the weekly Standard

JANUARY 20, 2003

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NORTH KOREA GOES SOUTH
JOHN MCCAIN • THE EDITORS
HENRY SOKOLSKI & VICTOR GILINSKY

GOP Greed Oppression Patriarchy

What unites the Democrats? A cartoonish view of Republicans.

by Noemie Emery

The Flame of Freedom

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Time to Reform Head Start

Diane Ravitch is a research professor, New York University; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

When I was a young parent, I read to my children every day. When walking in the neighborhood, we read shop signs. They quickly learned letters and new words and were good readers by the time they started school. The children of parents who read with them regularly begin school with larger vocabularies than those children whose parents do not have the time or education to introduce them to literacy.

The Head Start program was created in 1964 to give poor children the same kinds of educational opportunities that their more-advantaged peers get informally at home. Unfortunately, over the years, the program has abandoned its focus on education in favor of an array of social services, including nutrition education, and counseling. **After nearly forty years and many billions of dollars, Head Start children still begin kindergarten far behind children from middle-class homes on measures of school readiness.**

Most Head Start teachers do not have a college degree and are poorly paid. A large proportion of them are parents of Head Start students. As if to echo the program's isolation from educational goals, it is located in the Department of Health and Human Services, not in the Department of Education.

The last evaluation of the program, conducted in 1998, found that the typical entering student could not identify a single letter of the alphabet. At the end of a year, the same child could identify only one or two letters and had learned only eleven new words. Head Start children were not learning these skills because their teachers were not teaching them.

Head Start has no standard curriculum for school readiness, and the centers receive no guidance about which skills and knowledge to teach. Instead, Head Start prides itself on its extreme decentralization, regardless of its lack of success in preparing children for school experiences.

The Bush administration is trying to change this situation by proposing that Head Start teachers be trained in literacy techniques. Remarkably, leaders of many Head Start centers are opposed to the new emphasis on literacy. Some are even refusing to participate in literacy training.

Head Start will never fulfill its original promise until the program recognizes its responsibility to give disadvantaged children what advantaged children receive every day: immersion in reading, an enlarged vocabulary, and the joy of learning. Head Start cannot close the cognitive gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children until it has better-educated teachers, better-paid teachers, and a determination to prepare its nearly one million students for school.

Successful preschools have long demonstrated that learning need not be drudgery. Young children can be taught letters, words, stories, and games in a happy and creative manner. They can sing, dance, paint, and play while gaining new vocabulary and learning to express their ideas.

If our society is serious about reducing the educational gaps that divide children of different races and classes, we must meet the challenge of redesigning an effective Head Start program.

— *Diane Ravitch*

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Clintonus Maximus!

On Sunday, January 5, 82-year-old Roy Jenkins died at his home in Oxfordshire, England. Jenkins was a great and distinguished man: a Welsh miner's son who became a three-time cabinet minister, founder of the Social Democratic party, president of the European Commission, author of more than 20 much admired books of historical scholarship, a British life peer, and member of the Queen's Order of Merit. Baron Jenkins's death leaves his final position, chancellor of Oxford University, open. So who on earth could possibly take his place?

Bizarrely enough, the name on everyone's lips is Bill Clinton. The *Times* of London calls Clinton "a realistic prospect" and likely a "hot favorite among younger graduates." Alan Ryan, a professor at the university's New College, says he'd "love" to see it happen. "It would be tremendously good fun," Oxford and "fun" being virtually synonymous, of course. Clinton has Oxford connections: He frittered away his late-1960s Rhodes Scholarship there, and his daughter Chelsea is there right now. Also, Britain's university system is suffering a severe money crunch, and nobody does fundraising like good old Bill. Perfect, no?

Except for one thing, what you might call the "Roy Jenkins problem." Oxford, as the *Chicago Tribune* puts it, "is the personification of gravitas and dignity." Bill Clinton, on the other hand, is . . . well, not the personification of gravitas and dignity. What to do? What, for example, would Oxford's Public Orator say when it came time, at Clinton's investiture ceremony, to read the traditional Latin citation?

Our friends at London's *Financial Times* have considered this question, and have offered one possible answer, excerpts of which—tremendously good fun, we think—follow:

Guilelmus Clinton. . . . In res publicis et civitatis homo erectus stupendus ut in mens et in corpore. Philosophus profundus, per exemplo, "Quae quod significatio verbi 'est' est?" Libidensis gigantem. . . . Herba marijuana fumerat (sed non inhalerat), legionus Americanus evaderat, cum multibus feminibus dormaverat. . . . Alia Occidentalis Domus Albus laborante, sibi pizza donata est a Monica Lewinsky, puella pulchrissima, sensuosa californicante, fellatrix superiore. "Non coitus est cum hac femina," dixit. . . . Domus Representatis imperator Clinton defenestrare tentavit. Senatus, 50-50 divisa est, absolvit. . . . Ergo Cancellarius Universitatis Oxoniensi! Mentor feminae juvenaliae britannicae! Clintonus Maximus! Ave! Genuflexamus! ♦

Judge Pickering, Take Two

The battle over the nomination of Judge Charles Pickering to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals—more precisely, his renomination—has become a complicated drama. Pickering was brutally treated in 2002 by the Senate Judiciary Committee, then controlled by Democrats, and his confirmation was voted down. Bush was expected to be wary of sending Pickering's name back to Capitol Hill. He wasn't, adding Pickering to a list of 30 new judicial nominees last week. But now a few Senate Republicans are wary.

Pickering is a victim of both liberal race-baiting and the fall of Senator Trent Lott, who had persuaded the White House to nominate Pickering in the first place. Since Lott lost his job as Senate GOP leader, the Pickering plot has thickened.

Lott blames Bush adviser Karl Rove and Sen. Bill Frist for his demise, but mostly Frist, his replacement as the new Senate majority leader. On the Senate floor last week, Lott hugged his old nemesis, Democratic leader Tom Daschle, but declined even to shake hands with Frist. Then, when Frist was asked if he supported the renomination of Pickering, he ducked the question. Later, an aide said Frist would back Pickering. In any event, Lott is no longer in a position to push the nomination through the Senate.

What makes the case of Pickering, currently a federal district court judge, so touchy is the race issue. This spooks some Republicans. But in Pickering's case, it shouldn't. He's suffered from the McCarthyism of the 21st century—a wrongful accusation of racism. In truth, Pickering has worked for decades in Mississippi for racial reconciliation. He sent his kids to predominantly black public schools, not white academies, and testified against the Klan.

It was because of the unfair treatment of Pickering by liberal interest groups and Democratic senators that the White House insisted on nominating him anew, and doing it early in the new congressional session. Bush didn't want Pickering's critics to win a victory through race-baiting.

The Republican strategy is to wait several months before holding a new hearing on Pickering while the nominee and his allies generate support, particularly among blacks. In the end, though, Bush will probably be required to speak out again in Pickering's behalf, making it clear to Democrats and queasy Republicans that, for him, the confirmation of Pickering is a top priority. ♦

J. Lo of the Senate

Arlen Specter set out over the holidays to make things right in the world, or at least in Europe and the Middle East. And being the senior senator from Pennsylvania, he did so in style, according to an e-mail unearthed by the *Washington Post*'s Al Kamen. The congressional and diplomatic trip planners operated under one guiding principle: "The key to success here is to note that they [the senator and Mrs. Specter] are world travelers and like nice accommodations."

The list of demands makes Specter sound like the J. Lo of the U.S. Senate. Embassy personnel were instructed to "please have a case or two of Evian water for us to take with us at each embassy." And creature comforts? "Bring blankets for each of the Specters on the flight, Boca Burgers [veggie burgers] for in-flight meals, no flights more than three or four hours, no evening flights [and] no really early flights."

Other demands: Specter wants to "meet with the head of state . . . or highest ranking official they can muster during the holiday season." Mrs. Specter "will want an escort at each country and will likely be interested in sightseeing or shopping." She is "interested in local cultural products and [is] discerning about unique marketplaces/bazaars, she is not interested in clones of Western stores, i.e., skip the Tel Aviv Gucci or Prada branch etc."

We couldn't help wondering if it was just a coincidence that this short item showed up in *National Journal*'s "Hotline" last week. Conservative Pennsylvania Rep. Pat Toomey is "strongly considering" a challenge to Specter, who is up for reelection in 2004. ♦

Moore Obnoxious

For the last two months, Michael Moore, arguably the most obnoxious lefty in America (which is saying a lot), has been performing in a one-man show at north London's Roundhouse theater. Here he would go on his usual diatribes about how "America is being led into war with Iraq by a guy who can't even find it on a map." But the shtick has worn thin even in London.

According to Yasmin Alibhai-Brown of the *Independent*, Moore recently "went into a rant about how the passengers on the planes on 11 September were scaredy-cats because they were mostly white. If the passengers had included black men, he claimed, those killers, with their puny bodies and unimpressive small knives, would have been crushed." As if the racist tastelessness weren't bad enough, Moore decided to throw a tantrum over how little the Roundhouse was paying him. As one member of the stage crew told the *Evening Standard* (no relation), "He stormed around all day screaming at everyone, even the £5-an-hour bar staff, telling them how we were all con men and useless. Then he went on stage and did it in public." Theater staff refused to open the doors the next night until Moore apologized. The following day he left in a huff, not saying a word to anyone. Perhaps the first time in recent memory he has ever kept his mouth shut. ♦

Casual

Light Brigade

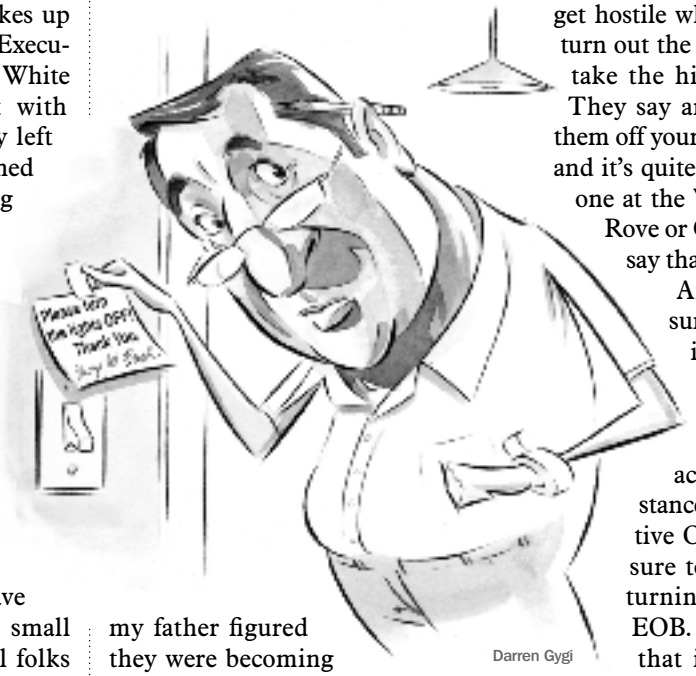
No doubt many readers of *The Right Man*, David Frum's engrossing new account of his year as a White House speechwriter, are relieved to learn that George W. Bush is much smarter than they'd been told and that political adviser Karl Rove has the brainpower and curiosity of a true intellectual. I on the other hand was delighted to discover that Bush is obsessed with turning out lights.

The president, Frum writes, becomes irritated when he wakes up before sunrise, gazes out at the Executive Office Building next to the White House, and finds it "bright with lights that had been carelessly left on." That's not all. He's concerned about a single light left burning in an empty room. Bush once pointed to a table lamp left on after a meeting and asked, "Do you think it's going to occur to anybody to turn that lamp off when we leave the room?" Answering his own question, Bush turned the light off himself, Frum says.

This is a man after my own heart. There are billions of people in the world who leave lights on. But there's only a small band of hardy, sensible, frugal folks who take it upon themselves to turn lights out and urge others to do the same. I'm a proud member of that group.

Around my house, there are people who think such behavior is weird and very obsessive. Maybe they've got a point. But I have an explanation. Making sure lights are turned out is genetic. It's not learned behavior. I don't know where Bush got the lights-off gene, but I inherited it from my father. He thought a light left on was a terrible waste of electricity. Besides, it cost money.

My father also felt a duty to make sure his children's genes for clicking lights off did not remain dormant. Day after day, he reminded my sister and me to turn lights off when we left a room or our home. He thought this was a good life lesson, and he was right. Another of his lessons was about feeding birds. He was glad to feed them—up to a point. But if the birds swarmed back the moment a fresh supply of birdseed was put in the feeder,



Darren Gygi

my father figured they were becoming welfare dependents. By putting food out sparingly, he made sure they didn't lose their habit of self-reliance.

But I digress. The important thing about turning out lights is it makes economic sense and represents good stewardship of resources. Think about it. Does a lumberyard leave the power saw on when the business is closed for the day? Of course not. That would be wasteful. Does a newspaper keep the presses running once the day's paper has been printed? No. That would needlessly drive up the cost of publishing. The principle—waste is costly and perhaps even sinful—is the same regarding lights in your home or in a government office.

Getting folks to observe this principle, however, is a chore. In my case and I assume in Bush's, it's a life's work. Those of us who are light-turners-off pass through three stages. First we're merely aggravated when confronting a light shining for no purpose. Then we become counters, as in, "Son, you left six lights on when you went to the basketball game." I'm a counter, but not a rigid one. A light switch that turns four ceiling lights on and off—I count that as one light. In stage three, we become crusaders. I'm there and I suspect Bush is too.

It's a lonely crusade. People tend to get hostile when they're reminded to turn out the lights. Worse, they don't take the hint and click lights off. They say angry things like, "Turn them off yourself!" This is not helpful and it's quite disrespectful. I'll bet no one at the White House, even Karl Rove or Condoleezza Rice, would say that to the president.

Anyway, Frum's disclosure about Bush and lights is extremely good news. It's bound to have a positive effect not only in Washington but across the nation. For instance, someone at the Executive Office of the President is sure to get the assignment of turning out the lights in the EOB. My only complaint is that it shouldn't have taken an insider book by an ex-speechwriter to make this happen.

Meanwhile, at houses everywhere, the lights-off people will be less lonely than before. They now have a big-time ally. Perhaps it won't work, but I'm going to try the tack of informing those who leave lights on at my house—that's everyone but me—that President Bush is on my side. And he wants you to turn the lights off when you're not around. If that won't work, nothing will.

Fred Barnes

Correspondence

Kirstein Strikes Back

Jed Babbin is described by *U.S. News & World Report* as an "old tough guy columnist." He certainly lived up to that characterization in the December 2 issue of The Weekly Standard with his denunciation of my e-mail misadventure with Air Force Academy cadet Robert Kurpiel ("When Professors Attack"). While he labeled the inflammatory e-mail as "barely literate," he might have been more favorably impressed by my anti-military expertise had he quoted it correctly. I wrote, "No war, no air force cowards who bomb countries without AAA," not "with AAA." I was referring to the indiscriminate use of high-altitude bombing and the incapacity of our so-called enemies to seriously challenge our airpower. It would be rather difficult to bomb a nation with AAA since anti-aircraft artillery is a defensive weapon that I presume a former undersecretary of defense would be familiar with.

I suspect that the undersecretary was not primarily enraged with the obvious lack of decorum and respect in my missive with the cadet, but that I would so harshly and passionately attack the sacrosanct military establishment that has brought so much devastation and misery for so many peoples throughout the world. As a son of an army captain who served in the Aleutians with bravery and honor in World War II and as a veteran of the United States Army Reserves during the Vietnam era, I am not quite the stereotypical leftist professor that Babbin so obviously loathes.

Interesting, isn't it? We fight zero-casualty wars for American troops that invariably lead to excessive noncombatant deaths among the innocent. We cravenly refuse to publish KIA or WIA estimates of "enemy" troop or civilian deaths, for fear the public would become disenchanted that America's wars are not so honorable as they generate untold numbers of orphans, widows, and quadriplegic children. We claim our Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) and new-fangled evil weaponry are "smart," with unprecedented precision, as if the decision to kill people in distant lands is not the most immoral and indefensible human activity. We show videos of smart bombs and missiles destroying bridges, cars, barracks, and other vital infrastructures. We exclude the press from combat photography and frontline reporting for fear that DoD propaganda and disinformation might be exposed by a David Halberstam or a Seymour Hersh. Can't let a My Lai and No Gun Ri become public knowledge. It might create a recrudescence of protest against the armies of the night.

Babbin and thousands of others have tried to silence me and remove me from the classroom for being patriotically incorrect. I suspect the undersecretary equates patriotism with blind obedience, reverence for the military, and always "supporting the troops" without questioning the policy where their unrivalled power enables them to kill other parents' children with near impunity.

I assure you no one defines for me what patriotism is and whether it is even always desirable, as those of us on the pacifist, antiwar left strive for a more peaceful, integrated global environment that eschews nationalism and undiminished state sovereignty.

As a realist I am deeply concerned with America's loss of prestige in the world and the growing resentment of its power, unilateralism, and contempt for international law and comity. Our national security depends not merely upon wars against terrorism, wars against Islam, and wars against the next imaginary enemy, but a redirection of our foreign policy away from power maximizing and imperial hegemony toward treating other peoples and cultures who dare diverge from our own with respect and patience.

I am grateful to Undersecretary Babbin for one thing. Perhaps his diatribe contributed to my receiving the *andrewsullivan.com* Sontag Award (Honorable Mention). That and my suspension I wear as a "Red Badge of Courage."

Peter N. Kirstein
Chicago, IL

Your Name is . . . Price?

Andrew Ferguson's well-written article "The Last Battle of the Civil War" (Dec. 30/Jan. 6) debunks an old myth surrounding my family. My grand-

father liked to tell a story about how his grandfather, who was a Charles County, Maryland, physician named Price, lived quite near to Dr. Mudd, but closer to Washington. The story has it that, finding Dr. Price not home that evening, Booth went on to Mudd's house. My grandfather was fond of saying that the old saying "your name is Mudd" would have been "your name is Price" (which just doesn't work in any case) if Dr. Price had been home.

It seems clear from just about anyone's perspective that Booth was known to Mudd and that Booth knew exactly where he was going the night of the murder of President Lincoln.

J. Mitchell Kearney
Owings Mills, MD

I was surprised by Andrew Ferguson's fairly accurate description of events and sympathies in Maryland during the Civil War (Dec. 30/Jan. 6). For such an "unremarkable" little state (as Matt Labash calls it in "The Next Kennedy," Aug. 5), it seems that everyone wishes to rewrite her history these days. I disagreed only with Ferguson's contention that "Maryland was with the Union in the Civil War." To the contrary, Maryland was invaded and occupied in the Spring of 1861 by Yankee troops and remained under brutal occupation until the early 1870s. Ferguson's choice of words implies a willingness on the part of the state to submit to the despot Lincoln's tyranny.

Concerning the late Dr. Dick: He was a very fine gentleman, but he was a revisionist. Having lived too long in the cold, snowy northwoods, he was ashamed of his southern heritage. Revising history to his own ends, he always insisted that his grandfather could not have been a Confederate sympathizer because Maryland was a Union state.

When historian James O. Hall's acquaintance gently confronted Dr. Dick with the truth, he was unable to respond. He could not acknowledge that his grandfather was a patriotic southerner who bit off more than he could chew, who was no murderer but who in all likelihood had dealings of some kind with Booth. The Mudds might be embarrassed by the facts and their family might have suffered through the years because of the harsh treatment of Mudd by a malignant military regime, but they have no right to take liberties with Maryland's past to ease their pain.

Joyce Bennett
Leonardtown, MD

Pet Peeve

For some reason, The Weekly Standard seems incapable of referring to the 26th president as anything other than "Teddy" Roosevelt, and not the name by which he was known to his family, friends, colleagues, and contemporaries, and to all historians and biographers: Theodore. This week the offender is Alvey S. Felzenberg ("A Cabinet at

War," Dec. 30/Jan. 6) but it might just as easily be Davey Brooks or Billy Kristol or Bobby Kagan.

God knows the origins of this annoying editorial tic, but in Roosevelt's lifetime, "Teddy" was what his detractors tended to call him. The childish nickname was meant to deflate his abundant ego, or better yet, transform him into the buffoonish character in *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Perhaps I may appeal to The Weekly Standard's sensibilities by suggesting that its modern equivalent would be to refer habitually to another president as Ronnie Reagan, or "the B-movie actor who succeeded Jimmy Carter."

Philip "Phil" Terzian
Oakton, VA

William James on Karma

I took great pleasure in learning in "The Book of James" by Joseph Loconte (Dec. 30/Jan. 6) that "numerous reflections on William James's work have appeared this year." James has long been my favorite philosopher/psychologist.

As Loconte says, James did ignore creeds and doctrines, but for me one of the most revealing passages in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* concerning his own religious affiliation is as follows: "I am ignorant of Buddhism and speak under correction in order the better to describe my point of view; but as I apprehend the Buddistic doctrine of Karma, I agree in principle with that."

The idea that judgment and execution go together was to James what weakened most traditional faiths. Elsewhere in his writings this pragmatist states that only Karma seemed, for him, to explain the many inequities of human destiny.

Nancy Ann Holtz
Beverly, MA

Swearing In

Each time I see and hear Adel al-Jubeir on television I end up screaming, "You lying sonofabitch!" at which point my wife usually responds with something on the order of: "If others heard you, they would say you are crazy. You don't just call someone like Mr. al-Jubeir 'a lying sonofabitch,' do you?" Do you?

Only if you are The Weekly Standard, and God bless you for having the courage to do so ("The Sultan of Spin," Dec. 16).

John N. Thomas
Altus, OK

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Champagne Not From Champagne?

No way!

Oh, sure, some sparkling wines may look and even taste the part, but if it's not from Champagne, it's simply not true Champagne. That's because Champagne isn't merely a type of wine. It's a specific region 90 miles east of Paris with a long history of winemaking expertise.

Combine this unique northern location with a one of a kind climate and chalky soil as well as hundreds of years of experience and tradition. The result? The only grapes that yield the Champagne of legend – a heavenly wine that can be imitated but never duplicated. If the grapes aren't from this unique region where winemaking is a special art, then the wine really isn't authentic champagne. It does matter where wines come from. A Napa wine is from Napa, a Willamette wine is from Willamette and a Red Mountain wine is from Red Mountain, Washington.

And, if it's not from Champagne, it's simply not true Champagne.

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North Korea Goes South

Reading the avalanche of op-ed articles on U.S. policy toward North Korea, especially from liberals noted for their dovishness on the subject of Iraq, you can't tell whether our leading foreign policy experts are dumb or dishonest. Why, they ask in feigned puzzlement, is President Bush not threatening military action against North Korea?

We generously offer to unlock this perplexing riddle. President Bush plans to invade Iraq sometime in the next two months and has neither the desire nor, unfortunately, the military capability to fight two wars at once. Therefore, he is stalling on the Korean crisis, hoping to find some way to buy time and slow Pyongyang down. Then, in a few months, after the Iraq operation is complete, he can turn his attention to North Korea.

As it happens, we don't agree with the administration's course. The North Korean crisis is real and it is serious, and the United States probably does not have the luxury of time. Given North Korea's potential capabilities to develop nuclear weapons, six months or even three months could dramatically affect our national security and the overall stability of East Asia. There's a big difference between having one or two nuclear weapons, and having a nuclear assembly line up and running. The possibility that Japan, and perhaps even Taiwan, might respond to North Korea's actions by producing their own nuclear weapons, thus spurring an East Asian nuclear arms race to match the South Asian nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan, is something that should send chills up the spine of any sensible American strategist. As is, of course, the possibility of a North Korean regime sufficiently well endowed with nukes so as to be able to sell and spread them beyond East Asia.

Nor do we agree with the manner in which the Bush administration has conducted its stalling operation. Bush officials have been flirting with the idea of offering North Korea a promise that the United States would never attack it. That is a terrible idea. The words of the government of the United States mean something. To promise not to attack someone who is holding a gun to your head and demanding such a promise is more than a symbolic act reminiscent of appeasement. It is appeasement. And in the nuclear age it is a particularly bad idea. What will the lesson be to other would-be North Koreas? If you want an American promise against attack, build some nukes. It is one thing for the administration to engage in a diplomatic dance of the seven veils to buy time. It is another thing to start giving away the store.

What's more, it is a mistake for the Bush administration to take the military option off the table in the present crisis. As Dennis Ross notes in the *Washington Post*, keeping open the possibility of military action could induce China and Russia to use their considerable leverage against Pyongyang. Ross is right to point out that the world-wide focus on Iraq has come solely in response to the threat of American military action. It might well take a similar threat to get the "international community," and especially Beijing and Moscow, to bear down hard on Kim Jong Il.

But while we are unhappy with the Bush administration's present North Korea policy, we sympathize with the administration's plight. As Ross—almost alone among Bush's critics—is honest enough to admit, one can't start brandishing the threat of force without ultimately being prepared to carry it out. Kim Jong Il will know if we're not serious. And China and Russia would need to be persuaded that we could and would go to war in North Korea if all else failed—just as they have been largely convinced in Iraq.

Could the United States credibly make such a threat? Unfortunately, it's a far more dubious proposition than it should be. The reason it's a dubious proposition is that we as a nation have failed miserably over the past decade and a half to prepare ourselves for the present world crisis. We have not prepared ourselves psychologically, and we have most assuredly not prepared ourselves militarily. Cuts in our defense budget over the past decade have left the American military with inadequate forces to fight two wars simultaneously. The army divisions necessary to invade and occupy Iraq are, essentially, all the army divisions we have available for major actions. Should military conflict in North Korea escalate, the American ability to

respond as flexibly and as decisively as we would want would be in question.

What is amazing, and depressing, is that the strategic predicament in which the United States currently finds itself—with simultaneous crises in the Persian Gulf and on the Korean peninsula—is precisely the one everyone imagined could arise. From the end of the first Bush administration through the Clinton era, our military posture was supposedly based on a "two-war" standard, derived from the evident possibility that crises in the Persian Gulf and in Korea could erupt simultaneously. The only problem was, successive administrations, Republican and Democratic, and successive Congresses, led by Republicans and Democrats, refused to provide our military the funds necessary to be ready to fight two wars simultaneously. Throughout the 1990s political support for defense spending was scant. What political will existed was undermined, in part, by a coterie of defense experts who counseled starving the Pentagon even further to force it to carry out a "revolution in military affairs"—to cut force levels and eliminate weapons systems. They argued that the present era was a time of "strategic pause," that the United States faced a period of about 20 years when no threat would require large-scale military action. Not a very sound prediction, as it turned out.

Even the present administration has largely failed to address the problem. The proposed defense budget increase this year is a pitiful $14 billion. The administration is using its political capital to propose hundreds of billions of dollars in tax cuts. Surely we can afford the necessary tens of billions for defense. After all, whatever the merits of the tax package, what's really bad for the economy is collapsing international security.

It's not just military capacity this nation lacks right now, however. It's an adequate sense of the seriousness of the present world crisis. It seems odd to suggest, after September 11, 2001, that the United States has still not awakened to the real challenges of this dangerous era. But we fear that is the truth. Right now not just the administration but Congress and the foreign policy establishment and the nation are all having great difficulty managing two crises at once. But it is entirely possible that we haven't seen the end of troubles. There have been periods in the past when the world was confronted by multiplying crises—the 1930s, for instance, when every year seemed to bring fresh aggression from the "rogue" states of that era, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Today it is just as easy to imagine new crises—involving Iran, India and Pakistan, China and Taiwan—as it was to imagine the present confrontations with Iraq and North Korea. Are we ready? The answer, we're afraid, is no.

—Robert Kagan and William Kristol

Rogue State Rollback

Don't appease Pyongyang.

BY JOHN MCCAIN

NORTH KOREA'S PURSUIT of a nuclear arsenal directly threatens the security of the American people, as well as our ability to shape the international order so as to strengthen the stability of Asia, defeat the global threat of terrorism, and enhance the security of the United States and our allies. Those who counsel a return to the status quo fail to grasp the danger of rewarding threats with retreat and concession. America's challenge in Asia is to compel North Korea's nuclear disarmament, protect ourselves and our allies from the insecurity caused by the nuclear ambitions and nature of North Korea's regime, and demonstrate to other rogue leaders that America will not be blackmailed into violating first principles of sound statecraft.

In 1994, faced with a similar challenge, the United States agreed to provide North Korea half a million tons of fuel oil annually and construct two civilian nuclear reactors in return for a freeze on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs. Many of us questioned how this could possibly serve our security interests. The agreement was frontloaded with benefits for North Korea, even allowing it to retain material to develop more nuclear weapons and advanced missiles that will soon be capable of striking the continental United States. In exchange, North Korea—a regime infamous for its deceit, hostility to the United States and its allies, and the megalomania of its ruler—provided a mere promise of future good faith.

Regrettably, the Clinton administration pursued a policy that was all carrot and no stick. It thus mistook for resolving the North Korean crisis what merely postponed its apogee. By granting North Korea the time and the means to improve its nuclear and missile capability, the agreement made America and our allies less, not more, secure. North Korea began a secret uranium enrichment program after 1995. Pyongyang now flaunts the failure of U.S. policy by trumpeting its nuclear progress and seeking to extort even more concessions.

We clearly enjoyed a false peace from 1994 to 2002. There can be no going back. North Korea itself has declared the Agreed Framework dead and withdrawn from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. In the face of North Korea's nuclear provocation, a return to the failed policies of the past is unacceptable.

North Korea's actions are driven by its expectation, which we have nurtured, that a policy of extortion through threat of attack will once again compel us to appease the regime of Kim Jong Il. But this would only instruct other rogue states in the benefits of threatening America. Proliferation would flourish. Those nations with the greatest interest in North Korea's denuclearization do not seem to have grasped the threat a nuclear North Korea poses to their interests.

Beijing should see that a nuclear standoff in Asia threatens the stability on which China's economic growth depends. Japan, understandably, will be under enormous pressure to deploy nuclear weapons absent North Korean disarmament, setting off a proliferation race in Asia with serious consequences for China's ambitions. And the Chinese would surely want to avoid an American military occupation of North Korea in the event of war with Pyongyang, or the possibility that Taiwan might seek nuclear weapons in response to regional proliferation.

The views of our South Korean ally are important. But South Korean policy today seems motivated more by fear than by logic. Policies that sustain Kim Jong Il's regime do not serve the long-term interests of the Korean people. Instead, they immorally prolong the suffering of North Koreans. The dream of reunification held by most Koreans, and the desire of many for a reduction in the U.S. military presence, are not served by policies that extend the reign of the North Korean dictatorship.

North Korea is the world's greatest rogue arms merchant. Failure to disarm Pyongyang will encourage grave challenges to our security elsewhere, as the North peddles its wares to other rogue states and terrorists. We cannot countenance a global order in which nuclear technology available to the highest bidder reorders world affairs in favor of our enemies.

Regrettably, the debate over the Korean crisis has been limited to arguments over whether the Bush administration's rhetoric and initial skepticism about North Korea's good faith provoked it, when it is plain that the flaws in the 1994 agreement, and the Clinton administration's ensuing diplomacy, as well as the nature of the North Korean regime, led inevitably to the current dangerous state of affairs. Yet, the Bush administration must accept part of the blame. By indulging in the same wishful thinking and finger-crossing as its predecessor, it has allowed this false debate to supplant a more honest and corrective appraisal.

After first responding appropriately to North Korean violations of the agreement and refusing even to discuss with North Korea its extortion demands, the administration now appears to have embraced, and in some respects exceeded, the style and substance of Clinton's diplomacy.

John McCain is the senior senator from Arizona.

Both the president and secretary of state publicly ruled out the use of force, although force could eventually prove to be the only means to prevent North Korea from acquiring a nuclear arsenal—a dangerously shortsighted precedent that even the Clinton administration did not publicly suggest. The administration's public rejection of North Korean demands for new negotiations gave way to public offers of direct talks, then one day later to a public offer to discuss formally assuring North Korea that the United States would never be the first to use force on the peninsula. This rapid deterioration of our resolve is as reckless as it is disingenuous.

North Korea and Iraq present different faces of the same danger. Today, North Korea poses a greater danger than Iraq, and confronting it presents a more difficult challenge. That is all the more reason to take whatever action necessary to prevent Saddam Hussein from becoming a threat of equal magnitude and just as difficult to confront.

But the greater difficulty of resolving the Korean crisis is not the central concern. The greater danger it poses is. This doesn't absolve us of the responsibility to meet and overcome the threat any more than it replaces the necessity of overcoming the threat from Iraq. Nine years ago we faced a difficult set of options. We chose to avoid them, and our irresolution has placed us in even greater danger.

To overcome it we should lead our allies in the aggressive, multilateral isolation of North Korea. We should immediately pursue the imposition of multilateral sanctions at the U.N. Security Council, accompanied by interdiction of critical shipments into and out of North Korea. We should encourage international efforts to freeze the $4 billion in personal wealth Kim Jong Il has salted away in offshore accounts. The United States should reimpose the sanctions on Pyongyang it lifted in 1999. We should encourage China to open its border to North Korean refugees. Most important, we should make clear to China and others the consequences of acquiescing to North Korea's nuclear ambitions, including Japan's emergence as a nuclear power.

We should negotiate nothing with the North Korean regime so long as it maintains its right to develop nuclear weapons. We should move aggressively to help our allies deploy missile defenses to protect them from the North Korean threat.

Our security depends on preventing North Korea from possessing a nuclear arsenal. That must be the primary object of our diplomacy. Freezing Pyongyang's nuclear program in place while we and our allies prolong the reign of the world's last Stalinist regime does not accomplish that objective, but merely encourages future attempts at nuclear blackmail. Only if North Korea is prepared to surrender the enriched uranium it secretly attained, the spent fuel rods that would yield enough plutonium for three to five nuclear weapons, as well as dismantle the reactor it now threatens to restart, should we or any other country consider any assistance that might help North Korea escape the certain destiny of a failed state.

The use of military force to defend vital American security interests must always be a last resort, as it is in this crisis. But if we fail to achieve the international cooperation necessary to end this threat, then the countries in the region should know with certainty that while they may risk their own populations, the United States will do whatever it must to guarantee the security of the American people. And spare us the usual lectures about American unilateralism. We would prefer the company of North Korea's neighbors, but we will make do without it if we must. ♦

Kim Jong Il

Ismael Roldan

No New Deals with North Korea

They never work.

BY HENRY SOKOLSKI & VICTOR GILINSKY

With North Korea's announcement Friday that it is withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), Pyongyang's nuclear defiance is no longer just an American or Korean problem. It is a world problem. It requires an international rejoinder, one that treats Pyongyang as a violator—not of any deal reached with Seoul or Washington, but of the NPT. This might not block Pyongyang from making more bombs, but anything less risks unraveling such restraints as remain on other would-be bomb-makers.

Our choices are much starker than most diplomats suggest. We can face the reality that Pyongyang is a nuclear violator and treat it as such. Or we can engage in another round of self-delusion, in the face of nearly two decades' experience, hoping that a U.S.-brokered deal will finally get Pyongyang to surrender its nuclear weapons capabilities. The latter course will signal to proliferators that they have nothing to worry about from the world at large once they get a nuclear weapon. All of them are watching how we handle this.

Unfortunately, most Asia hands see matters differently. Many of those who criticized the United States for not letting the United Nations handle Saddam Hussein insist the United States should come to an accommodation directly with Kim Jong Il. In this, they side with Pyongyang, which wants the United States to accept it as a legitimate nuclear state. That is the meaning of its withdrawal from the NPT and its demand for a "non-aggression pact." In making this plea, Pyongyang gives no hint of being willing to surrender its nuclear weapons (it regards them as vital to its survival), only to refrain from brandishing them. Pyongyang knows that if it can get the United States to formally renounce its "hostile intent" and accept a nuclear standoff as a legitimate state of affairs, no other country is likely to protest the North's violation of any international agreement. The door to foreign aid would then reopen, and the grim, militaristic regime once again would get a new lease on life.

Pyongyang can smell the weakness of South Korea and Japan, which want to "mediate" direct talks between Washington and Pyongyang to "resolve" North Korea's plutonium and uranium bomb-making projects. That suits Pyongyang, which knows that verifying the elimination of its covert uranium program is an impossible task, and that a negotiating partner anxious to reach an agreement will not press too hard. Pyongyang might give up something for suitable rewards, only to continue building bombs covertly. In any case, it will not permit effective inspections or searches.

Another suggestion is to return to the *status quo ante*—a favorite of Russia, China, and South Korea. This would mean no penalty for repeated violation of agreements. Construction would continue of the two large power reactors we promised North Korea under the 1994 Agreed Framework. After a year's operation, each reactor could generate 50 or more bombs' worth of weapons-grade plutonium. Offering to complete these reactors might be a quick way to restart negotiations, but it's a crazy way to respond to a serial violator of the NPT.

Sadly, we have been down this road before. As far back as 1985, when Washington first learned of Pyongyang's construction of a military production reactor, the United States worked with Russia to get Pyongyang to join the NPT. As an inducement, Moscow promised to sell North Korea three light water reactors. Pyongyang had to reach a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by 1987. It didn't until 1992. Then, to fill the gap, Washington helped arrange a North-South agreement to forbid either Korean nation from having nuclear weapons or plants to separate plutonium or enrich uranium. To sweeten the pot, the United States withdrew its tactical nuclear weapons from Korea. But for Pyongyang the agreement was just a piece of paper: It secretly proceeded to reprocess enough material to make one or more weapons. When the IAEA, after its first inspection in 1992, announced that Pyongyang might have covertly separated plutonium in violation of the NPT, Pyongyang threatened to withdraw from the treaty.

President Clinton then cut a deal with Pyongyang, the 1994 Agreed Framework. The United States promised annual fuel oil shipments equivalent to the energy output of all the nuclear plants Pyongyang had under construction. The United States also promised to build two U.S.-type nuclear power reactors with an electric generating capacity *ten times* as large as that of the ones North Korea was building. In return, Pyongyang was supposed to freeze its plutonium production facilities and not make nuclear explosives (with

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plutonium or highly enriched uranium). Unfortunately, our diplomatic body language also gave Pyongyang the idea that it could pocket all the gains and cheat on this agreement, too. We now know Pyongyang developed a covert uranium bomb project in violation of the NPT and its other nonproliferation pledges. When called on this last October, North Korea responded by kicking out the IAEA staff monitoring compliance with the Agreed Framework's plutonium production freeze and threatening to restart plutonium production.

So much for cutting nuclear deals directly with Pyongyang.

Now we have to stick to certain fixed points. IAEA director general Mohamed ElBaradei put it well in his advice to North Korea: "It is very important," he said, "that every country understand that not through defiance of its international obligations can it get political gains or strategic advantage. It is through dialogue, but dialogue has to be based on respect for international rules."

The international rules ElBaradei is talking about flow from the NPT. Enforcing that treaty should no longer be open to negotiation. At a minimum, we have to back the IAEA in taking North Korea's noncompliance to the U.N. Security Council. The alternative is to allow Pyongyang to violate the NPT and withdraw with impunity, which will only accelerate the spread of nuclear weapons. We can be sure Iran is watching. Do we want Iran and other would-be nuclear states to conclude that there are penalties only for those who try and fail to get nuclear weapons?

At a minimum, we should announce that, having violated past agreements, North Korea is no longer eligible *ever* for the power reactors we agreed to supply (and which South Korea is now building and mostly paying for). That is not only common sense, but is required by U.S. nonproliferation law. We should close the project down, something the administration seems to have overlooked. U.S. parts and technology are necessary to complete the plants.

Finally, we must stop kidding ourselves that any deal is possible that will prompt Kim Jong Il and his generals to surrender their nuclear ambitions. What would they be without their bomb? We will have to wait them out. We should use the IAEA in Vienna and the U.N. Security Council in New York to confront the world with North Korea's defiance of international agreements and to gain broad support for the demand that its violations cease. If the world cannot draw a nonproliferation line in this egregious case, is there any hope that it will ever do so? This question, rather than how to get to yes with Pyongyang, must be our guide. ♦

Michael Ramirez

The Cheney Tax Cut?

The hidden role of the vice president and his staff in Bush's bold plan. BY MAJOR GARRETT

VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY'S staunch, detailed, and defiant defense of the president's tax plan at the Chamber of Commerce last week was not an exercise in abstract "team dynamics." It was personal. Cheney and his staff had worked aggressively to beef up tax cuts and decimate federal aid to the states. Cheney didn't turn a reluctant president around. Senior administration officials say the president leaned in those directions all along. But it was Cheney, according to senior administration officials and top GOP congressional staff, who kept up the pressure on both fronts.

In his Chamber of Commerce speech, Cheney defended every portion of the Bush proposal in all its particulars, arguing that each provision would stimulate economic growth now and in the future. "I suspect we will be hearing some criticism of the president's plan," Cheney said. "These criticisms are not convincing, but they are familiar. We've all heard them before."

To those who warn of exploding deficits, Cheney said today's deficits are small by any historical measurement (1.5 percent of GDP, far lower than after previous recessions), and that a growing economy creates surpluses, not the other way around. Cheney also said failure to pass the president's tax cut could reduce GDP growth by one percentage point over the next two years, costing $800 billion in revenue over the next decade.

"Clearly, acting now to promote growth and to prevent even larger deficits in the future is the economically sensible thing to do," Cheney said. "The return path to a balanced budget is faster growth in the American economy." To critics of accelerating the reduction in income tax rates, removing the marriage penalty, and sharply increasing the child tax credit, Cheney pointed out all three would put real money into the economy now.

"A typical family of four with two earners making a total of $39,000 in income will receive more than $1,100 in tax relief—money to help pay bills and keep America's economy growing," Cheney said. And to those who said eliminating the double-taxation of dividends was a heartless sop to the rich, Cheney offered the following observations: Forty-five percent of all dividend recipients make under $50,000 per year; three-fourths of these recipients make less than $100,000 per year; and seniors collect more than half of all dividend income. He also argued that eliminating double taxation of dividends will improve corporate behavior in ways the SEC can't—with real-world market forces.

"Without the current tax penalty, investors will demand higher cash dividends and companies will be motivated to share them," he said. "This should discourage companies from artificially inflating profits just to cause a temporary spike in stock prices. Meanwhile, companies will be less inclined to over-leverage themselves with debt and more inclined to finance business expansion with equity. Over the long term, this will lead to healthier companies and stronger growth."

Cheney's political analysis of the coming stimulus debate argued for the

Major Garrett is a correspondent for the Fox News Channel.

Peter Steiner

boldest approach possible. Why? Because, as he and his staff argued over and over, the White House would be accused of favoring the rich no matter what the proposal contained; it was pointless to sue for peace in the supposed class war. The plan had to be bold.

Boldness, they said, would work, for both principled and practical reasons. First, principles are easier to defend on the stump (get ready for a variation of, "Either you're for the end of double taxation of dividends, or you're not"). Second, a bold plan offers more negotiating room when the final deal is struck in the Senate (look for eleventh-hour flexibility on aid to the states and dividend tax rates). "Whatever we did, we knew we would be vilified," said a senior administration official. "We did not want to play into the political game. We wanted to say: This is good policy and we're for all of it. Rate cuts. Eliminating double taxation of dividends. We didn't want to have to explain why we were only in favor of half or parts of a good policy."

As a result, Cheney and his team lobbied for and won an acceleration of all the Bush income tax cuts passed last year. The original plan had envisioned leaving out the cut in the top tax rate from 38.6 percent to 35 percent. Team Cheney also fought for and won complete repeal of taxes on dividends. The original plan had called for cutting taxes on dividends paid to individuals by half (try thinking up a stirring sound bite for that!).

Leaving out the top-bracket tax cut and merely proposing a 50 percent reduction in dividend taxes, team Cheney argued, would not de-fang the Left but would deflate tax-cutting conservatives. And the nasty intramural spat with these same conservatives over the appointment of deficit-hawk Stephen Friedman, the president's new top economic adviser, convinced Cheney that the base needed both reassurance and a rallying cry.

"I'm absolutely sure Cheney was a positive force," said a senior GOP congressional aide. "Whenever we need to drive home the conservative message, we go to Cheney. There is absolutely no payoff for sucking wind and cutting a deal early."

Considering the risks involved, it's mildly amazing that the most important decisions on the stimulus plan were made after the sacking of Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and National Economic Council director Larry Lindsey. While it's true Lindsey drew up the list of options for the plan before he left and that many made the final cut (the final draft memo sent to the president on December 30 bore Lindsey's name), the decisive political and policy decisions were made afterward and elsewhere.

Besides Bush and Cheney, Glenn Hubbard, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, and Deputy White House Chief of Staff Josh Bolten played key roles. Administration officials say that Friedman "was along for the ride" and Treasury Secretary-designate John Snow, awaiting Senate confirmation, played no role at all.

Now, Bush and Cheney will sell the package. Bush will, of course, do the heavy lifting on the hustings, while Cheney will keep the conservative base informed and mobilized. For the foreseeable future, senior officials say, Snow and Friedman will play only minor roles in pitching the package to Congress and none at all in trying to close the deal with the public.

So while the media will keep an eye on Snow and Friedman and speak of the new "Bush economic team," the truth is the "team" is even smaller and more centrally located than before. It's almost entirely on one floor of the West Wing. ♦

Mister So-and-So Goes to Washington

For the umpteenth time.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

NBC Photo: Paul Drinkwater

The cast of 'Mister Sterling'

"DO WE EVER really get to govern?" asks the naive young U.S. senator of his more experienced chief of staff as they stand on the Washington Mall, staring across the Reflecting Pool at the Washington Monument.

"*You* do," she replies. "Sometimes." She smiles. "And when you do, it makes it all worth it."

This familiar exchange takes place near the end of the second episode of *Mister Sterling*, a new television series that premiered on January 10. But it could just as easily have been lifted from *The West Wing*, the three-year-old TV show that inspired it, or from any other work of popular art with a Washington setting (save, perhaps, for the 1960s spy parody *Get Smart*). It has all the usual elements—the beautiful pictures of D.C. landmarks, the hushed voices, the gravitas leavened with rueful humor.

Something odd happens whenever Hollywood touches the subject of politics in Washington: Things get gooey. That's true even in the case of *Mister Sterling*, which is the first television series about D.C. created by a Washington insider. The show's writer, creator, and executive producer is Lawrence O'Donnell, who was once a senior adviser to Sen. Pat Moynihan and more recently a terrifically sensible talking head on MSNBC and *The McLaughlin Group*.

O'Donnell understands how the Senate works and how Washington works, and there are delightful riffs on both. Sterling arrives in Washington and is met at the Hay-Adams Hotel by a veteran aide who leads him out to the driveway. The new senator sees a limousine parked in front and makes a move toward it, whereupon his aide cuts him off. "Senators don't get limos," the horrified aide says, and pushes Sterling into a modest D.C. cab.

Sterling wants to be assigned to the most powerful Senate committees, Appropriations and Finance. He visits the chairmen of the committees and is given the identical tough-guy talking-to by both men in successive scenes: "You never offer an amendment to my bills. You always vote for my bills. And you never surprise me." When Sterling says he needs $38,000 to pay for a penitentiary teacher, the Finance Committee chairman—who manages billions of dollars a year—has a giggling fit.

A Democratic staffer catches sight of a senator who switched parties two decades earlier and speaks bitterly of the "traitor." The party-switcher is a Native American (a thinly disguised version of the Senate's real-life wild man, Colorado Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell) who offers Sterling a hit off a peace pipe in his office. That leads Sterling's terrified staff to wonder whether the stuff in the pipe is peyote and if so, whether smoking it might be legal, given the senator's Indian heritage.

A kid in charge of the mail insists that he be called the office's information-management specialist. The kid's roommate is a gorgeous young researcher for the Capitol Hill newspaper *Roll Call* who comes across as a combo of real-life NBC correspondent Norah O'Donnell (herself once a *Roll Call* staffer) and every blonde pundit in a Washington booker's Rolodex.

That's the good stuff, and it's all

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infinitely truer to the spirit of the Senate than the fantasy presidency on *The West Wing* is to the real White House. But the good stuff must share time and space with the hoariest of pop Washington clichés. We've seen several of *Mister Sterling*'s scenes before, most famously in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, Frank Capra's 1939 film. Indeed, with *Mister Sterling* O'Donnell has basically updated *Mr. Smith* and thrown in some of the 1972 Robert Redford movie *The Candidate* for good measure.

Just as in Capra's movie, Mr. Sterling is a young idealist who is appointed senator in an act of raw cynicism by a corrupt governor, and whose honesty and ingenuousness prove threatening to the Washington status quo. Mr. Smith got the job because he saved lives in a forest fire and because his first name, Jefferson, sounds patriotic. Mr. Sterling gets the job because he's come up with a new way to give prisoners hope through schooling and because he has a famous last name (his father is a former California governor).

Just as in *The Candidate*, Sterling is suffering from some undefined psychological issues relating to his father. Our hero gives a puzzling speech in the second episode about how he never did drugs because he didn't want to give his father the satisfaction of getting him out of jail.

Mr. Smith is an apolitical worshipper of American greatness. Mr. Sterling is so apolitical that he is actually a registered independent—a fact unknown to the sitting California governor responsible for his appointment, who simply assumes that the elder Sterling's son must be a Democrat.

This leads to some Jim Jeffords-like hijinks when it transpires that the appointed senator has it in his power to shift control of the Senate to the Republicans. And though Sterling seems like a rube, he manages to outfox the Senate majority leader and those pesky and annoying committee chairmen.

It's at this point that *Mister Sterling* takes an unfortunate turn into fantasy land. No one like Sterling would ever be appointed senator from any state save Jesse Ventura's Minnesota, and then only for a few weeks. Certainly, a California governor would do a little more checking up on his choice.

O'Donnell, like every other Hollywoodian who takes on Washington, cannot resist the temptation to create a mythically wonderful figure whose views and ideals happen to dovetail completely with his creator's. Once a partisan Democrat, O'Donnell now speaks very much like a disaffected independent—as does Sterling. Sterling approves of military tribunals and is open to the notion of digging for oil in the Alaskan Wildlife Refuge. He opposes the death penalty and is pro-choice.

The fact that these are not party-line views means *Mister Sterling* could prove more interesting as an exploration of political ideas than any other TV series before it. But still, wouldn't it be exciting if somebody, just once, made a show about a politician who actually *loves* being a politician—who enjoys raising money and trading votes and glad-handing and haggling with lobbyists—and yet still manages to hold true to his principles most of the time?

Wouldn't it be fun, for a change, if the villains of these works were less villainous? Wouldn't it be fascinating if the scene between the chairman of the Appropriations Committee and Mr. Sterling were played in such a way that Sterling came off like a boob and the Appropriations chairman came off like a wise old soul? Wouldn't it be something if the hero of a Washington movie or TV show were to drive by the Washington Monument or the Lincoln Memorial without giving it a second glance, the way actual Washingtonians do?

Only when a producer has the courage to emerge from the *Mr. Smith* goo will we ever see a work of popular art that engages with the real Washington. ♦

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Greed, Oppression, Patriarchy

What unites the Democrats? A cartoonish view of Republicans.

By Noemie Emery

Finally the Democrats have found their hot issue: The Confederate heart of George Bush, and of Bill Frist, who by virtue of their membership in the Republican party have indicated their desire to live in a slaveholding past. Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton, and Nancy Pelosi—to name just three prominent Democrats—have delivered themselves of the judgment that Republicans and those who vote for them are all closet racists. The demise of Trent Lott was only a smokescreen to hide this dark secret. The liberal interest groups are piling on, and the liberal pundits are going on witch-hunts, energized as they haven't been since the Florida recount (and as they surely were not in the 2002 midterms). The difference between their elation on this, and their ennui and confusion about other issues says a great deal about the state of their party. Parties run sometimes on hope, and often on anger. The Democrats these days are running on fear.

Democrats will tell you, many with straight faces, that the cause of their fall from majority status was the stand that they took in the mid-1960s for the civil rights cause. Republicans will answer that the racist vote was never that big or that critical, that when Barry Goldwater ran in 1964 on a straight states' rights ticket, he carried all of six states, and that Lyndon Johnson, passing civil rights acts in the heat of the crisis, won in a landslide. Republicans will tell you, further, that they began to win only when the Democrats split over issues of war and disorder; winning small in 1968 when the country was wracked by murder and riots; and winning huge in the 1972 election, when George McGovern produced a negative landslide for Richard M. Nixon, who remained so unpopular that two years later he became the first president forced to resign. The most telling fact of that era, they will say, was not that the South was absorbed into the Republican orbit but that the Democrats in 1972 made their peace with an activist base that defined itself in opposition to the mores of the country, as being soft on defense, and suspicious of American power and motives.

Ever since, attaching this base to enough of the center to make a majority has been an enduring problem for the Democrats; in only three of the nine presidential elections since 1968 have they been able to seize hold of that office, each time with a southern governor who claimed to be "different" and never with more than half of the vote. Bill Clinton was supposed to have fixed all of this when he ran in 1992 as a "New Democrat," but he did not reconcile the splits in his party so much as paper over them. Since his departure, the old splits have reappeared.

The corporate issue, for instance, once a great unifier of Democrats, still splits the populist, anti-corporate base of the party from its moderate pro-business elected officials. The past two years saw a series of battles over taxes, globalization, and the best way to handle the corporate scandals, which Democrats were unable to capitalize on. In 2001 the Bush-Baucus tax cuts managed to peel off a dozen Senate Democrats, while enraging the liberal base. (In 2002 the need to protect these 12 senators mostly took the tax issue off the table in the elections.) The left saw the corporate scandals as the fruits of systemic corruption, and longed to lay waste to the culture of markets, a viewpoint that did not take hold. Last July, a poll taken by the liberal Democracy Corps found that by a 10-point margin respondents agreed that the crimes "were the result of illegal behavior by a handful of individuals, and should not reduce or decrease our confidence in the ability of markets and corporations to govern themselves." On September 29,

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Bill Nelson

the *Washington Post* reported that "the uproar over corporate accountability appears to have little political potency. . . . Among those who are pessimistic about the economy, only 13 percent blame Bush." After the election, the left blamed the party for dropping the ball on what it believed was a great winning issue. But if there was an "issue" there, it was not one the party could agree about.

More telling still is the issue of war and peace, the Democrats' long-standing bane. On August 5, 2001, the *New York Times* ran a story about Democratic unease over grandstanding by Hillary Clinton, Mario Cuomo, and other prominent liberals to stop Navy bombing exercises in Puerto Rico. "The liberals clearly did not expect that they would meet with such resistance, if not hostility. . . . Moderate and conservative Democrats nationwide are beginning to complain that the party, under pressure from its vocal liberal wing, has gone too far in trying to stop the training operations. Their biggest concern, they say, is that the party has left itself vulnerable to charges that it is antimilitary."

And this was in peacetime. The attacks on New York and Washington a month later only made matters worse. "Many members who oppose the president's strategy to confront Iraq are going to nonetheless support it because they fear a backlash from voters," reported the *Washington Post* last fall. And so they did, but none too convincingly. "Voters might not know this explicitly, but if there were a secret ballot . . . Democrats in the House and Senate would vote overwhelmingly to repeal the Bush-Baucus tax cuts and to stop the president from going to war with Iraq," reported ABC News's weblog *The Note* six days before the election. The "gap between what many of them really think and what many of them claim to support in public has clearly divided the party." This bow to the center, however reluctant, meant all hell to pay on the left: "Direct mail donations to the DNC took a nosedive in August and September," Thomas B. Edsall reported. "A major cause is discontent over the acquiescence of many Democratic leaders to Bush's preparation for war with Iraq." On the two biggest issues—the war and the economy—the party's base found itself on the wrong side of a 2- or 3-to-1 split in the country. It is the same problem that has plagued the party since McGovern's convention, and one that Bill Clinton did nothing to rectify.

Still, the Democratic party has enormous residual strength, and has been able to capture the White House, when the stars are properly aligned. Jimmy Carter won in 1976 in reaction to Watergate; in 1992 and 1996 Bill Clinton was able to beat poor campaigners. But the winning Democratic presidential coalitions have been vulnerable ones. (Which is why the party suffered wipeouts in 1972, 1980, 1984, and 1988.) When the party plays to its interest groups, it puts itself at odds with the rest of the country, but without them, it cannot survive. One way to gauge this is to realize that in the 2002 elections, the Democrats had no figures of national stature who could campaign everywhere in the country: The people the left loves are seen elsewhere as demagogues, and when used, they did more harm than good. Shortly after the election, Michael Barone and former Democratic

strategist Ted Van Dyke both wrote pieces comparing the policies that earned John Kennedy a 64 percent approval rating in 1962 with those that earned similar ratings for George W. Bush 40 years later. They found a remarkable resemblance: a tough, nuanced response to foreign aggression, a wish to cut taxes to help the economy, and a colorblind civil rights policy. The basic elements of a winning national strategy have remained consistent and—for the Democrats—usually out of reach, thanks to the base of their party.

The Democrats' failure to develop any other unifying message leads to their reliance on gender and race. In their lean years, of which they have many, they tend to rely almost exclusively on two groups of voters—unmarried women and blacks. Democrats will tell you that these groups are reacting sensibly to the sexist and racist ideas of Republicans. But a different way of putting this is that Democrats have a hard time selling themselves to people who don't feel victimized and afraid: afraid of rejection or bias by others; afraid of having to raise their children single-handed; afraid of material need. Without their lopsided leads among these two groups—a 2-to-1 lead among single women; an astonishing 9-to-1 lead among blacks—Democrats might cease to function at all in some parts of the country. For the past twenty years, from Reagan's first win in 1980, when the Republicans seemed to be building a new coalition, Democrats have consistently fielded just one major message: Non-whites and women should fear the Republicans. A Republican party that doesn't seem threatening is the great primal fear of the Democrats. Thus the need to portray them as sons of Bull Connor (a Democrat) with the old hoods and the hoses conveniently stored out of sight.

Most voters—most Republicans—are too young to imagine a world before integration and have no longing to see one.

The depiction of the Republicans as Closet Confederates is based on some dubious claims: That nothing has changed since 1964 in the Republican party; that nothing has changed since 1964 in the South; and that everything has changed in the definition of racism, the content of which expands daily. The Goldwater campaign in 1964 was the first time that the Republicans cracked the once-solid South, winning five southern states on a platform that promised resistance to the civil rights measures then being pushed through Congress. This was truly a segregationist exodus, and had the Democrats' profile stayed as it was, the claims of today's liberals that their courage on the civil rights issue consigned them to minority status might be more credible. But four years later, the party started its crack-up, and by 1972 the South and its issues were all but drowned out in the thundering din of other ex-Democrats fleeing their party for other reasons. Union members and blue-collar voters departed over cultural issues (summarized by Hunter S. Thompson as "acid, amnesty, and abortion"). Scoop Jackson Democrats left over defense. By 1980, the Republican party had become a grand coalition much as the Democrats had been in mid-century—a party with racists in it, but their presence was swamped by others who were indifferent to race-tinged issues, or wholly opposed. The party reformed itself around race-neutral issues: a strong defense, an assertive approach to world leadership, entrepreneurship, and devotion to the ideal of a common culture transcending race. If modern Republicans are not eager to recall what occurred in 1964 (or the Nixon years, for that matter), Democrats seem unable to recall what came after, or to admit that it mattered. It did.

The idea of a Republican party anxious to make racist appeals supposes an audience eager to hear them, a market that may not exist. It is now 40 years since Bull Connor turned his hoses and dogs on civil rights marchers. Most voters—most Republicans—are too young to imagine a world before integration and have no longing to see one. The Clintons and friends may pretend the backroads are teeming with bigots, but rational people know better. "The decisive voters of the future are not nostalgic, Dixie-whistling former Democrats," noted David Von Drehle and Dan Balz in the *Washington Post*. "They are generic, migratory moderates." In a similar vein, the *Los Angeles Times*'s Ronald Brownstein observed that the "ties that bind Republicans to most whites in the region are conservative views on taxes, national defense and social issues such as guns and abortion, not nostalgia for Jim Crow." There are still white racists in the South and outside it who will vote for Republicans, as there are black anti-Semites who will vote for the Democrats, but these are fringe elements in what is becoming a post-ethnic country, in which Colin Powell and Joe Lieberman are both seen as possible presidents. The Republicans and the South have come a long way since the mid-1960s. Only the left is still living in the past.

Insisting the present is just like the past is one way

to attack Republicans. Another is defining racism down. Among the evidence recently adduced to prove the racism of Republicans has been the fact that Bill Frist made political hay in the early 1990s mocking the ties of his Democratic opponent to the famously corrupt ex-mayor of Washington, D.C., Marion Barry, who had recently been caught by undercover cops lighting a crack pipe. Should Barry rather have been off limits from criticism because of the color of his skin? Similarly put forth as an occasion of Republican sin was Jeb Bush's reference to the big guns deployed last fall in the Democrats' fruitless effort to defeat his reelection as governor of Florida. "Bill Clinton is in the state. Al Gore is in the state. Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton are in the state," said Jeb. Again, it is hard to see anything resembling racism here (unless it is the implication of Bush's critics that one should not lump Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton together with Clinton and Gore). And when all else fails, there is always the charge that one is "insensitive," a charge whose beauty is that it is utterly indefinable and can be deployed at will.

The need for such inventive tactics becomes all the more pressing as the Republicans move further away from the past. The more the party changes, and is seen to be changing, the greater the need to insist that these changes are an elaborate and diabolical charade. But after a time, as the disguise tends to outweigh the supposed bad intentions, common sense suggests that the "disguises" may be the reality—and that Republicans may really mean what they say.

"With one stupid and thoughtless attempt at humor, Lott stripped away the carefully constructed façade the Bush team erected at the GOP convention . . . and revealed the party's true colors," said Eleanor Clift. "When Lott stepped out of the polite way of speaking about race he exposed the GOP's double game: the lip service the party gives to reaching out to blacks and the winks and nods to whites assuring them that nothing fundamental will change." That nothing will change? The nation's foreign policy is in the capable hands of two black members of the president's cabinet. You could call that a change. Much is made by the left of Bush's trip in 2000 to Bob Jones University, which at the time still had a ban on cross-racial dating. Much less is made of the fact that several icons of the modern conservative movement are in cross-racial marriages to the apparent discomfort of no one. Everyone knew at the time that the Republicans' diversity display at their 2000 convention did not reflect the party as it was at that moment. It was a sign, as a disgruntled Pat Buchanan noted, of where the party intended to go. What George W. Bush has in mind is a party of compassionate conservatives like himself. They can be argued with but not labeled or libeled or demonized. And as such, they scare Democrats sick.

So look for the left to keep whistling Dixie, insisting that people are not what they look and act like, but are really like people who 40 and 60 and 140 years ago said and did terrible things. As Elizabeth Dole and Lindsey Graham replace Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond as the face of the South in the Senate, they have to insist the white South still is regressive and menacing. The more Bush transforms his party, the more desperately they have to insist that it's all a charade, that Bush is Trent Lott. But of course he is different, as sane people know. "Lott and Bush symbolize the two wings of the southern GOP," write Balz and Von Drehle, "the first emerging from the segregationist past, the second the son of a Yankee migrant who moved to the Sunbelt to make his fortune, and stayed to build a Republican party." As Earl Black, who with his brother Merle is the country's premier historian of southern electoral politics, told *U.S. News & World Report*, "President Bush is leading a Republican party that does not have any stake in the racial politics of the '60s and '70s. . . . He may get Republicans a second look among middle-class and conservative blacks." This is exactly what frightens the Democrats. Knock just 10 points off their staggering 9-to-1 lead among blacks, and they are a party in very deep trouble. Knock another five points off that, and they may cease to function on a national level. And so they must crank up the fear.

And so we see things like Bill and Hillary Clinton coming out with the theory that modern Republicans surround themselves now and then with black people, only to hide their dark hearts. "I think what they are really upset about is that he [Lott] made public their strategy," said our most former ex-president. "They try to suppress black voting, they ran on the Confederate flag, . . . and from top to bottom the Republicans supported it. . . . He just embarrassed them by saying in Washington what they do on the back roads everyday." This is really hot stuff on that part of the left that still believes Bush is a moron who stole the election. "Now that Lott has bathed them in their own filth, the rage of the non-southern right-wingers is boundless," raved Harold Meyerson in the *Los Angeles Times*. And what a conspiracy! For a generation, thousands of conservative pundits, essayists, activists, and elected officials, not to mention 49 million Republican voters, have toiled day and night to hide from the rest of the country and from each other the fact that under a

glossy veneer they are all really a collection of church-bombing bigots. How very exhausting, and utterly pointless. If they are all like this and so are the voters, then why bother dissembling at all?

Actually the Trent Lott affair blew up at just the right moment to save the left from a serious case of the blues. For the first time in years, it had no great causes to get its juices flowing, no terrible wrongs to avenge. In 1998 there had been the impeachment embarrassment, and the need to defend our first "black president" from being lynched by the vast right-wing menace. Then came the Florida recount, with its own set of villains: Jeb Bush, Katherine Harris, the five conservative members of the United States Supreme Court. But impeachment had ended in sort of a draw, and the Florida mess in a belated Republican victory: Jeb Bush is safe for another four years, Katherine Harris is now in Congress, and no one, it turns out, was mad. So the same pundits and people who were beating the drums in 1998 and 2000 are now defending the country from Jefferson Davis. Here are the *Nation*, the *American Prospect*, the *New York Times*, and most of their columnists. Here is Sean Wilentz, veteran of a thousand public letters, calling Strom Thurmond the "father of the modern Republican party," and weaving together Thurmond, Barry Goldwater, George Wallace (a Democrat!), Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush (for opposing the 1964 Civil Rights Act), and George W. Bush (a neo-Confederate by virtue of having campaigned at Bob Jones University) in a giant cabal to uphold Confederate values, at the center of which is Trent Lott.

The last vestiges of racism are leaching out of the Republican party. But the nihilism that seeped into the Democrats is still hanging in there.

Memo to Wilentz: (1) Albert Gore Sr. voted against the 1964 Civil Rights Act. (2) In 1967, George H.W. Bush put his House seat at risk by voting for fair housing measures. (3) The father of the modern Republican party is not Strom Thurmond but Ronald Reagan, who when Thurmond ran for president was a union leader and liberal activist. He decidedly did not think Thurmond should have been elected in 1948.

Democrats could get by without this hysteria if they were able to draw more white voters, something Lyndon Johnson had no trouble doing in the last presidential election before his party took leave of its senses. Democrats then stood for an assertive defense and a great pride in the nation. Nixon's narrative was that he wasn't a Democrat, and was not George McGovern; Jimmy Carter's was that he was not Richard Nixon; Ronald Reagan restored the grand themes to his party, and carried it through three landslides, until the victory in the Cold War robbed the elder Bush of his raison d'être. In this themeless world, Clinton was able to win on charm and small issues. But September 11 gave George W. Bush his chance to frame his own narrative around a national mission that the Democrats were too splintered to share in completely.

So almost four decades after the mid-'60s disruptions, the Republicans have done better at exorcising their demons than the Democrats have done with theirs. The last vestiges of racism are leaching out of the South and of the Republican party. But the nihilism that seeped into the Democrats is still hanging in there, the small rock-hard core at the heart of the party that time has not softened. Yes, there is a reason the Democrats keep losing elections, but it isn't "code words" or Jim Crow. Democrats delude themselves if they believe the Confederate flag played a key role in the 2002 defeat of Roy Barnes and Max Cleland in Georgia, by turning out a huge white vote in exurban areas. The trouble with this theory is that the voting patterns in Georgia tracked exactly the patterns elsewhere in the country, where massive white turnout fueled the Senate wins of Norm Coleman in Minnesota, Jim Talent in Missouri, and Wayne Allard in Colorado, along with Bob Ehrlich's big win of the statehouse in Maryland. Does nostalgia for the days of Jefferson Davis run high in those states, too?

There was one big wedge issue that did work in Georgia, and perhaps in some other states. In late September, three Democratic House members (including Jim McDermott and outgoing whip David Bonior) took a trip to Iraq, where they criticized Bush and blamed the United States for killing small children. It was then that the numbers for Roy Barnes and Max Cleland started tanking in Georgia. For weeks, the Baghdad Democrats were all over the airwaves. No chagrined fellow Democrats stood up to say "this isn't our party," as Bush and some others did about Lott. The nostalgia for segregation of politicians like Lott may have been the reason the South first moved into the Republican column, but the bitter leftism of Democrats like McDermott and Bonior is high on the list of reasons it stays there. It is the reason many Democrats are running a seemingly permanent deficit among non-minority voters, a deficit that makes race-baiting essential, even as they run out of racists to criticize. They have seen the enemy, and it is Stonewall Jackson. Too bad he's still dead. ♦

Still the One

Nixon at 90

By Andrew Ferguson

We live in a free country, thank God, so we are each of us entitled to celebrate Richard Nixon's birthday in our own way. Out in Yorba Linda, California, at the Nixon Library & Birthplace, the hardiest of the nation's merry-makers assembled on January 9 to toast the former president's 90th birthday with their annual "Victory of Freedom Gala." Other Americans celebrated quietly, surrounded by family and friends, while some preferred to be left alone, to gather their thoughts and memories. Still others chose not to mark the occasion at all, which is their right.

For myself, when the big day rolls around I like to drive out to suburban Maryland, to an annex of the National Archives called Archives II, where, in a fourth-floor room lined with towering gray filing cabinets, the Nixon tapes are stored. The tapes constitute one of the country's oddest historical artifacts—a portrait of a presidency, in second-by-second detail. There are 3,700 hours of tapes, recorded in the Oval Office and in Nixon's private White House hideaway between early 1969 and early 1973, touching on every subject from the China overture and Russian détente to Tricia Nixon's wedding and Bebe Rebozo's taste in movies. Of these conversations about 1,800 hours have so far been released for public listening, with many more scheduled to arrive over the next few years.

"We have people come by the busload, still," Karl Weissenbach, the tapes' curator, told me. They come to hear the Greatest Hits, of course—"Smoking Gun" and "Cancer on the Presidency," "I Want Brookings Cleaned Out" and "Did Mitchell Know?" and "We Could Get the Million Dollars (But It Would Be Wrong)"—but since these conversations can be readily downloaded from various Internet sites, most people come to chase Nixonian demons peculiar to themselves. The researchers, cranks, and hobbyists sit long hours at the gray metal desks, heads bent low in headphones, fingers stabbing the playback buttons on the cassette recorders, searching for this clue or that. "I've seen people sit through the entire eighteen-and-a-half-minute gap," Weissenbach said. "I guess they think they'll hear something no one else has."

I come tracking my own mystery. Ten years after Nixon's resignation, Alonzo Hamby, the historian and presidential biographer, began an essay on Nixon with the question, "Why did we hate him so?" The question is still open. By "we," of course, Hamby meant all right-thinkers, the liberal academics, artists, journalists, intellectuals, and wise persons, most of them gathered on the Eastern seaboard, who for a quarter century defined their political opinions in large part according to their contempt for Richard Nixon. The question "Why?" deepens as the years pass and the reflexive prejudices weaken, and what should have been obvious all along becomes undeniable: Nixon was the most liberal president of the past sixty years.

It should scarcely be necessary to prove the case any longer. He ended the draft and lowered the voting age and abandoned the kleptocrats of South Vietnam. He proposed a guaranteed family income and a nationalized health care system, instituted racial quotas and wage and price controls, and expanded the reach of the federal government with the EPA, OSHA, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and half a dozen other alphabet agencies. He bussed the brutish Brezhnev and pumped the blood-caked hand of Mao with grinning enthusiasm, in the name of peace. Far from their worst nightmare, Nixon should have been the liberals' fondest dream. And yet they despised him just the same. Why?

Sometimes, on the fourth floor at Archives II, the fog begins to lift, and the answer suggests itself.

When I first met him, and I told him I was at the Archives to mark Nixon's birthday, Weissenbach, the curator, brought out a tray of tapes from a file cabinet and told me to choose at random. I plucked one from the box, slipped it into the cassette player, and strapped on the headphones.

The tape I chose records several midday meetings in the Oval Office on April 9, 1971. It opens *in medias res*, with the tail end of a conversation between the president and Paul McCracken, the chairman of his council of economic advisers. Evidently that morning's *Washington Post* had reported that McCracken was going to resign.

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For much of this conversation, Nixon is listless, seeming bored as he so often was by domestic policy. But I soon discovered what all Nixon enthusiasts know: When you listen to the tapes, it never takes long for the exemplary, the essential, the ineradicable Nixon to manifest himself.

"So, we're settled on this thing," Nixon says suddenly on the tape, apparently having dissuaded McCracken from his intention to quit. The president picks up the phone to call his press secretary, Ron Ziegler.

"Ron, get this word out: This report in the *Washington Post* is completely erroneous. *Completely*. You tell those guys, Chairman McCracken has complete confidence in the president and in the president's policies. Got that? Go to it."

You hear the phone slam down. "That takes care of that," he says. "We can't take any crap from these people, Paul. Am I right? Sometimes you got to just stand up and kick 'em in the teeth."

McCracken departs and Nixon is joined by his aide Al Haig and his former Treasury secretary, David Kennedy, who has come to brief the president on his recent tour of Asia. Kennedy's account drags on and Nixon responds monosyllabically, until Kennedy mentions some trouble with the U.S. State Department and the Agency for International Development. On the tape there's an eruption.

"Goddammit, Al, I told them I wanted that AID budget *cut*! It's not the money, it's the personnel. Get those bastards out of there! You got all these young whippersnappers [*actual word—Ed.*] running around Asia knocking our policies. Get. Them. Out. Of. There."

"Yes, sir!" Haig says. "Should have been done already!"

"I'll tell you, we got to break some china around here. We need hard-headed, tough guys, not this usual State Department way of doing things. All these guys over there—they're weak. They go to these goddamn Eastern Ivy League schools and they're not pro-American."

Here I should stress again that this tape was taken at random, from a box selected at random, though there were moments when I thought Weissenbach was pulling a gag, slipping a Rich Little tape into the machine.

But no. Kennedy goes on to mention unflattering reports he'd heard about Peace Corps volunteers.

Nixon's feet hit the floor. "Goddamn them, Al! That's another thing I told those bastards to cut! I've never seen a place where the Peace Corps was worth a damn. Am I right? Oh sure, it's great for the kids. They're going to a nice Eastern college, they want a nice little vacation. Well, send them to the goddamn Congo then!"

The next meeting that morning concerned the arts.

Nixon's presidency was the most generous ever enjoyed by the arts establishment in the United States. Representing that establishment in the administration were Nixon's old law partner Leonard Garment and, preeminently, Nancy Hanks, a former director of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and thus, ex officio, a life member of the Eastern Establishment.

On the tape, Nixon says he wants to talk about the film industry.

"Now, Nancy, it turns out, 52 percent of the movies we see here in the United States were made abroad. What I want to do is find a way to keep these damn foreign movies out. Oh, I know they're supposed to be so damn great and so forth. To tell you the truth, I don't see many movies. Saw *Love Story*. *Patton*. But my point is, I will not have America slip to number two in the world when it comes to movies."

Mrs. Hanks protests that the popularity of foreign movies is owing to their superior quality.

"Well, then, here's what I want you to do. I want you to take it to the movie industry. You tell 'em, You've got to start producing good movies. Say: No more of this weird stuff! Shape up!

"The family movie is coming back, you know. People don't like arty. They don't like offbeat.

"But the film industry, they're trying to reflect the *intelligentsia*"—the word drips with venom—"and that is their big mistake. Following the intelligentsia is where they always go wrong. Look at these film schools today. All they do is the weird stuff. They produce weird movies. *They produce weird people.*"

But Hanks and Garment have come to talk not about the movies but about the government's grandest current project for the arts, the construction of the Hirshhorn Sculpture Museum on the National Mall.

"Is this going to be some of that—that *modern* art?" Nixon asks suspiciously.

"It is, Mr. President," Mrs. Hanks replies, in her Rockefeller voice. "It's one of the finest collections of modern sculpture in the world." *In the wuld.*

"Oh yeah?" Silence. Then: "Don't let it be one of those horrible modern buildings, all right? 'Cause if it is, we're not going to do it."

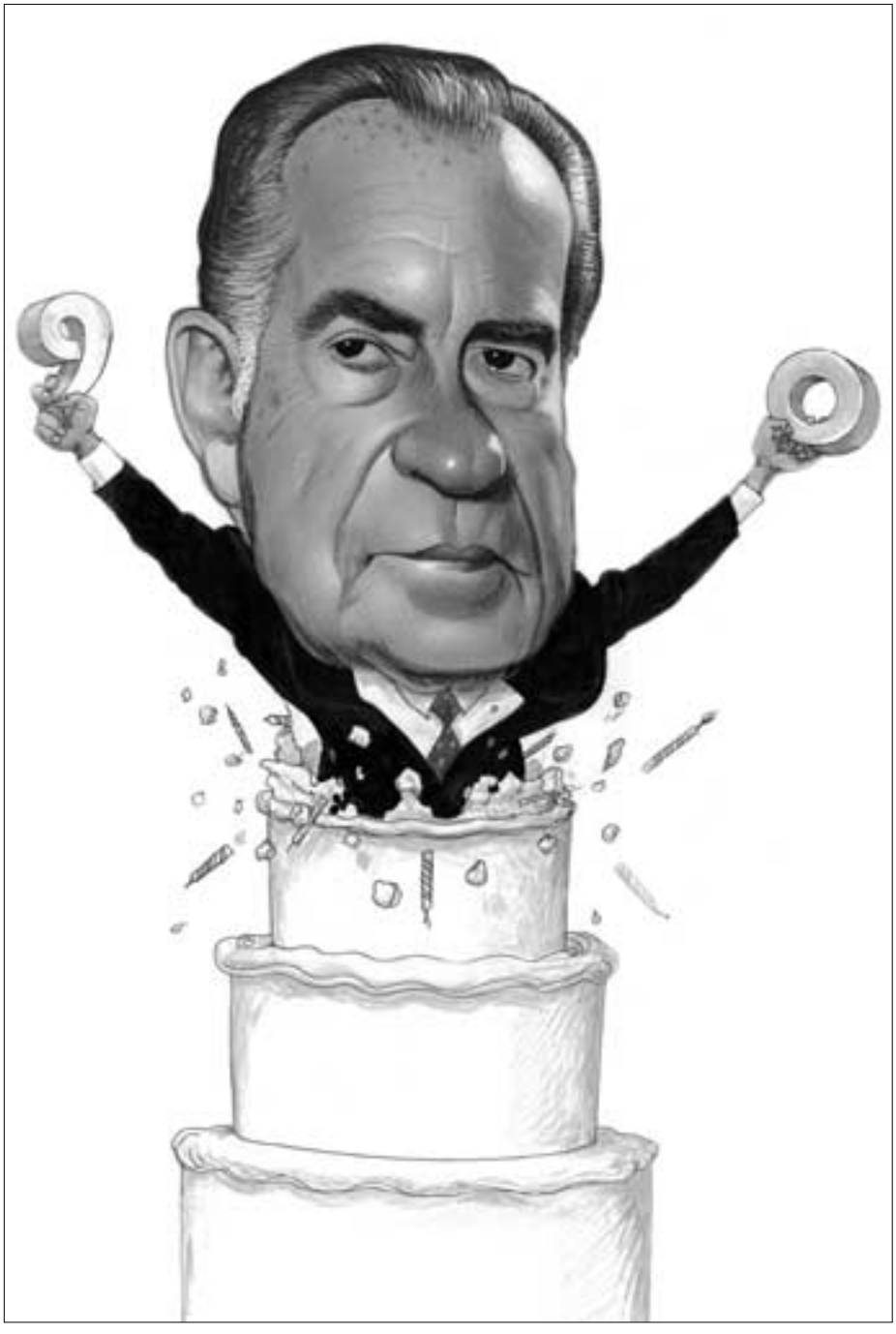
Garment and Hanks try to explain that the plans have already been approved.

Nixon's voice deepens. "I will not have the Mall desecrated with one of those horrible goddamn modern atrocities like they have in New York with that, what is it, that Whitney thing. Jesus H. Christ. If it looks like that, it—will—not—happen."

Silence.

"And I don't want 'controversial,' either. All right? Now this list for the board or whatever. Am I stuck with these names?"

Garment assures him the list for the museum's board of



Earl Keleny

directors can still be changed.

"Good. I'm taking all the Easterners off of here. Got that? Every single one. And this name—what's—some Harvard name. Know him. Part of the Eastern Establishment. Rich guy, but he'll never lift a finger to help us. Well, the hell with him. Am I right?"

Nixon mentions names of California donors he would like placed on the Hirshhorn board.

"Just put 'em on the list," he says. "I mean, why not? Think they'll make the thing a disaster? They can't make it a disaster because it's a disaster already!"

"No, no, Mr. President," Mrs. Hanks scolds. "It will not be a disaster!"

"Oh, come on, Nancy," Nixon says quietly. "I've seen the plans."

Another silence.

"Well," he says at last, "I wash my hands of the damn thing. Just make sure I don't have to see it when I look out this window."

And there it is: an entire administration in miniature, the capitulation of the tough-talking Republican. The damn building got built, of course, and the Hirshhorn is indeed an atrocity, as Nixon knew it would be, rising up on the Mall without windows or warmth, poured from dun-colored concrete in the shape of a giant automotive air filter.

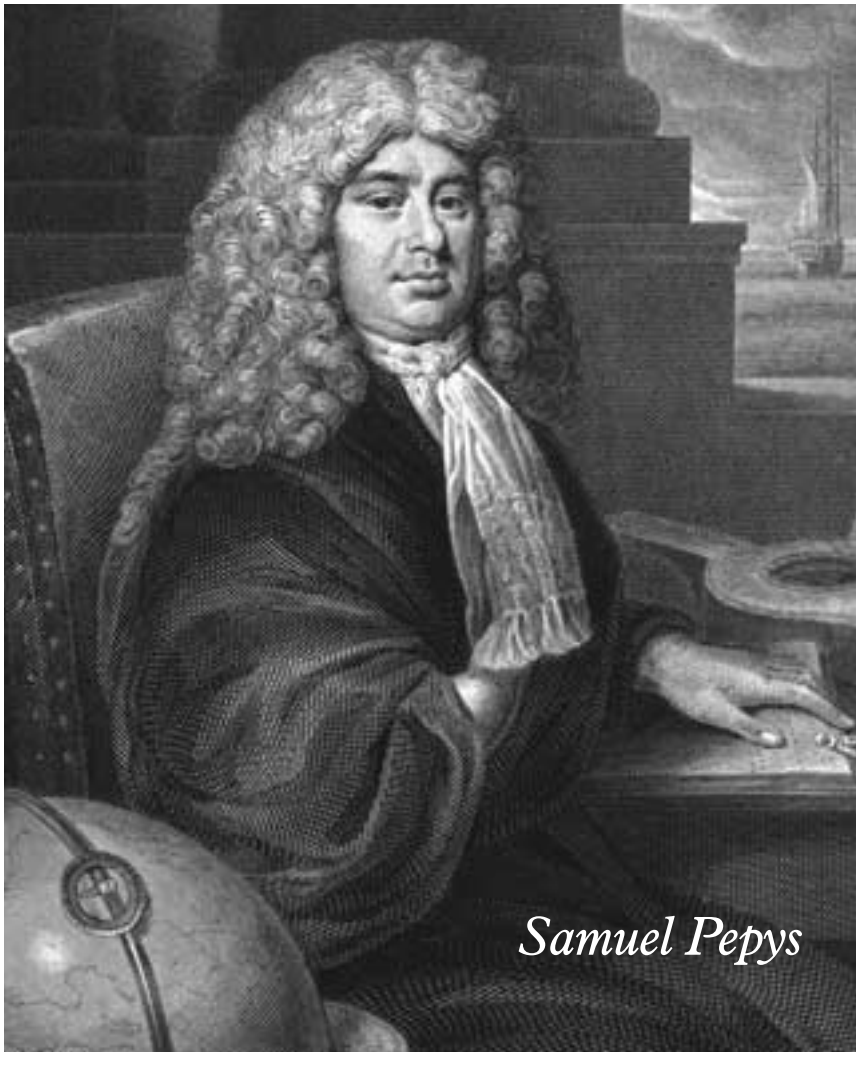
Why did they hate him so? "They" did get their building, after all, and so much else from him, too. A few hours in the tape room at Archives II, though, makes the answer plain: They hated him because he hated them. Deep as it was, the hatred wasn't about politics. It cut much closer to the vitals—into culture, disposition, class, I'm not sure what to call it. One of Nixon's legacies indeed is to demonstrate the puniness of politics, its relative insignificance in the larger scheme of what moves men to do what they do. His enemies knew he wasn't one of them, and though he may have tried to buy their trust with every kind of political concession, Nixon knew it too. He hated them for it and vice versa. And the hatred, both his and theirs, is what did him in at the end, as he also knew.

But who hated whom first—Nixon or the liberals? The answer to that chicken-and-egg question is probably untraceable at this late date, and out of order in any case, as we wish the old man's shade a happy birthday, despite everything. ♦

And So to Bed

The extraordinary life of Samuel Pepys

By Hugh Ormsby-Lennon



Samuel Pepys

Bettmann / CORBIS. All other photos: Knopf.

There seems to be a consensus emerging that with *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self*, Claire Tomalin has reintroduced us to a forgotten master. "Who remembers Samuel Pepys anymore?" the *New York Times* Sunday book-review section began its recent front-page review of Tomalin's biography, providing in the first paragraph the obligatory information that the seventeenth-century British diarist's name was pronounced in one syllable as "Peeps."

Was Pepys really as dead as all that? "Up this morning" is a phrase that has passed from his daily journal entries to diarists everywhere. "And so to bed" is another. In any case, from January 1, 1660 (four months before Charles II was restored to the throne of England), to May 31, 1669, the modish civil servant churned out a million and a half words, meticulously encrypted in shorthand. Pepys's eyes and hands roved everywhere—ships' cargoes, curb-side executions, autopsies, puppet-shows and plackets, musical and scientific instruments, actresses—for his inquisitiveness knew no bounds.

As he chronicles his private life and London's public life with staggering copiousness, Restoration England teems before us. From the great Plague and Fire of 1665 and 1666 to his own frantic interior decorating, from affairs of state to buying pornography, from the Dutch fleet's marauding its way up English rivers to spying upon his wife's choice of underwear, Pepys has left us a matchless (and breathlessly jumbled) encyclopedia of a seventeenth-century city and man in dramatic flux. He never really explained why he began or sustained his epic foray into prose. It seems that overwhelmingly interesting times impelled an overweeningly curious man to jot down nearly everything.

Samuel Pepys
The Unequalled Self
by Claire Tomalin
Knopf, 450 pp., $30

Uppermost in few readers' minds today is the fact that Pepys was, simultaneously, building a career at the Navy Office—where he pulled together the fleet that dominated the world's sea lanes for the next two centuries. Compared with so much else that he records, his job can seem like filler in his dairy. Tomalin lays out the details of Pepys's national career while she escorts us through the diary's back alleys of playing hooky and of fantasies about the king's whores.

Along the way, Tomalin pays perhaps less attention than she might to just how visionary Pepys was. That's not a real complaint. She is a literary biographer, not a naval historian, and interested readers can search out monographs such as J.D. Davies's *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins* (1991).

Still, the British navy was the largest employer in seventeenth-century England. It became the largest employer in the world during the next century, in no small part thanks to the indefatigable work of Pepys. The Navy Office was a good posting for any civil servant: Samuel and his wife Elizabeth began the 1660s with £25 between them; they ended a decade of love and fisticuffs and suspicion with £10,000. Pepys, however, did not just enrich himself. When the Dutch Admiral Michel de Ruyter sailed up the Med-

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way in 1667 to burn Chatham dockyard and capture the *Royal Charles*—the pride of the British navy—it shocked the nation and produced popular demands for naval reform. And Samuel Pepys, the ambitious administrator who happened to be in a position to do something about it, rose to the challenge as few other men could or would have done.

Naval historians have rightly made Pepys their administrative hero—which leaves the diary something of an embarrassment for them. What are we finally to make of his writing? Both Pepys and his diary invite superlatives. "The most unlikely thing at the heart of his long, complex, and worldly life," Tomalin remarks in her final paragraph, "is the secret masterpiece."

Some of the quotidian details Pepys recollected by candlelight do not make him attractive, even though pummeling a wife and servants was then the prerogative of any household's master. But somehow—amidst his forthright descriptions of squirming at his own marital violence—Pepys retains the affection, however qualified, of most readers.

Those who dealt with the clandestine diarist professionally—and they ranged from Charles II down to ships' carpenters—knew him primarily as a naval administrator, tireless and gifted. Other men knew him as a prodigious book-lover or as a prodigal consumer of fashionable clothes, food and wine, and the Royal Society's "new science."

But too many women—from Mrs. William Bagwell, a carpenter's wife, to Peggy Penn, daughter of his colleague and neighbor, Admiral Sir William Penn—had to handle his adulterous fumblings and tumblings. The diarist was a serial chancer, although in an age of extravagant rakes like Charles II and the Earl of Rochester, he seems mostly furtive. Fearful of disease, he eschewed prostitutes, but he often enjoyed slap and tickle with actresses and trinket-sellers.

About such sprees, Pepys was somewhat shamefaced in the diary. His wife Elizabeth entertained suspicions but couldn't confirm them until 1668, when he started making visible passes at her young companion Deborah Willett. Amidst domestic strife, Sam gave up Deb in what reads like a miniature novel, at once poignant and farcical. Samuel was also jealous (falsely it seems) of Elizabeth's dancing master and other young men who paid her pretty compliments. Never before in Western culture had such a documentary—candid but gauche and self-involved—been essayed.

"The *Diary* carries Pepys to the highest point," Tomalin concludes, "alongside Milton, Bunyan, Chaucer, Dickens, and Proust." The secret masterpiece certainly solicits such grand comparisons (even if Tomalin skips a chronological beat), but the paradox is that Pepys did not consciously set out to rival literary Londoners like Chaucer or Milton, both of whom were also civil servants. Indeed, Pepys seems (and this is Tomalin's savvy point) almost to blunder into the literary pantheon. Of how his diary would end, Pepys had no notion. And yet, somehow, the diary acquires a master-plot: an extraordinary man and his lucrative job and his volatile wife and their servant-problem, which his times serendipitously transmuted into narrative gold.

Pepys married on October 10, 1655, when Elizabeth Marchant de St. Michel was fourteen and Sam twenty-two. Neither could boast economic prospects. Elizabeth was a skittish and precocious child of a French father who dabbled in perpetual-motion machines and smoke-free chimneys, and a British mother who had seen better days. Emigrés to London, the St. Michels were impecunious but loopily ambitious, and their religious history (Catholic? Protestant?) was ambiguous. Sam was an aspiring nobody, the son of John and Margaret Pepys, a semi-literate London tailor and an illiterate former laundry-maid whose religious sympathies tended towards Puritanism.

The marriage was already tempestuous before Pepys began his journal in 1660—Elizabeth returned to her parents for a while—and only Sam's future reclaimed it for history. Not a written word from Elizabeth survives (partly because her husband tore up her papers during a violent quarrel), or from Mary Skinner, the seventeen-year-old with whom Pepys took up in 1670. The women in the life of this comsummately literate man were strangely unlettered.

Too many people assume that Pepys's governing passion was sex. In fact, it was music. Like his father John and countless other Englishfolk of the seventeenth century, Pepys was a skilled amateur musician who enjoyed nothing better than an impromptu concert. "Music is the thing of the world that I love most," he wrote in closing July 30, 1666, taking mental refuge from a rampant Dutch fleet and a "dissatisfied" wife. (The day had begun with lute lessons for his servant, continued with bad news on the naval front, and ended with a singalong, and harsh words, with Elizabeth.)

Tomalin astutely connects the joy Pepys took in music with his religious intimations of "Something above" and a future "State of Harmony." The relation to sex, however, was also present. "That which did please me beyond

anything in the whole world," Pepys wrote of a performance of Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr*, "was the wind-musique when the Angell comes down, which is so sweet that it ravished me; and indeed, in a word, did wrap up my soul so that it made me really sick, just as I have formerly been when in love with my wife."

Pepys continues thus for several affecting lines ("I remained all night transported"), but he does not mention that the descending angel was played by a scantily clad Nell Gwyn, the royal mistress who charmed him hopelessly. His companions at the performance included Deborah Willett, whom he had already given "a little kiss" on December 22, 1667; soon this love affair would plunge his marriage into crisis.

On May 31, 1669, Pepys finally set down his pen, fearful that his nightly travails were robbing him of his eyesight. The diary ends, "And so I betake myself to that course which [is] almost as much as to see myself go into my grave—for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the good God prepare me."

On November 13, 1669, Elizabeth entered her literal grave; the application of halved bleeding pigeons to her feet had not assuaged her sudden fever. This sad collision of dates in 1669 proves almost novelistic. "Elizabeth can be seen as the *Diary*'s muse," remarks Tomalin perceptively, but it was the wife who expired when her husband could write no further. Pepys retained his sight, but he had forfeited his diary and his wife.

Pepys was always worried about his health, and with reason: Born in 1633 as his parents' fifth child, he had by age seven outlived all his older siblings. He was in continual pain from bladder stones, for which he underwent perilous surgery, without anesthetic, in 1658. By 1677 his graphic itemization of physical ailments—including joint-aches, allergies, itchings, a clogged head, bowel and bladder pain—in a note headed "The Present Ill State of My Health" shows that

Above: Charles II at Whitehall. Opposite: the first page of Pepys's shorthand diary.

Pepys had lost none of his candor. The man who had boozed it up with Admiral Penn and many others, who had tucked into oysters, anchovies, and lobsters, now had "very little taste" for food and wine. "It makes you wonder how he ever got out of bed at all," Tomalin marvels, "let alone ran and reformed a government department, addressed parliament [as an MP] and attended the king wherever he happened to be."

Before 1660, none of the latter would have seemed a plausible future for the humble son of a London tailor. But England's class system could be surprisingly permeable. The family retained some good connections—Sam's great aunt Paulina had married Sir Edward Montagu—and during the plague of 1643 John and Margaret sent their oldest son off to the Montagus' big house in Huntingtonshire.

There Sam attended the same grammar school as had Oliver Cromwell, whose name was becoming a household word for military prowess. Upon his return to London, Sam attended St. Paul's School (Milton's *alma mater*, but not as classy as Westminster School where John Dryden, John Locke, and Christopher Wren were then pupils). On January 30, 1649, Pepys witnessed the execution of Charles I. In the diary entry for November 1, 1660, he records that an old school chum had that day reminded him how he had been "a great roundhead" as a boy, and the diarist became "much afeared that he would have remembered the words that I said the day that the King was beheaded (that were I to preach upon him, my text should be: 'The memory of the wicked shall rot')."

In 1651, helped by family connections, Samuel went up to Magdalene College, Cambridge, at the relatively late age of eighteen. Pepys was no prodigy like such Cambridge contemporaries Dryden and Newton. Upon graduating in 1654, he could find employment only as a dogsbody—servant, clerk, fixer—for Edward Montagu, his cousin from Huntingtonshire who was working, alongside Milton, for Cromwell in Whitehall Palace.

Montagu genuinely was a prodigy. Friend and neighbor to Cromwell, he had proved an outstanding general during the Civil War of the 1640s. Under Cromwell's government, Montagu became one of England's most dashing admirals in an era of naval triumphs. After Cromwell died in 1658, Montagu sagaciously switched his allegiance to Charles II. In May 1660 he took Pepys to greet the returning monarch in the English Channel. During these heady days, the factotum was promoted to a clerkship at the Navy Board and suddenly found himself "Samuel Pepys, Esquire" ("of which, God knows, I was not a little proud") with a generous salary (and kickbacks) to match. "If he changed, he changed

with the nation," Samuel Johnson explained of the Cromwellian poet Dryden's becoming Charles II's poet laureate. The same was true of Admirals Montagu and Penn and of the lowly Pepys.

Who remembers Montagu anymore? The newly created "Earl of Sandwich" went on to bungle his official accounts, his court politics, and some of his battles. In 1672, at the age of forty-six and in full regalia, he perished on his flagship, the *Royal James*, in savage fighting with the Dutch. Pepys's patron was brave, sanguine, and honorable, and his wife Jemima was the only woman for whom the diarist expressed unfeigned admiration. But the pen really is mightier than the sword, and now the admiral survives as a footnote to the diary of his seasick scrivener.

Pepys had the knack of being in the vanguard: from meeting the king in the Channel to making one of the first references in English literature to a "Cupp" of "Tee," from being among the first Englishmen to wear a francophile periwig to seeing actresses (rather than boys dressed as women) on the public stage.

Samuel Pepys in 1666

Pepys didn't lose that knack after 1669. In 1677 Montagu's protégé spearheaded the momentous proposal that naval appointments should be made by competitive examination rather than by family connection. In 1682 Pepys was among the first to call himself a "Tory," embracing as a badge of pride the epithet (meaning "Irish highwayman") with which the party's opponents had slanged conservatives.

The tide had already turned, alas, for the Catholic Stuarts by about 1670. By 1673 Pepys himself was accused of being a "Bluddy Papist" rather than an "old roundhead." The aesthetic penchant that he had shared with Elizabeth for Catholic ritual provided his enemies with ammunition. Parliamentary accusations of "Piracy, Popery, and Treachery" landed him in the Tower in 1679, where, amidst furious plotting, he briefly feared for his life. Released, he would eventually be imprisoned twice more.

Through it all, Pepys worked away (when he could) for kings and country. Eschewing political dogfights whenever possible, he became secretary to the Admiralty in 1684 and streamlined the operation of the navy. James II was deposed in 1688. Pepys remained loyal to the last, worrying about the future of the navy. The accession of the Protestant duo William and Mary saw Pepys out of government. He became a nonjuror when he refused to take the new oath of allegiance, thereby incurring double taxation.

Still, Pepys found plenty to do. During the 1690s, he hobnobbed learnedly with dons and scientists and with other non-jurors and Jacobites like Dryden who strove to keep the memory of James sweet. He had always been active outside government. He was a generous patron of Christ's Hospital school, whose department of mathematics prepared boys for the navy. Pepys was the reformist president of the Royal Society in 1688 when Isaac Newton's earth-shaking *Principia Mathematica* was published (which is why Pepys's name also appears on the title page). With some odd exceptions—not talking to his parents-in-law, for example, during the period of the diary—Pepys took good care of his family, employees, and friends. He also found time to write the sole work published during his lifetime, *Memoires Relating to the State of the Royal Navy* (1690). No masterpiece, the *Memoires* simply afforded Pepys a soapbox from which he could lambaste inimical commissioners.

Elizabeth Pepys in 1666

More important, during the early 1690s, he readied his diary for posterity, by preserving it with the rest of his library. What doubts crossed Pepys's mind when he reread the diary, probably in 1692, after the complex and worldly life he had negotiated since finishing the diary and since Elizabeth's death? He completed two short (but bloodless) diaries after 1669. There was a mound of other papers to tear or to sort. Fortunately for us, Pepys's gargantuan message-in-a-bottle remained untorn.

The story of how Pepys achieved unexpurgated publication enriches the fascination of the diary itself. In 1703 Pepys died famous (if politically side-

lined), and he bequeathed his collection of books—which included the six volumes of his shorthand diary—to Magdalene College. Not recognized for the full range of its holdings, this "bibliotheca pepysiana" began more than two centuries of humdrum peregrinations around Magdalene's quadrangles, finding at last, in the 1950s, a splendid home in the folksiest of the college's seventeenth-century buildings.

Only between 1819 and 1822 was the shorthand code of the diary assiduously deciphered by a starving student and patchily published by a boorish aristocrat. (Tomalin captures the attendant "tragi-comedy" with feeling.) The *Edinburgh Review* welcomed Lord Braybrooke's grotty edition as "a treasure-box of new detail," while Sir Walter Scott tut-tutted over the "man of pleasure."

Between 1893 and 1899, Henry Wheatley published a more complete edition, well-annotated but still bowdlerized, in ten volumes. In the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Leslie Stephen celebrated Pepys's naval career, but of the diary Stephen opined that "it seems to be highly improbable that he thought of publicity." Robert Louis Stevenson disagreed. Comparing this "unparalleled figure in the annals of mankind" with Montaigne and Rousseau, Stevenson declared, "Pepys was not such an ass, but he must have perceived, as he went on, the extraordinary nature of the work he was undertaking."

The first entry in the diary was not published, fully and in sequence, until 1970. Editorial squeamishness about that entry had been occasioned by Pepys's reference to his wife's menstrual difficulties (and their childlessness). Between 1970 and 1983, however, Robert Latham and William Matthews finally edited Pepys's diary, unbuttoned and magnificently glossed, in eleven volumes. The weird macaronics to which, even in shorthand, Pepys consigned his sexual follies were fully presented for the first time. Several paperback anthologies, based upon this edition, have brought him, whether naked or periwigged, to a new generation of readers.

Every biographer of Pepys is faced by daunting challenges. How does one paraphrase the details of the decade he so profligately recorded? How does one connect the quick of the diarist with the public man in the years after? Did bodily indisposition check his philandering? In 1687 Pepys wrote to William Bagwell (whose young wife's availability in 1663 had helped the complaisant ship's carpenter to a promotion) asking him to keep his middle-aged spouse away from the office. The diarist would have told the story; now we can only guess at the administrator's meaning.

Most of us feel, somehow, that we have always known Pepys the diarist—and Tomalin distills the diary for those whose acquaintanceship may be shaky—but she also reintroduces us to the aspiring young nobody and the dogged, courageous, and brilliant middle-aged administrator. In *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self*, Claire Tomalin shows why Pepys is "both the most ordinary and the most extraordinary writer you will ever meet." ♦

The Poet on Poetry

James Fenton muses about his craft.

BY BARTON SWAIM

In 1798 a slim volume of poems appeared in Bristol, England, entitled *Lyrical Ballads*, the anonymous work of two young and little-known poets, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It sold well, despite an overwhelmingly hostile critical reception; a second edition appeared in 1800, a third in 1802. The two young men went on, of course, to become the greatest poets of the age, indeed of the century in Wordsworth's case.

What made these poems so successful? Literary historians have often singled out the *Lyrical Ballads* as the book that started the poetic revolution known as English Romanticism: The poems violated a number of conventions common to poetry of the day, and they were cast in the language of everyday speech rather than in the grandiloquent diction then thought essential to poetry. But while there is some truth in this account of things, scholars over the last three or four decades have shown pretty convincingly that the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* weren't so original in form or subject as the poets themselves claimed them to be. Why, then, were they so successful? How did they start a revolution? The answer has less to do with their originality than with the fact that they were so exceptionally, thrillingly *good*. In other words, Romanticism in English poetry came about largely because the English literate public of the early nineteenth century were capable of discerning great poetry when they saw it, whatever hidebound reviewers might say.

Alas, if a work of equal power and depth were to be published in 2002, it would have little chance of being read by more than a handful of people, and virtually no chance of igniting the imaginations of two or three generations, as eventually Wordsworth and Coleridge's poetry did. The reasons for this can hardly be crammed into a book review. But several come to mind, chief among them that poetry must now compete with movies, television, and pop music. Another reason for this state of affairs, though, deserves consideration: the sheer awfulness of most of the verse written over the last four decades, and the effect it has had on the reading public.

Ask the average intelligent person

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whether he or she likes poetry, and the response will fall somewhere between a polite no and an embarrassed shrug. Probe, and almost certainly you will find that the reason has something to do with not understanding what poetry is "all about." No surprise there. English metrics haven't been seriously taught to the young for decades, and since the 1960s, poets themselves, with a few honorable exceptions, have eschewed metrics as "inauthentic" and confined themselves to "free verse," the ostentatious absence of meter. But while there may be some merit in free verse (I do not think so), its imposition as doctrinal orthodoxy since the '60s has rendered generations of intelligent people deaf to the rhythms and melodies of English meter—from schoolchildren who are taught to write "poems" but not instructed in meter (except for the haiku), to poets who think of metrics as a weird convention of yesteryear, like photographing dead people.

Thus does it fall to the poet James Fenton in his splendid little book *An Introduction to English Poetry* to acquaint the interested but perplexed with English language poetry, and, in the process, to plead with today's poets to take poetic form—which is to say, poetry—seriously.

Fenton's twenty-two small chapters seek to explain, as accessibly and winsomely as possible, the basic ideas involved in reading and understanding English poetry. What is the purpose of rhyme? What are iambs and trochees, pentameter and fourteeners, and how have poets used these things to make their words say more than would be possible otherwise?

In answering such questions Fenton is aware that many contemporary poets view metrics as little more than arbitrary and life-denying rules that poets of bygone eras imposed on themselves just to see if they could do it. Fenton goes shows this notion to be the self-serving sham it is, but he does so by definition and analysis rather than by argument and ridicule, appropriate as argument and ridicule would have been in this context.

Three brief chapters—"The Sense of Form," "The Iambic Pentameter," and "Variations on a Line"—explain the nature and purpose of metrics as well as can be done in so short a space. Having defined the most important meter in English poetry, the iambic pentameter, Fenton goes through several lines of Tennyson's "Tithonus." What is remarkable about iambic pentameter is that, while a poem like Tennyson's may be indisputably iambic pentameter, it constantly varies from that pattern—and the rhythmic variety the poem produces is, in large measure, what makes it beautiful. The meter was made for the poem, and not the poem for the meter. Here are four lines from "Tithonus":

Farrar Strauss & Giroux

An Introduction to English Poetry
by James Fenton
Farrar Strauss & Giroux, 144 pp., $20

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.

Only the first of these lines is in perfect iambic pentameter: Emphasis is placed on the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth syllables. The other three lines exhibit subtle variations. Fenton remarks upon the fourth line that "Tennyson could easily have avoided the extra syllable—the line has eleven syllables—by making the summers into a more conventional plural: 'And after many summers dies the swan.' But he does not do this. Clearly he prefers the idiomatic flavour of 'many a' . . . The irregularity he has introduced is not a *mistake*. It is another variant, and in this case a very gentle variant, on the classic pattern."

Other chapters discuss the uses of rhyme, the iambic tetrameter, the trochee, the sonnet, the longer forms such as the Spenserian stanza, and the minor forms such as the triolet. Fenton's is far from a comprehensive introduction; his choice of topics and poems, while sufficiently representative, reflects very much his own interests. It is more of an invitation than an introduction. But although it is possible to complain about some of Fenton's preoccupations (do we really need six pages on the sestina?), his choice of poems to illustrate poetic principles is by and large commendable, as is his practice of relaying, when possible, the entire poem rather than excerpts: The reader feels that he has read something other than a treatise.

Short and instructive as the book is, it is not flawless. Fenton's strategy of addressing aspiring poets themselves gives certain passages a cliquish quality; the chapters on song and libretto-writing, for instance, sound like a how-to manual.

More important, Fenton tries too hard to establish his non-elitist credentials, as when he remarks, with what sounds to me like insincerity, that rap has poetic precedents in ancient extemporaneous rhyming. Similarly, he stops short of saying what needs to be said about free verse, namely that the few respectable poems written in free verse are respectable only because they partake of the rhythms of metrical poetry while hypocritically claiming to eschew it, and that the elevation of free verse as the Only Way to Write Authentic Poetry has rendered two generations of versifiers incapable of hearing the music of poetry, and has lent itself easily to the creepy self-indulgence that scares normal and intelligent people away from poetry. Fenton seems to recognize this, but he is too kind to say it.

What is most troubling about this book, however, is that it had to be written at all. One hopes it will repair some of the damage that made it necessary. ♦

Nineteenth-century French uniforms. Christel Gerstenberg / CORBIS.

Dressing for War

Paul Fussell on the history of uniforms.

BY MARTIN LEVIN

"All my life I have had a thing about uniforms," writes Paul Fussell. He agrees with Thomas Carlyle that appearances matter ("Society, which the more I think of it astonishes me all the more, is founded upon cloth"). And in *Uniforms: Why We Are What We Wear*, Fussell tries to sort out the secrets of the wardrobe closet. They're not big secrets, but they can be illuminating—for instance, why the Navy's enlisted personnel has refused to modernize their archaic sailor suits.

Fussell can be a refreshingly cheery social critic. His latest book is a ray of sunshine in a season of apocalyptic publishing. This seems like a paradoxical assessment in view of his famously mordant books on the two world wars, *The Great War and Modern Memory* and *Wartime*. But Fussell's outstanding attraction is that he can't be pigeonholed. He is selectively "antiwar" without being "anti-violence" (his essay "Thank God for the Atom Bomb" is an outstanding contribution to devil's advocacy). Fussell identifies with H.L. Mencken, another unaffiliated troublemaker. In his memoir *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic*, he attributes his often dour critical outlook to his hitches in the Army and Harvard graduate school, both of which he detested. ("My presiding emotion was annoyance, often intensifying to virtually disabling anger.") After fifty years, Fussell's annoyance is undimmed.

Uniforms
Why We Are What We Wear
by Paul Fussell
Houghton Mifflin, 204 pp., $22

Uniforms is a once-over lightly on the motivations behind contemporary costuming. Fussell claims his ideas on dress were influenced by Erving Goffman's classic book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Goffman theorizes that there is a dichotomy between appearance and inner reality, and that individuals play a "role" that can eventually be subsumed into their personality. Life is, in large part, a "performance."

Fussell assembles an intriguing batch of performance analyses. One of these comes out of an exchange between a reporter and Swami Prabhudbada, founder of the Hare Krishnas. The reporter asked why the Hare Krishnas dressed differently. "It's because we are different" was the answer. Next question.

Another revelation seeks to explain why the Sisters of Mercy have been exchanging the traditional nuns' habit for mufti. Fussell speculates that it may arise from "generalized anger at anything that looks 'official.'" This changeover can be interpreted as a symptom of cultural decline if you accept Jacques Barzun's credible verdict (in *From Dawn to Decadence*) that decadence results from the dissolution of authority.

A large number of Fussell's reflections are amiably innocuous, such as why chefs wear white and why UPS drivers dress in brown. And some of his notions are purely idiosyncratic. To wit: "Who can behold a symphony orchestra all in white tie and tails without sensing something a bit funny in that anomalous spectacle?" I never sensed amusement at the Philharmonic, unless the orchestra programmed John Cage.

The author is also inclined toward unqualified absolutes, such as stating that Walt Whitman is "America's greatest poet" and Barbara Cartland is "a pulp fiction writer." Robert Frost, among many others, would give Whitman competition. And Barbara Cartland may have cranked out romance fiction unlimited, but not in the butcher paper medium that gave us Dashiell Hammett.

Whenever Fussell approaches the subject of the military, he loses his head. He quotes a passage from a book by Anthony Powell that describes the get-up of a retired British major who likes to relax wearing an evening dress and a picture hat. But this cross-dressing interlude appears in *From a View to A Death*—a work of fiction. Fussell also describes "olive drab"

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uniforms as being "the color of vomit or even excrement." You can't argue with what is really a matter of taste. I spent four and a half years in uniform without getting a scatological impression.

Some sartorial attitudes are unpredictable. When Admiral Zumwalt enacted a uniform change in the Navy of the early 1970s, he ignited a firestorm of resistance. You would think that sailors would have happily exchanged their bell bottoms (with a thirteen-buttoned "broad fall front") for trousers with a zippered fly. No way. Mastering the front flap was "a matter of nautical pride." One sailor summed it up thusly: "The classic bell bottoms, jumper, and white hat is, in my humble opinion, the sharpest dress uniform around." The bell bottoms stayed on.

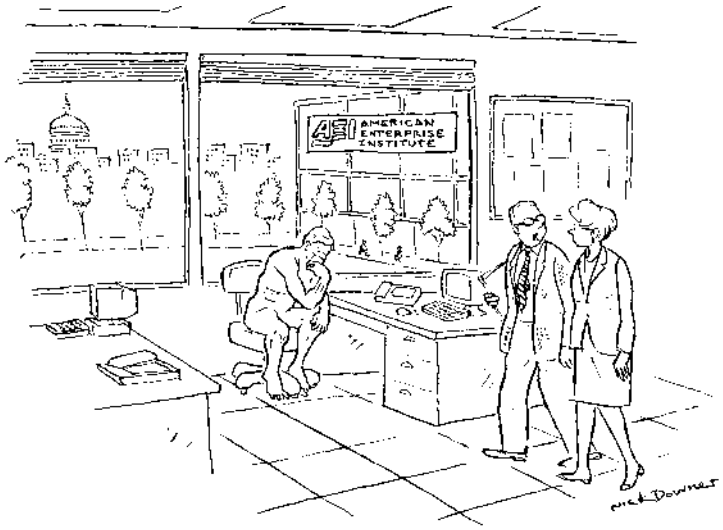
Pride has been the motive behind many small details of military snobbery. The leather flight jacket was issued exclusively to flight crews, who frowned upon their being worn by ground soldiers; likewise, the visored garrison cap with "the fifty mission crush." (The grommet was removed from the crown to accommodate earphones.)

Unauthorized jackets and floppy headgear could lead to confrontations. Then there was the recent attempt by the Joint Chiefs to cheapen the Army Rangers' exclusive black berets by issuing them to the entire Army. The Rangers protested strongly—and won. (The rest of the Army got tan berets instead.)

The ultimate uniform-lover was General George Patton, whose dandified regalia, including his famous pearl-handled revolver, is given much amused coverage. Shortly after World War I, Patton designed for his U.S. Tank Brigade a gaudy get-up topped by a glorified football helmet. When he wore it, he resembled "a football player dressed as a bellboy." So says Fussell, quoting Carlo D'Este, Patton's biographer. But the book's subtitle is *A Genius for War*, which D'Este found more central than the general's preference for fancy dress.

D'Este quotes Eisenhower as saying that Patton was "a problem child." Ike favored the prudent but slow-moving Omar Bradley—the "G.I. General," who was no sharp dresser. But when the Germans began their final counterattack during the Battle of the Bulge, it was Patton that Eisenhower called upon to save the day. He did so because, as military historian Gerald Astor put it in his book on the Ardennes battle, Patton could be counted on to "get the show on the road."

The point of all this is that we aren't always "what we wear." It can be the other way round. Patton's "performance" in battle proved that Goffman's theory about appearance becoming reality is reversible. ♦



"Who's the new guy?"

Books in Brief

Authentically Black: Essays for the Black Silent Majority **by John McWhorter (Gotham, 264 pp., $25)**. Two pages into the preface, John McWhorter announces, "I am not one for long introductions"—and then continues for another seven pages. It's the least provocative declaration in this collection decrying the state of Black America. For the Cornel Wests of the world, it's also the least upsetting.

McWhorter persuasively argues that African Americans are plagued by a "double consciousness": In private, they stress the bootstrap mentality and reject the "mantle of victimhood." Yet they publicly embrace the conceit that racism will always be a barrier to achievement for all but the fortunate few; whites can never be "let off the hook." While this victimology may soothe African Americans' collective inferiority complex, it keeps them from admitting the gains made since the 1960s, and it fosters a separatist, anti-intellectual culture that prevents further advances.

McWhorter spares no one. In one essay, he ridicules Transafrica Forum founder Randall Robinson for having the audacity to devote "less than three pages" in his pro-reparations book to an actual plan. McWhorter also proves surprisingly skillful at analyzing pop culture. While savaging media critic Donald Bogle for seeing "Mammies everywhere" on television, he offers his own list of performances that helped break down stereotypes, including Sherman Hemsley's portrayal of a racist blowhard on *The Jeffersons*.

McWhorter's suggestion that the controversy over racial profiling could be diffused with the help of community involvement fails to consider some of the more valid objections to the police technique. Still, *Authentically Black* is a worthy follow-up to McWhorter's previous polemic, *Losing the Race*. But it won't garner him an invitation to the NAACP Image Awards.

—RiShawn Biddle

World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability **by Amy Chua (Doubleday, 340 pp., $26)**. As markets open up and state enterprises are privatized in developing nations, a savvy few get very rich, very fast. Yale's Amy Chua helped privatize the state-owned Telefonos de Mexico and also served at the World Bank, so she has seen just how corrupt the process can be.

The new rich of developing countries are often ethnic minorities: Indians in East Africa, Chinese in the Philippines, Jews in post-Communist Russia. And when market reforms are accompanied by democratic reforms, these "market dominant minorities" quickly become targets for the poor and resentful ethnic majority.

"The competition for votes fosters the emergence of demagogues who scapegoat the resented minority, demanding an end to humiliation, and insisting that the nation's wealth be reclaimed by its 'true owners,'" writes Chua. When ethnonationalist governments come to power, violence and ruin await the prosperous minorities.

A barrage of examples supports Chua's thesis, each described with careful consideration of the different circumstances of different nations.

Mercifully sparing us the "solutions" chapter that plagues similar books, Chua makes limited suggestions on a case-by-case basis. She advocates encouraging small businesses and widespread stock ownership, as well as reducing the negative impact of globalization with progressive taxes and transfer programs. Mostly, though, she wants us to reduce our expectations. Chua clearly believes that democracy and free markets are good, but she feels compelled to remind us that they can't turn economic and political disaster areas around overnight.

Chua overextends her thesis, however, when she claims that it also explains ethnic resentment in the Arab-Israeli conflict and anti-American sentiment around the world. She says that America and Israel are resented because of their status as global or regional market-dominant minorities. This is essentially a recasting of the tired, they-hate-us-because-we're-rich argument. But her empirical evidence prior to this section is strong and told with a dramatic flair that makes a book with a dreary subject worth reading.

—Katherine Mangu-Ward

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cellor continued, "like barely yesterday when I was preserving my viability within the system at this very 'varsity myself."

"Oooh," she blushed. "Ah nivvah thowt ah'd be asked to the rooms o' the chancellor meself. An' me joost an oomble gal fresh arrived at Oxfud!"

"It was good of Professor McAuliffe to invite you," he said, smiling kindly. "A purty face brightens up a senior common room tea as much as those baloney McNuggets we've started serving."

The chancellor grew pensive for a moment and bit his bottom lip. "I don't know if you are acquainted with some of the cultural treasures of this hallowed institution," he said, "but I've been growing Chancellor Jenkins's video collection."

Stars twinkled over historic Oxford, and she clung to his arm as they walked towards his rooms. "Oooh, wha' be tha' hoonk a stone?" she expostulated.

"Why . . . why . . . I don't—" he replied. "Oh, yes. That's the Bodleian Library. Professor Gore designed it in the months after he led the evacuation from Dunkirk."

"Loovely!"

"No one has done more for Oxford than I have," he said solemnly. "Or civil rights. It is hard to believe no homosexuals ever attended the institution until I took over."

"Rooms is right loovely, they is," she said, as they crossed the threshold. "So near to the sink. Must be orriboo lonely for ye since your wife—"

"Good God, fair maiden," he ejaculated. "My life has been a wracking tale of torment e'er since! Nay, all that delays me from baring my heart and rendering you fair proof of my woe is a quick 'phone call I must make to Sonny Calla-