TRANSITIONS, REPUBLICAN & DEMOCRATIC
FRED BARNES • MATTHEW REES

the weekly Standard

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A Sex Crime and Its Apologists

by Mary Eberstadt

STEPHANIE GUTMANN

The Media, Israel, and the Palestinians

THIS IS A COMBINED ISSUE. THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE WEEKLY STANDARD WILL APPEAR IN TWO WEEKS. HAPPY NEW YEAR.

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Gore's "Room Service" for the Press

During the mad holiday rush to cease reading all things election related, THE SCRAPBOOK worries that many may have missed the 6,446-word peek behind the Gore campaign curtain by *Washington Post* media critic Howard Kurtz, who produces compelling fly-on-the-wall pieces when he isn't clucking about why the public distrusts the press (memo to public: We distrust you too).

Kurtz brokered a deal with spokesmen Chris Lehane and Mark Fabiani—the Gore campaign's self-proclaimed "Masters of Disaster." Over the course of the campaign, the MDs delivered tidbits to Kurtz, but he couldn't report them till after the election. This gave Kurtz access to some great scenes in which Lehane and Fabiani show that they are more than on-message automatons; meanwhile, Lehane and Fabiani can salve their campaign wounds with the knowledge that their tortured genius didn't go unrecognized.

What results is a series of snapshots that prove the Gore soldiers were every bit as cynically opportunistic as their boss. Kurtz leads with Gore (who staffers took to calling the "Don Corleone of candidates") subtly ordering a hit on Florida secretary of state Katherine Harris. Gore later reversed himself, as was his custom, telling his staffers to refrain from "using inflammatory language," but not before Lehane had branded Harris a "hack" and a "lackey"—a breed Lehane probably became well acquainted with on the Gore campaign staff.

Kurtz also serves up revealing campaign memos, such as the one where the MDs worried that "The Bush campaign long ago fastened on their mantra: Gore will say or do anything it takes to win. This description is effective because it encapsulates the core criticism of Gore in a single, easily repeated sentence." THE SCRAPBOOK would suggest it was effective because it was true, but give the Masters points for self-awareness.

The most entertaining passages, however, detail Lehane's and Fabiani's attempts to manipulate and collude with journalists. In order to upstage Bush's announcement of his prescription drug plan, Lehane tried to secure front-page *New York Times* coverage for his boss (unsuccessfully, it turns out) by showing up with Gore's book-length treatise on the subject at the Cleveland hotel door of *Times* reporter Katharine Seelye, where he called out, "Room service."

Lehane was pushing so hard, that Seelye put him on the phone with her editor, who yelled at Lehane to "leave the room and give her time to write the story."

Another instance has Fabiani frantically searching for a reporter who will agree to break the embargo of a RAND Corp. report critical of Bush's education record (he succeeded with Reuters). But the most over-the-top courtship saw Lehane driving the *Times*'s Rick Berke to an office to screen a slowed-down version of Bush's allegedly "subliminal" Democ-RATS ad, as part of what a Fabiani memo called "Rat-Gate Rollout." Lehane later dressed down Berke for writing about how Gore's "shading of the truth" had become problematic, perhaps feeling betrayed after serving as the *Times*-man's taxi service.

Lehane and Fabiani (whose final e-mail to Lehane reads "WE WUZ ROBBED") have now left the stage to contemplate their political futures. But THE SCRAPBOOK, for its part, wants to congratulate them for innovation in sucking up to the press. The Bush White House flacks had better realize that Lehane and Fabiani have raised the bar! We will be expecting, at the very least, a breakfast mint with our political press releases. No rides are necessary, thanks; but those expecting big favors should know that we like our room-service eggs over easy, on white toast. ♦

How Ashcroft Won

Social conservatives aren't known for subtlety in pressing for what they want from their political allies. But in sinking Montana's Marc Racicot as George W. Bush's pick for attorney general and replacing him with former Missouri senator John Ashcroft, they operated deftly and quietly behind the scenes. Make no mistake: Governor Racicot was Bush's first choice. Once conservatives advising the transition learned of his tepid record on abortion, gay rights, and other social issues, however, they rebelled, all in the 72 hours before Bush formally announced his nominee. The most active were religious conservatives, both Catholic and Protestant. They recruited pro-life Princeton professor Robert George to draft a paper on Racicot. George's dispatch was on its way in 24 hours to Bush political adviser Karl Rove in Austin. Rove answered many of the complaints, though hardly all, and the dump-Racicot movement grew. In a conference call with Rove, nearly every social conservative on the line turned thumbs down on Racicot. He still probably could have had the job, but facing strong conservative objections decided he didn't want it. Ashcroft, who lost his Senate seat in November to the late Missouri governor Mel Carnahan, was the clear favorite of the religious conservatives. Bush went along, turning out to be more responsive than social conservatives had dreamed possible. ♦

Scrapbook

Great Moments in Diversity

From an editorial in the December 19 *San Francisco Chronicle*:

"The incoming Board of Supervisors includes one woman. There are no Asian American women, no black males, no lesbians and not a single Latina. There are two Latinos (Matt Gonzalez and Gerardo Sandoval), one black woman (Sophie Maxwell) and an Asian American male (Leland Yee). The board does boast—if that's the proper term—of seven white males. Two, Tom Ammiano and Mark Leno, are openly gay.

"That leaves the 11-member board littered with enough straight, white males (five) to look like a sidewalk gathering in West Portal after a Rotary Club meeting. . . .

"Unusual circumstances arose in this fall's elections. Candidates were judged less on their ethnic identity, or other attributes, than on their political distance from Mayor Willie Brown . . ."

THE SCRAPBOOK doesn't have much to add to the *Chronicle*'s self-parodying descent into lunatic multiculturalism, except to wonder: Since when is it an unusual circumstance for candidates in a city election to be judged according to their political positions? ♦

Weisbergism of the Day

In a December 22 item, part of his running feature "Bushism of the Day" in *Slate*, Jacob Weisberg ridiculed George W. Bush for describing himself as not a "revengeful" person. It's not an everyday usage, but Bush this time is in good company:

"I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in."

—*William Shakespeare,* Hamlet, *Act III, Scene 1 (the "Get thee to a nunnery" speech).*

Well Said

Last week, we carped about a *New York Times* story retailing Gore-camp complaints that Clarence Thomas should have recused himself in *Bush* v. *Gore*. Somehow we missed the *Times*'s own thoroughgoing second thoughts on the story, which it printed in this December 13 editor's note:

An article in late editions yesterday reported an assertion that Justice Clarence Thomas of the Supreme Court faced a serious conflict of interest because of his wife's work for the Heritage Foundation, which would help staff government posts if George W. Bush won the presidency. . . . The headline said, "Job of Thomas's Wife Raises Conflict-of-Interest Questions." In its 12th paragraph, the article said that the federal judge who raised the conflict question was an associate of Vice President Al Gore's family, and the 14th paragraph reported that The Times had been directed to that judge by "someone in the Gore campaign." The partisan nature of the source should have been made clear more promptly and reflected in attribution in the headline. The headline's plural reference to "questions" exceeded the facts of the article. The article quoted Mrs. Thomas as saying that her transition efforts were nonpartisan, not on behalf of the Bush organization. But those comments were omitted in editing and appeared only in the latest New York regional editions.

Couldn't have put it better ourselves. ♦

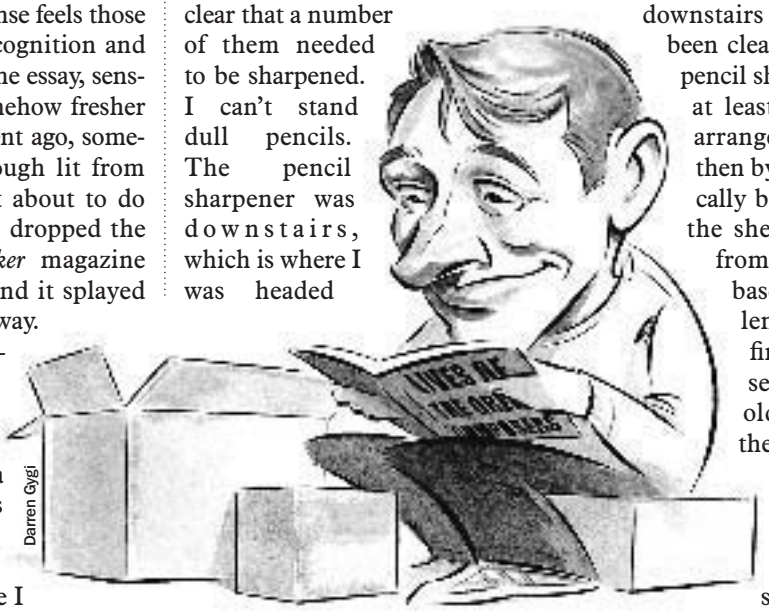
Casual

Self-Distraction

I could hardly wait to sit down and finally get to work writing this little essay—the deadline is fast approaching and I have a delightful subject this week that I think you'll enjoy—in fact it's the kind of small, delicate subject that a skilled writer likes to hold up to the light as he would a jewel, turning it first this way then that, playfully allowing each unexpected facet to disclose itself in its own fashion, at its own pace, to the wry amusement of the reader, who in response feels those quiet little bursts of recognition and who, when he finishes the essay, senses that the world is somehow fresher than it was just a moment ago, somehow more alive, as though lit from within—and I was just about to do this when the mailman dropped the new issue of *Backpacker* magazine through the mail slot and it splayed on the floor in the entryway.

I seldom read *Backpacker*, having no interest in the outdoors. A friend gave us a subscription, though, as a present. And my kids seem to enjoy it. I went to pick it up—just to keep things tidy, because I can't work if a room is messy—and before dropping it into the basket where we keep our magazines, I happened to flip through it and what do you know: an article on tick-borne diseases. In an amazing coincidence, tick-borne diseases is one topic I had never, ever had the slightest interest in reading an article about. I threw myself onto the sofa and instantly began reading. As it happens the article was predictably repellent, so after about an hour and a half I set the magazine aside and happily returned to my desk and to the subject that excites me at the moment and which, as I say, I think you'll enjoy as well.

But first, I think I mentioned my feelings about work and tidiness. I simply cannot work amid clutter, sometimes. Across my desk were several—no, many more than several—colored pencils scattered higgledy piggledy, courtesy no doubt of my children, who I referred to earlier. I carefully returned the pencils to the pencil holder and then pulled them out again and lay them in a row according to length, sorting them by color also, when it became clear that a number of them needed to be sharpened. I can't stand dull pencils. The pencil sharpener was downstairs, which is where I was headed when the radio started playing Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony. Schubert: an amazingly talented guy, right? A guy very dedicated to his craft, correct? Then why didn't he finish the symphony? What gives with that? As luck would have it, several years ago I bought a book called *The Lives of the Great Composers*. I went back upstairs and fished around for it, finally laying hands on it in a dusty old box tucked beneath the crawl space. I thumbed my way through to the Schubert entry, and found the answer to my question. I've filed it away mentally, for an essay on Schubert I'm hoping to write pretty soon, probably after I finish this one.



When I returned to my desk I realized I'd forgotten to sharpen the darn pencils! Going back downstairs I was rethinking the subject of this essay when my mind offered up a really clever turn of phrase that I mean to use: Discussing pundits who always say "On the one hand, on the other hand," I'm going to say, "Thank god there are no three-handed pundits!" Isn't that good? I rushed back upstairs to jot it down. It's difficult to convey the feeling of satisfaction a writer gets when these little jokes come to him unbidden—almost like finding that perfect subject for an essay, where the piece "just writes itself," as we say. But there was still the problem of the dull pencils. Back downstairs I saw that my wife had been cleaning house. Next to the pencil sharpener she had stacked at least a dozen cookbooks. I arranged them first by size, then by cuisine, then alphabetically by author, and dusted off the shelf she'd removed them from. When I went to the basement to find more lemon Pledge, I couldn't find it, although I did find several pairs of my kids' old shoes. Such tiny feet they had! I admit I fell into a kind of reverie. Then, at last, after noticing my son's basketball was deflated, searching for the air-pump, and reinflating the ball, as well as an old football and a volleyball that lay nearby, I eagerly headed back to work.

At my desk I put nose to grindstone. There are many magical moments in the writing life. You're just sitting there and the words flow, and the writing and the subject matter become one, and it's as though you the writer were a mere onlooker, a privileged witness to the act of creation. The pleasure is almost sensually intense. I can't get enough. I mean it.

Andrew Ferguson

Reining In the Courts

The Weekly Standard's articles on the judiciary contain many sensible criticisms of "our robed masters," the judges who came close to stealing the election for Al Gore. Questioning the legitimacy of the American judicial regime, William Kristol writes that for over 40 years courts have claimed "the last word" concerning the Constitution's meaning, and "Two generations of judicial usurpation is enough" ("A President by Judicial Fiat," Dec. 18).

If these old conservative complaints are to get beyond whining, isn't it time to open a serious discussion of actions we can take to end judicial usurpation? This is no simple task. Conservatives profoundly disagree about the elected branches' authority to restore the constitutional balance of powers. Some believe there are essentially only two means: appoint judges who are not "judicial activists," or amend the Constitution to correct mistaken judicial decisions. Both are inadequate.

Republican presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Bush assured us they were naming "strict constructionists." But, among others, we got Brennan, Blackmun, Stevens, Kennedy, and Souter, respectively. Presidents simply cannot guarantee the performance of their nominees on the bench. And corrective constitutional amendments are virtually impossible to enact—the flag-burning amendment has never gotten through Congress despite public support.

Moreover, judges get "the last word" on the interpretation of amendments. For example, in the 1997 *City of Boerne* opinion, the Supreme Court cited a 1970 case known as *Oregon* v. *Mitchell* to show that it has the power to strike down Fourteenth Amendment enforcement laws, disregarding the fact that the holding they cited was reversed only a year later by the Twenty-sixth Amendment!

Fortunately America has rich resources in its history, writings of the Framers and great statesmen, and constitutional logic to confront the judicial usurpation problem. The political branches can take actions ranging from powerful symbolism (e.g., the president attending school athletic events at which students pray over loudspeakers, implicitly repudiating the recent decision banning such prayers) to non-enforcement of unconstitutional lower court decisions and blanket pardons (e.g., Jefferson pardoned those convicted of violating the 1798 Sedition Act, which he considered unconstitutional).

Congress can enact declaratory and other forms of legislation correcting erroneous judicial policy (e.g., the 1862 Territorial Freedom Act, which contravened the Dred Scott holding). Nor should impeachment of egregious tribunes, especially on the lower federal bench, be out of the question.

In the states, similar actions can be taken, including recall or "reconfirmation" elections of state judges. In Florida,

a movement is developing to defeat Justice Anstead, one of the Supreme Court judges behind the atrocious *Gore* decision.

We must not forget that the U.S. Supreme Court performed an indispensable act of statesmanship by bringing the 2000 presidential election crisis to a conclusion accepted by most Americans. Still, that crisis began in the courts. Conservatives must suggest reforms that are neither intemperate nor ineffective. President-elect Bush—who has promised to support a partial-birth abortion ban despite the Court's prohibition of such laws—will need sound advice in order to save the courts from self-destruction.

We should begin a serious debate on solutions to judicial usurpation now that it has come to the surface because of the election debacle.

Dennis Teti
Associate Professor
Regent University
Alexandria, VA

Sunny Side Up

In his article "An Emerging Democratic Majority?," David Brooks misses a huge factor and thus misinterprets the demographics of this year's voting patterns. At one point he writes, "Gore won among women with graduate degrees by 22 points," and then goes on to explain that they don't really believe in Democratic positions, but vote that way "as a sign [they] haven't sold out." Mighty thin reasoning there.

The factor that Brooks missed is the issue of abortion. Nationwide, the abortion lobby tried hard to turn this election into a referendum on abortion. The National Organization for Women (NOW) assured voters that abortion would be stopped by Bush appointees to the U.S. Supreme Court. Not many people bought that line, but professional women certainly did. Sliced a different way, the voting patterns showed that single independent women heavily favored Gore's pro-abortion position, while stay-at-home moms strongly preferred Bush's pro-life position.

Brooks touches on this issue in only one sentence, where he says the Democrats "can appeal to the educated class by being pro-choice and anti-gun." Here Brooks seems to have fallen for the Democrats' idea that you're a stupid, uneducated gun nut if you think abortion is wrong. The notion appeals to those professional office women who want complete equality with their male counterparts, including the "right" to enjoy sexual freedom unfettered by concern for the consequences.

What lies ahead? Brooks thinks this trend will grow. But it may be reversed. George W. Bush has promised to restore principle, honor, and dignity to the presidency. Hopefully his administration will help rebuild the American values still held in the heartland, so sneeringly abandoned by the Hollywood celebrities and the media elites of the East Coast. Moral

leadership by President Bush, sorely missing these past eight years, can make a big difference.

Contrary to Brooks's prediction, perhaps we will find in the years ahead that high-tech people in places like Silicon Valley and Research Triangle Park are not all that susceptible to the allure of the responsibility-free life. Nearly all of us have taken biology courses, so we should know perfectly well that life begins at conception, no matter how inconvenient that fact may be. The "educated class," as Brooks calls us, may not sacrifice our votes just to keep abortion easy.

JANET M. BAKER
Gaithersburg, MD

THOMAS P. SHEAHEN
Oakland, MD

DESPITE THE ARMPIT-DEEP SNOW in Michigan, I am not looking over my shoulder for a new Ice Age, nor am I particularly worried about David Brooks's new Democratic majority. Al Gore foolishly lost the election by moving to the old Left, and the Democrats in Congress are made up of the same group. Thus, the Democratic Leadership Council's move to realign its party has turned into a one-time derailment, and Ronald Reagan's new era will get back on track.

George W. Bush will complete his party's realignment by knocking the legs off George McGovern's old stool. He will reach out to minorities with an inclusive, we-are-one-nation theme. I hope that means rewarding "we" thinkers and leaders from neighborhoods, campuses, and beyond. I'm sick of the old pathology-peddling talking heads.

I also expect Bush to recognize that highly educated people (I would include teachers, public employees, and even journalists in this group) are open to a new fairness initiative. These people need leadership to get them out of the left-is-good swamp. In their hearts they know it is time to move on, but they need to be able to feel good about themselves as they grow.

Finally, Reagan showed Republicans how to unite with working people—union leaders may have hated him, but the workers loved him and knew he cared about them because he reached out directly to them. If Bush reaches out they'll feel the same way about him.

Our problem is not fighting off a resurgent Democratic party. Our problem is to get beyond ego and celebrity. Bush's narrow win and close numbers will help with this. But most importantly, George W. Bush preaches faith and humility for America, and for Americans and their leaders. That is the best hook on which to hang our hat for the new era.

W.L. JENNINGS
Grand Blanc, MI

OUT WITH THE OLD

THANK YOU and thank you again. I very much enjoyed Joseph Epstein's article on paring down his book collection ("Books Don't Furnish a Room," Dec. 18). Last year I did the same, and while my book collection had nowhere near the breadth and scope of his, it still felt good to have a little room on the shelves for new books and new ideas.

The other thing that gave me hope was that somewhere in the world there exist other people that have read books because they like to; not for money or for the grades, but for the pleasure. I found it oddly comforting that there might just be a place where people don't hide the fact that they have read books, as if reading were something to apologize for. Perhaps it is a California phenomenon, but here it is a rare thing to meet someone who reads at all, let alone the authors Epstein sent on their way. Thanks for a glimpse into another world.

MARILYN SCOTT-WATERS
Costa Mesa, CA

JOSEPH EPSTEIN HAS INSPIRED ME. I may well take a page from his book, as it were. Since I moved away from New York City no one of my acquaintance has seemed to have more than 20 books at home. A liberating purge of my shelves is long overdue, so I can be accepted as normal by other human beings in America.

Epstein did omit one category from his list of books. He might have mentioned the singular nature of heavily annotated and underlined books. These are indeed part of the autobiography of many of us non-writers, for whom these margin notes may constitute the best we have ever thought on matters outside the scope of our intellectually unglamorous daily lives. These notes and markings also make the books much handier as reference works, but less desirable to used-book sellers.

LAWRENCE A. KREIG
Framingham, MA

I READ WITH INTEREST Joseph Epstein's essay about disposing of his library. I, too, have a vast library—at least 10,000 volumes—and recently had to make a choice about whether they or I would go. I went, buying a new house, about half of which is devoted almost exclusively to book storage.

One reason I did not follow Epstein's example and purge all the books I have never read and probably never will read is the increasingly dilapidated condition of even our best libraries. Because of the rapidly rising cost of serials and computer databases, book collections everywhere are severely deteriorating. Sadly, many students don't even know or care because they take the view (wrongly) that if it isn't available on the Internet it isn't worth knowing.

Instead of selling off his collection, I wish Epstein had given it to a university library where books still matter. The few dollars he got for selling his books are far less than the value they might have brought to a hungry young mind wise enough to realize that it's not all on the Internet.

BRUCE BARTLETT
Great Falls, VA

JOSEPH EPSTEIN RESPONDS: Mr. Bartlett's notion of giving one's books to a university sounds rather neater than it is. My own experience is that most university and other libraries just turn around and sell them. For years I used to pick up very clean Pleiade editions with the name of their former owner written in them. When I asked a used-book seller who the man was, he told me that he used to work for the Newberry Library in Chicago, to whom he left his excellent books. The Newberry, already owning a set of the Pleiades, sold his off. Something a little sad about that, no?

the weekly Standard

The Bush Tax Cut: Now More Than Ever

There's a lesson for President-elect George W. Bush in the experience of the two other Republican presidents of the past 20 years. The first, upon arrival in Washington, was urged to give up his plan for a big tax cut. It would spur inflation, swell the budget deficit, and cause unfairness by disproportionately helping the rich. That president rejected the advice, defeated Democrats to enact his tax cut, touched off an era of prosperity, and became the most successful Republican president of the 20th century, trusted by friends, feared by foes. That president was Ronald Reagan.

The second wisely wanted to prolong economic growth by cutting the capital gains tax rate. When Democrats, led by the Senate majority leader, blocked that tax cut, however, the president backed off. His fallback position was a promise not to raise taxes, ever. But at a bipartisan summit with Democratic congressional leaders, he abandoned that promise too and agreed to a tax hike. When the economy drifted into recession, his administration seemed helpless to combat it. After winning the presidency with 53 percent of the vote, he lost four years later with only 37 percent. That president was George Bush senior.

The case for a tax cut to energize the economy is impeccable. The philosophical and political arguments for it are strong, too. What better issue for a first Bush victory?

The good news about George W. Bush's belated transition to the presidency is that he's following the Reagan model, not his father's. In fact, he's doing it so convincingly that Republicans are emboldened and Democrats are beginning to waver. Unlike his father, he's so far decided to ignore the conventional wisdom in Washington that he must abandon his campaign themes and govern in a bipartisan fashion, brushing aside his conservative base and reaching out to Democrats. And how is he advised to reach out? By scrapping his $1.3 trillion proposal to cut taxes for every American taxpayer. It's too big, it will bring back a budget deficit, it's tilted to benefit the rich. Everything, in short, that Reagan was told about his tax cut is now being shouted in the ear of President-elect Bush.

Inside the Beltway, this advice may look reasonable and realistic, coming as it does from the media, Democrats, even some Republicans and business lobbyists. Outside Washington is another story. There, the stock market has tanked and the economy is rapidly deteriorating. Capital spending has plummeted and retailers are terrified. True, a weakened stock market doesn't always lead to a recession. And much of the evidence of an economic slide is anecdotal at this point. But there's enough indication of trouble ahead that Alan Greenspan, poised as recently as two months ago to raise interest rates again, is now fearful. Just before Christmas, the Federal Reserve said "growth may be slowing further" and noted the possibility of "economic weakness in the foreseeable future." That's Fed talk for "sharp downturn ahead."

So the case for a serious tax cut to energize the economy is impeccable, and both Bush and Vice President-elect Dick Cheney have made it. Fortunately, when the Bush tax cut, with its across-the-board rate reductions, was unveiled a year ago, it was designed for precisely the economic conditions the country now faces. Back then, Bush and his chief economic adviser, Larry Lindsey, appeared alarmist. Lindsey had famously pulled his personal assets out of the stock market. Now, they look like men of foresight. As Bush said in introducing his nominee for treasury secretary, Paul O'Neill, his tax cut spread over nine years "is part of the prescription for any economic ill that our nation may have." Indeed, it is.

There are two other reasons for Bush to stick with his tax cut, one philosophical, the other political. The philosophical is that federal taxes are unfairly high.

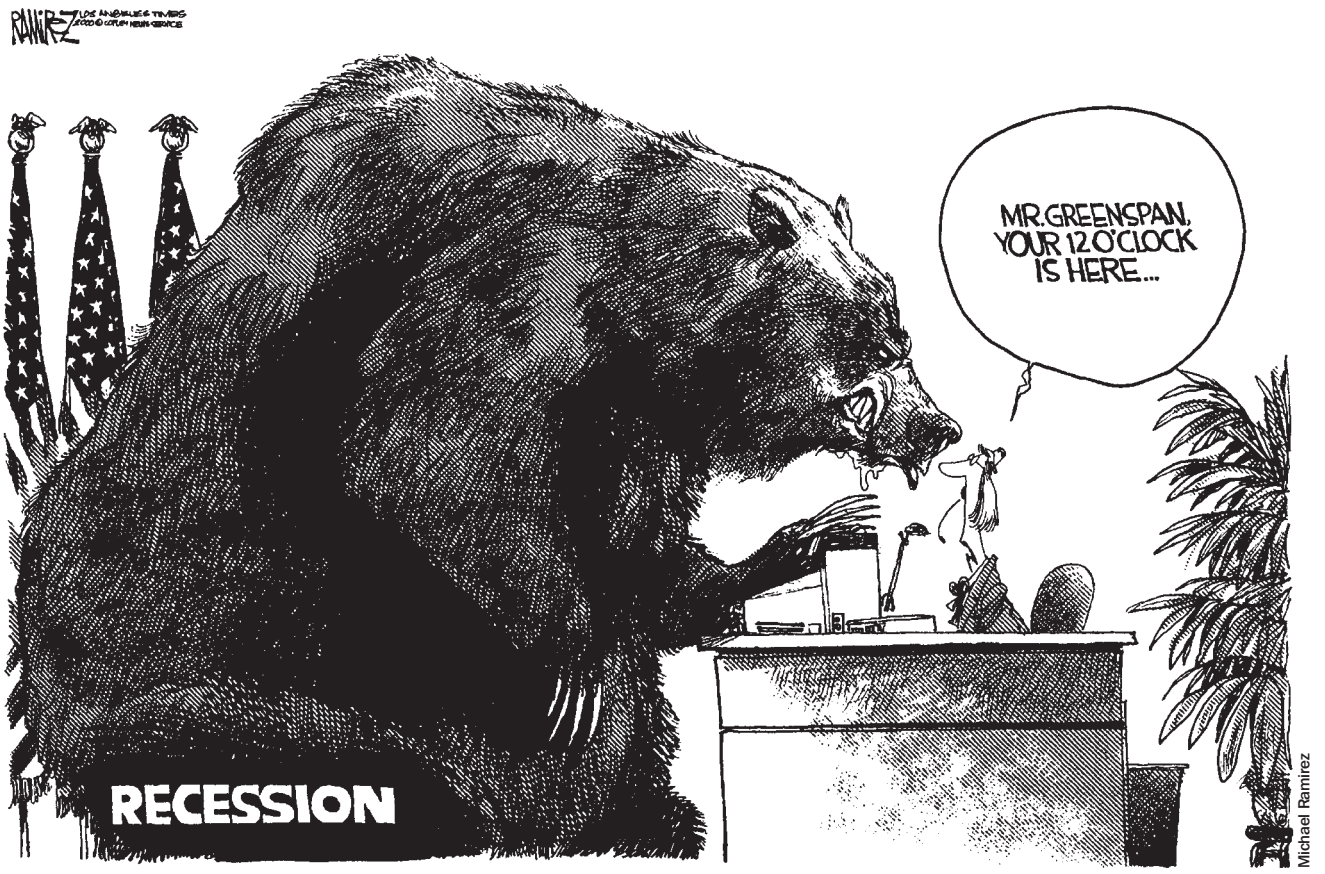
Federal tax revenue, at more than one-fifth of the nation's gross domestic product, is at World War II levels—but without a war. The bite taken by the federal income tax has grown from 7.8 percent of GDP in 1994 to 9.9 percent last year, the *Wall Street Journal* noted recently. And once again, there's bracket creep. People are working harder—nobody works harder these days than Americans—with too little to show for it. Regardless of the effect on the economy, taxes this high confiscate too much of people's earnings.

The political case rests partly on a notion that is lost on most of Washington: The public craves a tax cut. Election Day exit polls showed slashing taxes was the paramount issue for Bush voters and number two for all voters, topped only by education. Pollster Frank Luntz tested voters electronically on MSNBC during the debates and convention speeches and found that when Bush talked up tax cuts for all Americans or said the surplus belongs to them, not government, the dials "shot through the roof." Thus, politically, the path is clear for Bush to push tax cuts in his first 100 days (and education reform as well).

Bush has talked cheerfully about bipartisanship. But on taxes, no satisfactory compromise with Democrats is possible.

Bush has talked cheerfully about bipartisanship. But on taxes, no satisfactory compromise with Democrats is possible. They will never accept tax cuts across the board, since that means a trim in the top rate. And a tax bill without rate cuts won't provide serious relief for all taxpayers. Sure, Bush can pare down how much he cuts the top rate. Instead of dropping it from 39.6 percent to 33 percent, he could agree to, say, 35 percent or 36 percent. Getting any decrease in the top rate would be a victory for Bush. And he needs victories as well as successes. Finding common ground with Democrats on education would be a success. Defeating them on taxes would be a victory. It would have the same effect as Reagan's victories on spending and taxes two decades ago. It would establish his presidency. It would make him respected by Republicans and feared by Democrats. And questions about his legitimacy would vanish into thin air.

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors



Clinton's Party

Terry McAuliffe, friend of Bill, seizes the Democratic reins.

BY MATTHEW REES

Terry McAuliffe

Illustration by Earl Keleny

IN AUGUST 1986, *Life* magazine published a short profile of a precocious 29-year-old Democratic fund-raiser named Terry McAuliffe. It described McAuliffe as specializing in a "zany mix of sledgehammer persistence and personal magnetism," and it illustrated the point with an account of how he once wrestled an alligator in order to get the Seminole Indians of Florida to fork over a $15,000 contribution. Conveniently, a photo of McAuliffe in action found its way to *Life*'s photo department.

The episode has become a staple of McAuliffe profiles written as he's ascended through Democratic politics. But omitted from these write-ups has been any reference to the letter *Life* subsequently published from a reader who had scrutinized the photograph. The alligator, far from being dangerous, had had its mouth tied shut, rendering it "as dangerous as a three-month old kitten." The reader observed, "If McAuliffe wrestled with anything, it must have been his conscience, and his conscience lost."

Now that McAuliffe is slated to become chairman of the Democratic National Committee, this anecdote nicely captures what's likely to be the upside, and the downside, of his leadership. He will remain dogged in the pursuit of campaign contributions (it's noteworthy that as long ago as 1986 he was hitting up groups, like Indian tribes, who probably had no business making political donations). But in this pursuit he's destined to employ tactics that, like the tying up of the gator, violate the spirit of the game.

Just ask those who have studied his now legendary fund-raising tactics for Bill Clinton's 1996 reelection effort. McAuliffe was the first to urge stepping up the use of White House hospitality, including the renting of the Lincoln Bedroom, as a lure to donors. One longtime advocate for campaign-finance reform of the McCain/Feingold variety, asked to assess the choice of McAuliffe to run the DNC, replied, "He singlehandedly destroyed campaign-finance law in the United States."

It might seem odd to have a figure like McAuliffe lead a party whose elected officials almost unanimously support doing away with the fund-raising practices he helped pioneer. But don't expect much bellyaching from them, at least not in public. Distasteful though he may be, "the Macker," as he calls himself, is drooled over by party leaders. Al Gore, in a speech last May, made clear why. McAuliffe, he said, is "the greatest fund-raiser in the history of the universe."

Gore had it right. McAuliffe has set all sorts of records for fund-raising, like the gala in Washington's MCI Center last May that netted $26.5 million in a single night, but the best way to measure his effectiveness is to take note of how other leading Democrats treat him. Richard Gephardt, a man not known for being

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warm and cuddly, once bought a golden retriever puppy, had it housetrained, and then personally presented it to McAuliffe on Christmas day, according to *Fortune*. A few years ago, Gore lobbied McAuliffe to accept the chairmanship of the DNC, and when he refused, Gore resorted to lobbying his wife. As for Clinton, he offered McAuliffe one of the most highly sought-after ambassadorships, Great Britain, even though McAuliffe's foreign-policy experience is said to be limited to owning an Irish bar in Washington, D.C.

McAuliffe declined the London posting in order to assist Al Gore's fledgling presidential campaign, but Clinton still found a way to pay his golfing buddy back. Within 48 hours of Gore's concession to George W. Bush, Clinton had put out the word that McAuliffe was going to be the next DNC chairman (Clinton's gratitude stems in no small part from McAuliffe's having raised $300 million in recent years for various Clinton causes). Bill Richardson, who wanted to run, and whose service as Clinton's bagman on numerous issues would seem to have earned him the right to run, was told in plain language to forget it. But Maynard Jackson, the former mayor of Atlanta, decided late last week to challenge McAuliffe, saying, "I don't think we can be so preoccupied with money that we forget about the grass-roots."

McAuliffe's expected accession guarantees Clinton will remain an active figure in Democratic politics. It's also an early indicator of just how primed Democrats are to win congressional majorities two years from now, and to take back the White House in 2004. For if there's one thing McAuliffe will deliver as party chairman, it's money, and lots of it. Indeed, there's little doubt that with McAuliffe at the helm the DNC will, over the next few years, raise more money than ever before, even without the benefit of the Lincoln bedroom.

That will win him plaudits from Democrats. So will his expected willingness to accept a role that's relatively narrow. After the harrowing experience with Ed Rendell, the recently departed party chairman who committed a gaffe nearly every time he spoke, leading Democrats will be happy with McAuliffe if he functions as nothing more than a full-time fund-raiser. Mike McCurry, a former Clinton spokesman and an enthusiastic McAuliffe backer, thinks his friend will be content with this role: "He is more on the schmooze side than the substance side of politics."

But Democrats can only keep their fingers crossed and hope that the thin ice on which McAuliffe skates never caves in. Over the past decade he's been mixed up in a number of complicated business deals that have attracted the scrutiny of federal investigators. Republicans are likely to intensify the scrutiny of McAuliffe; a leading Republican strategist told me, "Choosing him is very risky. There's so much attached to him that something is bound to blow up." McAuliffe naturally professes total innocence—he once told *Business Week*, "The worst thing I've ever gotten is a speeding ticket." One of those who vouch for him is his fund-raising mentor, Tony Coelho, the former congressman who temporarily chaired Gore's presidential campaign. ("He's about as honest as they come," Coelho once told reporter Tim Burger.) But given Coelho's own checkered past, praise from him for honesty is a bit like praise from Madonna for modesty.

Those potential problems notwithstanding, McAuliffe would seem to be well positioned to have a successful chairmanship. In the aftermath of the Florida election controversy, Democratic voters are infinitely more hyped up than they otherwise would be after losing a presidential election. And their party is poised to win majorities in the House and Senate two years from now, for which McAuliffe will inevitably get a chunk of credit. He may even help prevent an excessively divisive presidential nominating process in 2004, given his clout within the party—not to mention his experience wrestling alligators. ♦

A Pro-Life White House

But very quietly so. BY FRED BARNES

IN A PRIVATE CHAT, President-elect George W. Bush raised the issue of abortion with Colin Powell several weeks before naming him secretary of state. Bush said his administration would be pro-life. And though Powell is pro-choice, he would have to follow Bush's lead and eliminate any vestiges of the Clinton State Department's program to promote abortion around the world. Powell said he understood. Later, after his nomination was announced, Powell told Bush who he has in mind to be undersecretary for global affairs. This is the office, held initially in the Clinton era by former Colorado senator Tim Wirth, that masterminded the use of foreign aid and international organizations to proselytize for abortion as a method of population control. Bush thought Powell's choice for the post was fine and would satisfy pro-life Republicans.

So how pro-life will Bush be as president? The Powell anecdote gives a pretty good idea. Bush will push the pro-life agenda in areas where it's politically feasible. But he won't be noisy about it. He intends, for instance, to reinstate the so-called Mexico City policy of Presidents Reagan and Bush senior that barred the use of American funds for groups promoting or performing abortions around the world. He can do this by sending a memorandum to Powell or merely by saying the old policy is restored. And he will remove Julia Taft, of the Republican Taft family of Ohio, as assistant secretary of state for population, refugees, and migration. She's a Clinton appointee. "She's from the wrong side of the Taft family," a Bush aide said, referring to the liberal Tafts, not the side of the current Ohio governor. The pro-life movement views her as pro-abortion.

Don't expect Bush speeches to be spiked with anti-abortion comments. He rarely broached the subject during the campaign, and he probably won't say much about it as president either. So he'll have to be judged by his actions. One that counts is the staffing of his administration with pro-lifers. He may wind up with more pro-lifers on his White House staff than either his father or President Reagan had. His cabinet will have pro-lifers in the positions of most concern to, well, pro-lifers: John Ashcroft as attorney general, Tommy Thompson as secretary of health and human services.

Though ready to sign a bill banning partial-birth abortion, Bush won't be able to do that soon. Tom DeLay, the House Republican whip, says it won't come up for a vote until April or May. And maybe not then. Doug Johnson, the legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, calls the shots on the bill. And he's inclined to wait until it's clear exactly how the language of the bill should be adjusted and whether it will pass. "We don't feel any compulsion to decide on the language in the next few weeks," he said.

Two things have to be taken into account. One is the Supreme Court ruling last summer that approved partial-birth abortion, so long as the abor-

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tionist says it's the safest method for the mother. Every abortionist is willing to say this, of course, or he'd be in another line of work. Whether language can be devised to circumvent the ruling and ban these abortions is uncertain, Johnson says.

In the Senate, the pro-life forces lost three votes. That reduces to 62 the number of senators who've voted against partial-birth abortion or are committed to doing so. But 15 of these senators have also voted to codify in federal law the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision legalizing abortion. This raises the question of whether these senators are ready to vote again to bar partial-birth abortion, knowing this time the president will sign the bill. In the past, they had a free vote, since President Clinton was certain to veto any ban.

Remember the five executive orders Clinton signed, shortly after his inauguration in 1993, to make abortions more accessible? He did so while insisting—with breathtaking hypocrisy—that he wanted abortion rare. It turns out only one of these orders, the one rescinding the Mexico City policy, is ripe for elimination. Another banned the use of fetal tissue in medical research. Now, that policy has been enacted into law by Congress. A third sought to speed up approval of RU-486, the abortion pill. This was a mere gesture, but the abortion pill has now been approved by the Food and Drug Administration anyway. Bush said during the campaign that as president, he would lack the authority to override the FDA's action.

There's also the order that required military hospitals to perform elective abortions. Congress stepped in to reverse that order and ban abortions at military installations. Finally, there was what the media called the gag rule, which prohibited abortion counseling at federally funded family planning clinics, which Clinton overturned. "It can't be restored by the stroke of a pen," says Johnson. It's become complicated by regulatory changes. Bush hasn't declared whether he'll try to reinstate the rule. But if he does, he'll likely do it as inconspicuously as possible. ♦

Washington for Beginners

Grovel to senators, be nice to civil servants, and learn how to leak. **BY BRUCE BARTLETT**

WASHINGTON will soon be inundated with a fresh wave of political appointees. This being the first Democratic to Republican transition in 20 years, many of the new people will find themselves in the Washington pressure cooker for the first time. And quite a few are leaving corporate America with its well-established rules for a city that operates under a completely different set. How they cope will be important to the success of George W. Bush.

One of the most important things new political appointees (particularly those from the business world) need to understand is how diffused power is in Washington. In a corporation, when the CEO makes a decision, that's that. Not so in Washington. A presidential decision is usually just the first step in a long, slow policy process that can last for years.

The president may nominally be the CEO of USA, Inc., but unlike in most corporations, he will have to contend with a hyperactive board of directors called Congress. And whereas even the biggest companies have perhaps two dozen board members, the board of USA, Inc., has 535 members, divided into two equally powerful and competing factions—the House and Senate. And within each faction there are sub-factions—majority and minority, leadership, committees, and a multitude of regional and other informal power blocs.

Navigating these waters is tough enough for experienced pros. For newcomers, it is not just like being dumped into the deep end of a pool without knowing how to swim, it is like being dropped into the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

In the short run, the most important thing for most appointees to know is which Senate committee will confirm them. Just getting a hearing before the relevant committee is a major effort, requiring vast amounts of preparation in answering questions from committee staff long before one has the opportunity to meet an actual senator. Then the committee has to vote out your appointment and the majority leader must schedule a vote by the full Senate. In the meantime, an individual senator can block your appointment for any reason whatsoever and not even have to say what the reason is to anyone, least of all you. And they often do so for reasons completely unrelated to you. Sometimes such "holds" can go on for months—and senators have far more stamina than most appointees.

In the meantime, you have probably quit your job, taken a big pay cut, spent hundreds of hours and considerable funds filling out vast numbers of reports, and are separated from your family. You cannot buy a new house until you are confirmed, and you are being paid as a consultant well below the pay grade for the job you have been appointed to.

Assuming you are confirmed by the Senate and finally take office as a newly minted assistant secretary or whatever, you will discover that your troubles have just begun. You will find that you cannot hire or fire most of your staff, because they are part of the Civil Service. You will determine

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that practically every new idea you have has already been tried before. And you will learn that there is a rigid pecking order among departments and agencies, and that you are closer to the bottom than the top.

New appointees will also come to realize that the Washington policy-making process is not limited to those who work in government, either in the administration or on Capitol Hill. We all know about lobbyists, but think tanks, interest groups, and the press are just as important.

Getting used to dealing with the press is especially tricky for newcomers. My best advice is never to say anything "on the record"—that means reporters can quote you directly and mention you by name. Always insist that your comments are "off the record," meaning that you can be quoted, but not identified. Better still is to stay "on background," which means that you cannot be quoted or cited in any way by a reporter. Of course, reporters are bound only by their honor to uphold such commitments. If they decide to blow your cover, you have no recourse whatsoever.

Keep in mind that the press is the enemy of all administrations, because its primary goal is to know your secrets. Most reporters are liberal Democrats, but this is small comfort to Democratic administrations—and also not an insurmountable obstacle for Republicans. Ultimately, all administrations have one critical advantage and that is a monopoly on information. How, where, when, and to whom an administration chooses to impart that information can make or break careers in the media. With skill, any administration can play the press like a violin.

A note on "leaking": All administrations hate leaks, which are unauthorized information given to the press. In practice, however, leaks seldom do any real harm. The main objection to them is that higher-ups in the chain of command lose the opportunity to divulge the information themselves to their favored reporters, who often repay such generosity with "puff pieces" in their papers.

Leaks can also be a very powerful way to get an administration's story through a hostile media. Thought of as exclusive news items, leaks can force reporters to run with stories they would never publish if sent out as a press release. Especially if the information comes to them close to a deadline, they have little choice but to run the item with your "spin" on it. They don't have time to check it and cannot afford to risk losing the story to a competitor. During the Reagan years, master leakers like James Baker and David Gergen were notorious for getting good press in liberal papers through the skillful use of this method.

One way to stay on the good side of the press is simply to be successful. Reporters respect power, and they have an infallible sense of who's got it and who doesn't. The dirty secret, however, is that no one has real power. Power in Washington largely consists in the appearance of power. In other words, those who are thought to have power actually have it. That is why being "out of the loop" is the worst thing that can happen to anyone in Washington. It means they have no power at all.

If all this sounds silly, it is. But it is also the way the world works. Those who learn the rules fast can prosper quickly. Those who fail had best get out of town as soon as possible, while their reputations are intact. The press are like hyenas. They can smell blood from far away and quickly pounce on and devour the weak. It is not just because it's their job—they do it for fun. That is why they joined the Washington press corps in the first place.

So, good luck to all the newcomers. You are going to need it. Most of you won't be around very long—you'll stay just long enough to get a line on your résumé and then move on to greener pastures. The rest will either be successful and join the permanent Washington establishment, or be run out of town, an embarrassment to everyone who ever knew them. Sadly, over the last quarter century, there seem to be fewer of the former and more of the latter. ♦

My Brother, the Spy

Noel Field was a Soviet agent; Hermann ended up jailed behind the Iron Curtain. **BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ**

Hermann and Kate Field, two little-known but quintessential twentieth-century figures, addressed a small gathering at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., the other night. The occasion was a belated promotion for Hermann Field's memoir, *Trapped in the Cold War: The Ordeal of an American Family*. Those in attendance were mainly investigators of communism and its depredations against the democracies—a sprinkling of retired CIA officers, prominent historians such as John Earl Haynes and Ronald Radosh, experts on Soviet control of the American Communist movement, and a handful of Eastern European intellectuals.

Hermann Field, remarkably spry at 90, is the brother of Noel Field, a Sovi-

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et secret police agent and distant colleague in that work of Alger Hiss. Noel served in the State Department, for the League of Nations, and as a relief worker with antifascist refugees in Europe. In 1948, Noel Field, whose name had surfaced in the U.S. investigation of Hiss's espionage activities, fled to Eastern Europe to avoid a federal subpoena.

There, he was caught up in the postwar machinations of the Russians, who were combing their clandestine networks, motivated by their habitual paranoia, looking for suspects to eliminate. Noel Field filled the bill: He had spied for the USSR in the United States and Europe during the murderous purge of the Soviet intelligence services in the late 1930s, and he had worked with Western intelligence authorities in the Second World War.

Noel Field disappeared behind the Iron Curtain, followed by his wife, Herta. Hermann, then a professor of architecture at Western Reserve University, received a letter from Herta in 1949 and went east in an attempt to locate his brother. He was kidnapped by Polish secret police officers at the Warsaw airport. When he asked his captors the reason for his arrest, they simply answered, over and over, "You know."

As a Soviet spy, Noel Field must have had some idea of what was going on in his case from the beginning. Hermann, however, was no more than a sincere antifascist liberal, and was horrified by his experience. His wife, Kate, who was in London, was soon flabbergasted at the news that Noel had been cited as a witness in the show trials of Lazlo Rajk in Budapest and Rudolf Slansky in Prague. The latter were loyal and even extreme Stalinist party chiefs selected for trial and execution as a preventive measure against the spread of Tito-style restlessness in the Soviet satellites.

Meanwhile, Hermann Field was transported to the cellar of a farmhouse in the Polish countryside, where for five years he was subjected to the classic torments of KGB interrogation. He never saw the outside of the building in which he was held, and never saw natural light. A single bulb burned through the night in his cell.

He became disoriented—which was, of course, the purpose of the torture. "I experienced a horrible world of sounds," he recalled before his spellbound Washington audience. Fellow prisoners were dragged up the stairs of the crude prison, beaten, and then chased down the stairs to further blows.

At first he thought he had been arrested for taking photographs. His captors laughed at that. He thought that if he cited the names of prominent Communists whose lives he had helped save from Hitler he would be released. Instead, those he named were charged as his alleged accomplices. He believed the other prisoners in the lockup were real Nazi war criminals, and envied them for, as he imagined, actually having something to confess. "There was nothing to grab onto in my mind," he remembered. Wakened night after night for continuous interrogations, he became semidelirious.

Hermann and Kate Field

Finally, he signed a confession admitting he was a Western spy, but his interrogators left for the weekend, and after a brief rest, he regained his composure. Incredibly, he repudiated his confession. Another prisoner was then put in his cell, a minor Polish functionary named Stanislaw Mierzenski.

The two men kept their sanity by lecturing each other on subjects they knew—in Field's case, architecture. Then they made up stories and, finally, books. Field realized that his captors were afraid he might die, so he used hunger strikes to get books and writing materials. But mainly, the prisoners waited. And waited.

And then Joseph Stalin died. The insanity that had led these two to their dank, stinking cellar abated, and in 1954 Hermann Field was informed that he had been the victim of irregularities in the Polish legal system and would be freed. Kate, still in London, learned the news from Reuters.

But Hermann created a problem for himself. He refused to leave Polish custody until he could be assured that his cellmate would also be released. The Poles argued and argued with him, and finally allowed him to meet with Mierzenski, who eventually was freed. Field returned to America, and later he and Mierzenski published one of the books they had written together, *Angry Harvest*, a novel about a Pole sheltering a Jew during World War II.

As if this record of sacrifice and generosity weren't enough, Hermann Field also refused to lie about his brother Noel, who in turn was released after Stalin's demise and died in Hungary in 1970, having declined to return to the United States. Questioned at his lecture about Noel's espionage activities—evidence of which Hiss apologists still reject as lies extorted by KGB interrogators—Hermann Field answered forthrightly. His brother had told the truth when he said he was a spy and identified Hiss as one. Noel's "final statements in prison, when he thought he was close to death," Hermann said, "reflected his need to leave a factual account of his life—he produced a true testament." It is Hermann, however, who, in the spirit of his Quaker faith, found the courage to tell the truth publicly, before his countrymen. ♦

"Pedophilia Chic" Reconsidered

The taboo against sex with children continues to erode.

By Mary Eberstadt

Until very, very recently, public questioning of the social prohibition against pedophilia—to say nothing of positive celebration of child molestation—was practically non-existent in American life. The reasons why are not opaque. To most people, the very word "pedophilia" summons forth a preternatural degree of horror and revulsion; and the criminal law that reflects those reactions has consistently treated the sexual molestation of minors as a serious and eminently punishable offense. So it is small wonder that, historically speaking, the taboo against using legal minors for sex was no more publicly controversial in the United States than the prohibitions against, say, cannibalism or bestiality. Those few partisans of the idea who did sometimes sally forth customarily found themselves regarded as the lowest of the social low, even by the criminal class.

This social consensus against the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, however—unlike those against, say, animal sex or incest—is apparently eroding, and this regardless of the fact that the vast majority of citizens do overwhelmingly abominate the thing. For elsewhere in the public square, the defense of adult-child sex—more accurately, man-*boy* sex—is now out in the open. Moreover, it is on parade in a number of places—therapeutic, literary, and academic circles; mainstream publishing houses and journals and magazines and bookstores—where the mere appearance of such ideas would until recently have been not only unthinkable, but in many cases, subject to prosecution.

Dramatic though this turnaround may be, it did not happen overnight. Four years ago in these pages, in an essay called "Pedophilia Chic," I described in some detail a number of then-recent public challenges to this particular taboo, all of them apparently isolated from one another.[1] Plainly, as the record even then showed, a surprising number of voices were willing to rise up on behalf of what advocates refer to as "man-boy love," or what most people call sexual abuse.

Yet while the examples themselves were easy enough to document, their larger meaning seemed far from clear. Why, in a post-Cold War world bursting with real political controversies, were some people intent on insisting that the time had come to rethink an issue that most people already vehemently, passionately, agreed about? And why was the taboo against pedophilia under particular pressure in the mid-1990s, of all times—an interval when, readers will recall, public attention to the sexual abuse of *girl* children had simultaneously reached an all-time high? Perhaps, or so it seemed reasonable to speculate, all that really lay behind these efforts was just that familiar postmodern idol, shock value. Perhaps this "pedophilia chic," I guessed then, was simply "the last gasp of a nihilism that has exhausted itself by chasing down every other avenue of liberation, only to find one last roadblock still manned by the bourgeoisie."

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[1] These included, among other events and soundings, a much-publicized Calvin Klein ad campaign that paid homage to the conventions of child pornography; the publication by a reputable publisher, Prometheus Books, of a book advocating "intergenerational intimacy," i.e. pedophilia; a still-notorious piece in the May 8, 1995, *New Republic* praising NAMBLA, the North American Man-Boy Love Association, for its "bravery" and suggesting that we lower the age of consent for boys; a sympathetic profile in *Vanity Fair* of a convicted child pornography trafficker; a sympathetic profile of a pedophile in a celebrated book by author Edmund White; and a review of the writings of several prominent gay authors, all published and acclaimed in mainstream circles, whose books featured sex scenes between men and underage boys. Literary critic Bruce Bawer was a minority voice objecting to the latter trend. See "Pedophilia Chic," The Weekly Standard, June 17, 1996.

Four-plus years and many other challenges to the same taboo later, it is clear that this hypothesis got something wrong. For one thing, no sustained public challenges have arisen over other primal taboos. Even more telling, if nihilism and nihilism alone were the explanation for public attempts to legitimize sex with *boy* children, then we would expect the appearance of related attempts to legitimize sex with *girl* children; and these we manifestly do not see.[2] Nobody, but nobody, has been allowed to make the case for girl pedophilia with the backing of any reputable institution. Publishing houses are not putting out acclaimed anthologies and works of fiction that include excerpts of men having sex with young girls. Psychologists and psychiatrists are not competing with each other to publish studies demonstrating that the sexual abuse of girls is inconsequential; or, indeed, that it ought not even be defined as "abuse."

Two examples from the last few weeks will suffice to show the double standard here. In the November 12 *New York Times Book Review*, a writer found it unremarkable to observe of his subject, biographer Gavin Lambert, that when "Lambert was a schoolboy of 11, a teacher initiated him [into homosexuality], and he 'felt no shame or fear, only gratitude.'" It is unimaginable that *New York Times* editors would allow a reviewer to describe an 11-year-old girl being sexually "initiated" by *any* adult (in that case, "initiation" would be called "sexual abuse"). Similarly, in mid-December the *New York Times Magazine* delivered a cover piece about gay teenagers in cyberspace which was so blasé about the older men who seek out boys in chat rooms that it dismissed those potential predators as mere "oldies." Again, one can only imagine the public outcry had the same magazine published a story taking the same so-what approach to online solicitation, off-line trysts, and pornography "sharing" between anonymous men and underage *girls*.

No: As was true four years ago, contemporary efforts to rationalize, legitimize, and justify pedophilia are about boys. Forget about abstractions like nihilism; what the record shows is something more prosaic. The reason why the public is being urged to reconsider boy pedophilia is that this "question," settled though it may be in the opinions and laws of the rest of the country, is demonstrably not yet settled within certain parts of the gay rights movement. The more that movement has entered the mainstream, the more this "question" has bubbled forth from that previously distant realm into the public square. It should go without saying, though under the circumstances it cannot, that many, many leaders and members of that movement draw a firm line at consenting adults, want no part of any such "debate," and are in fact disgusted and appalled by it. Then there are other opinions.

[2]The antinomian and arguably malignant exercise of Nabokov's *Lolita*, written 45 years ago, has not only not been surpassed, but remains so controversial today that the latest Hollywood version of the story was not even released in movie theaters in the United States.

I

Let us begin with one recent public challenge to the taboo against pedophilia that did garner the public attention it deserved, albeit belatedly, and which demonstrates both the boy-specific character of today's revisionism and the gulf between popular and other views of the subject. This was the episode that began with the publication in July 1998 of an essay in the American Psychological Association's (APA) prestigious *Psychological Bulletin* called "A Meta-Analytic Examination of Assumed Properties of Child Sexual Abuse Using College Samples" and co-authored by Bruce Rind (Temple University), Robert Bauserman (University of Michigan), and Philip Tromovitch (University of Pennsylvania).

The density of its professional jargon and 30-plus pages aside, the argument of "Meta-Analytic" was straightforward enough: that the common belief that "child sexual abuse causes intense harm, regardless of gender" was not supported by the studies the authors cited; that, to the contrary, "negative effects [of child sexual abuse] were neither pervasive nor typically intense, and that men reacted much less negatively than women." The article also criticized the "indiscriminate use of this term [child sexual abuse] and related terms such as *victim* and *perpetrator*," suggesting instead that the child's feelings about sex acts with adults should be taken into account, and that "a willing encounter with positive reactions would be labeled simply *adult-child* sex."

What was equally radical about "Meta-Analytic," though less discussed at the time, was its specific comparison of pedophilia to "behaviors such as masturbation, homosexuality, fellatio, cunnilingus, and sexual promiscuity." All such, the authors noted, "were codified as pathological in the first edition of the American Psychiatric Association's (1952) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*"; and all are so codified no more. What this analogy tacitly suggested, of course, was the assurance that pedophilia, too, would someday take its place at the liberationist table. In the meantime, as the authors put it, "This history of conflating morality and law with science in the area of human sexuality by psychologists and others indicates a strong need for caution in scientific inquiries of sexual behaviors that remain taboo, with *child*

sexual abuse being a prime example [emphasis added]."

As MIT psychologist G.E. Zuriff observed later in an essay for the *Public Interest*, "It is not difficult to see how these ideas would antagonize not only Dr. Laura [Schlessinger] but the public at large." For although the incendiary potential of asking people to give pedophilia a second look may or may not have been grasped by the APA authorities who accepted the article for publication, no such ambiguity marked the reaction of the lay public. Most people were made aware of "Meta-Analytic" in March 1999, when Schlessinger devoted the first of two radio talks to attacking the article, and their own livid view of the matter was made known in the course of a multi-dimensional public uproar that took months to die down. The denouement was a series of unusual events, including a public castigation of the American Psychological Association by majority whip Tom DeLay; a House vote to condemn the "Meta-Analytic" essay itself (355-0, with 13 abstentions); and a highly unusual public rejection by the APA of the piece's conclusions, along with a promise to acquire an independent evaluation of the article.

In retrospect, there were two significant and little-noticed facts in all this. One was not so much the schism that this controversy revealed between elite-therapeutic and popular thinking about pedophilia, but rather that the schism itself had gone unnoticed for so long. For shocking though it may have been to the general public, "Meta-Analytic" was in fact only the latest in a very long series of professional attempts to revise therapeutic conceptions of boy pedophilia, attempts of which most lay readers remain quite ignorant.

Professionals in the field know better. Fifteen years ago, for example, in his careful research volume *Child Sexual Abuse*, noted authority David Finkelhor was already drawing attention to the "body of opinion and research [that] has emerged in recent years which is trying hard to vindicate homosexual pedophilia." To read Finkelhor's sources on the subject—or, for that matter, to read the notes in the heavily sourced "Meta-Analytic" itself—is to see exactly what he means. In their call to redefine "abuse" as "contact," for example, Rind, Bauserman, and Tromovitch were merely resurrecting research and conceptual work stretching back over two decades; similarly, their distinctions between boys' and girls' supposed experiences of abuse have a pedigree that begins with Kinsey and branches out dramatically in professional publications of the last 25 years. The authors of "Meta-Analytic" may have made their points boldly enough to get noticed; but that is the only academic novelty to which they could truly lay claim. The real news about the normalization of pedophilia displayed in "Meta-Analytic" was that *nothing about it was conceptually new*.

The second peculiarity of the outrage over "Meta-Analytic," which also went unnoticed at the time, was that it was not, in fact, universally shared. The notorious North American Man-Boy Love Association (NAMBLA), predictably enough, cheered the study as "good news." Less explicable was the reaction within the gay press, which not only failed to distance its movement from the study, but went on to excoriate the APA's critics (particularly Laura Schlessinger). This was the same approach taken, independently, by at least two mainstream—and relatively conservative—gay journalists.

Writing in the *New York Times Magazine*, prominent author and activist Andrew Sullivan complained about the "sour reception" that had greeted the study. After all, he wrote, Rind et al. had found that "lasting psychological trauma among adult survivors of abuse, particularly for men, was much less than feared." This, according to Sullivan, should be "a reason for relief." Instead, and what he evidently found disagreeable, "outraged members of the religious right accused the APA of tolerating pedophilia" and "launched a crusade to punish the organization." He concluded sarcastically: "That'll teach them to look on the bright side."

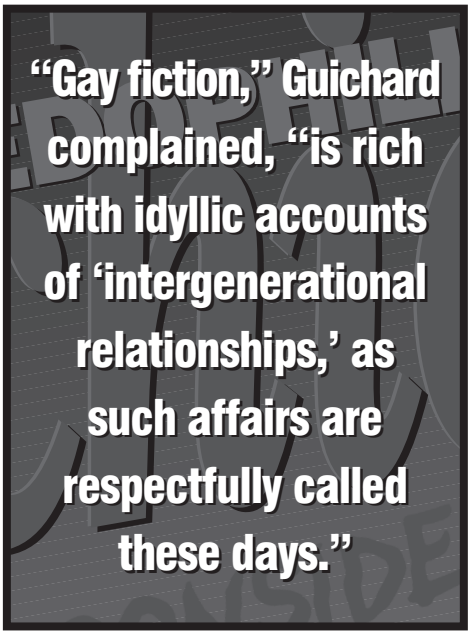
Another writer outraged over the outrage about "Meta-Analytic" was respected reporter and political analyst Jonathan Rauch. In his commentary on the controversy published in the *National Journal*, Rauch roundly defended the study. It was the critics of the "Meta-Analytic" piece, Rauch wrote, who were "turning out stomach-churning stuff." The vote in Congress—as opposed, say, to what Rind et al. had written—was "faintly sinister." Like the authors of the piece itself, Rauch advocated that, in the name of "science," researchers should "abandon the current custom of referring to all adult sexual encounters with minors, regardless of the circumstances, as 'child sexual abuse,'" because they could "perform finer-grained analyses if they used 'abuse' to denigrate injurious or unwilling encounters. Other encounters," Rauch echoed, "could be called 'adult-child sex' or 'adult-adolescent sex.'"

To his credit, Rauch did report that "in 1989, when he was 23 and just out of college, Bauserman [one of the Meta-Analytic authors] published a cross-cultural comparison of attitudes toward man-boy sexual relations in a Dutch journal called *Paidika*." This journal, in Rauch's description, "had taken pro-pedophilia stands"—something which he admitted "raises red flags."

But at the same time Rauch, like Sullivan, avoided the real issue at hand—that "Meta-Analytic" quite obviously aimed at de-stigmatizing boy pedophilia itself. Even more startling, though, was his bland depiction of *Paidika*. This is not exactly a journal in which pro-pedophile ideas have somehow surfaced accidentally. It *is* a publication dedicat-

ed to the phenomenon of "boy-loving," the most prominent such "scholarly journal" in the world, whose longtime editor, the late Edward Brongersma, was a convicted pedophile as well as the author of a two-volume pedophile classic, *Loving Boys*. (To describe this as a journal which "had taken pro-pedophilia stands" is akin to describing THE WEEKLY STANDARD as a magazine where conservative arguments have reportedly appeared.) And, of course, the qualifier "23 and just out of college" served to soften Bauserman's earlier appearance in *Paidika*, suggesting it was an excess of youth.

Both Sullivan and Rauch are not only prominent gay journalists but also leading proponents of the worldview to which the gay rights movement owes much of its recent and stunning political success—the argument that, as Sullivan's *Virtually Normal* puts it, "homosexuals . . . have the equivalent emotional needs and temptations of heterosexuals." Both writers are also members of the Independent Gay Forum, an institution aimed at "forging a mainstream identity"; and both have frequently broken ranks with the leftists and radicals who dominate gay activism. That two such mainstream authors should mock the public outcry against that APA article illustrates something noteworthy: that in place of a social consensus against pedophilia per se, a separate option—call it anti-anti-pedophilia—appears to have taken root. According to that view, the problem is less sex with minors than the people who declare themselves against it—Dr. Laura fans, congressmen, dissident therapists, religious types, and anyone else who does not grasp the necessity of putting words like "child sexual abuse" in quotes.



II

In some of the clinical and therapeutic literature on pedophilia, it has become customary to distinguish between "ephebophilia," or sexual attraction to postpubescent children and teenagers, and "pedophilia" proper, meaning attraction to prepubescent children. Both forms are exhibited more than occasionally in another part of the written world, namely gay fiction. "Fiction" here emphatically does not mean pornography as such, but the kind of literature authored by self-consciously gay writers, published by reputable houses, and reviewed respectfully in the mainstream press. Again, it must be emphasized that numerous gay authors of note do not positively portray sex between adults and minors, and ipso facto are not part of this discussion.

Plenty of authors do cross the line, though. "Gay fiction," Philip Guichard complained in an article for the *Village Voice* last summer, "is rich with idyllic accounts of 'intergenerational relationships,' as such affairs are respectfully called these days." Over four years ago, "Pedophilia Chic" quoted passages from the works of several acclaimed authors—including Edmund White, the late Paul Monette, and Larry Kramer—which frankly and often sympathetically portrayed men seeking and having sex with underage boys. Today there are many more such examples to be found in gay fiction, all verifiable by a trip to the local chain bookstore.

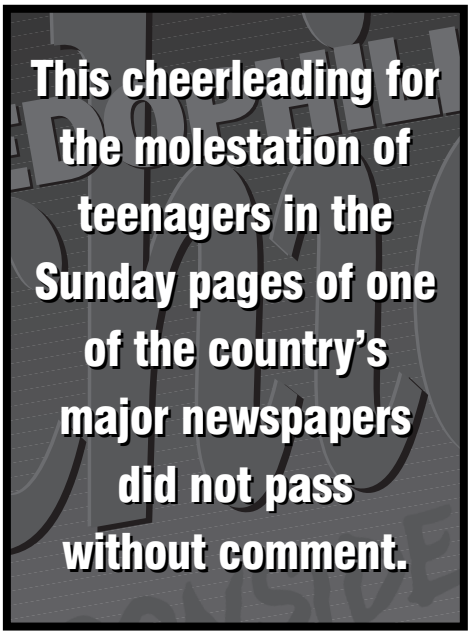
Last year, for example, St. Martins Press published a novel called *The Coming Storm* by Paul Russell, a professor of English at Vassar and the author of three previously well-received works of fiction. The drama of this tale revolves around something that remains an imprisonable offense in almost every state—a sexual "affair" between a troubled 15-year-old boy (Noah) and his 25-year-old gay boarding school teacher (Tracy). (The age of 15, incidentally, is no definitive limit in Russell's narrative. In the course of the book, Tracy also fantasizes about 14-year-old boys.)

The Coming Storm became the object of effusive praise by award-winning reviewer Dennis Drabelle in the *Washington Post Book World* (August 15, 1999). *The Coming Storm*, Drabelle enthused, "takes off from a sensational subject—forbidden sexuality—to arrive at unexpected heights and subtleties." It "persuades the reader" that "the sexual relationship between Noah and Tracy is not only not harmful to either but a boon to the precocious junior partner, who becomes a better, more engaged student after the affair gets under way." What is "troublesome" about the book, according to Drabelle, is

[3]In response, Drabelle wrote that he "supported the laws that protect children from the sexual advances of predatory adults," that nothing in his review "says or implies otherwise," and that the reader is "entitled to his opinion" about whether "any such affair would inexorably result in wreckage."

not that anyone is "corrupted" by what happens ("no one is"), but that "it is apt to be stereotyped, *not least by the legal system that makes it a crime* [emphasis added]."

This cheerleading for the sexual molestation of teenagers in the Sunday pages of one of the country's major newspapers did not pass without comment. One reader berated Drabelle in the letters column for "strongly implying that child abuse, when it takes place between two males, should no longer be viewed by the public as either a social offense or a crime."[3] Yet as even a partial survey of related literature shows, what is truly anomalous about this case—of a mainstream reviewer in a mainstream family newspaper ratifying sex between grown men and boys—was that anyone bothered to be bothered about it at all. Other writers, including prominent writers among them, have gone further still, and with even less consequence.



Consider David Leavitt, one of the best known of contemporary gay authors, whose numerous novels and short stories, among them *The Lost Language of Cranes* and, most recently, *Martin Bauman; or, A Sure Thing*, are routinely reviewed in the better journals and magazines. In fact, it would be hard to think of a gay fiction writer more consistently represented in mainstream publishing.

For that reason, it is all the more surprising to read what this ostensibly mainstream author chose to write in his introduction to the equally mainstream *Penguin Book of International Gay Writing* (1995, edited by Mark Mitchell). There, in the course of describing what the anthology includes, Leavitt notes matter-of-factly that "Another 'forbidden' topic from which European writers seem less likely to shrink is the love of older men for young boys." He then draws attention to one particular book excerpted in the volume, *When Jonathan Died*, by Tony Duvert. "The coolly assured narrative" of this work, Leavitt informs, "compels the reader to imagine the world from a perspective he might ordinarily condemn." Duvert, writes Leavitt, "offers us a homosexual Lolita—one in which the child is seducer as much as seduced."

The object of this praise by one of America's leading gay novelists, appearing in one of publishing's most prestigious book series, is the tale of a man and boy who are living together in Italy. The scene selected is sexually graphic. And the age of this child, whom Leavitt considers "seducer as much as seduced"? He is—page 427 in the hard cover edition—"hardly seven."

Another seemingly representative collection of gay literature, this one on the shelf at Barnes & Noble and also apparently selling without comment, is *The Gay Canon: Great Books Every Gay Man Should Read*, an Anchor Book published by Doubleday in 1998. Its editor/author, Robert Drake, is a novelist and editor of other anthologies who has won the Lambda Literary Award. Like the Penguin anthology edited by Leavitt, Drake's book too strives for canonical status, aspiring to offer a roadmap to the most important texts of gay history.

As it turns out, several of the texts that editor Drake thought worth including feature scenes of man-boy sex—again, what most of the rest of the public calls abuse or molestation. One work is something called *The Carnivorous Lamb* by Agustin Gomez-Arcos, described as a book about an incestuous relationship between a boy and his older brother (to Drake, "the best, most complex yet satisfying novel of filial love ever written"). Another text, this one by writer Matthew Stadler—described as the recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship for his first novel—is called *The Dissolution of Nicholas Dee*. This book, says editor Drake, "is an operatic adventure into the realms of love, personality, ambition and art . . . a pure joy to read." Its protagonist is "a pedophile's dream: the mind of a man in the body of a boy." Drake also excerpts and discusses William S. Burroughs's nightmarish *The Wild Boys: A Book of the Dead*, the pederastic violence of which defies description. Yet this work, according to Drake, "tears straight to the heart of one of the greatest sources, community-wide, of 1990s gay angst: What to do with men who love boys?"[4]

Still another example of how standards are being lowered by a major publisher and respected writer—this one from academia and available at Borders—is *A History of*

[4]Drake's own answer: "Even as the homo culture of this *fin de siècle* seeks to puritanically clamp down on boy-love advocates, it riddles itself with a fixation on lithe, boyish sexuality and smooth-chested youthful attractiveness—and the perpetration of same as the physical and erotic ideal apparent in clubs, online profiles, porn films and mainstream advertisements. It is nothing more than blatant hypocrisy."

Gay Literature: The Male Tradition, published in 1998 by Yale University Press. This book, "the first full-scale account of gay male literature, across cultures, languages and from ancient times to the present," is authored by Gregory Woods, described on the jacket as "the foremost gay poet working in Britain today." It includes a longish chapter on "Boys and Boyhood" which is a seemingly definitive account of pro-pedophile literary works, ranging over texts from the platonic *Death in Venice* to the *noir* likes of the aforementioned Tony Duvert. Nothing is questioned, much less condemned, in the course of Woods's account of these works. The only moral ambiguity that occurs to him concerns not the boy but the *man* in the equation. Woods concludes: "By playing [i.e., having sex] with boys, the man remains boyish. Whether you regard this as a way of retreating from life or, on the contrary, *as a way of engaging with it at its most honest and least corrupted level*, depends on which writer you consult at any given time [emphasis added]."

III

As for the related matter of gay non-fiction, here too, judging by the public domain, the subject of boy pedophilia has a manifest niche.

One book only recently available in the "gay studies" section of a Borders in downtown D.C., for example, is a peculiar classic of a sort entitled *Male Inter-Generational Intimacy: Historical, Socio-Psychological, and Legal Perspectives*, edited by the aforementioned pedophile icon Edward Brongersma and two colleagues. This book, according to one of its jacket endorsements, "shed[s] critical light on the broad spectrum of man-boy love and its place in ancient and contemporary societies." In other words, it is a series of briefs using scientistic polemics in an effort to rationalize the sexual molestation of boy children. The article abstracts speak for themselves. ("Pedophilia is always considered by mainstream society as one form of sexual abuse of children. However, analysis of the personal accounts provided by pedophiles suggests that these experiences could be understood differently." "The incidence of violence is very low in pedophile contacts with boys. The influence can be strong in lasting relationships; it can either be wholesome or unwholesome." And so on.)

Of course, this opus that "gay studies" bookshelves now reserve space for did not spring from nowhere. The book itself grew out of two issues of the American *Journal of Homosexuality* (Vol. 20, Nos. 1/2, 1990) dedicated to the pondering of "male inter-generational love." Here again, an ostensibly mainstream gay vehicle was put to the service of advocating pedophilia. In fact, the case of the *Journal of Homosexuality* is particularly interesting as a case study of how a pernicious idea can spread. The editor of this reputable gay journal, John P. DeCecco, is a psychologist at San Francisco State University. DeCecco is favorably quoted in the introduction to *Male Inter-Generational Intimacy* for having praised the "enormously nurturant relationship" that can result from pedophile-boy contact. DeCecco is also on the editorial board of *Paidika*.

As one would expect, such cross-pollination in gay fiction and criticism is verifiable many times over via the inhuman efficiencies of cyber-correlation. It was not immediately obvious, for example—in fact, it came as a surprise—that typing "Paidika" into an ordinary search engine would turn up a reference to Gay Men's Press bestsellers; but it did not take long to see why. For one of the books on the Gay Men's Press bestseller list turns out to be *Dares to Speak: History and Contemporary Perspectives on Boy-Love*, edited by Joseph Geraci—all of whose chapters but one appeared originally in *Paidika* itself. Another book on the same bestseller list is *Some Boys*, described as a "memoir of a lover of boys" that "evokes the author's young friends across four decades and as many continents." Another on the same list is *For a Lost Soldier* by Rudi van Dantzig, advertised as involving sex between an 11-year-old boy and a Canadian soldier in Holland in 1944. There are more.

Surfing also makes plain that the better-known gay organizations, all of whom stand dead set against any conflation of homosexuality and pedophilia, are nonetheless sending mixed messages about what is and is not off-limits for the underage. Most of them, for instance, now have "youth sections" on their websites for and about legal minors. The justification for this heightened attention to the young is to ameliorate the angst of gay teenagers. At the risk of stating the obvious, though, it is hard to see how this purpose is served by encouraging boys to act and think sexually at ever younger ages, which is an all but unavoidable side effect of the type of "outreach" these sites engage in.

Consider, for example, the website of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), one of the more respected gay rights organizations in the country. It is just a click of the mouse from PFLAG's "useful links" to a site where one can read the "coming-out" stories of children aged 10, 11, and 12. Similarly, the "youth" section of GLAAD's publication list (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) simply assumes that minors are sexually autonomous—and active. One piece ("Landmark Survey Shows Gay Youth Coming Out Earlier than Ever") notes approvingly that most children now "realize" their orientation at age 12. Another piece, "Lesbian and Gay Youth Find Safe Place in Cyberspace," counsels: "Don't believe much of the hype about how cyberspace is populated with pedophiles." These citations are taken from just

the first two pages of GLAAD's 15-page list of publications for and about "gay youth."

At OutProud—another site recommended and linked by leading gay organizations—visitors are routed to a comic strip called "Queer Boys." It features two boys who are said to be 16 and look younger. They set off for Manhattan ("Let's run away to New York, where it's safe to be Queer!!" "Kewl!"), where they triumph over evildoers (i.e., parents and reparative therapists) and find happiness at last thanks to the *habitués* of a bar in the West Village. ("A gay rock club! That's so cool! Damn! I wish we were old enough to get in!!" says one of the boys. "Damn those politicians! Damn them all to hell!!" replies the other.)

For a final example of how pedophilia is being defined down, consider *XY* magazine—which would doubtless have run afoul of the obscenity laws until very recently. Started just four years ago, *XY* is now, according to its founder and publisher Peter Ian Cummings, the "third largest gay magazine in the U.S., selling over 60,000 copies per year and hav[ing] more than 200,000 readers." (These numbers are unaudited, but would put *XY* on a par with the *Advocate* in circulation, though lower than *Out* magazine's 120,000.) Cummings also reports that "you can find *XY* on sale in Borders, Tower Records, Virgin Megastores, B. Dalton, Barnes & Noble, Waldenbooks, and many others."

What gives *XY* its unprecedented niche is that here, for the first time, is a mass-market magazine "officially targeted toward 12-29 year old young gay men," every issue of which, as one admiring journalist puts it, "features scantily clad young men in several photo spreads and on the cover." Then there is the non-photo content. The first issue was stamped "Underage." Another issue included a sympathetic pro-and-con interview with a prominent member of NAMBLA. An article in another issue was titled "F— the Age of Consent." There is also a smattering of self-help that can only make minors easier to find—for example, advice about what kids should do if their parents install a filtering system that prevents them from reaching gay cyberspace (answer: get around it).

In sum, if one had taken on the challenge of *designing* a magazine for pedophiles, it would probably look a lot like *XY*, which is why its market niche and evident reader support invite reflection. So too, for obvious reasons, does the public (gay) reaction to all this. On the one hand, *Out* magazine referred to *XY*'s debut as a "dubious achievement" and suggested that it was equivalent to child pornography. Similarly, Philip Guichard complained in his *Village Voice* piece (headlined "I Hate Older Men"): "Mainstream gay culture dresses up its kiddie porn in a pretense of serving teens. As nice as it is to believe that magazines like *XY* and *Joey* [a recent competitor] are actually consumed by gay teens, it's obvious to me that the shirtless kids in provocative poses who fill their glossy pages are there for older men." What's more, *XY*'s publisher has complained of "pedophobia" on the part of his gay critics; and most advertisers, by Cummings's account, including those popular with the male gay market (Calvin Klein, Abercrombie & Fitch, the Gap), have demurred from buying space in its pages. Apparently, the fear of supporting child sex, or the fear of appearing to do so—or both—remain potent corporate motivators.[5]

At the same time, however, to judge by the endorsements on *XY*'s website, numerous other observers have weighed in favorably. The *San Francisco Examiner* says that of all magazines, *XY* is "the one most on the cutting edge of change." The *Ft. Lauderdale Express Gay News* calls it "the most courageous magazine in America." The general-interest entertainment guide *Time Out New York* observes that "*XY* has boldly established itself as a unique publication that tackles sex, romance, and other issues facing gay teens and men." But perhaps the most accurate indication of *XY*'s community standing comes from the business publication *Advertising Age*, which noted: "*XY* is playing a significant role in mainstream online media. . . . The magazine's site can be accessed directly via America Online, and the magazine is also providing content to the 'youth channel' on PlanetOut.com." This success is a sign of the times. Some of the largest and most respected gay organizations in the country now list *XY*, of all things, as a "resource" for gay youth—this, alongside a burgeoning number of websites also aimed at minors and replete with personal ads, chat rooms, "pen pals," and other forms of anonymous contact rife with the potential for subterfuge.

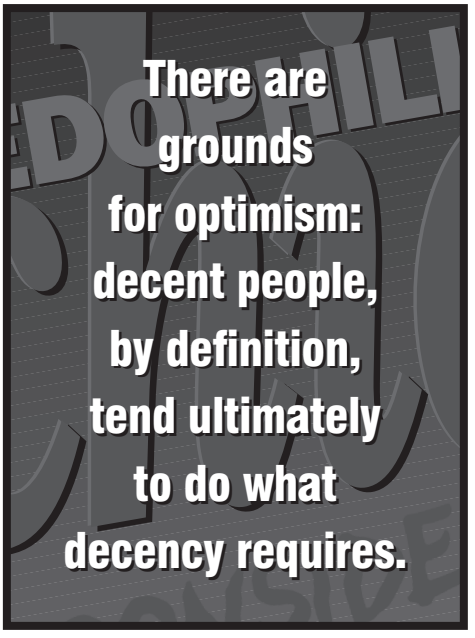
IV

It is tempting to throw up one's hands on reading a litany like this one, and to blame it all on our anything-goes postmodern life. But this is determinism masquerading as pessimism, and a determinism that does not fit the facts. Today's pressures to normalize pedophilia are not the result of some omnipotent and unstoppable taboo-devouring social and moral juggernaut; they are occurring one bookstore, one magazine, one publisher and advertiser, one author and editor and consumer at a time. Case by case, given a more enlightened public, it is not hard to imagine these decisions—like the one that led to Penguin's putting its imprimatur on a pedophilic sex scene, or like the misguided efforts by some gay organiza-

[5]According to the publisher, Virgin records, Tower Records, and Smith Kline Beecham have been among *XY*'s few paid advertisers.

tions to refer teens to unsavory and perhaps even unsafe websites—being made otherwise. Such a turnaround is particularly imaginable in the case of chain bookstore merchandisers, who routinely place pro-pedophile works on the gay-interest shelves—a phenomenon that thoughtful movement activists must find outrageous.

It would help immensely if those members of the gay rights movement who have not realized what is being committed in their name—along with those who do realize what is going on, and who deplore it—join forces against this trend. Here too, one can imagine progress being made; decent people, by definition, tend ultimately to do what decency requires. When "Pedophilia Chic" appeared four years ago, for example, a poignant response soon came from Paul W. Simmons, the political director of the Log Cabin Republicans in Houston. He feared that the piece would leave readers with the "erroneous impression that the gay male community endorses sexual exploitation of adolescent males." The letter continued: "Unfortunately, the homosexual community's political leadership, which is dominated by radical leftists, has failed to denounce loudly the North American Man-Boy Love Association and other nefarious groups. But on this issue, as with many others, the leadership is removed from the constituency it purports to serve. For a sizable majority of gay men, sexual relations with children are viewed as morally appalling, and the adult practitioners of it are seen as pathological deviants."



These are words with which any reasonable person will agree. They also raise the question of why—particularly in light of the astonishing political and social victories of the last several years—leaders of that movement have not been more scrupulous about some of its ranks.

In an interesting pro-movement 1996 book, *Perfect Enemies: The Religious Right, the Gay Movement, and the Politics of the 1990s*, authors John Gallagher and Christopher Bull propose an answer of sorts to this question. Most national gay groups, they note, opted for respectability as the movement grew, particularly by passing resolutions denouncing NAMBLA and all it stood for. At the same time, according to the authors, pedophilia advocates did enjoy lingering protection among parts of the movement because "many thoughtful activists who opposed NAMBLA's goals could not escape the suspicion that to denounce the organization would be to mimic society's condemnation of their own sexual orientation."

Whatever its origins, the reluctance by some activists to draw such lines means this: Today, instead of standing foursquare with the rest of the public against this evil, the gay rights movement appears divided. A few proclaim boys to be sexual fair game. Influential others disavow pedophilia per se, but tolerate its advocacy on grounds of political solidarity with persecuted groups. Still others, in the relatively new development noted earlier, appear to have opted for a kind of anti-anti-pedophilia, according to which the "real" problems for the movement are somehow Dr. Laura and the religious right, rather than the facts to which such critics draw attention: e.g., that efforts are being made to destigmatize the sexual exploitation of boy children; or that positive portrayals of "inter-generational sex," which are extremely rare in the rest of the culture, are not rare in gay literature and journalism. And, once again obviously, there are the many, many other people—representative of that "sizable majority" of which the Log Cabin Republican wrote—who must be as distressed by such advocacy as he is, but appear undecided what to do about it.

Today's gay rights advocates preside over what is probably the single most successful domestic political movement of the post-Cold War era. The sine qua non of its dramatic advance has been the tolerance of the civic majority, for whom the movement's most stirring appeals—to equity and fair treatment and "a place at the table," as Bruce Bawer put it—have turned out to resonate more deeply than even most activists could have imagined. This is not to say that public unanimity reigns here, any more than it does over the agendas of other special interest groups. Reasonable people, both inside and outside of the gay rights movement, disagree in good faith on profound points—from the interpretation of Judeo-Christian teachings, to the implications of civil unions, to the appropriate public health measures in the wake of AIDS, to the judicial propriety of hate-crime laws.

But it is not and will not be the case that this same tolerance can be parlayed into support for predators. About pedophilia there remains one and only one proposition that commands public assent. It is this: *If the sexual abuse of minors isn't wrong, then nothing is*. ♦

Lights, Camera, Intifada

The violence in the Mideast has become a war of images, in which the press is the key to victory.

By Stephanie Gutmann

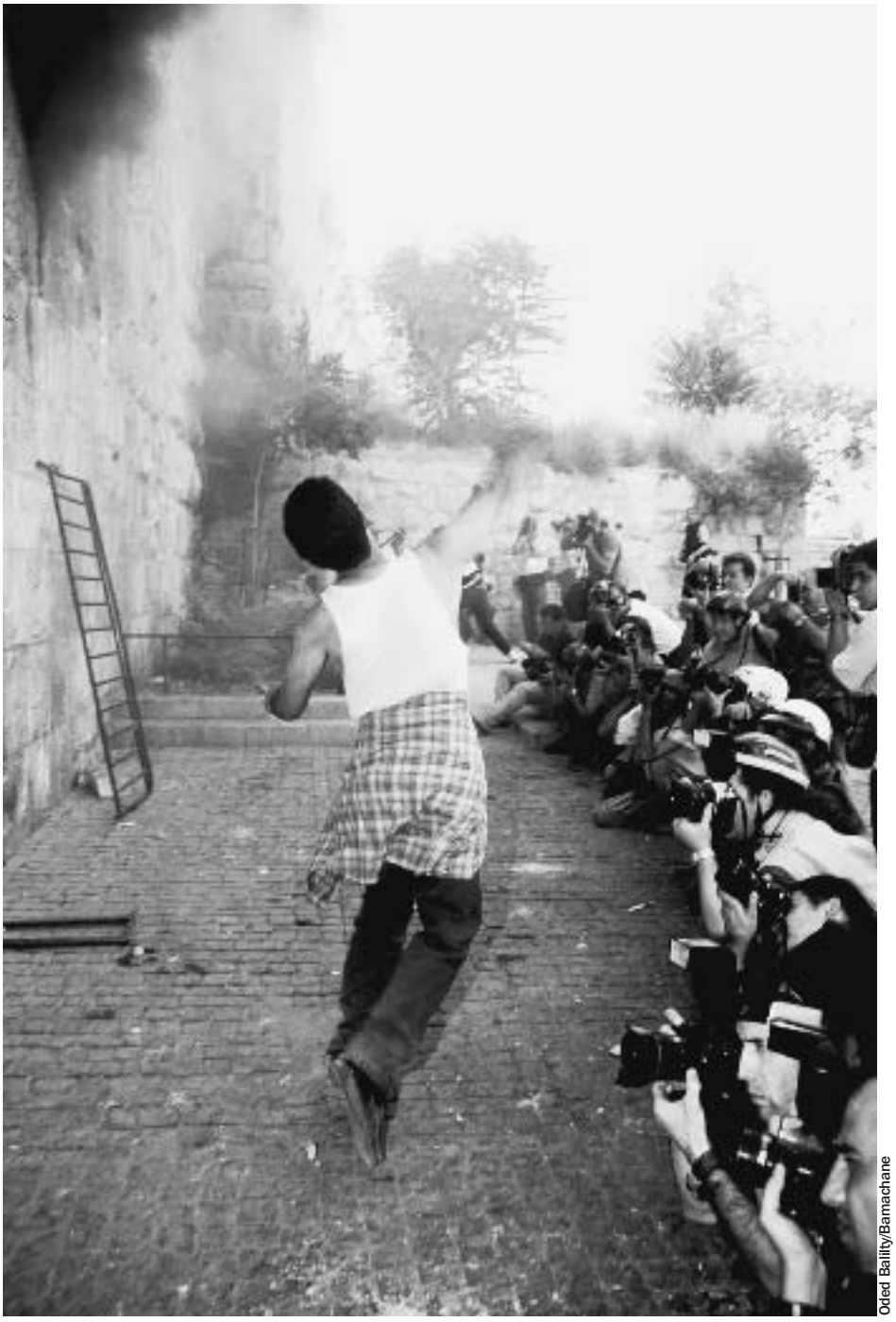
Day after day the seemingly incontrovertible evidence of Israel's brutality rolls in. The snippets of videotape bounced around the world by CNN, BBC World News, and Sky TV are nearly always the same: A mob of dark-skinned teenagers armed with rocks pit themselves against phalanxes of faceless soldiers who respond by aiming rifles. Often, newscasts then cut from the videotape (as Ted Koppel's *Nightline* did recently) to Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi thundering, "You cannot shoot our children and get away with it," or Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat decrying the "daily massacre of Palestinians by Israel," and TV delivers a message that hits adrenal systems around the world like a dose of amyl nitrate. As a foreign news-following acquaintance puts it, in a typical reaction: How can Israel want peace, when "all I see is the IDF shooting children?"

Spokesmen for Israel's foreign ministry, its police, and its military (the Israeli Defense Force, or IDF) who set up a 24/7 press center in early October to cope with the flood of journalists there to cover Intifada II say they're "fighting a war on two fronts." There is the actual shooting war, where aggression is direct, weapons conventional, and damage visible and measurable. The other front is in the ethersphere, the digital bazaar where freelance photographers offer their most dramatic images and footage to the publication or agency that bids highest. More than almost any other commodity, the trade in images is truly global. Photos are ready for sale faster than news copy, and they need no translation and fewer intermediaries. The Al Aksa Intifada as it is called (because it started when Ariel Sharon marched at a religious site known as Al Aksa) has been fought with images—the picture of the father and his dying son plastered against a wall to escape cross-fire, the Palestinian man proudly displaying his hands covered with the blood of the Israeli soldier—and on this front, Israelis admit they are getting clobbered.

But there are many reasons why the ubiquitous boys-throwing-stones-at-faceless-rifle-toting-soldiers photo does not tell the whole story. If we had a John Madden of the Intifada, with a grease pencil and a transparent overlay, he could freeze the frame and annotate the pictures. He could draw an arrow to the upper right-hand corner of the frame, for instance, and point out a smudge of black—an inch of rifle barrel protruding from a nearby minaret, a sign that a sniper is perched there. He might draw a circle around a man in the dense center of a crowd, a man who (one can see on closer inspection) is older and armed with something more than a slingshot. (Terrorist groups and ragtag rebel armies from Somalia to Iraq have learned to surround themselves with civilians, both for cover and to discourage the other side from shooting.) He might analyze minute differences in clothing and bearing and show us that some of these young boys are not just "children" drawn by what looks like a game, but militia who have been groomed Hitler Youth-style to kill Jews or die trying. He might point out that the Palestinian Authority ambulance parked on the side of the rock-throwing action is here not just to ferry the wounded; PA ambulances have been used as command and control vehicles, actually delivering "troops" and carrying the makings of Molotov cocktails.

There's another element one has to understand to make sense of the kids-versus-soldiers tableau. "It is a subject that no reporters want to talk about," says Noam Katz, a spokesman for Israel's foreign ministry press center and a man who has known most of the region's bureau chiefs for years. One has to understand that photographers and to a much smaller extent print reporters (everyone recognizes that pictures are more important) operate

Stephanie Gutmann is the author of The Kinder, Gentler Military *(Scribner).*



Oded Balilty/Bamachane

The rest of the picture: a well-photographed combatant

under unwritten rules of engagement when they work in troubled areas like the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Reporting in a combat zone is dangerous to begin with, of course. Camera crews often go out wearing crash helmets and body armor (during the first two months of Intifada II, two newspeople were shot and seriously wounded). But fear is amplified (and the investigative spirit curdled) by a pattern of intimidation of journalists who get connected—sometimes very loosely—with stories the terrorist groups who control these areas don't like. Take the photos the militiamen want and you are generally fine, even helpfully ushered around; take pictures that show Palestinians in roles other than victim, and things can get nasty quite fast.

News photographers have been harassed by Israelis as well. The Committee to Protect Journalists reports that Israeli settlers threw stones at a car driven by two Arab photographers, breaking a window and hitting one of the men in the shoulder. The photographers said IDF soldiers stood nearby and did nothing. Palestinian and Arab journalists are reportedly challenged and detained rather often, although it should be kept in mind that Palestinians as a group are subject to restrictions instituted by Israel to combat terrorism. Western photographers have complained of being kept out of certain areas by IDF soldiers. The Committee to Protect Journalists reports also that a number of reporters and cameramen who have been grazed or hit by bullets claim IDF soldiers intentionally aimed at them. But there is still a clear difference between working in Israel-controlled areas and Palestinian ones. Israel, though of course not perfect, is still a modern, Western-style democracy, and there are channels of accountability.

In mid-November, an American photographer was seriously wounded by an IDF bullet aimed directly at her. Yola Monakhov was looking for pictures in Bethlehem. A squad of IDF soldiers were also there, because of a riot that had taken place earlier in the day. Monakhov was with a small group of Palestinian boys who were breaking pieces of concrete into throwable chunks when the IDF

squad appeared from around a corner. A boy yelled "run" and Monakhov instinctively bolted in the direction everyone else was running. One of the soldiers fired a shot and hit Monakhov in the back. But IDF soldiers are not allowed to shoot live rounds (as opposed to rubber bullets) unless they are in mortal danger. As a result, the soldier and his commanding officer are being court-martialed, and the Israelis are paying Monakhov's hospital bills.

The territories, on the other hand, are like the Wild West. Police protection is at best unreliable. Self-interest and brute force rule—as Jean Pierre Martin, a Belgian producer, found out one day in early October. Martin, who works for RTL TV1 (Radio TV Luxembourg), and his crew were on their way to Ramallah. They were at a Palestinian-Israeli clash site when four young men pulled up in "a blue Chrysler van" and began to give orders to stone-throwing children. Then the men produced Molotov cocktails from their car and began handing them out. (Kids on the scene later told Martin that the men were from Al Fatah, Yasser Arafat's faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization.) Other crews on hand apparently didn't see this development or didn't consider it newsworthy, because Martin was the only producer who told his crew to begin filming.

After a few seconds, one of the young men saw the filming and strode over; several seconds after that, all the people on the scene, including the stone-throwing children, surrounded the crew. The men took the camera from the hands of the cameraman and disappeared with it. Meanwhile the crowd began to surge around them, trying to hit them. One youth got his hands around Martin's neck and started choking him. A Palestinian cameraman who had been on the scene working for an American company came "to rescue us," Martin says. Finally the Palestinian cameraman was able to calm "this very nervous situation." Martin and his crew were taken to see the PA chief of police. Their camera was already there. Once again, the Palestinian cameraman began to argue on their behalf—eventually, after they assured everyone that the tape of the "cocktail incident" had been erased, the policeman agreed to return the camera. That night, Martin opened his segment by saying, "This is what you would have seen if we still had the tape . . ."

Martin continued to return to the area, but about two weeks later, just after he and his crew passed the Israeli guard shack at the border checkpoint on the way to Ramallah, they noticed that a white jeep without markings was tailing them. The car followed them to their filming site. There the men in the jeep parked and gave orders to the PA police at the scene (which led Martin to think they were from Palestinian intelligence). This time they didn't wait for him to begin filming; they began to search his vehicle; again they erased his film, and they smashed one of the still cameras belonging to the crew. The men then told Martin to leave and tailed him back to the border. Just as Martin and crew pulled up to the Israeli checkpoint, a bullet fired from the Palestinian side whizzed by. Somehow this story reached the Israeli government, which described the incident at one of its daily press briefings. Martin says he is angry that the Israeli government "exploited" the story. And he complains that he now appears to be allied with the Israeli government. "They have made it very hard for me to go back," he says.

Shifting anger from the actual perpetrators to the Israeli government is common. News bureaus in Jerusalem either downplay or refuse to talk about such incidents because, as one bureau chief who wanted to remain anonymous told me, they are afraid of becoming tools of "Israeli propaganda." "They are trying to make out that we're allies of the Israeli government—thank you *very* much," spat a wire service editor I observed reading an Israeli government press release. All newspeople hate to think that they're being used as tools—whether to sell a movie star or to support a government—and the struggle to maintain balance is endless. But the fear of being seen as "allied with Israel" seemed near phobic among the press people I observed on the job in Jerusalem.

My sense is that, rather than jeopardize their already tenuous access to the Palestinian territories or endanger their employees by appearing to collaborate with the enemy, many of the media covering the Intifada adjust by simply "not seeing" things or by finding elaborate justifications for ignoring stories that would displease their hosts in the territories. I was in Israel for several weeks during a lull in the violence, staying in a hotel in downtown Jerusalem full of press attracted by a special $80 a night "journalist's rate" and by the Israeli press center on the ground floor, which offered free Internet connections, juice, cake, and espresso. Filling their plates at the sumptuous buffet breakfast (part of the "journalist's special"), producers groused about the lull and about the American elections, which had kicked their beat off the front pages. But I didn't meet anyone who was using the slowdown in daily news to investigate, say, the crucial question of whether the Palestinian Authority police were trying to enforce a recently declared cease-fire—which didn't seem to be working very well.

Some photographers are simply so polite that they end up inadvertently influencing news coverage: One freelancer for "the majors" told me he'd never had a problem working in the territories. On the contrary, he bristled, the Palestinian people were only too happy to have him take pictures. At funerals for instance—which tend to be

heavily attended by reporters—"they will ask you to take pictures. Here, 'Take a picture of the body,' they will say; they'll actually push you to the front." It's different at night he commented; "I wouldn't take a picture of a guy with an automatic weapon at night." Why not? "Because he wouldn't want me to, and I never take pictures of people unless they want me to." It's a policy that springs from a good heart. Still, what may seem like decency and fellow feeling to the photographer has the perverse effect of punishing democracies that do not censor media coverage, like Israel, and rewarding the authoritarian governments that strictly control imagery.

Have many journalists in the Mideast begun to practice this kind of quiet, even largely unconscious self-censorship? Does the access problem and, let's face it, the I-don't-want-to-end-up-getting-torn-to-pieces-by-a-mob problem, encourage a kind of Stockholm syndrome, an identification with those you are threatened by? The ingredients are certainly there in the petri dish.

On November 2, for instance, a letter appeared in *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, a Palestinian daily, ostensibly from "The Palestinian Journalists' Union." The "Union" announced that it had informed the Associated Press bureau in Israel that it believed AP had an intentional policy of presenting a false picture of the "just struggle of the Palestinians against the Israeli Occupation and its aggressive and inhuman actions which contradict all international human rights conventions." The letter went on to say that if the bureau did not change its coverage, the group would adopt "all necessary measures against AP staffers." The journalists' union did not return the calls placed to verify the Israeli Press Office's translation of the letter from Arabic, and the AP says—via a spokesman in New York—that this is "not an issue we're going to address at all." In fact most newspapers receive a steady stream of communiqués contesting their coverage and even implying violence—though in the United States the threats don't often correspond with real-life beatings and seizures of equipment.

Many camera crews, for instance, were able to record the notorious lynching last fall of two Israeli reservists by a Palestinian mob. Only one came back with footage. Mark Seager, a 29-year-old photographer from Britain, was on the scene that day:

"I was getting into a taxi on the main road to go to Nablus, where there was a funeral that I wanted to film, when all of a sudden there came a big crowd of Palestinians shouting and running down the hill from the police station. I got out of the car to see what was happening and saw that they were dragging something behind them. Within moments they were in front of me and . . . I saw that it was a body, a man they were dragging by the feet. The lower part of his body was on fire and the upper part had been shot at and the head beaten so badly that it was a pulp, like red jelly. I thought he was a soldier because I could see the remains of khaki trousers and boots. . . . Instinctively I reached for my camera. I was composing the picture when I was punched in the face . . . A melee began in which one guy just pulled the camera off me and smashed it to the floor. The worst thing was that I realized the anger that they were directing at me was the same as that which they'd had toward the soldier before. Somehow I escaped and ran and ran, not knowing where I was going."

The only crew to get out with footage—the bodies being tossed out a second-floor window to a mob waiting below—was an Italian TV crew working for a network called Mediaset. There was also a crew on hand representing RAI, another Italian network, led by a producer named Riccardo Christiano. Apparently fearing that Palestinians would think he was responsible for the terrible images that began to saturate news coverage, Christiano wrote a letter to the Palestinian daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*. "Let us emphasize that it is not the case [that we disseminated the video], as we respect the work arrangements between journalists and the Palestinian Authority," Christiano wrote. "Thank you and rest assured that this is not our way and we would never do such a thing." Acutely embarrassed for this abject promise of favoritism, Christiano's superiors recalled him to Italy and then recalled the rest of their Jerusalem correspondents. Israel suspended Christiano's official press card. A friend of Christiano's defended him to the *Jerusalem Post*, saying that the letter may have been inaccurately translated from English ("Riccardo's third language") to Arabic, but then offered the not terribly helpful explanation that Christiano had been rattled by recent trauma. Christiano had been severely beaten in the Jaffa riots in early October, she told the *Jerusalem Post*. "His ribs were broken; his cheek caved in, there were fears that a lung might be punctured. . . . Of all the foreign reporters, he got beaten the worst." Poor Christiano was even vilified by his colleagues—for exposing the fact that they were responsible for the videotape. Several days after RAI recalled Christiano, Mediaset recalled Anna Mignotto, the producer who, along with a Palestinian cameraman, had produced the surviving lynching footage. "As of today," Mediaset editor Enrico Mentana explained, "our correspondents can no longer work [in Israel]. We know whom to thank."

Most of the time, incidents like these don't get much attention. In early November, three young freelancers—two from Britain, one from Singapore—made a foray into

Palestinian-controlled Bethlehem just looking for some good shots:

"We'd met a local lad—he takes us through the back alley. There was a group of guys standing near a house, kind of huddled together talking," explained 26-year-old Chris Dearden of Britain. "Without thinking I snapped them. They all dive out, and several of them have guns."

One of the men shoved a gun barrel into Dearden's face. They strong-armed the three into a stairwell and kept them penned there while they discussed what to do.

"There's a lot of shouting, they take the camera; there was a lot of talking among themselves. The interesting thing was, there was no unity of opinion. There was one with a gun who had to be held back; then they hand the camera back, to my complete surprise. I open it up real fast; take the film out, [saying] 'There, it's yours!'"

To Dearden's relief and surprise, the men let the photographers go. "We were just about to walk away, when someone came up and kicked the guy who'd been leading us around; he turned around and gets one in the face and then there's like a complete melee." "Hopefully our guy got away," Dearden said, but as they hustled toward the border, he looked back and saw that "somebody got the absolute bejesus kicked out of him."

Of the "handful of Arabic words he knows," Dearden says the most important is now the word for picture. "I always say, '*Sura?*' If it's, '*Sura,*' fine; if it's, 'No,' I drop it really fast."

A number of photographers have had problems with the Israelis, as well—in general their anecdotes were about being told that they couldn't pass a checkpoint. By law Israeli officials are supposed to give journalists complete access, except when access—say to a hidden missile site—could endanger national security. Dearden and the other two photographers agreed that the Israelis generally leave them alone. "The Israelis don't really care what you do unless you get right into their face when they're trying to shoot," chuckled Renga Subbiah, a 30-year-old photographer from Singapore who spoke like an upper-class Englishman except when he affected a working-class accent for dramatic purposes. "I got one with a fooking IDF bloke pointing his rifle right into the middle of the frame."

Operating under the venerable TV news slogan "If it bleeds it leads," the brash young journalistic mercenary had filled his film satchel with "very good stuff." This included a "dead guy" ("right up in his face I got"), a wounded child, and a lot of "people shooting."

And throwing stones? In that particular week, that was the big action in town. "Course I got kids throwing stones," he said, bragging about one in particular who looked about 6 years old.

With national, international, and local news coverage having become a sort of daily grievance parade—the daily displaying of stumps and wounds by victims of all kinds of real and alleged injustice as if in front of a global godfather—the Palestinians have learned to excel at bleeding. Or at least, the authoritarian leadership has found plenty of civilians it can cajole into doing the bleeding. (In contrast, the Israelis have made it a point of national pride to avoid signs of weakness, and now show a kind of distaste for displaying wounds.) A Palestinian leader recently told the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, for instance, that the Palestinians would win this current round of Intifada because "our ability to die is greater than the Israeli ability to go on killing us." "They want you to show their side," which means showing "people dead and injured. What they have that the Israeli side doesn't is lots of dead people," explains Subbiah amiably.

It would have been more accurate for the Palestinian leader to say "our ability to sacrifice civilians is greater"—as most Palestinian leaders keep themselves well above the fray. In this, they are like the leaders of lots of developing nations. With plenty of passion and smarts but few armaments and even less high technology, the bleeding civilian has become the most potent weapon in the arsenal against liberal, media-saturated Westernized countries.

To the extent that civilians prove useful for their ability to die on camera for a world audience, we will undoubtedly see increasing use of the civilian body as both propaganda weapon and literal shield. In Mogadishu, for instance, American special forces soldiers found themselves facing a grotesque apparition: Rebels would seize a woman from a crowd (alive but usually very doped up), stick their arms under her armpits, so she hung in front of them, and then move towards the enemy line while hiding behind her voluminously-skirted body, and firing with both hands. We saw the civilian-as-sandbag (against bullets and world disfavor) technique immediately after the Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein established his base of operations in the middle of a palace mostly inhabited by women and children. And we see it now abundantly in the Intifada, where Yasser Arafat (who stays very far away from the "frontlines" himself) can be quite confident that Palestinian parents will proffer their children to draw Israeli fire—mainly for the benefit of the Western media.

In fact, the problem of the civilian pawn is transforming Western war strategy and our image of "the threat." The Marines now train for "urban combat" and the "three block war," and military scientists are hard at work developing all kinds of non-lethal weapons to deal with the crowds of civilians who will inevitably—knowingly or not—surround the armed terrorist. Now if the strategists could only figure out what to do about the camera. ♦

The Return of Inequality

The newest thing about the new economy is how it is transforming the old middle and upper classes.

By Dinesh D'Souza

For some time now we have been hearing about the gargantuan fortunes rapidly accumulated by tech superstars. Admittedly, the thought of people like Bill Gates, Larry Ellison, and Michael Dell having a net worth that exceeds the gross national product of small countries is staggering—and, to some, alarming. It took Rockefeller and Carnegie a lifetime to become billionaires; Joe Ricketts of Ameritrade, Pierre Omidyar of eBay, and Steve Case of America Online did it in less than five years.

When Rockefeller became a billionaire in 1913, his net worth was approximately 2 percent of America's gross domestic product. Gates's net worth is considerably less than 1 percent of the current U.S. GDP. Moreover, the "starter castles" of today's tycoons cannot compare with William Randolph Hearst's San Simeon, let alone the royal palaces of Blenheim or Versailles. In the past, though, wealthy people were a tiny minority, both in Europe and America.

What is new is neither affluence nor extravagance, but the sheer number of rich people in America today. The ranks of the rich have swelled so greatly that it is necessary to establish a new category, the super rich, to distinguish between people who can afford to live very well and those whose spending is limited only by their imagination.

In 1980, anyone with a net worth of $1 million was considered wealthy. The concept of the millionaire continues to wield its talismanic power: A show like *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* assumes that a million dollars makes you rich. But recall that the term millionaire became synonymous with wealth and acquired its mystique at a time when the average American was making $10,000-$12,000 a year. Today to qualify as rich you need $1 million in annual income, or $10 million in net worth. According to the Federal Reserve Board, some 250,000 households, with around 1 million people, meet this criterion.

Being rich means that you can live very comfortably, but you cannot do whatever you want. If you want multiple residences and domestic staff to manage them, if you insist on your own Gulfstream V, if you are determined to own a sports team, then you need to join the ranks of the super rich. That takes $100 million in net worth, or $10 million in annual income. I estimate that 5,000 American households, and perhaps 10,000 households worldwide, fall into the super-rich category.

But the big story is not the growth of this group. It is the explosion in the ranks of the affluent class, the people who make over $100,000 a year and have a net worth in excess of $1 million. In 1980, fewer than one million American families had this kind of money. Today approximately 5 million do, or more than 15 million people. Some analysts predict that in the next decade these numbers will quadruple. Many Americans have reached a standard of living that, in the words of novelist Tom Wolfe, "would make the Sun King blink."

Let's put this development into perspective. Historically, the great achievement of the modern West was the creation of a middle class, allowing the common man to escape poverty and live in relative comfort. Now the United States has performed an equally dazzling feat: It has created the first mass affluent class in world history. This country has extended to millions of people avenues for personal fulfillment previously open only to the very few. A mass affluent class is starting to emerge in European countries as well.

Call it the Overclass. These are the new equivalents of the lords and barons of the Middle Ages—only today's

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Overclass is so big, and growing so fast, that perhaps one day it will outnumber the peasants.

All this new wealth has generated some interesting conflicts. Recently the *Wall Street Journal* published an article under the headline "Even Leftists Have Servants Now." It profiled people, including some professors, who for the first time are making six-figure incomes. These people have hired gardeners, pool men, cooks, and nannies, most of them blacks and Mexicans. The contortions the academics go through to justify their behavior make for amusing reading. Political scientist Mark Petracca, who teaches at the University of California at Irvine, says he finally agreed to get a nanny, but he absolutely refuses to hire a gardener, even though everybody else in his neighborhood has one. Explaining his scruples, Petracca says, "It reeks of a kind of imperial colonialism one can imagine present in Shanghai in 1920."

What this behavior suggests is that the baby boomers, who grew up in the 1960s, have finally embraced capitalism and are eager to enjoy its rewards, but they are also anxious to show by their consumption patterns that they have not given up their values. In his recent book *Bobos in Paradise*, David Brooks describes well-off Americans who live in "latte towns" where the style is bohemian—Jim Morrison on the radio, Colombian throw rugs and African masks for sale, Left Bank-style cafés—but the talk, even among pony-tailed men with beards, is of start-ups and stock prices.

Meanwhile, successful entrepreneurs and business executives are also acting "against type." Many who have seen an explosion in their net worth have consciously rejected the social style of the old rich; rather, they are eager to present themselves in public as middle class. Tech CEOs, in particular, like to be seen in jeans, black T-shirts, and baseball caps worn back-to-front, to show the adjusto-strap to advantage. A Lexus or a Porsche is socially acceptable in Menlo Park, California, or Medina, Washington; a Rolls Royce is not. Affluent people today are not likely to go in for the diamond-studded Rolex; some will not hesitate to wear a cheap Swatch, and others will sport a Patek Philippe with a crumpled shirt and faded jeans.

Somewhat comically, today's tech tycoons who have made enormous fortunes chant in unison, "We're not doing this for the money." Bill Gates says that, and so do Tim Koogle of Yahoo, Steve Jobs of Apple, Mary Meeker of Morgan Stanley, investment guru Charles Schwab, and Larry Ellison of Oracle. Apparently the largest wealth-creation scheme on the planet is being driven by non-profit motives.

Equally strange, many rich people have announced that they are not going to leave the bulk of their estate to their children. "Leaving children wealth is like leaving them a case of psychological cancer," says broadcasting magnate Jim Rogers. The new rich are terrified of raising a generation of lazy, arrogant, spoiled brats. Some rich people who speak of the need to "give back to society" or to "find meaning in work" are even beginning to sound like social activists or spiritual gurus.

What we are seeing in America is the moral conundrum of success. In times of poverty the problem of wealth creation is in the forefront. In an era of prosperity, however, the issue becomes the use of wealth. When a person, or the country, becomes rich, new questions arise: Do I really deserve all this? How do I use my money to find happiness? How can I raise my children well in an atmosphere of plenty? What can I do to extend opportunity to others in society? How do I deal with envy? Questions like these are on the minds of the Overclass.

Inequality, a topic that seemed to have disappeared with the collapse of socialism, is suddenly a big issue again in America. Studs Terkel, the author of *Working*, gripes it is not right that millions of Americans are struggling to make ends meet, and millions around the world are starving, while "some guys have more money than God."

Social critic Michael Walzer points out that while CEOs of public companies as late as 1990 made an average salary of $2 million a year, today's average is $11 million. And if you factor in stock options, it is not uncommon for top CEOs to take in $100 million a year. Perhaps their companies have done well, Walzer admits, but have the employees seen their salaries go up fivefold or tenfold?

These are the complaints of journalists and academics, but many in the tech world have expressed similar concern about the "digital divide." As physicist and tech visionary Freeman Dyson puts it, "People who are not wired are in danger of becoming the new servant class. The gulf between the wired and the unwired is wide and growing wider."

I raised these concerns with Rich Karlgaard, a new-economy enthusiast who is also the publisher of *Forbes*. With a look of dismissive amusement, Karlgaard replied, "I've heard the entire greed, sin, red-in-tooth-and-claw, orphan's-empty-porridge-bowl dreary lecture. You know what is really galling these intellectuals? The fact that they have lost power. The fact that no one cares what they have to say. And you know why? Because people are all at the mall, shopping. Because America's doing too damn well, that's why. Inequality is only a problem in the minds of intellectuals."

I told Karlgaard that while I agreed with him about the broad reach of affluence, I did not agree that inequality was a non-issue. To illustrate my point, I recounted an experience at a recent conference sponsored by his own magazine. During a session devoted to executive salaries,

CEO after CEO had stood up to complain about having been personally criticized for making too much money. Finally one corporate titan said, "I don't understand the American people at all. They don't begrudge Jerry Seinfeld and Michael Jordan their millions. What do they care about what I earn?" To this, one of his colleagues retorted, "When the average Joe turns on his TV, he sees Jerry Seinfeld do his comedy routine and Michael Jordan hit those baskets, and he says, 'I can't do that.' But he thinks he can do what you do."

Karlgaard laughed. "And maybe he's right. I don't begrudge him his arrogance. But he's got to go out and prove it. Don't tell me how smart you are. Go out and start a company. Stop whining about the wealth gap, because when you think about it, the wealth gap is a good thing."

A good thing? "I know how we *could* have solved the problem of inequality in America," Karlgaard says. "Maybe Steve Jobs shouldn't have popularized the personal computer. If only Jeff Bezos had stayed in his hedge fund job instead of starting Amazon. Too bad Michael Dell didn't obey his parents and become a doctor. Wouldn't it be great if Ted Waitt had taken up cattle ranching instead of starting Gateway? Unfortunately these things didn't happen, because, if they had, America's wealth gap would be a trifle instead of a cancer."

So what now? Karlgaard says there's only one viable solution to inequality: a 98 percent capital gains tax. That, he says, would pretty much take care of the wealth gap.

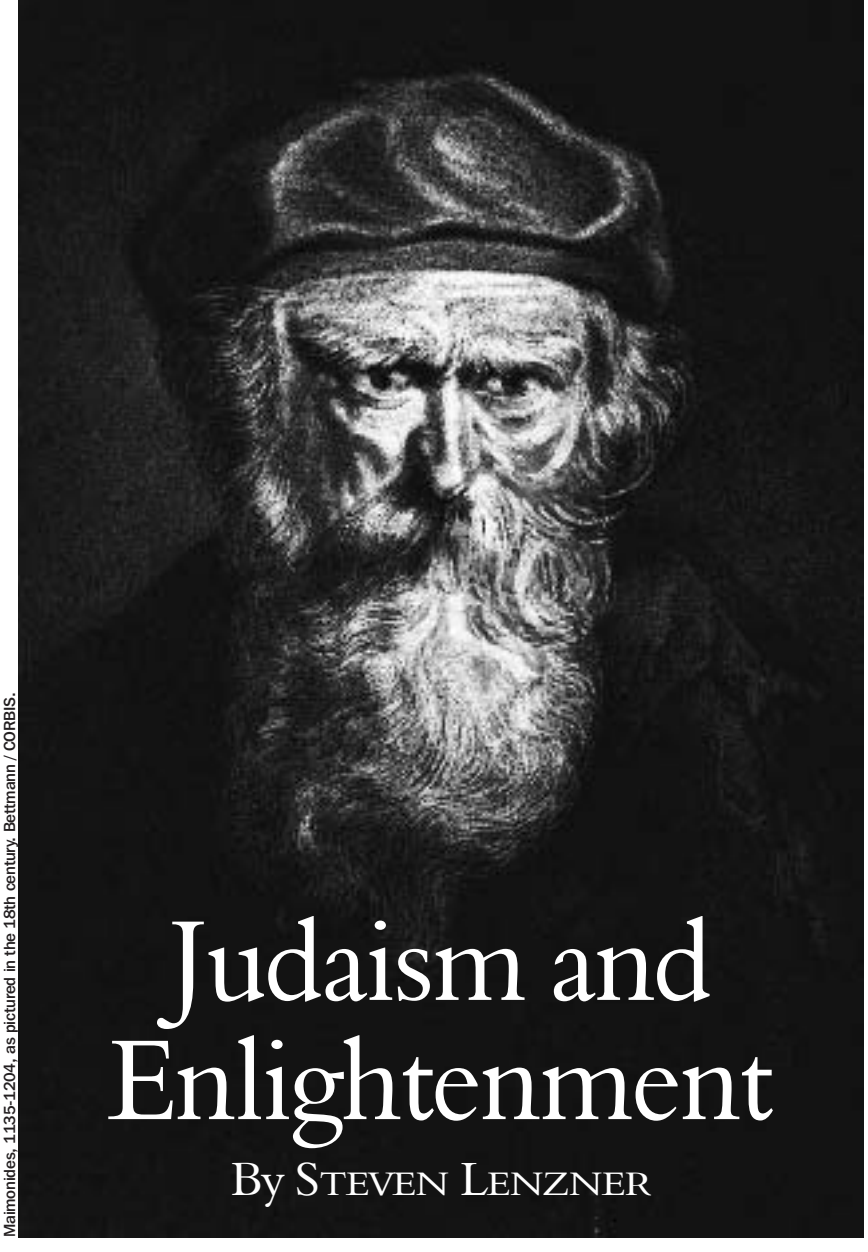
Karlgaard's point is that inequality is necessary for markets to flourish efficiently; it is the natural outcome of a growing economy. And in one sense he's right. In 1980, the vast majority of people in America earned between $12,000 and $55,000. If you made more than $55,000, you were in the top 5 percent of wage earners. Today six-figure incomes are commonplace, and to be in the top 5 percent you need an annual income of at least $150,000.

In other words, many people who were previously in the lower ranks have ascended rapidly. As they have become well-off, they have increased the gap between themselves and the rest of the population. Karlgaard's point is that a narrow concern with inequality carries the implication that this expansion in the ranks of the affluent is a social tragedy, when in fact it is a magnificent social achievement.

So what about the digital divide? It's true that whites and Asian Americans are more likely to use the Internet than blacks and Hispanics. The gap is even more pronounced along class lines: The rich are online in vastly greater numbers than the poor. These are social realities, but do they reflect a problem of "access"? Internet access in this country seems about as serious a problem as telephone access or automobile access. Today a secondhand computer costs no more than a TV set, and prices are likely to plummet even further. Internet use ranges in cost from $20 a month to free. Just about anyone who wants access can have it.

There is, to be sure, a digital divide, but it does not separate those with access to computers and the web from those without it. The real digital divide is between those who know how to use these tools to acquire knowledge and those who don't. To close the divide would require teaching people the value of knowledge, how to obtain it, and what to do with it.

Members of the Overclass are concerned with these issues because they aspire not only to get rich but also to lead meaningful lives and to integrate their personal success with the improvement of society. The newly affluent don't want to be envied, and they don't want to leave their fellow citizens behind. So even as they enjoy their prosperity, they demonstrate an egalitarian social style and an eagerness to see knowledge, skills, and opportunity extended to as many people as possible. Whether the Overclass will succeed in implementing its ideals remains to be seen. But if it does, it will prove that the age-old animus against the rich is no longer justified, and that there can be virtue in prosperity. ♦



Maimonides, 1135-1204, as pictured in the 18th century. Bettmann / CORBIS.

Judaism and Enlightenment

By Steven Lenzner

In an age of enlightenment, how does a Jew believe? In an age of belief, how does a Jew enlighten? The answer is, "Only with difficulty," for—as both Ruth Wisse and Ralph Lerner suggest in their outstanding studies—enlightenment and Judaism have always been uneasy partners.

Wisse, a professor of comparative literature at Harvard, is a lady with the convictions of her conscience, and *The Modern Jewish Canon: A Journey Through Language and Culture* reflects her character. She writes with wit, intelligence, and unfailing spiritedness. Wisse is particularly contemptuous of self-forgetting blindness. Her summary judgment of the American contribution to the Jewish canon is a masterpiece of damning with high praise: "American Jewish literature . . . has not yet offered up many positive advertisements for Jewish life or teachings, but some of its most masterful work joins the Jewish canon in supplying the negative evidence of a community that has traduced its values and followed strange gods."

The Modern Jewish Canon
A Journey Through Language and Culture
by Ruth R. Wisse
Free Press, 416 pp., $28

Maimonides' Empire of Light
Popular Enlightenment in an Age of Belief
by Ralph Lerner
Univ. of Chicago Press, 221 pp., $35

Wisse has an admirable impatience with pretense and affectation (thus we encounter E.E. Cummings instead of e.e. cummings). She has an altogether praiseworthy distrust of things German. Nothing captures her idiosyncratic charm better than the fact that she describes Cynthia Ozick's *The Cannibal Galaxy*, perhaps the best novel by the author with whom Wisse seems most to identify, as an "irritated book," thereby becoming the only writer ever to employ that expression as a term of praise.

The Modern Jewish Canon is an ambitious book. In it, Wisse aims to prove that there *is* such a thing as modern Jewish literature: a multilingual body of self-consciously Jewish works. But she aims further to demonstrate that this literature is *good*. Examining works in all the major languages in which the twentieth-century Jewish experience was recorded—Yiddish, German, Polish, Russian, Hebrew, French, Italian, Dutch, and English—Wisse turns primarily to fiction for a comprehensive account of human nature and experience. "Literature," she maintains, "has always seemed to me the discipline that encompasses all the others. The same novel can be read for pure enjoyment and for the kind of information that otherwise could never be gleaned."

Few readers can come away from her book without a renewed desire to read the authors she treats: Sholem Aleichem, Franz Kafka, S.Y. Agnon, George Eliot ("*Daniel Deronda* is the imaginative equivalent of the Balfour Declaration"), and Saul Bellow, among others.

Ultimately, Wisse contends, such works invite Jews to self-knowledge: "Modern Jewish literature is the repository of modern Jewish experience. It is the most complete way of knowing the inner life of the Jews."

But even as she calls her book *The Modern Jewish Canon*, Wisse is well aware of the tensions compressed in the phrase "modern Jewish." In her discussion of Cynthia Ozick, for example, Wisse writes: "If *modern* meant trust in

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human agency and *Jewish* meant following the commandments at Sinai, the Jew would have to mark his separation from the rest of society at the point that God's Sabbath and laws set the boundaries. Ozick's fiction disproves the liberal assumption that enlightened Jews can embrace secular modernity without forfeiting their moral strength." Though appreciative of America as "the best diaspora," Wisse is not sanguine about the prospects it offers for a meaningful Jewish life.

The problem, as Wisse knows, is that the "modern Jewish" literature she seeks to elevate is for the most part closed to the possibility that God exists, that the Jews are His chosen people, and that they were given His Law to follow. What then is the core of Jewish identity in the absence of shared belief?

This is perhaps the question that explains Wisse's preference for authors who are most alive to—if not exactly open to—the problem of revelation. This especially applies to S.Y. Agnon, whose *A Guest for the Night*, she asserts, "stands at the center of the modern Jewish canon." Indeed, it is when she takes up Agnon's work that Wisse supplies her fullest explanation of what she considers it means to be a modern Jew: "The Jewish way of life is, when all is said and done, less an answer than a means for living with questions, and Agnon's narrator persuades us by example . . . what advantages accrue to the person who lives his life through its framework."

As her subtitle indicates, Wisse is fascinated by the problem of language. To what extent is language determinative of national identity? Are there languages that as it were are constitutionally hostile to Judaism? Can the future be anything but bleak for Jewish literature in non-Jewish languages? At the same time that Wisse powerfully makes her case for the existence of a multilingual Jewish canon, she suggests that the future of Jewish literature rests in Jewish languages—without, however, arriving at a clear explanation of the difficulties gentile tongues present Jewish authors.


Bettmann / CORBIS


David Rubinger / CORBIS

Above: Franz Kafka, c. 1903.
Below: S.Y. Agnon in 1966.

So, for example, Wisse shows—with restraint and delicacy—how Elie Wiesel "neutered" *Night*, his novelistic memoir of Auschwitz, when he assisted in its translation from Yiddish to French. Pointing out the ways in which the Yiddish and French versions differ, she blames much of Wiesel's accommodations to "a Gentile readership" on "the conventions of national discourse."

Yet it is not clear why the deeply political Wisse attributes so much to the cultural and, especially, the linguistic rather than to the moral and the political. Certainly, she betrays neither reluctance nor incapacity when it comes to translating the passages in question from Yiddish to English. Perhaps the problem is less the product of culture and language than of secular liberalism, a contention to which Wisse's analysis of American Jewish literature lends considerable support.

At a quick reading, Ralph Lerner's *Maimonides' Empire of Light* would not seem to share Wisse's concern with contemporary liberalism. But this conclusion would be misleading. Wisse is concerned with modern liberalism's constitutional aversion to Judaism, while Lerner examines modern liberalism's antipathy to genuinely philosophic—or Maimonidean—education. Lerner's study is an ode to the art of teaching.

Maimonides' Empire of Light consists of two parts. The first, "The Politics of Public Teaching," contains eight brief essays on the approach of the twelfth-century philosopher Maimonides and two successors, Joseph Albo and Falaquerea, to the relation between philosophy and political life. The second part, "Addresses to the People," then adds translations of five of the texts to which Lerner refers.

Lerner's book may be described as an introduction to Maimonides for democrats—as opposed to a democratic introduction, an attempt to turn Maimonides into a modern supporter of democracy. Maimonides comes to sight as a radically aristocratic philosopher who at the same time was a bold innovator on behalf of popular education.

Leonard de Selva / CORBIS

A nineteenth-century inauguration ceremony for the installation of Britain's chief rabbi

How was it that "so confirmed and openly avowed an elitist" as Maimonides undertook the massive project of enlightening the entire Jewish people—learned and ignorant, old and young, women and children? Addressing some of his works to popular audiences, Lerner informs us, Maimonides effected a break from the "nearly unanimous opinion" of his philosophic predecessors. For a variety of reasons, not least of which was their awareness of the natural basis of intellectual inequality, those philosophers regarded the attempt to "bring some features of [a] philosophic analysis within the ken of each and all," as, at best, an exercise in futility. What induced Maimonides—who shared their understanding of intellectual inequality—to make the attempt? How did he proceed and what did he hope to accomplish?

Lerner addresses these questions chiefly through a series of commentaries on Maimonidean texts that show the great thinker struggling to free his fellow Jews from particularly harmful delusions to which the Exile had given rise. In an age of belief a persecuted and homeless people were vulnerable to superstitious longings. Maimonides found himself confronted by assorted unhealthy enthusiasms—messianic, resurrectional, and astrological— which he sought to moderate. His artfulness lay in his ability to make a single piece of writing convey different teachings to different classes of readers.

The range of Maimonides's purposes matches the range of people he addresses. Tempering the excesses of the fanatic is one purpose, but educating the human being who by nature and character is truly fit is the highest as well as the most pious:

> Philosophy can reinvigorate or newly awaken a sense of wonder. That sense of wonder, in turn, if properly guided and nourished, can lead to a deeper understanding. Maimonides himself has produced such a guide. For it is his unfailing message to rare individuals of all times and places that the achievement of that level of understanding constitutes true worship of the purest kind.

Lerner is more concerned with the manner of Maimonides's teaching than the teaching itself. *Maimonides' Empire of Light*, as Lerner notes in his preface, is a book about "the *way* a master teacher addressed the confusions of his distressed and distracted people." That way is restrained, playful, and indirect. Lerner takes particular delight in calling attention to Maimonides's pedagogical imitation of God. In place of the just and angry God of the Old Testament, we are presented an urbane and crafty God of "wily graciousness," who, as it were, "stays His hand" in regard to the announcement of the future resurrection of the dead at the time of Israel's founding because the slavish people of that time were insufficiently credulous. Only a "gradual, politic" Divine education in miracles could lead to "a generational progress in acceptance if not necessarily in wisdom." Education by degrees is characteristic of the empire of light.

"In the course of illumining God's modus operandi, Maimonides draws attention to his own." Something similar can be said of Lerner's own relation to Maimonides. Maimonides employed what he illuminated about God to teach his contemporaries. Lerner employs what he learned from Maimonides to teach us to overcome our democratic resistance to Maimonides's greatness. Indeed, only one aspect of *Maimonides' Empire of Light* is un-Maimonidean—its oddly contemporary chapter headings: "Curricular Reform," "Hard Lessons for Slow Learners," and "Back to Basics." Yet as a reminder to reflect on ourselves and our times, those obtrusive intrusions of the contemporary serve a genuinely Maimonidean—and thus timeless—purpose. Like Wisse's *The Modern Jewish Canon*, Lerner's *Maimonides' Empire of Light* is a scholarly labor of love. ♦

Costner, Cuba, and the Kennedys

Hollywood takes a stab at the Cuban missile crisis—and almost gets it right. **BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER**

The Cuban missile crisis is the closest the human race has come to Armageddon. Oddly though, like the moon landing—another 1960s event of millennial importance—it has faded from our historical imagination. For a new generation, its gravity is unappreciated. *Thirteen Days*, the new Kevin Costner docudrama about to open in theaters, tries to remedy that deficit. It does it so well in so many ways that one can only regret that in the end it fails.

It fails because it tells a lie. Ironically, the lie is not central to the story. But it is a lie nonetheless. As we have learned during the last eight years, the gratuitous lie can be the most maddening of all, precisely because it is unnecessary: The lie in *Thirteen Days* is ideological—and thus typically Hollywood. For those who can't look past it, the movie is quite satisfying. For those who can't, the film is ruined.

What's right about the film is its technique. *Thirteen Days* quite brilliantly creates drama out of mere meetings, phone calls, and deep thinks. Two and a half hours of mostly talking heads is not the usual formula for riveting entertainment. But here it works because of the material: thirteen days of unimaginable tension, from the first discovery of U-2 evidence of Soviet medium-range missiles in Cuba to the secret Kennedy-Khrushchev agreement to dismantle obsolete Jupiter missiles in Turkey.

The public quid pro quo was that the Americans would not invade Cuba, in return for the removal of Soviet missiles in Cuba. In the end, however, Kennedy added the Turkish concession. (Historically, if not filmically, it appears that Khrushchev might have settled without it.) It was not a deal Kennedy wished to tout. The administration and the participants managed to deny it for twenty years. Indeed, in order to obscure the link further, the Turkish withdrawal did not take place for six months after Khrushchev withdrew his missiles from Cuba.

Filmmaker Roger Donaldson manages to illustrate brilliantly the essential elements of crisis, the fluidity of decision-making under crushing pressure and incomplete knowledge. Kennedy, for example, changed course several times. He was on the verge of ordering, and then decided against, attacking Soviet air defenses in Cuba. Donaldson also deftly demonstrates the role of coincidence. The more conspiratorially inclined will be disappointed to learn how much sheer happenstance and screw-up shape crises. Other parts of the government, for example, conducted routine missile testing during the crisis, and a U-2 flight inadvertently strayed over Soviet territory. Kennedy feared that these extraneous events might be misinterpreted by the Russians as aggressive signals from him.

Most of all, the film shows how historical success is a product of both genius and luck. Napoleon once said that the quality he valued most in a general was luck. Historian Graham Allison has pointed out that our great good luck in this crisis was timing. Kennedy encountered his supreme crisis in October 1962. What if it had happened in, say, April 1961? It is hard to imagine, contends Allison, that we would have had a peaceful outcome of the Cuban missile crisis had it been faced by the young untested president who authorized the Bay of Pigs. After eighteen months of experience, however—particularly after the Bay of Pigs—Kennedy had acquired the depth and confidence that enabled him to navigate the most fateful crisis of them all.

That was the luck. The genius occurred at the most crucial moment. With the American blockade tightening around Cuba, Kennedy received two cables from the Soviets: one conciliatory, hinting at a solution; and the second, uncompromising. The Kennedy brothers decided to simply ignore the second and respond positively to the first. That was the beginning of the way out of the abyss.

Not all the action in *Thirteen Days* is cerebral, however. This is Hollywood, after all. The film deftly intersperses the decision-making with a few beautifully staged action sequences of reconnaissance planes: U-2s under harrowing missile attack, more nimble jets flying dangerously low to get the pictures to bring the proof to force the issue.

So what's wrong with this picture? The problem, the perennial problem of the docudrama, is historical accuracy. The film does cover itself by saying that it is "based" on the actual Cuban missile crisis and thus does not pretend to be a historical record. Deciding one's obligation to truth is always a tricky question in this genre. In this case, there are two major deviations from historical truth. One is tolerable, the other is not.

Tolerable is the centrality of Kennedy aide Kenny O'Donnell, the character played by Kevin Costner. The O'Donnell character is preposterously expanded to become the consigliere, the fixer, the psychic counselor, and the guiding spirit of the crisis. This is a little like making Rosencrantz or Gildenstern the lead character in *Hamlet*: When Tom Stoppard did that, the play became a comedy.

The original idea was for O'Donnell to function as a kind of narrator, like Nick in *The Great Gatsby*. But while Nick is a participant in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, he is a fairly minor one as he

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New Line Cinema

narrates and observes. O'Donnell towers in *Thirteen Days*. He is the one who navigates the Kennedy brothers through the shoals. O'Donnell has to be the central character because he is played by Costner, and Costner is the box office star. He dominates Jack and Bobby in the film, the same way his face overshadows that of the Kennedy actors in the publicity photo for the picture. (Another annoyance is Costner's attempt at a Boston Irish accent. It is so thick and implausible as to make you think in the movie's opening dialogue that he is doing a *Saturday Night Live* parody of a Boston Brahmin.)

These dramatic failures can be tolerated. The real problem with the film is that it found it necessary to portray the American military brass, as represented in Generals Curtis LeMay and Maxwell Taylor, as unredeemed warmongers. It is historically true that they favored an attack on Cuba. But the film goes far beyond that. It shows them not only trying to cajole and bully Kennedy into war. It shows them trying to trump, even usurp, civilian authority and trap Kennedy—force him into a war against his will—by sending reconnaissance planes low over Cuba for the purpose of getting them shot down, thus creating irresistible pressure on Kennedy to counterattack.

This would be bad enough. But in a typical Hollywood act of moral equivalence, the movie compounds the travesty by making "moderate" Russians into good guys. In the climactic scene, Bobby Kennedy is negotiating the final Turkish deal with the Soviet ambassador in Washington. After the deal has been struck, the sympathetically portrayed Dobrynin rises and praises the work of the "good men" who saved humanity. Clearly, the Kennedy brothers and O'Donnell and Dobrynin and Khrushchev (who supposedly is fighting down hard-liners at his end) are the good guys. The bad guys are the shadowy Moscow hard-liners, and the Strangelovian American generals.

A plain reading of the text (as David Boies might say) would show, first, that Khrushchev recklessly started the crisis, and, second, that he backed down in the end not because he was a good guy but because he had the weaker hand. At the time, the Soviets were far inferior strategically to the United States. Moreover, he came away with a fairly good deal: a guarantee of a Communist Cuba and the removal of the Jupiter missiles in Turkey.

After a screening of the film, I asked the producer about this distortion. He explained it as "dramatic compression." You want to intensify the drama, so you shape the characters to produce dynamic tension—in this instance, a good-guy bad-guy dynamic.

There's nothing wrong with that in principle. But when you do it in a historical context, you have an obligation to be careful about the *identity* of your good guys and bad guys. If you wanted that kind of dichotomy in this movie, the solution was simple: The bad guys are Khrushchev and Castro (who doesn't play any part in the film at all, but who we know urged Khrushchev to attack the United States). They *invented* the Cuban missile crisis.

It is not as if dramatic compression is not permitted in films. The character presented in David Lean's film *Lawrence of Arabia* is far different from the T.E. Lawrence who emerges from the pages of his autobiographical *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. But in Lean's movie, concision, simplification, and dramatic invention are in the service of psychological depth. In *Thirteen Days*, these devices are in the service of producing yet another set of cardboard caricatures of the usual suspects: Americans with medals on their chests.

It is unfortunate that a movie otherwise so good, about an event so important, should perpetuate so pernicious a lie about the American military. Particularly because Kevin Costner is the star. His presence inevitably connects *Thirteen Days* to his other docudrama, about an event that occurred just thirteen months after the Cuban missile crisis. Costner's presence here—together with the caricature of the military as war hungry and reviling President Kennedy's weakness—turns *Thirteen Days* into an ideological prequel to *JFK*, the egregious Oliver Stone film starring Kevin Costner. How perverse. How unnecessary. ♦

Omnibus Press

What Good Came from the Sixties?

The answer, my friend, is Bob Dylan.

BY MICHAEL LONG

Pop music has given us talented stylists and praiseworthy songwriters—but only one artist. No one matters but Bob Dylan. He emerged in the early 1960s with a voice as authentic as the genres he seemed to have created. He did nothing less than upend the cultural landscape. He redefined the method and meaning of music itself.

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According to his high school annual, Robert Zimmerman aspired "to join Little Richard," yet he began his career singing—under the assumed name "Bob Dylan"—old folk and blues standards. In 1960, nineteen-year-old Bob Dylan arrived in New York from Hibbing, Minnesota, with the singular goal of comforting Woody Guthrie, who was dying in Brooklyn State Hospital.

A lot of New York folkies were showing up there, too—it was a kind act from members of a small and tight-knit community, if not also a way to enjoy a little personal contact with their unofficial leader. Dylan, described as being a veritable "Woody Guthrie jukebox" at the time, had no following, no record deal, and no articulated artistic vision. But that changed fast. Dylan joined the city's folk music scene, picking up standards from other performers around Greenwich Village and from recordings (most often those of folk icon Ramblin' Jack Elliott). He quickly became a leading light.

The key to Dylan's fast success was his voice. Comic parodies of his voice have become standard over the last twenty years, but Bob Dylan was initially recognized for his singing talent. Live recordings of the early days document just what he could do: His heart-bruising rendition of the slave lament "No More Auction Block"—available only as a bootleg recording until its official release, thirty years later—reveals a young man with the world-weary delivery of someone three times his years. Dylan's aching, soaring vocal conveys real pain over the "many thousands gone," a profound and mortal injury that prohibits the narrator, a just-emancipated slave, from fully accepting his freedom. Dylan's raw interpretations make the cardigan harmonies of Peter, Paul, and Mary sound like dorm-room anthems for the privileged.

Within two years of his arrival, he had a record deal. His first album was recorded in 1962 by Columbia Records' John Hammond, who was led to Dylan by the *New York Times* folk-music critic Bob Shelton. Recorded in a single afternoon on a $400 budget, *Bob Dylan* was a collection of folk and blues standards supplemented by two original compositions.

The recording did little for either Columbia or Dylan. While folk music had its fans, it had yet to achieve a significant segment of the market for recorded music. The record initially sold a disappointing five thousand copies.

But Dylan's talent was clear. He had, in his growling interpretations, a voice beyond his years and, in the new compositions, a hint of humor. In 1963 came Dylan's second chance, the album *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*, and a mature

artist sprang forth fully formed. Now Dylan's antique voice was applied to his own words and music, and the combination was breathtaking. The very first song, "Blowin' in the Wind," borrows the melodic essence of "Auction Block" and transforms it from field blues into an acoustic anthem.

Two cuts later comes "Masters of War," perhaps the most powerful anti-war song ever set down. Over nothing but a pair of minor chords relentlessly repeated, Dylan uses simple couplets to curse the masters of war, far from the frontlines, who build the "big bombs" and the "death planes," who treat the men of his generation like cannon fodder. This amazing album also includes Dylan's prescient "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," while still making room for a few non-political things—especially the sad, playful "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right":

It ain't no use to sit and wonder why, babe,
if you don't know by now.
An' it ain't no use to sit and wonder why, babe.
It don't matter, anyhow.
When your rooster crows at the break of dawn,
look out your window and I'll be gone.
You're the reason I'm travelin' on.
But don't think twice, it's all right.

By 1965, Bob Dylan was a household name and the poet laureate of the youth movement. He was also a twenty-four-year-old, bridling under a mammoth reputation and restless for change. After four acoustic albums, Dylan was officially an Icon, and his lyrics served as elegant shorthand among the counterculture.

But Dylan never seemed as uncomfortable as when he was held up as a leader—it was a characteristic that would present itself throughout his career (*don't follow leaders*, he would pen that same year in "Subterranean Homesick Blues"). His discomfort with authority—his own as well as that of others—was expressed early and often, notably in "Restless Farewell" (from his third album, *The Times They Are A-Changin'*), when he dismissed interest in being the leader of anybody's revolution: *It's for myself and my friends my stories are sung.*

He issued another dismissal at the close of his next album, *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, in a now-famous love song, heavy with double meanings:

You say you're lookin' for someone
never weak, but always strong,
to protect you an' defend you
whether you are right or wrong.
Someone to open each and every door.
But it ain't me, babe.

With that, Dylan turned his back on folk and, significantly, on the folk movement. In the most fundamental shift of his career, he simultaneously embraced electric rock 'n' roll and began experimenting with beat-style lyrics. The result was a whole new level of critical and popular acclaim—and a new kind of American art. The influence of his first "electric" album, 1965's *Bringing It All Back Home*, can hardly be overstated: It gave birth to nothing less than the possibility of electric music as literature. Its first cut, "Subterranean Homesick Blues," is still a powerful jolt of rock 'n' roll, playful and angry and artful all at once. Dylan's run-on lyrics—*Maggie comes fleet foot, / face full of black soot, / talkin' that the heat put / plants in the bed but*—are less meaningful for what they are about than they are for the sheer musicality of their sound. They are a pleasure to hear, a pleasure to sing.


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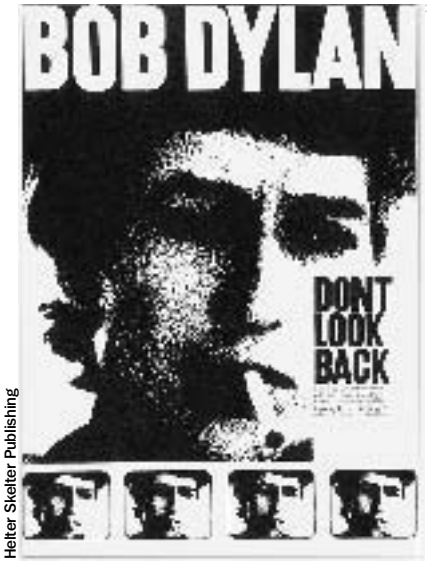
Dylan's grand experiment loosed something unpleasant, too: the possibility of legitimacy for every line of navel-gazing twaddle that would ever be set to music. Dylan's literary ambiguity combined with the political proclivities of his fans paved the way for decades of self-righteousness from such bands as the Clash, the Dead Kennedys, and Rage Against the Machine. But Dylan sought neither credit nor blame for any of that—and still hasn't even today. He just kept making music.

No one mined the new possibilities of electric, intelligent music more artfully than Dylan himself—and no one did it (for a while, at least) with more commercial success. *Bringing It All Back Home* was Bob Dylan's most successful album to date: It peaked at six on the U.S. charts, and remained in the Top 100 for nine months.

Dylan's abilities as a songwriter remained strong, though his beat-influenced experiments caused his work to suffer as often as it succeeded. Released only five months after *Back Home*, Dylan's next album, *Highway 61 Revisited*, further explored beat territory: The record is populated by biblical characters, circus performers, historical figures, and clueless moderns, and the imagery in the lyrics (of both records) is by turns nonsensical, bizarre, touching, and troubling—though when it worked, it *really* worked: *Well, you know I need a steam shovel, mama, to keep away the dead. / I need a dump truck, mama, to unload my head.*

Now forever established in the pop firmament—the song "Like a Rolling Stone" is perennially listed as one of the finest rock songs ever recorded—Bob Dylan entered a relatively fallow period that would last a decade. For any other artist, this time would have been praised as a creative renaissance. Dylan embraced country music, recorded with Johnny Cash, collaborated with Robbie Robertson and the Band, and wrote the classic "All Along the Watchtower." But given the impact of the first six years of his career, almost nothing that followed could have measured up.

In 1975, Dylan's best strokes emerged again with *Blood on the Tracks*,



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a song cycle apparently inspired by Dylan's breakup with his first wife, Sara Lowndes. The album remains among the singer's most popular recordings, though Dylan himself said in response, "A lot of people tell me they enjoyed that album. It's hard for me to relate to that—I mean, people enjoying that type of pain."

And there is plenty of pain. *Blood on the Tracks* is a collection of tales of lost love, missed opportunity, regret, and rage. Starting off with the classic "Tangled Up in Blue," a many-layered epic about a man and a woman who cannot connect for long, Dylan relates all the emotions that come at the bitter end of a relationship. And, echoing Macbeth's "Tomorrow" soliloquy in "Idiot Wind," his usual attacks on the hypocrisy of the world are traded in for soul-shredding examinations of self:

I can't feel you anymore.
I can't even touch the books you've read.
Every time I crawl past your door,
I been wishin' I was somebody else instead. . . .
Idiot wind, blowing through the buttons of our coats,
blowing through the letters that we wrote.
Idiot wind, blowing through the dust upon our shelves.
We're idiots, babe.
It's a wonder we can even feed ourselves.

Before the album's coda, the playful "Buckets of Rain," Dylan closes the record with "Shelter from the Storm," and somehow manages in a few short lines to simultaneously invoke hope and praise for—and distrust of—a lost lover:

I'm livin' in a foreign country,
but I'm bound to cross the line.
Beauty walks a razor's edge,
someday I'll make it mine.
If I could only turn back the clock
to when God and her were born.
"Come in," she said, "I'll give you shelter from the storm."

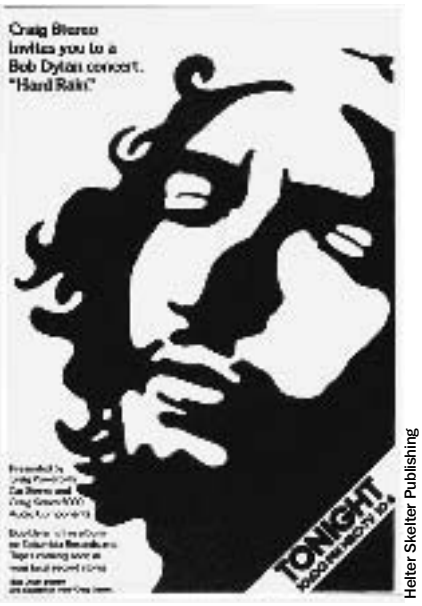
Dylan's creative revival was short-lived. By 1979, he had receded to become more of a totem than an active force in popular music. Follow-ups to *Blood on the Tracks* were disappointing, and the wholesale shift of the record business to dance music left no room on the radio for the difficult voice (in every sense) of Bob Dylan. And then, already notorious for going his own way, Dylan committed what to many seemed to be professional—and creative—suicide: He became a born-again Christian, had the nerve to actually tell people about it, and began to write music about Jesus.

Predictably, the so-called "serious" rock press was livid and sneering, with *Rolling Stone* (the journal that took its very name from his words) dismissing his new music as "Jesus-gonna-getcha" tunes. For a time, Dylan even renounced his catalog and began playing concerts in which he performed only religious songs. He also added an ordained minister to his road crew and began preaching sermons—interesting, Dylanesque sermons, but sermons nonetheless—at his shows.

Fans abandoned him in droves. Dylan, however, plowed on, ultimately recording four Christ-themed albums. Yet in this period of depressed record sales and critical spitballs, Dylan produced some of the greatest songwriting and recording of his career. The first Christian album, *Slow Train Coming*, was co-produced by soul-music giant Jerry Wexler. In the title track, Dylan warns the smiling corrupters of mankind that they will someday answer to a higher power whose arrival is inexorable.

Dylan, no stranger to fire and brimstone as an anti-war folkie, had plenty to say too about the power of the righteous and angry God he now followed: *Do you ever wonder just what God requires? / You think He's just an errand boy to satisfy your wandering desires?* And of course Dylan remained the artist who speaks in riddles. In "Jokerman," he seems to recognize mankind as at once flawed and gifted, and he contrasts man's great abilities with his moral ambivalence: *You're a man of the mountains, you can walk on the clouds. . . . / You're going to Sodom and Gomorrah. But what do you care?* But he could also match his indignation with gentleness: *In the fury of the moment, I can see the Master's hand, / in every leaf that trembles, in every grain of sand.*

Dylan's final "Christian" album, *Infidels*, was a high-water mark for his creativity in those years. Yet it is widely believed that the record could have been even better, and it serves as an excellent demonstration of why Dylan's fans are so often frustrated by his output. *Infidels* is less a whole album than part of one; it is the apparently capricious remainder of numerous, rich sessions produced by guitar master Mark Knopfler. Bootlegs abound of recordings cut from the album; so great are these missing songs that Columbia eventually released many of them as part of an "official bootleg" boxed set in 1991. Among the songs that Dylan passed on was "Foot of Pride," a raging, stream-of-consciousness ramble that switches among times, perspectives, and even narrators. The song does not easily lend itself to any particular interpretation. It is a kaleidoscope of images and emotions on anti-spiritualism, vanity, and immorality: *They kill babies in the*



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crib and say only the good die young. . . . / In these times of compassion when conformity's in fashion / Say one more stupid thing to me before the final nail is driven in. Also left behind was "Blind Willie McTell," one of Dylan's greatest long-unreleased compositions, in which the singer laments the lack of one who can adequately express sorrow over the torpor of the age. The song is one of the best examples of the integration of music and lyrics in Dylan's songs to create a mood. The song also demonstrates the intellectual short-sightedness of considering Dylan's lyrics—considering any songwriter's lyrics—as pure poetry.

The critic Morris Dickstein once noted that Dylan has "produced nothing which could be anthologized in any first-class collection of verse." That's true enough (though the well-known literary critic Christopher Ricks has recently launched a defense of Dylan as a poet). But, as Martha Bayles observes in her 1994 book *Hole in our Soul*, lyrics are not generally created to be examined apart from the music. It is their combination with melody that brings them to life.

After the disappointing sales of the stellar *Infidels*, Dylan slid into yet another creative trough. For the balance of the 1980s, Dylan released five albums and a compilation boxed set, and was once again largely ignored by the public, just as he had been in the late 1970s. His records grew progressively weaker, his performances were more often incoherent, and he scraped bottom with 1988's shambles of a live record, *Dylan & the Dead.* He continued his so-called "Never-Ending Tour" around the world, and the crowds dwindled.

But as the decade closed and Bob Dylan approached the age of fifty, he found yet another second wind. The 1989 album *Oh Mercy* wiped out the memory of Dylan's weak 1980s output. Producer Daniel Lanois introduced an aurally dense sound that directly contrasted with the melody- and riff-oriented production of Knopfler and Wexler, and the straightforward styles of his first producers, Bob Johnston and Tom Wilson.

These arrangements with their thick, electronic sound were as integral to meaning and mood as Dylan's lyrics and melodies had once been. Instead of the bright guitar strums of "Mr. Tambourine Man," Lanois produced Dylan in a mysterious fog of riffs, sound effects, and rhythm.

Oh Mercy also marked another shift: If Dylan's outlook on the future had been dark before, it now seemed positively black. Yet *Oh Mercy* is so well executed and so listenable that it is easy to miss the simple point of the album: The world is falling apart. The message is there for the hearing, the words rising out of Lanois's sonic jungle in song after song. Yet unlike the posturing punk rockers of the early 1980s—whose "message" was mere adolescent attitude—Dylan does not revel in destruction and loss, but mourns it:

Ring them bells Sweet Martha,
For the poor man's son,
Ring them bells so the world will know
That God is one.
Oh the shepherd is asleep
Where the willows weep
And the mountains are filled
With lost sheep.

The embrace of *Oh Mercy* by both critics and the public sparked a modest Dylan renaissance that continues today. Young people once again came to his concerts, his deep and remarkable catalog was rediscovered by radio and a new generation of music consumers, and he established a fresh reservoir of goodwill that would carry him through his more forgettable releases (such as 1990's *Under the Red Sky*, featuring the ridiculous "Wiggle Wiggle") and difficult, dull collections of Smithsonian-housed folk standards (*World Gone Wrong* and *Good as I Been To You*).

His most recent recording of original material, *Time Out of Mind* in 1997, met with a critical reception that lapsed into sycophancy, so fashionable is it now among critics to admire Bob Dylan. But the record is quite good, a mix of broken-heart songs and meditations at the end of life, all of it capped by only the second long-form Dylan song since the 1960s (the first being "Brownsville Girl" written with Sam Shepard for the 1986 album *Knocked Out Loaded*). That song, "Highlands," seems a monologue about weariness at the end of life, about longing for heaven, being misunderstood, missing one's youth, and perhaps even running out of songs: *The party's over, and there's less and less to say / I got new eyes / Everything looks far away.*

Bob Dylan's work is art because it does what art should do: edify and entertain, provoke thought, promote truth, extol beauty. Moreover, what we know of Dylan comes almost exclusively from his art. He allowed his public personality to be drawn only on the basis of his creative output. If we believe character cannot be divorced from the nature of what is produced—that the heart of a man appears in his creations—then the music of Bob Dylan tells us that he is a man of integrity and character, a worker for beauty and truth and good. ♦

Office of the President-Elect

To: All Cabinet Designees
From: Dick Cheney

To help the President introduce you to the American people, please complete the following questionnaire:

Phrase that best describes you:
(a) "a good man"
(b) "a sharp lady"
(c) "a longtime Bush family toady"

Position held in the Ford Administration: _____

Politically, you would describe yourself as:
(a) I don't really think labels mean anything.

Which policy causes have you lobbied for that are antithetical to Republican party principles?
(a) Hillary Clinton's health care plan.
(b) raising the gasoline tax
(c) drive-through reproductive rights centers
(d) global warming solutions
(e) putting all the supply siders in a bus and driving it off a cliff
(f) acquiescing to Saddam's conquest of Kuwait
(g) affirmative action

The day after you are appointed, the headline of the lead editorial in the *Washington Post* will read:
(a) A Reassuring Choice
(b) A Steady Hand At the Tiller
(c) Competence, Not Ideology

Favorite magazine:
(a) *Golf Digest*
(b) *Corporate Jet Report*
(c) *Smooth: The Magazine for Owners of Lincoln Continentals*

Aside from Condi Rice, do any one of you have an oil tanker named after you, and if not, why not?

If the president needs to reach you on Sunday, you can be found at:
(a) Palm Springs
(b) Any owner's box
(c) Get real, nobody in this administration is going to work weekends.