the weekly
Standard
MARCH 15, 1999
$3.50

EZRA POUND:
THE POET AS CON ARTIST
CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

CAN'T WE JUST MOVE ON?

NO.

WILLIAM KRISTOL: JUANITA BROADDRICK AND US

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER: DEFINING FEMINISM DOWN

NOEMIE EMERY: JUST RAPE

DAVID FRUM: OUR FEARLESS PRESS

FRED BARNES: SILENCE OF THE DEMS

the weekly Standard

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 25 • MARCH 15, 1999

Cover photos: AP/Wide World Photos

Books & Arts

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except for combined issues the first and second week in January; the first and second week in July; the second and third week in August; and the last week in November and first week in December) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-303-776-3605 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.50. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. The Weekly Standard Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call Natalie Harwood, 1-610-293-8540.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

Don't Confuse Her with Facts

When New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman cashiered her embattled police chief the other day, she took pains to stipulate that she doesn't think he's a racist, and neither does she buy his critics' charge that he tolerated "racial profiling" in his department. Instead, the firing offense was "insensitivity." Translation: It's insensitive to expose the governor of New Jersey to even a minute of bad press.

A 35-year state police veteran, Col. Carl Williams Jr. got the axe for noting, in a long interview with the *Star-Ledger* of Newark, that various ethnic groups play various roles in the drug trade. "If you're looking at the methamphetamine market," Williams was quoted as saying, "that seems to be controlled by the motorcycle gangs, which are basically predominantly white. If you're looking at heroin and stuff like that, your involvement there is more or less Jamaicans. Two weeks ago, the president of the United States went to Mexico to talk to the president of Mexico about drugs. He didn't go to Ireland. He didn't go to England."

As soon as the interview hit the newsstands, state assemblyman LeRoy J. Jones Jr. blasted Williams's "dastardly, . . . ill and sickened" views. Whitman fired the chief within hours, and the *New York Times* soon applauded. Never mind that to drug-enforcement professionals, it is common knowledge that each illicit substance has its own characteristic sources, distribution networks, and consumption patterns, many of which are ethnic.

Much of what Williams said, in fact, can be found almost verbatim in a 1996 Drug Enforcement Administration report, available at www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov. According to the DEA, heroin from Southeast Asia, for example, is brokered to "suppliers with connections to ethnic Chinese criminals in the United States who acted as wholesale distributors. . . . Nigerian and West African groups, meanwhile smuggled Southeast Asian heroin internationally," and so on.

Truth, of course, is no defense in the face of racial mau-mauing. In fact, as happened in this case, truth is often the cause of such mau-mauing.

Now, please, no accusations of racial profiling, but Gov. Whitman's failure of nerve puts The Scrapbook in mind of a truth once nicely captured by Jesse Jackson: "Some black folks ain't got rhythm, and some white folks can't think."

A Clinton Dynasty?

The desire to flatter Hillary Rodham Clinton apparently knows no bounds. Barely a month after a campaign began to urge the first lady to run for the Senate in New York in 2000, some admirers, including ABC's Carole Simpson, are pointing out the obvious: Hillary is already a national figure, so why aim low? She should run for president.

Why not? Leaving aside the fact that the Gores can't be very happy to hear such speculation, the numbers don't look bad for Hillary. Pollster Scott Rasmussen in late February found only a two-point lead for the vice president in a head-to-head contest with the first lady among likely Democratic voters.

The exact question asked was this: "Suppose that, in selecting the Democratic candidate for President, you had a choice between Hillary Clinton and Al Gore. If the election was held today, for whom would you be likely to vote?" Al Gore got 40 percent; Hillary got 38 percent; and 22 percent were not sure.

What's more, if you added Bill Bradley to the mix, Hillary as the only woman in the race would no doubt be a formidable candidate in the Democratic primaries. Indeed, Rasmussen's poll showed Hillary with an 11-point lead among female voters, who typically turn out in higher numbers in Democratic primaries.

Washington insiders joke that the president is enthusiastically supporting his wife's Senate ambitions because she would have to get an apartment in New York. But a presidential race for Hillary, from a certain perspective, might make more sense. After all, if a couple is going to split up and stop sharing quarters, shouldn't she keep the house?

Scrapbook

Castro at Bat

A ferocious government crackdown in Cuba has angered the Europeans and Canadians but has yet to faze the Baltimore Orioles. Fidel Castro's new and harsher laws, a mass detention of dissidents, and show trials of four democratic leaders have led King Juan Carlos of Spain to announce that he may have to postpone his planned spring visit. The usually all-forgiving Canadians have called on the Cuban ambassador to denounce what's going on. Even *Le Monde*, the paper of record for Cuba-romanticizing Parisian intellectuals, blasted Castro last week in an editorial entitled "Havana, the end of an illusion."

Continuing talks about an Orioles exhibition game in Havana in the next few weeks should be canceled now. Listen to Madrid: "The visit will not proceed . . . in an atmosphere of repression," said Spain's Foreign Ministry. If the king won't go, why should Cal Ripken?

Truths of the *Times*

Dan Seligman, The Scrapbook's favorite *New York Times* watcher, has a new addition to the list of articles at the paper of record that have ended up as ideological embarrassments. That would be the story of gay Marine Rich Merritt. As Seligman noted in his *New York Post* column last week, Merritt was "profiled anonymously last year in a *Times Magazine* article about the agonies undergone by gays in the military. The article depicted Merritt as a straight arrow, 'fiercely loyal to the Corps,' who was 'a Marine first and gay second.'

"It quoted him as stating: 'I know very little about gay culture,' and added that he found its hedonism 'wearying and empty.' It also said that he and his friends 'monitor themselves obsessively' so that nobody can possibly find out they're gay.

"And then it turned out that, while on active duty, the straight arrow had appeared in several gay pornographic movies. Trying to deal with this catastrophe, the Feb. 4 *Times* ran an article quoting Adam Moss, editor of the *Magazine*, as wishing he'd known about the films. But also as arguing that the news ultimately made no difference as 'this revelation doesn't alter the story's truths.' Whether its distortions and absurdities were in any way implicated he didn't exactly say."

Help Wanted

Casual

Doctored Letters

I got a call from a friend of mine the other day asking if I'd write a letter of recommendation on her behalf to a medical school. No problem, I said. I write a lot. I can handle it.

A week later, I still hadn't finished the letter. It seemed simple at first. Ivy League schools have liberal admissions boards. Why not tailor my recommendation accordingly? My friend, I explained in my first draft, is a promising scientist with a heart, a cross between Dr. Spock and Al Sharpton. More than merely an aspiring doctor, I wrote, she is a "dedicated community organizer," a "longtime activist," a—and this was my personal favorite—"passionate advocate for the rights of the underserved." Whatever that means.

They'll love this, I thought, and got ready to lick the envelope. Then I stopped. Should I really do this? I wondered. I'm not even sure my friend is a Democrat. Is it really a good idea to bet on the reaction of college administrators? As I learned long ago, probably not.

Senior year in college, one of my roommates wound up in trouble with an economics professor. As was his custom, he hadn't bothered to show up to a single economics class all semester, assuming that he could learn everything he needed to know in 48 coffee-soaked hours and do decently on the exam. Days before the midterm, though, he got a call from the professor. "Just thought I'd let you know," she said, "that I've counted each one of your absences against you. No matter how well you do on the test, there is no way you can pass my course."

My roommate was stunned, and once I heard about it, so was I. Failing a class simply for doing no work? Outrageous. We decided to find a solution. But what could excuse a semester's worth of missed economics classes? A death in the family seemed a bit dramatic. Conscription struck us both as implausible, at least in peacetime. Then it came to me: How about mental illness? Perfect, we agreed.

He located a textbook on abnormal psychology, I sat down at the keyboard, and we got to work. It wasn't easy to settle on a malady. We scanned the index. Agoraphobia? Too obscure. Schizophrenia? Too scary. Chronic fatigue syndrome? Too hard to explain. We settled for something that sounded grave but not dangerous, acute neurotic depression.

"Dear Professor," began the letter, which was signed by a nonexistent psychologist from Maryland, "I am writing to you on behalf of a patient of mine who is also a student of yours." The psychologist had very official-looking stationery, and he seemed to take an almost avuncular interest in my roommate, Bill. Bill, the shrink explained, had loads of problems. In addition to being a suicidal alcoholic, Bill still bore scars from growing up amid "maladaptive family patterns." Bill's behavioral symptoms, the psychologist wrote, constituted "a textbook example of acute neurotic depression." And indeed they did, since we copied them verbatim from the textbook. "Bill," the letter said, "has difficulty concentrating, exhibits a high level of anxiety and apprehensiveness, together with diminished activity, lowered self-confidence, constricted interests and a general loss of initiative."

I remember chuckling as I typed the letter, sure it would reduce the professor to weepy sympathy. But just to be sure, we ended on a note of hope: "Fortunately, Bill has responded well to a combination of antidepressant and anti-anxiety drugs. He is also attending Alcoholics Anonymous. I am in regular contact with Bill and think that his chances for recovery are good."

Good, but not a sure thing. The last paragraph was pretty explicit about college professors' role in Bill's recovery process: "The road to wellness is often a long one, but I believe that, if given the chance, Bill can rise above his recent past. Of paramount importance are instances in which Bill can meet success in tangible ways. He is an impressive and likable young man who needs opportunities to redress his mistakes. I hope that this letter has made Bill's situation clear and you will show him the sensitivity that his full recovery requires."

That ought to do it, we thought. We were right. Within about two hours, the dean of students summoned Bill to his office and kicked him out of school.

What had seemed to us like a clever excuse looked to the administration like cause for immediate hospitalization, not to mention a potential liability nightmare. The dean asked Bill to pack his bags and be off campus by nightfall. "We just don't have the facilities to meet your needs," he said with what seemed like sadness.

It was another three years before Bill got his undergraduate degree, though I'm happy to report that everything worked out well enough in the end. He graduated at the top of his class from a well-regarded law school. I was in the front row when he got his diploma, the most relieved person in the room.

Tucker Carlson

The Sixth Time's a Charm

What is most remarkable about Richard Cohen's "flogging" of Rep. James Rogan for not having read Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* is that Cohen himself has not read the book (Scrapbook, "Just an Allusion," Feb. 22). Or at least he had not read it as of July 23, 1998, when he wrote in the *Washington Post*: "I tried another book on the list [of 100 best English-language novels] about five times. That's Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. . . . I never got past page 30. For me, Koestler brought on darkness way before noon." And yet, in January he claimed there were parallels between Clinton's situation and Rubashov's. Perhaps he made a sixth and successful attempt.

Luis C. Aribe
McLean, VA

Spiro, We Hardly Knew Ye

In Tucker Carlson's piece on Dan Quayle, Quayle's press secretary, discussing the Murphy Brown speech, challenges us to "name another speech by a vice president that was more significant" ("Dan Quayle Gets Serious," March 1). Easy. The speech was delivered by Vice President Spiro Agnew in Des Moines in 1969. The subject was television network news bias, and the networks—and the news business—have never been the same. Dan Quayle's Murphy Brown speech undoubtedly expanded the debate beyond newsrooms and added an important chapter, but in 1969, Spiro Agnew wrote the basic text.

John R. Coyne Jr.
Chicago, IL

Standing up for Kasich

Matthew Rees's story on George W. Bush's presidential aspirations made for good reading, but he made at least one mistake: I have not endorsed Gov. Bush for president ("George W. Bush Gets Organized," March 1).

I'm glad The Weekly Standard created an opportunity for me to tell its readers that I am a friend and supporter of John Kasich for president. While I admire Gov. Bush, I did not make a commitment to his campaign. I am committed to Kasich because he and I have worked in the trenches together every day for the past six years fighting for our vision of limited and effective government, stronger families, and more opportunity for all Americans.

I am enthusiastic about the field of Republican candidates developing at this time. I believe Kasich's leadership in the House of Representatives and especially as chairman of the House Budget Committee makes him uniquely qualified to lead the nation as president.

Pete Hoekstra
House of Representatives (R-MI)
Washington, DC

Founding Character

During the impeachment proceedings, many conservatives feared the worst of all possible outcomes—a popular backlash against the Constitution itself ("The System Didn't Work," March 1). Of course, it was simply assumed such an assault would be led by the Left, as part of its attempt to discredit the republicanism of the founding and to legitimate the extra- or anti-constitutional administrative state.

It is with some surprise, therefore, that one finds the attack being led by an ostensible conservative, James Bowman. He not only argues that the impeachment proceedings revealed deep flaws in the Constitution, but insists that the Founders inaugurated the modern administrative state!

"The Founders," Bowman writes, "wanted to come as close as possible to obviating the need for trust" and "to design a system so well that honor would not have to be relied on." Indeed, so utopian were the Founders that they anticipated socialism in trying to create a government in which "no one would have to be good."

That is simply bizarre. Consider the following:

The Virginia Bill of Rights (1776): "[N]o free government, or the blessings of Liberty, can be preserved to any people, but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality and virtue, and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles."

James Madison, Federalist No. 55: "[T]here are other qualities in human nature, which justify a certain portion of esteem and confidence. Republican government presupposes the existence of these qualities in a higher degree than any other form. Were the pictures which have been drawn by the political jealousy of some among us, faithful likenesses of the human character, the inference would be that there is not sufficient virtue among men for self-government; and that nothing less than the chains of despotism can restrain them from destroying and devouring one another."

Northwest Ordinance (1787): "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

George Washington, Farewell Address (1796): "Tis substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free Government."

These are the merest sample of hundreds of similar statements from the founding era.

At the same time, the Framers did not believe one could rely simply on public virtue, and so they created a limited government with separation of powers and checks and balances. Though using an "improved science of politics," this notion of limited government and institutional checks was hardly novel. Again contrary to Bowman,

Correspondence

"traditional parliamentary systems" did not rely simply on honor. Bowman writes: "If a [parliamentary] leader loses the trust or confidence of a majority of his colleagues [there is no legal] provision for his removal." But can't a prime minister be replaced at any time by his or her majority party, as Margaret Thatcher was in 1990? The concept of a government leader limited only by his own sense of honor, and utterly insulated from removal, is as alien to parliamentary systems as to American constitutionalism.

Of course at its best, American constitutionalism does permit and even cultivate a keen sense of honor, as demonstrated most nobly by George Washington, who retired after two terms. In doing so he set an example of citizen-statesmanship that was not breached until the architect of the New Deal spurned this and a great many other traditions of limited government.

Glenn Ellmers
Claremont, CA

A Fine Proposition

Ron K. Unz takes California Republicans and Gov. Pete Wilson to task for supporting Proposition 187 ("The Right Kind of Outreach," March 1). This proposition, later struck down by a federal judge, would have banned state-issued social spending on benefits, including welfare, medical treatment, and education for illegal aliens. This proposition was passed overwhelmingly by Californians and remains popular today. How has that then hurt the Republicans, as Unz speciously claims? Hardly anyone was against this proposition except illegal aliens and their sympathizers. I thought illegal aliens were supposed to be summarily tried and deported. Instead, we should annually bestow billions of dollars on them, while Unz debates the negative political impact of going after them? Has our rule of law broken down to such an extent that the pernicious effects of illegal aliens on our state now have prominent defenders such as Unz?

Ironically, Unz's own initiative, Proposition 227, "English for the Children," had the least favorable rating among Latino voters of all three of the controversial propositions, including the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209. Governor Wilson backed Proposition 187 and won his reelection bid in 1994 by a landslide. In contrast, Dan Lungren refused to back Proposition 227 in the June election and subsequently lost. Republicans should have backed all three measures simply because they were the right thing to do. If Republicans don't soon stand for something, they'll fall for anything.

Adam Sparks
San Francisco, CA

Name Games

Elia Kazan is a great director who has given us some wonderful films, and as an artist he deserves whatever honors his Hollywood colleagues bestow upon him; but in trying to turn him into a political icon, Stephen Schwartz does him no favors ("The Rehabilitation of Elia Kazan," Feb. 8).

Kazan's decision to "name names" before the House Un-American Activities Committee was a bit more complicated than Schwartz lets on. For one thing, it was a necessary price he, like others in Hollywood with left-wing pasts, had to pay if he wanted to keep working. That he was reluctant to sacrifice his career for a cause he no longer believed in is understandable. Unfortunately, he had to sacrifice the careers of others in order to save his own, simply because the congressional investigators and the studio heads both made it quite clear that an ex-Communist's recantation would not be believed if he was not willing to turn informer.

Actions taken under this kind of duress are not heroic, and no ritual invocation of Stalin's crimes can make them so. Kazan and others in his position were forced to make a choice that no free society should force upon its citizens. That Schwartz sees this as a cause for celebration strikes me as perverse. And while he might legitimately criticize the Communist party for functioning as a secret organization, he apparently does not grasp that, in a democracy, a person's political opinions and associations are ultimately his own business, not the government's.

Peter Shapiro
Portland, OR

Waiting for Newt

As a Republican resident of Georgia's Sixth District, I agree with Tucker Carlson that Johnny Isakson is no heavyweight ("The Race to Replace Newt," Feb. 15). But few districts have the privilege of being represented by a giant like Newt Gingrich.

That said, Carlson's article is a hatchet job. Tom Perdue may be "seasoned" in the sense that he is long in the tooth, but he is scarcely "powerful" if one measures power in terms of success. His candidate, Guy Millner, has lost three statewide races since 1994. In the 1996 Republican Senate primary, Millner and Perdue defeated Isakson only by appealing to the loony aborticentrists who this time around supported Christina Jeffrey. Of course, Millner went on to lose the general election to Max Cleland, an amiable idiot who slavishly follows the Clinton line. Isakson would have buried Cleland.

James F. Trucks
Alpharetta, GA

Talking Points

Contrary to what David Frum says, Republicans don't need slogans like "compassionate conservatism" ("Promises, Promises," March 1). They need to point out that their idea of government is to foster economic policies that will make it possible for every American who wants a job to get one, while constructing a safety net to rescue those boats that are too stuck in the mud to be raised by the incoming tide.

Gary D. Jensen
Lake Jackson, TX

The Weekly Standard
welcomes letters to the editor.
Letters will be edited for length and clarity and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number.
All letters should be addressed:
Correspondence Editor
The Weekly Standard
1150 17th St., NW
Washington, DC 20036.
You may also fax letters: (202) 293-4901.

the weekly Standard

Juanita Broaddrick and Us

Buried in last Thursday's *Washington Post*, in a story on how the president and virtually everyone else in Washington are "Looking Past Scandal, Focusing on Future," were these extraordinary paragraphs:

> Asked about Juanita Broaddrick's recent allegations that Clinton assaulted her 21 years ago in an Arkansas hotel room, [Donna] Shalala said she has reached no conclusion about whether she believes Broaddrick or the terse denial issued by Clinton's lawyer—and said she doesn't need to in order to do her job.
>
> "I take all of this very seriously," Shalala said of Broaddrick's allegations, adding that "I do not compartmentalize" by making separate judgments about personal conduct and public performance. At the same time, Shalala said, "I'm both a patriot and a professional; I serve the nation and the president."
>
> This conviction, she said, allows her to pursue what she considers important issues on Clinton's behalf without knowing for sure what to believe about his past.

So: A cabinet secretary is agnostic as to whether or not the president she works for is a rapist. At least Donna Shalala has the courage to admit her uncertainty. No other Clinton administration official with whom the *Post* spoke was willing to be quoted on the record about the Broaddrick allegation. One unnamed aide did admit, "I think you have to be troubled by it; she seems very credible."

And so she does. Mrs. Broaddrick seems credible to administration officials; she seems credible to most of the political and media elite; she seems credible to much of the country. But everyone seems willing to drift through the next two years remaining unsure over whether our president is a rapist—and not particularly eager to find out the truth.

"Come on," the answer goes, "we'll never be able to find out the truth." Perhaps. But we already know more than most people realize. We know the date and place of the alleged assault—April 25, 1978, at the Camelot Hotel (now the Doubletree) in Little Rock. We know the names of five people who were told about the incident by Mrs. Broaddrick at the time—Norma Rogers Kelsay, who saw her that day and helped ice her lip; three other friends, Jean Darden (Norma's sister), Louise Ma, and Susan Lewis; and her future husband David Broaddrick, who also saw the injuries. We know that Bill Clinton added a handwritten note to an official letter in 1984 congratulating Mrs. Broaddrick after her nursing home was judged the best in the state, saying, "I admire you very much." We know that Jean Darden saw Bill Clinton talking to Juanita Broaddrick in a hotel hallway—probably in the Riverfront Hilton—in 1991, after Gov. Clinton had had Mrs. Broaddrick pulled from a meeting to speak with him.

We also know that Mrs. Broaddrick had no incentive—financial, political, or legal—to correct her false affidavit in the Jones case; unlike Monica Lewinsky, for example, Juanita Broaddrick could have simply stuck to her story without risking a perjury charge or even adverse publicity. (Mrs. Broaddrick told The Weekly Standard that Ken Starr's investigators "never threatened me. They were nothing but courteous. . . . The only thing that made me tell the truth at this time was my son and my husband.") We know that Mrs. Broaddrick has been honest throughout with reporters, volunteering evidence not particularly flattering to her (for example, that she was having an affair with David Broaddrick, now her husband, at the time of the incident). We know that she was extremely reluctant to go public with her story. And we know that the president has been unwilling to defend himself, or to give any account of his contacts with Mrs. Broaddrick.

Instead, the president has tried to hide behind his lawyer's statement that "any allegation that the president assaulted Broaddrick more than 20 years ago is absolutely false." How can the president's lawyer, David Kendall, know this to be true? Either the president said this to Mr. Kendall, or Mr. Kendall had investigators independently research the matter. If the first, surely the president can tell us, not just Mr. Kendall, what did or did not happen in 1978; what he meant by his 1984 postscript; what he said at the 1991

meeting. If the second, Mr. Kendall should make public whatever evidence he has, and the president should make available any records he might have of his whereabouts for the relevant dates in 1978 and 1991.

Instead, the president is stonewalling, and Clinton allies are spreading the word that the April 25, 1978, encounter was one of consensual sex. Last week THE WEEKLY STANDARD asked Mrs. Broaddrick about consensual sex rumors. She responded: "It's completely untrue. There was nothing consensual about what went on in that room. . . . I adamantly deny it was consensual."

Will the press continue to allow the president simply to avoid responding to Mrs. Broaddrick? A few years ago records surfaced suggesting that Hillary Rodham Clinton had engaged in questionable commodity speculation in 1978-79. Mrs. Clinton is not the president of the United States. But no one thought it inappropriate when the media insisted that she give an account of her behavior. And she did. Why is it inappropriate that the president be asked to respond to a much more serious charge of wrongdoing from the same era?

Kevin Chadwick

The sophisticated answer to this, expressed in a *Washington Post* editorial last week, is that you couldn't believe the president anyway: "Mr. Clinton's word in this realm by now has no value." But this is simply a fancy excuse for avoiding the responsibility to discover as much as we can about the president's behavior, and for insisting that the president address the charge and the evidence.

The press, it is often said, is the fourth branch of government, whose duty it is to hold public officials accountable for their actions and to discover and publicize the truth. But there are first, second, and third branches of government, as well. There are, for instance, prosecutors, whose duty it is to investigate possible crimes. They do not usually fail even to begin such an investigation just because it *may* turn out there will be insufficient evidence to go to trial. If a charge of sexual assault were made against someone else, accompanied by this degree of corroborating evidence, there would at least be some attempt by relevant authorities to investigate—to question witnesses, to secure evidence, and the like. One might respond that the statute of limitations has run on this incident. But the statute of limitations is an "affirmative defense," that is, it is not self-executing. A defendant must invoke it to avoid prosecution for a crime. A man wishing to establish his innocence can waive the protection of the statute. Shouldn't Bill Clinton be invited to do this by the district attorney in Little Rock or the U.S. attorney for Arkansas?

And there is a branch of government called the Congress. It is a sign of how much Bill Clinton has corrupted us all that to suggest congressional action now is practically to invite ridicule. Well, ridicule us if you will, but we happen to think that last month's Senate vote did not relieve Congress of any responsibility for the next two years to fulfill its constitutional role.

After all, if hearings on Whitewater were legitimate—as surely they were, as even Democrats conceded (though they disliked the way they were conducted)—why would a brief investigation into these charges be out of the question? Committee staff would seek out whatever records they were able to obtain with their subpoena powers; the president would produce any evidence he wished; Mrs. Broaddrick would testify under oath; the five contemporaneous witnesses would testify under oath. We would then have a full airing of what we know and what we don't know. Citizens could make up their minds. Congress could choose to act, or not. Then, perhaps, we could "move on."

But as things now stand—a stonewalling president, an incurious press, and a passive Congress and law enforcement officials—the only honorable answer to the question, Can't we just move on? is no.

—William Kristol, for the Editors

Defining Feminism Down

by Charles Krauthammer

Like the careless Buchanans of *The Great Gatsby*, Bill Clinton is known as the man who leaves friends wounded and bleeding in his wake. But of all the casualties littering his trail—the jailed business partners, the disgraced aides, the character-assassinated former lovers—the most serious by far is feminism: Feminist leaders, feminist groups, feminist ideology, and the Democratic party, once the party of women and women's rights, will never recover.

Consider:

(a) Before Monica Lewinsky, it was a major tenet of feminism and an increasingly accepted workplace ethic that even consensual sex involving a subordinate and the boss was suspect given the unequal power relationship and the potential for exploitation. That was then.

Now, the most powerful man in the world, but fatefully a Democrat, has an affair at work with a 21-year-old intern, an affair exploitative in the extreme. (Remember: The president's *defense*—against charges of perjury—was that in every single encounter he'd merely been serviced without any reciprocation.) And what happens? The man's feminist and Democratic allies attack those looking into the affair for violating the man's privacy.

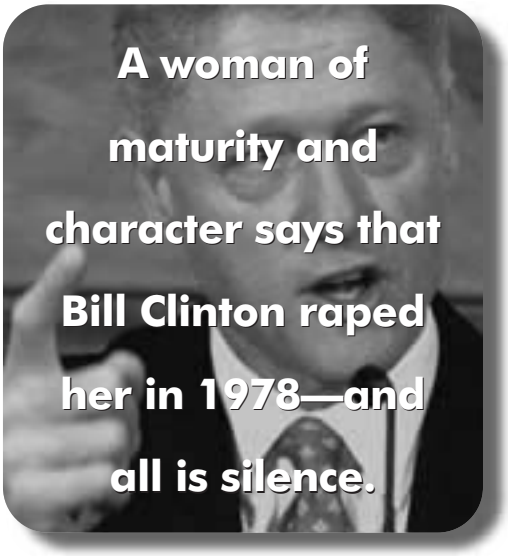
New feminist principle: Even workplace sex is private. And the inquisitors who violate that privacy are guilty of "sexual McCarthyism."

(b) Before Paula Jones, it was a major tenet of feminism and an increasingly accepted workplace ethic that the degradation and objectification of women—even giving away a nude calendar as a year-end bonus—could contribute to a "hostile work environment" and constitute sexual harassment. That was then.

Well, if cheesecake on the wall can violate women, how about the boss summoning an employee, dropping his pants, and instructing her to kiss it? Pretty serious. Just the kind of behavior women's groups and the Democratic party crusade against. Why, when Clarence Thomas was accused of nothing much more than some off-color remarks—no exposing, no touching, no groping, no servicing, nothing of the sort—Barbara Boxer led a delegation of House Democratic women who stormed the Senate demanding his head. That was then.

This time around, feminists disdained the woman seeking redress (Paula Jones), and Democrats joined the White House in savaging her. It's just "he said, she said," you see. Who you gonna believe? The Oxford-Yale man or trailer trash?

(c) Before the Jones deposition, it was a major tenet of feminism and an accepted principle of civil procedure, that in a sexual harassment suit the past sexual habits of the accused predator should be open to legal inquiry. That was then.



When it turned out that Bill Clinton lied repeatedly under oath in the Paula Jones suit, the feminists were silent, and the Democratic party waged a vigorous campaign to minimize the offense, arguing—and voting—that lying about sex is not really perjury, that it is only to be expected and, besides, this is an area of privacy that the man should never have been made to testify about in the first place.

(d) Before Juanita Broaddrick, it was a major tenet of feminism that rape was a serious charge. A plausible charge of rape leveled against a public figure—even a boxer like Mike Tyson—would bring indignant demands for an accounting and for justice. The *Rashomon* dodge—"who can ever really know"—was considered the last refuge of scoundrels. That was then.

Now, Juanita Broaddrick, a woman of maturity and character and with no discernible ulterior motive, says that Bill Clinton raped her in 1978—and all is silence.

National Organization for Women president Patricia Ireland says that, yes, Juanita Broaddrick's story is troubling, but it only highlights how conservatives have been blocking needed changes in legislation on hate crimes and violence against women, and other some such in the Congress. This changing of the subject is hilariously akin to President Clinton responding to charges of massive campaign finance law violations by urging the passage of yet new laws.

But the bankruptcy of the feminist position was best illustrated by Susan Estrich, a leading Democratic figure, stridently defending the "let's move on" position by invoking her authority as herself "a rape victim." She used to invoke that authority to call for moving in on the victimizer.

The Democratic party is certainly a gloat-free zone today. You could see not only discomfort but actual shame in the face of Democrats, who having made careers of defending women's rights and protesting their abuse, must now dismiss a rape charge, not with a denial but with shoulder-shrugging agnosticism. Democratic leaders Dick Gephardt and Tom Daschle, evincing not the slightest curiosity as to whether their leader is a rapist, say that it is time for the country to "put this behind us" and "move on" to more important business.

Six years ago, the Senate deemed it quite the nation's business to look into charges against Sen. Bob Packwood—ah, a Republican—some of which were older than Juanita Broaddrick's (they went back to 1969) and none anywhere near as severe. Under pressure of outraged feminists and agitated Democrats, Packwood was forced to resign and Washington pronounced itself satisfied at his political decapitation.

This time around, the move-on Democrats throw up their hands with it's just "he said, she said." (Actually, it is "she said, his lawyer said." He's said nothing.) Do these people have no shame? Of course they don't. But more important, and the reason the feminist cause is irretrievably damaged, is that its erstwhile champions have no arguments. What do they say the next time a public man is charged with grossly exploitative (if consensual) workplace sex? With creating a hostile work environment? With lying under oath in a sexual harassment suit? Good God, with rape?

Let's move on?

Charles Krauthammer is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Our Fearless Press

by David Frum

Soon after President Bush nominated Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, Timothy Phelps of *Newsday* and Nina Totenberg of National Public Radio heard rumors that a law professor in Oklahoma had accused Thomas of making crude sexual remarks to her when they worked together almost a decade before. Phelps and Totenberg called Anita Hill, for that's who it was, who refused to confirm the story. Then, with barely days remaining before the Senate Judiciary Committee vote on the Thomas nomination, somebody leaked to the reporters the statement Hill had given to the FBI. On October 6, 1991, the story broke.

At the time, Phelps and Totenberg had no witnesses who could confirm Hill's allegations, nothing except a complaint anonymously given to the police. Their use of uncorroborated charges to damage a man's reputation horrified the journalistic establishment. Two eminent press watchers published this stern condemnation in the *Washington Post*:

> The pressure of the new journalism of assertion is to go with stories before they have gone through the discipline of reporting—and that is what reporting is, a discipline. The foundation of journalism's role in society is its "ruthless respect for fact," as Columbia Journalism School professor Jim Carey has said. . . . [Unfortunately] journalism is becoming less a product than a process, witnessed in real time and in public. First comes the allegation. Then the anchor vamps and speculates until the counter-allegation is issued. The demand to keep up with and air this to and fro leaves journalists with less time to take stock and sort out what is true and genuinely significant. The public gets the grist, the raw elements. . . . [But] a journalism of unfiltered assertion makes separating fact and fiction, argument from innuendo, more difficult and leaves the society vulnerable to manipulation.

Of course I'm kidding. Nobody except a few unhappy conservatives said any such thing in 1991. The bit of censoriousness quoted above, by Tom Rosenstiel of the Project for Excellence in Journalism and Bill Kovach of the Nieman Foundation, was published last weekend, and it concerned not Hill's allegation that Clarence Thomas talked dirty to her but Juanita Broaddrick's allegation that she was sexually assaulted by Bill Clinton. Back in 1991, the scandal was the refusal of the old, white men in the Senate to believe Hill's anonymous, uncorroborated allegations, not the willingness of the press to print them. Thomas's alleged behavior was so shocking, so dismaying—*he had engaged in sexual banter in the presence of a woman!*—that the senators' insistence that his accuser give her name if she wanted to be heard

and offer proof if she wanted to be believed proved only how little men "got it."

In the eight years since then, however, journalistic standards seem to have become considerably more stringent. In 1999, Juanita Broaddrick stepped forward to accuse the president publicly of rape. There were five people willing to confirm that she had told them her story at the time it happened; one of them said she had seen Broaddrick's physical injuries. The strongest counter-evidence against her story—that she had earlier signed an affidavit denying the rape—actually tended to confirm it: As we now know, Clinton's protectors have made a habit of collecting false affidavits from women linked to their man. But according to Rosenstiel and Kovach, none of this was good enough to justify the *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page in publishing its interview with Juanita Broaddrick. It should have checked the story more laboriously, more thoroughly, rather than hurrying into print a mere four weeks after Broaddrick first publicly stepped forward.

Even after Dorothy Rabinowitz's *Journal* piece at last prodded NBC to broadcast its interview with Broaddrick; and despite a suspiciously lame denial by the White House, the national press appears to have decided that the story is not newsworthy. At Clinton's appearance with the Italian prime minister last Friday, no reporter even broached the issue. The Big Three networks have all downplayed the Broaddrick allegations, and NBC is now refusing to make the tape of the interview available for rebroadcast, even to its own affiliates, the Media Research Center reports. (Perhaps the network is waiting for a signed confession.)

As for the underlying behavior, here too press standards seem to have evolved in a surprising new direction. Eight years ago, the press gaped and gasped like Victorian maiden aunts in horror that a Supreme Court judge might have used the word "breast" in office conversation. Now the press shrugs off the very considerable likelihood that the president of the United States is a rapist. No less an authority than the National Organization for Women's Patricia Ireland is urging the press to "stop wasting time on unprovable charges." White House sources tell reporters on deep background that, yes, the sex occurred, but Broaddrick really wanted it.

"Watching Clinton walk away from this one is especially frustrating, but what can be done?" asked *Newsweek*'s Jonathan Alter. Well, here's an out-of-left-field suggestion: Why don't we try to discover the truth? Bill Clinton refuses to say where he was on the morning of April 25, 1978. It's not beyond the resources of Alter's colleagues to sleuth out his whereabouts that day. Rosenstiel and Kovach and our other high-minded press critics worry that the press has become dangerously overeager. Of course damaging allegations against a president should not be carelessly publicized. But when a woman with no obvious motive to lie testifies under oath that the president sexually assaulted her, when her story is an internally plausible account and conforms to the known facts, when she can name corroborating witnesses . . . well, what we have here is called news. And as Mark Steyn has quipped, anybody whose curiosity is not piqued by this sort of news ought not to be a journalist at all.

Journalists say they're tired. If so, they should take a vacation or retire. They say they dislike this kind of story. But it's not really up to them to decide which stories they like and which they don't. They say the American people don't care. But wouldn't that be a more meaningful statement *after* the story was covered rather than before? They insinuate that they are too high-minded to put this story into circulation. And as for that—let them tell it to Clarence Thomas.

David Frum is a contributing editor to **THE WEEKLY STANDARD.**

THE SILENCE OF THE DEMS

by Fred Barnes

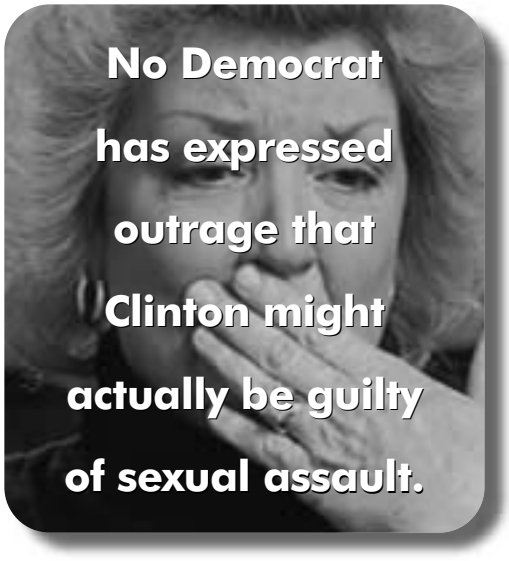
WHERE ARE THE DEMOCRATS? Only a few weeks ago, they were indignant that anyone would think they took a permissive attitude toward President Clinton's wrongdoing. While opposed to impeachment and conviction in the Monica Lewinsky case, congressional Democrats insisted President Clinton should not go unpunished. "Most of us do not want to have the public believe that an acquittal means acceptance of the behavior," said Democratic Senator Carl Levin of Michigan. So they favored strong censure of the president, and, Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein of California said, no one should doubt their motive. They weren't just looking for political cover.

Now, weeks later, Juanita Broaddrick has accused

Clinton of raping her in 1978. Now, there's no threat of impeachment and no criminal investigation. Now, Democrats are seeking no punishment at all. They're suddenly restrained and quiet.

No Democrat has demanded that the truth be determined in the case. No Democrat has called for Congress or law enforcement officials to get to the bottom of the case, lest the public think the charge is being winked at. No Democrat has expressed outrage that Clinton might actually be guilty of sexual assault. Only one congressional Democrat, Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, has even said the president should respond directly to Broaddrick's accusation. One more thing—Clinton's attorney has called the charge "absolutely false." But no Democrat has stepped forward in public and said he or she believes this denial.

Democrats have tons of excuses for taking a pass on the Broaddrick case. The timing of her charge couldn't be worse. Congress is exhausted from dealing with sexual allegations after months of impeachment, and there's no process for dealing with the new charge.



Besides, members of Congress are busy with other things. Or they simply haven't been asked about Broaddrick by reporters in Washington or back home. Also, the public doesn't seem to care about the new allegation. Phone calls and letters are not pouring in. And so on.

No Democrat has put out a press release commenting on Broaddrick, but a few have been forced to respond when questioned by reporters. That response has come in two forms. Either they say the charge is very serious but it's a matter for legal authorities, not Congress, or they claim the American people want Congress to "move on" to more important business. That's it. The only other Democratic response is silence. Among the silent Democrats are senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York and Robert Byrd of West Virginia.

Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut is one who regards the charge against Clinton as "obviously very, very serious, more serious than the other allegations that have been made against the president, because this is an allegation of sexual assault." But he told Wolf Blitzer on *CNN Late Edition* that since the statute of limitations has run, "I'm afraid this will stay like a cloud overhead for a while." To be fair, he added, "I think we can't rush to judgment here." Wellstone didn't. He said on *Fox News Sunday* that the rape charge, "if true . . . would be very serious. How could anybody discount this? And I think the president should speak to it. . . . We shouldn't say it's unimportant, but we shouldn't jump to conclusions. Listen, I think people are sick of that."

Democratic leaders in the House and Senate have taken the "move on" tack. House minority leader Richard Gephardt told reporters, "I really think the American people are ready to move on. That in no way excuses anything the president did." The legal system can handle "future charges," he said, "but we need in the Congress to get back to the people's business."

Deputy caucus chairman Martin Frost of Texas said on the Fox News Channel that while he doesn't know "the alleged facts of this case," he does know "the country wants us to get on with the business at hand, get on with the problems the country faces." Senate minority leader Tom Daschle put it this way on *This Week* on ABC: "There's not much more that we can learn from a story that's over 20 years old. I think that what we'd have to do now is move on and do the thing that the American people expect us to do."

Democrats have a defense for their muted response in the Broaddrick case: Republicans haven't spoken out much either. True, more Republicans have urged Clinton to answer the charge himself. But then there's John Kasich of Ohio, the Budget Committee chairman and a candidate for the GOP presidential nomination in 2000. "I've really paid little attention" to Broaddrick, he said on *This Week*. Republicans "have to concentrate on putting their positive agenda out there." House majority leader Dick Armey declined to deal with the Broaddrick case, too. Should Clinton respond? "I don't know," Armey told reporters. "Don't ask me. I'm not a lawyer."

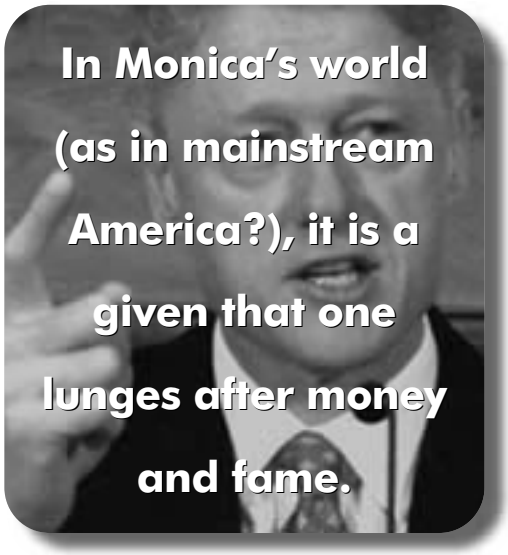
Does he believe Broaddrick? "Do I have to answer this kind of thing?" he asked back. Apparently not.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of **The Weekly Standard.**

Monica's World

by Claudia Winkler

WHAT WAS MOST REMARKABLE about the Barbara Walters interview with Monica Lewinsky was its revelation of the moral derangement of Monica's world. Consider, first, the embarrassing nature of the program itself. What exactly was this disconcertingly childlike woman doing baring her love life in our living rooms? One knows the answer, of course: She was promoting a lucrative book. In Monica's world (as, perhaps, in mainstream America?), it is a given that one lunges after money and fame when opportunity arises, however humiliating the reason for the headlines. Monica says she has been violated, her conversations recorded and exposed, her most personal memories dragged from her before a grand jury. Such cruel usage reduced her to thoughts of suicide; she is compelled to take anti-depressants; aspires to healing. Yet on *20/20*, she did voluntarily, in front of millions of people, the very thing she decried when a false friend and the prosecutors secured it by force. In Monica's world, a decent retreat into privacy is the road to healing not taken.



Then there was the sheer, staggering coarseness of her story. The outline was already familiar. Even so, there was something shocking about watching Monica recount how she reassured Bill, the first time they were alone, that she'd already had an affair with a married man, so she "knew the rules"; hearing her affirm, apparently without irony, that she thought the world of Mrs. Clinton; learning that she quite liked the man at the Pentagon who impregnated her after her exile from the White House (her abortion was the one bit of news to emerge), though she felt for him nothing like her attraction to "the president."

It was Monica's comfort level with all this immorality, the matter-of-factness with which she spoke of her adulteries and placed them in the context of her low self-esteem, that was striking. She actually seemed proud of herself as she spoke of the early phase of her Oval Office liaison, before the lovers were reduced to phone sex. Now, chastened to whatever extent she is and "very sorry for what happened," she chose to come forward and publicly glow at the memory of her "sexual soulmate." Whatever lessons the last year has taught her, they don't include shame. Indeed, she waxed indignant at the suggestion that others in the White House had good reasons for trying to separate her from the president: The affair, she said, was "none of their business!" In her universe, it seems that a strong attraction automatically confers an absolute license to act.

To act, and to blab. Monica told 11 friends and family members about her affair with Bill Clinton, regaling them with sexual particulars. Thus, she explained to Barbara Walters, it was not she but some of her friends who informed the grand jury of the infamous cigar. Again, the embarrassment was all ours. In Monica's world, there is no reticence.

It must be said that Monica's world is not mainly of her own devising. This clueless girl, a child of divorce, encountered an abundance of predatory men and too few adults who showed much zeal for the sanctity of marriage. (Vernon Jordan, she said, encouraged her to hope she might have an affair with Clinton after he left office.) Happily, though, her chaotic experience did not suppress her every wholesome instinct. Once the scandal came crashing down, she seems to have suffered for her family and even to have shed a few of her illusions about "Handsome." She didn't quite bite when Walters asked her whether the affair was "wrong," but she did concede it should have been handled differently.

Then Walters asked Monica what lies ahead, and out from under all the emotional confusion of her life came this confession: What she really wants is to get married and have kids. The desire for motherhood seemed to clarify her thinking. "What will you tell your children?" asked Walters, and the interview ended with the answer: "Mommy made a big mistake."

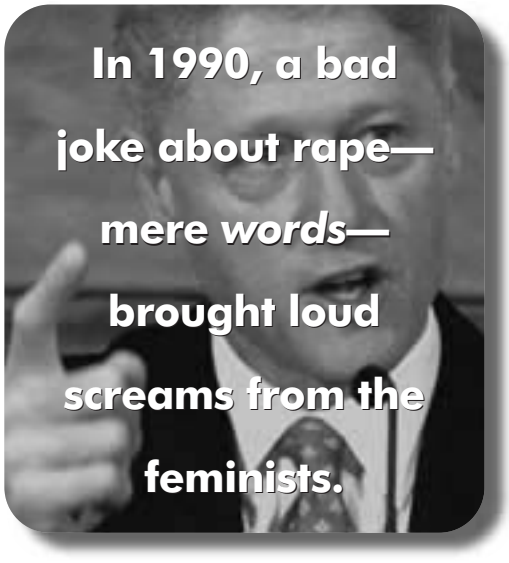
Even as one cringed, one detected here a seed of sanity. Is it conceivable that a young woman like Monica could work her way backwards from her wish to be a good mother toward reasonable conduct? Might she notice the advantages, for a mother, of a stable marriage, hence of fidelity and of a partner whose merits go beyond his physical appeal? Could she, before her life is altogether ruined, begin to reinvent the rudimentary verities so startlingly absent from her world?

Claudia Winkler is a managing editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Just Rape

By Noemie Emery

Once upon a time, it is now hard to believe, feminists thought that rape could be serious. Very serious. Exceedingly serious. One of the most serious accusations you could make. It was not only grim in itself, it was also a metaphor, a symbol for the whole sorry state of sexual matters that feminists vowed to correct. Metaphoric or not, feminists saw rape everywhere—in marriage, in love affairs, in the amours of Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara. In 1975, feminist scholar Susan Brownmiller made her name with *Against Our Will*, a landmark study of rape and its motives that called rape the model for social oppression. In 1990, Clayton Williams, Republican candidate for governor of Texas, told a bad joke comparing rape to bad weather—"When rape is inevitable, relax and enjoy it"—and his mere *words* brought loud screams, NOW pickets, and charges that no such man should ever hold power.



But those were the old days of consciousness-raising, when sensitivities were being heightened everywhere, and women were told to fight for their rights and their interests. These are the new days of consciousness-lowering, when women are being told—again by their feminist leaders—to unlearn everything they knew. They are being told now that the accused male merits the presumption of innocence; that without absolute proof, the man's word is valid; that if it's an old story, it no longer has meaning; and that a rape charge shouldn't be allowed to interfere with the career of a prominent man.

Thus, Juanita Broaddrick's credible charge of a rape accompanied by physical battery by a man who was then attorney general of Arkansas and is now our president is too meaningless to merit a word of reproach from, among others, Gloria Steinem, Betty Friedan, Susan Faludi, Eleanor Smeal, former congresswoman and vocal feminist Patricia Schroeder, former governor and vocal feminist Ann Richards, or Geraldine Ferraro, vocal feminist and former candidate for the vice presidency of the United States. On cable chat shows, the ever-flexible Elizabeth Holtzman, her grin stretched as tight as a death's-head, expresses great concern for the imperiled rights of Bill Clinton. How do you defend yourself against such a charge? she wonders. On *Crossfire*, Clinton friend Susan Estrich claims that in the absence of proof, the benefit of the doubt goes to the accused, who is then declared innocent. But if so, innocence must also be granted to Clarence Thomas, whose denial of a far lesser charge was so much more forceful than Clinton's, and against whom no scintilla of corroborating evidence has ever been brought. So, are the apologies to Justice Thomas in the mail? Thought not.

Feminists have also made much of the power equation, according to which social arrangements are themselves weapons of intimidation, used against women by men. Indeed, Mrs. Broaddrick's charges involve not only rape, but rape by a government official, a man of vast institutional power, charged with upholding the law. "All rape is an exercise in power, but some rapists have an edge that is more than physical," writes Susan Brownmiller. "They operate within an institutionalized setting that works to their advantage, and in which a victim has little chance to redress her grievance."

One such instance is what Brownmiller calls "police rape," in which the violation is done by an authority figure, charged with keeping these things from happening. Bill Clinton in 1978, at the time Mrs. Broaddrick says he raped her, was the top cop in his state, soon to be governor, then president, making the assault she charges him with the ultimate perversion

Noemie Emery, a frequent contributor, lives in Alexandria, Va.

of power. As Brownmiller writes, "The horror of police rape is special, for it is an abuse of power by one whose job it is to control such abuses of power. . . . Police rape . . . represents the ultimate Kafkaesque nightmare, for when society's chosen figure of lawful authority commits a criminal act upon one of those persons he has been sanctioned to protect, where can a woman turn for justice?" Not, it appears, to the women in Congress, who used to call themselves members-at-large on behalf of all women, whose special beleaguered constituency was their imperiled and endangered sex.

Phone calls to the offices of senators Barbara Boxer, Barbara Mikulski, Dianne Feinstein, and Patty Murray (all of them strong backers of Clarence Thomas's accuser, Anita Hill) and representatives Nita Lowey, Rosa DeLauro, Zoe Lofgren, Carolyn Maloney, and Nancy Pelosi brought refusals to comment, unreturned messages, statements that the reported incident happened too long ago for comment, and assurances that the members were working on more pressing issues. After a few days, Patricia Ireland of NOW did issue a statement finding credible both Mrs. Broaddrick's charges and the long years of silence that followed them. The statement put no pressure at all on the president. Still, it had its uses, as it warned the president's friends off the "nuts and sluts" attacks they had used against his earlier accusers with such gusto.

The NOW statement also made the stunned silence of Congress's feminists seem more than ever peculiar. The most vocal defenders of women are perfectly content to let a proven liar who has been credibly charged with rape and battery stay on in the White House unquestioned. But this is only the latest of a whole train of judgments going down the same slope. First, the feminists said it was unimportant if a governor dropped his pants in front of a total stranger (who worked for the government). Then they called an office affair between an unpaid college-age intern and the most powerful man in the world both okay and private. Then they said that it was fine with them if the same man as president physically assaulted a volunteer in the Oval Office when she came to him seeking paid employment, in obvious emotional distress.

In that last instance, Gloria Steinem formulated what came to be known as her "one free grope" theory, maintaining that Clinton knew how to "take 'no' for an answer." Now, when it appears that he sometimes takes "no" to mean "yes, please," Steinem is silent, though she might want to upgrade her theory to "one free rape," so long as the accused is in favor of late-term abortion. Perhaps Hendrik Hertzberg will call this a rape trap. Perhaps William Styron will apologize once again to the French for our monstrous prudery, and Arthur Miller will write something else about witch hunts. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. may tell us in the *New York Times* that gentlemen always lie about rape, to protect their wives and their victims. Perhaps Erica Jong and her set, so turned on by the Paula and Monica stories, will be more aroused by this sequel. And perhaps Toni Morrison will rethink her idea that this makes Bill all the more her black brother. But then, perhaps not.

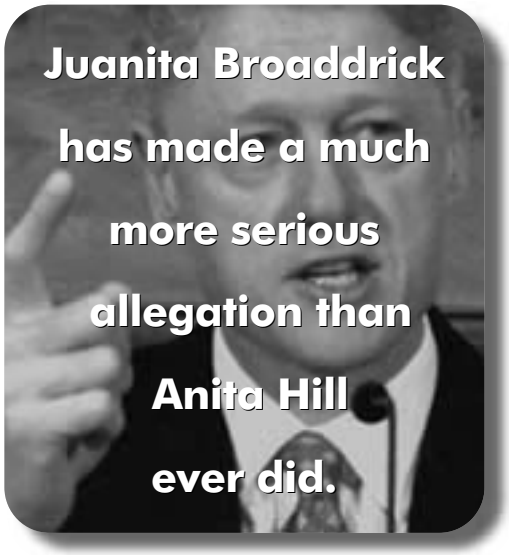
Still, beyond making the Left look stranger than ever, there is the question of where this all is leading. In a concrete sense, perhaps nowhere. This is not a legal proceeding with a definitive outcome. This is a matter of tone and of context. It is a long-burning fuse, an underground fire, a drop of dye spilled into a great vat of water that progressively discolors all the rest. "This is *subversive*," says Chris Matthews. It is. And those who wonder where it can go, or what it can influence, should realize it has already gone everywhere and influences everything. Quietly, the terrain has been subtly altered. And the things that have been changed are these:

(1) Bill Clinton's plan to win the verdict of history is now all but finished. He will not succeed in painting impeachment as a partisan witch hunt, punishing him for his personal shortcomings. His legacy now has been set in concrete: He is the first elected president ever impeached and acquitted; and the first president to be credibly charged with a rape. These two different elements reinforce each other. Singly, impeachment and the Broaddrick charges may be open to question. Together, they have a cumulative impact that makes each more valid and plausible.

Has anyone noticed that, since the Broaddrick interview, the once pervasive talk about the mean,

nasty, intolerant, out-of-step Republican party has more or less disappeared? Maybe Bill Clinton was not quite such a victim. Maybe the stories of Paula Jones and Kathleen Willey appear more disturbing, more like predation than sex. The dread House managers now seem somewhat less sinister, in view of what their quarry is thought to have done. The subject has been changed again, from Clinton's accusers to Clinton himself, always a dangerous thing for this president. His supporters have warned him to lay off Mrs. Broaddrick. So how will he now change the subject back?

(2) Has anyone also noticed that, since the airing of the Broaddrick charges, the heavy breathing about Senator Rodham has somewhat died down? Hillary Clinton's chances of being elected to anything, any time, any place, may have been compromised. A first lady, or a private citizen, can refuse to answer questions. A political candidate can refuse questions about his or her private life. But one thing a candidate for high public office cannot do is refuse to answer serious questions on crime. The day after the Broaddrick interview aired on *Dateline*, Rush Limbaugh introduced almost every segment of his three-hour radio program with cuts from Mrs. Clinton's ringing 1992 endorsement of Anita Hill, which called Hill a heroine and urged women victims of abuse to step forward. As a candidate, Hillary would be fair game.



It would be legitimate for rivals and journalists to bring up matters like these: Anita Hill and Juanita Broaddrick both made charges against controversial male public figures many years after the alleged offenses were said to have happened, and neither offered tangible evidence. Mrs. Broaddrick waited 21 years to go public; Professor Hill waited ten. Mrs. Broaddrick at the time of the incident told five other people; Professor Hill says that she told one. Mrs. Broaddrick had limited subsequent contacts with Clinton; Professor Hill continued to socialize with her employer and even followed him from job to job. Clarence Thomas had no record of lying or lechery. Bill Clinton does. Does Mrs. Clinton, like NOW, find Mrs. Broaddrick's charges believable? If not, what makes her story *weaker* than Hill's?

It is one thing to defend a weak, wandering husband; and another to shelter a possible predator. In this sense, the first lady looks much less appealing than before. Oddly enough, no pundit has linked these, but since the Broaddrick charges were first published, on February 19, Mrs. Clinton's putative lead in New York against New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani has vaporized. So may the Senate career.

(3) A Hillary retreat would take some heat off the hustings, but the story wouldn't quite end there. Her stand-in, Rep. Nita Lowey, an early and ardent Anita Hill backer, would herself draw Broaddrick questions. As would all feminist Democrats facing tight races in the 2000 elections. Did they fight Packwood? Did they hate Tailhook? Did they back Hill? What is the difference between Hill's case, and Broaddrick's, except that *Broaddrick's charges are so much more serious?*

And then there is Al Gore, joined at the hip to Bill Clinton, who stood at the president's side on the day of impeachment and praised his greatness. Gore in 1991 voted against Clarence Thomas, while calling for a full airing of Anita Hill's charges. "We cannot dismiss Professor Hill so cavalierly," he said to the Senate. "Doing so would be to dismiss every woman we represent. Every woman who has ever struggled to be heard over a society that too often ignores even their most painful calls for justice—we simply cannot take for granted that . . . the victim, or the woman, is always wrong." So does Gore think that the many women who have accused Bill Clinton of things ranging from gross misbehavior to violence have been "always wrong" or misguided? What does ignoring them do to all the women "we represent?" Has Mrs. Broaddrick's case—or Kathleen's or Paula's—ever come up in Gore's chats with Clinton? Did Gore ever ask him about them? Did Clinton ever try to tell Gore he was innocent? Would Gore believe him if he did, and, given the record, why should he? And, again and always, to all the Democrats, *Why is Juanita Broaddrick's case weaker than Anita Hill's?*

Every feminist Democrat, male or female; everyone who ever backed the Violence Against Women Act and then either defended Bill Clinton or has said nothing about him, is now fair game for repeated questions and protests and pickets from women themselves. Clinton survived 1998 at least partly because

his friends were able to portray his critics as querulous white men, poking their noses into "private behavior." They will have less success against their new critics, who are rape counselors, rape victims, and angry ex-feminists. These people were not amused by Tom Daschle's plea that we simply "move on" as if nothing had happened. Clinton may skate, in the legal sense, but his friends may pay for him. They are in for a rocky two years.

(4) Broaddrick's charges bring up another quality of Bill Clinton's that is even more disturbing than anything broached so far: his strained relationship with what most people regard as real life. To many, O.J. Simpson's odd lack of outrage when he was charged with the murders of his wife and Ronald Goldman was the tip-off that all was not kosher. Likewise, Clinton's reaction to Mrs. Broaddrick's story seems . . . strange. Accused of a crime that is vile and violent, he seemed not merely unmoved, but elated. The day after the *Dateline* interview aired, said a cheerful story in the *New York Times*, he was all smiles as he glad-handed supporters, "so sunny in his own remarks that he converted even his bad news to good."

What kind of man is turned on by rape charges? Perhaps the same man who in 1991 embraced the cause of Anita Hill five months after his encounter with the then-Paula Corbin in the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock. The same man who, in September 1994, signed the Violence Against Women Act, including the harassment clause that would later help impeach him, 10 months after his encounter in the Oval Office with Kathleen Willey. And the same man who would send his vice president out to announce "$223 million in grants to help detect and stop violence against women" (and to insist that abusers be held accountable) two days after he was accused on national television of having raped an Arkansas woman. Guilty or innocent, this is peculiar behavior. It suggests Clinton has, at the very least, a form of reality deficit disorder, a syndrome not desirable in a president. Yet this is the man the Democrats battled to keep in high office. There seems at this time a fairly good chance that the president of the United States may be a delusional predator. And the Democrats think this is fine.

By now, the Broaddrick story does not have to "go" anywhere to have its own impact. It just has to stay as it is. It just has to sit there, unresolved and unending, in everyone's mind, if not on the newscasts. It just has to sit there, coloring everything; in the mind of every reporter who asks a question; in the mind of every congressman dealing with Clinton; of every viewer who sees him on the evening news. It just has to sit there, upping the squirm factor, going on into the 2000 elections.

Do the Democrats ever think of how sweet life would be if they had forced Clinton out at the beginning of the scandal? They would now have a President Gore, entrenched in office, running to *hold* power, not to win it, taking full credit for the booming economy—not an embattled prospective nominee thrust into an awkward position by his boss and polling well behind George W. Bush and Elizabeth Dole. And the feminists would have a pro-choice, pro-quota president, who did not embarrass them daily, and who was a good bet to get elected, and then reelected. They would have had their policies and their principles; and their credibility, somewhat tarnished by their dismissal of Paula Jones's charges, would have been fully restored. But it is too late for what-ifs, and the "winners" are stuck with the spoils of victory. Good. ♦

Steeling Votes in West Virginia

By Pia Nordlinger

Weirton, West Virginia

THERE WAS A TIME when the people of Weirton, West Virginia, loved Bill Clinton as much as they love the Pittsburgh Steelers—which is pretty much the pinnacle of adoration in this northern West Virginia town.

Those happy days, however, are over. In the last year, a wave of anti-Clinton feeling has swept through Weirton like a fever. Even the administrators of the Millsop Community Center—Weirton's townhall and the place where locals work out before heading over to Gus' Goodies for eats—have turned against the president. They removed from the main hallway a photo of Clinton and Al Gore on their 1992 Weirton campaign stop. The image of these one-time heroes was chucked into a dusty storage closet because, as Dave "Goose" Gossett of the Independent Steelworkers Union explained, "He came to this town, and he lied to us."

The offending lies weren't about Monica, perjury, or obstruction of justice. They were campaign promises related to the Weirton Steel Corporation. "I want to first make sure we enforce strictly the anti-dumping laws, and the laws against unfair subsidized steel being dumped into this country," Clinton said in 1992. "That's not fair . . . they shouldn't have access to our markets." This was music to the ears of Weirton's steelworkers.

Today, those steelworkers say that Clinton has betrayed them by his trade policies. "[Treasury secretary Robert] Rubin is about globalization," says Gossett. "He's more concerned about the Russian and Brazilian economies than he is about American steel."

While Clinton is all but being burned in effigy, another politician has won the hearts of Weirton's disaffected. Republican presidential candidate Patrick J. Buchanan, in his third try for the nomination, knows that this town is a case study in what he believes is wrong and right about America. And that's why before announcing in New Hampshire, he made a big show of drumming up support here. Though Weirton and Buchanan may seem at first an unlikely pair, it is easy to see why they now make a perfect fit.

When Weirton Steel was at full tilt, it provided 14,000 jobs. Now its workforce is hovering around 4,000, and Weirton may lose its mill entirely as other countries are undercutting the price of its steel. Waiting on the fate of the mill, as one man who had worked there for over forty years told me, "is like being sentenced to death and knowing that the governor isn't going to help you out."

> WHEN PAT BUCHANAN VISITED WEIRTON HE WAS GREETED WITH THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME A REPUBLICAN HAS EVER RECEIVED.

The union had tried everything to attract national attention, but until Buchanan put the town on his dance card, the steel crisis, as it is known, was merely a regional issue. When Buchanan visited Weirton last week, he was greeted with what was by far the most enthusiastic welcome this Democratic stronghold has ever given a Republican. The incongruous sight of over 1,000 diehard union Democrats chanting "Go, Pat, Go!" was particularly interesting to me, as Weirton is my hometown.

The audience was full of old friends and neighbors like Lora Crow, who presented Buchanan's wife, Shelley, with a Kroger bag bursting with just-baked pepperoni rolls. Growing up, I had been to the community center on many occasions, and to see it now decked with signs saying "Thank You, Pat," "Pat Buchanan Stands Up for Steel," and "Free Traders are Traitors" was a little surprising. Yet, Buchanan couldn't have picked a more beleaguered steel town to showcase.

Weirton Steel has long been fighting for stability. In the early 1980s, National Steel, which owned the mill, decided that it could no longer afford its Weir-

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

ton plant. So, in 1984 the employees joined together to buy it themselves, forming what is still the country's largest industrial employee stock ownership plan. In order to make the company profitable, costs were trimmed through early retirements and a 30 percent cut in wages and benefits. The newly formed corporation then invested $1 billion in plant modernization. It was a Toquevillian effort beyond compare.

This heavy investment allowed Weirton Steel to become one of the most modern and efficient mills in the country. But Weirton Steel is not just competing with other American mills. As economies around the world have collapsed, the American market has been flooded with super-cheap steel from abroad. In 1996, Russia sent 1.6 million tons of steel to U.S. shores. In 1998, that tonnage shot up to 5.2 million. Japan sent 2 million tons in 1996; in 1998, 6.6 million.

Charles P. Saus/Weirton Daily News

Pat Buchanan at Weirton Steel

These enormous increases came with awesome cost reductions. Weirton spends $240 to produce one ton of steel, but it costs as little as $180 to import foreign steel. The company has decided to fill a portion of its orders by using imported steel: The savings, through imports, will total $23 million.

To send a message, the steelworkers' unions embarked in November on a nationwide "Stand Up for Steel" campaign. Weirton has done its part with a 5,000-strong local rally, followed up by a march on Washington that attracted 6,500 people. "Stand Up for Steel" signs hang in the windows of every Weirton establishment except Wal-Mart, which caused the store a major flap and sparked talk of a boycott. Union officials have testified before the House Ways and Means Committee. In Congress there are now bills that would require the administration to enforce current anti-dumping laws.

What Pat Buchanan made clear in Weirton is that he understands the town's frustration, both economic and emotional: "American factory workers who make $15 or $20 an hour cannot and ought not have to compete with workers who have to work for a dollar an hour." He wooed the crowd with a combination of patriotism—"Is there anyone who thinks this country could have won World War II without a steel industry that produced half the steel in the world?"—and anti-communism. "We've got a $60 billion trade deficit with Chinese Communists who persecute Tibetans, persecute Christians, persecute political dissidents, and who are targeting American Marines on Okinawa and sailors in the Seventh Fleet with missiles . . . paid for by surpluses they get from trading with the United States."

Buchanan paused while the crowd booed, and then he lowered the boom: "Now, you're walking very close to the line of treason when you're giving money to people targeting our troops." Loud whistles, long applause, the works.

Since this is still a Democratic stronghold, Buchanan insisted that keeping American industry alive is a non-partisan issue, although he mentioned Ronald Reagan whenever possible. He credited Reagan with instituting temporary steel quotas "to give our steel industry a fighting chance to come back," and he reminded the crowd that he had once worked for the former president: "Reagan had five things. He said to me, 'Pat, our campaigns are about work, family, faith, community, and country.' Now isn't that what Weirton is about?"

That is, in fact, exactly what Weirton is about. Just ask Chris Magnone, senior at Weir High School and poster child for Weirton Steel. "All these men want to do," he says, "is go to work and raise a family." About his own ambitions, Magnone is certain: "I've always wanted to work in the mill. It's a tradition. A generational thing."

Trouble is, that tradition may be coming to an end, after which, like many other traditions, it will recede into memory. But Pat Buchanan understands the power of tradition. Can it fuel a viable presidential campaign? ♦

Rogan's Run

From House Manager to Senator?

By Matthew Rees

When seven Republican presidential candidates turned up at California's recent state party convention, they expected to be star attractions. Instead, they were eclipsed by James Rogan, the second-term congressman who leapt to prominence during the president's impeachment trial. Countless conventioneers wore buttons reading "Proud of Rogan," and he was mobbed wherever he went. When he tried to enter a ballroom quietly where Dan Quayle was to be the featured dinner speaker, a few people rose and began clapping. Within 30 seconds, hundreds were giving him a standing ovation and chanting, "Rogan! Rogan!"

Rogan is now giving serious thought to trying to unseat Sen. Dianne Feinstein, who is up for reelection next year. In public, he says he's undecided, but in fact he's strongly leaning toward a run. At the convention, he met for two hours with advisers and expressed great enthusiasm about a challenge. He's also sought out an array of people for advice: Pete Wilson and George Deukmejian, who together spent the past 16 years governing California; Jane Clark, a San Francisco fund-raiser; and Walter Lukens, a Virginia-based direct-mail consultant. The near-unanimous counsel he's received is to jump into the race. Deukmejian says challenging Feinstein is "a splendid idea."

There are three arguments for a Rogan candidacy. First, if he remains a congressman, it's highly unlikely he'll ever again have as much impact as he did during the House impeachment proceedings and the Senate trial. Second, his suburban Los Angeles district leans Democratic, and even if Rogan is reelected in 2000, the Democrat-controlled California legislature will redistrict Rogan out of existence. Third, his stature will keep other serious Republicans from challenging him in the senatorial primary. Indeed, the only announced GOP candidate, state senator Ray Haynes, told me, "Jim Rogan is one of the finest men I know. If he gets into the race, I wouldn't think of running against him."

> ROGAN WON'T RUN AWAY FROM HIS ROLE IN THE IMPEACHMENT. "IF IT'S A LIABILITY," HE SAID, "I'D BE PROUD TO LOSE THE RACE ON THAT ISSUE."

The paucity of Republican candidates isn't only a testament to Rogan. It also reflects the decrepit state of the party in California. Last year's GOP candidates for governor and senator, Dan Lungren and Matt Fong, both lost decisively. The number of Republicans in the legislature is the lowest in six years. And at the state convention, a feud erupted over abortion, with pro-choicers trying, without success, to defeat the incoming slate of pro-life party leaders.

In this depressed environment, Rogan is looked to to resuscitate the party's fortunes. He's young (41), has a distinguished professional history (former municipal court judge and deputy DA), and a compelling personal story (born out of wedlock, raised in a broken home). A registered Democrat until 1988, Rogan is also one of the few California Republicans

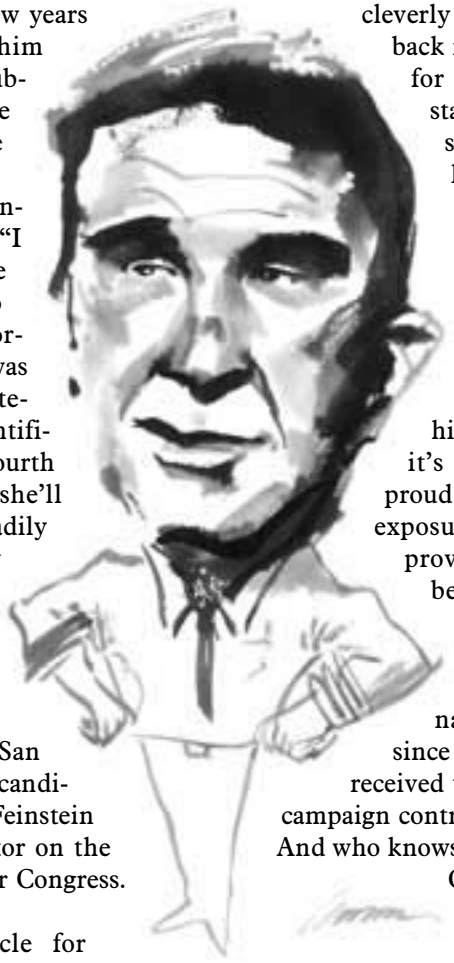
Matthew Rees is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

who can bridge the party's ideological divide.

His dexterity in dealing with moderates and conservatives was on display at the state convention. While he supported the pro-life slate for the party leadership, he nonetheless was the only conservative to also appear at a reception for Brooks Firestone, one of the pro-choice challengers, and heaped praise on him in a short speech. Firestone told me he's "very comfortable" with Rogan, who "would make a great senator." Nor is Rogan's appeal limited to Republicans. He's been elected twice in a 40 percent minority district, and a few years ago the *Los Angeles Times* called him "that rare breed of right-wing Republican: a born-again, conservative Christian who is not an immediate turn-off to liberal Democrats."

Whether Rogan can defeat Feinstein is, of course, another matter. "I think Dianne Feinstein will be very, very tough no matter who runs against her," says George Gorton, a California consultant who was Pete Wilson's main political strategist. Feinstein has high name identification (the 2000 race will be her fourth statewide campaign in 10 years), she'll be well funded, and she's not as readily labeled a knee-jerk liberal as fellow senator Barbara Boxer. Yet Gorton also points out that "Feinstein probably has 40 percent of the electorate against her at any given time" because of her reputation as a liberal former mayor of San Francisco. Rogan, sounding like a candidate, says, "I don't think Dianne Feinstein has been a particularly good senator on the issues that motivated me to run for Congress. I think she's beatable."

The biggest potential obstacle for Rogan is that even though he received heavy media coverage during the Senate trial, he remains unknown to most California voters, and in a state with 32 million people and five major media markets, that will be difficult to change. Moreover, opportunities for free media are limited, as the state television networks have minimal interest in politics; they barely covered last year's campaigns for governor and senator. Thus, with little opportunity to define himself, Rogan is vulnerable to Democratic attacks, given his opposition to abortion rights and gun control in a state that strongly favors both.



Will Rogan's role in the impeachment drama help or hurt? Polls showed the state's voters never favored removing Clinton, and Rogan's high-profile part in the effort to oust him could be used to tar him as a right-wing extremist. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has announced it's targeting him for defeat if he stays in the House, while Hollywood mogul David Geffen was quoted near the close of the Senate trial as saying, "Many of us are looking forward to spending time and money and effort defeating James Rogan." Rogan cleverly replies that "if any of the liberals back in California . . . want to attack me for standing up for principle, for standing up for civil-rights laws, for standing up for sexual-harassment laws, . . . I welcome that argument."

But Rogan's impeachment experience would also motivate a dispirited Republican base. He was among the most hawkish of the managers, and he has no intention of running away from his record in a Senate campaign. "If it's a liability," he told me, "I'd be proud to lose the race on that issue." The exposure from the Senate trial would prove invaluable in fund-raising, and being targeted for defeat by Democratic campaign operatives and gay liberals like Geffen would make for a potentially lucrative national direct-mail effort. Indeed, since the Senate trial, Rogan has already received thousands of dollars in unsolicited campaign contributions from around the country. And who knows whether having sought to remove Clinton might not look better by November 2000.

The prospect of a Rogan Senate candidacy has led some to draw a parallel with another southern California Republican, Richard Nixon. He, like Rogan, achieved fame as a junior member of the House of Representatives. Shortly thereafter, he capitalized on his fame and won what originally looked to be an uphill Senate race. The more immediate parallel, though, might seem to be with fellow Republicans Lungren and Fong, both of whom were slaughtered in their statewide races last November. Asked how he'd avoid their fate, Rogan doesn't mince words: "If I run, I'll win." ♦

Kent Lemon

What's the Truth Matter If You're a (MacArthur) Genius?

Mike Davis's L.A. Stories

By Brian Doherty

Los Angeles

Leftist intellectuals are always prophets with honor, no matter how dishonorably they behave. Consider professional Los Angeles-basher and Marxist social commentator Mike Davis. His book *Ecology of Fear,* which made it to the top of the *Los Angeles Times* bestseller list last fall, turns out to be fable as well as journalism, but his fans are unappalled. Like Rigoberta Menchu, the Guatemalan leftist activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner whose much-lauded "autobiography" was exposed as full of fiction—without distressing her many academic admirers in the least—Davis is apparently exempt from the ordinary author's obligations to the truth because of the political usefulness of his work.

Davis is a so-called native son, "born in Los Angeles" it says on the flap of *Ecology of Fear*, though he in fact hails from the small California desert town of Fontana, not even in Los Angeles County. His past is a blend of lumpen- and highbrow-prole. He's been both a truck driver and an editor of the *New Left Review*—a dream set of credentials combining practice and theory. He professes contempt for effete intellectuals, preferring the company of L.A. street gangs. And he's a MacArthur Foundation-certified "genius"—the recipient last year of a $315,000 grant to pursue his work. *Mother Jones* called his 1990 swipe at Los Angeles, *City of Quartz*, one of the 20 books of the past 20 years everyone should read.

A grim social history of L.A. framed as a story of the white power structure vs. embattled minorities, *City of Quartz* could be seen as prophetic after the 1992 Rodney King riots, and reporters from across the country acquired the habit of going to Davis as an expert source on the supposed dark side of L.A. In his new book *Ecology of Fear*, he builds on that reputation, casting himself as an end-of-the-century Jeremiah, with vivid predictions of fire, flood, and plague in the Los Angeles basin. His project is to unmask what he calls "the social construction of 'natural' disaster." And those sneer marks around the word *natural* are crucial. In Davis's telling, the damage done to L.A. by wildfires, floods, and earthquakes is less an act of God or of Mother Nature than the fruits of capitalism. As Davis puts it: "Market-driven urbanization has transgressed environmental common sense."

Some of the book is so unsurprising it's merely tedious—you mean Los Angeles is prone to *earthquakes*? But a lot of it is surprising, and not necessarily true. Indeed, a rumble has begun to spread, if not yet to earthquake proportions, that Davis is an unreliable scholar. This is largely thanks to the work of Malibu realtor Ross Earnest Shockley, who moonlights as a one-man anti-Mike Davis truth squad under the pen name Brady Westwater.

Westwater's success as a debunker is a testimony to the ability, in these days of mass e-mail, of one very energetic layman to call the mass media's tune. He's already garnered stories in local L.A. papers, a couple of Webzines, and in the *Economist*. Westwater's crusade began in November with an 18-page essay on Davis's errors that he e-mailed to magazines across the country, especially those that have praised Davis's work. Since then, day and night, sometimes seven days a week, Westwater has pursued his quarry—searching and downloading articles from the Web about Davis or about the various alarms raised by the book—cougar attacks, rainfall, tornadoes, fires.

Fact-checking Davis is a chore—he footnotes heavily but omits publishers' names for books and page numbers and headlines for his newspaper citations, leaving any interested researcher to thumb through entire issues of a newspaper seeking verification. But Westwater has caught Davis on some obvious points:

¶ Davis insists that a popular downtown gathering area known as Bunker Hill was redeveloped by sinister white power brokers after the Watts riots as a futuristic high-security fortress to keep out dangerous blacks. In fact, the redevelopment plan went into effect before the Watts riots, and the resulting area is

Brian Doherty is the Warren Brookes fellow at the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

a fully accessible public gathering place usually filled with more Hispanics and blacks from nearby neighborhoods than whites, and free of the grim rolldown bulletproof doors blocking all business entrances that Davis describes.

¶ Davis writes that L.A.'s Westlake District and adjacent parts of downtown have "the highest urban fire incidence in the nation." He then ties this vague claim down to a year by saying the two area fire stations had 20,000 calls in 1993. In fact, in 1993, that area had the *lowest* number of structure fires (195) of any council district in Los Angeles, much less the nation.

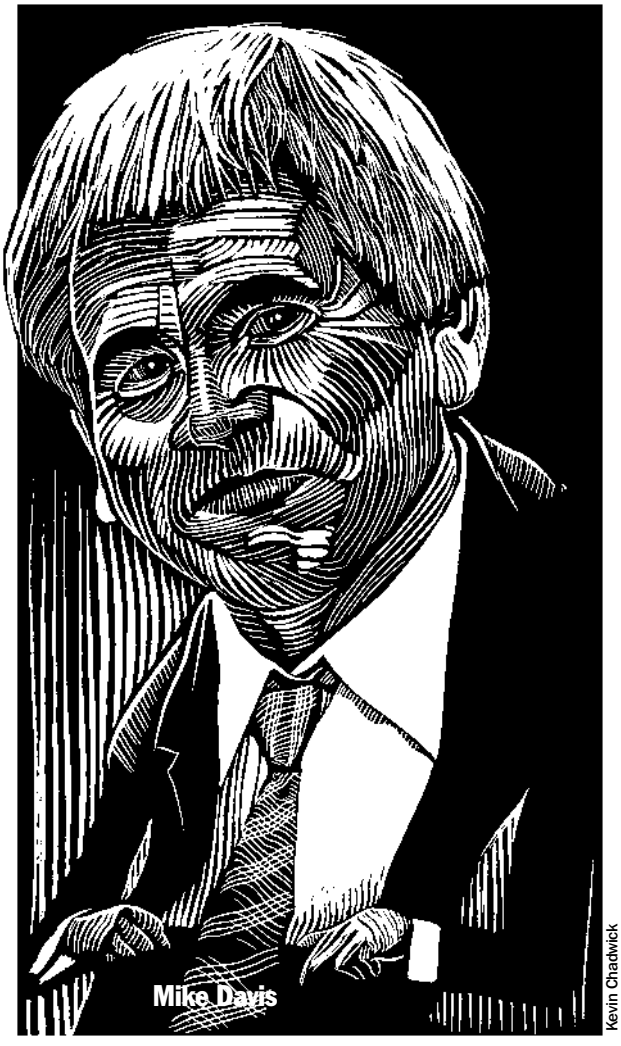
¶ Davis devotes a whole chapter, "Our Secret Kansas," to the preposterous notion that L.A. is being continually battered by twisters—and that local media cover this up. He makes much of the supposed fact that when a tornado struck in 1930, "the *Times* could not say the forbidden 'T word,' so its headline merely noted that 'Roofs Go Flying in the Hawthorne area.'" Leaving aside the obvious flaw in this evidence—newspaper headline writers are mainly concerned with fitting informative and alluring words into tight spaces—the very article Davis cites contains the word "tornado," which the *Times* allegedly "could not say," six times, including in a photo caption.

So far criticisms of Davis seem to have had a curious effect: His "genius" reputation is barely diminished, and there has been a spate of counterattacks defending him. Both lefty columnist Marc Cooper in the *L.A. New Times* and the Webzine *Salon* quote University of Southern California professor Douglas Sherman supposedly verifying one of Davis's more striking claims against Westwater's debunking: namely, that a spot in Los Angeles County's San Gabriel Mountains holds the world's record for highest one-minute rainfall. Westwater points to standard sources like the Encyclopedia Brittanica, which tells us that the greatest recorded one-minute rainfall (1.23 inches) was nearly twice as high as Davis's "world record," and in Unionville, Maryland, to boot. What's more, Sherman tells me that he never said what *Salon* and Cooper quoted him as saying. He merely confirmed that, yes, the San Gabriels are prone to *some* of the world's heaviest rains. Neither the recorded one-minute, five-minute, one-hour, one-day, nor one-month rainfall maximum was in the Los Angeles area.

Occasional freak storm or no, this dispute over rainfall points to a larger absurdity in *Ecology of Fear.* Even if Davis were right about the record, so what? Anyone who lives in L.A. and considers rainfall a problem is looking really hard for something to complain about—which pretty much sums up Davis's Los Angeles *oeuvre*. As if aware of this, Davis tends to use hyperbolic adjectives to deflect the reader's eye from the actual numbers: He refers, for example, to the "extreme storminess" and "extraordinary tornado-genesis" in L.A. due to El Niño. Look at the chart on his next page, though, and you see that the "extreme stormi-

ness" is a jump from five thunderstorm days a year to ten; and from no tornadoes to six. Our secret Kansas, indeed.

The most curious defense of Davis was in an *L.A. Weekly* cover story, run just as Westwater's critiques began to attract attention elsewhere. The story didn't even mention the brewing controversy. But it did contain the first public admission—in a strangely admiring context—that Davis tends to, well, make things up. The author of the *Weekly* story, Lewis MacAdams, a local expert on the L.A. River, relates how when Davis was writing a story about the river for the *Weekly* a few years earlier, Davis manufactured an interview with MacAdams, at a place MacAdams had never been, and claimed to have shown Davis a document MacAdams had never seen. MacAdams also quotes Davis saying—twice—that "I was stunned to find out that something I said turned out to be true." MacAdams offers this all-purpose defense of Davis: "Those who argue with his facts must still grapple with his argument."

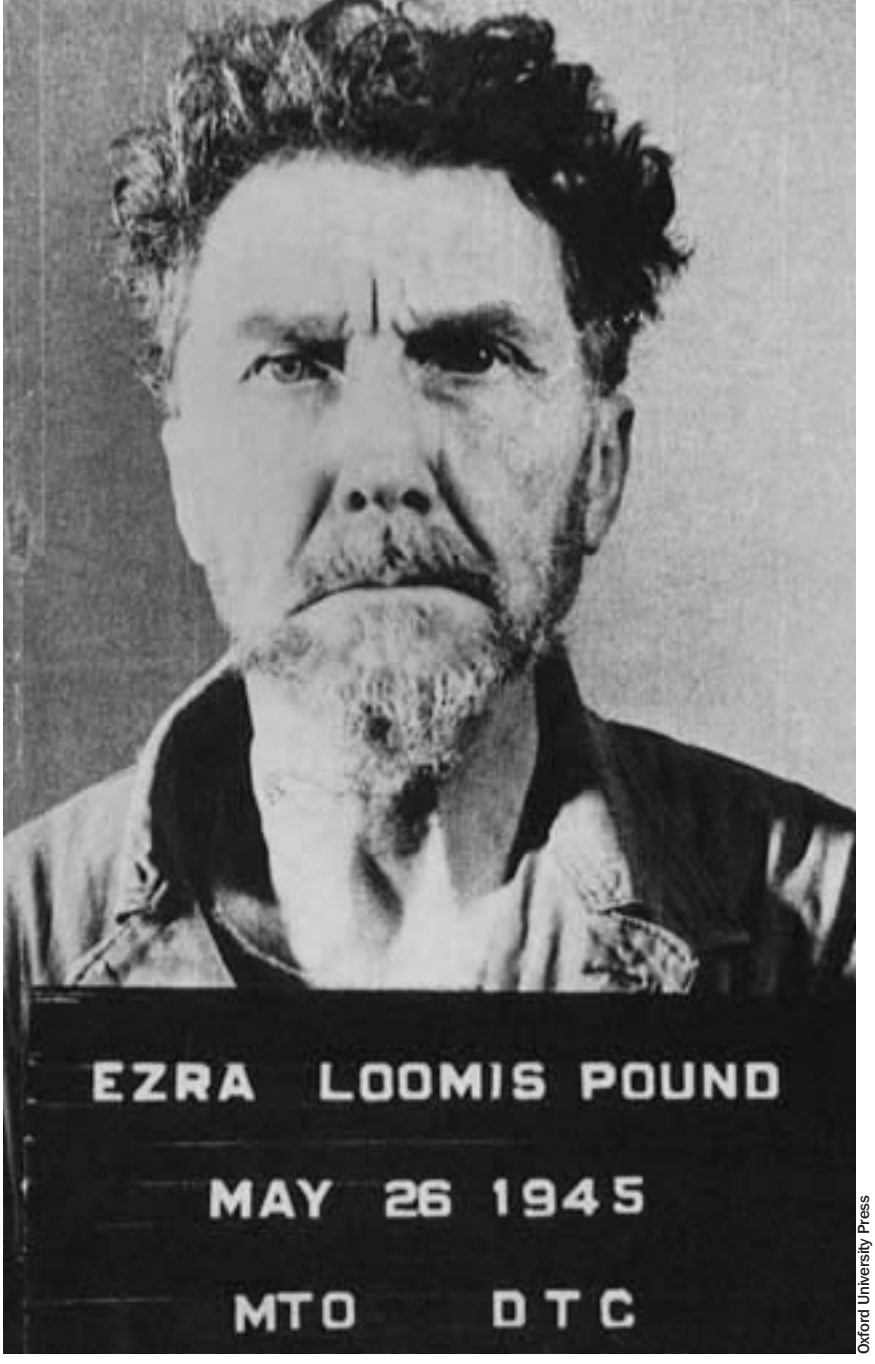


Kevin Chadwick

So Davis's defenders end up at what you might call the core doctrine of Menchuism: Even if the author's wrong, he's right. (A recent defense of Davis in the *Nation* by Jon Wiener also takes this tack.) But the truth is the opposite. While Davis certainly is often wrong, even if he were right, he'd still be wrong. That Los Angeles is prone to earthquakes and fires is news to no one and hasn't stopped the population from swinging up again after the early '90s recession. Since Davis never gives comparative risks for the horrors he describes—comparing, say, the ten mountain lion attacks this century in the entire state of California (only one in Los Angeles County, and none in the city), to which he devotes a hysterical 73-page chapter "Maneaters of the Sierra Madre," with the thousands of motorists who collide with deer in the Midwest and in eastern suburbs—it's impossible to take counsel from his fearmongering. It's a typical modern leftist maneuver. Lacking a believable vision of positive social change, Davis becomes a hysterical town crier warning of unrelieved doom and gloom everywhere he looks.

Remarkably, Davis also imagines that he is a defender of oppressed minorities against the depredations of wealthy whites. In fact, an L.A. that was a small, wealthy, white enclave would have less sprawl, and would suffer less earthquake, fire, and tornado damage, than the real Los Angeles. Davis praises early 20th-century planners who would have kept development tightly controlled—and excluded most of the more recent Hispanic arrivals. He condemns supersprawl without admitting that fighting sprawl means fighting the dreams of people who want to live in a city like Los Angeles—in most cases, with a pretty good understanding of the dangers involved. And a serious risk of being eaten by animals or killed by tornadoes isn't among them.

As I sat on Malibu beach recently reviewing my notes on this story, on a winter day with temperatures in the mid-70s, lovely swimmers frolicking in the surf, dozens of surfers gliding over the waves, a mellow Kool-Aid light on the hills, the newspapers filled with plummeting crime rates, it was clear that, the occasional racial conflict or growling cougar notwithstanding, L.A. is okay. But it doesn't take a genius to tell us that. ♦



Oxford University Press

The Poet as Con Artist

by Christopher Caldwell

The first time Ezra Pound ever flew on a plane was in November 1945, when he was brought from Italy to the United States to stand trial for treason. He was guarded for the forty-eight-hour trip by Lieutenant Colonel P.V. Holder, who described him as:

> an extremely well educated man with a wide divergence of knowledge and interest. His hobbies are the translating of ancient documents such as Pluto and Confucius . . . also he is a keen economist, although in my opinion his arguments are not entirely sound. . . . He is distinctly anti-Jewish and anti-Communistic. . . . He states that his whole defense was based upon the fact that his mental capacity and studies placed him in a sphere above that of ordinary mortals and that it would require a "superman" to conduct his defense.

Pound was in danger of facing a firing squad. Holder was returning to his family and a hero's welcome. Yet it was Pound who hopped antically about the aisles, marveling at Bermuda's "feldspar" waters, declaiming verses and political opinions. Holder, meanwhile, with the insecurity of one who didn't know his Pluto from his Plato, responded with a yokel's diffidence.

That same diffidence besets those who try today to explain why such an unambiguously hate-filled man occupies such an unambiguously central place in twentieth-century literature. William Carlos Williams may have been right when he claimed that Pound possessed "the most acute ear for metrical sequences, to the point of genius, that we have ever known." Despite its bric-a-brac construction, often bewildering syntax, and obscure allusions in two dozen languages, Pound's gigantic poem *The Cantos*—composed in pieces between 1915 and his death in 1972—stands high in the critical canon.

His career as impresario was even more commanding, taking him through English, French, Italian, and American culture, in each of which he was a major taste-maker. It crossed eight decades—Pound palled around with Henry James and listened to Bob Dylan and the Beatles with Allen Ginsberg. He was William Carlos Williams's earliest poetic friend. He took an inchoate project of T.S. Eliot's and molded it into *The Waste Land*, the century's central poem. He was the first champion of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. He steered William Butler Yeats into the mature idiom for which the Irishman is most remembered. He founded, almost as a publicity stunt, the "Imagist" school of American poetry, which is still studied in universities, and

Christopher Caldwell is senior writer for The Weekly Standard.

launched the careers of its leading practitioners, Amy Lowell and "H.D." (Hilda Doolittle, to whom he was briefly engaged). He helped start *Poetry*, the most influential American poetry magazine ever. He gave Wyndham Lewis the name "Vorticism" to describe the only important English modernist painting movement. Without him, asks Pound's greatest recent defender, the literary critic Hugh Kenner, "what literature would America have to show for this century?"

Yet for half that century, Pound practiced a politics—not in any flight of irrationality but in a sustained, premeditated, and unrepentant way—centered on the menace of "the ubiquitous Yidd." It filled huge sections of his most popular poems and was fairly well summed up by his plea on Mussolini's shortwave propaganda station at the height of World War II: "For God's sake, read the *Protocols*"—the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the turn-of-the-century forgery promoted by Nazis and other anti-Semites.

There is a mystery here: As society has grown steadily more appalled by this kind of politics, it has grown steadily more comfortable with according Pound a high place as both a poet and an influence on poetry. Most critics solve the contradiction by separating "the poetry from the politics." But that leaves us with a problem. Withdrawing the critical skepticism that usually attaches to the work and redirecting it toward the life has only worked to Pound's benefit. In an oblique way, and without any active anti-Semitism on anybody's part, the act of separating his bigotry from his poetry has led us to overvalue Ezra Pound as a poet.

I

Two new letter collections show Pound during his postwar confinement in Italy and at St. Elizabeths. The letters he exchanged with his wife Dorothy Shakespear Pound in 1945 and 1946 have long been known to scholars and mined by biographers. This edition of the letters, edited by Robert Spoo and Omar Pound (Dorothy's son), adds FBI files, U.S. government cables, and letters to Omar himself. The *Pisan Cantos* Pound was working on at the time were an autobiographical stocktaking, so the descriptions of his poetry in these letters provide an unusually full picture of everyone who passed through the first half of his life—with excellent biographies in the notes. A reader who wanted to learn about his life from primary sources could find no better place to start.

That life is both very American and not very American. In later self-mythologizing, Pound would make absurdly much of his having been born in an Idaho mining town. In fact, his parents were fairly polished, and Pound owed his frontier birth to his father's serving a youthful stint in the family mining business. Pound's paternal grandfather Thaddeus had been lieutenant governor of Wisconsin, served several terms in Congress, and was denied a seat in the Garfield cabinet only when J.G. Blaine objected to his live-in mistress. His mother's family, cousins of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, owned a posh New York boardinghouse. Pound grew up outside Philadelphia, where his father held an important job in the federal mint.

OMAR POUND AND ROBERT SPOO, eds.
Ezra and Dorothy Pound
Letters in Captivity, 1945-46
Oxford University Press, 398 pp., $35

DEMETRES P. TRYPHONOPOULOS AND LEON SURETTE, eds.
"I Cease Not to Yowl"
Ezra Pound's Letters to Olivia Rossetti Agresti
University of Illinois Press, 327 pp., $34.95

Friendless much of the time, drifting from the University of Pennsylvania to Hamilton College (where he took his degree), ignominiously fired from his first job as a French teacher at Wabash College in Indiana, Pound debarked in London in 1908 with a privately printed first poetry collection and a desire to turn poetry on its ear. Some would say the half-dozen volumes he wrote before the age of thirty-five made a start.

In 1921, Pound moved to Paris, declaring London corrupt—although the waning of his influence relative to T.S. Eliot's was surely as much to blame. He found Paris little better. While he dabbled in opera-writing and Dada and met most of the expatriates then crowding the city, his feel for French literature was shaky, and the poets there obstinately refused to take him seriously. By the time he left for Italy in 1925, his life was pivoting. He stopped writing short lyrics and poured all his output into *The Cantos*, a single narrative that would reach eight hundred pages by the time of his death. And he turned to fascism.

When war came, Pound agreed to broadcast pro-Mussolini propaganda to the United States—which would result in the treason charge on which he was held for months after the war in a succession of military jails, including the "gorilla cage" he describes in his *Pisan Cantos*. He avoided trial by pleading insanity. For twelve years he lived at St. Elizabeths Federal Hospital for the Insane in Washington. Prominent American writers—particularly Eliot, Robert Frost, Archibald MacLeish, and Ernest Hemingway—secured his release in 1958, arguing his continued incarceration was becoming a national embarrassment. The condition for his freedom was that he leave the country. He did so gladly, living in Rapallo and Venice until his death in 1972.

II

Almost the first thing Pound did when he arrived in London in 1908 was wangle an entrée to the salon of Yeats's sometime lover Olivia Shakespear. This was Pound's introduction to the society of poets, and he seemed inclined to pursue a courtship with the much older Olivia. But it was her daughter Dorothy who fell in love. Partly through inertia, partly through familial pressure, Pound wound up marrying her in 1914. Dorothy's income of £150 a year (considerably more than Eliot's starting salary at Lloyd's bank) can hardly have been a disincentive. For all his later railing against "usury," Pound well understood the artistic uses to which compound interest could be put.

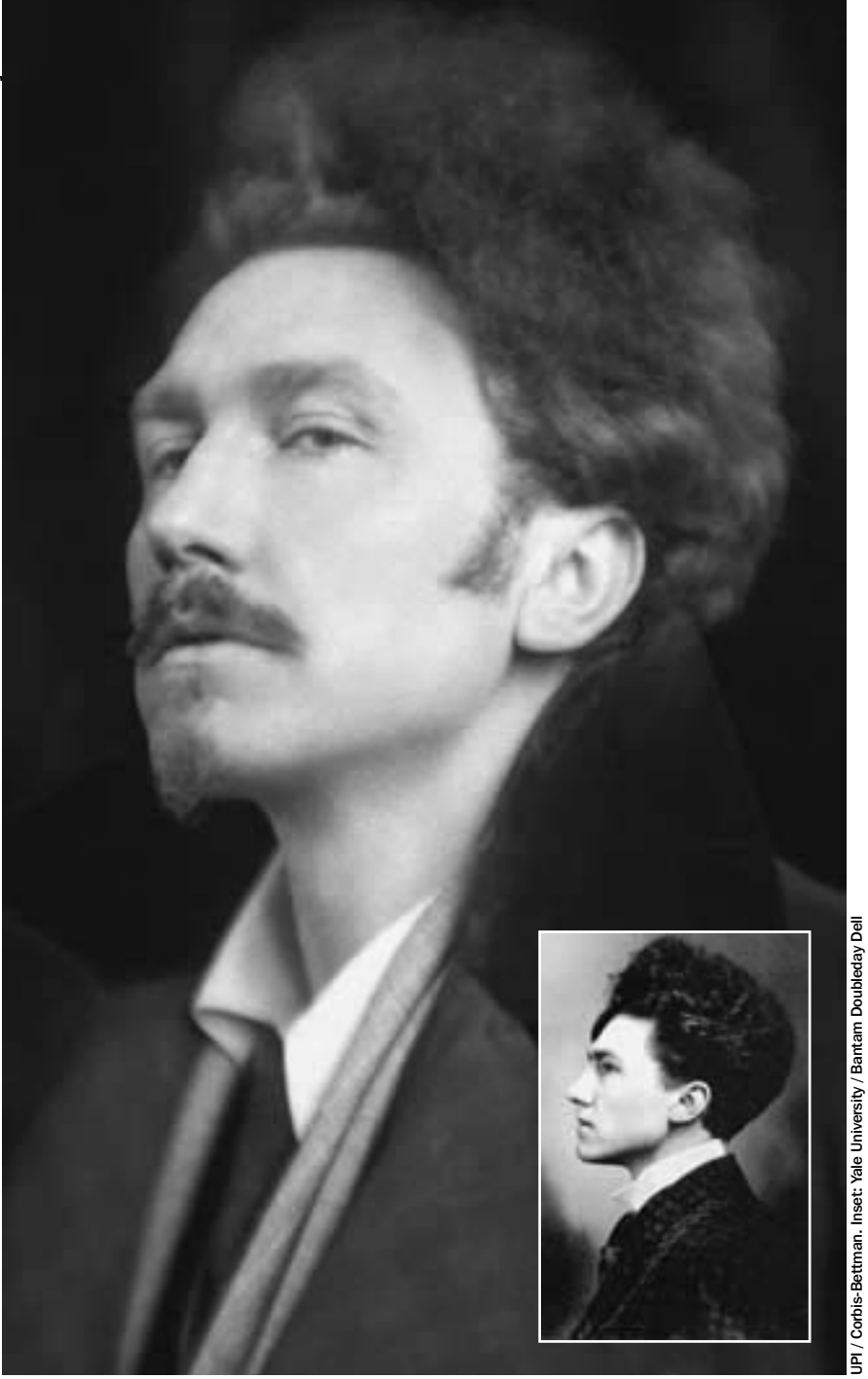
There was always a resonating intellectual sympathy between Dorothy and Ezra—she even adopted his epistolary

tics, like "yr" for yours and "yesty" for yesterday—though their amatory passions lay elsewhere. In 1925, just settled in Italy, Ezra fathered a daughter by his lifelong mistress, the American violinist Olga Rudge. Dorothy fled to Egypt, where she herself wound up pregnant with Omar. (Olga finally won the battle for Pound's affections. Pound moved into her Venice apartment in 1962 and spent the last decade of his life with her; Dorothy lasted out the same decade in the company of her cleaning ladies.)

In their letters from 1945 and 1946, Dorothy keeps Ezra posted on the doings of his eighty-six-year-old mother, then living out her old age in Rapallo, and describes her own efforts to reclaim her American citizenship, which had "lapsed" during the war. They share their reading: for her, Joseph Conrad ("such a relief—*no* women!") and Francis Bacon (the *Novum Organum*, although Pound himself inclined more to Bacon's essay on usury); for him, Charles Beard, Confucius, and the Washington tabloids. Pound asks her to look up various Confucian ideograms and to make financial arrangements for his "other" family.

Dorothy's letters also contain the news that Fascists all over Europe, including many of Pound's colleagues, were being put to death by their outraged countrymen. October: "So Laval is gone the way of all flesh." November: "Paresce shot." But for the grace of his American passport, Pound's decades-long descent into Fascist politics might have ended the same way.

That descent began in 1919 when he met Major Clifford Hugh Douglas at the offices of London's *New Age*. Douglas was a civil engineer and amateur economist who sought to explain why war so often creates economic booms. His answer—that, since output gets diverted into capital goods, workers never get enough in wages to buy back the products they make—was not entirely loopy. But it became so in the hands of Pound. He combined Douglas's social-credit theories with his own esoteric readings on money to create a critique of "usury"—which, in turn, came to mean a cabal of Jewish financiers *starting* wars for profit. Pound took to reading literature for usury-consciousness the way adolescents do for purple passages. ("Look up Jas Hilton whose 'Random Harvest' mentions money ONCE," he writes from Pisa.) He even began devoting his poetry to social-credit theories: Canto 38, for example, which lays out Douglas's "A + B Theorem" at great length. "Put your book aside," he urged the poet Louis Zukofsky. "Take up Social Credit."



UPI / Corbis-Bettman. Inset: Yale University / Bantam Doubleday Dell

Pound as literary impresario, 1918, and, inset, shortly after his arrival in London, 1909.

Pound thought Mussolini could be trusted to institute social-credit policies. On January 30, 1933 (coincidentally, the day Hitler took power in Germany), he got an audience with Mussolini on the pretext he could arrange favorable coverage of the regime in the American press. The two talked for thirty minutes, the dictator leafing through Pound's *Draft of XXX Cantos* and pronouncing it *divertente*. Pound was proud of that: While never a member of the Fascist party, he thought Mussolini not just a statesman but an "artist." As Humphrey Carpenter notes in his masterful Pound biography, *A Serious Character*:

> By looking at the dictator in this fashion, he had found a way of coping with the fact that the man *was* a dictator. If he was an artist, then obviously he had the right to do as he saw fit.

Pound went on to write two books about Mussolini—*ABC of Economics* and *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*—and offered, when war loomed, to talk up Italian Fascism on short-wave radio.

Pound had always been race-conscious. In 1917, he wrote of a visit to New York,

> Unfortunately the turmoil of yidds, letts, finns, esthonians, cravats, niberians, algerians, sweeping along Eighth Avenue in the splendour of their vigorous unwashed animality will not help us.

But as time went on, Pound developed a race *hobby* that made such sallies look jolly. He was, for instance, fascinated by circumcision, speculating that it warped the Jewish mind. To William Carlos Williams he wrote in 1936 that "history is written and character is made by whether and HOW the male foreskin produces an effect of glorious sunrise or of annoyance in slippin backward." He dismissed rumors that Ford Madox Ford had had a Jewish ancestor on the grounds that Ford "could not have enjoyed digging in the ground the way he did if he had any Jewish blood."

This race-preoccupation mixed badly with the Italian radio broadcasts Pound began in the summer of 1940 and continued until Mussolini's arrest in July 1943. Four times weekly he would greet listeners: "Europe calling, Ezra Pound speaking." Sometimes he did bitter comedic routines, acting a character he called "American Imperialist," or airing a parodic "News from Nowhere." Occasionally he discussed poetry. But for the most part the broadcasts were devoted to warning his countrymen about the machinations of "high kikery":

> You have got to learn a little, at least a little, about the history of your allies. About Jew-ruin'd England. About the wreckage of France, wrecked under yidd control. Lousy with kikes.

Their minions—the "aryo-kikes"—were everywhere, from the American president "Franklin D. Frankfurter Jewsfeld" to the Chinese leader "Chiang Kike Chek." Pound subscribed to the Nazi *News from Germany* throughout the war and after the fall of Mussolini made contact with the Nazis' puppet government to ask if he could be of use. As he explained in a May 1942 broadcast, "Hitler, having seen the Jew puke in the German democracy, was out for responsibility."

If Pound's contemporaries were slow to condemn him as evil, it might be because his evil was always being outrun by his ridiculousness. "Treason is a little too serious and a little too dignified a crime," said Archibald MacLeish, "for a man who has made such an incredible ass of himself and accomplished so little in the process."

Paris, 1920

III

Upon his return to America on November 18, 1945, to face trial, his Hamilton College classmate Elihu Root recommended to Pound the lawyer Lloyd Stryker (another classmate, who would later defend Alger Hiss at his first perjury trial). But, on the advice of his publisher, James Laughlin, Pound chose Julien Cornell for his defense instead.

Now the question arose of *how* to defend him. Pound had an idea. Before each of his broadcasts, an announcer had read a disclaimer of Pound's own composing: "He will not be asked to say anything contrary to his conscience or contrary to his duties as an American citizen." He therefore insisted that he could not be tried for treason since he had been sending not Axis propaganda but "MY OWN stuff."

This insistence was foolish, since claiming coercion would have been his best avenue of legal escape. Dorothy's letters fed her husband's bad judgment. She even saw her lawyer "on the point that you were sending yr. *own stuff*. I think its v. important."

The United States would, in the end, deal lightly with its citizens who made hostile broadcasts. Iva d'Aquino, the Japanese propagandist known as "Tokyo Rose," got only ten years. (The comparison of her sentence with Pound's would work in his favor when poets began agitating for his release.) But no one knew that at the time, and the climate among American allies had been anything but lenient. The British Nazi broadcasters John Amery and William Joyce ("Lord Haw-Haw," with whom Pound had been in close contact throughout the war) were hanged. In France, Pierre Laval went the way of all flesh and Marshal Pétain was spared execution only because of his age—making a big impression on Pound, if we are to believe Canto 79: *And Pétain not to be murdered 14 to 13 / after six hours' discussion.*

A more telling parallel was the case of Robert Brasillach, the French novelist whose writings in *Je suis partout* were

presented as "pro-French." They just happened to urge a Frenchness that involved collaboration with the occupying Germans and wholesale massacres of Jews. When Brasillach was executed in early 1945, despite strenuous objections and petition-signings from much of France's literary class, a precedent had been set that neatly bundled treason, propaganda, and crimes against humanity—terrible news for Pound. Then, the week he arrived in Washington, the Nuremberg trials began. Under the circumstances, Julien Cornell decided his client's best bet was to get himself declared insane.

The idea that Pound might be out of his mind didn't come from nowhere. One of his Italian colleagues had found his broadcasts so confused and disjointed that he worried Pound might be broadcasting in code. In his often-iterated wish to conduct his own defense—a wish that Dorothy devoted much of her correspondence to contravening—he sounded the same Superman note that he did on the plane to Lieutenant Colonel Holder. "I favour a defender who has written a life of J. Adams and translated Confucius," Pound wrote his son. "Otherwise how CAN he know what it is about?"

His self-aggrandizement was extraordinary. While still captive in Genoa, he asserted that his knowledge of Confucius would allow him to settle the war in the Pacific. He asked the FBI agent who was interrogating him to take a telegram:

> PRESIDENT TRUMAN, WASHINGTON. BEG YOU CABLE ME MINIMUM TERMS JUST PEACE JAPAN. LET ME NEGOTIATE VIA JAPANESE EMBASSY RECENTLY ACCREDITED ITALIAN SOCIAL REPUBLIC, LAGO DI GARDA. FEMOLOSAS, EXECUTOR AND TRANSLATOR OF CONFUCIUS, CAN WHAT VIOLENCE CANNOT. CHINA ALSO WILL OBEY VOICE OF CONFUCIUS. EZRA POUND.

He was indignant when told it could not be sent.

Even Pound's Confucian scholarship is evidence of his disconnection. There is surely something out of whack about a person who spends half his prodigious energies ranting about his race obsession and the other half translating (from a language he doesn't actually speak) classic works about balance, modesty, moderation, and honor. Pound came to think Mussolini's problem was that he had not read enough of (Pound's) Confucius:

> Poor old Benito errd all right. I was assured he received first edition of this confucian book, but when his secretary acknowledged the second edition (italian without the chinese text) it was too late.

Hitler, too, would have benefited from more Confucius—i.e., more Pound—and as the war ended, the poet proved willing to work his magic with Stalin as well. He told a visiting newsman in the first days of his Washington confinement that he had tried to travel overland to Moscow "where he hoped to persuade 'Uncle Joe' that the American Constitution was a superior instrument to the Soviet Constitution."

Paris, 1921

Princeton University / Bantam Doubleday Dell; previous page: Culver Pictures / Bantam Doubleday Dell

Was it a mistake to plead insanity? That begs the question of Pound's mental health. Four doctors testified that he *was* insane. But Pound never, in his twelve years at St. Elizabeths, received any treatment—not a pill, not a minute of therapy or psychoanalysis. His lawyer Cornell, who arranged the diagnosis, wrote to Dorothy that "a state which would, no doubt, appear to you to be normal, is defined by doctors as paranoid in character, to an extent which impairs your husband's judgment of his predicament and renders him unable to properly defend himself." One can call him insane or evil, but there's no getting around the fact that the mental patient Ezra Pound and the raving anti-Semite Ezra Pound *are* the poet Ezra Pound.

The things that kept him off the stand are the stuff of his poetry.

IV

The critic Hugh Kenner has sought to excuse Pound's anti-Jewish ravings on the grounds that he absorbed from Dorothy a benign British upper-crust anti-Semitism:

> One began by excluding whole groups: Catholics, Jews, Americans, the uneducated, tradespeople, provincials. One then readmitted individuals one by one. . . . When Jews began to enter [Pound's] field of attention, it was easier than it should have been for him to think of them *en bloc.*

One does find exactly this type of discrimination in Dorothy's letters: "The Brits *are* an unpleasant lot," she says, "except ones friends!" But the publisher James Laughlin claimed of Dorothy that, when talk turned to the Jews, there would be "a gleam in her eye," and the letters bear that out, too. Of a German professor she met, she writes: "I suppose there are newrich or oldusury in the show: haven't yet discovered." In later life, Pound sought to repair to the "milder" anti-Semitic tradition Kenner postulates, telling Allen Ginsberg in 1969, "The worst mistake I made was that stupid, suburban prejudice of anti-Semitism." (Some suburb

that must have been.) But while the distinction between ethnocentric exclusivity and maniacal hatred is a meaningful one, Pound is unequivocally on the wrong side of it.

The editors of the newly published collection "*I Cease Not to Yowl*" describe Pound's letters to Olivia Rossetti Agresti as "the most frank expression we have of Pound's political, religious, and racial views during the years 1937 to 1959." (More accurately, from 1947 to 1959, since only five short letters predate his arrest.) They show Pound every bit as vehement in his hatreds as before the war. More vehement, even, since by now he had added the grievance that "obviously," as he wrote Archibald MacLeish, "it is kikes keeping me in here."

If these letters are *about* anything, they're about Jews—or "mesopotamians," as Pound took to calling them. In letter after letter, the now long-dead FDR appears as "Oozenstein," "Oozenstink," "the Ooze," "Roosenstein," "Jewzfeld," "Goosenstein." So does "Weinstein" Churchill.

A reading of *Hitler's Secret Conversations* in 1953 leads Pound to a reassessment: Hitler's problem, aside from his ignorance of Confucius, was that he was *too Jewish*:

> The Hitler Conversations very lucid re/ money/ unfortunately he was bit by dirty jew mania for World DOminion, as yu used to point out/ this WORST of German diseases was got from yr/ idiolized and filthy biblical bastards. Adolf clear on the baccillus of kikism/ that is on nearly all the other poisons. but failed to get a vaccine against that.

Agresti had herself broadcast propaganda for Mussolini, but she had been horrified at Pound's anti-Semitism even during the war and never considered Hitler anything but a "homicidal maniac." Agresti was the daughter of the British anarchist William Michael Rossetti, and as such the niece of the poets Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti as well as the cousin of Pound's friend Ford Madox Ford. She traveled in anarchist circles in Europe and America, helped found a number of international organizations, and embraced Catholicism in middle age.

Agresti saw the world as "lining up for one great struggle, that between Marxian materialism which leads to slavery . . . and [the] Christian conception of the supreme value of human personality and the sacred duty of respecting it." She may have shown a jaw-dropping lack of perspicacity in having thought that Mussolini would protect her and her Catholicism from the twentieth century's materialism, and considerable naiveté in assuming that Catholic moral reasoning could show Pound the error of his ways. She may also have let friendship override politics to an absurd degree in praising Pound as "an all too rare example of fearless courage and great dignity during all these eleven years of most unjust treatment." Yet she appears, in the handful of letters that find their way into this correspondence, as a gentle and decent person—never trimming her criticism of Pound's inanities and always remonstrating with him on his anti-Semitism.

Pound's wife, Dorothy

Oxford University Press

Pound's mistress, Olga

Yale University / Bantam Doubleday Dell

Her forbearance only goaded Pound into ever more extravagant denunciations:

> Boris sez yu giv a MAGnificent whoop at Cuma/ but seems to think you have a blind eye for the bastids that Xified yr Svr. namely the Monds, Morgenthaus, Rothschilds and other filth of the mesopotamian mud flats. . . . Pity the pore uncawnshus "carrier" whether it be of bubonics, tubercles or the kikerian state of mind, the oily and spherical/ the so accurately defined by Wm Shx/etc. Not that the chew shd/ be prejudged/ he shd/ simply be watched for racial symptoms, and not allowed to infect the mind of the non-kike. Genocide? unnecessary. Bar them from three professions.

Oddly, neither of these Mussolini fans sounds like an Italian Fascist. Agresti resembles Whittaker Chambers; Pound can be called, with no exaggeration whatsoever, a Nazi.

And an unrepentant one. "Autarchy was functioning," Pound wails to Agresti. "One SLIP. war. does not invalidate benefits of autarchic drive." Even before the end of 1945, enthusiastic visitors were beginning to arrive at St. Elizabeths, mostly poets and poetry groupies (the females appear to have kept Pound serviced sexually), but also a clutch of political epigones. Pound backed the young neo-Nazi John Kasper as he set up White Citizens' Councils with the Ku Klux Klan and George Lincoln Rockwell. Kasper, who merits the comradely tag of "Der Kasperl" from Pound, slavishly aped not only Pound's ideas but also his prose mannerisms, lauding American Nazis who "know what is fact and what ain't."

It was a partnership of commiseration. As Pound wrote Agresti in 1955: "Kasper has ascertained what I had long deduced, that our greatest historian Del Mar was a kike." And in 1956: "Kasper acquitted of sedition/ public cheers. . . . None of the kikecution witnesses stood up under cross Xam. At least got a little

publicity for the NAACP being run by kikes not coons." The relationship would endanger Pound's release in 1958.

V

A life like this has implications for the poetry. Canto 74 reads:

> *the yidd is a stimulant, and the goyim are cattle*
> *in gt proportion and go to saleable slaughter*
> *with the maximum of*
> *docility*

Hugh Kenner's defense that "one would think it evident that the group who ought to feel insulted are the goyim" is preposterous, particularly in light of the Agresti letters. One must take Pound as an evil anti-Semite or not take him at all.

The tendency of the poetry-reading public has been to *take* him. What did he achieve as a poet that makes us so willing to honor a Nazi?

A half-century ago, with large parts of *The Cantos* already in print, the critical jury seemed to have reached a verdict: Pound's poetry was tightly yoked to Pound's life, and the poetry was for the most part second-rate. His gifts as an impresario of poetry were, by universal agreement, formidable. According to the Harvard scholar F.O. Matthiessen:

> One must never forget his important role in the poetic renaissance of thirty years ago. That importance may finally have consisted more in his critical stimulus and instigation than in his own work.

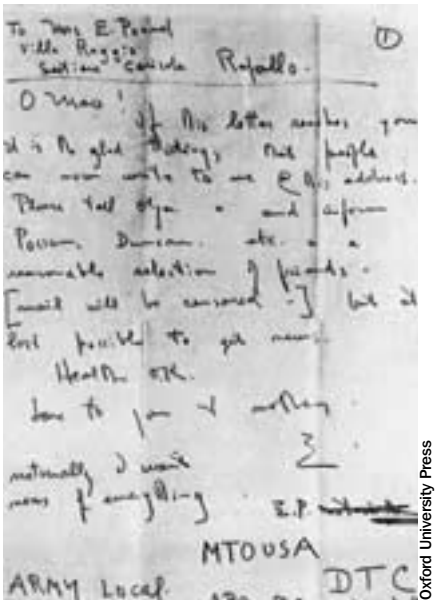
T.S. Eliot added that Pound's technical virtuosity is an "inexhaustible reference book of verse form. There is, in fact, no one else to study." But Eliot largely concurred in Matthiessen's assessment, insisting that Pound be judged on "his total work for literature." Malcolm Cowley was typical in calling the verse "imposing [but] spoiled like the man himself by arrogance, crotchets, self-indulgence, obsessive hatreds, contempt for ordinary persons, the inability to see the world in motion."

Central to this low regard for the poetry was the widely held belief that Pound—in his poems as in his life—was an obscurantist and a poseur. The cliché about modern poetry is that its deliberate difficulty both reflects the disjunctions of twentieth-century life and demands the attention from readers necessary if poetry is to survive. Pound preached both doctrines, of course, but his contemporaries felt he was up to something else as well. Walter de la Mare dismissed his early *Canzoni* as "affectation combined with pedantry." Eliot complained about passages in *The Cantos* that are "very opaque: they read as if the author was so irritated with his readers for not knowing all about anybody so important as [Martin] Van Buren, that he refused to enlighten them."

What makes this showing off particularly galling is that Pound himself often knew little about Van Buren (or whatever else he was writing about) until he boned up. After reading the "Adams" Cantos, Archibald MacLeish

World Wide Photos / Bantam Doubleday Dell

Pound outside the hotel where he stayed in Rome while making his broadcasts from 1941-1943.



Oxford University Press

Pound under American military arrest in May 1945, and a letter to Dorothy that September.

wrote Hemingway that he was disturbed at Pound's "conviction that he has read American history—which the facts don't seem to support."

A lot of people had this impression. The poet Richard Aldington said: "He has tasted an enormous number of books, yet I doubt if he has ever read one with concentration from cover to cover." After hearing Pound sing the praises of the German anthropologist Leo Frobenius, the classicist Huntington Cairns sought for weeks to get a single scrap of concrete information and came to the conclusion that Pound had never actually read Frobenius. To James Joyce, who had mailed him a manuscript of *Ulysses*, Pound wrote: "I think your novel is damn fine stuff." But Pound, for all his enthusiasm about promoting *Ulysses*, never discussed it in any detail, and Joyce later came to doubt Pound had ever read it.

This pseudery is no mere mask or persona. In light of what we now know about Pound, his tics look like canny strategies for hiding an essential charlatanism. Take the table manners that horrified London: Pound affected not to care about them, in the interest of being Bohemian and *épatant*—at one dinner party he slowly ate a floral centerpiece—but at least some of his hosts perceived that his behavior was a way of avoiding *un*-intentional gaffes.

We should view the wacky letters Pound wrote throughout his life—the scribbles, annoying crackerbarrelisms, and indecipherable abbreviations—the same way. "Your incomprehensible scrawls are a torture to me," Ford Madox Ford wrote him. Yeats asked, "I wonder if you could bring yourself to tell me what you want in old-fashioned English?"

Like Pound's outrageous manners, his bombastic letters disguise an inability—in this case, to spell. This inability is undisguisable in the official letters he wrote to the "Attourney General" during his confinement, but it was present throughout his life, in all languages: "ammong" for among, "prologomena" for prolegomena, "justo prezzo" for *giusto prezzo*, "Santiana" for Santayana, "Brussles" for Brussels, "Teopile" for Théophile. It would seem a failing not worth mentioning—plenty of writers, from F. Scott Fitzgerald to Evelyn Waugh, have been atrocious spellers—had not Pound gone to such absurd lengths to hide it.

In this same category of fendings-off of scrutiny fall the sophomoric puns that pepper his letters: "Nude Erections" for New Directions (his publishers), "yourpeeing" for European, "Harry-stop-her-knees" for Aristophanes, and the "slopagandists" who praise the "bank (or stank) of England."

What's most striking about the newly published letters to Agresti is that they are *more* obscure—the language *more* private—than those to his wife. Pound's public language is more private than his private language. The letters Pound wrote Agresti—

> have I got to start on YOU, to keep even YOU from swallowing the god damned lies of the same god damned liars who lied re/ Mus and Adolph. There is no witch hunt. They lie about McCarthy, the press in the hands of dirty jews and worse goyim.

—differ little from large chunks of the poem Pound meant to stand as the greatest epic since Dante:

Democracies electing their sewage
till there is no clear thought about holiness
a dung flow from 1913
and, in this, their kikery functioned, Marx, Freud
and the american beaneries.

If the Agresti letters seem an exercise in bullying and mystification—as they inescapably do—then we have no choice but to view the published poetry as a similar exercise, particularly when Pound grows heated and intolerant.

VI

For Pound more than for other poets, the quality of the work is dependent on the quality of the person. And yet, when one gets past the evasions and

looks for the person, one doesn't find much. This was a failing to which his contemporaries caught on early. Reviewing Pound's first British volume, Edward Thomas found beneath the "turbulent opacity of his peculiarities . . . very nearly nothing at all." Wyndham Lewis, looking back on their London days, admitted a tremendous talent but little else: "Pound is that curious thing, a person without a trace of originality of any sort. . . . Yet when he can get into the skin of somebody else . . . he becomes a lion or a lynx on the spot."

The greatest lines from his *Pisan Cantos* suffice to show that Pound at his most lynxlike is an extraordinary poetic animal indeed:

The ant's a centaur in his dragon world.
Pull down thy vanity, it is not man
Made courage, or made order, or made grace,
Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down.
Learn of the green world what can be thy place
In scaled invention or true artistry,
Pull down thy vanity,
Paquin pull down!
The green casque has outdone thy eloquence
"Master thyself, then others shall thee beare"
Pull down thy vanity
Thou art a beaten dog beneath the hail,
A swollen magpie in a fitful sun,
Half black half white
Nor knowst'ou wing from tail
Pull down thy vanity
How mean thy hates
Fostered in falsity,
Pull down thy vanity
Rathe to destroy, niggard in charity,
Pull down thy vanity,
I say pull down.

Twentieth-century poetry offers nothing more metrically dazzling than this—and little more moving. But much of its ability to move us comes from misreading it as a Poundian act of contrition, when in fact it's an accusation. The lines—unfortunately—continue:

But to have done instead of not doing
this is not vanity
To have, with decency, knocked
That a Blunt should open
To have gathered from the air a live tradition
or from a fine old eye the unconquered flame
This is not vanity.
Here error is all in the not done,
all in the diffidence that faltered.

The message is directed at us, not himself: "*You* pull down *your* vanity." It goes a long way towards wrecking what came before. We're in the presence not of a moral conversion but of a master ventriloquist with a lot of Ecclesiastes and Chaucer rattling around in his head.

The emptiness, the lack of identity, that Thomas and Lewis saw in the young Pound is not necessarily a failing. Goodness or badness rests in what one does to fill that emptiness, and poetry was Pound's arena—maybe his only one—for doing that. If he chose evil, how can that not vitiate the poetry? The more so since there is real opportunism here. Pound's artistry conceals that a gathering up of scraps is all the vision he has to offer. But it also aims at providing a sort of poetic asylum that would place his evil beyond moral scrutiny. In Pound, the modernist obscurantism and the anti-Semitism have the same source and are effected by the same means.

That's why we must view his later public self-flagellation with suspicion. To Daniel Cory, his expatriate neighbor in Rapallo, Pound said of *The Cantos* in 1966: "I picked out this and that thing that interested me, and then jumbled them into a bag. But that's not the way to make a *work of art*." Leonard Doob of Yale, who edited the broadcasts for publication, reported of a 1961 visit to Pound in Venice: "He grabbed hold of my shoulders, stared straight into my eyes and said: 'But don't you see? There was something rotten behind it all.' There were tears in his eyes and he looked utterly tortured." Donald Hall remarked after a three-day interview for the *Paris Review*: "Gradually I understood that he doubted the value of everything that he had done in his life."

Pound clearly had second thoughts about his ragbag, archive-plundering style of composition. Yet he did not explicitly renounce his hatreds, and we have no evidence that he ever reassessed them—only that he woke up to the damage they might do his poetic reputation. In 1959, he sent the embat-

tled Kasper a letter warning, "Antisemitism is a card in the enemy program, don't play it. they RELY on your playing it." Far from being nuttily unconcerned with his politics, far from hiding in his "separate" poetic sphere, Pound was cannily strategizing. As he insists at one point to Agresti: "Gt mistake not to separate the CONSTRUCTIVE parts of heretical or innovative writers from their fantasies." This has the ring of a preemptive strike against the harsh judgment of posterity, for Pound understood far better than any of his later critics how tightly his poetry was linked to politics. He had, after all, done the linking himself.

VII

This brings us to a disquieting paradox: In the heyday of political correctness, Pound's critical star has risen even while information about his intolerance has grown, to the point where he is now considered in the very top rank of American poets.

It is not that we ignore that Pound was a Hitlerite; it's that critics have eagerly tried to separate the bad man from the good poet. The Pound critic Christine Brooke-Rose, for example, asks: "Do we bother much now whether Agrippa d'Aubigné, the baroque religious poet, was on the Protestant or the Catholic side, except for points of exegesis?"

It's a foolish question. If d'Aubigné's affiliations don't matter, it is only because we don't read him. Brooke-Rose's flippancy leads us down the road at the end of which we resolve our ambiguities about what we want out of poetry by ceasing to read it. But more to the point, little as his religious affiliations matter to us, Agrippa d'Aubigné was a poet in the first place because *he* knew what side he was on.

And so did Pound. As Dorothy typed up the jottings Ezra had sent her from his Pisan confinement, she wrote: "Of course all these last, apparently, scraps, of cantos, are your self, the memories that make up yr. person." The subject of *The Cantos* is Ezra Pound. *The Cantos* are his *Apologia pro vita sua*. And anti-Semitism is a wellspring for the poetry he wrote throughout his life—maybe the primary wellspring, for in all his writing it is the only motive principle never hedged about, encrypted, bundled with allusions, or mystified with intentional disjunctions of syntax: *Let us be done with Jews and Jobbery, / Let us SPIT on those who fawn on the JEWS for their money.*

This kind of anti-Semitism is in poetic terms just like every other thing

World Wide Photos / Bantam Doubleday Dell

A Fascist salute after his release in 1958.

in Pound's poetry: It is one of the arrows in his quiver of obscurantism, meant to bully the reader away from a discovery of the poet's essential shallowness. Pound could have picked another obsession for this purpose. (He seemed tempted for a while by sex.) *But he didn't*. Pound made a choice, and the problem is not merely that the obsession he chose renders the poems offensive—it's also that that obsession is not much to build a poetry around. Flimsiness, crassness, and intellectual laziness are what make so much of his poetry flop. Deep down, everyone who has read Pound knows this. How have we lost sight of it?

The controversy over the 1949 Bollingen Prize was both the springboard for the growth in Pound's reputation and a bleak dress rehearsal for the way arguments about Pound have *failed* to rage ever since. In a weak year, with a gobbet of William Carlos Williams's *Paterson* the only competition, Pound's *Pisan Cantos*, by eight votes to three, won the award just established by the Library of Congress.

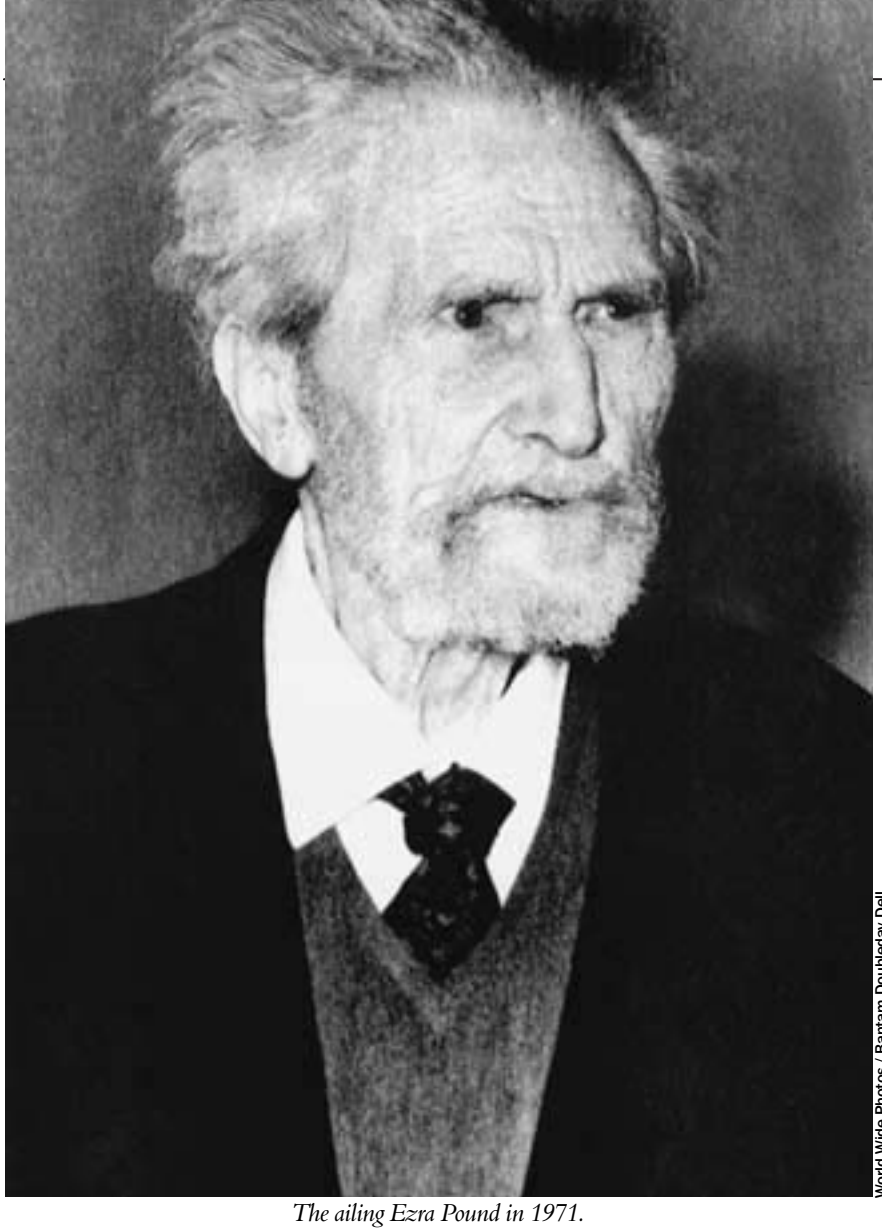
The pro-Pound faction, which included W.H. Auden, Robert Lowell, Allen Tate, and T.S. Eliot, seem to have viewed the award as a battle between the philistines and gentlemen backing art for art's sake. There's a worthwhile argument to be had here about whether poetry should be judged via esthetic reasoning from the inside out, or via moral reasoning from the outside in.

The voters for Pound, however, defied logic by concluding that he had so little control of his mental faculties that the government could not try him for treason, but such command of his poetic ones that the government should shower him with money and honor. This reasoning implies a poetry that was so important that it answered to no authorities save those set up by poets—and so trivial that no account needed to be taken of Pound's services to an ideology under which people had been exterminated just four years earlier.

The Library of Congress fellows who voted against Pound—the poets Karl Shapiro, Conrad Aiken, and Katherine Garrison Chapin—were not any more astute about recognizing the Pound problem. According to Shapiro,

> My first and more crucial reason was that I am a Jew and cannot honor antisemites. My second reason I stated in a report which was circulated among the fellows: "I voted against Pound in the belief that the poet's political and moral philosophy ultimately vitiates his poetry and lowers its standards as literary work."

While either would be a defensible reason on its own, taken together they undermine one another. The second should suffice—that it was morally indefensible to give the prize to an anti-Semite. When combined with the first, though, it opened the door to an unproductive political correctness. By asserting that he voted against Pound because "I am a Jew," Shapiro implied that morality requires an aggrieved interest group that exists, by definition, outside of poetry in the "other" realm of politics.



World Wide Photos / Bantam Doubleday Dell

The ailing Ezra Pound in 1971.

This was Pound's opening. It was F.R. Leavis who realized most astutely that, in the long run, setting up such a duality between a "political" and an "esthetic" Pound could only lead us to overvalue him drastically as a poet:

> Today it is assumed that if one withholds one's admiration from the *Pisan Cantos*, it must be because one's dislike of the Fascism and anti-Semitism in what Pound says . . . prevents one from recognizing the beauty and genius of the saying. But how boring that famous versification actually is—boring with the emptiness of the egotism it thrusts on us. A poet's creativity can hardly be a matter of mere versification; there is no profound creative impulse at all for Pound's technical skill to serve.

With modern Pound readers locked in a critical doublethink—separating the poems from the man's attitudes, even though the poems are about *nothing but* the man's attitudes—a great deal depends on our being able to recover this earlier, wiser way of reading Pound.

VIII

The poet Charles Olson, who visited Pound over his first few weeks in St. Elizabeths before losing patience with his racist ranting, found him "terribly American, insecure. . . . He does not seem . . . to have inhabited his own experience." Between the damnable choice Pound made to fill that emptiness and his Americanness, there is a link.

Pound was fond of passing off his crotchetyness as American. But his fellow literary expatriate Margaret Anderson stressed, "Ezra's agitation was not of the type to which we were accustomed in America." What Pound did have was the ability to play American insecurities like a fiddle. He understood the American fear of being thought "hokey" or provincial or philistine, because he had that fear in spades. He *was* provincial. The yellow overcoat and earring he wore during his early time in London struck his contemporaries as resembling nothing so much as the costume of a dandified "poet" from the Midwestern dance halls of the 1870s. Even his egomaniacal offers to settle the war in Japan have the ring of those back-of-a-magazine ads offering to "unlock the mysteries of the Orient."

This Americanness was an opening for generosity towards his fellow countrymen—an opening that Pound, as a poetic promoter, frequently took. But more often, Pound used his insight into American diffidence as a means to self-aggrandizement, bullying, and con artistry. The rhetoric of his 1912 "To Whistler, American" (*You and Abe Lincoln from that mass of dolts / Show us there's chance at least of winning through.*) was no mere poetic stance. To Harriet Monroe, the energetic Chicagoan who founded *Poetry* magazine and paid his rent for years, he sold his dashed-off and pornographic "Contemporania" by insisting it was "your chance to be modern." When Monroe bridled at even racier stuff, Pound replied:

> These fools don't KNOW anything and at the bottom of their wormy souls they know they don't and their name is legion and if once they learn that we do know and that we are "in" first, they'll come to us to get all their thinking done for them and in the end the greasy vulgus will be directed by us.

Pound turned out to be right. Americans proved willing to cut an outrageous amount of slack to an intellectual they didn't understand or like—and to effect a separation between his politics and his poetry that has no basis in common sense. This is the Tocquevillian horror: a culture that, lacking confidence, looks imitatively to the next class up and creates a domino effect of amoral conformism. Pound's evil is a standing invitation to prove we care about "the arts" more than we care about something so crass as *what someone says*—an invitation, in other words, to prove how chic we are.

And we continue to accept it. ♦

BUSH FOR PRESIDENT 2000

Exploratory Committee

"Victory is Inevitable: What Are You Going to Do About It?"

Dear Policy Person,

WELCOME TO AUSTIN! The governor is excited that you have agreed to come down to share your policy ideas with him. As you know, the Vision Thing is really important to this generation of Bushes, and the governor has set an ambitious goal of signing up 400 advisers a day to his campaign for the next six months.

As you exit the airport, please stop near the baggage carousel to pick up your ticket. This will have your appointment number on it. Then proceed to the University of Texas football stadium, which is serving as the governor's waiting room. Shower facilities have been set up for those requiring an overnight wait. In the meantime, please fill out the following questionnaire to make your meeting with the governor more efficient, circling the appropriate answers.

1. My name is:

2. My friends call me:
   a. Senior Research Fellow
   b. Rapporteur
   c. Mr. Secretary

3. Qualifications for presidential appointment in the Bush administration:
   a. I have never met Dick Darman
   b. I worked for Darman for 6 years but never really liked him
   c. I seem more conservative than I really am

4. If someone asked me what I was doing to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*, I would:
   a. Change the subject
   b. The only correct answer is a

5. The following politicians nurtured my career, but I'm willing to abandon them for you:
   a. Dan Quayle
   b. John Kasich
   c. Steve Forbes

6. Turn ons:
   a. Transition teams
   b. Larry Lindsey's op-eds in the *WSJ*
   c. Strong manly men whose fathers left them political dynasties

7. Turn offs:
   a. Weak pencil-necked geeks whose fathers left them magazine empires
   b. That robotic witch who used to run the nation's blood supply
   c. Specificity

8. Essay Question: Please provide examples of recent acts of conservative compassion. Explain how these can be translated into 30-second TV spots.