich for a performance *equally* "wretched" and "repugnant" as the president's.

This is not right. David Broder ought to know better. There is plenty of disgrace in the current scandal, to be sure. But just as sure, most all of it rests squarely with Bill Clinton.

—David Tell, for the Editors

Bacon Tripps Up

by Jay Nordlinger

On Friday, March 13, at least one Pentagon hand knew something strange was going on. Les Blake, head of an office dealing with confidential files, decided he needed to write a "Memorandum for the Record." Earlier in the day, he had received a call from Cliff Bernath, a deputy in the public-affairs office. Bernath was seeking sensitive information about a Pentagon employee—not just any employee, but one of the most controversial figures in the country: Linda Tripp, who had taped Monica Lewinsky and was giving the White House nightmares. Specifically, Bernath wanted to know how Tripp had answered a question on a security-clearance form concerning whether she had ever been arrested or detained by the police.

Blake, after verifying Bernath's title and phone number, requested a copy of that form—number 398—from the Privacy Act Branch of the Defense Security Service. Once he had received it, he called Bernath to "ask him if he was requesting this information in an official capacity." Bernath "assured" him that "this was an official request," whereupon Blake informed him that, "pursuant to the Privacy Act," the security service would "be making a full accounting of this disclosure/release." At 1:56 P.M., Blake faxed to Bernath three pages from Tripp's security form. He also directed a colleague to indicate on another government form that the "disclosure/release"

had taken place. At 1:58 P.M., Bernath called Blake to thank him—as well he might have. The circumstances of this business were unusual in the extreme. Blake—no doubt thinking to protect himself—wrote his memo.

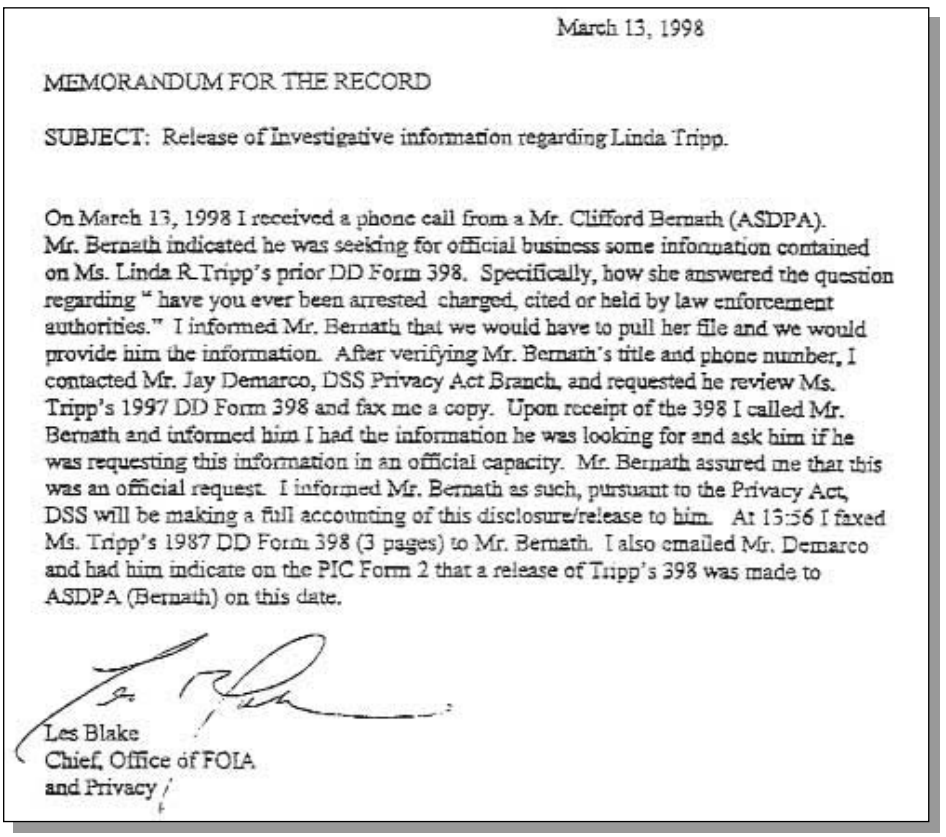
Soon after, the whole country would know the contents of Linda Tripp's security form, because they appeared in an article by Jane Mayer in the *New Yorker* magazine. Mayer had earlier learned that Tripp, when a teenager, was arrested for grand larceny in the hamlet of Greenwood Lake, N.Y. Mayer had then known to call Tripp's employer, the Defense Department, with an amazingly precise question: How had Tripp responded to Question 21, parts *a* and *b*, on Form 398? The Pentagon was (atypically) quick with an answer for her—Tripp had indicated no arrests or detentions—and it seemed that the president's nemesis was in trouble. Cliff Bernath told the *New York Times* that Tripp faced "a very serious charge." Defense secretary Bill Cohen said on CNN that Tripp was guilty of "a contradiction of the truth," which would be "looked into."

But it soon became clear that Tripp's arrest had been the result of a juvenile prank, perpetrated against her, and that the judge, recognizing this, had reduced the charge to one count of loitering, an infraction so trivial that it would not be recorded as an arrest. The Pentagon quickly dropped its investigation of Tripp. Instead, the spotlight turned to the department itself—specifically to Bernath, the public-affairs aide who had released the choice morsels about Tripp to Mayer, almost certainly in violation of the law. Republicans on Capitol Hill howled for a probe. The Pentagon shortly announced that it would conduct an internal investigation (one that continues, with no end in sight). Thus, a new Clinton scandal was born.

And it has received a new twist, with more sure to come. On April 30, Cliff Bernath was deposed by Judicial Watch, a conservative public-interest group that has besieged the administration with no fewer than 17 lawsuits. Its founder, Larry Klayman, has been almost as annoying to the president as Ken Starr. And it was in furtherance of his FBI-files suit—in which he represents aggrieved Republicans—that Klayman brought Bernath to the witness table.

Bernath arrived at the deposition with a battery of government lawyers, from the Justice Department, the Defense Department, and the White House (in addition to one from Williams & Connolly appearing "on behalf of the first lady," a defendant in the case). Over the next six hours, Bernath told a story sharply different from the one he had offered when the Mayer article was published. Then, he had claimed that his release of the information was routine, that he was responding in a totally unremarkable manner to a reporter's ho-hum request. He further maintained that he believed his disclosure to be exculpatory of his employee, Tripp: "It seemed like good news." If Tripp had indicated on her form that she had indeed been arrested or detained, said Bernath, "we definitely wouldn't have released that."

But Bernath had known better. He preserved some of the evidence, too. When he was transferred to another office in mid-April, he erased all of his computer files, but retained notes he had made into his Palm Pilot, a small, hand-held device. These notes



March 13, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Release of Investigative information regarding Linda Tripp.

On March 13, 1998 I received a phone call from a Mr. Clifford Bernath (ASDPA). Mr. Bernath indicated he was seeking for official business some information contained on Ms. Linda R Tripp's prior DD Form 398. Specifically, how she answered the question regarding " have you ever been arrested charged, cited or held by law enforcement authorities." I informed Mr. Bernath that we would have to pull her file and we would provide him the information. After verifying Mr. Bernath's title and phone number, I contacted Mr. Jay Demarco, DSS Privacy Act Branch, and requested he review Ms. Tripp's 1997 DD Form 398 and fax me a copy. Upon receipt of the 398 I called Mr. Bernath and informed him I had the information he was looking for and ask him if he was requesting this information in an official capacity. Mr. Bernath assured me that this was an official request. I informed Mr. Bernath as such, pursuant to the Privacy Act, DSS will be making a full accounting of this disclosure/release to him. At 15:56 I faxed Ms. Tripp's 1987 DD Form 398 (3 pages) to Mr. Bernath. I also emailed Mr. Demarco and had him indicate on the PIC Form 2 that a release of Tripp's 398 was made to ASDPA (Bernath) on this date.

Les Blake
Chief, Office of FOIA
and Privacy

were subpoenaed in Klayman's suit. And they, along with Bernath's oral testimony, document an unusual sequence of events.

On Thursday night, March 12, around 7:30, Mayer called the assistant defense secretary for public affairs, Ken Bacon, a former colleague of hers and Bernath's superior. Before his appointment at the Pentagon, Bacon had been for 25 years a reporter and editor at the *Wall Street Journal*, where Mayer, too, had once worked. Later that evening, Bacon told Bernath that "he had received a call from Jane," who "indicated that Ms. Tripp may have had a problem when she was young." Even before speaking to Bernath, Bacon had "already discussed the query" with David Cooke, the Pentagon's director of administration and management. Bacon instructed Bernath to call Cooke the next morning to see whether he "had obtained the information and then to follow up" with Mayer.

At around 8:30 on Friday morning, Bernath phoned Cooke and then went to see him in his office. Cooke had already put his hands on Tripp's Form 171, the standard government-employment document that serves as both application and résumé. Form 171, too, includes a question about arrest and detention. That, however, would not suffice, "since the specific question that came from Ms. Mayer was regarding [Tripp's] security form." So Bernath asked Cooke for Tripp's 398, and "that's when he referred me to" Steve O'Toole, director of personnel security. O'Toole turned out to have "some information, but the 398 was not part of it." So O'Toole sent Bernath to Les Blake, the file custodian and memo-writer. Cooke told Bernath that "it was all right for me to get the form," but "didn't comment on what I could do or could not do with it."

At about 9:00 A.M., Bernath placed his first call to Mayer. According to notes he made at the time, Bernath "told her I was working on [an] answer to her question" and that "Ken [Bacon] has made clear it's priority." Bernath also noted that Mayer was concerned whether the "question on the security form pertains to 'arrested' or 'convicted.'" After receiving the fax from Blake, Bernath again talked to Mayer, who said, "What if I had information that that information [provided by Tripp on the security form] is not true?" Bernath told her that this would constitute "a serious circumstance, and it would have to be investigated"—the same thing he and his department would subsequently tell the press in general. Later Friday afternoon, advance copies of Mayer's *New Yorker* piece were faxed to the media, becoming the talk of the weekend news shows, and Tripp's life became yet more complicated.

But so did Bernath's and Bacon's. The next week, their boss, Secretary Cohen, was furious, and Cohen's chief of staff gave Bernath a severe dressing-down, citing "gross stupidity." Bernath recorded that Cohen had been "surprised at a press conference," and "that's bad." Of course, the job that had been done on Linda Tripp was bad, too. One congressional investigator describes it as a "targeted hit," which "stank to high heaven from the minute it broke." Ken Bacon admitted at a March 26 press conference that "we're learning new things every day about the Privacy Act." And he is about to learn more.

Judicial Watch is set to depose Bacon on May 15. Bernath confirmed in his deposition of April 30 that Bacon, along with Bernath himself, is under internal investigation, because, in Bernath's words, "I didn't do it on my own." The important question is, Did Bacon do it on his own? Bacon told the *Washington Post* that Bernath's testimony was "not accurate," but would say no more.

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It strains credulity, however, to believe that Bacon, in the midst of the biggest scandal to hit Washington since Watergate, occupying the sensitive position of chief spokesman in a famously cautious department, sought no guidance from the White House. So who on Clinton's team ordered Bacon's cooperation? Was it perhaps Sidney Blumenthal, another former colleague of Mayer's? Bacon has shown himself a most reliable administration appointee. He hired Monica Lewinsky as his "confidential assistant" at a time when the White House was eager to unload her, and his office had already taken the troublesome Tripp (resulting in the fateful friendship). Did Bacon then agree to be the instrument of Tripp's destruction, hungrily sought by the White House? Ex-presidential adviser Dick Morris—who knows the Clinton operation well—is one who finds it inconceivable that Mayer simply stumbled on an embarrassing fact about Tripp and that Bacon, all by himself, with no authorization, let fly damaging data from Tripp's security file.

Neither Bacon nor Bernath nor Les Blake nor Jane Mayer would talk to THE WEEKLY STANDARD. (Mayer herself has been subpoenaed in the Judicial Watch suit. Phone calls to her are now answered by her lawyer, First Amendment heavyweight Floyd Abrams.) There is one Clintonite, though, who is firm-

ly on the record as to his feelings in this area: the president himself. In the fall of 1992, candidate Bill Clinton was exercised—rightly—when it was revealed that political appointees in George Bush's State Department had rooted through his passport files, along with those of his mother. In his first press conference as president-elect, he declared, "If I catch anybody doing it, I will fire them the next day. You won't have to have an inquiry or rigmarole or anything else."

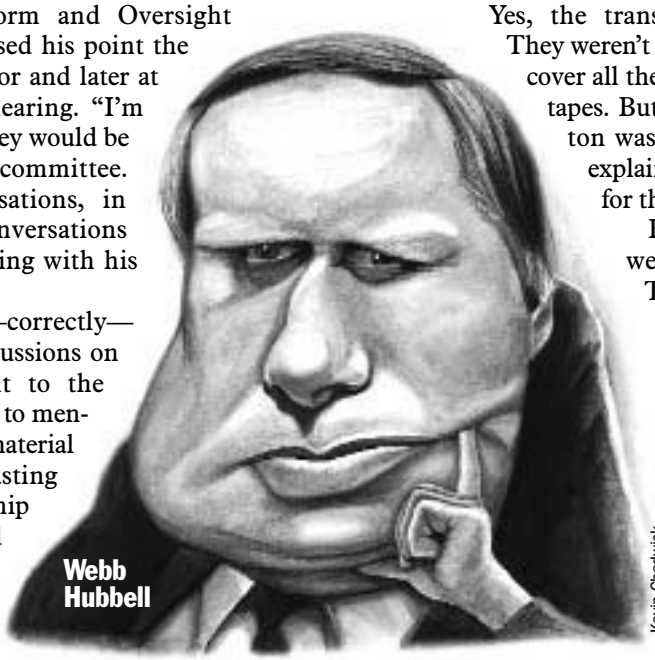
Yet the inquiries and rigmarole continue. And the questions wait for answers.

Jay Nordlinger is associate editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

How Waxman Won

by Byron York

HENRY WAXMAN WAS OUTRAGED, and the Webb Hubbell prison recordings hadn't even been released yet. "The tapes," Waxman wrote in a letter to attorney general Janet Reno on April 21, "contain extremely personal conversations that are wholly unrelated to any investigation relevant to Mr. Hubbell or any other matter." The ranking Democrat on the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, Waxman pressed his point the next day on the House floor and later at an April 30 committee hearing. "I'm offended at the idea that they would be released," he told the committee. "They're private conversations, in many cases intimate conversations that Mr. Hubbell was having with his wife."



Kevin Chadwick

Waxman pointed out—correctly—that 99 percent of the discussions on the tapes were irrelevant to the investigation. But he failed to mention that 1 percent of the material was extremely relevant, casting new light on the relationship between the Hubbells and the White House at a time when Hubbell was at least nominally cooperating with independent counsel Kenneth Starr. At the very least, the tapes showed a down-and-out Hubbell under intense White House pressure to cover up incriminating information about top administration figures.

Nevertheless, committee chairman Dan Burton tried to accommodate Waxman's objections—and ended up playing into his hands. Burton announced that he would not release the actual tapes, but rather transcripts of just those portions most important to the committee's investigation. The rest would be edited out. That way, Hubbell's privacy would be protected and the public would still learn important new information.

So Burton released the transcripts—and Waxman had his opening. "Things shouldn't be taken out of context!" Waxman thundered. "They shouldn't be censored and cut—doctored, really!" Picking up the charge, White House senior policy adviser Rahm Emanuel denounced the tapes as "doctored and altered."

Yes, the transcripts were amateurish. They weren't verbatim, and they did not cover all the important subjects on the tapes. But doctored? No. Still, Burton was on the defensive, at first explaining and later apologizing for the transcripts.

But Waxman's objections were not terribly reliable. Take his treatment of the most frequently quoted tape, a conversation between Hubbell and his wife that included the following exchange:

SUZY HUBBELL: *[Marsha Scott] said you're not going to get any public support if you open up Hillary. Well, by public support I know exactly what she means. I'm not stupid.*

WEBB HUBBELL: *And I sat there and spent Saturday with you saying I would not do that. I won't raise those allegations that might open it up to Hillary, and you know that. We talked about that.*

SUZY HUBBELL: *Yes, but then I get all this back from Marsha, who's ratcheting it up and making it sound like, you know, if Webb goes ahead and sues the firm back, then any support I have at the White House is gone. I mean, I'm hearing the squeeze play.*

WEBB HUBBELL: *So I need to roll over one more time.*

Waxman accused Burton of leaving out the punch line. He told ABC's *Nightline*, "There is one instance where [Burton] put out a tape saying that Webb Hubbell was going to try to roll over in order not to implicate Hillary Clinton. But he omitted the next sentence where Webb Hubbell said, Of course, Hillary Clinton knew nothing about the billing practices at their law firm."

The point sounded good, but it wasn't true. As *Nightline* correspondent Chris Bury reported, that "next sentence" was not the next sentence at all, but came 45 minutes later in the tapes. And what about the charge that the tapes had been doctored? Well, maybe that's not actually true, conceded Waxman. "It is not doctoring them in the sense, in the view of putting in different words," he said to Bury.

Beyond that, there was the question of what the taped conversation actually meant. On NBC, *Meet the Press* host Tim Russert played the missing excerpt for Burton. In it, Hubbell discussed lawyers at the Rose Law Firm who had overbilled clients. But:

WEBB HUBBELL: *Hillary's not. Hillary isn't—the only thing is, people say, Why didn't she know what was going on? And I wish she'd never paid any attention to what was going on at the firm. That's the gospel truth. She just had no idea what was going on. She didn't participate in any of this.*

SUZY HUBBELL: *They wouldn't have let her if she'd tried.*

WEBB HUBBELL: *Of course not.*

Russert confronted Burton: "That is rather exculpatory for Hillary Clinton, and you left it out when you released that document." Again on the defensive, Burton answered that he had tried to protect the Hubbells' privacy and condense many hours of tape into a small package. But the question left unanswered was: Exculpatory of what? As it turns out, Hubbell's exoneration of Mrs. Clinton—even if it is believable—was extremely narrow.

The disputed conversation, which was recorded on March 25, 1996, took place just a few days after the Rose Law Firm filed suit against Hubbell, demanding that he repay the $457,000 he stole from the firm. Hubbell admitted that he took the money, but was angry at the firm's stance toward his overbilling of clients. Sure, he did it, he told his wife. But "so does every [other] lawyer in the country." And besides, the Rose firm had benefited from his overbillings.

Hubbell and his wife discussed a plan to countersue the firm, alleging misconduct on the part of several partners. If that happened, a lot of embarrassing information might come out—including allegations that a former associate White House counsel had cheated his clients. "My friend Bill Kennedy," Hubbell told his wife, ". . . he's one of the most vulnerable people in my counterclaim." And that's when Hubbell said that Hillary Clinton had not been involved.

The effect of the exchange was to clear Mrs. Clinton on the charge of overbilling her clients—which she had not been accused of doing in the first place. Hubbell's words had nothing to do with matters, like Castle Grande, in which the first lady *is* suspected of wrongdoing. So Hubbell had hardly exonerated her. (Incidentally, a source familiar with Starr's investigation says prosecutors did look into the possibility that Mrs. Clinton had overbilled. Although they did not conduct an intensive investigation, they concluded that she had actually not billed very much at the firm. And even if she had overbilled, the statute of limitations had run out.)

THE EFFECT OF THE EXCHANGE WAS TO CLEAR MRS. CLINTON ON THE CHARGE OF OVERBILLING HER CLIENTS—WHICH SHE HADN'T BEEN ACCUSED OF DOING.

Much of Waxman's other "exculpatory" material is equally weak. On another tape, Hubbell says several newspaper editorials were "pre-supposing that I—my silence is being bought. We know that's not true." Before accepting that at face value, one should remember that Hubbell strongly and repeatedly proclaimed that he had not stolen money from his law firm. He said this before he resigned from the Justice Department, he said it after he resigned, and he said it virtually up to the day he pleaded guilty. (In his book, *Friends in High Places*, Hubbell admits that he lied even to those closest to him.) His denial this time may be no more credible.

But none of that stopped Democrats, the press, and the punditocracy from flogging Dan Burton. Some Republicans joined in, too. In addition to his apologies, by late in the week Burton was forced to fire his chief investigator, David Bossie, in an effort to placate an angry Speaker Newt Gingrich. But if Republicans thought firing Bossie would do anything to silence Democratic criticism, they were clearly mistaken. Indeed, it has only stepped up calls for Burton and the speaker to remove themselves from the fund-raising investigation. "In throwing David Bossie to the wolves, Speaker Gingrich is trying to evade any responsibility for the Burton tapes travesty," said head wolf Richard Gephardt. The minority leader plans to introduce a resolution calling for Burton's ouster.

But if Republicans—especially those who privately view Burton as an embarrassment—think that dump-

ing the chairman will solve anything, they are likely mistaken again. They should remember the circus that House Democrats made of Whitewater hearings held by the fair-minded, intelligent, non-partisan Jim Leach. And the circus Democrats made of Travelgate hearings held by the equally evenhanded Bill Clinger. Does anyone doubt that the next Republican investigator—whoever he is—will receive the same treatment?

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No Fear of Clinton

by Fred Barnes

House Republican whip Tom DeLay recently sent House committee chairmen a simple message: Act boldly. DeLay had a particular episode in mind. In April, President Clinton had threatened to veto a supplemental spending bill because it lacked money for the International Monetary Fund. Go ahead, Republicans responded, veto it. Clinton hastily backed down and agreed to sign the bill.

Thus, DeLay told the chairmen, there's no reason for queasiness. Pass the most conservative bills possible, he said, and if need be, we'll tinker with them later to win approval on the House floor. At a meeting of GOP leaders on May 5, speaker Newt Gingrich made a similar point. He insisted "there's no turning back" from confrontation with Clinton. "Not one inch," he added.

What's new here is the absence of fear. The terror that Clinton struck in the hearts of congressional Republicans after the ill-fated government shutdown in 1995 is gone. For more than two years, they were obsessed with Clinton's ability to counterpunch. Would he try to isolate them as extremists, brand them as bad people without compassion? Would he try to pilfer their issues? These questions scarcely come up anymore. Instead, Republicans are sending bills to Clinton with the message "Take it or leave it" attached. Chairman Jesse Helms of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said Clinton has one chance for funds to pay United Nations dues: sign a measure that includes an anti-abortion provision. In a letter to Clinton, House appropriations chairman Bob Livingston echoed Helms.

The best test of Clinton's authority is whether he's able to punish Republicans for such intransigence. At the moment, he's not. His presidential-performance rating remains high despite the simmering scandals. But it no longer translates into political clout. "There never seems to be a price to pay for opposing Clinton on a legislative item," says a GOP congressional strategist. Senators discovered this firsthand in April when they killed Clinton's education proposals and passed their own. Was there any public backlash? Not a peep, says Republican Connie Mack of Florida. Better yet, the president now may sign a measure, championed by GOP senator Paul Coverdell of Georgia, to create education IRAs that parents could use for public- or private-school expenses. Clinton blocked the IRAs in 1997 and threatened a veto this year. But Coverdell got Democratic senator Bob Torricelli to intercede in early May directly with Clinton, who is reconsidering.

Exactly how much Clinton has been weakened by the sex scandal is a subject of considerable discussion on Capitol Hill. GOP senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania believes the president has lost both his moral and his political authority. Livingston isn't so sure. Democratic representative Gary Condit of California says Clinton still has the ability to advance issues that "resonate across the country"—if he finds the appropriate centrist positions. But Condit concedes that, post-Monica, this is harder. "It's difficult for him since he's bombarded every day with attacks."

EXACTLY HOW MUCH CLINTON HAS BEEN WEAKENED BY THE SEX SCANDAL IS A SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION ON CAPITOL HILL.

That's not the only reason, however. The scandal has sharply limited Clinton's maneuverability, always an important component of his political strength. Given the critical need to hold onto his base of support among liberal Democrats in Congress, the president isn't free to move to the right and compromise with Republicans. What would happen, for instance, if he put together a new anti-teen-smoking bill that brought the tobacco companies on board? Republicans admit they'd be unable to block it. The question is, how would key Clinton allies like Rep. Henry Waxman, the ranking Democrat on chairman Dan Burton's House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, react? Not favorably, for sure. Or how would feminists, a key Democratic constituency, respond if

Clinton signed the U.N. legislation that also cuts funds for "family planning" groups promoting abortion rights abroad? Angrily, no doubt. Indeed, how would Hillary Rodham Clinton react if the president suggested privately he might sign such a bill? Strongly enough to stop him from doing so, I'd bet.

But the most important thing the sex scandal has cost Clinton is his rhetorical advantage over Republicans. A minimum-wage hike, extending Medicare to folks as young as 55, even adding more child-care benefits—these major Clinton agenda items have all but vanished, and Clinton has not been able to revive them with speeches or photo ops. "On child care, he can't attack us because we'll just laugh at his idea of child care, looking after the White House interns," says a GOP leadership aide. Managed-care reform, also part of Clinton's agenda, is dicier for Republicans, but not because of the president. It's likely to pass in watered-down form. What's driving it, though, is public dissatisfaction with HMOs, not White House support.

Clinton's prospects for regaining his political influence are negligible. He's mired in the same spot Republicans were in the spring of 1995. After wowing everyone with the Contract With America, Republicans lost momentum following the Oklahoma City bombing and a little-remembered but consequential Clinton speech. On April 5, 1995, the president delivered what became known among White House aides as the "pile of vetoes" speech. He said he didn't want to accumulate vetoes, and so he spelled out what issues were priorities and where he'd compromise with Republicans. He came off as presidential, moderate, and reasonable. This time, Clinton is the one who dazzled Washington with a string of initiatives announced last winter—then ran out of gas. Could he uncork another "pile of vetoes" speech? I'd be surprised. He and his staff don't have time to figure out where Clinton should stand firm and where he should cave. They're too distracted putting out daily fires and planning foreign trips intended in part to draw attention away from the scandal. Worse for Clinton, if he did make such a speech, few would take it seriously.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of **THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**

Pulling the Wings Off the Warriors

By Matt Labash

In military parlance, Maj. Jacquelyn Parker was a water-walking blue-flamer, with a résumé that would quicken the heart of any service flack. She was born on the Fourth of July, had a genius IQ, and was flying solo before getting her driver's license. In 1989, she became the first woman to graduate from the legendary test-pilot school at Edwards Air Force Base. In 1994, she joined one of the nation's premier fighter wings, the New York Air National Guard's 174th, expecting to become the Air National Guard's first female F-16 pilot. She was a veritable Pentagon pin-up for women in combat, appearing on CNN and *Oprah* and receiving awards from generals, Air Force secretaries, and Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Had Jackie Parker's string of firsts continued unbroken, in the summer of 1995 she would have become the first female pilot to see combat, flying over the Iraqi no-fly zone as a member of the 174th—once known as "the Boys from Syracuse." Like all National Guard flying units, the Boys from Syracuse were primarily part-timers. But this was hardly a weekend flying club for soft-bellied aviators, even if its nickname came from a Rodgers and Hart musical. The Boys were a tight, battle-tested unit—one of only two National Guard squadrons to fight in Desert Storm. Their commander, Col. David Hamlin, a wheat-farming former Marine, led them straight into the jaws. By the end of the Gulf War, the 174th had flown 1,600 sorties, and two-thirds of the pilots wore Distinguished Flying Crosses.

But what Saddam Hussein could not blow out of the sky, Jackie Parker did. After struggling in her F-16 training for a year and failing to complete it, she quit flying in June 1995—but not before intimating to New York Guard headquarters that she had been the victim of an unfair and hostile training environment because she was a woman. That complaint ricocheted from New York to Washington and back again and prompted a hasty investigation by the New York Guard, with dire results for the pilots of the 174th.

Overwhelming evidence has since emerged that Parker was in no way victimized by her instructors; that she was the source of her own problems; that she herself engaged in sordid behavior that was winked at. Much of this evidence can be gleaned from a two-year civilian inquiry completed recently by New York's inspector general. But it comes too late for the Boys from Syracuse. After a deeply flawed investigation in 1995, the top brass of the New York National Guard decided to appease the gods of gender integration. For starters, the 174th was ordered to drop its nickname. David Hamlin, the commander, was fired. His vice commander, Tom Webster, was transferred to another unit in a non-flying position. When members of the squadron protested, the higher command made examples of the most vociferous dissenters. The entire wing was grounded for over a month. By the end of 1995, ten of the squadron's two dozen or so pilots ($1.5 million apiece to train) had been transferred and demoted. Six of those men have never flown again; they were assigned to dead-end jobs below their ranks and outside their specialties. All of them have either left the military or are stalled in their current grades, with their careers and reputations ruined, while Jackie Parker today is part of a California Guard unit, where she flies a desk in a command-post position.

The decimation of the Boys from Syracuse would be shocking if the story weren't so familiar: A woman infiltrates a traditionally male domain and fails to measure up; her shortcomings are chalked up to an oppressive warrior culture by agenda feminists; said culture is then consigned to history's slag heap by political invertebrates. It's the formula that made Citadel-busting Shannon Faulkner a magazine cover girl and adulterous Air Force aviatrix Kelly Flinn a media martyr.

But the Jackie Parker story sheds light on the other half of the equation: the decline of the military man. Ultimately it was not Parker who did in the Boys from Syracuse but feckless military leaders who wanted to appear socially progressive, men who would tuck tail and acquiesce in the unjust punishment of top-notch pilots rather than stand up on their hind legs and admit a mistake. The story of the 174th is a

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case study of how, in the service of political expedience, the military devours its own.

From the beginning of her military career in 1980, Jackie Parker received extraordinary treatment, securing a waiver to join the Air Force though she stood an inch short of the 5′4″ minimum requirement. Over the next decade, she became a proficient "heavy driver," piloting transports and tankers like the C-141 and KC-135. Her goal, though, was to become the first female space-shuttle pilot. That odyssey took her to Edwards Air Force Base, a key posting on the astronaut fast-track, the test-pilot school where leathered grizzlies like Chuck Yeager once punched holes in the sky over the High Mojave.

At Edwards, Parker got a crack at flying fighters and wasn't particularly good at it. One of her instructor pilots, retired colonel Harry Walker, says that she was merely "competent" in maneuvers not requiring "a great deal of three-dimensional thought." Though she was good enough to become the first female graduate, it was *that* distinction that marked her for celebrity, not her aerial skills. Walker notes that "she graduated near the bottom of her class."

That hardly slowed Parker's public-relations regimen. While fliers of Chuck Yeager's generation were shoulder-shrugging repositories of muted cool, Parker was a neon Wheaties box, giving motivational speeches at Girl Scout cookie conventions and Rotary Club luncheons on topics like "Reaching for the Stars." When defense secretary Les Aspin opened combat cockpits to women in April 1993, Parker seemed poised for glory.

After graduating from Edwards, Parker had become acquainted with Mike Hall, who would shortly be named adjutant general of the New York National Guard, the top commander, by Gov. Mario Cuomo. Over the years, Parker and Hall saw each other at professional events and became quite close. Parker was a guest at Hall's family farm on one of her visits to Syracuse, and Hall stayed with Parker overnight while they both attended an Air Force event in Ohio (he was married, she wasn't). Hall decided to make Parker the first female fighter pilot in New York's Guard—and not just because of their friendship. Such

The Boys from Syracuse, in happier times: Col. David Hamlin, commander, stands in the center of the front row.

a high-profile appointment would provide political insurance in a climate of base-closings. It would enhance Hall's reputation as a female-friendly commander. And with post-Cold War downsizing underway, a publicity magnet like Parker would help the 174th Fighter Wing stay at full strength and retain its F-16s. On the day of Aspin's decision, Hall saw his opening. He gave Parker clearance to announce on CNN's *Sonya Live* that she would be joining the Boys from Syracuse.

This was news not just to CNN viewers, but to the unit's commander, Col. David Hamlin. Though it is often assumed that male fighter jocks would rather swig from their cockpit piddle packs than fly next to a girl, Hamlin, who also pulled two tours in Vietnam, was amenable to recruiting female pilots. (One who accepted Hamlin's bid flies with the 174th to this day.) But he balked at Hall's pet project. By then a 33-year-old major recently separated from the Air Force, Parker had developed a career's worth of habits in heavy aircraft that he feared would not be conducive to flying F-16s (a handicap Hall later acknowledged). Then there was her personality, which is always a consideration when hiring for a close-knit Guard unit.

Both male and female unit members say Parker made a bad impression. She was obnoxious—a chronic name-dropper more interested in plugging résumé holes to become an astronaut than in the mission of the wing. During initial interviews with Parker, pilots say dialogue ranged from *things Jackie wants to be* to *important people Jackie knows*. "For 14 hours, it was the Jackie Parker Show," says former pilot Anthony Zaccaro. "She never asked us a question about Syracuse."

Hamlin rejected Parker, but Hall pulled strings to get her into the unit anyway. While training with the 174th, Parker would be a "headquarters pilot" technically reporting to Hall. This high-handedness did little to endear Parker to the unit. And her own behavior compounded the animosity. She engaged in sexual banter that might easily have seen a male counterpart facing court martial. She grabbed a major's crotch while apparently inebriated. Several pilots reported that during her first unit training lecture, an instructor commented that an aircraft's targeting was "a hair off." Parker piped in that it was "a c—t hair off, a red c—t hair, and I should know."

Worse behavior was corroborated in sworn testimony by unit males and females alike. In one instance, pilots charged that Parker grabbed the hose of a major's flight suit, asking, "Hey, Omar, want a blow job?" Parker would not consent to an interview for this article, saying she wanted to get on with her life. But testifying in the Guard investigation after her resignation she said she couldn't recall the incident, adding, "It is not uncommon for me to make a nasty comment."

Anthony Zaccaro, the unit's scheduling officer, had the most contentious relationship with Parker. He told investigators that Parker frequently grabbed him, pinched his butt, called him "big boy," and accused him of playing "hard to get"—though the soon-to-be-married Zaccaro sternly warned her to keep her distance. Zaccaro later brought a sexual-harassment suit against Parker, which was dismissed on jurisdictional grounds. Parker, who framed her behavior as normal horseplay, conceded much of the activity during the Guard investigation: "I'm sure I tried to bother him all the time. . . . I would touch him because I know it drove him totally nuts."

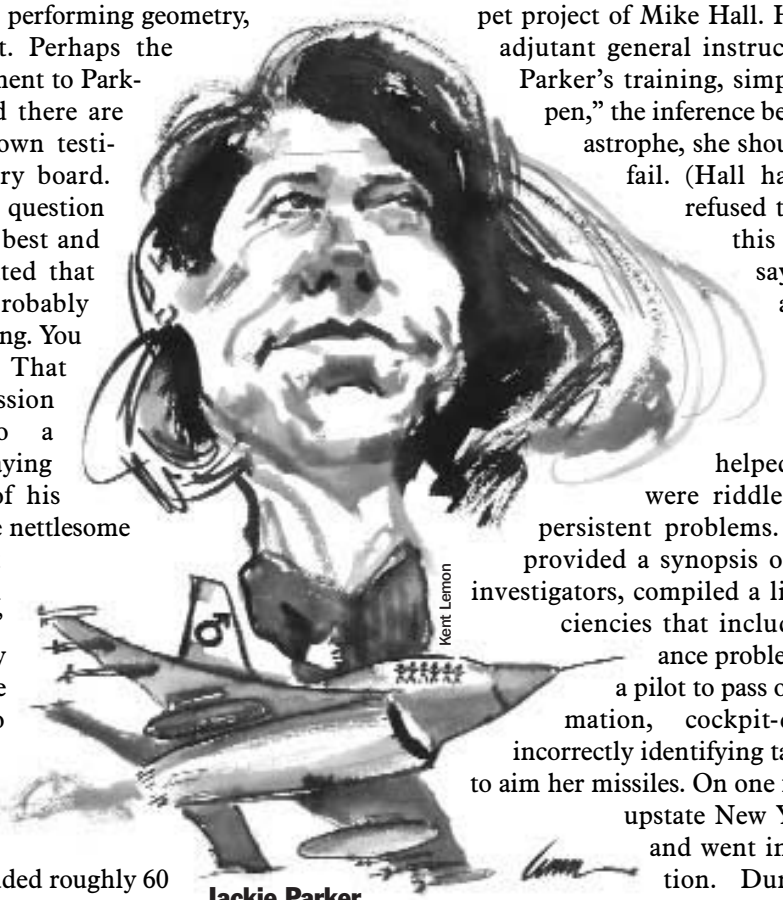
The investigations of Parker's tenure in Syracuse generously concurred with her that she was just "trying to fit in." Neither report, however, details any sexually charged banter returned at her. Unit pilots cautioned Parker about her behavior; and Hamlin gave several lectures on appropriate conduct. This, despite the fact that many unit members felt powerless to take issue with Parker's behavior because of her political patron, Adjutant General Mike Hall. That perception was magnified by Hall's practice of personally calling Parker's instructors to check her progress, talking to her on the phone, and allowing Parker (who was several ranks below him) to call him "Mike" and occasionally dine with him during her training. Worse yet, in violation of military regulations, Parker developed a romantic relationship with her immediate supervisor, Bob Rose, which he would later lie about to Guard investigators. If there was hostility towards Parker in the unit, it was well earned.

Though the Boys from Syracuse were never found to have engaged in an intentional or concerted effort to hinder Parker's training, the 174th was still faulted by the New York Guard's top brass for disparate treatment of Parker. When Parker had not made it all the way through her training program in time to deploy with the squadron to Turkey to fly patrols over Iraq—technically a combat mission—she quit in frustration.

Parker thus missed the opportunity to be the first female F-16 pilot in combat, a distinction that she was intent on having on her résumé. The New York inspector general's report, in other respects harsh on Parker, repeatedly laments the loss of this "historic opportunity." And no doubt from Parker's point of view, it was all fairly tragic. But it's also clear that any disparate treatment she received worked for and not

against her getting that opportunity: A male pilot performing as Parker did would have washed out of the program.

While Parker had long since perfected the skills required to pilot jumbo transport planes, she never consistently demonstrated that she could "employ" a fighter jet. In layman's terms, the difference between merely flying an F-16 and successfully employing one as a weapon is the difference between driving a car, and driving a car while talking on the phone, playing video games, performing geometry, and getting shot at. Perhaps the most damning testament to Parker's deficiency—and there are many—is Parker's own testimony to the military board. When asked a fluffy question about what she was best and worst at, she admitted that her worst area "is probably just basic tactical flying. You know, just turns? That part." Such a concession is tantamount to a NASCAR driver's saying he's in command of his car—except for those nettlesome curves. "She quit because she realized she couldn't do it," says former pilot Ray DuFour, "but to save face, she had to blame us."



Jackie Parker

The unit was faulted for Parker's protracted training, which included roughly 60 graded missions over the course of a year, when the syllabus can theoretically be completed with as few as 12 rides in a matter of months. While the length of Parker's training was unusual, it was not unprecedented. John Whiteside, one of the pilots affected in the Parker fallout, had taken nearly 50 rides over the course of eight months before he passed.

And Parker's own work habits cut into her training schedule. Former 174th intelligence officer Maureen Murphy says Parker "manipulated the system," bragging that she was taking lots of sick days, and that when she said an illness was a "female thing, they always back right off." (Parker has admitted undocumented absences.) For 40 days of the training year, Parker was on vacation or leave—often at awards ceremonies where she rubbed elbows with the likes of Norman Schwarzkopf, Secretary of the Air Force Sheila Widnall, or Maj. Gen. Don Shepperd, the former director of the Air National Guard, who once offered to assist Parker in securing a coveted full-time position.

But Parker's frequent absences tell only half the story. Unit pilots say they thought they had unlimited time and resources to pass her, because she was the pet project of Mike Hall. Hamlin says that the adjutant general instructed him, as regards Parker's training, simply to "make it happen," the inference being that, barring catastrophe, she should not be allowed to fail. (Hall has denied this, and refused to be interviewed for this article.) The pilots say they therefore assumed Parker was best served by being brought along slowly and safely.

Not like that helped. Her grade slips were riddled with critiques of persistent problems. Jeffrey Ecker, who provided a synopsis of Parker's grades to investigators, compiled a list of recurrent deficiencies that included serious G-tolerance problems (which can cause a pilot to pass out), flying out of formation, cockpit-display confusion, incorrectly identifying targets, and forgetting to aim her missiles. On one flight to Ft. Drum in upstate New York, Parker got lost and went in the opposite direction. During another ride, Parker bombed the wrong target five times—dropping her 25-lb. smoke bombs a mile and a half from their target and putting ground troops who were also training in peril. A witness called it "one of the worst missions I've ever seen."

For Parker to deploy to Turkey with the unit, the last training mission she had to complete was a low-altitude exercise in which she would locate enemy aircraft (two American fighters had recently shot down their own Blackhawk helicopters in the no-fly zone where the 174th was heading). Parker had passed the bulk of her syllabus, and if she passed this last test—and the 174th had already purchased her airline ticket—she would go to Iraq. Ecker, her instructor for the exercise, who was flying alongside Parker's F-16, testi-

fied that after Parker failed to locate the planes visually or by radar three different times, he took the lead in a final attempt. Ecker "shot" one of the "enemies" and was headed for the other. He then noticed a disoriented Parker finally identifying the planes only after they had managed to sneak behind her. She then overbanked her plane and pulled the nose down in a maneuver that Ecker says would have had her drilling a hole in the ground if he hadn't yelled, "Knock it off." Parker flunked the ride. Her complexion was the color of Bisquick. And the unit deployed to Iraq without her. Three make-ups of the exercise were scheduled, but she was sick all three times.

That was when Parker quit in frustration, warning Hamlin, according to his sworn testimony, that she was "going to take this unit down." Ecker says he always expected an investigation. But he thought it would be along the lines of, "How could you let her kill herself?"

If Mike Hall's public-relations stunt became a comedy of errors, there was nothing amusing about how military brass destroyed David Hamlin and the Boys from Syracuse to cloak the embarrassing failure of their poster girl. Hall himself was replaced in April 1995 by the new governor, George Pataki, who installed John Fenimore as the new adjutant general. Fenimore had been Hall's number-two man and had gone along with the Parker hire. When Parker told Fenimore that she was quitting her training, Fenimore immediately initiated an investigation. "Fenimore was so goddamned scared of the issue because she was a high-profile threatening presence," says one headquarters source. "This girl was linked. Everybody was scared of her." Fenimore too refused to be interviewed for this story.

Fenimore kept an interested Pentagon informed of his moves. The day Parker resigned, Fenimore was on the phone to Washington promising that he had "talked with Jackie Parker" and that the New York Guard would be "resolving [the] problem." Parker had not even filed a formal complaint, but Fenimore appointed a four-member investigative board, all from the ranks of the New York Air National Guard. During the investigation, Parker took a non-flying position in the same Guard headquarters running the investigation.

After a month, the board forwarded an interim report to Fenimore, who notified Hamlin that his promotion to brigadier general would be delayed because there were indications of an atmosphere of "discrimination and harassment" under Hamlin's command. Fenimore gave Hamlin 15 days to respond in writing, then denied Hamlin a copy of the accusatory report—Hamlin says he felt he was "shadowboxing in a dark room."

That was far from the only instance of star-chamber protocol. The National Guard report was a collection of errors, botched leads, and perjured testimony. Tapes malfunctioned and testimony was never recovered. Investigators argued with witnesses and went off the record in the middle of interviews. None of the squadron's non-flying women, who almost unanimously supported the male pilots, was called to testify. Parker was initially interviewed off the record, and a board source allows that Parker had some input into who was interviewed. Of the ten pilots who graded Parker, the three who scored her lowest—and who accounted for nearly 40 percent of her rides—were never called to testify (including Jeffrey Ecker, who oversaw her disastrous last ride).

The military report documented virtually no untoward behavior directed at Parker. The only arguable incident came when Anthony Zaccaro, who'd been physically manhandled by Parker, was kidded on the radio by squadron mates as they flew over his mother's residence in Queens. When they joked that they saw Parker approaching his mom's house (Parker was not flying with the squadron that day), and that his mother had scored a head shot, Zaccaro suggested his mother would target the stomach, resulting in a slower death. "It was more of a goof on my Italian heritage and my mother," explains Zaccaro. "Just don't tell my mother that."

Other instances of animus, however, had to do with the improper relationship that developed between Parker and Bob Rose, her direct supervisor in the wing. As the later civilian inquiry noted, "the Rose/Parker relationship virtually destroyed the already tenuous link between Parker and the unit."

The two made a show of their affections. In the throes of a troubled marriage and midlife crisis, Rose boasted of his carnal intentions. Parker approached a stitchless Rose in the shower. They went sailing, sipped wine, and in the middle of flights discussed future rock-climbing excursions and the brilliant fall foliage over the unit radio. In addition to privately castigating their old friend Rose, members of the 174th began publicly chiding the two. Rose was given the annual "Most Disgusting Guardsman" award for extracurricular Parker-related activities. Parker was presented the "Toilet Bowl" award during the squadron's monthly vinegar session where dubious achievements are rewarded. One pilot, Major Ted Limpert, had his law partner call the unit to pretend

he was a journalist doing a story on the Parker/Rose relationship.

Hamlin, without hard evidence of an affair, admonished Rose three times to cool his relationship with Parker. When Rose failed to, Hamlin finally removed him as Operations Group commander. The military investigators, however, failed to pursue this obvious explanation—the affair with Rose—for Parker's chilly relations with fellow pilots. When Parker was questioned under oath, she volunteered that she had not had sexual intercourse with Rose, admitting it was the rumor, "which isn't unusual for me, because I'm always accused of having an affair with someone."

When Rose was questioned by Fenimore's investigators, he twice asked for a lawyer and then said the relationship was never more than a professional association. His interviewer quickly led him away from the subject. Rose later admitted to both Hamlin and a member of Fenimore's staff that he had lied in the interview, that he had enjoyed an improper relationship with Parker, even spending the night with her, though he maintained the two never had sex. Fenimore decided that this amounted only to "rumors," and he didn't himself contact Rose or halt the release of the board's report, though he had evidence it was based on false testimony.

On October 17, 1995, three days before Fenimore released the investigative report, Parker made a surprise visit to the Pentagon to see then-secretary of the Air Force Sheila Widnall's staff. Parker regularly dropped Widnall's name around the squadron, though Widnall told me she has no idea why Parker stopped by, and never saw her personally. A source familiar with the visit says Parker "just wanted to tell her side of the story." It was hardly necessary. On the same day, the director of the Air National Guard, Don Shepperd (who was in contact with Parker during the investigation), e-mailed Widnall, the Air Force chief of staff, and the undersecretary of the Air Force, notifying them that Fenimore would be taking tough actions and that the event would draw significant media interest. Shepperd said that the Guard wanted "to be proactive and get this story out before we have to react. . . . We will not hide problems. We will investigate and hold people accountable."

Hiding problems, though, was precisely what Fenimore and his investigators did. With a press conference at the Pentagon and two in New York, Fenimore issued the results of the investigation. Parker had been treated unfairly, he said, and the "Boys from Syracuse" moniker had to go. Zaccaro and Limpert were to be disciplined for their radio and fake-journalist incidents. With stunning bad faith, Fenimore said that the most difficult thing for him was disci-

plining Hamlin, a "genuine American hero." So difficult, apparently, that Fenimore didn't notify Hamlin until after his Pentagon press conference that Hamlin would lose both his promotion and command and would be forcibly retired.

Though the investigators had concluded their duties a month before the report came out, one investigator received information that Parker and Rose had spent the night together during a deployment. He sent a memo to Fenimore on the day of his press conference warning that if such an accusation were true, their testimony should be reviewed for perjury and the board's recommendation to let Parker return to flying at the 174th should be reconsidered.

But Fenimore was too busy singing the praises of Parker, whom he called a "very assertive bundle of energy." No discipline was recommended for her; she was free to fly at the 174th, or Fenimore would work to find her a good slot elsewhere. In a final indignity to the unit, a Guard spokesman in Washington told the *New York Times* that Parker had been subjected to sexually offensive comments, though she had been the one making them. Parker, meanwhile, began the inevitable transition from assertive bundle of energy to long-suffering martyr, assuring one paper that she spent a year in training not because she was a below-average pilot, but because she "had to endure to show that I wasn't treated right."

But if Fenimore thought he could railroad the Boys from Syracuse without a fight, he was badly mistaken. Hamlin refused to retire and filed a complaint. When he was forced out anyway, nearly 5,000 letters of support were generated in his behalf in his home county. Limpert and Zaccaro, slated to receive non-judicial reprimands that can kill future promotions, began speaking out against the decision to the media, state senators, and whoever else would listen. Other pilots took their concerns of perjured testimony and kangaroo-court proceedings to congressmen and military investigative agencies.

Zaccaro lost his full-time hours and thus saw his pay cut from $50,000 annually to $6,900. In a display of solidarity, 18 pilots asked to have 15 days of their pay donated to Zaccaro, who ended up on unemployment for six months before finding an airline job. When even liberal feminist state senators started making noise to Pataki about the apparent injustice, the pilots pressed their offensive. Eleven of them backed Limpert and Zaccaro at an American Legion hall press conference, where Jeffrey Ecker also detailed Parker's near-fatal last ride. The day of the press conference, the entire unit was grounded by Fenimore's chief of staff, Col. Archie Berberian, purportedly for safety reasons. Two days later, Limpert and Zaccaro were pushed into non-flying jobs at other units for "career broadening."

Throughout the ordeal, the pilots were met with obfuscation, duplicity, and betrayal by their own chain of command. When Berberian came to ground the unit, he lectured on the "good ol' white boys club," which he said the national leadership was committed to changing. In a briefing for pilots, he said something nearly unimaginable. In the fall of 1994, the squadron had been rated "excellent" on an all-important combat-readiness test. But Berberian told the pilots they "would have been better off getting a satisfactory" on that inspection and managing instead "to train the first female fighter pilot in the F-16."

I called Berberian to see why he would recommend public-relations stunts over combat readiness, and he said, "I never suggested that." But he did. The pilots recorded him. And they weren't the only ones recording. Berberian's remarks were also videotaped. Mike Otis, a retired public-affairs officer for the 174th, says that he was asked by the vice commander of the 174th to make a copy of the tape, destroy the original, and send the copy to Guard headquarters. Otis says the nervous superior told him that he didn't "want that goddamn [tape] on my base." The pilots tried to get the videotape with a Freedom of Information request, but the state headquarters responded that no tape was to be found. When I called headquarters spokesman Walt Wheeler, he admitted he may have "recycled" the copy he was sent. Otis also says Guard headquarters suggested he gin up a letter-writing campaign to local papers against the pilots.

The pilots were grounded and demoralized. They knew the truth of Parker's tenure, and of her relationship with Rose, which was ignored by their commanders all the way up the chain. John Whiteside, the pilot who had once spent eight months qualifying, called an Air Force Office of Special Investigations agent to relay his concerns. The agent, after a call to the deputy director of the Guard, told Whiteside that the Guard investigation had been adequate. Whiteside, a pilot who lives in Chicago, then went to Rep. Henry Hyde, his congressman, whose office contacted Sheila Widnall's office on behalf of their constituent. Because of the sensitivity of the matter, Hyde's staff asked Widnall's staff not to forward the information to Fenimore. Shortly thereafter, Hyde's office received a letter of response from none other than John Fenimore.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, at the end of December

1995, Col. James Burdick, who had replaced Hamlin as commander of the unit, transferred eight more pilots. Though they were highly skilled fliers and decorated combat veterans with model records, many were transferred to non-flying jobs. "They put me in a corner like a mushroom to mind the copy machine," says Whiteside, a lieutenant colonel who was transferred to a captain's position in maintenance, for which he had no training. The official reason: "career broadening"—though Whiteside and other pilots insist it was to make examples of them. Burdick had been handpicked by Fenimore to replace Hamlin as interim commander, and before even reading the report and meeting the unit, Burdick had been quoted in the press suggesting "sensitivity training" for the pilots.

To this day, the excuses for the retaliatory transfers are utterly inconsistent. Walt Wheeler by himself has offered multiple explanations: that the pilots failed to "maintain good order and discipline"; that their transfers were meant "to increase their chances of rising through the ranks"; that they were transferred because of their "inattentiveness to flying." Anonymous headquarters sources told *Air Force Times* the transfers were for "discriminatory behavior." Burdick, too, has floated several scenarios for Whiteside's transfer: from career broadening to failed leadership to mental instability (a charge so baseless that Hyde had the Pentagon expunge it from Whiteside's record). Ecker says he has heard every reason for his move from career broadening to his early-retirement wishes (which he didn't have) to his flying with low fuel a year and a half before Burdick even came to the 174th. Burdick, for his part, hadn't given any of the pilots reasons for their transfers besides career broadening.

> THOUGH THEY WERE HIGHLY SKILLED PILOTS AND DECORATED COMBAT VETERANS, MANY WERE TRANSFERRED TO NON-FLYING JOBS.

Shortly after those transfers, a conflicted Bob Rose signed an affidavit admitting his false testimony to Fenimore's investigators and his unprofessional relationship with Parker. That admission was sufficient to cause Pataki to order the New York State inspector general to conduct what would become the two-year investigation. This civilian report strongly suggests that both Rose and Parker lied under oath to Fenimore's investigators. But neither Fenimore nor the Pentagon's National Guard bureau has ever displayed any appetite for pursuing perjury charges against them, though Fenimore's chief of staff had been quick to threaten Limpert and Zaccaro with sanctions if they lied under oath. Fenimore wrote the *Wall Street Journal* that he might have pursued Rose and Parker if Rose had signed the affidavit before retiring (Rose *did* sign the affidavit before retiring). A suddenly uncooperative Parker refused to testify to the state investigation, and Guard officials didn't order her to cooperate, despite Gen. Shepperd's earlier promise to "hold people accountable."

The New York inspector general's report so eviscerates the Guard investigation that the pilots have constructed what they call a "Page by Page Destruction" of the military report using the state's evidence. But they weren't exonerated as they had hoped, since the executive summary of that report neatly parcels blame all around, giving Pataki and his adjutant general cover to move on without apology or redress. Rick Butterfield, a New York state policeman who worked for the inspector general's investigative team, says, "All of the factual information is in there. But it's like in English Lit. when you discuss *Catcher in the Rye*. By the time the professor gets done, you wonder if he read the same thing you did." Although detailing everything from the discredited military report to Parker's flying mishaps to the Parker/Rose relationship, the executive summary is thick with weepy regrets over Parker's—and the Guard's—lost chance at making gender-integration history.

"We thought we'd get justice," says Anthony Zaccaro, "but they gave us something that reads like a bad issue of *Cosmo*."

In another stab at justice, six of the transferred pilots filed whistleblower complaints with the Department of Defense inspector general, alleging that they were retaliated against for their complaints about the Guard investigation. The whistleblower investigators concluded that various pilots had been banned from the squadron building, had had their flight gear taken and their pay withheld, had been threatened with AWOL notices, had had their mental fitness questioned and negative comments added after the fact to their performance reports, and had been lied to about their "career broadening" transfers that were actually career-ending.

Nonetheless, the inspector general concluded that the pilots had not been retaliated against. To prove that charge, it must be shown that adverse actions are taken because of protected contacts the pilots made

that are known by the repriser, and that wouldn't have occurred anyway.

Translation: The Boys from Syracuse may have been screwed, but it wasn't because they called their congressmen. A disgruntled source close to the investigation frames it thus: "That report sat and got hacked up four or five times. It's a bunch of bulls—. They fired a bunch of guys who shouldn't have been fired. If they didn't shut up about what went on—they were gonna hammer you."

The horror story at Syracuse may not be an isolated one. Almost weekly, there is another report on how the military is hemorrhaging pilots, who are ostensibly lured by better hours and paychecks at civilian airlines. But in a recent *Navy Times* survey, "loss of confidence in leadership" is the top reason given by 75 percent of officers who are planning to leave after their current commitment (95 percent of Navy pilots say they are planning on departing).

That's hardly surprising. In a climate where military leaders join their civilian counterparts in trying to stamp out the much dreaded "warrior culture," why shouldn't the warriors take their leave? As former pilot Ray DuFour says, "People come up to me all the time and say, 'It must be the ultimate game.' But there are no playoffs. There's no bronze medal, no silver medal. There's a winner and a loser. I have over 40 friends that are dead from my 'business.'"

The story of the Boys from Syracuse is lamentably ironic. Decorated men of valor who've spent lifetimes wagering their hides in their country's service are telling their kids to stay out of the military. Three investigations cataloging inequities have managed to give the guilty enough cover to continue the charade. And the only justice the Boys from Syracuse are likely to get will come because they've held their noses, pooled their money, and hired Kelly Flinn's PR firm. ♦

The Big Enchilada

Who Will Govern the Golden State?

By Michael Barone

The California governor's race—with two millionaires, Democrats Al Checchi and Jane Harman, and two statewide officials, Democrat Gray Davis and Republican Dan Lungren, contending—is easily the most important election this year. For one thing, it is the Democrats' best chance of picking up a big-state governorship; for another, the race tells us a lot about public opinion on the number-one issue in most polls, education.

There is some good news for the Democrats. They now hold the governorship of only one of the eight largest states, Florida, and they seem likely to lose it; they are far behind in Texas, New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan and behind in Illinois and Ohio. But California is the big enchilada. If the Democrats win the governorship and hold the legislature, they will control redistricting for 2002 in a state with 52-plus U.S. House seats. They will get a chance to build an attractive track record for their party, as Republican governors have done in so many states in the 1990s. And they might create a viable presidential candidate—a help to a party whose list of prospective candidates is as embarrassingly short as the Republicans' is embarrassingly long.

But a Democratic victory in the California governor's race would tell us little about public opinion. Bill Clinton has carried California twice, with the same blend of cultural liberalism and economic moderation that Checchi, Harman, and Davis are banking on. The cultural issues the Democrats will use against Lungren—"choice, tobacco, and guns," as Harman puts it—are established winners for Democrats in the Pacific states. And though Republicans have held the California governorship for 16 years, Democrats came close to winning it the last two times it was open (Tom Bradley in 1982 and Dianne Feinstein in 1990). A win this year would not necessarily mean that California or the country had moved left.

In fact, it might mean the opposite. For what California Democrats are saying on education shows that opinion on this leading issue has moved sharply to the

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right. Checchi, Harman, and even Davis sound very much like William Bennett or Chester Finn. They have repudiated the dogma of the teachers unions, whose political slaves Democrats heretofore have been.

The education debate is more starkly drawn in California than anywhere else. Back in the 1950s and '60s, the California school system seemed a model for the nation. It expanded to meet a vast population influx, adding a huge community-college system (Lungren calls it "a jewel"), and produced some of the nation's highest test scores.

But that was another California. About 20 years ago, the state embarked on an experiment, backed by Democrats and never effectively opposed by Republicans, that can be described with only slight exaggeration as a decision to stop teaching children to speak, read, and write English. Those with custody of the public-school system—the schools of education, the teachers unions, the school administrators, and the Democrats in Willie Brown's Assembly who blocked any possibility of reform—adopted policies of bilingual education and whole-language reading instruction that left California ranking 49th in the country on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The affluent Left, epitomized by the wealthy donors of Westside Los Angeles, actively supported this experiment, and the affluent Right, epitomized by the Orange County Lincoln Club, responded with blank indifference. These groups could send their children to private schools, and who cared about the immigrant kids anyway? As Al Checchi said in late April, when asked whether he sent his children to public school, "Of course not. Why would I do that?"

> ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO, THE STATE EMBARKED ON AN EXPERIMENT THAT CAN BE DESCRIBED AS A DECISION TO STOP TEACHING CHILDREN ENGLISH.

But after 20 years, the contrast between California's highly competent private economy and its highly incompetent public schools—between Silicon Valley and the public-education system—has become too stunning to ignore. "We can't lead the nation and the world in prosperity and opportunity if we continue to accept schools that are falling behind," says candidate Checchi. "We're enjoying a good measure of prosperity. The only threat to that prosperity is our K through 12 system," according to Gray Davis, who has held high state office for 23 of the last 25 years and is supported by the very teachers unions that have influenced the school system more than anyone else. Noting the mismatch between the supply of unskilled labor produced by public schools and the demand for skilled workers produced by the private economy, Davis goes on, "We are not growing our own. We have to import people from Asia and Europe."

On the education issue, these politicians are struggling to keep up with the people they seek to lead. Others have already taken action. High-tech millionaire Ron Unz and Orange County teacher Gloria Matta Tuchman put Proposition 227 on the June ballot, to stop the practice of teaching non-English-speaking pupils in their native language (a practice known as "foreign-language instruction") and instead provide them one year of "sheltered immersion," instruction in English, but with special allowances for the linguistic transition they are going through. In a late-April Field poll, Prop. 227 led 71-21 percent, and 58-41 percent among Latinos.

Despite its popularity, the three Democrats all oppose Prop. 227, and Lungren has so far declined to back it, for fear of undermining local control (though he admits that the huge Los Angeles Unified district will be among the last to embrace reform on its own). All four, however, criticize current bilingual-education policies to some degree. Bill Honig, meanwhile, the man who as state superintendent introduced whole-language instruction, now is calling for more use of phonics. And outgoing governor Pete Wilson, who allowed class size to balloon, has put up the money to cap classes at 20 kids in kindergarten through grade three.

Of all the candidates, Checchi has the most detailed proposals. He spent a year traveling the state studying government. Most of the coverage of his campaign emphasizes the $50 million he is spending on television ads, but his command of issues is impressive, and so is his feel for how government affects ordinary people. "We need radical change, because we have had radical failure," he says. "Restoring the educational system is my first, second, and third priority." He would end "social promotion," calling for tutoring and summer school for kids who fail achievement tests, then retention of those who still perform below grade level. He would lengthen the school day. He would start compulsory preschool immersion programs for kids who don't speak English and allow a maximum of two years of foreign-language instruction, with tutoring after that if necessary. He would lift the cap on the number of charter schools and try to

make educators more "entrepreneurial." He would like to see private-school choice "some day" and calls for more school-to-work programs. Responding to polls and to what he has learned in his travels, Checchi says, "We have to spend right, not just spend more."

Harman is much less specific but no less critical of the school system her party helped build. "Bilingual education has failed," she says. "The goal is to make every child proficient in English. Let communities figure out how to do it." She favors competency tests for students and holding principals accountable for schools. She wants small classes up through 12th grade. Vocational education should produce a workforce that can use advanced technology, she says, as workers do at her husband's Harman Industries plant in Northridge. Harman talks a lot about her skills at listening to others and forging consensus. She would "work with communities, listen to their ideas, generate something from the grass roots." Pabulum perhaps, but she is not looking for guidance solely from those who have had custody of the schools for the last 25 years. She opposes the proposal of state superintendent Delaine Eastin, a teachers-union favorite, to raise per-pupil expenditures to the national average.

Davis, who depends heavily on teachers unions and other traditionally Democratic groups, has used his considerable intellectual skills to come up with reforms that won't antagonize them. But even he employs rhetoric tinged with scorn for the current system. When asked why the system has deteriorated during his 23 years in state government, he talks wanly about how 1978's Proposition 13 cut revenues for schools, but then launches into fairly sharp criticism of the status quo. "We need to ask more of everyone, students, teachers, parents," he says. "If kids don't meet standards, they should go to summer school or be held back." On bilingual education, he would set a three-year limit on foreign-language instruction, and perhaps a two-year limit in elementary grades. He would spend $3 billion on textbooks; Los Angeles Unified can't seem to get them into children's hands. He would copy Chicago's practice of having every parent sign a contract promising to spend one hour a month in the children's schools and 20 minutes a night helping with homework. He would have the state take over poorly performing schools. He would have teacher performance reviewed by peers every year, with recertification every five years. On whole language, he says, "I'm more inclined to basics for the 21st century—a heavy dose of phonics, memorizing multiplication tables. Some of my supporters"—the teachers unions—"don't agree," he says. "But school is not about teachers, it's about students."

Lungren has supported education reform for years, but with no serious primary opponent and every reason to conserve money for a general-election race against a self-financing millionaire, he waited until April to run TV ads and come up with an education plan of his own. "Education would have been a Democratic issue four years ago," he says, "but people have moved beyond the answer that money is the sole remedy." Bilingual education he calls "a massive failure." He would discard new math and whole language for basic math and phonics, with student skill tests every year. "We need greater flexibility at the local level, with strict statewide standards, and accountability from teachers, from students, from administrators." He favors greater choice of schools, moving toward vouchers. He favors smaller classes and greater flexibility for school districts. He favors a proposed November ballot initiative that would ease requirements for charter schools and encourage the founding of charter schools in low-performing school districts. He has already succeeded in getting more places reserved at the University of California and the California State University system for community-college graduates. Harking back to the 1950s, he says, "I want to see California the kind of state I thought it was when I was growing up."

THE VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA, SPEAKING THROUGH THESE CANDIDATES, ARE ISSUING A STINGING REBUKE TO THE EDUCATION ESTABLISHMENT.

Of course there is no guarantee that any of these candidates would follow through on these reforms. And it is easy to see how some reforms could be sabotaged by teachers unions and education bureaucrats—what Bill Bennett calls "the Blob." But it is clear that the voters of California, speaking through these four candidates, are issuing a stinging rebuke to the public-school establishment.

They are demanding that kids be taught to speak, read, and write English. And there is no reason to think opinion is very different in other states. True, the situation is not quite as dire elsewhere, the contrast with a golden past not so glaring, the mismatch between a competent private economy and incompetent public schools not so obvious. But the point has general application. Voters are fed up with the work of the education apparat. They are ready to vote not for the candidate who promises to spend most on public

schools but for the one who promises to change them most dramatically.

One might suppose that this would give a big advantage to Republicans. But not necessarily. California is an apolitical commonwealth, where most media do not cover state government or politics (no Los Angeles or San Francisco TV station has a bureau in Sacramento), and any of these four candidates for governor could have walked into a shopping mall in January without being recognized. That gives an enormous advantage to the celebrity candidate (Ronald Reagan, Jerry Brown) and to the candidate who can spend vast sums of personal money. And it gives a big advantage to the candidate who has the discipline to concentrate on two or three popular arguments in his very limited time in the spotlight: This is how Pete Wilson, despite an acerbic personality, a small local base (San Diego), and middling poll ratings, has twice been elected senator and twice governor.

Kevin Chadwick

The Democrats in this race have similar skills. They are articulate graduates of elite schools who are adept at speaking in politically attractive language responsive to the polls. None grew up in California: Davis went to Stanford, returned to the state after law school, and immediately ran for office; Harman did attend high school in Los Angeles for a couple of years and lived there as a young adult, but has spent most of the last 20 years in Washington; Checchi, who grew up in Maryland and worked in Texas and Minnesota, moved to Beverly Hills while making money at Northwest Airlines. They are in tune with the secular sensibility that dominates such public discourse as there is in California.

Lungren has a different background. He was educated in Catholic schools (Notre Dame, Georgetown) and is the California version of a small-town boy, the son of Richard Nixon's physician who grew up in Long Beach when it was an Ozzie-and-Harriet suburb. He is less smooth and poll-driven than the Democrats, unafraid to stand up for his strong and, in some cases, unpopular views. In a pro-choice state, he proudly proclaims his opposition to abortion. But he is also politically adept enough to point out that on the only abortion issues likely to arise—parental consent, partial-birth abortion, and public funding—he stands with the large majority of voters. Lungren shows a solid command of the issues and a knowledge of state government that make him at least a match for any of the Democrats. Perhaps more important, he has the sunny optimism and self-confidence of the California of the 1950s, a time many look back on with longing, even though most voters don't remember it. He is ready to take on the three Democrats in a May televised debate, apparently confident of winning, however much they spend.

This is a race that could go to either party. The most recent polls show Democrats, who have been on the air more, leading Lungren in general-election pairings, but all the candidates poll under 50 percent. The outcome will have great practical political significance. But on education, the returns are already in. Three able and ambitious Democrats are harshly attacking the education policy that the Democratic party has backed for the last quarter century. Conservatives have carried the education issue, and in the long run, that should have much more significance for how Americans live than who becomes the next governor of California. ♦

Titian's Women

Boston's Gardner Museum Shows Off

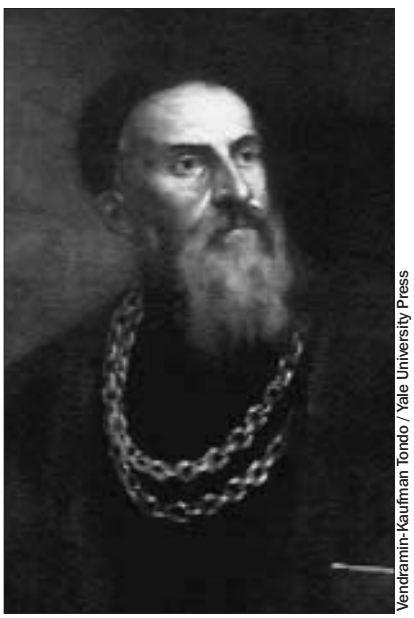
By David Gelernter

For sheer dazzling gorgeousness, precious few man-made objects hold their own against the paintings of Titian, the long-lived and enormously productive sixteenth-century Venetian, creator of the celebrated *Assunta*, the *Baccus and Ariadne*, the *Venus of Urbino*, and dozens of other masterpieces. The man loved paint. No painter loved it as much until the Dutch-born American Willem de Kooning came along in the twentieth century.

Titian reveled in color and texture and the play of light. Most of all he loved natural beauty—specifically good-looking women, undressed. His paintings throb with all kinds of ardor, and their gravitational pull changed art history; four centuries later, you can still feel the tug. Many of the best aspects of twentieth-century art come directly from Titian. Some of the worst do too. The man was important.

His early masterpieces, painted in the 1510s and the first part of the 1520s, have the clarity and super-saturated brilliance of a cloudless day. In his later work, painted until his death in 1576, the sharpness is gone but you see something new, the artist focusing his creative force not on the objects to be depicted but on the painting itself, on the wide-open problem of how to cover a flat rectangle with color.

The new idea underlying his later work emerges in such paintings as the *Entombment* (c. 1525) in the Louvre, with the startlingly close integration of its elements. The figures fill the frame. Energy echoes up and down a tight contrapuntal line of faces. The rust-orange theme-color leaps from garment to garment, then up to the sky; the dramatic close-in, low-down viewpoint pulls you in and makes the tight structure possible. You achieve such a painting not by working bottom-up—not by imagining the Virgin and Mary Magdalene and Nicodemus individually, then forming them into a group, then imagining the group from different angles. You work top-down. Here is a canvas; how do I fill it with force? For Titian (to overstate his approach only a little), paintings don't exist to depict people, people are the raw material for paintings.



Vendramin-Kaufman Tondo / Yale University Press

Attributed to Titian, Self-Portrait *(c. 1550)*

Earlier this year the Gardner Museum in Boston mounted a fascinating little show of Titian and the seventeenth-century Flemish master Peter Paul Rubens (but mainly Titian). The exhibition is over, but the melody lingers on, and so do the star attractions: Titian's *Europa* (1561) and Rubens's *Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel* (c. 1629). The Gardner owns both.

The Gardner Museum brought in from the Uffizi in Florence the Titian portrait that inspired Rubens's *Arundel*. But the exhibition centered on a more spectacular juxtaposition: *Europa* and a painstaking full-size 1628 copy by Rubens (now owned by the Prado in Madrid).

Rubens is a great figure in his own right, but his *Rape of Europa* is hideous—in a fascinating way, that brings out Titian's brilliance. For a few months the Gardner found a marvelous new way to illuminate its proudest possession.

Jupiter (the story goes) covets a beautiful princess named Europa. So he turns himself into a bull, gets the princess to hop aboard, and runs straight out to sea as she holds on for dear life. When they reach land, they gallop across the continent that is named in her honor.

Of course if *you* wanted to steal a princess, it's unlikely you would start by turning yourself into a bull or, come to think of it, a ruminant of any kind. You'd want to hold onto your princess, and a bull can't. This is important; the maiden has to cooperate or all bets are off, which means in turn that there is nothing grim or violent about the painting. As Titian sees it, Europa is terrified but ecstatic. Isabella Stewart Gardner, the American collector who opened her fancy villa to the public in 1903, described the piece beautifully:

A contributing editor to The Weekly Standard, *David Gelernter wrote "Unresolved Evil: On Justice and the End of the Unabomber" in the April 6 issue.*

"Every inch of paint in the picture seems full of joy."

So Europa clings to the bull's horns and the beast splashes forward with a knowing smile; Titian has painted the suavest bull you'll ever meet. Two cherubic winged putti hover like traffic-copters overhead, and a third trails the bull through the water as Europa's companions call helplessly from the fast-receding shore.

The picture centers on a great vibrant arc of energy, sweeping from the sea-putto at the lower left up through Europa's body, round the arch of her back-tilted neck, throat, and face to billow upward in a scarlet flutter of drapery to the pair of sky-putti and out the upper-left corner. The putti wheel and soar, the drapery floats, hooves splash, and the colors dazzle—they shouldn't work together, yet they do. The copper-rosy sunset and scarlet cape are set off by the cool blue sky, and also by the turquoise water. Titian has built an astonishing unity out of a driving, soaring, screaming, splashing, billowing tumult.

And Rubens underlines Titian's achievement by attempting the same feat and failing. The Rubens copy is literal, syllable-by-syllable, but the syllables don't add up and the composition disintegrates. Titian makes Europa and her cape the curved keystone of an arch—a tense, springy arch full of energy, like a strung bow. But in Rubens's version, the sky-putti stretch slightly farther to the right, the cape slightly farther left—and as a result the arch is gone; the bow snaps. Rubens's sky-putti don't soar—they hang in mid-air, but only temporarily, because the one on the right has clearly been shot down and is plummeting. And so Europa's alarmed expression seems to mean, "Look out for falling putto!"; the poor creature could easily hit her in the stomach. Rubens exchanges Titian's outrageous palette for something a little more tasteful, restrained—a cape of cool crimson instead of warm scarlet, a sky washed clean of copper-rose; the results are boring and vaguely repulsive.

The Rubens and the Titian made a brilliant juxtaposition, a curatorial tour de force. But for some reason the curators don't want to admit it. *Titian and Rubens: Power, Politics, and Style* is the name of the catalogue and the show, lest we get the wrong idea that the topic here is the mere art of painting. It seems that King Philip II of Spain commissioned a group of six paintings from Titian, leaving the subjects up to the artist. Philip ruled lands in Asia, Africa, and America as well as Europe—and so "the image of Jove leaping continents with Europa clinging to his back," writes Hilliard Goldfarb in the catalogue, "carried a political implication for Philip quite apart from any sensual response it provoked." This appears to be the exhibit's central thesis—an interesting observation that has nothing to do with art; that adds nothing to our understanding of Titian's achievement in *Europa* or of Rubens's copy.

I CAN'T BE THE ONLY MAN TO FIND TITIAN'S WOMEN UNALLURING. HOW FETCHING CAN A NON-CEREBRAL WOMAN BE?

To seek the origins of twentieth-century art, dive into Titian. You discover as you go deeper that he approached women and men on very different terms, and that this difference is reflected in the art of our own era. It is a topic that fascinates us, supposedly—but we tend to be too squeamish to face it squarely.

Titian is supposed to be the "epic poet of sensuality," as Kenneth Clark puts it, "an absolute master of flesh painting." And *Europa*—this half-naked girl overwhelmed by a bestial male and loving it—is widely regarded as an erotic masterpiece. But I can't be the only man in the world to find Titian's women utterly unalluring. You might guess that we non-responders are put off by the artist's fondness for the (so to speak) full-figured look, but that's not the problem. Look at another hefty lady from the same era, Correggio's Antiope in the *Jupiter and Antiope* of 1524. She lies sleeping with her head thrown back and lips slightly parted, abandoned (her face says) to ardent dreams, her intriguing mind set off by the cool, vulnerable stillness of her sleeping body as Jupiter tiptoes over for a look. Correggio's figure is everything Europa is not: mysterious, alluring, beautiful.

The art critic Arthur Danto discusses in a brilliant short piece Titian's *Danaë* (a painting that is celebrated for demonstrating, among other things, that certain words simply cannot be pronounced). Danaë, like Europa, is seduced by the ever-resourceful Jupiter, got up this time as a shower of gold. Alongside Danaë, reports Danto, "the art of Florence"—Michelangelo's art—"looks chill, abstract, contrived, cerebral." And sure enough, there is nothing chill or cerebral about Danaë or Europa. Nothing cerebral or even halfway intelligent. And exactly how fetching can a wholly non-cerebral woman be? Correggio's Antiope thinks and is lovely. In *Europa*, the bull is smarter than the girl.

The issue goes deeper than erotic content, for Titian was a master of bodies but not faces. His faces tend to be beautifully rendered and completely predictable. His naked young ladies smile seductively, his mourners grieve, his saints are saintly, his revelers revel—so what else is new? They lack not merely erotic allure but spiritual depth.

Titian, says Danto, is warm; Michelangelo is abstract and chilly. But Michelangelo's Virgin at San Lorenzo has more spiritual depth (pondering quietly with her far-away eyes) than all Titian's paintings rolled

together. And Michelangelo accomplished this feat at least a dozen times—created faces that are endlessly deep, infinitely moving, artistically perfect.

Some of Titian's portraits do have convincing depth; they tend to depict men, for example the celebrated *Man with a Glove* (c. 1520) in the Louvre. Such late works as the *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence* (c. 1567) or the Munich *Crowning with Thorns* (1571) bring the extremes of good and evil together in a portentous, electric atmosphere that is dense with meaning. But the spiritual content of these greatly revered late paintings is conjured up by technical wizardry, by Titian's amazing ability to paint light—not by psychological acuity.

"The Venetian conception of painting went with an entire transformation in the materials of the artist," writes Danto of Titian and the Venetian approach he epitomized, "with canvas esteemed for its texture and paint for its physicality and brushes for their gestural responsiveness." "Pollock and de Kooning and the New York School," he writes, "are in their philosophical address to art Venetian to the core."

True. Titian predicts modern art. The greatest art of the twentieth century reflects his strengths and weaknesses. The best cut-outs of Henri Matisse, the best paintings of Stuart Davis and de Kooning are lyrical and ardent, with novel, gorgeous colors. They are overwhelmingly beautiful, and on the whole lack spiritual depth (although de Kooning's best paintings, abstracts from the late 1940s and early 1960s, are deeper, it seems to me, than Titian's best).

Modern painters have certainly shared Titian's preoccupation with the naked female. His work marks

Gardner Museum, Boston

Titian's Europa *(1561)*

Museo del Prado / Yale University Press

Titian's Danaë *(1546)*

the beginning of the long decline of the male nude. By the twentieth century, male nudes were virtually extinct: Lucian Freud and Alberto Giacometti and a few others were interested, but Matisse and Pablo Picasso painted mainly women; even such masters as Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Cornell and de Kooning depicted women, to the extent they depicted anybody. Titian's truest modern disciple is Amedeo Modigliani, who was even more obsessed than the master with naked females. Modigliani painted nudes even warmer, more vivid, more spectacularly palpable than Titian's—nudes who stare out at us with blank eyes in empty faces.

If *Europa* fails as pornography, at least it succeeds as art. That's something. Perhaps it even succeeds as pornography. Having glanced at Titian's differing approaches to men and women, we ought to glance at men's and women's differing approaches to Titian. The Gardner's director Anne Hawley contributes the sharpest comment in the *Titian and Rubens* catalogue. On the wall directly beneath *Europa*, she notes, Mrs. Gardner mounted fabric from one of her favorite ball gowns. "She clearly identified herself with the picture and perhaps with Europa herself; could Gardner be suggesting that she has left her dress and dissolved into the picture as Europa?"

If the female lead is unattractive, it stands to reason that women in the audience will be less bothered than men. And it could be that women have always cared more for the erotic element in Titian than men have. Could be that men who find these paintings erotic are responding less to the art than to the female response it provokes. We know at any rate that in the Alcázar in Madrid, home of Spanish royalty, *Europa* was displayed in a gallery that was closed to women—suggesting that men have long been disturbed by the female response to this painting.

But why read about Titian when you can look at his paintings? *Europa* is often called the finest European painting in America. Whether it is or not, it is beautiful and profoundly significant. It points the way to abstract art, and beyond abstract art. The artists who count most today bring the gestural freedom, inventiveness, and spectacular energy of abstract painting back home to representational pictures; they still look to Titian as a guide. He was a big man. There is no end of his influence in sight. ♦

When East Meets West

Winging It at the National Gallery

By Andrew Ferguson

The East Building of the National Gallery of Art turns twenty on June 1, and in honor of the occasion let us throw caution to the winds and do something unheard of in a story about an art museum. Let us quote Jimmy Carter.

The then-president spoke at the opening festivities back in 1978, in the bright sunshine on a steamy afternoon. Seated before him on the plaza, where Fourth Street intersects the National Mall, was a gathering of Washington officialdom and the burghers of the American art establishment. Among them were the East Building's architect, I. M. Pei, and the benefactor who had paid for it, Paul Mellon.

"I. M. Pei and his associates have given us an architectural masterpiece," Carter said, going on to make the new gallery sound like an amusing Beaujolais: "sensitive to its surroundings, dignified and daring, . . . monumental, yet without pomposity."

And then he said something true, which is the part worth quoting.

"This building," the president said, "tells us something about ourselves, about the role of art in our lives, about the relations between public life and the life of art, and about the maturing of an American civilization."

All true! Truer, probably, than Jimmy Carter could have known, and true in many and various ways.

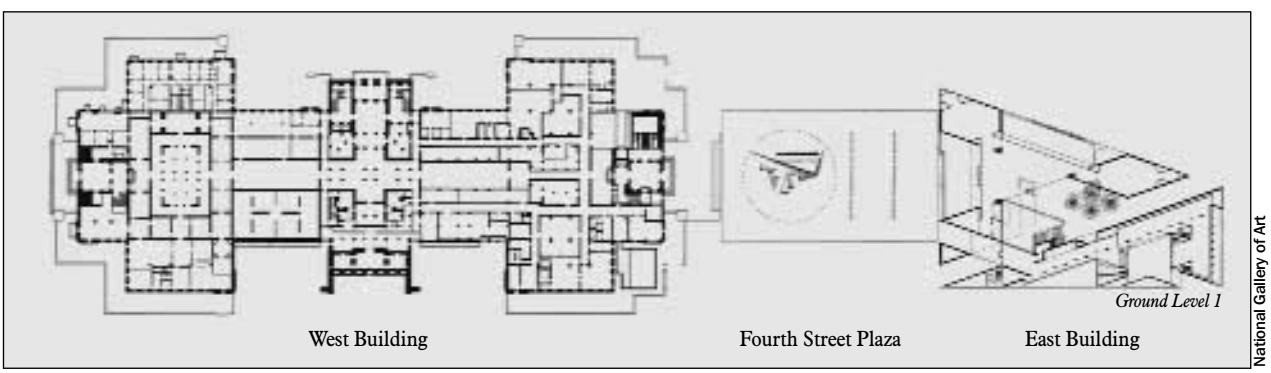
The National Mall—that grand axis stretching from the Capitol building through the Washington monument to the Reflecting Pool and the Lincoln Memorial beyond—is the most public of public properties, and home to some of the nation's most unfortunate architecture. A couple of buildings are quaint and eccentric, like the original redbrick Smithsonian "castle" from 1851. Others are absurd, like the concrete donut Gordon Bunshaft created in 1974 for the Hirschorn Gallery. Still others, like the 1976 Air and Space Museum and the 1964 Museum of American History, are merely inept and stupid.

None of this can be said of Pei's building. The design is an ingenious example of late modernism, sharply angular and unadorned, sheathed in shaded marble, constructed with a lavish budget and the finest craftsmanship the 1970s could muster. The East Building holds down the Mall's northeastern corner. Behind it the Capitol looms up. Across the street on the Mall side sits the gallery's original building, now known merely as the West Building, a massive domed and columned and porticoed pile opened in 1941. Scarcely a quarter century separates the two gallery buildings in time, but walking from one to the other you can't help but think they come from different worlds. And so they do.

It is this contrast with its neoclassical companions that forces the East Building to continue to speak loudly, even giddily, on the questions President Carter described. Twenty years after its opening, it still "tells us something," in Carter's phrase, about "the maturing of an American civilization."

And what does the East Building tell us? It helps if you remember that "maturing" is sometimes a euphemism for "decay."

The National Gallery of Art was the last of the great robber-baron monuments. The robber baron in this instance was Andrew Mellon, the Pittsburgh financier (money man to Carnegie and Frick) who in his dotage abandoned his active business career to become treasury secretary under Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. In Washington, as in



Floor Plan of the National Gallery

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Pittsburgh, he became a civic booster. One of his projects was the construction of the Federal Triangle, a vast acreage of government office buildings along the Mall, done in the neoclassical style.

By the mid-1930s, architectural forward-lookers were already in the grip of modernism, and the verdict on Mellon's project was nearly universal: The buildings were "brutal," the critics said, and—ye gods—"unoriginal." Mellon was unmoved, as billionaires usually are. Washington and its architecture, he believed, should "express the soul of America," and that soul was best expressed in the neoclassical form. It was there already in the city's oldest official buildings—the original city hall, the Patent Office, the executive mansion, the Capitol itself. In continuing the tradition, Mellon said, he was fulfilling the promise of the Founders: "We are justifying that faith which [they] had from the beginning in the future greatness of America."

Much as his critics might have wished otherwise, Mellon was not a philistine. Over the years he had quietly acquired one of the world's great private collections of painting and sculpture, with the intention of bequeathing it to his country. He hoped it would form the nucleus of a national gallery along the lines of England's, and he offered as well to pay for a building to house it. Congress reserved a plot of land on the Mall, between Seventh and Fourth streets, and Mellon hired the nation's leading traditionalist architect, John Russell Pope, to continue the neoclassical scheme begun with the Triangle. Mellon knew what he was doing.

"Andrew Mellon decided from the outset that he wanted a powerful building designed in a classical idiom," the gallery's first curator, John Walker, later wrote. Mellon felt that people need "buildings more magnificent, more spatial, and less utilitarian than the apartments and houses they normally inhabit."

Pope was a design consultant on the Federal Triangle, and something of a propagandist for the neoclassical revival in America. The Jefferson Memorial is his, as are a variety of Washington's signature buildings, including Constitution Hall. He also designed the Triangle's most elaborate building, the National Archives. With its endlessly repeated Corinthian columns, numberless pilasters, voluptuous statuary, and billowing entablature, the Archives was neoclassicism on stilts—and a little rich even for Mellon's blood. Mellon convinced Pope to make a sleeker building for the National Gallery, more modest in its adornment, but still grand and classical enough to be worthy of the great art it would house.

Grandeur wasn't a problem. At the time of its construction, Pope's gallery was the largest marble building in the world. Its façade stretches nearly the length of three football fields, and what might have been a deadly, endless slab of rose-tinted stone is instead, thanks to Pope's delicate hand, a varied, subtly shifting arrangement of paneled surfaces, modest setbacks, empty niches, and blind windows. Small gardens with fountains flank the grand stairway outside. A ten-foot wall surrounds the building, hiding the office windows on the first floor and creating the unlikely illusion that the entire weighty edifice is hovering slightly above ground. Inside, past the thirty-foot bronze doors, a dome derived from the Pantheon rises one hundred feet on twenty-four columns of green and black, and off to the left and right are a series of symmetrically arranged viewing rooms. These in turn are set around two large garden courts with vaulted skylights, filled with statuary and fresh flowers.

BY THE TIME THE NEOCLASSICAL GALLERY OPENED, ITS NEOCLASSICISM WAS AS DEAD AS ITS ARCHITECT.

Pope was a classicist but not an ideologue. A colleague once said of him, "He was always guided by an ideal, the perfection of classical architecture adapted to contemporary life." Adaptation, the press of the present on the past, was essential to his method, and his design for the National Gallery is far more eclectic than Pope's critics have claimed. Its low-slung, streamlined look gives off a hint of Art Deco; in its understated exterior ornamentation, it even shows the influence of modernism. It is a wholly original synthesis, tied together by Pope's, and Mellon's, belief in art as an uplifting enterprise and a source of quiet pleasure, best enjoyed in repose amid noble surroundings.

The architect and the benefactor died within a day of each other, when construction was just underway. The National Gallery was Pope's last work and his greatest—and unquestionably the most inspiring museum on the Mall, fully suitable to its purpose, an act of deference and gratitude to the masterpieces within.

And everyone hated it—everyone, that is, but museum-goers. By the time the museum opened in 1941, neoclassicism was as dead as John Russell Pope, and the world of academic architecture was dissolving into the overstimulated pursuit of fashion that we know today. In thrall to modernism, and particularly to the pitiless reductionism of Bauhaus, the young architects who had taken control of the city's Commission on Fine Arts nearly got Pope's design rejected—and had the building not been an outright gift from Mellon, involving no public money in its construction, they might have succeeded. It lacked, they said, the "free imagination" that modern architecture demanded of its practitioners. Perhaps the design's most furious critic was Joseph Hudnut, dean of the Harvard School of Architecture, who

pronounced it "pompous and overblown." The National Gallery was a favorite object of scorn throughout Hudnut's career, the exemplar of all that contemporary architecture rebelled against. It was "the last of the Romans," Hudnut said. And, more darkly, "the death mask for an ancient culture."

Hudnut's contempt for neoclassicism in general and Pope in particular was deeply impressed on his students at Harvard, among whom was a brilliant young immigrant from China named I. M. Pei.

The decision to expand the gallery was made in the mid-1960s. John Walker, by then the museum's director, persuaded Paul and Ailsa Mellon, Andrew's heirs, to finance the construction of a new building on a site across Fourth Street from the original gallery. Pope himself had sketched a possible annex for the site—in neoclassical style, of course.

National Gallery of Art

John Russell Pope's West Building, 1941

Andrew Mellon had conceived the gallery as an institution carefully insulated from the pressures of politics and artistic fashion. Money for upkeep came from Congress, but all acquisitions were to be privately funded. The actions of the gallery's trustees, according to the charter, "shall not be subject to review by any officer or agency other than a court of law." Mellon had insisted—and the charter established—that the gallery display only works of the "highest quality," as reflected in Mellon's own collection of Old Masters. To reinforce the point, the gallery instituted a policy of refusing to accept donations of works by any artist who hadn't been dead twenty years. (The policy was violated only once, in the early 1960s, to admit the collection of Chester Dale, who wanted to donate some early Picassos and Matisses along with his collection of French Impressionists.)

And so for twenty-five years the gallery steadily expanded its holdings along the lines Mellon had prescribed. His original bequest of Italian, Dutch, and British art became the nucleus he had hoped for, drawing donations of similar or higher quality. The result was one of the world's preeminent collections of Western painting from shortly before the Renaissance to the cusp of the twentieth century.

In a memoir, Walker compared the attitude of Mellon and the gallery's other early benefactors to that of European nobles: "The collections they formed were to be of masterpieces. . . . But unlike their princely precursors, what they assembled was intended to go into public museums. Patriotism and popular availability, they thought, would justify their vast expenditures. If the poor, the underprivileged, the 'ethnic minorities' stayed away, it was not their concern. In their opinion the museum's obligations ended with the display of beautiful works of art. . . . Museums do not exist solely for the noise and turmoil of hordes of schoolchildren!"

Well, curators don't write stuff like *that* anymore, and even by 1969, when Walker retired, his views were deemed wildly anachronistic—fuddy-duddyism and worse—within the art world.

"It was as if," the critic Hilton Kramer complained, "an intellectual moat separated the National Gallery from its own time." This, of course, was the whole idea, though Kramer and other critics and curators found the arrangement inexplicable and irresponsible. By the late 1960s, intellectual moats were no longer in fashion—were considered, in fact, to be insults to the very idea of democracy and popular taste-making. The National Gallery of Art had been by definition an "elitist" enterprise, broadly understood, and "elitist" was now an epithet. Walker's (and Andrew Mellon's) era ended immediately with his departure, when he turned the directorship over to his protégé, J. Carter Brown. It was Brown who oversaw the expansion of the gallery into the new building and thereby, as his admirers said, "brought the museum into the twentieth century." (The museum had always been in the twentieth century, of course, but people were starting to talk like this in the 1960s.)

Brown soon became famous as a skillful diplomat, exquisitely sensitive to the tastes of his various con-

stituencies on Capitol Hill, in the press, and on the board of trustees. His résumé was a curious hybrid. He had studied with Bernard Berenson at the scholarly enclave I Tatti, where he learned to savor art, and he had earned an MBA at Harvard, where he learned to please the customers—and the more customers the better. From the start, for example, Brown embraced the nascent trend toward "blockbuster shows," those enormous crowd-pleasers that travel from city to city in a swirl of publicity, festooned with all the trappings of the road company of *Cats*. Just as crucially, he wanted to expand the gallery's collection to include modern art—particularly the abstract art that Andrew Mellon had found incomprehensible. Brown quietly dropped the now-infamous "twenty-year" rule, as the gallery acquired Motherwells and Rothkos, Klines and Pollocks and de Koonings.

"My own hope," wrote Brown, "is to see the collections grow more and more into the twentieth century, as the definition of an Old Master changes."

The advancing perspective of history was revealed in a lopsided ratio: The gallery would reserve one building, Pope's, for the first twenty-five centuries of artistic endeavor, and one building for the past sixty years. But displaying modern art was only one reason for the gallery's expansion, and a relatively minor one at that. For the East Building was meant to reflect the new definition of art, and of art museums.

Pope's stuffy old pile was raised up in an era when all you needed to run an art museum was a handful of guards, carpenters, cleaning ladies, and volunteers, under the loose supervision of a small curatorial staff. But by 1969, a cutting-edge museum—and no one in his right mind wanted to be associated with any other kind—was a spectacle, a happening (as we used to say), with shops, restaurants, hotel-sized kitchens for catering, retail space, open areas for cocktail parties and fund-raisers, auditoriums, classrooms for adult-extension programs, places to spend money and buy merchandise, laboratories for conservation work, shops, libraries, TV and film studios, shops, and honeycombs of office space for the people who specialized in all of the above, not to mention a large army of full-time publicists, catalogue writers, interior designers, researchers, historians, and curators. Museum upkeep was now a profession—the stuff of graduate study, advanced degrees, and doctoral dissertations. To the extent that the "museologist" concerned himself with art, he was to make it "accessible" and (in the new adjectival form) "fun." Under Brown, the moat was filled and paved over, and the hordes of schoolchildren streamed in.

PEI'S POINT IS PHILOSOPHICAL: WE DON'T USE ORNAMENTS BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT THEM.

Brown and Paul Mellon chose Pei as architect for the new building. In hindsight he seems the inevitable choice, for today he is as close to a celebrity as American architecture has produced since the death of Frank Lloyd Wright. In Hudnut's School of Architecture, he had been an acolyte of Walter Gropius, the founder of Bauhaus, and Pei's buildings were sufficiently ugly to keep him in good odor with the academics who set architectural standards. But Pei was a modernist with a twist. Most of Gropius's students had graduated as fierce purists and gone off to lives of relative professional obscurity, railing against the corruptions of commercialism and capital. Pei, by contrast, had gone to work for a real-estate developer. His success led him to found his own firm with scores of employees, a Madison Avenue atelier, where he landed one fat corporate account after another. He drew his friends and connections from the upper reaches of Manhattan and Washington society: Kay Graham, Jock Whitney, Joseph Alsop, and more Kennedys than you could shake a stick at.

In designing the new gallery, Pei faced several difficulties, which he overcame with varying degrees of ingenuity. The site is in the shape of a trapezoid, nearly nine acres in all, requiring a structure of equally unusual dimensions. Meanwhile, the East Building had to accommodate the multiple purposes of a modern museum. Only 12 percent of the new space would be reserved for the display of art. The rest was swallowed up by a grand atrium (for parties and the hordes of schoolkids), offices, loading docks, storage space, an auditorium, all those restaurants and shops, and a large academic enterprise called the Center for the Advanced Study of the Visual Arts.

But the most telling restrictions were ones that Pei, as an ideological modernist, imposed on himself. The construction of the East Building lasted almost ten years, and the whole agonizing process was preserved in a PBS documentary called *A Place to Be*. In its opening scene, Pei discusses with colleagues his design for the new building. In a burst of inspiration he had bisected the trapezoid with a diagonal, creating a single building composed of two triangles—one for the art displays, the other for the more important offices and study center.

"This is perhaps the most sensitive site in the United States," Pei tells his colleagues. "The old Pope building, being of neoclassical style, managed to have columns, pilasters, and all kinds of moldings to make its surfaces"—and here his voice betrays a hint of sarcasm—"uh, *interesting*, shall we say. But we don't have those devices anymore."

We don't have those devices anymore. The flat assertion encompasses all by itself the yawning chasm that separates Pope's building from Pei's. Pei wasn't referring to the state of contemporary craftsmanship in the American building trades. Surely, with his large budget, Pei could have located somewhere a stonemason or two who were still able to fashion pilasters and columns to make his building "interesting." No, Pei's statement is philosophical: We don't construct those pleasing ornaments because we don't want them. History has moved on; an architect who uses columns and moldings is rummaging through a discredited past, abandoning his prerogatives as an artist. Without such devices, however, an architect is freed from the dead hand of history to make his expressive statement. According to the modernist credo, after all, architecture is done in service of . . . the architect.

And Pei's East Building is a feverishly expressive statement, an advertisement for the cleverness of the man who designed it. In place of ornamentation, Pei substituted geometry. The triangular motif recurs deliriously. The corners of the exterior walls are the apexes of triangles. The towers are triangles. Inside, the coffered ceilings are patterned in triangles. Structural columns are done in triangles; the inlays of the floors are triangles. The men's rooms, the maitre d's desk in the terrace restaurant, the roof of the skylight—triangles, triangles, triangles. And where triangles are inconvenient, Pei substituted hexagons and tetrahedrons—in the elevators, for example, and in the small, sharp-edged skylights that erupt from the plaza between the two buildings.

Pei's plan has no right angles—none—and here again the upshot is philosophical, even metaphysical; where Pope's classical forms offer the order and resolution of a comprehensible world, the East Building's endless triangulation suggests a multiplicity of points of view, relativity in stone. "The angles cheerfully frustrate one's sense of measurement," wrote one critic, who meant it as a compliment. The effect is either annoying or stimulating, depending on your disposition. Either way, no one has accused Pei's building of being dreary. Pope meant to induce repose and serenity and a sense of grandeur in museum-goers. Pei wants to hop them up. In a cutting-edge art museum, the curator's worst fear is that someone might get bored. There is never a dull moment in the East Building—a fitting leisure-time option for the visitor who's taking a break from watching TV.

"We built a circus," Pei said. Brown agreed. "The building has to be designed in such a way that young people will find it interesting to go there," he wrote. "The main thing is that it be fun to visit."

But what, you might ask, about the poor fellow who's come to the art museum to look at art? You walk under a low overhang and enter the atrium—"It's designed for a mob scene," Pei remarked—and are at once bedazzled by the soaring skylight, the oddly placed ledges, the ramps and escalators and crisscrossing bridges. It is a less-grand version of the huge lobbies John Portman designed for the Hyatt Hotels in the 1970s. But where's the bellhop? Where's the registration desk? Come to think of it, where the hell is the art? One exhibition space is tucked off to the left behind you. Another is hidden above you beyond a balcony. A third is in the basement below, and a fourth is through a narrow doorway up ahead. You can get a map at the information desk, but all the map really tells you is that you're in a building shaped like a triangle. Which you knew.

But there's more art than you might first suspect. There are pieces in the atrium, and more outside the building. The works illustrate one of the many unintentional ironies of modernist architecture. Modernism forbade any conventional adornment, of course. But modernist architects,

National Gallery of Art

I. M. Pei's East Building, 1978

having stripped their buildings of decoration, noticed that the buildings lacked a certain—how to put it?—*decoration*. So they began commissioning art to adorn their unadorned buildings. Hence the careers, the fame, and the fabulous wealth of Henry Moore, Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, and other brand names of public art circa 1975.

Each of them, not coincidentally, was commissioned to create works that would add "visual interest" to the otherwise blank stone walls of Pei's gallery. And most of them, being contemporary artists, were comically disdainful of pragmatic considerations. Pei chose Moore's sculpture from a catalogue—by this time, the lucky Brit was in such corporate demand that he had become a mail-order house. As originally designed, Moore's *Knife Edge Mirror Two Piece* would have blocked the entrance to the museum so no one could have gotten in or out. (It was repositioned.) Calder's atrium mobile, ingeniously entitled *Untitled*, was designed to hang from the skylight; at five thousand pounds, it would have brought down the whole building. (It was eventually redesigned and hangs there still.) Other works, alas, were put in place as the artists wished. Anthony Caro was asked to produce a piece to rest on a ledge in the atrium, and sure enough he produced *Ledge Piece*, a small slag heap of corroded metal. James Rosati, perhaps in homage to Calder, contributed another *Untitled*. Isamu Noguchi's *Great Rock of Inner Seeking* is a big hunk of bronze.

It could have been worse. For the entrance—in the place where Moore's bolus now stands—Pei had originally commissioned a piece by Jean Dubuffet. *The Welcome Parade* was in the trademark style of the French absurdist: a collection of figures done in black and white, presumably museum-goers, outsized and grotesque. It was a satire, a mockery of the boobs who would come to the gallery.

In the documentary *A Place to Be*, we see Pei and Brown examining a maquette of Dubuffet's piece before a model of the East Building. "Don't you think this makes a great place to be photographed?" Pei exclaims.

National Gallery of Art

Interior of the East Building

"You know, you come with your family from, from . . . Iowa or someplace!" The joke—the joke on the Iowans—would be delicious!

But Brown, ever the politician, didn't agree, and neither did the board of trustees. They lacked the corrosive and reflexive disdain of the ideological modernist. And they were above all sensitive to the tastes of the philistine congressmen who every year reauthorize the gallery's funding. Moore they could handle. And Calder. Noguchi and Caro were pushing it, but . . . mocking Iowa cornshuckers . . . making fun of taxpayers . . . wasn't that a bit much? Dubuffet's commission was quietly canceled.

The fate of *The Welcome Parade* captures in miniature the conditions under which modernism came to the National Gallery. It could have been worse! By the time the doors of the East Building were opened, after all, the museum world had already been disfigured by such horrors as the Pompidou Center in Paris and Louis Kahn's annex to the Yale Gallery of Art. Pei himself had recently designed the ludicrous Paul Mellon Arts Center at Choate and was soon to commit the greatest crime of his long career: the steel and glass pyramid in the courtyard of the Louvre. Against these the East Building is a model of decorum and taste.

There are many reasons for this. There were institutional restraints that rendered Pei's modernist impulses almost harmless. Paul Mellon insisted that the building be sheathed in the same understated Tennessee marble his father had chosen for the original gallery. There would be no exposed beams, no tinted structural glass, no curtain walls of rusting steel. Zoning restrictions set by the Commission on Fine Arts limited the height of the building and required that its entrance face the West Building, in a gesture of deference. And deference—that most unmodern attitude—is the East Building's saving grace, no matter how grudgingly it is paid. Here on the Mall, Pei's gallery can't help but submit to the grandeur and dignity of Pope's much greater building, an unlikely testament to the enduring power of the neoclassical ideal. It's almost as if the old master had reached out from the grave to stay his rival's hand. ♦

My Darling Clement

The Art of Writing About Art

By Roger Kimball

Even bad books have their uses. Florence Rubenfeld's new biography of the art critic Clement Greenberg is a case in point. It is a very bad book indeed, littered with errors large and small, and reading more like an exercise in character assassination than a biography of an important cultural figure.

To be sure, Greenberg, who died in 1994 at the age of 85, was not nice. Arrogant, lecherous, and manipulative, he managed sooner or later to alienate everyone he dealt with. His consumption of alcohol was prodigious, with predictable results on his behavior.

Florence Rubenfeld
Clement Greenberg
A Life
Scribner, 448 pp., $29.50

But it was not Greenberg's depressingly common personal failings that justify Rubenfeld's writing or our reading his biography. On the contrary, it is his impersonal achievements that make his story worth commemorating: Greenberg was one of the greatest art critics America has yet produced. Rubenfeld knows this, but only from the outside, from hearsay. Greenberg was a man steeped in high culture. His professional life was a series of battles to preserve the integrity of art in the face of myriad efforts to cheapen, debase, or trivialize it. Rubenfeld represents the party of trivialization. Her discussions of Greenberg's ideas are like a game of Russian telephone: A message gets through, but it is garbled in transmission.

Still, Rubenfeld's book is useful as a mnemonic. In the art world and the academy today, Clement Greenberg's work is mostly remembered only to be rejected. Greenberg was a critic who believed firmly in the irreducibility of aesthetic experience—that "a work of art has its own ends," as he put it in 1946, "which it includes in itself and which have nothing to do with the fate of society."

This idea—and the corollary that criticism must strive to be disinterested in its judgments—is of course unacceptable to the many critics who seek to subordinate art to some extra-artistic agenda (feminist, Marxist, homosexual, or whatever) and who view criticism as a continuation of politics by other means.

A second thing that makes Greenberg unacceptable to the cultural establishment today is his insistence on clarity. Like George Orwell, Greenberg was a critic who believed that lucid prose was a moral as well as a stylistic imperative. In a time when polysyllabic hermeticism is widely regarded as a sign of profundity, Greenberg's spare, bluntly formulated prose is about as welcome as a slap in the face.

In fact, whatever one thinks of Greenberg's particular judgments (his most famous enthusiasm—for Jackson Pollock and Abstract Expressionism—was wildly excessive), his seriousness and integrity as a critic make him very much worth returning to.

"How Art Writing Earns Its Bad Name," an essay that Greenberg published in *Encounter* in December 1962, has particular bearing on current trends in art criticism. Greenberg's point of departure is a celebrated but incoherent description by the critic Harold Rosenberg of "action painting" (a phrase that encapsulates an entire tradition of critical nonsense). Greenberg's larger target in the essay, however, is the growing trend towards obfuscation and pretentiousness in art criticism. "Vistas of inanity open up," he wrote, "that would have made Apollinaire or Elie Faure blanch. Things that would get expelled from other kinds of writing by laughter multiply and flourish in art writing."

Greenberg was writing before Jacques Derrida and his minions spread the disease to writing about literature and other subjects. The pattern, however, is everywhere the same. Heavy with a load of pretentious terminology cribbed from other disciplines, such writing is not simply fake criticism, it is fake everything: "pseudo-description," Greenberg calls it, as well as "pseudo-narrative, pseudo-exposition, pseudo-history, pseudo-philosophy, pseudo-psychology, and . . . pseudo-poetry."

Perhaps the most common way that art writing earns its bad name is through simple inflation. The aim is glamour by association: A battery of important names is requisitioned to enhance the status of some second- or third-rate talent. Consider the contemporary artist Frank Stella. For some time now, his works have looked liked nothing so much as car wrecks hauled off to a vacant lot to rust and collect litter. An exhibition of Stella's work currently on view at the prestigious Knoedler Gallery in New York is accompanied by a glossy pamphlet in which Dante, Beethoven, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Goya, and T. S. Eliot are enlisted to add luster to Stella's reputation. And that is just in the first paragraph.

Inflation operates in other ways, too. One common procedure is inflation through contradiction. An artist produces shopworn work that is

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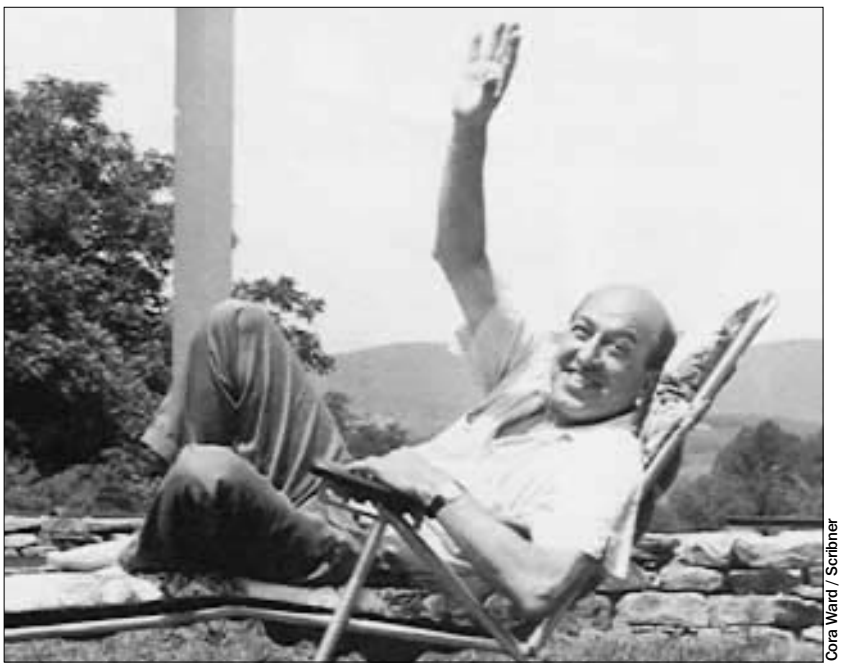

Cora Ward / Scribner

Clement Greenberg in 1965

pornographic or blasphemous or both—but claims that his work is full of deep philosophical and spiritual significance. The critic's job is clear: Take what the artist says at face value and embroider it. In England, Gilbert Proesch and George Passmore—the artistic duo known as Gilbert & George—have accomplished prodigies of obfuscation using this technique. Their artworks belong essentially to a species of scatological Pop Art: huge photographic collages of the two men, often naked, generally accompanied by images of excrement or other bodily effluvia. The scatological title of one recent exhibition, "The Naked Sh-t Pictures," admirably sums up the spirit of their work.

But it is part of Gilbert & George's act to pose as moralists whose art is wrestling with profound religious questions. "We believe our art can form morality in our time," George modestly remarked in one typical statement. What is amazing is the extent to which even well-established critics have acquiesced in this nonsense. Writing about "The Naked Sh–t Pictures" in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1995, Richard Dorment invoked famous altarpieces as a precedent. In the *Sunday Telegraph*, John McEwen, spoke of the duo's "self-sacrifice for a higher cause, which is purposely moral and indeed Christian." Not to be outdone, David Sylvester wrote in the *Guardian* that "these pictures have a plenitude, as if they were Renaissance pictures of male nudes in action." The most egregious example—so far—of such Gilbert-&-Georgeolatry came last spring when Robert Rosenblum had this to say about their exhibition in New York:

> Brilliantly transforming the visible world into emblems of the spirit, Gilbert & George create from these microscopic facts an unprecedented heraldry that, in a wild mutation of Stations of the Cross, fuses body and soul, life and death. Once again, they have crossed a new threshold, opening unfamiliar gates of eternity.

All that one can answer to such a sermon is, Amen.

There are other ways besides inflation that art writing earns its bad name. Linguistic terrorism is one. Able practitioners of the art of writing badly about art are legion, but a few rise above the multitude by combining barbarous prose, preposterous ideas, and unremitting pretentiousness. A long-standing champion is Rosalind Krauss, founding editor of the reader-proof Marxist quarterly *October* and professor of art history at Columbia University. Krauss's works are a gold mine for connoisseurs of intellectualized cant. In her book *The Optical Unconscious*, for example, she explains the relation between the theories of Jacques Lacan and modernist art:

> Would it be possible to modify the L Schema as the basis for mapping a visuality that both subtends and subverts the field of modernist vision in the same way that Lacan's psychoanalytic circuitry erodes the structuralist relations from within? For if the mirror relation as it is graphed in the L Schema divides the subject from the unconscious, by driving a wedge of opacity through the diagonal center of the graph, it is nonetheless true that the subject is the effect of the unconscious, or what needs now to be called a "subject-effect."

A third way in which art writing earns its bad name is through sex, the ickier the better. Artists long ago caught on to the advantages of using perverse sexuality to endow their works with a "transgressive" glow. But critics have not been content merely to extol such works as Robert Mapplethorpe's obscene photographs. The entire history of art has been turned into fodder for outré erotic imaginings.

One typical example was offered recently by Svetlana Alpers, a distinguished professor of art history at the University of California at Berkeley, in her book *The Making of Rubens*. The mildly obscene pun in the title—such puns are a staple of trendy criticism today—is a first clue to the contents of the book, and perhaps Alpers's most memorable claim is that Peter Paul Rubens's picture *Drunken Silenus* (c. 1618) is a self-portrait that depicts a scene of anal rape. This may or may not be a shocking

claim, but it is certainly a ridiculous one.

But of such stuff are large reputations made today. A classic example of the genre is found in the well-known critic Michael Fried's discussion of Gustave Courbet's 1856 painting of a hunting scene. Depicting a moment of rest after a successful hunt, Courbet's *The Quarry* shows, in the left foreground, a vanquished deer hanging from a branch, its head lolling sideways on the ground. To the right, receding into a shadow, the hunter—generally thought to be a self-portrait—leans back dreamily against a tree. Further to the right, the piqueur, the master of the hounds, sits in a brilliant slip of light blowing a hunting horn. In the right foreground two dogs, also brightly illuminated, frisk playfully.

One might wonder where in this forest scene one could conjure sex. A tired hunter, self-absorbed piqueur, two dogs, and a dead deer may not seem much to work with. Not to worry.

"I for one," Professor Fried confides, "am struck by the implied violence of the exposure to the hunter's viewpoint of the dead roe deer's underside, specifically including its genitals." From here it is but a short jump to a stratosphere of rebarbative verbal eroticism: "The last observation may seem excessive," Professor Fried allows.

> For one thing, I am attaching considerable significance to a "side" of the roe deer we cannot see as well as to a bodily organ that isn't actually depicted. For another, the hunter isn't looking at the roe deer but faces in a different direction. But I would counter that we are led to imagine the roe deer's genitals or at any rate to be aware of their existence by the exposure to our view of the roe deer's anus, a metonymy for the rest. . . . I would further suggest that, precisely because the roe deer's anus stands for so much we cannot see . . . such an effect of equivalence or translatability may be taken as indicating that the first, imaginary point of view is more important, and in the end more "real," than the second.

Of course, once one accepts that "the imaginary point of view is more important" than what one discerns with one's own eyes, anything goes. Which is precisely why Fried's procedure of giving precedence to the imaginary is so popular among those contributing to art writing's bad name.

But if art writing has earned its bad name many times over, it remains to ask why this form of fatuity is so popular among our intellectual elites. Part of the reason is a kind of emotional dissociation from first-hand experience of art that seems to be a perennial temptation for intellectuals. The early nineteenth-century English critic William Hazlitt touched on this in his description of "hieroglyphical" writers. "Such persons," Hazlitt wrote, "are in fact besotted with words, and their brains are turned with the glittering, but empty and sterile phantoms of things. . . . Images stand out in their minds isolated and important merely in themselves, without any ground-work of feeling."

But another part of the reason that bad criticism has been so successful has to do with that perverted but widespread romanticism that mistakenly elevates art over life and gleefully dispenses with accepted canons of taste and morality for the sake of aesthetic effect.

Greenberg was right to criticize the "art-adoration that prevails among cultured people, . . . that art-silliness which condones almost any moral or intellectual failing on the artist's part as long as he is or seems a successful artist. . . . As it is, psychopathy has become endemic among artists and writers, in whose company the moral idiot is tolerated as perhaps nowhere else in society."

What is saddest, of course, is that the effect of such "art-adoration" is not to enhance but to distort one's appreciation of art. As critics busy themselves earning art writing its bad name, they do a great deal to discredit the art they profess to exalt. ♦

Parody

"...publishers have been scurrying to churn out kids' titles by celebrities."
—Wall Street Journal, Monday, May 4, 1998

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

Best Sellers for Children

May 10, 1998

Fiction

This Week

1 **ENCYCLOPEDIA BROWN: THE CASE OF THE VICIOUSLY PARTISAN BOY DETECTIVE,** by Hillary Clinton (Doubleday, $27.95). Bugs Meany and his gang of Tigers are hounded by an out-of-control Encyclopedia Brown who invades their privacy and leaks shamelessly.

2 **THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE GOES TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE,** by James Cameron (HarperCollins, 1,465 pages, $200 million). Sir Topham Hat survives a terrible accident but the passengers stuck back in the coaches sink like rocks.

3 **CURIOUS GEORGE USES THE FACILITIES,** by George Michael (illustrations by Joycelyn Elders) (Sony Press, $16.95). Curious George is walking around Beverly Hills and he can't stop thinking about the man in the Big Yellow Hat. He knows he shouldn't go in there, but he is so curious . . .

4 **HORTON HEARS A 12 GAUGE,** by Charlton Heston (Regnery, $3.95). A group of hunters exercise their Second Amendment rights and turn 100-percent-dependable Horton into a wall ornament.

5 **WHERE THE WILD THINGS SHOULD BE,** by Rudolph Giuliani (Columbia Univ. Press, $12.95). Max becomes king of all the Wild Things and then quiets their wild rumpus with the magic trick of spraying mace into their yellow eyes all at once.

6 **MADELINE GOES TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE,** by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray (Free Press, $39.95). In an old house in Paris that was covered with vines lived 12 little girls in two straight lines. The smallest one was Madeline. Unfortunately Madeline lacked the cognitive skills to compete and Miss Clavelle expelled her.

7 **THE HISTORY OF CANDYLAND,** by Paul Johnson (Simon & Schuster, 2,137 pages, $49.95). A magisterial survey—from the Bronze Age to the present—of the land that is now known for its tedious board game.