I, RIGOBERTA MENCHU...NOT!
DINESH D'SOUZA

the weekly Standard

DECEMBER 28, 1998 $3.50

THE HOUSE IMPEACHES PRESIDENT CLINTON

THEIR FINEST HOUR

BARNES • CARLSON • FERGUSON • FRUM
NORDLINGER • REES • THE EDITORS

the weekly Standard

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

The Revolt of the Moderates

The reason why Bill Clinton was impeached turns out to be not very mysterious: So-called "moderate Republicans" looked at the evidence and decided the president had perjured himself. They made the difference.

But most of the media couldn't bring themselves to accept this simple explanation. They believed that "moderate Republican" was code for "almost a Democrat" or "spinelessly willing to follow whatever politically expedient directions are issued by the *New York Times* editorial page." And—let's be honest—this is a view shared by many conservatives and even on occasion by The Scrapbook, which has called moderate Republicans "squishy." Oops. Missed that call.

The mistaken analysis of the moderate Republicans sent the media and hysterical House Democrats off on a wild goose chase to prove that evil right-wingers had somehow intimidated, hoodwinked, or body-snatched the moderates.The *Washington Post*'s usually level-headed analyst Tom Edsall, for instance, wrote an embarrassingly obtuse news analysis last week on how the secret movers and shakers of the drive for impeachment were *American Spectator* editor R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., Georgia congressman Bob Barr, and the eminent jurist Robert Bork, all of whom share the distinction of having called for the president's impeachment *before* the Monica Lewinsky episode. Edsall hardly needed to spell out his subtext: Look, all you moderate Republicans, at the loony right-wing company you're keeping and come to your senses!

Meanwhile, Edsall's colleagues tried without success to prove that House whip Tom "The Hammer" DeLay had held a gun to the heads of the moderates. Except that, his nickname notwithstanding, DeLay hadn't. As a poignant account in the *New York Times* had it: "Mr. DeLay is not working the phones this week. He is not calling in chits, mobilizing his 64 deputy and assistant whips or orchestrating indirect communication through his staff. In fact, he shows no evidence of whipping this one at all." Gee—how exactly was DeLay getting his way, then? In the immortal explanation of Peter T. King, a New York Republican and one of the handful of moderates who voted against impeachment: "Everybody knows [DeLay's] reputation of being the Hammer, and it may help him so much he doesn't have to do anything."

With such mysterious invisible powers, DeLay is odds-on favorite to become the Democrats' new bogeyman. And, God knows, they're desperate to find a new GOP voodoo doll now that Newt Gingrich has retired.

Indeed, just a day before impeachment, The Scrapbook received an anonymous fax containing five pages of talking points with which to attack House Republicans. The headline? "The Gingrich Precedent." Who can blame whatever Democratic oppo outfit prepared this fax for not wanting to put its name to it, given that Newt has hardly been seen in public since he announced his resignation? Time to find some fresh enemies, guys. And time for some fresh thinking about "moderate Republicans."

We Flinch

With the impeachment of Bill Clinton, our long national nightmare of the self-contradicting *New York Times* editorial board is mercifully brought to a conclusion. Originally, the *Times* editorialists ardently promoted censure of the president, but only if he admitted his lies. Then—as we noted here recently borrowing from the superb exposé of Daniel Seligman in the *New York Post*—they backed off. Then the *Times* worried that people would notice they'd backed off, and started sounding tough again.

Here, last week, is how the final *Times* editorial on the subject tried to explain the shifting sands of high principle at the nation's newspaper of record:

"In advocating censure, we have consistently urged the House not to offer it in the absence of an admission of lying by the President. But now that the decisive moment is at hand, we urge the moderate Republicans who hold the balance of power to vote against impeachment even if Mr. Clinton does not confess."

Let's see if we can summarize: We flinch. Principles are fine things. Sort of like those collapsible umbrellas, except in reverse. At the first sign of a storm, you will want to be able to fold them up and stuff them in the pocket of your overcoat and forget you have them. Then you can just flap with the breeze, or something.

Henry Hyde's Moment

Scrapbook

What a magnificent speech the chairman of the House Judiciary committee delivered last Friday to begin the impeachment debate. A friend of ours was particularly struck by one passage. At a time when too much rhetoric reduces every issue to "the children," our friend pointed out that Hyde managed to strike a related note, only without the clichés:

"Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap. Let it be taught in the schools, seminaries, colleges. Let it be written in primers, spelling books, almanacs. Let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls and enforced in the courts of justice."

We didn't have the heart to tell our friend that in this passage, Hyde was quoting, as he said, his fellow Illinoisan, Abraham Lincoln.

Decline and Fall

There's news aplenty from the vast left-wing conspiracy. *Hustler* magazine publisher Larry Flynt described the investigators he has hired to look into congressional sex lives as "friends of people inside the White House." He says there may have been conversations between his crack team and Clinton officials, but he won't comment on whether he has hired the Clintonites' favorite gumshoe, Terry Lenzner.

Separately, Flynt says he has dirt on 11 members of Congress, 10 of them Republicans and one a Democrat. But as a loyal Democrat, Flynt says he probably won't publish the dirt he has on the Democratic member.

Remember when the *Washington Post* was the official organ of the Democratic party? Then *Salon*? Now it's *Hustler*.

Retirement Becomes Him

One of the mysteries of the past year is why no member of the White House staff felt compelled to resign over Bill Clinton's dishonesty. Maybe the answer is they just stopped thinking about it very hard. The day before the impeachment vote, former spokesman Mike McCurry was asked by a BBC journalist if Bill Clinton was fit to be president. McCurry said, "I have enormous doubts because of the recklessness of his behavior. The immorality is troublesome to me, but you know, you can sort of understand how an adult male gets to that kind of situation. I don't think Mrs. McCurry would understand me getting into that situation, but you know you can see how pressures occur. But there's something beyond that. The nature of this particular affair and then the way in which he did conceal it really does raise some very profound troubling matters."

This is not the language of a person who worked extra hard to grapple with the moral dilemmas of his job. It suggests the White House staff gets through the day in a fog of lazy agnosticism.

Pentagon Multiculturalism

Bumper sticker sighted last week in the Pentagon parking lot: "Only two bombing days left till Ramadan."

Casual

A Child's Christmas in Pierre

My father always insisted on an early Christmas breakfast—a huge feast of eggs poached in milk, and bacon and hashbrowns and pancakes and marmalade and grapefruit and a sort of sweetened toast whose name I can't remember, but it tasted like corrugated cardboard with cinnamon and sugar sprinkled on top.

And then, after that groaning meal, nothing. No lunch, no snack, no Christmas gingerbread, no nuts, no fruit. None of the fancy chocolate a cousin had sent from England, none of the *bûche de Noël* my sister taught us to make when she came back from her junior year in France with her bangs cut at a Parisian angle and her diary filled with recipes. Nothing until two o'clock, or three or four or, one year, even five, when the ravenous aunts had begun to snip at each other in hunger, and the starved uncles were arguing angrily in the living room about how many terms Sigurd Anderson had been governor of South Dakota, and the children—past the wheedling stage, past the whining stage, past the stage of sitting on the kitchen floor and weeping for food—were crouched together on the sofa, dumb with misery.

But then at last the kitchen door would swing open in a blast of steam and smoke and relief. And the dining-room table would fill with a turkey or a goose, rolls and salad and green beans, little glass bowls of watermelon pickles with tiny three-pronged forks beside them, and cranberries plopped whole in sugared water, boiled until they started to burst, then set aside to cool. "You see," my father explained every year as we sat down to eat, "this is the way to do it: A big breakfast to stretch your stomach, then no lunch, so by dinner time you're really ready for a full Christmas meal."

They can't have all been there the same year, but my memory puts together on the table sweet potatoes and yams, butternut squash and the white potatoes mashed with milk and butter that—in one of those sneaky family traditions by which chores get divvied up—we were told only Uncle Harlow could make well. But there was always the onion and breadcrumb dressing into which my father dumped two, three, four little white tins of sage, sneaking back into the kitchen to add more when he thought no one was looking.

And then there were pies: made from pieces of cooked pumpkin kept in the freezer since October, apples up from the cellar, Mason jars of mincemeat, a chocolate-pudding pie from a packaged mix that one of my aunts brought. My father would look at the pie, then at us children, and then at my mother. And my mother would shake her head, but my happy, roly-poly aunt never noticed and gave us big pieces anyway.

The food was all more enormous than it was complicated. The only elaborate thing I remember my mother making for Christmas was an aspic, a sort of clarified gelatin made from a consommé of veal bones and flavored with tomatoes. I have no idea where she got the idea—South Dakota didn't run much to French cooking—but she would spend hours working on it, and the result always looked to me and my sisters like jello made with tomato juice.

Every year, the relatives would ooh and ah as the aspic was triumphantly brought on a platter to the table, and the crisis of the children's refusal to eat it would escalate from parental glares to harsh whispers to my father banging the table and forbidding us in a loud voice to have dessert or play with our new toys until we finished our portions. At last, while our parents snuck out to the porch to recover their nerves, our favorite uncle would pick up our plates, along with his own, and head off to the kitchen, whistling. He didn't like the stuff either.

It's almost impossible to separate those Christmas dinners from one another. There was the year Great-aunt Fern fell asleep by the fire, the year the cousins from Milwaukee came, the year the car was snowed in and we had to walk to my grandmother's house bearing tomato aspic through the streets of Pierre. But the menus never changed. And though the Christmas season was church and presents and staying up till midnight and carols, memories of Christmas Day itself are mostly memories of food.

But that's what almost everyone who writes about Christmas knows. In Washington Irving's *Bracebridge Hall*, in Charles Dickens's account of Bob Cratchit's feast, even in Dylan Thomas's childhood Wales, at the center of recollection stands the contrast between the cold weather outside and the steaming dishes inside.

The sudden burst of abundance in the midst of winter: That's what Christmas is about. That—and the other thing, the other sudden burst of abundance in the midst of winter, almost two thousand years before.

J. Bottum

Correspondence

A Suspicious Solution

Watch out for any article quoting Gunnar Myrdal: Allan C. Carlson and David Blankenhorn propose to solve the Social Security crisis by buying babies, thus increasing the child credit, allowing all parents to take the dependent-care credit, and doubling the size of the tax brackets for married couples ("The Solution to Everything," Dec. 14).

As evidence of the power of taxation to produce babies, the authors cite a study purporting to show that raising the personal tax exemption for children resulted in an increase in the fertility rate by 5.5 births per 1,000 women between 1986 and 1990. But the correlation is spurious. First, the exemption almost doubled for everyone, not just children. Second, fertility rates increased by a dramatic 9.7 births per 1,000 for teenagers, who earn too little to benefit from the exemption. Third, fertility rates declined after 1990, and the exemption was still in place.

It is difficult to use tax incentives such as raising the child credit and allowing all parents to take the dependent-care credit without raising only the number of births to unwed mothers, since these incentives represent a smaller percentage of married couples' incomes. And doubling the size of tax brackets for married couples does not ensure that they have more children: They may spend more on existing children, buy a fancier house, take a better vacation, or increase savings.

One of the major costs of having children is the forgone income of the mother, which, for the median wage-earner, approximates $23,500 annually, excluding fringe benefits. The incentives proposed by Carlson and Blankenhorn, even though they involve substantial tinkering with the tax code, do not begin to approach this figure. It is in part because of women's increased earning power that we have seen declining fertility rates all over the world in countries as diverse as Brazil, Japan, and Italy, even as these nations get richer.

The authors write that the dependent-care credit subsidizes only commercial day care. In fact, it subsidizes any paid care to a legal provider. And the big unanswered question at the end of the article is of course the cost of the proposal, and whether the tens of billions spent on it could be more efficiently used—perhaps by reforming Social Security and our tax code in one fell swoop by lowering the payroll tax and allowing individual personal savings accounts. Or, for a costless solution, why not allow more tax-paying immigrants from all those countries which followed policies consistent with Myrdal's advice?

Diana Furchtgott-Roth
Washington, DC

Disbar Dash

The Scrapbook makes the point that Sam Dash was wrong on the facts and the law when he asserted that Kenneth Starr violated his obligations under the independent counsel statute ("A Dash to the Exits," Nov. 30/Dec. 7). However, what is even more striking is that while Dash's opinion on that issue may be debatable, what is not debatable is that Dash, the renowned ethics expert, committed an unethical act which would subject him to disbarment in Georgia and most other states.

Dash was retained as a lawyer by the special prosecutor, whose office has made it clear that it did not know that Dash was going to resign and did not give Dash permission to release to the public and the news media the letter he sent to Starr. Under Standard 28 of the Georgia Code of Professional Responsibility, which is similar to provisions in most states, a lawyer may not reveal the confidences of a client, which include all attorney-client communications. Violation of this standard is punishable by disbarment. Dash's legal opinion about Starr's testimony before the House Judiciary Committee fits squarely within the definition of confidential communication.

Hans A. von Spakovsky
Atlanta, GA

Fathers Beat Boyfriends

In actuality, John A. Barnes's "boyfriend problem" is nothing more than a reversal of the wicked stepmother problem of old ("The Boyfriend Problem," Dec. 14). When paternal custody was the norm, stepmothers were the common result. However, the women entering into those relationships garnered benefits for themselves as well, such as shelter and a home provided by their new spouse. Likewise, under the "evil" patriarchy, fathers were still expected to marry the live-in lover.

All of which gives impetus to reconsidering the idea of paternal custody. America's biological fathers care far more about their children than this increasingly dysfunctional society wants to realize.

Gene Hopp
Bellevue, WA

International Law

Following our previous exchange, Ruth Wedgwood has asked me to share these two further points with readers: (1) She has a professional appointment at the Naval War College, as well as at Yale Law School, and (2) she would most certainly take the side of the U.S. defendant if an American official were charged with war crimes in a third country (Correspondence, Dec. 14).

I still think it is a bad idea to promote a trend in international law which would make such a trial more likely. But I do not doubt that Wedgwood is devoted to U.S. interests.

Jeremy Rabkin
Ithaca, NY

the weekly Standard

Our Parties and Our President

The modern American political party is a frequently disappointing beast. And the Republican party, sure enough, has all too often in recent years disappointed us with graceless or timid leadership. This magazine has never hesitated to point out these GOP weaknesses. They still exist, and we do not hesitate to acknowledge that they have occasionally revealed themselves even during the epic controversy that has lately consumed the country's public life.

But neither do we hesitate to say that the Republican party, at least in the House of Representatives, has now fulfilled the ultimate responsibility imposed on it by that controversy—to an extent, and with a courage, that puts paid to our every past criticism.

There were moments of uncommon eloquence and drama in the House debate last Friday and Saturday: Judiciary Committee chairman Henry Hyde's opening statement; the agonized floor speeches of GOP moderates like Tom Campbell of California and Nancy Johnson of Connecticut; the rigorous legal arguments of Charles Canady of Florida and Christopher Cox of California; and the stunning resignation announcement of speaker-designate Bob Livingston. But eloquence and drama are as nothing in the grand scheme of things; the votes themselves are what counted.

By those votes, a narrow House Republican majority, with support from only a few men of conscience across the aisle, did something almost never seen in American politics of the television age. The House Republicans risked their political futures to pursue an apparently unpopular objective—and did so because they thought it necessary to preserve the integrity of our constitutional order. History will smile on these Republicans; they may never live a nobler moment. For his undeniable crimes, and for his defilement of the presidency in the concealment of those crimes, William Jefferson Clinton has been justly impeached.

And what of the Democratic party in all this? By the start of Friday's debate, the Democrats' substantive defense of the president had long since been reduced to a hopeless hash. Early last week, John Conyers's Judiciary Committee minority released a 93-page dissenting report on impeachment that tacitly concedes the president is guilty of perjury. Indeed, the Conyers report argues that the president could not have committed an obstruction of justice—when he failed to correct attorney Robert Bennett's sweeping, Jones-deposition denial about Monica Lewinsky—precisely *because* the president was then too busy formulating an imminent perjury. Clinton wasn't paying attention to Bennett's misleading remarks to Judge Susan Webber Wright, according to the Judiciary Democrats. He was distracted, "thinking as fast as he could"—planning a falsehood, in other words—"as he just realized that someone was setting him up."

Elsewhere, the Conyers report blithely announces there is "no dispute" that Clinton's gifts to Lewinsky were returned to Betty Currie on December 28 of last year. But the White House, concerned about obstruction-of-justice charges, continues to dispute exactly this point. Elsewhere still, conversely, the Conyers report rejects out of hand the possibility that Clinton was tampering with witnesses in January when he privately told his senior aides he had never touched the intern. "He could not have known then that his staff would be called before [Ken Starr's] grand jury," the Judiciary Democrats insist. But he could have known, and did—as Clinton himself admitted during his own grand jury appearance in August.

And so on. Such is the nature of any complicated lie. Those inclined to sustain it first get themselves stuck in a tar of further contradiction and dishonesty. Then, pressed to the wall, they wind up wholly unmoored from fact and evidence, reduced to mere sputtering. Which is what nearly every Democratic representative did on the floor of the House last Friday and Saturday. It was sputtering of a particularly dishonorable and sinister sort.

By the language of the Democratic party's preferred fix to the Lewinsky scandal—a congressional resolution of censure against the president—Bill Clinton has "egregiously failed" the test of his constitutional oath, "violated the trust of the American people," and "dishonored the office which they entrusted to him." Impeachment of such a president would plainly seem, at the very least, a plausible option. But

House Democrats en masse—joining the Clinton White House in rhetorical perversion and exposing the insincerity of their censure motion all at once—were unwilling to acknowledge that any decent person could believe in the justice of impeachment. By the tenor of their arguments, House Democrats sought to demonize and delegitimize their opponents.

So now we have this situation: Bill Clinton has stained the executive branch. And in order to whitewash that stain, House Democrats have sought to stain the Congress as well.

Early in Friday's debate, Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut called the impeachment resolution a "constitutional assassination" perpetrated by "provocateurs" and motivated by a "naked partisanship almost without lawful and civil bounds." John Conyers warned of a "coup d'état," introducing an ominous phrase that would shortly—and endlessly—be repeated by his party colleagues. By debate's end, Tom Lantos of California had likened the House impeachment proceedings to "Stalin's parliament" and Hitler's "Reichstag." Our House of Representatives, Lantos told America, has become "a totalitarian legislative body." House minority whip David Bonior, standing next to him at a press conference, eagerly assented: "I couldn't agree more with what Tom Lantos has just said."

At a time of utmost political sensitivity—the most important congressional vote in decades—the Democratic House minority has seen fit to prostitute itself to the personal interests of a Democratic president. To blunt the result of a constitutionally sanctioned and duly ordered inquiry into presidential malfeasance, these Democrats have seen fit loudly to proclaim—from the floor of the United States House of Representatives—that Clinton's impeachment is, instead, the product of a banana-republic legislature run by madmen. Immediately following the vote, surrounded by his party's caucus, House minority leader Dick Gephardt had the effrontery, *on the White House lawn*, to castigate his own institution as a "disgrace to our country and our Constitution." And moments later, the president had the effrontery to praise Gephardt for this astonishing slander.

"I have accepted responsibility for what I did wrong *in my personal life*," Clinton oozed in his brief remarks Saturday afternoon. But he refuses, still, to accept responsibility for the manifest wrongs of his public life—or even to allow that those wrongs are more than a hallucination. And he and his confederates now charge those who see his wrongs clearly with something close to treason.

Bill Clinton has become a genuinely poisonous presence in American politics. His impeachment now moves to trial in the Senate. The stakes could hardly be higher.

—David Tell, for the Editors

The End of the Clinton Iraq Policy

Last week's air and missile attacks on Iraq, for all the damage they inflicted, didn't accomplish much of lasting importance. Military planners seemed to be targeting Saddam Hussein's elite forces in the hopes of stirring a general uprising in the regular army. But officials admit they were just "rolling the dice." Since the Clinton administration gives no sign of seriously supporting Saddam's many opponents in Iraq, such an uprising is unlikely. The bombing may well have "degraded" Saddam's conventional military forces and infrastructure, but over time he will rebuild them, just as he did after the far more devastating Gulf War seven years ago. The damage to his forces might be significant if Saddam had to face a domestic uprising in the next few weeks or months. The last time the Clinton administration launched cruise missiles at Iraq, then-CIA director John Deutch candidly noted that the attack had only made Saddam stronger. Were Deutch around today, he'd be making the same assessment.

What about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction? Unfortunately, the Pentagon admits that U.S. strikes did not target the facilities where Iraq is known to be developing chemical and biological weapons, for fear of unleashing those horrors on innocent Iraqi civilians. We will probably never know to what extent the military action succeeded in "degrading" his weapons programs, or indeed whether it had any effect on them at all. It is unlikely that U.N. inspectors will be visiting Iraq again any time soon to find out.

Finally, no one should imagine that Saddam will be cowed by this attack into complying with the U.N.

resolutions and American demands he has spent the last year or more rejecting. Saddam may or may not have been surprised by the timing of the attack, but the scope of the attack was probably smaller than what he had anticipated. Because of the president's bizarre concern about bombing Iraq during Ramadan (has anyone told the president that Iraq is run by a secular Baathist party?), this attack was both less severe and of shorter duration than the one the administration had contemplated back in November. Saddam is probably breathing a sigh of relief, not shuddering in fear. The Americans took their shot, and he's still around. That's what Saddam calls victory.

Now here's the good news. Last week's strikes may not have shaken the pillars of Saddam's regime, but they have destroyed the pillars of the Clinton administration's Iraq policy and blasted away the myths and delusions in which that policy has been enshrouded.

For the past year and more, the Clinton administration's policy toward Iraq has been built around three objectives: first, to keep a fragile consensus at the U.N. Security Council in support of containing Iraq, chiefly through economic sanctions; second, to preserve the U.N. inspections regime as the principal means of discovering and eliminating Iraq's programs for developing weapons of mass destruction; and third, to create conditions in Iraq that would someday lead to Saddam's ouster by a military coup.

Administration officials have long admitted that the third objective was more wishful thinking than practical strategy: Saddam has proved more adept at quashing coup attempts than the CIA is in fomenting them. But now the administration's two other goals have also become impossible.

Last week's attack drove a stake through the heart of any American strategy that depends on agreement in the Security Council. A month ago there was almost unanimity there on the need to attack Iraq, a remarkable moment which Clinton tragically squandered when he called off that attack. Now that fragile and temporary consensus has been shattered, perhaps permanently. Given the hostile reactions of France, China, and Russia, which withdrew its ambassador in protest against the U.S. attack, it is ludicrous to imagine that the United States will be able to rebuild a consensus in the Security Council for continued tough action against Iraq. Quite the contrary. Now that the bombing has stopped, we can expect those three nations to work even harder to lift economic sanctions and begin normalizing relations with Saddam. In this effort they will likely be supported by U.N. secretary general Kofi Annan, whose opposition to the U.S. attack and sympathy for Iraq were on full display last week.

Meanwhile, you can say good-bye to the U.N. inspectors—chief inspector Richard Butler's report on non-compliance last week was a virtual letter of resignation. Even if Saddam were to allow the inspectors back in—and he probably won't—UNSCOM is a spent force. Russia and France are openly hostile to Butler, whom they blame for providing the pretext for last week's attack, and they will demand that he be either removed or muzzled. Nor will Saddam be deterred by last week's bombing from playing his usual cat-and-mouse games. If he does let the inspectors back in, it will only be to buy more time and to drive an even deeper wedge between Washington and the rest of the Security Council. The U.N. inspections regime is finished.

This is all to the good. For the past year and more, American policy has rested entirely on comforting fictions: that U.N. inspectors could keep the world safe from Saddam's chemical and biological weapons, that maintaining a fragile and skin-deep consensus at the Security Council could substitute for the effective but risky exercise of American military power, and, above all, that Saddam could be "contained." Perhaps now that these fictions have been exploded, the Clinton administration, as well as the Congress and the American people, will be forced to confront the stark realities.

The containment of Saddam Hussein is a myth. There have always been only two coherent strategies for dealing with Saddam. One is deterrence: Accept the fact that he is going to acquire weapons of mass destruction and hope that we can deter him from using them against his neighbors (not to mention against us). The Clinton administration has at times flirted with the idea of moving to a strategy of deterrence—though it has been loath to admit this publicly. And for good reason. A strategy of deterrence is fraught with perils: How will we prevent Saddam from brandishing weapons of mass destruction to bully his neighbors? Even if he doesn't use them, his mere possession of such weapons will radically alter the strategic balance in the Middle East to the detriment of our interests and those of our closest allies. And even if he does use them, how credible is our deterrent? Will we really nuke Iraq if Saddam uses chemical weapons against, say, Bahrain or Kuwait? Will we invade Iraq with conventional forces if we know he has weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them? There are no sound answers to these questions. But at least a policy of deterrence would have the virtue of clarity. Unlike the failed strategy of containment, which could never deliver what it promised, deterrence would lower our expectations as it diminished our security.

The alternative to deterrence is a strategy to remove Saddam Hussein from power once and for all.

If the goal of U.S. policy is to ensure that Iraq never develops or uses weapons of mass destruction—and this should be the goal—then the only way to achieve this with any confidence is to take Saddam out. There are at least two ways to accomplish this, both of which will require a significant commitment of U.S. forces and the will to use them.

Former undersecretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz has outlined a coherent and credible strategy for supporting forces in Iraq who want to challenge Saddam's control. The Wolfowitz plan calls for the creation of a "liberated zone" in southern Iraq where opposition forces can rally, provide safe haven for defectors from Saddam's regime, and establish a genuine alternative to the Saddam tyranny. To succeed, the opposition would have to be backed not only by American financial and military assistance—which Congress this year voted to provide in the Iraq Liberation Act—but also by American military power, both from the air and, if necessary, on the ground. Backed by credible U.S. force, an organized and well-supplied Iraqi opposition could quickly emerge as a dire threat to Saddam's hold on power—something that air strikes alone can never be.

Another course would be to use U.S. military force directly to complete the job George Bush began in 1991. A military campaign that started with several weeks of devastating air strikes and ended with a ground attack on Saddam's forces in Iraq would stand a high chance of success—if the president gave the U.S. military the resources to beef up their forces in the region. Although more costly and more risky in the short run, an invasion of Iraq might actually be the safest and surest way of saving the world from Saddam.

Whichever course one prefers, these are the kinds of options the Clinton administration and members of Congress must begin to take seriously. The old game is over.

—Robert Kagan, for the Editors

Impeachment Eve

by Andrew Ferguson

The Capitol, Friday, December 18

8:45 A.M. Here we are in the Speaker's Lobby, directly off the House floor, 15 minutes before debate begins on the most historic vote any of us is ever likely to witness, and a large group of reporters stands riveted, entranced, dumbfounded, every ounce of attention concentrated on the spectacle taking place in front of us. Right before our eyes, Maria Shriver and Mary Bono are hugging. It is a long, lingering hug. Then they push apart and giggle, like Marcia Brady and her sister Jan sharing some innocent intimacy. Both are wearing black pants suits, and they seem oblivious to the semicircle of gaping male reporters who stand a few feet away. A consensus is forming among my colleagues: This could be an exciting day.

9:00 A.M. But it will be a long one. The impeachment vote won't take place until tomorrow, but the House has agreed to convene for 16 hours of debate today—"debate" being the term of art the House applies to a series of speeches given by speakers who pay no attention to one another. Paying attention would extend the session to 4 A.M. at a minimum, and everyone already looks tired.

The session opens with an admonition from the presiding speaker, Ray LaHood of Illinois. "The Chair asks and expects the cooperation of all members in maintaining a level of decorum that properly dignifies the proceedings of the House." His plea for civility is greeted as you'd expect: with an eruption of hooting and catcalls.

In the Speaker's Lobby, Mary Bono has finished her tête-à-tête with Maria Shriver, and now she's swarmed by reporters, who pepper her with Mary Bono-like questions. She mentions how drained she was after the Judiciary Committee voted out the impeachment articles. "Where'd you go to dinner that night?" asks one reporter. "How did you feel when you woke up the next morning, after the vote?" asks another. "How do you feel now?" "Are you feeling sad this morning?"

She fields the questions gracefully—she is "absolutely sad," in case you were wondering—and makes only one curious comment. "I think when this is all over," she says, "we'll look back and both sides will really see that this has really brought us closer together." Mrs. Bono is new to the House.

10:45 A.M. The first two speeches of the debate—by Richard Gephardt and Henry Hyde—are excellent. Hyde's in particular, with its references to Bunker Hill, Concord and Lexington, and the graves at Arlington, sounds like a Decoration Day speech from several generations ago. (Nobody talks about Concord

and Lexington anymore. And what's a Bunker Hill?) But it is fast becoming apparent, as the speakers line up for their allotted three-minute turns, that nobody has anything new to say. The press gallery, which just an hour ago was standing-room-only, is now half-empty. In the work area off the gallery, no one pays attention to the TVs tuned to C-SPAN.

It is remarkable how quickly even the loveliest phrases, like "rule of law," become clichés in the wind tunnel of political debate. But it's also remarkable how, for all their difference in emphasis, the speeches of both Democrats and Republicans share certain premises. Everyone hangs his rhetoric on the same logical frame. This consists of five points, articulated in one way or another by each member, regardless of party: (1) I think the president is a lying sleazebag. (2) The House must do itself proud. (3) I'm voting my conscience and you aren't. (4) O the poor children! And ergo: (5) The sleazebag should (should not) be impeached. Q.E.D.

This is not what you'd expect history-in-the-making to sound like, and as the debate drags on, 4 A.M. is looking farther and farther away. Spirits are suddenly buoyed when word filters through the House that the leadership has agreed to end the session at 10 P.M. Even the debaters have realized their debate stinks.

IT IS REMARKABLE HOW QUICKLY EVEN THE LOVELIEST PHRASES, LIKE "RULE OF LAW," BECOME CLICHÉS IN THE WIND TUNNEL OF POLITICAL DEBATE.

12:20 P.M. Out in the Speaker's Lobby, I'm talking to Jerry Nadler, the rotund congressman from New York City, when Bob Barr, Republican of Georgia, appears. Barr is immediately besieged by reporters. He is second only to Mary Bono as a favorite Republican among the press corps, most of whom see in them the twin poles of today's Republican party—airheads on one end, nutcases on the other. Barr recently admitted he once spoke to a white-supremacist group, and this morning, in his speech on the floor, he quoted John F. Kennedy with effusive praise, perhaps trying to reposition himself as a moderate. The smart money says it won't work.

Anyway, as Barr chats to reporters, Patrick Kennedy, the boyish congressman from Rhode Island, suddenly appears. His face is crimson. He moves as close to Barr as he can through the scrum of reporters and begins shouting. "You're disgraceful!" he bellows. "Anybody who went to a racist organization has no business invoking my uncle's memory. Racist! I'm outraged!"

"Young man," says Barr, "you can say whatever you'd like."

"Young man?" Kennedy screams. "*Young man?* I'm a duly elected member of my state!" Veins are popping from his neck.

"And I'm *duly* impressed," Barr says.

With that, Kennedy turns on his heel and zips out of the room as fast as his little legs will carry him, looking as incensed as he might have been when Dad refused to buy him Bermuda for his thirteenth birthday.

Poor Nadler is suddenly forgotten in all the commotion. He slips up behind me. "What happened?"

"Pat called Bob a racist."

"Oh," Nadler shrugs. "Gee, if I call Bob Barr a racist can I get all that attention too?"

2:15 P.M. Can it get any drearier than this? These must be the doldrums. A representative from the Virgin Islands is on the floor declaring that the Republicans are pursuing impeachment because what they really want to do is impeach "a very, very popular first lady." It's an interesting speech, in that it raises a question that's gone unaddressed for too long: Whose bright idea was it to let the Virgin Islands have a representative?

Up in the press gallery, the Kennedy-Barr imbroglio has taken on the dimensions of a clash of the titans. This is how dreary it can get. Reporters are comparing accounts of the mythic battle and phoning in bulletins to their newspapers. When word breaks that Barr is in the Speaker's Lobby, we all rush down.

He's sitting at a table, surrounded by reporters.

"Congressman, was there actual personal interaction between the two of you?"

"Is it true you called him 'young man'?"

"Was that an attempt to intimidate him—to denigrate him, in some way, by referring to him as a 'young man'?"

And then the Mary Bono question: "How do you feel?"

3:00 P.M. Barney Frank was the subject of an excruciating profile by Sally Quinn in the Style section of this morning's *Washington Post*. She praised his quick wit and eloquence, so when he walks to the podium—without a prepared text!—we're prepared for . . . well, a quick-witted and eloquent attack on the Republicans.

"They plan," he says, in his rapid-fire style, "having degraded impeachment and claimed it is no definitive judgment, once they get a partisan vote for an impeachment where the bar has been lowered, then to

say that's the basis for resignation."

He gets an ovation when he's through, but even among his colleagues the faces betray what they're thinking, which is: Huh?

4:30 P.M. Finally there's something to replace the electrifying Barr-Kennedy exchange as a subject of conversation. A rumor circulates that Larry Flynt, the publisher of the one-hand magazine *Hustler*, is holding a press conference in Los Angeles to reveal the names of 10 more Republican congressmen who've had extramarital affairs. The rumor has two main benefits. First, everyone gets to speculate about who these adulterous malefactors might be. And second, it gives the people in the press gallery an excuse to change the TV channel from C-SPAN to some other station that might carry Flynt's press conference live. That means we get to watch Susan Molinari on MSNBC while we wait. I'm not sure this is an improvement.

On the floor, Bernie Sanders, the socialist from Vermont, is pointing out that there's a gap between the rich and poor in this country and *it's getting wider*. Plus 43 million people don't have health insurance. In response, the Wisconsin Republican James Sensenbrenner points out that today the Nasdaq reached a new high. Who says the impeachment process can't be illuminating?

6:15 P.M. The appointed hour for Larry Flynt's press conference has come and gone without a word from Larry. A false alarm, apparently. Now the press-gallery TV is tuned to *Redskins Report*, the reporters having abandoned all pretense of an interest in public-affairs television. I make one last pass through the Speaker's Lobby, which is empty except for the cops and a couple of reporters. On the floor, fewer than 20 members are milling about.

A few minutes later, I head back to the press gallery to get my coat before I leave. If history is being made today, it's being made without witnesses. The TV is tuned to figure skating.

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

What a Difference a Month Makes

by Fred Barnes

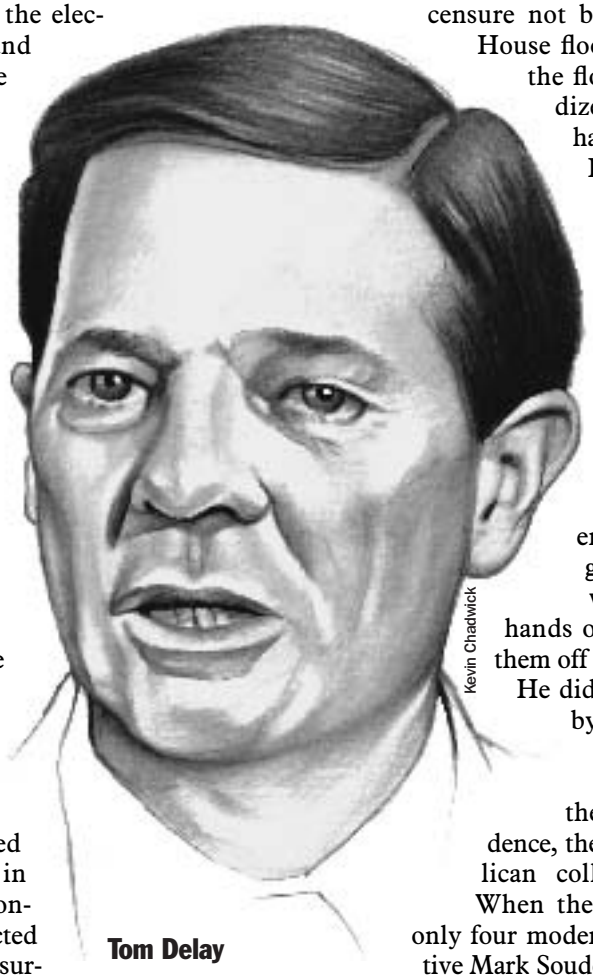
WHAT CHANGED? A month ago, Republican governors gathered in New Orleans and sneered at the bid to impeach President Clinton. "We're all kind of tired of it," Gov. Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania told a reporter. "You and I know there will be no impeachment." This assessment was echoed by the mainstream media, GOP strategists, and even Ralph Reed, the political consultant and former executive director of the Christian Coalition. Reed cited the Election Day exit poll showing Americans opposed impeachment by roughly two to one. He said Republicans should vote for censuring the president "and then move on with the rest of their agenda for the country." That was November 15. One month and four days later, the House of Representatives impeached Clinton for perjury and obstruction of justice.

So what did change? In fact, not much. Three things unfolded exactly as expected: the evidence uncovered by independent counsel Kenneth Starr, the president's legalistic defense and stonewalling, and impeachment hearings by the House Judiciary Committee. A fourth was likely: a vote on the House floor to impeach Clinton. All this meant the case against Clinton couldn't be dismissed or ignored. House members would have to examine the evidence of Clinton's crimes, then weigh it against the president's defense, and finally announce a decision on impeachment. The facts, of course, were overwhelming—for anyone without a partisan bias in favor of Clinton. Republicans, including moderates, didn't have this bias. For them, *not* voting to impeach was always going to be difficult. Thus, while there wasn't a built-in majority for impeachment, there was always a potential majority.

Newt Gingrich, Henry Hyde, and Tom DeLay turned it into an actual majority. Gingrich's role was inadvertent. Ironically, the prospects for impeachment would have been worse if Gingrich had kept his job as House speaker. Instead, the poor Republican showing in the November 3 election prompted Gingrich to step down, and that cost the White House a central element in its campaign to defend the president. Clinton needed an enemy to demonize, and, given Gingrich's unpopularity with the public, he was an easy target. Without him—he let a substitute, Ray LaHood of Illinois, preside during the nationally televised impeachment deliberations—there was no one to single out as the focus of evil. Bob Livingston, the new

speaker-designate, was unknown nationally, and he mostly stayed out of public sight anyway—until he suddenly announced his resignation on impeachment day. DeLay, the House GOP whip, wasn't a household name either. As for Hyde, the Judiciary Committee chairman, he was actually popular. While two out of three Americans dislike Gingrich, two out of three like Hyde. The result: no Gingrich, no effective White House strategy.

Important as Hyde's role as a happy face for the Republican party was, it was not his most significant contribution. After the election, Hyde was the one (and only) person who could have killed impeachment. If he'd listened to Republican governors or consultants, he would have. If he'd wanted to be lionized by the press as a statesman, he would have. But he didn't. Rather, he conducted hearings on impeachment that became more serious and more civil as they wore on. Hyde, patient and affable, made the hearings both a substantive success and good TV. Hyde flinched only once, and that was for a good cause. He agreed to hold a committee vote on whether censure should be allowed as an alternative to impeachment. This produced two good results. It appeased Democrats, and it lost.



Kevin Chadwick

Tom Delay

However, it infuriated DeLay, whose pivotal role in impeaching the president consisted not, as might be expected from his job as whip, in pressuring Republicans. He didn't pressure anyone. But DeLay gets credit for a signal achievement: He killed censure. Actually, he killed censure repeatedly. When it came up in September, he delivered a floor speech denouncing censure advocates. "Anyone who considers censure—and makes decisions based on the polls—believes the rule of man, not the rule of law," he declared. After the election, sentiment for censure emerged again. DeLay held a conference call with dozens of GOP House members and secured their opposition to censure. Still, censure didn't die, but came up again during the hearings. DeLay got a Republican foe of impeachment, Chris Shays of Connecticut, to join him in opposition to allowing a vote on censure on the House floor.

That wounded censure, but still didn't kill it. And censure got a new lease on life when Hyde agreed to bring it before the Judiciary Committee. He didn't inform DeLay, who feared Hyde might have resurrected censure. As it turned out, the committee voted along party lines to reject censure. When the hearings adjourned, DeLay arranged for Hyde to send a letter to then-speaker-designate Livingston insisting that censure not be brought to a vote on the House floor. "Hyde realized a vote on the floor on censure could jeopardize all the work his committee had done," a GOP official said. In response, Livingston, also at DeLay's instigation, announced that he opposed a censure vote by the full House. Censure was dead.

This cleared the way for Republican moderates to fall in line behind impeachment. DeLay knew leaning on them wouldn't work. His theory is that lobbying moderates never works, except to give them grounds to do what you don't want them to do. So he keeps hands off. But he didn't want to let them off the impeachment hook either. He didn't want them to be tempted by censure. Faced with voting up or down on impeaching Clinton, DeLay figured, they'd have to go with the evidence, the GOP base, and their Republican colleagues. He guessed right. When the House voted last Saturday, only four moderates defected, plus conservative Mark Souder of Indiana.

Why so few? The president's legal defense made defection an unattractive option for Republicans. Stonewalling and legalisms had kept much of Clinton's political support intact for months. But that defense "contained the seeds of its own destruction," says GOP consultant Jeffrey Bell. The problem was it gave Republicans no fig leaf if they voted against impeachment. Clinton's lawyerly and contemptuous response to 81 questions submitted by the Judiciary Committee crystallized the point and alienated wavering Republicans.

In the end, Republican unity on impeachment

shouldn't have been a surprise. And it wouldn't have been if the results of the November 3 election had been interpreted correctly. Initially, though, Republicans accepted the Democratic explanation that they had lost because they were pursuing impeachment. Later, they realized they'd simply been out-hustled. Eight million fewer GOP voters went to the polls in 1998 than in the previous mid-term election in 1994, and one million more Democrats showed up. Even so, the exit polls showed 60 percent of Americans don't like Clinton. As the momentum for impeachment grew, little public opposition appeared (except in Hollywood). And on impeachment day—the day that was never supposed to happen—there was scarcely a peep of protest outside the Capitol.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

MAN OF THE YEAR

by Matthew Rees

THE DECISIVE MOMENT in the House Judiciary Committee's deliberations over impeachment occurred the morning of November 4. The previous day's disappointing election returns were still dribbling in, and there was speculation the Republicans would scale back their inquiry. The quickly emerging conventional wisdom was that impeachment would never win a House majority. Henry Hyde, the committee chairman, rounded up the committee Republicans for a conference call. Calmly but firmly, he declared there was no turning back. "Yesterday, we got shellacked," he told them. "But we always said this isn't about polls or the election. This is about our constitutional duty. So let's get to it."

Had anyone but Henry Hyde been chairman of the Judiciary Committee at that moment, Bill Clinton might not have been impeached. For without the combination of Hyde's friendly profile, his stature, and his single-minded determination to pursue impeachment, even in the face of Democratic obstructionism, personal attacks, and GOP unease, few Republicans would have held firm against censure and for impeachment. "Mr. Hyde did an outstanding job under extraordinarily difficult circumstances," says Charles Canady, a GOP member of the committee.

From the beginning, a number of factors were working in Hyde's favor. Most important, independent counsel Kenneth Starr's thoroughness in questioning witnesses before the grand jury meant the Judiciary Committee had all the evidence it needed and wasn't saddled with reinvestigating the facts. The White House couldn't stonewall, as it had every congressional investigation of Clinton, and then claim the GOP was dragging its feet. Hyde also benefited from having a group of committee Republicans who were disinclined to view the Lewinsky matter charitably. And Newt Gingrich's resignation as speaker eliminated the Democratic charge that he was manipulating the proceedings, and made Hyde—widely viewed as a statesman—the public face of impeachment.

Despite all this, impeachment was no slam dunk. Congressional Democrats and the White House tried to tar the entire effort as strictly partisan, while many Republicans—aware of the public opposition to impeachment—would have happily settled for censure. As recently as a month ago, the likelihood of impeachment's winning a House majority was considered remote. On November 21, for example, Rep. John Porter, a moderate Illinois Republican, was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* as saying, "There are at least 50 Republicans that feel this matter has gone on for so long that it is leading nowhere. . . . If you don't have the votes for impeachment—and I don't think they do—we should vote for a resolution of censure." Porter, and countless other GOP moderates, eventually voted for impeachment.

Hyde, according to many of his colleagues, was instrumental in making impeachment happen. Asa Hutchinson, a committee Republican, notes, "Henry's presence was a great aid in giving our committee credibility." Bob Ney, a Republican who announced his support for impeachment only last week, told me that people in his district liked Hyde for being fair and nonpartisan. The best indication of the chairman's effectiveness came in early December, when Richard Gephardt comically announced that he wanted Newt Gingrich more involved in the impeachment proceedings—this just weeks after Gephardt and White House officials had loudly complained that Gingrich's involvement was excessive.

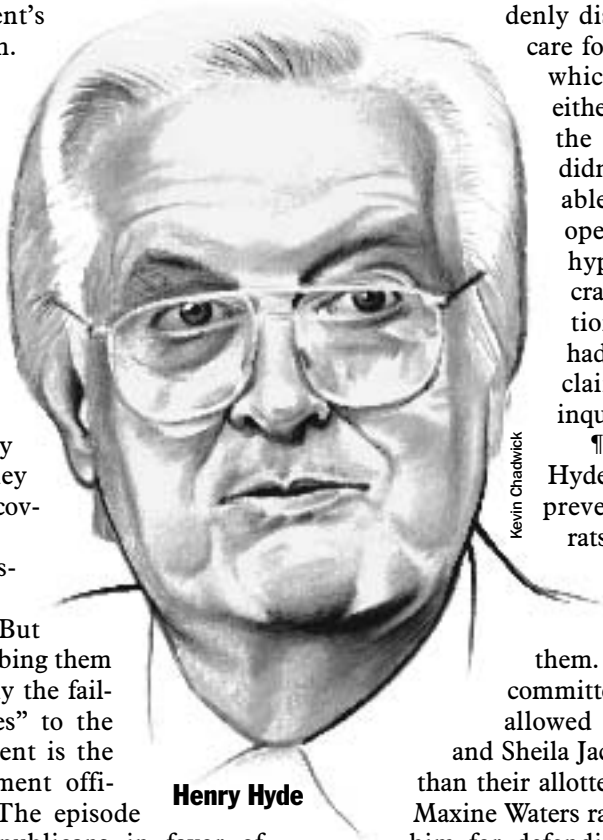
By the time Gephardt issued this call, Hyde had already orchestrated the steps that would prove critical to persuading Republicans that impeachment was justified. Those steps, in descending order of importance, were as follows:

¶ *The 81 questions:* Most of the immediate post-election impeachment news centered on Hyde's deci-

sion not to call material witnesses like Linda Tripp, Vernon Jordan, and Betty Currie before the Judiciary Committee. But two days after the election, Hyde sent the president 81 questions designed to establish which facts of the case could be stipulated. Hyde's communications team cleverly did not release the text of the questions, prompting the White House press corps to pick up the story and press the Clinton legal team to disclose exactly what it had received from Hyde.

The questions set a trap for Clinton. Hyde's aides figured the president would have to fudge his answers, setting off a round of press stories about the president's inability to tell the truth. Indeed, the White House was so uncomfortable with the questions, it considered not responding. Hyde threatened a subpoena and observed that the Nixon administration's failure to cooperate with Congress's impeachment inquiry produced an article of impeachment. In the end, the White House released the president's answers the day after Thanksgiving, when they were sure to get little media coverage.

With Congress out of session, the answers at first were dismissed as nothing new. But soon, Republicans were describing them as contemptuous—particularly the failure to provide a simple "yes" to the question whether the president is the country's chief law-enforcement officer—then as outright lies. The episode swung wavering House Republicans in favor of impeachment.



Kevin Chadwick

Henry Hyde

¶ *Kenneth Starr's testimony:* Hyde was initially reluctant to have Starr testify before the Judiciary Committee, for fear that Democrats would devote all their time to destroying him. But when Starr said at a late October forum in Minnesota that he would be "pleased and delighted" to testify, Hyde dropped his objections. Indeed, he became an enthusiastic advocate of Starr's coming before the committee. Good thinking. Starr's tarnished image left him nothing to lose and everything to gain by testifying. His performance didn't win universal acclaim—polls showed his favorability rating didn't budge. But he didn't embarrass himself either, and when neither committee Democrats nor Clinton lawyer David Kendall questioned any of his conclusions, House Republicans of all stripes came away more persuaded than ever. Hyde's staff privately credited Starr's testimony, along with Clinton's responses to the 81 questions, as critical to turning the tide in favor of impeachment.

¶ *The Watergate resolution:* When Starr sent his report to Congress, the Democrats insisted the Judiciary Committee should follow the rules laid down during the Watergate inquiry. A few weeks later, Hyde did exactly that: The resolution calling for an impeachment inquiry followed the Watergate model almost word for word. Democrats suddenly discovered they didn't much care for the Watergate resolution, which contained no limits on either the length or the scope of the impeachment inquiry and didn't try to define an impeachable offense—but this only opened them up to charges of hypocrisy. Thirty-one Democrats voted for the GOP resolution. More important, Hyde had neutralized the Democrats' claim that the rules of the inquiry were unfair.

¶ *Courtesy from the chair:* Hyde understood the best way to prevent the committee Democrats from turning the impeachment hearings into a circus was to bend over backwards to accommodate them. Thus against the wishes of committee Republicans, he regularly allowed ranters like Barney Frank and Sheila Jackson Lee to speak for more than their allotted five minutes. Once when Maxine Waters ran out of time as she blasted him for defending lies in Iran-contra, he asked for unanimous consent so "the gentlelady be granted time to continue her attack on me."

After the hearings ended, committee Democrats took the extraordinary step of praising Hyde's performance as chairman. "Henry was fair in that he certainly allowed members to express their point of view," said Martin Meehan. William Delahunt said, "In terms of running the hearings, and graciousness, I thought Henry was outstanding." And on the final day of the hearings, Howard Berman told the chairman, "You have often been unfairly attacked throughout this process and I, for one, want to commend you for the way you have handled these proceedings." An ABC News/*Washington Post* poll found that by 57 percent-38 percent, people felt the hearings were fair.

Yes, there were mistakes. The last-minute foray into Clinton campaign-finance abuses was ill-advised and prompted grumbling from Republicans on and off the Judiciary Committee. And the initial decision to expand on Starr's 11 impeachable offenses and put forward 15—reversed a few weeks later when just 4 counts were put forward—conveyed confusion. But compared with the big things Hyde did right, these were only stumbles.

The question now is whether Hyde's success in the House will make any difference in the Senate, where he and a few other Judiciary Committee Republicans will prosecute the case against Clinton. The environment will be dramatically different—the senators are not allowed to speak during a Senate impeachment trial, giving Hyde an opportunity to present his argument without Democrats nipping at his heels. Still, conviction is considered unlikely.

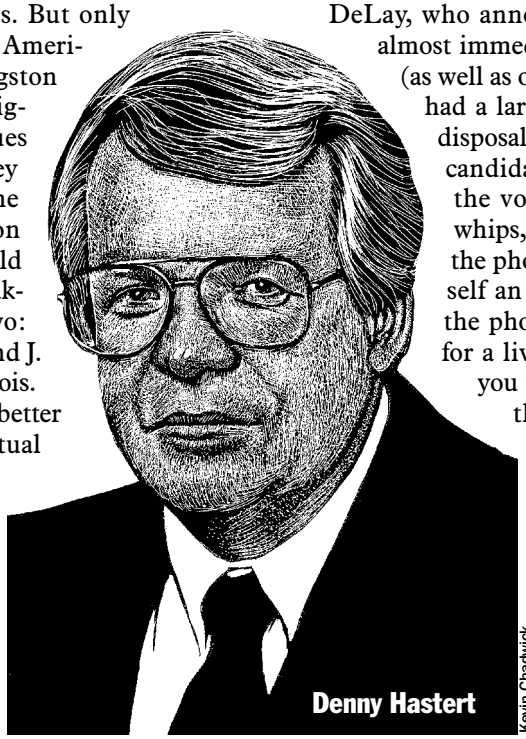
Regardless of what happens in the Senate, though, Hyde's success in pushing impeachment through the House has already secured him the fulfillment of a cherished ambition. Reflecting on his 24-years in Congress, he recently told the *Washington Post,* "You want to be thought well of by the people you work with. You like to earn their respect. I would like that to be my legacy—that I was a good congressman, I accomplished some things, and that when my time comes I'll be missed. If I can attain that, I'll be quite happy." Mission accomplished.

Matthew Rees is a staff writer for **THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**

DENNY'S HOUSE

by Tucker Carlson

REP. BOB LIVINGSTON'S SATURDAY-MORNING surprise resignation threw House Republicans into confusion and chaos. But only for about an hour. Before most Americans even learned that Livingston had withdrawn as speaker-designate, a number of his colleagues had already spread word that they intended to replace him. By the time the House began voting on articles of impeachment, the field of serious candidates for the speakership had shrunk to just two: Christopher Cox of California, and J. Dennis "Denny" Hastert of Illinois.



Denny Hastert

Kevin Chadwick

Of the two, Cox is by far the better known, a conservative intellectual with a Harvard law degree, a long record as an effective legislator, and the enthusiastic support of Republican opinion-shapers like George Will and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. Hastert is a low-key former high school wrestling coach who last received widespread publicity this fall when he slipped $250,000 into an appropriations bill to study the effects of a certain brand of caffeinated chewing gum. He has the enthusiastic support of the Illinois fastener industry.

But Hastert is almost certain to be the next speaker of the House.

How and why did this happen? For starters, Hastert enjoys the patronage of majority whip Tom DeLay, who announced his support for Hastert almost immediately. As DeLay's chief deputy (as well as one of his closest friends) Hastert had a large vote-getting operation at his disposal from the moment he became a candidate. He is almost certain to win the votes of the other 60-odd deputy whips, each of whom in turn will work the phones on his behalf. Hastert, himself an accomplished whip, will be on the phone, too. "The guy counts votes for a living," says a DeLay staffer. "Do you think he would have gotten into this if he didn't think he could win?"

Many of Hastert's peers also believe he can win, and want him to. During the House leadership shakeup last month, Hastert was often mentioned as a replacement for majority leader Dick Armey. As it turned out, Hastert had already promised Armey that he wouldn't mount a challenge for the position. Friends tried to draft him into the race, but Hastert refused to break his word to Armey. It's not clear that Hastert would

have beaten Armey, but he received a great deal of credit for not trying.

Hastert also gets credit for patience and for uniting factions within the party. Though he is pro-life, Hastert gets along so well with moderates he is sometimes described as one himself. He's not, insists a DeLay aide. "His image is a lot more moderate than his voting record. He's just a quiet conservative."

Aides to Chris Cox, meanwhile, have been making much the same case for their boss. While Cox is firmly on the ideological right, those who work for him say, he's not obnoxious about it. As an example, one aide points to Cox's stationery. For four years, Cox has run the House Republican Policy Committee. Somewhere along the way, he had the term "Republican" deleted from the committee's letterhead. "When you use the word 'Republican,'" says an aide, proudly displaying a piece of the revised stationery, "you turn off 70 percent of the people you're trying to reach."

Cox, who has a reputation for being arrogant and cold, has already turned off a number of his fellow Republicans in the House. By late Saturday he was working hard to generate momentum for his campaign for speaker. But the Cox virus didn't seem to be spreading. Little more than an hour after the last impeachment vote, Hastert had already won the endorsement of outgoing speaker Newt Gingrich, sewn up about 50 votes, and been described by CNN as the front-runner. More than 30 congressmen manned a phone bank in his office trying to track down Republican members before they left for Christmas. Hastert's staff was predicting the race would be over by Monday.

What sort of speaker will Denny Hastert be? Don't expect brilliant oratory or impromptu history lectures on *Larry King Live*. Even his friends describe Hastert as a better manager than inspirational leader. "Not a great communicator," says one.

On the other hand, a stable, effective manager is what many in the Republican conference want at this point, someone a bit less exciting than the previous two speakers. "Larry Flynt isn't going to find any skeletons in this guy's closet," says a DeLay aide happily. "In fact, Denny doesn't have any offensive qualities."

Not high praise, perhaps, but about as much as Republicans could ask for under the circumstances.

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer for **THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**

BOMBING BEFORE RAMADAN

by John R. Bolton

FINALLY, FOR THE FIRST TIME in the six years of his administration, President Clinton took vigorous military action against Iraq. Nonetheless, his December 16 speech to the nation was unclear about both the real objectives of the attack and the level and duration of force that were to be applied. If we had greater confidence in the president's credibility and in his military leadership, we would all be more confident that, in fact, he made the correct decision, rather than just another expedient political maneuver. It is hard to believe that the order to attack, coming from a president whose foreign policy rests on domestic politics, was not calibrated by its consequences for the impeachment process.

THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH MADE A COMPELLING CASE FOR WHY WE SHOULD HAVE BOMBED IRAQ THREE YEARS AGO.

The timing of the president's decision to use force against Iraq had no other logic. At three times in just the past 14 months—October 1997 and February and November 1998—President Clinton could have and should have imposed harsh military punishment on Iraq. Nothing in his address to the nation explained why he abjured force on those occasions, but chose to unleash it last week. Indeed, his speech made a compelling case for why we should have bombed Iraq three years ago.

The only difference between the situation in mid November and the situation in mid December was that the president's personal political standing had declined precipitously. In November, impeachment looked remote, but by December 16 it seemed almost certain. Senate majority leader Trent Lott then said publicly what most Republican congressmen had been saying privately: that the use of force just hours before the scheduled opening of the House debate on impeachment was questionable at best.

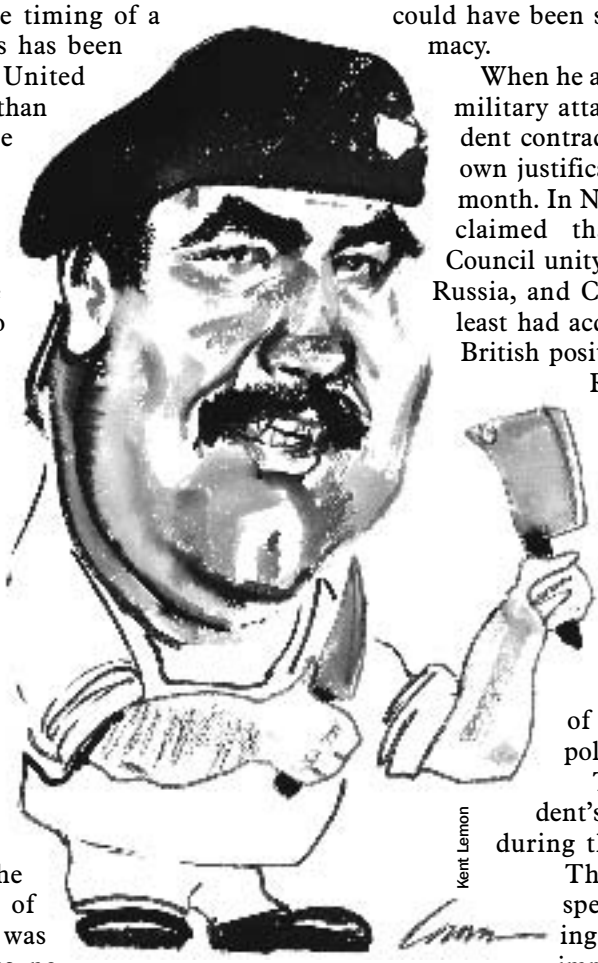
Republican concerns had a considerable basis in fact. NBC's Tim Russert had reported that a Democratic pollster had told him that the attack would stall the rise in public support for impeachment or resignation, which by December 16 had reached 44 percent in at least one poll. Russert's Democratic source had also believed that, by diverting attention from the impeachment issue, the attack had bought the president time to put his crumbling political defenses back in order.

The key point is that the timing of a military strike is and always has been the exclusive call of the United States. No one said it better than Secretary of State Madeleine Albright shortly after Scott Ritter resigned in protest from the United Nations weapons inspection team: When dealing with Iraq, she said, you must "be able to choose your own timing and terrain." Either the president had failed to heed Albright, or, more likely, he had followed her advice very carefully and chose his own timing.

The president's rationale for attacking Iraq on December 16 rested on two basic points: (1) the timing was dictated by the report delivered to the Security Council by chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler and by the need to surprise Iraq; and (2) the attack needed to start before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. The first claim was entirely spurious. There was no reason not to have attacked earlier, at any of several points in the weeks before December 16—when Saddam actually blocked the inspections, as reported by Butler. With equal plausibility, the president could have waited until after the House impeachment vote, because Saddam had been on notice since at least November (albeit for the seventh or eighth time) that Clinton was threatening military force.

The president's second claim was also faulty. Ruling out the use of force during Ramadan radically circumscribed what the attack could accomplish. Furthermore, it raised serious questions about why Clinton waited until just a few days before the holy month to begin military action.

More fundamentally, it was simply a gross misstatement of Muslim concerns to have asserted that military action during Ramadan could not have been explained to the leaders of Muslim countries. Indeed, Muslim states attacked Israel during Ramadan in 1973. Showing sensitivity to the religious tenets of Islam is extremely important to managing the American-led coalition. However, any concerns raised by military attacks during Ramadan could have been satisfied by prudent diplomacy.



When he authorized the December 16 military attack against Iraq, the president contradicted a key element of his own justification for not attacking last month. In November, the president had claimed that maintaining Security Council unity was critical. Even France, Russia, and China had supported, or at least had acquiesced in, the American-British position. But this time around, Russia and China were in full-throated opposition, while France's reaction was mixed. So irritated was Russia, it recalled its ambassadors from Washington and London. What had happened to the importance of Security Council solidarity? Was solidarity another casualty of the president's domestic political fortunes?

The cloud over the president's credibility will only grow during the remainder of his term. This is why former House speaker-designate Bob Livingston's decision to keep the impeachment process on track by postponing debate for only a day was exactly the right thing to do. Moreover, his decision to propose a resolution supporting America's military forces in Iraq was also the right thing to do. Nonetheless, the confluence of impeachment and the president's timing on Iraq has only underlined the importance of expeditious action by the Senate now that the House has approved articles of impeachment.

John R. Bolton is senior vice president of the American Enterprise Institute. During the Bush administration, he served as assistant secretary of state for international organizations.

War and Impeachment

by David Frum

The Clinton administration's defenders are shocked, absolutely shocked, that anyone might think the timing of the raid on Iraq had something to do with the impeachment vote in the House of Representatives. Geraldo Rivera—usually a reliable indicator of this administration's thinking—opined on television last Wednesday that never before in American history had any president had to endure such insinuations. Is the self-pity merited?

Let's take a little trip back through time. It's October 25, 1973, five days after Richard Nixon's "Saturday Night massacre"—the firing of Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, and the resignations of Attorney General Elliot Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus. It's also the twentieth day of the Yom Kippur war, and Israeli troops have crossed the Suez canal, surrounded an Egyptian army in the Sinai desert, and reached the outskirts of Damascus. Suddenly, President Nixon orders American troops worldwide placed on "precautionary alert"—not a war footing, but close to it. Soldiers' leaves are canceled, B-52s in Guam are ordered back to the United States, and a third aircraft carrier is dispatched to the Mediterranean.

Does Washington rally round the president? Hardly. Nixon sends out National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger—one of the few members of his administration to retain any credibility—to face the press. Kissinger is asked much ruder questions than anybody dared put to Clinton's national security adviser, Sandy Berger, or Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: Not only is Kissinger challenged to explain whether the operation was "designed" with domestic political considerations in mind, but one reporter ventures to ask him to comment on whether he thinks Nixon entirely sane.

The Nixon administration was in fact reacting to a genuine and frightening threat: the possibility that the Soviet Union would send troops into the war zone to save Egypt and Syria from humiliation by Israel. Credible reports had reached Washington that 40,000 Soviet airborne troops were gathered in staging areas in southern Russia and that 6,000 Soviet marines might already have disembarked in Syria. But even after the genuineness of the crisis had been established; even after the Soviets had backed down; even after the alert ended, the doubts lingered. The *Washington Post* reported on October 26 that the capital was gripped by an "undercurrent of suspicion that the president might have escalated the crisis . . . to . . . take people's minds off his domestic problems." *Newsweek* suggested in its November 5, 1973, issue that the president's "flourish of crisis diplomacy" was a device to divert attention, and it quoted an unnamed administration source as saying, "We had a problem and we decided to make the most of it." *Time* questioned whether "the alert scare was necessary," and concluded that it probably was not.

This ancient history shows something more than the falseness of the Clintonites' claim that no previous administration has ever had to endure the skepticism that this one has. It points to parallels between the harm the Clinton presidency is doing to the country and that done by the Nixon and Johnson administrations a generation ago. Between 1966 and 1975, every poll of public opinion registered a dramatic drop in public trust and confidence in the government in Washington. The reasons for this drop are pretty obvious: Lie to people often enough and they stop believing your words; fail often enough and they lose faith in your judgment. And the decade from 1966 to 1975 abounded in lies and failures, both abroad and at home.

> CLINTON'S FAITHLESSNESS SEEMS TO BE INFLICTING MORE DAMAGE ON THE PRESIDENCY THAN ON HIS OWN STANDING.

Some conservatives have been known to laud the collapse of trust in government, because it makes it harder for the likes of the Clintons to launch sweeping new social programs. That's true enough. But a widespread belief that politicians are liars and frauds is an equally effective weapon against tax cuts, school choice, and Social Security reform. Cynicism does not promote small government. As the sociologist Edward Banfield taught 30 years ago, a society in which people do not trust each other will not be able to govern itself. And a society that cannot govern itself will not be a society without government; it will be a society perpetually vulnerable to authoritarian government.

So when people say, as they do, that Ronald Reagan's most important achievement was restoring Americans' faith in themselves, they are not mouthing platitudes. Between 1979 and 1989, opinion polls showed a rise in public confidence in the trustworthiness of government. Reagan's strong leadership, his rock-solid personal integrity, and his consistent record of success won back much of the faith—and some of

the latitude to conduct a muscular foreign policy—that Johnson and Nixon had forfeited. It was Reagan's record, crowned by the collapse of communism and the ultimate vindication of his hardline anti-Soviet policies, that made the Gulf War of 1991 politically feasible.

But Reagan's achievement was an incomplete one. Trust in government as measured by polls has never recovered the levels of the 1950s and early 1960s. Even at the peak of his popularity in 1984 and 1985, Reagan never commanded the deference that an Eisenhower or even a Kennedy once took for granted, particularly in the realm of foreign policy. Nor did Reagan's achievement sink deep roots. The shock of the 1990 recession and George Bush's breach of his no-new-taxes pledge rolled poll-measured levels of public trust right back to their late-1970s nadir. And then Bill Clinton was elected.

So here we are: The economy is strong, still; crime, unwed pregnancy, abortion, and divorce are all trending down; the 1990s have been the first decade since the 1920s in which the United States has faced no powerful enemy. And yet, trust in government has not recovered as it did in the 1980s. Indeed, as Karlyn Bowman of the American Enterprise Institute notes, while 73 percent of Americans in 1958 trusted the government in Washington to do the right thing "most" or "all" of the time; in 1998, 73 percent expect the government to do the right thing "only some of the time" or "never"—a precise mirror image. Against this backdrop of low expectations and ill-humor, President Clinton ordered up a repeatedly postponed air war against Iraq 24 hours before he was sure to lose a House impeachment vote.

We should fervently hope that suspicions Bill Clinton timed a military operation for political protection remain just that—suspicions. Because already, 80 percent of the public believes the president is a perjurer, and a majority believes that he organized an obstruction of justice. Yet Clinton's faithlessness, curiously enough, seems to be inflicting more damage upon the institution of the presidency than upon his own personal standing. He remains popular even as ever-increasing numbers of Americans describe the government he heads as corrupt and immoral. It's an impressive act of blame-shifting. So one has to wonder to what record heights public mistrust of government would ascend were it ever shown that Clinton had deployed the military—even in a just and necessary cause—for personal gain.

And one must fear that at the very same moment that the president's job ratings are reaching an all-time high, the troubling timing of this sudden and startling reversal of Clinton's foreign policy seems likely to perpetuate for another generation the poisonous suspicions that have crippled American foreign policy, and American government more generally, since the 1960s.

David Frum, a contributing editor to* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*, is completing a book on the 1970s.

CLINTON'S INTELLECTUALS

by Pia Nordlinger

THOSE WHO BELIEVE CLINTON is an innocent lamb also believe, with unwavering certainty, two "truths." The impeachment process is a subversion of the democratic process; and the vast right-wing conspiracy is behind it all.

This was made abundantly clear when a group of New York City Clinton-backers—drawn from the ranks of both the hoi polloi and the exalted—gathered at New York University Law School to spread a little holiday impeachment outrage. Organized by writer Paul Berman, historian Sean Wilentz, and law professor Stephen Holmes, the December 14 event was billed as an "emergency speakout." The shindig couldn't quite manage "rally" status, even though there were about 500 people present. The largely boomer-and-over crowd wasn't about to convene in Washington Square Park, not at this time of year. Comfortably seated indoors, these members of the Rockport-and-Charlie-Rose set were nevertheless highly animated all night.

Historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and novelist Toni Morrison were two of the bigger names of the speakout. Law professor Ronald Dworkin, novelist Mary Gordon (who suggested that Clinton was the first female president), Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg, and Elie Wiesel were in the lineup. And *New York* magazine's Michael Tomasky was the moderator. Nearly every speaker urged audience members to contact their congressmen and make their opinions known—not that these fiery liberals needed any goading. They were happy to scribble down congressional Web sites and phone numbers in the hopes of entering their mounting anger into the historical record.

Former congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman hit the key note when she took to the podium. "What is

at stake here is the right of the American people, by majority votes, to elect a president of the United States and not have that undone by a group of moralizing yet sanctimonious people." In between "sanctimonious" and "people," Holtzman paused, and the audience, on cue, yelled, "HYPOCRITES!"

But the crowd hadn't reached the level of finish-the-speakers'-sentences all by themselves. Sen. Bob Torricelli of New Jersey had revved them up with a little doomsday scenario: "If Bill Clinton is impeached, one of the great gifts of the Founding Fathers of this Republic will be sacrificed in the process: political stability." The senator continued, "What has occurred in the House is not simply a threat to the power of Bill Clinton, but the disenfranchisement of every man and woman who went to vote in 1996."

Novelist E.L. Doctorow, who declared the impeachment proceedings to be a "conflagration of church and state," placed the blame squarely on the independent counsel. "Ken Starr," he thundered, "has shown us how a conscienceless and ideologically vindictive use of investigative privilege can undercut the legitimacy of a duly elected American government. More than partisan politics is going on here. This is the unseating of a democratically elected president, with all the legitimacy of a coup d'etat."

The impeachment-as-coup story had legs with this crowd. Feminist scholar Blanche Wiesen Cook took advantage of it when she said that the impeachment proceedings were, simply, a "coup over a cock."

Had there been a marquee for the evening, the local congressman Jerrold Nadler would have enjoyed star billing. When Manhattan's Defender of the American Way strode onto the stage, the mostly grey-haired audience worked itself into a frenzy of clapping, cheering, and waving, far more of a display than they would muster for later speakers, even Alec Baldwin and Toni Morrison. Nadler managed to couple the coup idea with his own take on the vast right-wing conspiracy. "If, God forbid, this goes to trial in the Senate, the silver lining may be that we may be able to find out who started this coup d'etat. Who paid for it? What exactly was the role of the so-called Arkansas Project paid for by Richard Mellon Scaife? What role did that have in financing the Paula Jones case?"

Gloria Steinem tapped this same vein in proclaiming that impeachment is not about the president's actions but about conservatives' "desire to win the culture war at last. To get rid of a president they hate." The feminist icon also called for an "end to the public humiliation of Monica Lewinsky," who "could be us and our daughters."

Throughout the evening, speakers made plain the fact that Republicans, and everything they stand for, are responsible for Clinton's present situation. Actor Alec Baldwin, now a staple at all the popular liberal events, was short on logic and long on ad hominem attacks. After declaring that there are a few good Republicans, he lamented that they are "completely under the thumb of these sociopaths who run Congress." Baldwin also pulled out the sure-fire hit: abortion. "What you see with the rabid conservative leadership in the Republican party is that there is never any homogeneity to their thinking. They want to take away a woman's right to choose, and they don't want to take care of that child once it is born. They are so concerned about the effects that Clinton's perjury and behavior will have on their own children. These guys are pretty good actors. They sit there and they look at that camera and say, [and here he put on a deep cornpone accent] 'I am concerned about the children of our country.'"

Hatred of the Right had become the unifying theme of the evening. Blanche Wiesen Cook invoked it when she tried to awaken the '60s rebel within these parents and grandparents. They were with her at first, but began murmuring to each other as the feminist scholar's rant became increasingly hysterical.

> There is no reason for us to be here unless it is to reignite our Democratic-activist movement. . . . For weeks, for months, the Christian Coalition has gone around to churches and written letters. They're on that phone tree! WHERE ARE OUR PHONE TREES?
>
> We are looking at theocrats. We have to mobilize like we mobilized against the war in Vietnam, like we mobilized against slavery. This is about race. And Maxine Waters is right when she says this is about crack cocaine in the neighborhoods. [Republicans] do not believe in government; that's why there are a million homeless people.

Former Episcopal bishop Paul Moore Jr. took a different tack, running down a laundry list of issues from Bosnia to Social Security and Medicare which the impeachment proceedings are supposedly undermining. Sorrowfully, he told the audience, "I think of the millions and millions of people who will suffer and die because the Republicans want to get President Clinton for a personal sin."

The evening ended in song, with diva Jessye Norman leading tone-deaf fellow Clinton backers in the national anthem. Afterwards, the crowd began dispersing, but not before Rep. Nadler got a chance to mix with his adoring, infuriated public.

***Pia Nordlinger is an editorial writer for the* New York Post.**

Clinton's Hysterics

by Tucker Carlson

The rally organized by Jesse Jackson on the Capitol steps last week was advertised as a prayer vigil against impeachment; but for demonstrator Haji Warf, a 33-year-old non-profit-foundation employee from the Virginia suburbs, the event was "part of the grieving process." Warf has been involved in politics at the volunteer level for years—her husband is a Democratic pollster—but she has never felt as passionately about Congress as she does now. "This thing is driving me crazy," she says. "I can't even make dinner for my family anymore. I start thinking about what the Republicans are doing to Clinton and I start to cry."

Since the Monica Lewinsky story broke, Warf has been crying a lot. She cries on her way to work in the morning listening to Republican members of Congress on the radio. She cries when she gets to the office. She cries as she remembers crying. And when Warf isn't crying, she's seething. "I have violent feelings," she says, feelings brought on by this "sham of an impeachment process. Countries have gone to war for less than this, hand-to-hand battle for less than this. I would be surprised if we didn't revolt. It's a good thing we're a civil society or there would be mass murder right now to rectify the situation." Personally, Warf says, she doesn't have plans to hurt Republicans. On the other hand, "I can see how some people would act on their impulse to violence. I can see that happening."

Kent Lemon

Jesse Jackson

How did an otherwise mild-mannered soccer mom like Warf get so worked up? By listening to the impeachment debate, of course. And if you believed half of what some Democrats are saying, you'd be worked up, too. Consider the speakers at last week's prayer vigil.

This impeachment, shouted Rep. John Conyers of Michigan to the crowd of several thousand, is not a political process and it isn't a legal proceeding. It is "a bloodless political coup d'état." In fact, it's worse than that. The impeachment process, Conyers said, is a "crime against the United States and the people," perpetrated by "clinical, psychopathic" Republicans intent on seizing executive power for their own evil ends. But they won't get away with it, the top-ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee thundered. "They will pay."

They certainly will, agreed labor leader Gerald McEntee, and not just in the next election. Republicans, said McEntee, head of the AFSCME government employees union, are facing defeat at the heavenly polls as well. For "those who vote for impeachment," he said sadly, we can only "pray to God to have mercy on them."

It's going to take a lot of mercy, observed another speaker, John Boyd of the National Black Farmers Association. According to Boyd, Jesus himself has come to Washington to judge the impeachment proceedings. "He's looking at the wrongdoing of the Republican party," Boyd told the crowd, and His verdict is clear: Republicans had better rethink their position on Clinton. Otherwise, Boyd warned, "on judgment day they might not get through."

Why is God so mad at the pro-impeachment Republicans? Well, for one thing, they're racists. Jesse Jackson Jr., second-term congressman from Illinois, explained as much during a long speech toward the end of the vigil (an event he described as "the most relevant historical protest of our time"). It is not actually Bill Clinton who is being impeached, Jackson informed the heavily black crowd. "They are impeaching 130 years of opportunity and hope for every American." And who is "they"? "Old historical forces," Jackson said—the same forces who opposed the Voting Rights

Act, the same forces responsible for "the long, dark night of the Negro's legitimate discontent in America," the same forces, in fact, who fought on the wrong side in the Civil War.

Confederates loose in Washington? Where? Well, said Jesse Jr., just look at who's supporting impeachment. There's Bob Livingston (then still the speaker-designate). He's from Louisiana, and "they seceded from the Union." Sen. Jesse Helms, meanwhile, is from North Carolina, another secessionist state. As for the home states of Republican representatives Tom Bliley of Virginia, Porter Goss of Florida, Newt Gingrich and Bob Barr of Georgia—they, too, "seceded from the Union."

In a Congress run by pro-segregation, pro-slavery forces, Jackson explained, it doesn't take a genius to know the impeachment hearings are really all about race. "This is not a Republican takeover, it's a states' rights takeover," Jackson told the cheering crowd. "In 1998, they don't have to call you Negro anymore. They just call you liberal."

WHY IS GOD SO MAD AT THE PRO-IMPEACHMENT REPUBLICANS? WELL, FOR ONE THING THEY'RE RACISTS, EVEN CONFEDERATES.

It's easy to dismiss much of Jackson's rhetoric as a weirder, less eloquent version of his father's. It's harder to ignore the same kind of talk—dark warnings of political coups and plotting segregationists—when it comes from Alan Dershowitz, law professor, cable television fixture, and creator of the "political coup d'état" talking point. For one thing, Dershowitz represents Harvard Law School, not the South Side of Chicago. For another, Dershowitz appears on MSNBC a lot more often.

Plus, Dershowitz is even less subtle than Jackson. "A vote against impeachment," he told Geraldo Rivera last week, "is not a vote for Bill Clinton. It is a vote against bigotry. It's a vote against fundamentalism. It's a vote against anti-environmentalism. It's a vote against the right-to-life movement. It's a vote against the radical Right." It is a vote, Dershowitz said gravely, against "the forces of evil, evil, genuine evil."

Overheated as Dershowitz's rhetoric is, he is still on the faculty at Harvard, and one might expect him to have at least some evidence for his charges against Republicans. He doesn't. Take Dershowitz's claim, repeated on television to Geraldo, that Republicans on the Judiciary Committee are "a bunch of politically opportunistic hypocrites who couldn't care less about the United States of America."

Nastiness aside, there's a problem with this contention: If polls show most Americans are against impeachment, how can Republicans who vote for impeachment be acting out of political opportunism?

"There are two different kinds of polls," Dershowitz explains. "Very few politicians care about the polls you see on CNN. They have their own polls." Which polls? Which politicians? "This impeachment is largely driven by that kind of look at the polls," he repeats. Yes, but how do you know this? Where are the reports, the studies, the *data* people who run around calling themselves "professor" are supposed to whip out in the heat of an argument to prove their case? "It's the conclusion I draw," Dershowitz says primly. "Everybody's entitled to reach a view on this, and that's my view."

Dershowitz's view has won him appearances on lots of cable broadcasts over the past year, not to mention an audience with the First Family on Martha's Vineyard, but it's hard not to think he has lost something in the process. Calling your political opponents evil can be an effective short-term strategy. Among other things, it can whip soccer moms into a useful frenzy. The trick is to get out of the game before you begin to sound like a frenzied soccer mom yourself. It may be too late for Dershowitz.

Earlier this month, Dershowitz gave an interview to Sean Hannity, host of a radio show on WABC in New York. During the course of the program, Dershowitz made the point that Rep. Bob Barr of Georgia is a white supremacist. Hannity disagreed. Dershowitz lost control. "You're a horse's ass, a wimp, and a liar," Dershowitz screamed. "You'll be working for McDonald's in a few years because you're playing ball with racists, and your New York audience shouldn't be subjected to this."

"Shut your jackass-professor mouth," replied Hannity. "You're a failed talk-show host who has the nerve to call people racists after you sat silent while the race card was played in the [O.J.] Simpson trial."

"Listen, you wimp," Dershowitz yelled back. "I'll bet you $1,000 that you won't renounce your buddy Barr after I prove to you that he's a racist and an anti-Semite."

The argument continued, but how it ended isn't the point. The point is that it happened at all. One moment, you're a respected Harvard law professor. The next, you're screaming at radio talk-show hosts about who is and who is not a racist. Before you know it, you're standing on the steps of the Capitol in tears.

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

I, Rigoberta Menchu . . . Not!

By Dinesh D'Souza

I confess to having been mildly embarrassed when Rigoberta Menchu, Guatemalan political activist and author of *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992. The *Chronicle of Higher Education* called the very day her prize was announced and reminded me that in my book *Illiberal Education* the year before, I had harshly criticized Menchu's autobiography as a sadly typical example of the bogus multicultural agitprop that was displacing the Western classics on the reading lists for undergraduates at elite universities like Stanford.

"Now that Rigoberta has won the Nobel prize," the reporter asked, "what is your reaction?"

"All I can say," I replied, "is that I am relieved she didn't win for literature."

For Rigoberta, the Nobel prize proved to be a canonization in both senses of the term. This obscure Indian woman who published her 1983 autobiography when she was still in her mid 20s, suddenly received worldwide recognition as a leftist icon—a modern-day Saint Sebastian, pierced by the arrows of racist discrimination and colonial exploitation. She received several honorary doctorates and in 1992 was nominated as a United Nations goodwill ambassador and special representative of indigenous peoples. Her book, hailed as a first-person account of Guatemalan bigotry and brutality against native Indians, spread from cutting-edge curricula like Stanford's to become part of the canon of required and frequently assigned readings in high schools and universities around the globe.

Then, just last week, the *New York Times* revealed that much of *I, Rigoberta Menchu* is a fabrication. *Times* reporter Larry Rohter corroborated the research of an American anthropologist, David Stoll, whose interviews with over a hundred people and archival research during the past decade led him to conclude that Rigoberta's story "cannot be the eyewitness account it purports to be."

For example, in one of the most moving scenes in the book, Rigoberta describes how she watched her brother Nicolas die of malnutrition. But the *New York Times* found Nicolas alive and well enough to be running a relatively prosperous homestead in a Guatemalan village. According to members of Rigoberta's own family, as well as residents of her village, she also fabricated her account of how a second brother was burned alive by army troops as her parents were forced to watch.

Central to Rigoberta's story—and the supposed source of her Marxism—is a land dispute in which her impoverished family, working for slave wages on plantations, is intimidated and oppressed by wealthy landowners of European descent. Those nefarious oligarchs supposedly manipulated the government into forcing the Menchu family and other poor Indians off unclaimed land that they had farmed. According to the locals, however, this dispute was really a land feud that pitted Rigoberta's father against his in-laws. "It was a family quarrel that went on for years and years," Efrain Galindo, the mayor of the town, told Rohter. "I wanted peace, but none of us could get them to negotiate a settlement."

Even on small matters, Rigoberta's account turns out to be unreliable. On the very first page of her autobiography, Rigoberta says that she "never went to school" and only learned Spanish as an adult. In fact, she received the equivalent of a middle-school education as a scholarship student at two prestigious private boarding schools operated by Catholic nuns. Her half-sister Rosa Menchu confirms that since Rigoberta spent much of her youth in boarding schools, she could not possibly have worked as a political organizer and labored up to eight months a year on coffee and cotton plantations, as described in considerable detail in her autobiography.

None of this is to deny that Rigoberta's family, like many Guatemalans, suffered greatly during that country's long civil war. Both her parents were killed in that bloody conflict. But Rigoberta's account of the tragedy can no longer be trusted. "The book is one lie after another, and she knows it," Alfonso Rivera, a

Dinesh D'Souza, who is John M. Olin scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is author of Illiberal Education *and* Ronald Reagan: How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader.

municipal clerk who kept all official records for the area for three decades, told the *Times*.

No less interesting than these revelations has been the reaction to them by Rigoberta Menchu, her champions and advocates. Rigoberta herself senses a racist plot and denounces her critics for "political provocations." The Nobel committee, having found Rigoberta a suitably obscure and politically correct candidate for its peace prize in 1992, the 500th anniversary of Columbus's landing in North America, said that it will not rescind the prize even though her only credential for winning was her life story, as narrated in her autobiography.

Equally recalcitrant is the academic community that enshrined *I, Rigoberta Menchu* in the multicultural canon in American colleges and universities. The Rigoberta Menchu Foundation, based in New York, boasts that her book is one of the most widely read in classrooms in America and Europe. My cursory check at such leading universities as Stanford, Columbia, and Princeton shows that *I, Rigoberta Menchu* is still widely assigned. So many high schools use the book that there is even a textbook, *Teaching and Testimony: Rigoberta Menchu and the North American Classroom*, about how to teach Rigoberta Menchu's life story.

According to reporter Robin Wilson of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, who has been calling professors around the country who teach *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, most of them are outraged—not with Menchu for making things up, but with anthropologist David Stoll for exposing her fraud. Virtually all of the professors Wilson contacted defiantly told her that they would not stop assigning *I, Rigoberta Menchu* to their students.

Some of this may be the defensiveness of those in shock. But still it raises the question of how universities, supposedly dedicated to truth and critical thinking, can continue to teach a book that is full of falsehoods. For now, Rigoberta's academic fan club resorts to what may be termed the Tawana Brawley defense, named after the New York teenager who faked a racially motivated rape. The lawyers and civil rights activists who defended Brawley said it didn't matter that she had concocted her tale, because a racist society causes such desperation. As legal scholar Patricia Williams put it, "No matter who did it to her, and even if she did it to herself . . . Tawana Brawley has been the victim of some unspeakable violation."

In a similar vein, Rigoberta apologists like Marjorie Agosin of Wellesley College now argue that whether or not Rigoberta's autobiography was faked, the native Indians of Guatemala have endured unimaginable hardships, the death squads of Latin America were a reality of the 1970s and 1980s, and so despite a few inconveniences of detail, the general message of *I, Rigoberta Menchu* is essentially true.

But of course the legitimacy of teaching Guatemalan social and political history is not in dispute. The issue is whether *I, Rigoberta Menchu* deserves a central place in the liberal arts curriculum. Even Rigoberta's strongest defenders, like Stanford anthropologist Renato Rosaldo, have never maintained that this young woman's autobiography is great literature. If it were, then the claim of factual inaccuracy might be beside the point. *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway's memoir of his life in Paris, would remain a minor fictional classic even if it turned out to be an unreliable account of that phase of Hemingway's life. Rigoberta, though, does not run the risk of being confused with Hemingway.


Kent Lemon

Rather, the argument for teaching *I, Rigoberta Menchu* is based on the claim that, for all its literary flaws, the book is an accurate and authentic representation of the sufferings of a people, perhaps of all oppressed peoples. Rigoberta Menchu's translator and literary collaborator, the French feminist Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, recognized this fact in her introduction to *I, Rigoberta Menchu*: "Her life story is an account of contemporary history. . . . She speaks for all the Indians of the American continent. . . . The voice of Rigoberta allows the defeated to speak. She is a privileged witness. . . . Her story is overwhelming because what she has to say is simple and true." By the same token, if what she has to say is neither accurate nor representative, there can be no possible case for teaching the book, unless one wants to include it in a survey of celebrated hoaxes.

As I pointed out in *Illiberal Education*, there were plenty of reasons to be suspicious from the outset of Rigoberta Menchu's credibility as the spokesperson for oppressed indigenous peoples. She met her feminist translator *in Paris*, not a venue to which many of the Third World's poor routinely travel. Rigoberta's rhetoric employs a socialist and Marxist vocabulary that does not sound typical of a Guatemalan peasant. These jarring elements in her story have now been accounted for. David Stoll's study shows that Rigoberta's life story was "drastically revised" to reflect the ideological perspective of a revolutionary left-wing organization she joined and on whose behalf she made the fateful tour of Europe that led to the publication of her book.

So what explains the continuing allegiance to her autobiography among Western academics? The answer is even if Rigoberta does not accurately reflect the experiences of oppressed people in Guatemala, she *does* reflect the political ideology of American professors who came of age in the 1960s. She embodies a projection of Western Marxist and feminist views onto South American Indian culture, which is manipulated and distorted to serve Western political objectives. Her radicalism provides Third World confirmation of Western progressive ideology. She is in fact a mouthpiece for a left-wing critique of the West that is all the more powerful because it seems to come from an "authentic" Third World source.

Rigoberta thus provides a model with which American minority and female students are meant to identify: They, too, are oppressed like her; they, too, can make victimology a basis for group solidarity. And if they spend their precious college years reading this stuff and thereby waste the opportunity to have a genuine liberal arts education? Well, that's just too bad. For Rigoberta's admirers to renounce her now would be to give up a standard-bearer of progressive grievance and alienation.

Rigoberta Menchu has all along been a willing and crafty accomplice in this cultural transaction. With extraordinary canniness, she presented herself in her autobiography as the consummate victim, a *quadruple* victim of oppression. She is a person of color, and thus a victim of racism. She is a woman, and thus a victim of sexism. She is a Latin American, and thus a victim of European and North American colonialism. She is an Indian, and thus victimized by the Latino ruling class of Latin America.

For such ingenuity in seizing the bottom rung of the ladder, who can doubt that Rigoberta Menchu deserved a prize? ♦

How the Grinchus Stole Christmas

Dr. Seuss's Christmas Classic in Latin

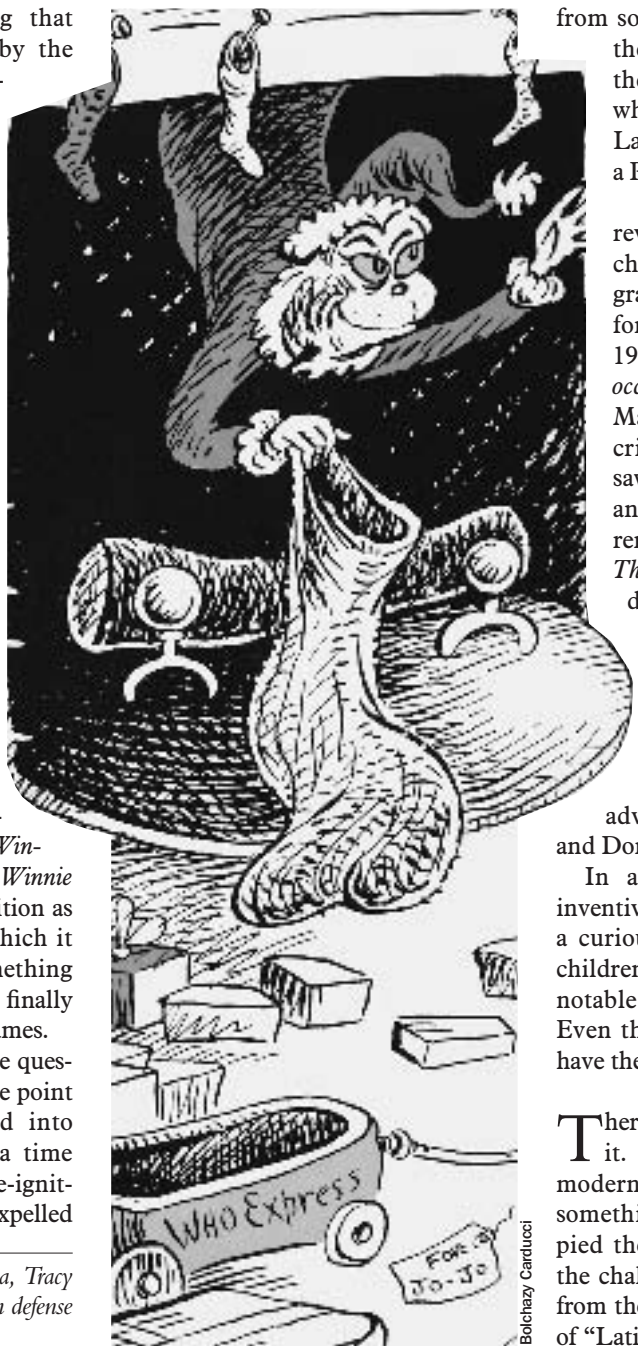
By Tracy Lee Simmons

Just as we were despairing that today's children, seduced by the Information Age, might never learn to read for pleasure, a new strategy to draw them back to the stacks has emerged: the translation of children's books into Latin.

A bold idea certainly, but not one, to put it mildly, that would have occurred to most of us. Yet there the shiny volumes beckon from the shelves of the tony book stores that are so attentive to the gourmet-coffee crowd and the style-conscious parents busy raising designer children.

E.B. White's classic *Charlotte's Web* becomes *Tela Charlottae*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* steps through the looking glass as *Alicia in Terra Mirabili*, Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* emerges as *Fabula de Petro Cuniculo*, and—most visibly these days—A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* sweetens itself into *Winnie Ille Pu*, blurbed in the latest edition as a *New York Times* bestseller (which it was, back in 1961). Here's something for that precocious ten-year-old finally bored with TV and computer games.

Of course, this still leaves one question: What could possibly be the point of a *Winnie-the-Pooh* rendered into flawless Latin—especially at a time when, despite some pockets of re-ignited ardor, Latin itself has been expelled from so many schools? Quite clearly, these books aren't for children; they're for adults. But exactly which adults? A child's book in Latin seems roughly as useful as a Pet Rock.



Bolchazy Carducci

A little digging, though, reveals that this strange urge to chisel children's books into the granite of Latin has been around for some time. As far back as 1950, a Latin version of *Pinocchio*, translated by Enrico Maffacini, received a measure of critical acclaim. *Winnie Ille Pu* saw the light in the early 1960s, and its success prompted Latin renderings of *Ferdinand the Bull*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* before the fad withered. Nor have Disney's characters been left untouched: Devotees can read volume after brightly colored volume of the comic-book adventures of Michael Musculus and Donaldus Anas.

In all of these, the translators' inventiveness is unmistakable. But it's a curious impulse to translate these children's classics into a language not notable for its popular reach. Latin? Even the most avid multiculturalists have their limits.

There is, of course, the challenge of it. To say you have rendered a modern book into Latin is saying something; brilliant folks have occupied themselves in worse ways. And the challenge arises, in all likelihood, from the time-honored school practice of "Latin Composition," in which stu-

A writer living in Arlington, Virginia, Tracy Lee Simmons is completing a book in defense of classical education.

dents were forced to render familiar phrases and well-known passages from modern poetry and prose into tight, syntactically secure Latin. For centuries, students dreaded these composition courses, but there were benefits. The act of composition enhanced students' comfort with Latin, increased their confidence, and made the language their own. Forming sentences and paragraphs with the requisite precision turned them into natives—or at least that was the idea.

Back when I was taking composition, I volunteered to translate President Kennedy's inaugural address into Latin: *Itaque concives mei Americani, ne rogetis quid patria vestra pro vobis facere possit* . . . Although I underestimated the work involved by a factor of ten, it proved immensely satisfying and won me an A. I thought I had earned my *toga virilis* for sure. But in looking over my work recently, I found that it was a perfect cheat. I'd translated each sentence with a strict one-to-one correspondence. A *real* Latin translator would have realized that Kennedy's rhetoric called for long, high-flown Ciceronian periods, and not the short, Senecan sentences I produced. Usually, however, composing Latin certifies one's membership amongst an elect, however shrinking. There's nothing like assembling a Latin sentence to make you feel immortal.

But while the challenge of translation may explain why a Latinist would bother to attempt a translation, it doesn't explain why a publisher would publish the results. Obviously, people are buying these books. But who are they?

It's a safe bet that few of them are reading Virgil or Livy or any other genuine Roman author in their spare time. The typical buyer probably belongs to that legion of the Upwardly Mobile—the type who display their college degrees prominently (the only other Latin in the house), drive a Volvo, recycle religiously, and pledge regularly to PBS. In short, they are the type to make sure their friends know they own such books. A Latin *Winnie* isn't so much to be read as to be seen.

Then again, there actually may be some people buying these books to read out of love for a richly beautiful language. There can't be many of them, but surely they're out there.

So now, just in time for Christmas, we find the bouncy rhythms and kaleidoscopic wordplay of Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, translated by a pair of zealous Latin mavens. The child who can recite from memory the story of the evil Grinch who tried in vain to destroy Christmas for every Who down in Who-ville might chafe at the alterations. But if he could read Latin, he would be pleased with what he'd find: a version of the story at least as playful and inventive as the original.

Still, it is Latin—*Quomodo Invidiosulus Nomine Grinchus Christi Natalem Abrogaverit*—and not particularly easy. The original *Grinch*, with its clever, thumping rhythm, is a book of poetry—and poetry is typically what gets lost in translation. But not here. The translating team, Jennifer Morrish Tunberg and Terence O. Tunberg, have done a splendid job, practically creating an entirely new poem. The characters and plot they've borrowed, while the *Grinchus* is their own.

Dr. Seuss
How the Grinch Stole Christmas
translated by
Jennifer Morrish Tunberg
and Terence O. Tunberg
Quomodo Invidiosulus Nomine Grinchus Christi Natalem Abrogaverit
Bolchazy Carducci, 64 pp., $19.95

One at least initially jarring effect is the unexpected expansion. Latin usually compresses, reducing the number of words required for a thought or expression. But the Tunbergs take another tack, one that may derive from the problems they faced creating their new Latin rhythms.

Then again, the lengthening of Dr. Seuss's wonderful lines may just arise from the Tunbergs' sheer exuberance. Consider the following:

But,
Whatever the reason,
His heart or his shoes,
He stood there on Christmas Eve, hating the Whos,
Staring down from his cave with a sour, Grinchy frown
At the warm lighted windows below in their town.
For he knew every Who *down in* Who-ville *beneath*
Was busy now, hanging a mistletoe wreath.

The Tunbergs see it thus:

Sed
Utut res ipsa sese habebat,
Sive corde aegro sive calceamentis invidiosulus magis afflictabatur,
domi Christi natalis pridie manebat inimicitia erga Laetulos incensus.
E spelunca tenebrosa in qua domicilium habebat exile,
Invidiosulus noster fronte malitiose contracta
Laetopolim infra sitam conspexit,
Ubi splendebant multae fenestrae lucernis lucentibus luminatae.
Sat bene intellexit Grinchus noster omnes illic Laetulos
In sertis visci suspendendis tunc diligenter ac sedulo versari.

Marvelous stuff—if you can read it—and the work of two people who know their craft, but clearly it's not for the beginner. If you've retained enough of your Latin grammar, the Tunbergs have provided an extensive vocabulary at the back of the book to help you through the thicket of uncommon words. For initiates, though, this is a delightful book. Sounding out each line reveals an astute artistry, even to the Latinless. The lines dance. And, should you need a running translation, the Latin story matches the English, down to the evocative drawings accompanying the poetry. Little will be ruined for the prospective reader, I hope, if I say that this rendition holds no surprises: "*GRINCHUS carnem laetior Laetulis laete secat!*"

Quomodo Invidiosulus Nomine Grinchus Christi Natalem Abrogaverit represents the best of the "Neo-Latin" genre, as well as another odd inversion in this age of the child: a child's book that even many adults cannot read. But for those who can, it is a frolic. ♦

Doubleday

A Good Life

Peter Ackroyd's New Biography of Thomas More

By Michael Novak

Over the years, I have read at least four biographies of the sixteenth-century politician, scholar, lawyer, writer, diplomat, and saint, Sir Thomas More. But Peter Ackroyd's new biography, *The Life of Thomas More*, is the first that I wanted to start again as soon as I finished. It may be, quite simply, the most satisfying biography I have ever read.

Peter Ackroyd
The Life of Thomas More
Doubleday, 447 pp., $30

The secret to Ackroyd's success lies in his power to recreate, chapter by chapter, the surroundings of his subject—the smells, sights, sounds, tempo, hardships, disciplines: from the scene of More's birth to the street where he grew up, his house, his school, his daily service for Wolsey, his studies at Oxford, his typical day in the Inns of Court, and all the other settings of his life.

Almost effortlessly, Ackroyd manages to put in place the things upon which More's attention fell, year by year. And somehow, along the way, he manages to put his readers in place as well. In the midst of all the lavish details of sixteenth-century daily life, our senses and our sensibilities are lifted back into a radically different time and place—until at last the biographer convinces us that we can share More's own way of seeing his world. Ackroyd makes us smell the sewage on the roads, hear the bustle and shouts, wend our way through the street life. He forces us through the early grammar books, the prayers, the principles of rhetoric, even the sound and feel of Latin poetry.

Ackroyd also brings to life the finely wrought, tough-minded, and highly personal Catholic faith of his subject, despite the fact that (it appears) he doesn't share that faith. At More's christening, he makes us taste the salt, receive the cold shock of the baptismal water, start at the ritual slap.

Thomas More was born on February 7, 1478, the son of a successful London lawyer. Taken up and favored by powerful men—Archbishop Morton, and later Cardinal Wolsey—the precocious More was sent to Oxford in the autumn of 1492 at the age of fourteen. His ability to read, write, and frame an argument was already far advanced, and he was soon studying Greek as well as Latin and composing Latin poetry and dramatic passages. (It is likely that during his life More heard, spoke, read, and wrote more Latin than English, and his reputation as a Latin stylist allowed only one or two rivals in all of Europe.)

In the dangerous political world in which he lived, More quickly rose to the heights. Practicing as a lawyer in London, he attracted the attention of Henry VIII, who initially used him as a diplomat. Then—in 1529, when Cardinal Wolsey failed to secure the pope's approval of the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon—Henry named More to succeed Wolsey as lord chancellor, the highest political position in the realm. But in 1532, More himself was replaced, and his fate was sealed when he refused to subscribe to the 1534 Act of Supremacy by which Henry VIII declared himself protector and supreme head of an independent, anti-papal Church of England. After

Michael Novak holds the George Jewett chair in religion and public policy at the American Enterprise Institute. His most recent book, co-written with Jana Novak, is Tell Me Why: A Father Answers His Daughter's Questions About God.

months of imprisonment, More was beheaded on July 6, 1535, at age fifty-seven—declaring himself "the King's good servant, but God's first."

Together with such companions as the English scholar John Colet and the Dutch priest Erasmus (who stayed with More on his visits to England), More championed a perennially new movement in the West: the renewal of Christian humanism, the call to a new beginning in a higher, fresher wave of learning. Holding that the gospels are best understood with a grasp of language, history, and a variety of methods of thought, these Christian humanists worked diligently at establishing critical texts and accurate translations. They sought a new mastery of the ancient biblical languages, and they struggled to bring back into common knowledge the commentaries and reflections of the Fathers of the Church, especially the Greeks. (This preference is a little surprising, since the Latin Fathers, with their Roman love for law and practicality and common sense, seem more "English" than the Greek Fathers, with their cosmological speculations and poetic forms. But then, More went to Oxford, and there has always been at the English universities an insistent tug toward Platonic metaphysics and mysticism.)

More has been called the greatest of all Englishmen, an amazing encomium for a papist of his time—and ours, given the antipathy to Roman Catholicism that exists even today in England. A talent for witty extemporaneous retort, a self-contained countenance, and an ability to write with an elegant brevity of language have always been prized by the English, and More is said in all these to have had no equal. And he went to his death for a quiet, understated principle, having sought by all means to spare the King the disgrace of killing him. The English also admire bravery.

Most comforting in Ackroyd's loving *Life of Thomas More* is the low-key recounting of More's faults—for since (as Leon Bloy once put it) "the only tragedy in life is not to have been a saint," it is helpful to see that even saints are not exempt from petty human failings. More had a reputation for warmth and humor, and his daughter testified that she saw him angry only twice. But, in fact, he seems to have been often impatient, driving, severe, and a perfectionist. Against Martin Luther—the wrecker of Christian unity, disdainer of law, and unleasher of disorder (as More saw him)—More practiced a degree of vituperation unmatched until our own time, coloring his prose with every word for excrement and baboonery the rawness of sixteenth-century life could suggest.

Although shrouded in privacy, More's attitude toward his two wives (the first died young) also seems not to have reached the ideal of marital friendship. But he did see the talent of his daughter Margaret and pushed her until she became easily the most learned woman in England (perhaps in Europe) and a public figure in her own right.

MORE'S MIND HEWS CLOSER THAN HIS BIOGRAPHER'S TO THE CONCRETE TEXTURE OF THINGS.

There are a few places in *The Life of Thomas More* where Ackroyd goes wrong. It is true that More loved order, tradition, and law, and equally true that he had an unusually strong sense of piety toward his father. But in trying to contrast the modern with the premodern (of which he makes More the exemplar), Ackroyd makes his subject seem rigid and narrow: "Thomas More," he declares, "was one who needed pillars and the security of an ordered world."

The fact is rather that the imagination of the Middle Ages was filled with a sense of contingency, fragility, disorder, discontinuity, and even terror. One does not have to live in modern times to feel such things. More faced the madness, bloodlust, and chaos of martyrdom with amazing equanimity. An individual Christian does not need "pillars," if he has Christ.

It is instead—as More saw—civilization that needs pillars and order. More was acutely aware of the cauldron beneath the surfaces of things. That is why he feared the unleashing of demons taking place on all sides during the Reformation, and why he saw the need for thousands of small acts of dramatic fidelity across Europe if civilization were to advance or even survive. This is the warning More kept uttering, even in his famous 1516 political essay, *Utopia*. It is not the cry of a man who believes in order; it is the cry of a man impressed with the ever-present power of disorder.

Secular writers sometimes have the annoying tic of projecting upon Catholics an icy mantle of eternal verities uncomfortably at odds with their turbulent times. Such lapses are rare in *The Life of Thomas More*, but they do appear in one context. Every time Ackroyd discusses law—the law of reason, or of God, or of the Church—he paints a picture of narrow inflexibility. The biographer doesn't quite understand the Catholic sense of the fleshiness of things, the incarnateness of God, the sacramentality of the singular and the particular. When Ackroyd writes of law, he seems to think of geometry. When More himself wrote of law, he thought of the wild tergiversations of English common law, rooted in unique human experiences. More's mind hews closer than his biographer's to the concrete texture of things.

But the reader is given more than enough information to override the biographer's occasional lapses. The extent to which Ackroyd has dwelt with and sympathized with the living, breathing More is exhilarating. So too is the extent to which he allows us to enter an inner world like More's and grasp its universal appeal. I would, if I could, give this book to every lawyer I know, and to every serious person who aspires to the nobility and wit of human greatness. As an antidote to our sour season, it is a perfect book. ♦

Regnery

Foreign Policy for Sale

Clinton, China, and Diplomacy

By Mark P. Lagon

It was while he was first running for president that Bill Clinton promised that his foreign policy would have only two touchstones: the promotion of democracy and the halting of arms proliferation. But somewhere along the way, he managed to forget his promise. "Commercial diplomacy" is instead what the Clinton administration decided to practice, using the nation's enormous diplomatic resources to pry open foreign markets for the entry of American industry.

There is, no doubt, an excellent use to be made of diplomacy in expanding the reach of domestic investments and products. But it isn't the only use of diplomacy. And the worst results of the Clinton administration's abandonment of any high-minded foreign-policy goal can be seen in our relation to China.

In the recently published *Year of the Rat*, two veterans of congressional foreign-policy debates, Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II, present a telling jeremiad against the grotesque commercial mutation of American diplomacy. The book is an account of sensitive technology transfers driven by corporate interests and illicit campaign contributions from China. And the book is also a primer on the congressional investigations chaired by Senator Fred Thompson (whom the authors assisted) and Representative Chris Cox. In the course of their presentation, the authors amply demonstrate the hard truth of commercial diplomacy: A foreign policy defined *by* sales becomes at last a foreign policy *for* sale.

Year of the Rat is the chronicle of a sellout—a sellout of American security and, even more, a sellout of American values. The book's dustjacket provides the perfect image for our current China policy: President Clinton reviewing Chinese troops in Tiananmen Square, nine years to the month after pro-democracy demonstrators were massacred there.

The policy itself seems to be driven by a strange coalition headed by National Security Adviser Sandy Berger. Among its members are representatives of business interests, conciliatory alumni of the Carter administration (like Berger himself), Kissingerian realists still quite sentimental about the relation to China that they forged a quarter century ago, and academic and diplomatic Sinologists who wield phrases like "the Chinese need to preserve face" and "the non-Western values of Asia" in order to justify accommodation.

But it is the economic determinists who have provided the premises that form this coalition's lowest common denominator. They argue, for instance, that nearly any increase in trade with China will result not only in real profits for American businesses, but also in the growth of Chinese cooperation in international markets. It was for this reason that Ron Brown made the Commerce Department's trade missions to China his top priority.

The actual effect, however, has been merely to make the trade deficit with China America's largest—at some $60 billion dollars a year, surpassing that with Japan. A wide range of Chinese tariffs, unpublished regulations, "export performance requirements," and the low buying-power of Chinese consumers have kept the goal of selling American products in China as elusive as ever.

Similarly, the economic determinists—and their partners in the coali-

Mark P. Lagon is a Council on Foreign Relations international affairs fellow at the Project for the New American Century.

tion that has produced our China policy—argue that unfettered trade will eventually halt China's innumerable violations of human rights. One year after promulgating an executive order linking China's trade status to human rights, the Clinton administration scrapped it. And then in 1998, the administration quietly abandoned even its pledge (made at the time it dropped the link between trade and rights) to submit censure resolutions aimed at China to the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

The result has not been promising. Just this month—after winning "most favored nation" trade status under the less-controversial title of "standard trade relations" and after receiving the longest visit an American president has ever made to any foreign country—the Chinese authorities arrested the organizers of the independent China Democracy party.

The promoters of commercial diplomacy hold that trade weaves a web of interdependence that will provide the best protection against military threats to the United States. It was for this reason that the Clinton administration allowed the transfer to China of more super-computers (used in nuclear-arms design) than the Pentagon owns. And it was for this reason that the administration jettisoned its early attempt to halt the flow of sensitive military technology from China to other countries.

In a windfall for the Westinghouse Corporation, President Clinton agreed to American cooperation with China on nuclear-power technology. Under a 1985 statute, however, the transfer of such technology requires certification that the receiving country does not engage in nuclear-arms proliferation. Within two months of President Clinton's delivering the required certification last January, the press reported that a Chinese state company was transferring to Iran the anhydrous hydrogen fluoride used to refine uranium for nuclear warheads. And in November, the Clinton administration itself was forced to protest China's delivery of medium-range-missile equipment to Iran—equipment that could be used to deposit nuclear warheads on such allies as Israel.

In *Year of the Rat*, Timperlake and Triplett are at their best when explaining to laymen the implications of the flow of technology to and from China. The book suggests how Clinton's policy has empowered the People's Liberation Army as the chief instrument of proliferation, external aggression, and internal repression. The authors note,

Edward Timperlake and William C. Triplett II
Year of the Rat
How Bill Clinton Compromised U.S. Security for Chinese Cash
Regnery, 275 pp., $24.95

for instance, how a "Defense Conversion Commission" (the brainchild of ex-defense secretary William Perry) allowed the Chinese military "to convert some surplus military production into civilian goods, export them for hard currency, and invest the profits in modernizing their military lines."

Year of the Rat is perhaps too focused on such sinister and intriguing but ultimately small figures as Wang Jun—ushered into the White House for fund-raising purposes in February 1996, only to have his firm caught smuggling thousands of machine guns to California gangs three months later (though this focus may have influenced the House Judiciary Committee to take up, briefly, the question of illegal Chinese campaign contributions).

The betrayals and corruptions and gangsterism that have emerged from our China policy were predictable. Far more scandalous is the policy that allowed them to emerge. President Clinton and his conciliatory adviser Sandy Berger have made American foreign policy synonymous with business. They have effectively turned America into France by embracing the statist promotion of industry abroad, and they have posed as sophisticated statecraft their indifference to repression and arms sales. In doing so, they have done something worse—more subtle and yet more important—than *Year of the Rat* suggests. ♦

Ice Fishing in America

Life on the U.S.-Canadian Border

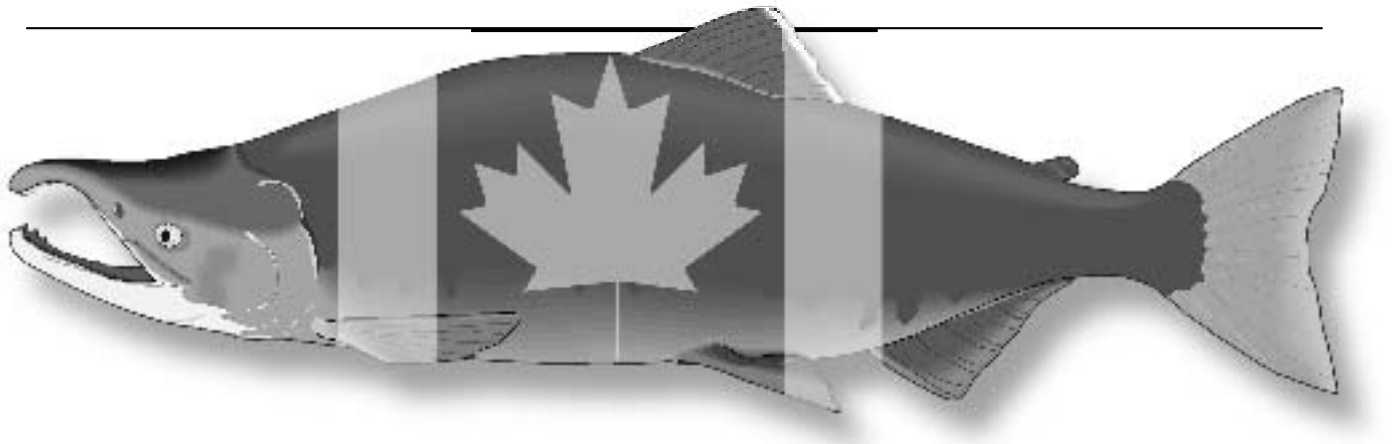
By Preston Jones

No one in New York or Washington or even Boston expects to find much happening out along the United States' northern border—and most of the people who live there seem to think that's just fine. The northlanders—Vermont author Howard Frank Mosher explains in his *North Country: A Personal Journey Through the Borderland*, newly issued in paperback—are just as pleased to preserve their reputation for dullness. Not to mention their fishing rights.

"Time and again," Mosher notes as he devotes page after page to trout fishing here, bass fishing there, and salmon fishing on the Pacific coast, "in upper Michigan and Minnesota and Montana and Washington . . . fishing seemed to be the universal North Country sport linking the people I met with their territory, their history, and one another across the generations."

But besides fishing, what predominates in this collection of over fifty short essays is the story of the independent-minded men and women who are glad to dwell in out-of-the-way places. What abides in the North Country, Mosher says, is a "healthy frontier anti-authoritarianism," a "distaste for government bureaucracy," an impatience for the "crybabies out in Califor-

Preston Jones is finishing his Ph.D. in Canadian history at the University of Ottawa.



nia," and the "strongest sense of independence . . . left in America today."

Among the stories told along the border is that of Fred Jackson, game warden in northern Maine's French-speaking Madawaska Republic, who, to trap poachers, has "immersed himself up to his nose in the icy water of beaver runs, huddled under a thin plastic sheet in freezing November sleet, and clung to snowy granite cliffs for hours on end." Then there is six-foot-plus Ti René (Acadian for "Little René"), who would just as soon employ his bush plane to smuggle cigarettes and beer into Quebec as lend his flying talents to local law agencies in pursuit of drug-runners, which he has done on occasion. "No problem," Ti René tells Mosher: "Look, Ti René is no criminal. A judge would laugh such a case out of court, you know, arresting René, over a few bottles of beer, a small present for his friends across the friendliest border in the world."

The U.S.-Canada border hasn't always been as friendly. It wasn't until the 1930s that the United States and Canada stopped paying military strategists to maintain plans of attack and defense against one another, and things can still grow tense. In late September of this year, hundreds of farmers from Montana and the Dakotas blocked the border in protest at Canada's dumping of cheap wheat on the American market. And then there is a growing concern among Canadian government officials over the influence of the White Aryan Resistance types who inhabit the little-policed mountains in Idaho's panhandle—men like the one Mosher spoke to, who sported swastika tattoos on his arms, packed a revolver in a shoulder holster, and announced himself devoted to living free of electricity, schools, the devil, and writers.

But, except for a brief spat with one abrupt Canadian border agent, there are no international hard feelings in Mosher's North Country. His borderland is rather a place where regional concerns outweigh the distant national pronouncements of Ottawa and Washington, D.C.

It is thus somewhat peculiar that Mosher never mentions the crusade for statehood that gained some ground in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the 1970s and 1980s, or the movement that hopes someday to carve a nation called "Cascadia" out of Washington, Idaho, British Columbia, and Alberta.

Howard Frank Mosher
North Country
A Personal Journey Through the Borderland
Houghton Mifflin, 272 pp., $13 paper

Mosher, however, does recount some of the borderland's little-known historical independence movements. In 1832, for example, several hundred American, French Canadian, and Indian hunters, loggers, homesteaders, river drivers, and trappers banded together, raised a militia, wrote a constitution, and declared northern New Hampshire independent of both the United States and Canada. "Known as the Indian Stream Rebellion," Mosher writes, "this impromptu border-country insurrection lasted until 1842 when, as part of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, the disputed tip of New Hampshire passed peaceably to the United States." This same treaty brought a resolution to a border dispute—actually a series of slugfests remembered as the Aroostook War—between lumberjacks in Maine and New Brunswick.

Briefly recalled here as well is the story of Louis Riel, a French-speaking Catholic métis, who established a provisional government of his own in Rupert's Land in 1869, taking it as his mission to establish a new Vatican in the North American prairies, and whose armed, messianic movement was finally crushed in 1885.

Something along the same lines can be said of the Akwesasne Indian reservation that straddles the New York-Ontario border. Mosher observes that there "seems to be an unwritten government agreement to maintain a hands-off policy toward the Akwesasne Territory"—which is the main reason this reservation has become a smuggler's paradise. In 1997, as much cheap American booze was smuggled from New York into Ontario (where alcohol is sold primarily in expensive, government-run stores) as was smuggled into America from Canada during Prohibition. This reservation was also the site of violence in the early 1980s, with Mohawk factions fighting one another and police on both sides of the border. Here Mosher introduces Solomon Cook, a Cornell Ph.D. in horticulture, who successfully convinced his people to settle their grievances lawfully, not, as they used to do, with home-made bombs.

North Country is not a profound book. But it is a fine essay in Americana—a reminder that there are still parts of North America that remain as they have always been: violent, lusty, romantic, dull, patriotic, anti-government, and concerned above all with the next day's fishing. ♦

The WB Network

Buffy in the Garden of Good and Evil

The WB Network Finds a Winner

By Jonathan V. Last

It's hard to root against Buffy Summers. Even at the end of last year's television season—when she was charged with murder, kicked out of the house by her mother, and forced to miss her chemistry exam. Even when she had to impale her boyfriend on a sword and banish him to Hell in order to save the world. High school can be rough.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer is a television series loosely based on a 1992 B-grade movie of the same name. It tells the adventures of an ordinary high-school girl (played by Sarah Michelle Gellar) who—much against her will—has been "chosen" by vaguely defined mystical powers to fight the vampires flooding her small, southern California hometown of Sunnydale. When it first appeared in 1997, *Buffy* was a surprising favorite of television critics. But only now has the show found popular success, especially among teenagers. It is that rarest of creations: a movie-derived series that is much better as television than the original was as film.

Long before man walked the earth—according to the show's mythology—the world was beset by monsters. But one day, those creatures were herded into another dimension to make way for human beings. Unfortunately, a few vampires managed to remain on earth as supernatural stowaways. These vampires went about feeding on humans and propagating themselves until the unnamed powers-that-be decided to fight them. As Giles (Buffy's mentoring "Watcher") explains, "Into each generation, a Slayer is born. One girl in all the world, a Chosen One. One born with the strength and skill to hunt the vampires, to stop the spread of evil." So, until she dies, Buffy is the Slayer, whose job is to protect mankind.

This setup may sound silly—in fact, it *is* silly—but in practice, *Buffy* is what television executives call a "dramedy": an hour-long show somewhere between sitcoms like *Three's Company* and dramas like *ER*. In the last decade, the dramedy has produced some of television's best shows: *The Days and Nights of Molly Dodd*, *The Wonder Years*, and *Ally McBeal*. The dramatic fantasy shows that lack the dramedy's comic edge have mostly proved flops. The Fox channel had a wild success with *The X-Files*, but the television graveyard is littered with the recent corpses of tepid science-fiction attempts to copy that success: *Dark Skies* (NBC), *Prey* (ABC), *Kindred: The Embraced* (Fox), and *Rag & Bone* (CBS) all came and went faster than anyone could catch them.

What sets *Buffy* apart is its ability to mix vampires and Armageddon with a wicked eye for satire and an exceptional ear for tone. In *Buffy*, all of high school's metaphorical monsters prove to be real monsters. An evil cheerleader, it turns out, really is a witch. The cutthroat competition of a talent show truly ends in mass murder. The varsity swim team juiced up on steroids actually does become carnivorous mermen. As the new principal of Sunnydale High puts it, "This place has quite a reputation—suicide, missing persons, spontaneous cheerleader combustion. You can't put up with that."

Now in its third season, *Buffy* was one of the first television shows to capture the attention of the teenaged "Generation Y." When it first appeared on the upstart Warner Brothers' television network—"the WB"—the show was paired with another teen-centered drama, *7th Heaven*, which follows the life of a suburban minister's family. The two programs carved out a foothold for the WB network among Gen-Y viewers and gave the network its corporate identity as the TV station for teens. Today, *Buffy* is the twelfth-highest rated show among viewers between twelve and seventeen. And it is also, in many ways, a signifier of a change that seems to have taken place in the moral constitution of television for teenagers—and maybe in those teenagers themselves.

Jonathan V. Last is a reporter for The Weekly Standard.

It's absurd, of course, to impute sophisticated moral reasoning to teen TV, in part because such reasoning may be beyond the capacity of a television program, any television program, to convey. But moral reasoning, even in its unsophisticated forms, typically requires an ability to make two distinctions: We must know the difference between good and evil to behave well, and we must also know the difference between right and wrong. One refers to cosmic ideas and requires an overarching view of reality. The other pertains to the arena of human interaction. Good and evil are grand operas played out against the backdrop of the universe; right and wrong are kitchen dramas played against the backdrop of other people.

It's Shakespeare, more than anyone else, who knows that the fullest representation of human life demands both good and right, evil and wrong. But the *contrast* between the two may be clearest in Graham Greene's 1938 novel *Brighton Rock*, a story about murder in early 1930s England. The principal conflict in the story is between two characters: a young gangster who understands the difference between good and evil, and a girl who knows only right from wrong. At the novel's end, it is the criminal alone who has a chance for grace.

Even at their low best, the television programs aimed at the older Generation X know only half of this distinction. *Beverly Hills 90210* (the Aaron Spelling drama that put the Fox network on the map for adolescents in 1990) is rife with conflicts about appropriateness: whether a girl may flirt with someone else's boyfriend, or how late you can be to a party without hurting the host's feelings. Like most Gen-X shows, *Beverly Hills 90210* presents a universe full of decisions about right and wrong.

It's not a sufficient answer to such programs to observe that the moral decisions they treat as serious are usually trivial and invariably trivialized. Neither is it sufficient to observe that they derive their terms of reference entirely from pop psychology. What they lack as well is the cosmic drama that makes it all make sense. What they lack is good and evil.

Somehow, the Gen-Y *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has managed to do what the Gen-X *Beverly Hills 90210* couldn't. The entire premise of *Buffy* rests on a worldview that takes as its highest priority the distinction of good from evil.

Buffy, in other words, seems to have grasped the other half of morality. The primary villains in *Buffy*—vampires—typically have no redeeming qualities to muddy the metaphysical waters. In most of the popular mythology about vampires, people bitten by vampires becomes vampires and yet also retain part of their original personalities—morphed in some malevolent way into half-human monsters. In *Buffy*, a vampire is the soul of a demon which has taken over the body of a human, completely stripping it of humanity and placing it beyond redemption. There is no such thing as a good vampire in Buffy's world.

And if the evil in *Buffy* is absolute, then the good is even more so. No one ever questions the duty or the righteousness of the Slayer. It is an article of faith among the characters that Buffy must protect the world and that she is right to do so.

On the other hand, the limitations nowadays on our ability to talk about good and evil may be revealed best by the fact that none of the show's characters ever ask why Buffy was chosen or by whom she was chosen. One almost has to feel sorry for the show's writers, who can't quite bring themselves to say out loud the conditions for the possibility of their show. Good and evil are metaphysical terms with theological roots: Without God as a referee, the universe becomes a moral demolition derby—and in *Buffy*, always offstage and just out of view of the camera, is God. In Buffy's world, humanity was clearly created and Buffy herself was clearly chosen, but no one ever says by whom. Every week a silver cross dangles conspicuously from Buffy's slender neck, but no one ever mentions the Cross it represents.

Of course, this is merely television—a medium not well known for its power to present accurate metaphysics. And besides, there's that small attack of emphysema television executives get when religion is about to be mentioned on their programs. Even on the WB's *7th Heaven*, the show's main character, a Protestant minister named Camden, can't actually talk about the Almighty.

The significance of *Buffy*, however, isn't in the words that the show isn't saying. What's interesting is that—whatever the show is doing—young audiences are accepting it. *Buffy* represents the return of the moral tale for Gen Y. The show's creator, Joss Whedon, has sold teens on good stories about good and evil.

The inability of *Buffy* to mention God does cause some confusions to crop up. One of the main plot lines deals with Buffy and her boyfriend Angel, a vampire who (as the result of a gypsy's curse) had his human soul restored. The practical effect of this curse was the torture of Angel—for with the restoration of his human soul came guilt at the memory of all the atrocities he committed as a vampire. But then he and Buffy have sex—the kind of salvic sex that television characters have, in which there is complete forgetfulness of self, complete ecstatic transport, and completely no consequences like babies. And as a result of this "moment of true happiness," the curse is suddenly lifted—which immediately transforms him back into an evil, guilt-free vampire.

What such confusion means is that while *Buffy's* characters know good from evil, they don't always know right from wrong. This shortcoming isn't unimportant. But—given the horizonless trivialities of the previous generation's popular shows—it's better to have the cosmic understanding than to lack it.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer isn't Shakespeare—and it isn't Graham Greene—but it is certainly superior to the entertainments that found favor with Gen X. And the moral tale deserves to be welcomed back to the center of American pop culture. ♦

ANN LANDERS

Good Manners For War and Peace

Dear Ann,

I'm thinking of incinerating 10,000 or so Muslims, but my wife says it would be rude to burn them to a crisp on their religious holiday. Is this something I need to worry about? I say she is just blowing smoke.

Sincerely,
Upset in the Oval

Dear Upset,

Most people are put out when they are roasted on one of their special days, whether it's a birthday, anniversary, or religious holiday. But if you are open and honest with them, there are ways to smooth their singed feathers. For example, if you start killing people before the special day begins, then they're sort of used to it when the holy period starts and don't mind so much. Plus their families know how much food to prepare for the holiday dinners.

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Dear Ann,

I'm having trouble controlling my anger. There's this president I know who just drives me crazy every time he launches a military action. Is there a way I can support our military troops without supporting their commander in chief?

Sincerely,
Trent in Turmoil

Dear Trent,

Yes, but you have to be careful. You don't want to support any of the troops so close to the commander in chief that your support will accidentally rub off on him. My rule is to support all of the privates, and all of the sergeants, and some of the captains, but I definitely wouldn't support anybody above the rank of colonel.

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Dear Ann,

Most of my sources are octogenarians, and so my pieces for the Style section tend to be fusty and out of date. Do you know any young people?

Sally in Georgetown

Dear Sally,

There's that charming young whippersnapper Barney Frank. He's so witty and genial, even his opponents like him, or at least they did back in 1983, last time I was paying attention.

• • •

Dear Ann,

I am president of a large superpower. I just launched a bombing campaign against an enemy regime, but we mostly seem to be hitting empty buildings. I may have to start a sex scandal to distract from the war I launched to distract from a sex scandal.

Ann, have I ever told you how much I love the way your hair flows down your shoulders? Would you like a private tour of the White House?

Giving in to My Shame in D.C.