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Conservatism

July 12, 2010

The White Post

All conservatism is based upon the idea that if you leave things alone, you leave them as they are. But you do not. If you leave a thing alone, you leave it to a torrent of change. If you leave a white post alone, it will soon be a black post. If you particularly want it to be white, you must be always painting it again: that is you must always be having a revolution. Briefly, if you want the old white post, you must have a new white post. But this, which is true even of inanimate things, is in a quite special and terrible sense true of all human things.

-- G.K. Chesterton

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July 10, 2010

The Conceit of Being Well Read

(from the archives - April 2004)

I suspect that Hitchens is on a roll with his anti-religious rants in preparing himself to ramp up his rhetoric against the scourge of jihadism. It's almost enough to get me to put down Neal Stephenson in favor of Salman Rushdie. Not.

Last night he had a fair salvo of invective against Christianity's nut of forgiveness, but like most anti-theists his focus centers on the hole instead of the donut. All men are afraid of the dark, so what does it matter that one creates God and another creates Science if the purpose is obliterate fear? Well the conduct of those systems of belief does matter, and anyone is right to criticize a means that creates more fear than it settles. There is plenty of evidence that religion bears a great responsibility for that. Amis said that the purpose of philosophy is to show the proper way to prepare for death, and admirable goal. And so it works equally in that the age of Maoism and Stalinism and other like political philosophies a great deal of preparation was made of an ungodly amount of death.

It is only being well read that diffuses the conceit of any monotheism or single political ideology. But being well-read is a conceit as well, especially in that it arms one with a kind of grip which allows one to swing a more or less straight path through any jungle of diverse trees without getting bogged down in the fruits of just one. Such swingers as Hitchens, and Amis to a lesser extent, can quickly find the nut of contradiction in any single system given the broad understanding a life of sampling gives one. And yet it is only conceit that could justify ignoring the fruits of systems of belief entirely.

Goedel famously suggested, (and if your belief in math is total, you could say he proved beyond a shadow of a doubt) that it is impossible for any single system of proofs to be both complete and consistent. I generally take the example of Judaism to be exemplary of this. There are a huge number of rules which must be scrupulously followed by the faithful, and yet in the holy of holies, in the temple where G*d, who must not be named, there is only one human who can go to the single place. And yet what he sees must be nothing at all. Judaism, like every other monotheism is a faith around a void, and that non-existence is the article of faith which legitimize everything around it in perfect harmony with Goedel's Incompleteness Theorem.

That such religions have a singular provable flaw make them more consistent than the forest of trees the well-read swing through on their random paths toward enlightenment. For all such swingers must examine & abandon, revise & review their

world view. This is called being progressive, and although it should be incredibly tiresome, men such as Hitchens remain faithful to its discipline. They cannot stop reading. They cannot stop writing. Their task is never complete for there are few settled truths.

Those that are, must then be observed religiously, and one is apparently the rejection of theism. This principle may often be practically correct, although I've yet to hear any anti-theist reject the principles of Buddhism. It is a conceit nonetheless, so let's not forget that.

I am not here to suggest that all things are relative. It is only that I am convinced all things are not which makes me conservative. I know of what it is I conserve and so I am not so likely to be swinging through forests of logic. I honestly believe I can be honest without knowing who Leni Reifenstahl was. (Although Google helps)

And that's all I have to say about that.

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July 02, 2010

Steele Steps In It

And probably should step down for saying that Afghanistan is not our fight. What a maroon.

[Bill Kristol hands him his ass hat.](#)

What's crazy is that Afghanistan is the place I think Obama is most vulnerable to issues that matter most to me, geopolitics. And quite frankly nobody is looking to the Republican Party apparatus, much less to Michael Steele to figure out what to do and think through this bad economy. I think what can truly be said of Steele's tenure is that it has been completely overshadowed by the likes of the Tea Party activists, Glenn Beck's personality and the mendacity of Obama's rhetoric. Not one home run from Steele. Not even an RBI. Just a bunt to get on base and then maybe one steal.

He had the opportunity to demonstrate some erudition and class, but I guess he wasn't up to it after all. How he could come out so ass-backwards has me a bit baffled. Oh well. Steele goes the way of Gerald Ford. Actually, not measuring up there either. Time's up. Next.

Of course there will be no next. The GOP remains in disarray, incapable of calling Congress on the carpet, stonewalling Sotomayor, defending proper banking (or even defining it), or suppressing its half-wits. Both parties are in a state of default.

Sometimes I think that Chief Justice Roberts is the only dread pirate around.

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June 14, 2010

Laïcité

It has taken me about 6 years, but I am now completely comfortable in my understanding of the American Right, where I stand in it and how it perceives issues of politics and policy. I think I will spend more time explaining that out rather than staking out positions as I go forward here at Cobb. My cousin Lino in Rome was describing, in a recent debate, why American conservatives shouldn't demonize atheists as political. He speaks of [laïcité](#), and I respond:

The way to describe and defend laïcité to an American conservative is to start from the authority of the individual or the family. However one must distinguish between Hayekian Conservatives and Social Conservative. Either one might respond positively to laïcité in the following manner. If you ask a Hayekian Conservative, like myself, who should have final authority over the individual, he will say that individual. This means that the State should be minimized and the Church should be minimized with respect to their proper roles. A Hayekian might explain the evolution of society by the extent to which the commons is preserved with a balance of influence from secular and religious authority, but both subservient to the will of the individual. The individual *through his own consent* may submit to the authority of the Church or the State according to his creed. But in no case should either Church or State presume to *do for* or *do on behalf of* that individual and thus undermine his will and ultimately his ability to give reasonable consent.

Not being a Social Conservative I cannot say exactly how they might respond. But I believe that they would suggest that it is a continued submission to God which enables the individual to make the just and proper consent as an individual. So the Social Conservative or Religious Conservative is transparently comfortable with laïcité so long as this submission to God is unrestrained as the right of the individual.

Both Religious/Social and Hayekian Conservatives close ranks against the encroachment of the State as a social authority because if secular politics begin to take on such roles as have been traditionally provided by family or Church, then we see them as inevitably weakening both. This is one of the greatest abuses of power in our view of the world.

A 'Fiscal' Conservative may actually be on the Left or 'Progressive'. Their aim is to restrain excessive spending by the State but not necessarily restrain State power. They may be boiled frogs...

The question of political atheism is an issue here in the states because an intellectual and technical elite have been claiming that GWBush was too stupid to be a strategic thinker. Had Obama not been elected, and say Richardson instead, this might not have been an issue. However the atheists have been politicized against GWBush over relatively insignificant spending issues like Federal funding of Stem Cell research, which leads to the abortion debate and such questions of life and death. June 14, 2010 in [Conservatism](#), [Critical Theory](#), [Domestic Affairs](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#). [Reblog \(0\)](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Save to del.icio.us](#) | [Tweet This!](#) |

May 11, 2010

The Inconceivable Arrives

(artlessly lifted from [CBN.com](#))

Black Conservatives: The New Face of the GOP

WASHINGTON - The midterm congressional elections are seven months away. Republicans are already promising a strong effort to take back the majority and they're attracting candidates who are already making history.

At least 30 African-Americans in 16 states are running for the U.S Senate and the House of Representatives. It's a surge of black Republican activism that America hasn't seen since the Reconstruction era.

Returning to Slavery?

Charles Lollar is one of the candidates. As a major in the Marine Corps Reserves and a businessman, Lollar is taking on the second most powerful Democrat in the House, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland.

Lollar said that just as he felt drawn to serve his country, he feels called to run against those he says are steering America off track.

"The policies of socialism," he said. "The policies that say government should get involved in competition when that's not the government's role, the policies that extend government and makes it overwhelming with the tax burden where every 38 cents of your dollar goes to state, federal or local government, where you're only getting 62 cents of every dollar you earned --there's something wrong with that."

"If we keep going down the road we're going, financially - I think - it's 53 to 54 cents of every dollar we make with this health care bill intact. We're getting closer and closer to slavery," he said.

Proud of Obama, but...

Lollar said although he's proud of President Obama and thankful for the barriers he's broken for black candidates, he's convinced Obama is leading the country in a dangerous direction.

Still, National Public Radio's Juan Williams' said, "President Obama and the idea that a black man as president, I think, has encouraged lots of black people across the political spectrum because they think 'You know what, you can break through some barriers, you can have success.' Michael Steele, you have a black man as the chairman of the Republican Party."

While Steele is often controversial, conservative Ron Miller, who is executive director of Regular Folks United, says Steele is making an impact on the black community.

"I think that his presence has encouraged people, it has emboldened people and I just hope that continues on," Miller said.

GOP a 'Natural Fit for Blacks'

Actor and author Joseph C. Phillips believes the Republican Party has always been a natural fit for the black community. Conservative principles, he points out, were the foundation of the Civil Rights Movement.

"Who is a more idealistic people, American people, than black people in America?" Phillips asked. "We truly, truly believe in the ideas articulated in the Declaration of Independence: equality under the law and a limited government that secures equal rights to life, liberty and property."

Phillips recently spoke to CBN News about his book entitled "He Talk Like a White Boy." [Click here to watch the interview.](#)

African-Americans are church goers. And on social issues like gay marriage and abortion, blacks tend to be more conservative.

"I always tell my mother when she asked me why am I a Republican, 'It's because you raised me that way,'" Miller said. "When I got old enough to make my own decisions, I started comparing what I believed to the Democratic Party platform and I saw no alignment whatsoever."

A Lonely Existence

However, life as a black conservative can be lonely. Candidates still face pockets of racism among whites and those who associate with the Tea Party movement face criticism from liberals.

Lollar has even been called a racist.

"It's actually kind of funny when you think about it," Lollar said. "I use the one liner in my speeches, 'How can I be a racist? My wife is black.'"

Republican leaders know they have a problem attracting minorities, something they're focused on changing.

"In my judgment there may be no higher priority for Republicans in the 21st century then to return to that Abraham Lincoln, Jack Kemp vision that at the very center of everything we are as Republicans is the principle of equality of opportunity," House Republican Conference Chairman Mike Pence told CBN News.

A Black GOP Revolution?

Ken Blackwell, senior fellow with the Family Research Council and former candidate for RNC chairman, argues the GOP should widen its tent, but not at the expense of its principles.

"We are the party of job creation and opportunity and we believe in a meritorious society where individuals deserve a place at the starting line with no guarantees of how they're going to finish the race," he said.

Lollar predicts Americans will notice more black conservatives running for public offices on all levels in the coming years.

"It's time for us to reach across aisles," he said. "Be uncomfortable and reach across race lines. It's time for us to rebuild our country from the inside back out."

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March 26, 2010

A Short Musing about the Conservative Brotherhood

I was just reading something I wrote way back when about racism. I wrote that I would like to see racism ended (or some such) but not as much as I would like a million bucks. The same applies to black conservatism. I would like to see it recognized for the simple and beautiful thing that it is, but not as much as I would like a million bucks. And so that is why I don't spend so much time fighting racism or promoting the Conservative Brotherhood. I'm working on the million bucks.

Last week I found the L. Detweiler letter. If you're old enough to remember or are interested in arcane facts about the internet, you'd find this letter fascinating. Suffice it to say that when that controversy was boiling, it was the hottest topic in the geek universe. And so I'd imagine that it could be said that when I founded the Conservative Brotherhood, it was a fairly interesting matter. I would think that most people do not know what T C May is. You can't Google it. You'd have to know contextually what to look for. But just to give a little context, there was something called the Kleinpaste server. It was named after a dude who no longer stands in the spotlight, but was nonetheless part of an historically significant evolution of a world we take for granted.

So I'll say that I was the founder of the Conservative Brotherhood, and nothing has changed about my attitude towards the principles that impelled me to do so. But I'd rather make a million bucks and time is money.

No political activism is not my passion. It's merely compelling, but not as compelling as the philosophy and theology behind it. And I'm not so passionate about compelling issues as I am for doing right by my family.

If I get the million dollars, I'll have more time to make the Brotherhood all it can be. But I wouldn't hold my breath if I were you. Making a million ain't that simple.

Family first.

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Black Conservatism: It's Like Being a Red Sox Fan

I wonder if I have, at any time, put together an be-all, end-all essay that answers all the sorts of questions it must be awfully hard for a certain class of people to answer with their own imaginations with any sort of accuracy. I'm talking about the class of questions amounting to, Gee isn't it hard to be a black Republican?

The answer to the first question - the one I'm asking about my own output is yes and no. The answer to the second question, the existential question that begs the first question is no and yes.

NO 1. It is impossible to satisfy the curiosity of human beings who are intrigued. They have to be told over and over again, reassured by an acceptable narrative that the facts in front of their face are just a small subset of reality and the reality with which they are unfamiliar and intrigued by doubt, is in fact real reality. I have a difficulty with that because human beings are unlike computers into which the proper program, once written, can be fed such that it runs with having to be retold from scratch over and over again. So I gather that for the sort of people who remain continually intrigued by the very existence of black conservatives and Republicans, there aren't enough books in the Library of Congress to put that pique to rest.

YES 1. I'm fairly certain that if you're asking this question, which I find relatively simple, if exhausting to answer, then you haven't read this blog. So the complete answer to the question is to read the blog. It unfortunately only has categories which are convenient for my purposes. That would be Conservatism, not Black Existential Risks In Conservatism. [So here's the link](#). See for yourself do I sound as if I were in pain.

No 2. It's like being a Red Sox fan.

YES 2. It's like being a Red Sox fan.

What's difficult is figuring out if the person asking the question knows anything about baseball at all or is a Yankee fan.

--

But to add to the pile of obiter dicta, here's a quick story I recall to take as a 'teachable moment'.

In 1982 when I went to State. I attended what was then known (and probably still known in some circles) as a 'predominantly white college'. At the time, I was just before the tipping point of the equilibrium. Which is to say as a Freshman more black Americans graduated from HBCUs, and when I was a junior more black Americans graduated from 'predominantly white colleges'. So if somebody asked me in 1982, with a certain presumption if I was comfortable attending a predominantly white college, I would have said, "It's like being a Red Sox fan."

There was a similar question raised by a clever man who called himself Elijah Muhammad. It was the central question of his book *Message to the Black Man*. He posed the question rhetorically, Isn't it foolish to be a black Christian? He then went on to outline how the various sins and crimes and injustices Africans in America suffered at the hands of white Christians proved them morally bankrupt etc. The rest is history.

--

So yes it's true, I am that sort of Red Sox fan. These questions are not deep enough for me. So I return the question with a question.

If your team doesn't win, are they really playing baseball? And if nobody reads your blog, could you possibly be telling the truth?

I know. I know. But I'm the guy who studied Computer Science at a predominantly white college back in 1982. And I married a black American woman. And I have three kids. And I live in the most overpriced neighborhood in the word. It was what I wanted to do. Works for me.

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March 17, 2010

1968

When you are a Conservative like me, you are trying not to be a Progressive primarily because you don't think human beings and human society should be tinkered with too much. You are against social engineering, but simultaneously you are fairly welcoming of change and progress. The fundamental premise of modern liberty is non-racial and non-sectarian. My favorite aphorism of this meritocratic notion is that you never know from where nobility will arise.

In 1968, America burned. It burned because MLK was assassinated. King represented a great deal in terms of the pace of meritocratic change America needed. A man like King was inevitable given the conditions of blacks in post-war America. What was clear was that in many parts of the nation, a certain aristocracy was not meritorious and it blocked the liberty of millions. A sleepy and intransigent America needed a wake-up call. But was the violence inevitable? I say that it probably was but I want to know more.

All this was a timeline I did not appreciate as a child and was never sufficiently instructed as a student. It was all still happening, and in many ways it still is. The historical context of nationwide riots gives us the kind of perspective necessary. To my way of reckoning, the political force of a Tea Party movement is picayune as compared to the political sentiment that, once denied can spark the torching of cities. I see people getting bent out of shape by Olbermann and Limbaugh and yet still laughing with Maher and Stewart - there's a sort of fake political outrage in the air these days. Yes people are griping and complaining but nobody is going to murder Rush.

I'm looking for the book. The best one on the era. Because I'm curious. Eyes on the Prize is no longer sufficient.

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February 28, 2010

Black Conservative Exceptionalism

One of the trivial burdens of black conservatives is the extent to which they have to get over themselves. There's a special microscope for us, rather like audiences for Sidney Poitier. We ain't supposed to be so uppity. I've been thinking of a snappy answer to the stupid question of black conservative relevance.

If you're like I used to be, there would be a time in your life when you commented with ire about the condescending backhanded compliments handed to black men. It falls under the heading of the soft bigotry of low expectations. Like 'you certainly are articulate' etc. There's another side to this coin, which is the genuine extra praise given to achievement as if it were excellence - like the praise heaped on black men who are schoolteachers in the ghetto trying to knock some algebra or grammar into little black heads.

That's what we expect. Except you know how it is. A little black skin sometimes warps time and space and what is ordinary becomes extraordinary. Sometimes it is. Most of the time it's not.

And so that is my perspective on black conservatives. Sometimes it's extraordinary. Most of the time it's not. I mean, you can really go out there and make movies about Joe Clark and heap mounds of praise on this or that teacher who is plying his trade among the darker brothers. But really. That's his job. Big freakin' deal. So when I hear people who think black conservatives are all big-headed because we ply our rhetoric of 'get off the Democrat plantation' and think we're doing a great service to The Black Community - I think it's all part of the outsized praise that people get for educating black people.

Do the ghetto kids come out of the womb understanding Algebra? Of course not. It's got to be taught, forever. Those who learn and can apply it in their life - hey good. Civilization marches on. Do ghetto kids come out of the womb understanding Conservative politics and principles? Of course not. It's got to be taught, forever. Those who can learn and apply it in their life - hey good. Civilization marches on.

Do black conservatives deserve special praise or derision because they have a bat and bullhorn like Joe Clark and demand that their subjects deserve attention and respect? No. Neither do black fathers who don't beat their children.

It's just life. Get used to it.

February 28, 2010 in [A Punch in the Nose, Conservatism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)
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February 27, 2010

One Man's Happiness

I had a bout of argumentation [over at Respectable Negroes with C. DeVega](#) whose contempt for Conservatives surely has bounds, but I can't see them because the Milky Way obscures the view. I am recalling, since it's been a while since I've gone typo a typo with an online interlocutor that I should use Popper's sort of argumentation via falsifiable statements. It may or may not yield the proper results, but I should remain consistent.

The pursuit of happiness is a great phrase. In my reading, I've been told that it was a substitution for the pursuit of commerce. I am of the sort, lately, that understands the equivalence. It has not always been the case. As England has been derided as a nation of shopkeepers, so too I had contempt for the likes of Korean grocers amid the fiery arguments I possessed in the days of Rodney King. And for a long time I have been quoting Cornel West by saying that he recognized in African America an existential dilemma that precluded their participation in that thing called 'enlightened self interest'. And so despite the monumentally astounding thing that is the infrastructure of the American commerce machine, millions are not willing or able to find happiness of that originally intended sort.

It is from that position of unhappiness that grows a poverty of spirit and charity which characterizes that crowd my political fellows have called 'Hate America First'. I'm inclined to believe not that most people are stupid, but that most people accept stupidity as common ground. So these unhappy people accept that most people are unhappy and then come up with solutions which have the unfortunate consequence (or intent) of dashing happy people into the dirt. For them the world can always be improved and the formula is simple. Take whatever it is them that got got, water it down a bit and distribute amongst those what ain't got.

There are a few things, however, that do not fit that formula. Whiteness, for example. Such things must then inevitably be demonized. After all, if it can't be shared amongst all of humanity it must not be good for mankind. This ineffable kind of specialness must be reckoned with, and in those things come the axioms of HAF values. I don't know why it must be this way. I presume it is so because such unhappy folks find the present so miserable that something must have gone radically wrong in the past - something that determines their unhappiness, something outside of themselves, created by someone that they are not and could never be. It leads me to a very interesting existential question I will ask in the following essay. But for now we know this thing to be Other.

I found this video, and very much like another video I posted here of Lawrence Welk, it shows a picture of happiness. It is a happiness alien to my upbringing, not in substance but in form. And it is a happiness that I think would baffle most of the HAF gang. I myself am happy, and I am convinced that the sort of happiness I am pursuing is defended by the Constitution and held in contempt by its enemies. Tra, la freakin' la!

Eduard Hil` - Vocalise



BTW, DeVega asked a question about black conservative commitment but then either pooped out or punked out before he could process one, my answer. I guess all he could hear was 'tra la la'.

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February 01, 2010

King Solomon's Mines

I've never seen The African Queen but now I know who this Alan Quartermain dude is supposed to be, and I can see how much better we had it with Indiana Jones. But this review is about a black thing. A small one, though.

It happened Sunday on Continental 665 with the crew from Houston. I swiped my one remaining card with credit and got the little 7 inch screen (smaller than an iPad, larger than an iPhone) to connect with Dish Network. It actually turned out to be a pretty good deal for 6 bucks. And so the film of the day was on Turner, King Solomon's Mines.

I once wrote that the true test of one's own liberation from the mental shackles of black American peasantry could be found in the ability to eat watermelon and fried chicken without shame. I don't know how long, if ever, that benchmark will make any sense, but I'm sure it did to me at some distant point. I thought about that matter of liberation while watching a film I can imagine undergraduates at Brown squealing at in disgust on three levels of deconstruction. But it only took a little bit of doing, or so it seemed to me. I happen to be in the throes of my addiction to the portrait of Victorian England, step one Sherlock Holmes. As such, I am de-presentizing myself and coming to grips with history - devaluing those trinkets we are so easily seduced by and trying to determine what it is a truly free man does on a day to day basis. And so let me take that tangent for a moment.

It occurs to me in a trifling way from KSM (Not the terrorist, the film) but in a grander way from *The Man Who Would Be King* (although I didn't watch the film to its conclusion - I did read the entire book) how it is that men become leaders of men. They pay them for honorable work. This is so very fundamental that I am astonished we don't all know it better. It speaks volumes about our decrepit public values that such things must be learned from study. Now one only need look to Haiti to find in our public consciousness something other than the ennobling matter of contract employment; it is the pursuit of charity over that of honorable work. It is done in the exorbitant self-righteousness of those dedicating themselves to such a cause, viz Katrina. Charity is the chance for the peasant to drop a superior dime, and the politics of such matters lure the whole peasant world towards the swamp of socialism. Why? Because when it is considered morally superior to rescue a man than to employ a man, we grow a nation of slavers. Yes I said it.

Let us recall Toni Morrison's insight on Robinson Crusoe.

'At last he lays his head flat on the ground, close to my foot, and sets my other foot upon his head, as he had done before; and after this, made all the signs to me of subjugation, servitude, and submission imaginable, to let me know how he would serve me as long as he lived.' -- Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

'The problem of internalizing the master's tongue is the problem of the rescued. Unlike the problems of survivors who may be lucky, fated, etc. the rescued have the problem of debt. If the rescuer gives you back your life, he shares in that life. But if as in Friday's case, if the rescuer saves your life by taking you away from the dangers, the complications, the confusion of home, he may very well expect the debt to be paid in full.' -- Toni Morrison, 1992

Now I read that "master's tongue" stuff as just antipathy to modern life in a Republic, as if raffia ennobles. There's a crowd Toni plays to that doesn't get out much. They like to think that English itself is a prison. They may be onto something, but I doubt it. Nevertheless, the question of debt is not a trifle. When you save a man's life - the sort of distended belly, flies on the face, life we here in Sally Struthersville get all moony about - then you have a rather hefty debt in your annoying condescending favor. This is the same sort of debt that makes liberal jaws drop when they encounter Mexican American Republicans and Africans who say no to aid. The other side of that same coin gives debt forgiveness to college students who join whatever Obama is calling the Peace Corps these days - you know the sort who minister to Mexican American migrant farmworkers and starving Africans of all sorts. *Quid pro quo* in the socialist circle of life, all centrally managed and planned from a singular set of humanist values to the best of our scientific ability. Just don't step outside the line, comrade.

Why? Because we made you.

That is the difference between charity and employment. The donor expects respect forever. The employer doesn't call you when the contract is over. The man with honorable work, makes his deal, does his share, and moves on. The rescued slave must sing the praises of his liberator for generations. It's a problem we have here in America. "Legacy of slavery" is a familiar phrase. If people could have just gotten paid, we'd be over all this.

Which brings me back to Alan Quartermain and his train of native porters, spear handlers, cooks and bottlewashers. Or PDiddy and his entourage of press flacks, personal shoppers and weed carriers for that matter. It's not exploitation. It's work.

In the genre of "wow check out these weird African animals and tribes" flicks, I'm not very savvy. And for the sake of stating the obvious, you can clearly see why the African nations involved did their best to get whole villages decked out and put all in frame for the sake of the whiteys on and off camera and in posterity. Pictures of elephant are a dime a dozen, but native dance on that scale just doesn't play very often here in the States. I was flat mesmerized, especially for the final shindig. I actually got into that sentimental zone where I'm thinking - maybe we've lost something extraordinary here. I don't know. Have we? It does get back to the question of what a free man does on the daily. After all, it's the Left who wants everyone to have a state guaranteed minimum wage, affordable housing and a small, fuel efficient car with airbags. The Watusi don't want that, do they? So who is going about destroying indigenous culture? It's the socialist, because he can't leave anybody alone. Not in Darfur, not in Somalia, not in Haiti. Everyone must be rescued. Everyone must have health care. Everyone must have instant citizenship in the comfiest nation on Earth. You know, before it warms over.

In my newest favorite podcast, *Philosophy Bites*, our hosts entertained a guest who talked about cannibalism. We have lost the cannibal. But the cannibal, and the very idea of the cannibal, elevated our thinking about the true natural nature of man. What

would we be without civilization? What is it about civilization that helps? What hinders? And similarly in this global economy I ask about the very idea of the peasant, the urban peasant I know very well. Does he work and having done his work can he be left alone or is he rescued and indentured to that act of charity?

Watching King Solomon's Mines says a lot about what 5,000 Pounds Sterling might do and how negotiation over the value of work goes directly to our souls and what may or may not be troubling them. Watch the first encounter with Mrs Curtis and Alan Quartermain closely - everything else, aside from the separate and distinct journey of the Watusi, circles around that exchange. It is in the end, the fate of the Watusi that seals the fate of the questing whites. They are rescued. Then again, homegirl had the Dosh from square one.

I could observe the native Africans from my psychological and temporal distance neatly contextualized in that dated bit of filmmaking. I could see the strengths and weaknesses of the film qua film, and imagine what the directors had in mind. I like the idea that once there was a thing called 5000 pounds and for this one might be set for life, instead of the fact that we are three weeks from starvation if the power goes out in our half million dollar suburban raffia. I look at that Africa and that England and I see that they were once full of free men, and so I am sentimental.

February 01, 2010 in [Conservatism](#), [Critical Theory](#), [Film](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)
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January 17, 2010

Starting Today

Starting today, I'm going to take on some of my heroes to determine if they merit my attention. And the first I'm going to deal with is **Stanley Crouch**. Now Crouch is not an active hero. He is one of memory. He wrote [Notes of a Hanging Judge](#) and I couldn't wait to get my hands on it. That was almost 20 years ago and now I have an opus that's big enough to compile a similar work - except that I'm working in a different medium.

I have recently been challenged to be more productive with my writing talent, and I am indeed working part-part time on a couple of works. One is an autobiography called 'Up from Freedom' and one is something of an instruction manual on being a proper American. There are others, but both of these relate to Crouch.

You see if you asked me the black American men I would like to be most associated with, by dint of the reputations they have attained in public (not that I know them to be true or not) they would be the cultural conservatives Marsalis, Crouch and Murray. I see them as representing the Old School on the cultural side, whereas I am doing a new bit of exposition on the political side.

Now there's some aspect of political populism that I cannot stand and from what I'm seeing of Crouch's latest hip shots at the GOP it appears to me that he's not engaging anybody but barrelfish. It's his column, and it's possible that I misread him. But I'm going to try to understand this man well enough to build him up or take him down. Or maybe find that he's not worth the effort, or perhaps that I'm not up to the task. Either way, his triumvirate is where I'm aiming, and I'm trying to see how it is that they might be so blind to what political Conservatism is even as they fight to preserve the best of African American literature and music.

My gut tells me that they, like so many other New Yorkers, are assuming that the Black Swans are going to come to them, and that because none have been provided, they don't exist. The Black Swan in this case would be me, and others like me in the Conservative Brotherhood who are a little bit smarter than the average wingnut television news junkie.

I'm not trying to move the crowd. I'm trying to preserve what's right. And when Crouch suggests that the American Right is wrong on principle because of what some of their loudmouth propagandists say, I wonder if he realizes the blackness of his kettle.

I'm raising the profile of the conservative Brotherhood. That needs to be done, with some commercial animus. So I'm noodling on that because I think I have to be the man to do it, my way. There are others whose independence I would not attempt to co-opt as a 'black thang'. So I say more power to the Hiphop Republicans and the John Langston Forum, Project 21 and all the rest of the crowds. But there is a level of discourse that needs to be maintained and addressed - even though I'd rather be playing volleyball. I am cutting way back on my gaming, so there is more time for me.

Oh yeah and I'm turning comments back on. 2010 is ON.

January 17, 2010 in [Conservatism](#), [Keeping It Right](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)
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January 14, 2010

I Got Nothing

Three years ago I wrote what I wanted from the next President of the US, and what have I got?

1. A commitment to the destruction of Al Qaeda, a well-thought out strategy for an achievable victory in Iraq in-term and a firm posture towards counter-terrorism at home and abroad.

Obama has given me mostly indications that he considers our war with AQ like a bad relationship that he can't get out of and only talks about mending to keep up appearances. What he really feels, he tells to his democrat socialist buddies on the other side of the pond, like a dude catting out on his girl.

2. A commitment to federal deficit elimination in-term.

Yeah right. I don't think I've heard Obama even talk about money cogently during his campaign or his term. Austin Goolsbee has disappeared. (Good riddance) Paul Volker is being ignored. His spending is outrageous. The biggest Federal spending from the man with the most expensive presidential campaign in history. This will not only end in tears, it may end in blood.

3. A commitment to defend the rights of all Americans in civil unions and in marriage, separate but equal.

I give him a B. On gay marriage he elides the Conservative position. He doesn't ask, and he doesn't tell. I think that is appropriately presidential.

4. A commitment to prosecute businesses that hire illegal immigrants, a robust and secure guest worker program, a secure southern border and a new treaty with Mexico which commits both countries to the repatriation or repudiation of their citizens here in America.

Nothing.

5. The establishment of a separate domestic intelligence agency under the auspices of the Secret Service and new Federal counter terrorist circuit court. A thorough review of the Department of Homeland Security aimed towards cutbacks.

Security theater has reached new heights of absurdity. He has had Holder antagonize the intelligence community. The chances of new thinking here is close to nil. Napolitano is not shining in any way.

6. A federal works program aimed at the trades, plumbing, electricians, carpentry etc and tax incentives to small businesses aimed at the home building market.

Instead of gonging the populist bells against Wall Street, Obama might have done something for Main Street. He has not. Small business is getting no credit, literally or figuratively in the Obama Administration. There are no "shovel ready projects" not even for the manufacture of shovels.

7. The creation of an American Standard Associate's degree. A no-nonsense, no excuses degree program established in community colleges coupled with decertification of open-enrollment 'universities'.

Nothing.

8. The elimination of catastrophic health care requirements.

Of course he has gone 180 degrees against this and spent all of his domestic political capital throwing compromises against the wall and coming up, not with linguini but garbage. Only 35% of Americans like the proposals before Congress. There is no vision, there is only arrogant political will established by the mandated of the deluded.

9. The elimination of mandatory sentencing laws, parole and any program that effectively increases scrutiny on prisoners once they have been released. Establishment of a prison colony in Alaska & a return to hard labor sentences.

Nothing. Just more ACLU opportunism.

10. Establishment of a federal works program to divert water from the Great Lakes to the Southwest.

Yeah well, I didn't really expect that to happen.

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December 31, 2009

Judicial Decrees vs Democracy

An excellent seminar by Scalia.

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Chest Pains

The word out there is that Rush Limbaugh has been hospitalized with chest pains. I only know this is so because the Multi Cult is running naked around the Mother Tree whooping it up, voodoo dolls and stickpins in hand.

I can't seem to keep it out of my head to dis these peasants despite the damage it might do to my own calm resolve, but they do bring it on themselves.

- LOL...As bad as it may sound some people you just wish would have chest pains just to know that they will be quiet for at least a moment....but we talking about Rush...Wonder if any of his care takers are black??? LOL
- I hope Rush Limbaugh is saved by a black lesbian doctor with a questionable immigration status
- ^^yeah..my sentiments also.
- I felt bad for a second for hoping 2009 would claim one last celebrity.
- I wish him the worst pain known to man. Yeah, I said it.
- But we need people like Rush Limpdog to shine a light on what fools the far right is all about...
- Wow! I know he is not a cool dude but to wish death and pain?
- Too much hot air. Must be giving him gas pains.
- Yep. I wish him the worst, as he wishes blacks, Latinos and Asians the worst each and every day.
- He's probably enjoying the IV pain meds.
- don't forget gay people and woman. Hell, he hates everyone except old fat white conservative men.
- Not nice, Lawrence, not nice.
- As I've always said: "God is fair."
- I know. Demagogues like Rush do generations worth of damage by justifying racism as entertainment. So yeah, I'm pumping him full of oxy...
- Or to quote the great philosopher Rasheed Wallace: Ball Don't Lie.
- *Michael David Cobb Bowen* Hmm. Does politics make people say evil hurtful things? No, just fat white men, not any of you graceful thoughtful multi-x persons.
- I would suspect it might be a heart attack, except since it's Rush, we all know he doesn't possess a heart! And let's face it - if Rush wasn't around to spew right wing nonsense, there are plenty others (Bill O'Reilly, Glen Beck, etc.) standing in line to fill the void.

- My voodoo dolls can take them out one by one.
- Sweet! :-)
- He is a pain in the a\$\$, but to celebrate this agony and possible death brings you down to his level. I know you don't want to be compared to that ignorant SOB.

Just in case, you know, he dies.

--

I'm going to take a tangent here because I was thinking at length a bit yesterday about how it is that some level of commentary is kept alive. Well, now that I think about it, I'll pass. Talk is cheap, that's why.

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December 19, 2009

To Live and Die in Cleveland

[Cleveland & The Economy of Death & Dying](#) from [Michael David Cobb Bowen](#) on [Vimeo](#).

December 19, 2009 in [Conservatism, Economics](#) | [Permalink](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#).
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December 11, 2009

Welfare vs Unemployment Tolerance

Browsing David Goldman's blog about 22% underemployment I wondered about such an eventuality as 20% actual unemployment. At what point would supporters of a Welfare State actually start to behave like the investor class?

Any businessman knows that an increase in the entitlements of the welfare state undermines his business by making it easier on the unemployed and by raising taxes to pay for such programs. Conservatives regularly bark and scream about any tax increases as if the incremental bits will impoverish them permanently. But I think anyone can envision a scenario like the following:

I'm Joe Liberal and I have a commitment to a fair society. So I want to see Elroy Grabbag become a productive member of society. So I vote for welfare to get Elroy out of the gutter, and free health care for him to stay healthy. I don't mind paying more taxes. It's the price you pay for a fairer society.

Last year I made 75k and paid about 25% in taxes. Meaning I take home about 56k. Comfy. I look at Elroy and realize that with his welfare and free health care, he's getting for free what I have to pay for. Still, I take pride in my responsibility to my fellow man - I mean, through my taxes, it's not like I invite the guy over for dinner. But now that unemployment is 20% - there's more Elroys around the place. And they're all stuck just like me because there are no new jobs and no growth in the economy.

In fact, my local economy is doing lousy and we're knee deep in Elroys, but it's the Federal tax that's paying. So Sam Liberal in Georgia got a raise, and me, 10% of our company was laid off, meaning I have to do somebody else's job at work in addition to mine, and I'm lucky to have the job.

Well, crap. I'm not putting Elroy through college, but he's not becoming a productive member of society. He's just using my welfare and health care. I know it's not much, but I'd kinda rather have the extra dollars for my own family - because now I see how I could help my kids do better than I did. Like maybe get them to move to Georgia.

At some point, but probably only during a recession, does the idea take hold that there is no easy way to claw back the entitlements you gave up when life was easy and an incremental tax increase was not a problem. That should be especially evident now. Whether or not your party is responsible for the screwups in the economy which have resulted in the government being deeply in debt, you're going to have to pay for it. And the satisfaction one may get from seeing their socially responsible investments being managed by government programs will become tainted.

Furthermore, people ought to recognize that they cannot fight forever. You will one day turn your back on government and it will stab you. The reasonable thing to presume is that you are smarter and more possessed of integrity than the political proxies who would spend your dollars for you.

Besides, whom is your commitment to, Washington or Elroy?

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October 22, 2009

A Stupid Question To Liberals

How do you get your information about conservatives and conservative ideas?

The best answer I could imagine would be 'Little Green Footballs', because it would be the kind of answer that would justify a liberal, even reactionary liberal stance. That is to say 'stance' because liberal thinking would be something altogether different.

The problem I see with the sort of liberal I have been is that they think they are being intelligent, not just liberal. But in the global scheme of things, there have been fewer pointedly awesome frameworks than the post I just read this morning over at [Belmont](#). The funny thing was that I used to make fun of 'idiots' who saw secular humanism as the enemy. I thought they were just being paranoid and stupid. In fact, they were merely inarticulate and therefore dismissable.

What prompts is [this non-discussion](#) which gets all the spice in its flavor from the ghost of racism. But what I was really trying to get to was a matter of book knowledge. Given that, I can erect a new barrier to time wastage.

I got my book knowledge of Progressive thought from the post-Nationalist black left whose Talented Tenth airs I was born into. The gods of that pantheon include the redoubtable Cornel West, and a host of critical theorists including bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Haki Madhubuti (whom is often despised for being 'homophobic' - hmm maybe he's wised up) and a host of others I guess I've forgotten. I suppose I should add some other classic heads like Andrew Hacker, Howard Zinn, Gore Vidal, Mike Davis and Theodore Cross into that mix. But it was also the air I was breathing. You see it's easy to catch the symptoms of that religion of socialism/communism without catching a full blown case. And that's where I think most liberals are standing, in their b-boy stance, arms folded, head cocked and supremely arrogant. It is a stance I can no longer take at all seriously, given that I am taking the time to read fatter books and I am no longer impressed by politics.

In response to my stupid question, aside from my juvenile exploits, I should be responsive to the same kind of question. The answer is that I'm not looking for the sorts of things that liberals might read to make them good liberals. For example, I listened to Fareed Zakaria's 92nd Street Y lecture. (And yes, I used to dig on the [92nd St Y](#) when I was a boho in Brooklyn.) But I was not impressed. Not because I think Zakaria is stupid, but because he works for a magazine, and magazine writers who write non-fiction only know what people tell them. So it came as no surprise last week when Zakaria showed his shallow stripes by acting as if he were smarter than the commander of our forces in Afghanistan with regards to the reasonableness of his request to the President. I didn't spend much time picking out loudmouths who made it their business to second-guess General McChrystal, but I did see that there were more than a few who were interested in picking any number than his surge number. But if one is pre-disposed to the b-boy stance, the likes of Zakaria or Juan Cole for that matter (I imagine) are sufficient to put political weight on the left side of any military equation. My point is that I want to shy away from such sources despite that perhaps even more thoughtful liberals can use their intellectual products.

I'm looking at the kinds of knowledge that appeal to peasants in full-literacy economy rather in the same way I would look at the shiny packages in a Wal-Mart that appeal to shoppers in a full-employment economy. It's all starting to look like product. And in a contest of products, you don't pay attention to consumers, you pay attention to producers, nay the natural resources upon which they build their wares. So I'm looking more towards the underlying philosophies in conflict in this big old literate world. And I'm paying specific attention to the amount of energy they can captivate through their instruments.

I'm also paying attention in an introspective self-centered regard, as to which sorts of philosophies and ideologies appeal to people smarter than me. I mean there's a real feudal sense going on here. For example, one might ask why Werner von Braun came to the US (or was that after the war?) How about Einstein? Where do people of intellect and conscience go when they have the entire world to choose. Would a man who could become rich under both Sharia and the US Constitution choose Sharia? Why? Why not? I'm looking for the less subtle clues, which is why David P. Goldman remains such a fascinating figure to me.

Anyway, there is a set of good reasons to avoid American political debate as it has evolved out here in the blogosphere - and the reason is, if you ask me, is that the debate has evolved from the reading of newspapers. And I think that newspapers have been a shallow product to be replaced by equally shallow bloggers. Except that there are great writers on blogs who illuminate the way towards deeper ideas.

So if you think I'm a liberal or a conservative, I'm not. It's not about stance. It's not about be. It's about do, and the do has to do with looking towards global regimes of truth. I use the term without any deference towards the relativistic connotations. They only apply to the reactionaries.

October 22, 2009 in [Conservatism](#), [Critical Theory](#), [Geopolitics](#) | [Permalink](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: benedict xvi, conservatism, cornel west, critical theory, liberalism

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October 14, 2009

More Peasant Principles

I have begun to articulate my [Peasant Principle](#) in application to life in these United States as I observe the decline of our society. What alerted me to this was my overuse of the metaphor of Sherwood Forest and my attraction to the order of feudalism. But what is a persistent reminder is the failure of the American middle class to hold fast to those things that made it great. I think our leadership has forgotten the use of the public and has failed to keep in place some simple restraints.

To use a metaphor, think of cops deployed at the Fourth of July night at the beach just before the fireworks start. If you think about the situation for a moment, you realize that there is absolutely no way that 50 cops can control a crowd of 100,000 unless that crowd exhibits some self-discipline. But in any case, the cops have to make a hard nudge in order to keep the tipping point of chaos from being reached. The cops need hegemonic power, which roughly translated means, don't even *think* about crossing this line.

Hegemonic power can only be exercised when people see it in their best interest not to get completely bent out of shape. This implies the use of a framework / ruleset / mythology / education. They all serve the same purpose which is to give the people inertia. If enough people exhibit any appreciable amount of groupthink, they become self-limiting. Ideas that might upset things, new ideas, radical ideas, or simply reactions, travel slower through large crowds of like-minded individuals. The purpose of leadership in exercising hegemonic controls is to use the weight of the crowd against it drawing away from that leadership. In other words, find out what the crowd believes and tell it what it wants to hear.

Now understand that as I describe the use of hegemony, I am being value neutral. I see this as a consequence of information theory. It's flies against the rules of 'information thermodynamics' to think that you can get mass audiences to turn their thinking on a dime. That would require vast amounts of energy. However there is entropy in all systems, including information systems. So there are gradients to be achieved by introducing chaos, or failing to police the crowd.

If a crowd's enthalpic instinct is toward modesty with its entropy towards immodesty, one can achieve a gradient by failing to reward modesty and rewarding immodesty. You can't turn a nation of women into whores in one generation, but you can give them the Pill and tell them that their need for sexual gratification is the same as a man's and let a Feminist movement do work at the margins for 50 years. You can fail to police and you can let some ideas trickle through. Sooner or later you get to a tipping point, and the immodesty of the crowd has become its defining characteristic. Then of course you have to push for the

'normalization' of the ever increasingly perverse in order to be Progressive, and you have to point to some Nirvana over the horizon. Moo-ve the crowd. Us a prod.

--

Let's consider the fact of average intelligence. I will place an axiom here too, which is that the bourgie consumer is highly suggestible. One who doesn't need to spend a great deal of time using their brains to survive has excess brain space, given average intelligence, and their enthalpic instinct towards mental sophistication will move them towards learning stuff. I make use of the term enthalpic instinct because people generally understand that it takes work to avoid suffering and pain. Nobody gets bed sores on purpose. On the whole we're not that frickin' stupid. So what kind of stuff do you learn when you don't really need to know anything more to live in relative comfort?

You learn lies.

Why do you learn lies? Because you are a peasant, and you are not responsible for making things happen in the world. Therefore it's not important that you learn the truth. And since learning requires work and teaching requires work, there are economics as well as informational thermodynamics that make your chances of learning the valuable truth much less likely. It's not impossible, of course. I mean it's not like the Library at Stanford University is hidden in some secret underground facility. It's not as if the laws of physics, the rules of mathematics, the syntax of English or the text of the Constitution are not readily available. It's just that you're not hanging with the crowd of people who find that stuff absolutely compelling and pushing their enthalpic survival instincts to the max in absorbing those self-evident truths. You're simply not going to get there. Because you are a peasant.

But that's OK because you are in a whole crowd of uninformed, misinformed, uneducated (or mythologically edumacated) to remain under hegemonic control. Not because hegemony is evil, but because it is efficient. And since you are a member of that crowd, you understand your self-interest in the terms of that crowd's norms. Nobody is particularly compelled to become sociopathically radical against the ideas of their neighbors, and only the cops are trained to shove the right elbows at the right spots to moo-ve the crowd. You feel bad when you sit indoors reading a book instead of laughing with your friends on the beach - just like the kids in that McDonald's commercial on TV. They make having fun look so easy. And check out those dancers on MTV. I'm going to learn how to dance like that, then you'll have to put a ring on it. And we all are supposed to be married right?

Are you catching my drift here? You have to desire to be weird and transgressive to have an opportunity to guage the size of your crowd's limits. You have to shove people out of the way in order to get to the edge out where the cattle prods are. You have to look at eye level and see what the cops are doing when everybody else is staring at the fireworks and saying ooh and aaah.

The point I'm trying to emphasize out of this entire dynamic is yet to come, but I've set you up. I want you to [read this](#), keeping in mind what I've said about the energy required to change the direction of an inertial crowd. But since you're a peasant and too lazy to read that, I'll just focus in on one key set of bullets, as a quote from Democrat Robert Reich speaking about the inevitables of healthcare reform.

- Younger people should pay more
- Healthier people should pay more
- Older people should just die- they're "too expensive"
- There should be "less innovation" in medical technology
- You should not expect to live longer than your parents.

These are inevitables. They are the saws to everything you see. They are what totter when you teeter. If something goes up, these are what's going down. They are the left hand side of a thermodynamic equation that is balanced by the right hand of God. And they are the expensive truths that those who are actually responsible to running things in this world are bound to know.

But you are a peasant, and it is not inevitable that *you* would learn those truths. In fact, politicians in a democracy understand the rules of hegemonic power very well. It suits their purposes to tell you... exactly what you want to hear - something not too far off from what your inertial crowd already believes in its precious little heart of hearts. And the quid pro quo that you demand of your duly elected leader is that HE LIES TO YOU.

And you cannot change that. Do you want to know why? Do you really want to know why? OK I'll tell you why. Because voting is free. It's free. It's easy. It takes 5 whole minutes. And no matter what you tell yourself, in the economy of information, that's not a lot of energy. Hell, your vote doesn't even have your name on it. Neither does the poll that the politician actually listens to - that is when he's not actually being bought. You do know what a lobbyist is. He's somebody who is 50 times more connected than you, 20 times better paid, and only twice as smart. The lobbyist knows how to change a Congressman's vote, all you know how to do is get mad at Glen Beck or Keith Olbermann and tell your friends on Facebook. That's because you're a peasant.

Don't get mad at me. I'm a peasant too. But I've been a black nationalist and a black Conservative Republican, and I don't mind spending a little extra energy shoving you out of the way to eyeball the cops on the Fourth of July. At the very least, I'm a writer with six years of blogging and 7400 essays. So that's some enthalpic interest up an information thermocline, even though I don't expect a peasant like you to read it all..

I'm trying to be a free man. I've got nothing against peasants except that, well, you know. They're people and I'm still to Christianly humanist to piss all over them.

--

Now let me talk about the strength of the American middle class. It's not an exceptional thing except there are exceptional leaders who understand what inertial values work towards the crowd's enthalpic interest in becoming and remaining free men. Those guys aren't around. And even though half the teenaged women in the peasantry are on the Pill halfway to Babylon, there still remain some paragons of purity and parental pride. Surely there are men in that crowd who seek ever to be better men, and those who by talent of discipline move towards clarion truths in spite of the roaring mendacious mumbles of the great unwashed boogedy beat.

The American middle class, those of us with no responsibility for being in the Slice (no John Geilguds are we to the Dudley Moores of the world) holding up the royal wankers of those who might have us killed for sport or spite, we might be our own owners. We might be free men with our little parcels and our own honest businesses and upright families and righteous neighbors and beloved communities. We might be independent and industrious, moral and cool too. It is not preordained that we roll in the mud of a depraved society with no backbone to sustain our eyes on God. But we move with a crowd ourselves.

But could we the People be a righteous crowd? Could our own inertia work for us? Might we adopt, dare i say it, Old School Values, and recognize that hegemonic power is being used to prod us in the wrong direction? Of course ideally, we want to trust our cops and know they are not elbowing us towards a deathmarch into the sea.

It's getting late. You understand what I'm saying. Keep your head up. Those fireworks are beautiful. But remember, you're still not yet free, even though you're middle class. And you ought to remember what lies are being repeated back to you, because that's what you paid for last November.

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October 09, 2009

Right Thinking

People ask me, no actually they don't. But they imply in a tangible way that they don't get where I'm coming from. It took me a long time to understand people - I only got it from good fiction and history. So now that I've moved from the Progressive Left to the Right, people ask me how and why. But they don't actually.

Somehow I have become tangentially responsible for the mindlessness of Right Thinking, but it's actually Right Behavior they mean. The thinking takes place outside of the behavioral affinities of the Right. But you can't know that unless you find out what the thinkers are saying and understand their value. Thus the following from the Archives:

[Download Right Thinking](#)

There's a sweet PDF for you, just in case you store things like I do. Otherwise here's the text.

James Burnham - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Burnham

The party dispute led to Shachtman, Burnham, and their supporters resigning from the SWP in 1940, and soon afterwards, Burnham broke with Shachtman and left the Communist movement and worked for the war time Office of Strategic Services. After the war, he called for an aggressive strategy to undermine the Soviet Union's power. During the Cold War, he regularly wrote for the National Review magazine. In 1983, President R.W. Reagan awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His ideas were an important influence on the neoconservative and paleoconservative factions of the American Right Wing

Cobb: Dog-Whistle Politics

cobb.typepad.com/cobb/2007/01/dogwhistle_poli.html

I think Petraeus is the right man for the CT job in Iraq, and given all that I've read through Ricks' 'Fiasco' I think that ought to be the operational consensus. I know we're getting on a tangent here, but what I can't stand is the idea that the 20k 'Surge' troops are being given no indication that anything they do will be worthwhile. People who are saying Iraq is a failure are giving no respect to the job that's being done, and that's just wrong.

Posted by: [Cobb](#) | [January 17, 2007 at 02:39 PM](#)

Introduction

A friend asked me for publications that would assist her child in presenting a paper supporting the US mission in Iraq. I was more than happy to help, but then I fumbled when it came to naming more than a few. This notebook is a comprehensive list of the primary sources of my knowledge on that and other subjects of political and historical concern.

Update to the Introduction

9/11, Afghanistan, Iraq, War on Terror

Terror & Consent - Phillip Bobbitt

The Man Who Warned America - Murray Weiss

The Pentagon's New Map - Thomas PM Barnett

The Looming Tower - Lawrence Wright

Fiasco - Thomas Ricks

Cobb: Tuesday's Children

cobb.typepad.com/cobb/2006/08/tuesday_childre.html

Second Fallujah

I've just gotten up to the part of 'Fiasco' which describes the second battle for Fallujah, the one I recall being rather piqued about when it happened. Ricks says it was quite a mission. Still, I believe that I have mischaracterized the insurgency in my politics up to now, so I'll recap Iraq sometime later this week. (I'm also spelling it with an 'h' now, so as to conform with search engines.)

Cobb: Better?

cobb.typepad.com/cobb/2007/10/better.html

It was Fiasco however that told me the most about what I was wanting to know. How was the American army doing on the ground in Iraq and what could we learn? I've continually rejected the Baby Bin Laden Theory and I've continually said that we would get better in CT on the ground. That was because I understood from reading Fiasco that the generals in Iraq, especially Petraeus, would not leave lessons unlearned.

America Alone - Mark Steyn

Cobb: America Alone

cobb.typepad.com/cobb/2007/04/america_alone.html#c...

Mark Steyn isn't a great writer, in fact his book, America Alone isn't a very good book. I think he's way better as a radio commentator and columnist. So this effort seems a bit scattershot for me. But I think it's just the kind of book that someone like me needs to have read. It gives me a handful of double-ought shotgun shells of red hot facts to spew. By 'someone like me' I mean someone with a reason to defend America in the face of all the gibberish that passes as constructive dissent.

Individual Writers of Note

Victor Davis Hanson

| <http://victorhanson.com/>

Victor Davis Hanson is a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, a professor emeritus at California University, Fresno, and a nationally syndicated columnist for Tribune Media Services. He is also the Wayne & Marcia Buske Distinguished Fellow in History, Hillsdale College, where he teaches each fall courses in military history and classical culture. He was a full-time farmer before joining CSU Fresno, in 1984 to initiate a classics program. In 1991, he was awarded an American Philological Association Excellence in Teaching Award, which is given yearly to the country's top undergraduate teachers of Greek and Latin.

Michael Yon

| <http://www.michaelyon-online.com/>

Michael J. Totten

| <http://www.michaeltotten.com/>

Ed Morrissey

| <http://www.captainsquartersblog.com/mt/>

Gerard Van Der Lewen

| <http://americandigest.org/>

Geopolitical Blogs

The Belmont Club

| <http://fallbackbelmont.blogspot.com/>

Tigerhawk

| <http://www.tigerhawk.blogspot.com/>

In From The Cold

| <http://formerspook.blogspot.com/>

Counter Terrorism Blog

| <http://counterterrorismblog.org/>

Conservative Thought & Policy

Michael Oakeshott

The Kirk Center - Biography of Russell Kirk

www.kirkcenter.org/kirkbio.html

For more than forty years, Russell Kirk was in the thick of the intellectual controversies of his time. He is the author of some thirty-two books, hundreds of periodical essays, and many short stories. Both *Time* and *Newsweek* have described him as one of America's leading thinkers, and *The New York Times* acknowledged the scale of his influence when in 1998 it wrote that Kirk's 1953 book *The Conservative Mind* "gave American conservatives an identity and a genealogy and catalyzed the postwar movement."

Edmund Burke

Manhattan Institute

| <http://www.manhattan-institute.org/>

American Enterprise Institute

| <http://www.aei.org/>

Hoover Institution

| <http://www.hoover.org/>

Imprimus

| <http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis.asp>

Heritage Foundation

| <http://www.heritage.org/>

Cato Institute

| <http://www.cato.org/>

General Conservative Publications

Wall Street Journal Editorial Board

Front Page Magazine

October 09, 2009 in [Conservatism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)
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September 27, 2009

Escape

If you like pina coladas,
Getting caught in the rain...
- The Escape Song

The thing that has changed my view of the world has to do with equilibrium and power. More specifically why it is that when 36 million people are absolutely convinced of the truth of something which defies the status quo, the status quo doesn't change. It has to do with the willingness of people to wage war against the willingness of people to accept discomfort.

But there comes a time when discomfort is a bit too much but still not anything worth dying and killing for. In that direction we plot escape.

Just last night I was comparing road trips with a colleague who runs marathons. He said that from Ohio to Denver is a 24 hour drive, but even after all that, you're only halfway to San Diego. Anyone who has driven across Texas knows that there is plenty of space for plenty of people. And yet we mostly live in crowded cities with people who, more often than not, make us very very uncomfortable. It seems to me that I could escape in the US. And every time I fly over flyover country, especially when I see long straight highways, I wonder who owns all that property down there, and how could I get a eyeball full.

An eyeball full of real estate at 36,000 feet is about as large as a decent sized county if you're looking straight down. I don't know how many counties there are in America, but they're all named after someone. Might as well be one named after me. But I know that I'll not likely have the time to learn what it takes to look after several paltry square miles. The very idea of shaping an acre to grow enough ingredients to fill a Big Mac is daunting. So I'm stuck with my pathetic urban skills. I'm not likely to do much better on a desert island. As it stands, I can't even decide which 10 DVDs to take to the exclusion of all others.

Nope. I need fellows. This place I would escape to must have people. But it's not about just being with people but doing things with people. There are things that I would like to accomplish - tinkering with the tools of my trade like the mechanics who build a monster truck in their spare time. It's a uniquely Western passion I think - this romance with gear. I've got the bug. I can satiate that through online channels. But my fellows in escape, we need to share something in the lore of the land. I need to be in a place that makes me wear different clothes and communicate with people over distance that takes some doing. So I am drawn to islands and places with interesting geological features that make them less accessible to the world, and binding of those that are there.

Hilton Head Island has these ingredients. Martha's Vineyard has these ingredients. I've thought about retiring both places. Once when I was still under the thrall of Stanford University, Menlo Park had that magical quality to it. I very much enjoyed living in the enclave of South Pasadena for the time that I did. I thought it to be the greatest little city in the world. But South Pasadena and Menlo Park are still too much under the influence of their larger communities. To be there is more like hiding, not escaping. These are not destinations of destiny, rather they are convenient hollows still adjacent to all the bustle. Bustle means dependency. Escape leaves one independent in an organic spot. Hilton Head and Martha's Vineyard are just unique enough by their very nature that they draw people through them. Santa Fe, NM has the same quality I think, although it is not so magical to me - magic for me requires aquatic access.

So I contemplate a final living place for myself. My final home. My last place on earth. That if I make millions or if I make none, I can come back to that place from wherever I travel and feel that it is my best corner of the planet. Where the food and

the language is mine. Where the attitude and the community is right. Where my fellows have that same need to be at arms distance from the foolish endeavors of the masses and the concurrent desire for elevated company.

--

Carlin speaks inspired from Pat Buchanan's ruminations about the disunity of American society. He suggests that we might be fortunate one day to live up to the doctrine of the Tenth Amendment. And I have my own hopes of that as well. States rights. Private property. I want to be someplace American where common Americans require some education of a sort to access and remain. The kind of education that makes you respect liberty. The easiest way to say so is money. You can't just walk into a penthouse at the Beresford on Central Park West. Then again, money alone is not enough there. That's the point. There is something unique about what we have evolved to be the places where America might be considered to be at its best. You escape to those places.

Everyone's idea of escape isn't the same. Riffing off Carlin, what say Hawaii becomes the Marijuana State, that Vermont becomes the Gay State? Sure, why not? In fact, we can only hope that becomes the case. Every man has a destiny. Heaven forbid it be the Mainstream.

September 27, 2009 in [Cobb's Diary, Conservatism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)
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September 24, 2009

The New Feudalism

Every time I watch a video by Bill Whittle, I am reminded that there are people out there like me who, if things go to shit, I will be perfectly comfortable betting my survival on.

I just finished *Five Thrillers*, a sci-fi by Robert Reed. It's the serial about a character by the name of Joseph Carroway, a man with two extraordinary talents. He has an innate ability to read people's motivations, size them up, and figure them out. And, he has a sociopathic ability to do whatever it takes to save human lives. The combination make him, ultimately a sort of philosopher king, but he goes through life as an assassin. You've all heard of the moral exercise of 'The Lifeboat'. You're shipwrecked in the middle of the ocean and you have six people but room for only five. Who lives, who dies? Joe Carroway is the one man who can make that decision better than any human, but his logic is extraordinarily precise, and correct. Hearing it out makes you realize that more often than not, we make choices that are comfortably dismissive of the value of human life - that we have ways of thinking that make high minded appeals to sacrifice, when in fact the situation calls for heroism or justice.

To give away some of the ending of 'Five Thrillers', Carroway makes a statement about the necessity for cannibalism in anticipation of an extraordinary global calamity. Cannibalism a year so that one generation can survive to be 10 generations. Brutal selfishness and paranoid distrust for 10 generations so that those generations can survive for 50 generations, until a world is reborn where the possibility of liberty can be actualized. Else, extinction.

--

Today Roger Simon pinged the idea that the end of the American Dream is at hand. And I wonder about that. Without having read anything below that soundbite, I figured he was talking about the probability that banks will no longer fund 30 year mortgages for the American middle class and that in some not too distant future, the only Americans who will own property are those who already do. I've long been aware of this paradox when I noted in my bohemian days the sleeping habits of the homeless in NYC. You see NYC being a winter city, banks often enclosed their outdoor ATMs in heated glass enclosures, some the size of a good sized bedroom. You use your ATM card to unlock the security door and use the ATM, unless there was some bum sitting there in a huddle. Why should they be allowed to sleep on bank-owned property, I thought. Well, how many of us do sleep in bank-owned property? You may call yourself a homeowner, but have you had a mortgage burning party lately?

Why not assume the worse? What if America goes feudal, and we're all just peasants who will never get the benefit of a general heartless corporation that offers money at a reasonable percentage so you can pretend to be the king of your own castle for 30 years? Imagine you have to work for a person, not an institution. Imagine you have to be a name and not a number. Imagine that everything had to go through your boss's boss's boss. That there were no credit scores, no SATs, no demographic abstracts about your qualities - that it all hung on the word of that man. Yeah man. The Man. Imagine that there were never

any telephone agents or customer service jagoffs for you to complain to - no middle management, no flunkies or flacks. Everything goes to The Man. That's the kind of feudalism I'm talking about. No corporate institutions. No United Nations, no Safeco Field, no Organizations for the Whatever of Whatever. Just The Man whose kingdom extends as far as you've ever walked in your life from the place you were born.

Do you have it within your power today to find such a man? Can you ever imagine such a powerful figure to be just? I can.

That's what I've been thinking about these past few years. If I have the God given right to make life and death decisions, well then I want to be The Man. It is why I read Shakespeare's tragedies. It is why I read Plato. It is why I study politics and culture and philosophy and theology and history. It is why I game. It is why I write. Because I know there's a Man behind all of this, and when the institutions rot to the ground, those men will still be around. And how will you find them? And how will they know you? And what will you do if society's institutions all go bankrupt? Since Enron I've been thinking this. And immediately since learning of Stalin's atrocities, I've been thinking this. Do you know how, do you know why?

Because one day I walked into a bank in Texas and tried to deposit a check for \$7500 that I earned and it took me half the damned day to get my cash. I saw the failure of the institution, but I still remember the man named Buck who got me the job that sent me to South Texas that paid me the check from Buck's bank in North Texas. All these peasants were standing between Buck and me. And they called themselves 'working', but they were just sleeping on bank-owned property and getting between me and my money.

--

I know what it's like, relatively speaking, to be The Man. And I know what it's like to be despised in that position - to have all of your honor called into question by some bureaucratic formalism. You do too. That's why you hate talking to those drones on the phone all the way over in India who ask you your security question - that is, when their computers are functioning. Because they have no idea of your value as a human being. They have no way of assessing your character, of judging your honor, of knowing what kind of person you are, of sizing you up and putting some understanding into the equation. They just know how to process this corporate transaction. Or this government transaction. Whatever. You're just a number, and they're just doing their job. Surely you must understand, you have that kind of job too, don't you?

--

The problem with social collapse is that there are pockets of plenty, of private, well-managed business, that gets drowned with the rising tide of failure. We're all interconnected, after all. That is no longer in question. I don't want to see the end of the American dream. I kinda like the anonymity of being a number. But if we go feudal instead of corporate, I think I'll have some advantage because I was never the one asking my government to do more. I was never the one surprised by institutional corruption and mendacity. I was never the one begging for bureaucracies to expand and deliver more of their transactions to more of the middle class and the deserving poor. I was the one looking for The Man. I was the one trying to be The Man for me and my people.

Individual liberty is not incompatible with feudalism. It depends on the man. Try getting that institution to defend your individual liberty.

September 24, 2009 in [Conservatism](#), [Critical Theory](#) | [Permalink](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: bill whittle, conservatism, corporatism, feudalism, liberty

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September 17, 2009

Effective Resonance Redux

Six years ago I was actively fighting racism through my blogging. I came up with all the answers and I satisfied myself in many ways that racism in America was clear and present, but by and large not a danger. Along the way I found that most people, in fact the overwhelming majority, wanted racism to be beat, but they had no idea how to go about that politically. Personally, I think most people don't have a problem figuring it out.

These days, the old political punching bag is taking its hits as people from all directions call fouls and punch the racism bag in somebody else's direction. But the bag never goes away and nobody steps around it to actually punch the other person.

I am perturbed to a certain extent. On the one hand, like most people, I want to see racism defeated. Not more than I want a million dollars, but a lot. I also would like to see Americans have a single clear and comprehensive understanding of what racism is, and what to do about it. But I know that's pretty much impossible. Therefore I plink targets and do my small part within the context of the more or less perfect framework I have established over the decades.

Today my target is the people who 'play the race card'. If you understand the phrase then you understand that such people are corrosive of both civil society and true anti-racism. I accuse them of a lack of perspective, they are people who are apoplectic for inadequate reason. They are exactly like cops who arrest without probable cause, they are fanatic and misguided. But most importantly, they are a key component of the constituency that rightly wants to fight racism. They therefore need not to be defeated, but redirected and corrected.

There is only one way to be wrong and that is to be ignorant. The race carders, or 'Carders' as I will term them, along with Birthers and Truthers a swelling class of fanatics within suffering America, have history on their side. That is to say they mis-categorize current instances of racial bigotry alongside a long history of American racism which all folks understand to be heinous. So if their charges of racism are denied, they accuse the deniers of being blind not only to the present but on the wrong side of history. As I said at American Digest:

The thing to recognize about people who play the race card is that it is part of a narrative that stretches back 400 years. The cycle of accusation and denial is self-perpetuating and only strengthens the convictions of the accusers who are convinced there is an impenetrable 'white wall' of racists and that American thought itself is its foundation.

The only way to combat this strategy is through judo - by using its own energy against it. Reason and evidence may be on the side of the Sheriff, that doesn't take bullets out of the bad guy's guns.

Therefore let us look at [Effective Resonance](#) once again which was my way of assaying what was two, four or [Six Pounds of Racism](#). My intent, as always is to have the punishment fit the crime and rid ourselves of fanatic excess.

Class Three - Background Noise

This will include all such insults, slights and disrespect as is generally expected to be found everywhere in this nation. Examples include but are not limited to being ignored by cabbies, flying confederate flags, nazi propaganda, being mistaken for the help, being shown costume jewelry, being asked one's opinion of, or to account for the opinions of the [Fungibles](#), and most nigger calls.

Class Two - Political Intransigence

Class Two racism involves denials of public accommodation or private standing which are not criminal, yet grossly unfair and unjust. Such acts would include imposition of glass ceilings, racial profiling, white flight, medical misdiagnosis, educational tracking, false arrest, false imprisonment, racist vois dire, racist jury nullification, denials of service with plausible deniability, any institutional individual or institutional racism which must be tried in civil courts and all such active bigotry one associates with hate groups which fall short of incitement.

Class One - Crime

Theft, criminal defamation, cross burnings (now), hate crimes, murder, rape & all that stuff for which America has never made any extraordinary effort to repair.

Now my own cynical point of American repair of racist crime notwithstanding, it is quite simple to look at everything that has been called racist in this 'post-racial' era and see that very little of it, including the Gates fiasco, rises to the level of Class Two.

The point, my friends, is not to tell the Carders that there is no racism going on, but to explain to them that it is not their grandfather's racism. They'll have to agree, although what is plausibly deniable gets foggy. After all, even the Carders will deny that they themselves are not making stereotypical judgments.

September 17, 2009 in [Conservatism](#), [Domestic Affairs](#) | [Permalink](#) | [TrackBack \(1\)](#)
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July 04, 2009

The Virtue of the Essential Human

The experiment of America, as an aristocracy of merit, challenges us all. To take the idea of citizenship seriously is to approach the best understanding of individuality and the rights of man. I think that requires of us a great deal. There is only so far the

offices of government should go in recognizing us as we necessarily think ourselves to be.

Many years ago, I held the somewhat common notion that the Declaration of Independence might have listed complaints against the deprivations of racial offense and become the basis of an anti-racist Constitution. The fact that it didn't suggested to me some original flaw in the founding of the nation, which a proper evolution of thought would correct. But I did all that for the purposes of the anti-racist promise, without much regard for the substance of the original complaint.

So I believe this is a common error of any class of people who regard themselves as so separate as to not identify in common with the pains suffered by those with more to lose. Or more plainly said, what would I care about the King quartering his troops on my property if I have no property? Shouldn't the Declaration talk about *my* peeves?

It is this kind of error that I believe is at fault in the mischaracterization of contemporary political complaints as matters of rights. And the popularity of this sort of overproduction ultimately dilutes the polity's ability to preserve and defend those self-evident rights the Founders had in mind. And so we have lost focus as a nation and wasted our political energies on frivolous matters thinking them to be literally righteous.

How can we come to believe that America is incapable of defending the dignity of a 13 year old girl from improper search and seizure? It must be because we believe people like Ginsburg must stridently instruct people unlike Ginsburg in such basic matters of human dignity.

How can we come to believe that some certain people must in their struggles to achieve freedom act from a playbook of radical reinterpretations of human history? It must be because we believe people like Fanon must stridently instruct people unlike Fanon in such basic matters of human freedom.

And so each group has their unique message to the world and each must find, independently, their own separate path to dignity and freedom. Well, what's the difference between that idea and any of Hitler's ideas? Nothing.

I find it difficult to presume to lead some fraction of the people or to defend some fraction of humanity as a worthy political aim. I am greatly convinced that the human animal does not vary so much that he can be served well by a wide variety of principles. There are a simple few and the paths towards attaining and defending them are few. But having found those paths, we must find our human center of gravity, each individual conforming at their core, and place that center on those paths. Instead we have put our sex lives and skin colors as our cores and we have made mountains of the discomforts such fetishes have brought us. And in our every personality trait, thinking moderation and conformity itself a sin, we have expanded our appetite for taking our every difference as deep and fundamental. We have monetized the long tail of arcane whim and now ply it as political currency. We passionately attend the details of vegetarianism as if they were matters of war and peace and we run our state treasuries into ruin for the sake of propping up a million subsidies of such trivial import. All such foolishness is done at the peril of our common good because we have determined that our diversity is the most important feature we possess.

This is the evidence of a crisis in confidence in our underlying principle. We Americans are invested in a globalist, multicultural hedge against the sort of common sense Thomas Paine had. We pretend that we are of a different strain than he and that our expanse and our eclectic humanity, our advanced sensitivities to the great variety of human experience makes us wiser. The great variety of human experience can all be cruelly ended with a pike through the heart, and the heart in every human lies in the same place. It doesn't matter how much we value what our tongues have tasted or where our feet have trod, our heart remains our core.

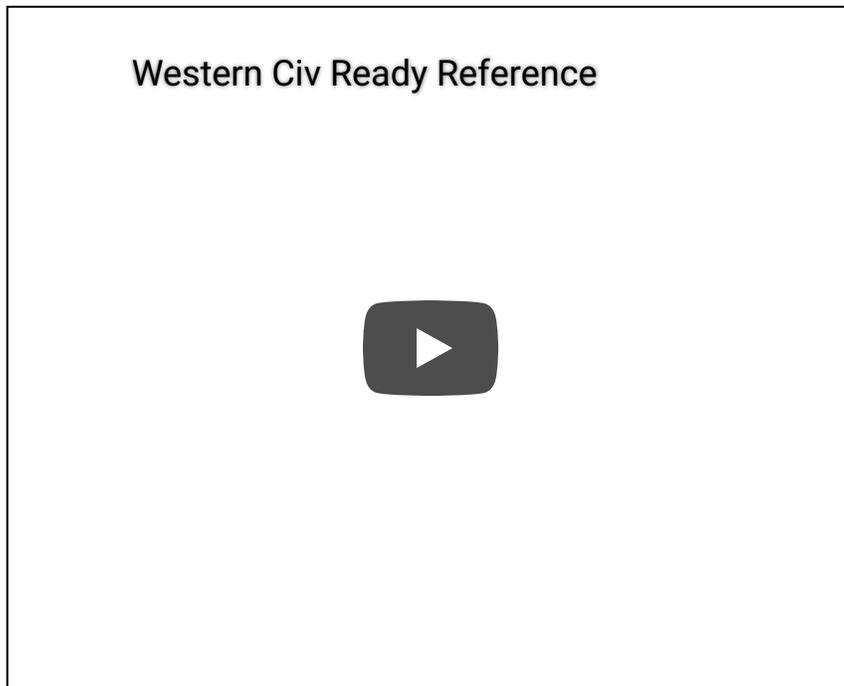
So we must resolve to understand and hue to what is essential to our individual humanity and to reassert its common core. We must recognize the minimal yet essential role of government's defense of simple liberty and not attempt to gainsay it by attempting to guarantee too much. We can only be a nation with liberty and justice for all if all are for the nation correctly focused on its principles and not our own differences. When we seek to be too many things as a people we lose sight of the common purpose of nationhood, and we belabor our citizenship with freight it cannot bear; we turn our politics into a fleamarket and dilute society with a million complaints.

The most important things in life are as they ever were, and no greater ideas will be invented than liberty. So let that be our focus on this day.

July 04, 2009 in [Conservatism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)
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April 15, 2009

Western Civ Ready Reference



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February 25, 2009

Brooks, Black Engineers & Epistemological Modesty

Not long ago, [I lamented](#) the fact that although I've been following David Brooks since '[Patio Man](#)', I had never heard him mention Oakeshott and like conservative thinkers. Today as he speaks of those and others, I remember something about my own journey that puts me in the conservative camp.

These experiences drove me toward the crooked timber school of public philosophy: Michael Oakeshott, Isaiah Berlin, Edward Banfield, Reinhold Niebuhr, Friedrich Hayek, Clinton Rossiter and George Orwell. These writers — some left, some right — had a sense of epistemological modesty. They knew how little we can know. They understood that we are strangers to ourselves and society is an immeasurably complex organism. They tended to be skeptical of technocratic, rationalist planning and suspicious of schemes to reorganize society from the top down.

When I met the man who would be one of my closest friends we clashed almost immediately. The year was 1983 and I was a sophomore at State. I was a fairly newly minted leader in NSBE, the National Society of Black Engineers, a hugely successful undergraduate organization. The occasion was the annual Camping Conference at which we would perform a kind of drop squad maneuver on a couple hundred inner city youth. That year I had been elected to be Head Counselor and I was holding a meeting to discuss themes and agendas. My idea over which I and '[Moleman](#)' collided was 'Engineers of Black Society'. Moleman looked at me like I was some alien species dropped on his lap, oddly fascinated but truly disgusted. I compromised. But I did not compromise my belief that we were indeed working out those things that all us Talented Tenth had been put on this earth to do, which was to lead the masses of underprivileged blacks out of the ghetto and into the Promised Land. And of course there was no controversy in the aim at all, but the ethics of the situation demanded that we didn't just blurt it out so obviously. Nobody expected that black ghetto kids would amount to anything if other ex-black ghetto kids didn't lavish so much attention and other people's money on them. This was why it was and is so easy to get such funding that mere undergraduates can do community service on a part-time basis and get props. I was a community organizer, you were a community organizer - we all were community organizers, except I was alien and disgusting enough, as a college sophomore to call it the engineering of black society. I do have that ability to be blunt.

As most Cobb readers recognize, all of this energy and motivation came to a screeching halt as I recognized in microcosm that there was no black orthodoxy. My soul bled out as it was metaphorically pierced by Mishima's own sword at the failure of my culture to save itself through the ministrations of such neo-nationalist organizations as NSBE. I found peace finally in defying the practice of black unity in 1986 and true solace in even abandoning the concept of black leadership in 1992 and now approach the bliss & responsibility of rejecting blackness altogether. All of these revelations are related to a sane and sensible epistemological modesty, and so Brooks' words bear repeating as I join the company of his leading lights in concept..

We are strangers to ourselves and American black society is an immeasurably complex organism. Therefore we should tend to be skeptical of technocratic, rationalist planning and suspicious of schemes to reorganize American black society from the top down.

There is an implication by default that there might be some reorganization from the bottom up. I am even more dubious of that. As well there will be no spiritual, humanist planning for American blacks either. There's just no herding those cats, except for the lame ones who lack the energy and spirit to escape the corrals of stereotypes.

So I bear witness to a certain deflation of myself, of thousands of hours spent in the faithful rendition and interpretation of a lost civilization, like some old cloistered fanatic scribbling out sentences and wrangling out rap couplets. But the echoes and ghosts of that Struggle are still with us and people still find ways to attribute their condition to shackles of old arguments and disproven identities. We live in the past's future, ignorant of our own presence. Strangers to ourselves.

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February 18, 2009

Nothing To Brag About

I'm likely to give Barack Obama's presidency six months before I trash him. 100 days is meaningless, and the first 30 has been so full of barrel fish it doesn't even seem fair.

However, this is how I see all the scandals. Firstly, if you're going to get new blood into the capitol, some of this nonsense comes with the territory. The fact of the matter is that Joe Sixpack has no clue about how powerful and wealthy people actually live. The idea that some people might get \$100,000 worth of free perks probably does seem incredibly scandalous, as does the idea that somebody might have forgotten to pay \$20,000 in back taxes that they just happen to have lying around.

However Barack Obama has fanned the populist flames that boil this pot by castigating rich people in general and CEOs in particular.

It's been might quiet around Obamaland. The reason is clear. They have nothing to brag about. There are a dozen ways to snipe at this guy, and I think its fair that he and all of his fatuous admirers be taken down a peg. I could, but I'm not going to right now.

See the way I see it is this. There's only one lesson to learn from the mistakes that Obama is inevitably going to make, and it's the big lesson. It's an old lesson too. In fact, the best way I've seen it described (popularly) is in the following video.

The Reagan Obama Debate



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December 28, 2008

Hitting You Where You Live

[Akindele Akinyemi](#) has been a member of the Conservative Brotherhood for some time now. I'm going to post his end of the year message in its entirety. He is increasingly strident on a fairly strong plank of what I'm calling the **Urban Conservative Agenda**, this is his manifesto. Another of my commentors and a guy I've seen around the web, [Constructive Feedback](#) has this on his mind, as does [D Burt the Afronerd](#). These are activists who have answers for those who ask what are Republicans going to do for the ghetto. More importantly they are on point to ask the very profound question about Democrat and Liberal black leadership - has their monopoly over the past 30 years produced results you can believe in?

I think these folks represent a trend that's going to have a great deal more influence in 2009 as the glow fades off the novelty of the election of Obama and Americans faced with the same problems are going to recognize that change is slow to come for those who wait for it. They have the upper hand when it comes to change, because the black meccas of America have yet to choose Republican leadership.

There are those who would suggest that we now live in an era where 'liberal' and 'conservative' have no meaning. Of course this is wishful thinking. There aren't startling new ideas, there are old proven ones that are discovered late. The Urban Conservative Agenda is a new name for old time religion that was good enough for our great grandparents. Hear Akindele out. He sounds in his message so much like Booker T. Washington that the resemblance is uncanny. The attitude is fierce, uncompromising and confident. The language is clear and to the point using terms that have floated around for a long time. Listen up.

[Continue reading "Hitting You Where You Live" »](#)

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November 30, 2008

The Next Great Republican

The next great Republican will have to be someone we know but haven't seen. I'm imagining that person today.

The thing that the next great Republican will need to know, that quality that will distinguish him most has everything to do with his ability to draw a strong line between the role of morality in life and the use of moral power by the government. It is because this line has been blurred that Republicans have failed the Conservative movement. It is because this line has been blurred that Republicans are making mortal enemies of the center. It is because of this failure that the GOP is currently tearing itself apart.

What Conservative leaders seem to have failed to grasp is the extent to which they draw upon Christian themes and personal morality enables and empowers multiculturalism and the politicization of everyday life. When Conservatives insist that one's personal demeanor is integral to the effective morality of any office, they have breached a wall of modernity. They have broken a rule that is evident but unwritten. A man who swears and drinks may be a fine father, so long as he confines his salty personal behavior to appropriate times and places. But to accept and expect that the strengths of character attach to efficacy of leadership or respect for standards destroys in both directions.

We live in a time of cynicism - we are searching for heroes. This is a consequence of the fact that we have been betrayed. Reagan betrayed us by trading arms for hostages, and Oliver North betrayed us by running rogue operations in Central America. The slack we were willing to give these men because of their otherwise fine public character is exactly what gave them license to do dirt. William Casey's polluted ethos of plausible deniability showed its ultimate limits. What compartmentalization works for spies does not work for public figures. So there is a fine edge that cuts both ways. Too little compartmentalization makes the personal political and give us license to behave as though a black man cannot know what a white woman knows. Too much compartmentalization gives rise to imbuing too much stake in appearances.

The successful party must seek to inform its constituency better on the proper conduct of the business of government. It is in this regard that the GOP has the advantage, but that advantage has been squandered by its opportunism once in office. Strongarm tactics used for party advantage rather than in fulfillment of a pledge to public service has tarnished whatever reputation the GOP might have had gained from its Contract With America, matters of term limits and its fresh approach to 'throwing the bums out'. That sentiment lies firmly with the Democrats, not because they have shown any brighter, bolder or more innovative ways and means to run government and get it to respond to the needs of the people, but because in the ways that ultimately mattered more, the Democrats appeared to be on the side of transparency whereas the Bush Administration seemed to cover up. In fact, both parties conduct their business in plain view of the public, but the one who can outwit the press and put the attention on dealings that can be roundly condemned will have the upper hand.

Most importantly, the Republicans need to take the Culture Wars in a new direction. At the moment, there is no way they cannot do so without putting a visible minority front and center. That is because the GOP needs the assistance of the major media in putting such issues in front of the people. Only by bringing issues of race, class and gender onto the front burner can Republicans overcome those stereotypes placed at their feet. The inevitable contradictions that will surface, whether they be obvious or of disingenuous faint praise, the boulder will begin rolling downhill. This augments the momentum initiated by what remains its own movement, the energy around Sarah Palin.

The Republican Party itself, in its various leadership councils needs to energize its various constituencies and establish an e pluribus unum around center-right priorities. Whenever the Republican Party can be stereotyped when it is convenient, the Left can rule the soundbites. When Ralph Reed ran the Christian Coalition, his role within the Big Tent was clear and had to be dealt with separately. These days, the coalitions have become ill-defined for their general support of the Bush agenda in various ways. So all Republicans had to be vaguely supportive of Bush, of the War, of pro-Life issues, of Second Amendment rights, against illegal immigration etc. The Republican Party needs individuals out front on each of these issues which appeal broadly to the Right without everyone being responsible for everything. This makes a robust Republican party which handles its own differences better and provides a variety of intelligent dissents which cannot be stereotyped.

That's what I see.

See also [Posner](#).

...In the Republican Party these fall into three main groups: believers in (1) free markets, low taxes, and small government; (2) believers in tough criminal laws and a strong foreign policy; and (3) social (mainly religious) conservatives, who are hostile to abortion, gay marriage, pornography, and gun control. Groups (2) and (3) converge on hostility to illegal immigrants. Groups (1) and (2) are in some tension because a national security state requires big government and therefore high taxes. Group (1) is in tension with (3) because (1) is libertarian and (3) is regulatory.

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November 24, 2008

In Search of Conservative Intelligence

Something I believe goes without saying is that there are particular advantages to be had by myself and all Progressives who seek to understand the principled conflicts between themselves and Conservatives. To the extent that I care much about the particulars of black people, which is possibly all sentimental and chauvinistic, I think there is a good opportunity for African Americans to avail themselves to sound Conservative logic. It also goes without saying that this is a controversial assertion for a black man, but I think much of that controversy is misplaced in a sort of dissonance.

When I was a performance poet in the early 90s moving to New York, it was an article of faith, especially in the wake of Rodney King and the LA Riot, that news anchors and reporters would seek out uneducated angry black people for a representative opinion. This has become such a cliché that when the reverse happens, as it did famously with an Obama supporter YouTubed in Hollywood, it is seen as quite an unusual phenomenon. It is therefore a bit ironic but then again entirely predictable that when Progressives and liberals choose to find a representative of those people they know nothing about, they tend to find those who most resemble their preconceived stereotypes. It is with that kind of foolishness I wish to dispatch.

This of course, forces me to do likewise. Fortunately, that's not difficult considering that when I first began blogging I was more Progressive than I am now, and linked to a more liberal set of bloggers. I've gotten rid of that blogroll altogether. Hmm. But since the election of Obama I have started re-reading Yglesias, Drum, Kelley and DeLong. I didn't realize that Kevin Drum left the Washington Monthly and landed at Mother Jones of all places, so I've since dropped him - but that's my prejudice. Still, I've never made much of a point of arguing against Kos, for example. If I had my druthers, and since it's my blog I'll state them, I would have Progressives quoting from The New Republic and Leftists from The Nation. I'd thusly be quite happy quoting from The National Review. What irks me is that I keep hearing about Glenn Beck, Bill O'Reilly and George Will - people I don't take seriously.

Be all that as it may, it's clear that from my own perspective, I am sufficiently grounded in the basics of Conservatism to take my own study up a notch and will continue to heed David Brooks, Victor Davis Hanson, Richard John Neuhaus, Greg Mankiw, Richard Fernandez and Ross Douthat. I'll spend more time hearing out the Powerline guys from the Claremont Center and other Straussians of their ilk. But pointedly, I will be paying stricter attention to those Conservative intellectual writers, historians, economists, and attorneys whose grasp of the finer details is without question.

Since November 4th, I haven't read one thing about Sarah Palin but I did finally come to understand that it was Tina Fey (star of 'Mean Girls', duh) who most famously said in a skit as Palin that she can see Russia from her house. Haha very funny, now I get the joke. But I don't watch Saturday Night Live, and haven't since Eddie Murphy left. I realize that there are all sorts of millions of Americans who inform their political views from parody and satire but you won't find me quoting Stephen Colbert around here.

On talk radio, I still like Hewitt's form of lawyerly gotcha, but it wears thin after a while. Instead I prefer Dennis Miller and Dennis Prager. Miller because he doesn't have an overweening desire to be taken so damned seriously yet remains hilarious and an incredibly prescient judge of character. Prager because in the end, he's probably the most even-handed and philosophical on Right Radio. I probably would listen to Bill Bennett if he weren't on a 3-6AM. I will listen to Rush Limbaugh because he is right on top of the talking points of the day, often establishing them, but I won't hear him out. He's a naked and brilliant propagandist - there to keep the hoi full of it's own polloi. I never ask Limbaugh "why" and nobody ever should, and in that regard he's only useful to spark up a topic.

I've got Chesterton and C.S. Lewis in my back pocket, but I'd probably do well to seek out Oakeshott and other theorists like Edmund Burke, because I'm rather determined through the education I've just gotten from Jonah Goldberg to find out the finer points on the differences between Classic Liberals, Modern Conservatives like Hayek and Libertarians. I'd also like to be able to understand how Christianity in general connect through the Enlightenment and energizes an appreciable amount of morality in Conservative ideology without becoming the parody portrayed in redneck Evangelism. I've broadly placed conservative Christianity in the sole province of Catholicism, but it cannot solely reside there.

All in all, I am satisfied that I won't have to talk about elections for some time and that I'll spend less time defending policies on principles than speaking more directly about those principles.

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November 20, 2008

Liberal Fascism: Halfway Mark

I am about halfway through Jonah Goldberg's 'Liberal Fascism', and it's truly a fascinating set of ideas. Goldberg has given me quite a bit to think about considering what I did and did not know about American history. But in many ways this is exactly the book I have been needing to know.

As I mentioned before, or probably never said it this way before, the most difficult think about being a black conservative is that you haven't inherited it. Which means, like any bounder on the ascent, you know very well what you don't like but you're not sure exactly if getting what you do like gets you into. We are all aware of the rhetorical catfights that certain conservatives like to get into and there is a great risk of falling into blatant demogoguery. It is difficult to unlearn progressivism without being slavish.

What is not said often enough is that blackfolks who bother to do battle as conservative specifically with progressive blackfolks are often motivated by the same premises as progressives - that some intellectual vanguard pointing in the proper direction is going to lift all boats. I think that in divesting myself of the prerogatives of the Talented Tenth, that I have avoided that trap - but it does consequently leave me wondering why I talk to or about blackfolks at all.

These are some of the interesting consequences of transcribing my journey as I get through towards more contemporary histories in Goldberg, especially with regard to the role of the Black Panthers and the Black Power Movement. You see in assigning the dichotomy necessary to make his point clear, there is no question but that black politics in significant components lie directly in the scheme of fascism. For what it's worth, a great deal of American politics does, but I suppose that I will have some responsibility to deal with the black part. In some ways that will be quite easy as my record on the Fifty Page Book Men and the Coalition of the Damned is fairly clear. But the premises of unity and collectivism, very deeply imbedded in Progressivism and in black identity itself - well, smacking that with a stick is going to be costly in terms of the noise I will have to suffer for doing so.

Be all that as it may, this book is the antidote to Howard Zinn. It is absolute required reading for anyone who cares to understand what conservatives are NOT. That is because it makes for the first honest accounting of how exactly to view that period in world history when the context of the evil of the 20th century can be explained in American terms.

Goldberg does a damning good job, but perhaps not as persuasive as possible (yet the first time I've heard it) accounting for the intellectual tenor of the 20th century with regard to the reconception of government. Although his book is complete with a fairly robust accounting of the intellectual leaders and concepts of the century, he decides rather to concentrate his focus on the great men. That is the single weakness of the book aside from some variously scattershot factoids that are often thrown in for effect. (For example, Malcolm X is only mentioned once for 'by any means necessary') which he paints as nihilist, and then left alone. I suspect that as he loads down his book with such references it becomes overwrought with nitpicky and debatable talking points rather than tracing a smooth inevitable arc and consequences of the philosophical ends of Progressivism. The difficulty is thus with justifications of cramming everything under fascism which is not the sum of all evils that in my view totalitarianism actually is. The question I think would be better answered is how to rescue the world from dictatorship through the application of classic liberalism and the separation of powers inherent in the American system. But maybe that's just me.

But what remains the unquestionable strength of the book is how Goldberg illustrates what the Left has done to spin treachery of its own design onto the shoulders of the Right. He demonstrates case after case of how liberalisms of the 'third way' are drawn to fascistic themes.

It should be instructive to understand the very basics of fascism which have basically everything to do with the origin of the word from the Roman fascēs in which a set of slim, individually weak sticks, are bound tightly together to form a weapon. The premises of fascism always subordinate the individual towards a nationalist scheme of group identity and meaning. Goldberg sees fascism as essentially an organizing methodology with consistent themes in Nazi Germany, Mussolini's Italy and Wilson's

warsocialist America. He then traces these themes through FDR's New Deal, and Progressives on the Left from Dewey to current thinkers and politicians on the Left from Hillary Clinton to [Michael Lerner](#).

The book is an armory of ammo showing the excesses of the Left and their efforts to conceal their errors, and it essentially breaks the stranglehold liberals claim to the moral high ground. Extraordinary book.

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November 18, 2008

The Average Black Conservative

I've been discussing the progress of the state of political advocacy and communications in the Right section of the black blogosphere. I recognize that most of us in the Conservative Brotherhood are un-ordinary. You can't be out here representing all this political stuff without being able to dish it and take it. But what about the average Joe?

I think everybody knows that Denzel is Republican, and it's easy for the extraordinary guy. I've always been a big fan, and there's that part of me that really finds it difficult to understand how it is that DW doesn't catch the flack that we do. I think the answer is that we have seen him do all sorts of things in his roles, but we don't see average black conservatives.

I've been thinking about some of the veterans and pros like [Joe Hicks](#), [Shannon Reeves](#), [Bob Parks](#), [Herman Cain](#) and Michael King. These are people that have a tight network, know each other and know operatives in the Republican Party. They've been around and surely have their war stories. But it's not about them. Then I think there are folks like me and other black conservative bloggers who have been around a relatively short period of time - less than 7 years on the scene. We are starting to be influential in the public. But it still requires a little bit of an extraordinary initiative. That initiative has the appearance of being offset by the particular rarity of Republicans who happen to be black, and it is rather true what Spence says:

In an election like this there are no black independents. There are blacks who are predisposed to vote for McCain/Palin either for ideological reasons or because the GOP line is much shorter—blacks in the DNC are a dime a dozen, while blacks in the GOP are as rare as....well did you watch the Republican National Convention?

But most of us are not operatives on a mission to deliver pork back to the home base, nor lobbyists with legislative axes to grind, nor opportunists trying to make a buck or get some airtime for our own aggrandizement. Most black conservatives are merely center-right to right wing, but not interested in doing much more than speaking our minds and voting without being hounded into submission by accusations of self-hatred and worse.

I'm not going to pretend to be an average black conservative. I am a sucker for political philosophy and I can talk about it forever, even when I know it makes me appear much stranger than I actually am. But why is it that a black man cannot be a political philosopher without appearing strange? But more importantly, why is free thinking considered inimical to the black political agenda. Perhaps it is the very term 'black political agenda' that we've made a great deal of assumptions about and it's time for those assumptions to be unpacked. That's part of what I, and others, have been trying to accomplish all these years online.

It goes without saying that being a black conservative and consistently voting as an ideological Republican requires some independent thinking. After all, the great success of our forbears' political activism resulted in great changes in both parties and the national political landscape. The beneficiary of that has been the Democrats, by far. Nevertheless it often doesn't occur to people to think of Malcolm X as a religious conservative who wanted to pay no taxes, believed very strongly in the sanctity of marriage and held a high burden of proof for the Government. These are attributes largely associated with Republicans today. I happen to think this congruence is not ironic nor coincidental. They come from the same place in the souls of people. When you are fiercely independent and don't trust bureaucracies to have your best interests at heart...well let me not go on. My point is that there are plenty of people who easily identify with Malcolm X as a strong black man who should have no problem identifying with Denzel, those professionals like Michael King and bloggers like me.

In the end, I say it should not be a matter of controversy at all

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November 13, 2008

Walter Lippmann - First Note

Walter Lippmann - From Wikipedia

Lippmann saw the purpose of journalism as "[intelligence work](#)." Within this role, journalists are a link between policymakers and the public. A journalist seeks facts from policymakers which he then transmits to citizens who form a public opinion. In this model, the information may be used to hold policymakers accountable to citizens. This theory was spawned by the industrial era and some critics argue the model needs rethinking in [post-industrial societies](#).

Though a journalist himself, he held no assumption of news and truth being synonymous. For him the "function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them in relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act." A journalist's version of the truth is subjective and limited to how he constructs his reality. The news, therefore, is "imperfectly recorded" and too fragile to bear the charge as "an organ of direct democracy."

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The Legal Difference

I heard on Dennis Miller last evening that a group of homosexual activists spit in the face of an 80 year old grandmother for defying their crusade. I think she was a Mormon, but it hardly matters. This radicalism has gone too far.

It is surprising how useful reading Jonah Goldberg's 'Liberal Fascism' has been in understanding matters of conflict between Left and Right. Following his example I am going to reduce political complexity that I have previously used from three schools to two. I had previously talked about Liberals, Progressives and Conservatives. I will now talk only about Progressives and Conservatives. Primarily this is about who has the upper hand in the intellectual direction of the parties. Progressives, encompassing Pragmatists, the followers of [William James](#) are the leaders of the Left. Barack Obama is squarely there. Conservatives took over the Right with Ronald Reagan in 1980 who branched off from Goldwater. The Rockefeller Republicans are essentially dead.

I will also however talk more about Classic Liberalism as the home of Conservatism whose values we may all be trying to get back to - depending.

At any rate, I have suffered through a great deal of bickering about who's a bigot in all of this noise about Proposition Eight, which is rather odd considering that California merely joins the other 41 states in outrightly banning gay marriage. What nobody has done in any of these flamewars is detail any of the 'rights' that are supposedly being denied gay couples. It has, in the most logical case, boiled down to 'the right to call themselves married', with no reference to what exactly being married gives straights other than social recognition. I think that the social recognition is an important part of the cast that advocates for gay marriage should emphasize, but that they should not pursue this matter in the scorched earth manner they have done, and thus they are destroying their own case by claiming all of their opponents are bigots. [Here is the applicable case law](#) that nobody has been referring to. Actually very easy to find if anyone cared.

An honest evaluation of all of the differences will recognize that 99% of these differences are benefits not rights, and a case that any of these benefits are Constitutional rights is easily debatable. This is the distinction I make for inheritance of property - however I don't see how any gay partner's unwillingness or inability to execute a proper will is a responsibility of the state. Probate can be ugly for anyone.

A second look at the substantial list of benefits would show that almost none of them existed before the New Deal.

It is to be expected that Progressives will expand upon Rousseau's concept of the General Will as the proper driver of state activity. Similarly we can expect Progressives to demonize their opposition, especially conservatives who wish to limit the scope and influence of state granted status and definitions of social institutions.

This is a sterling example of my tried and true definition of the difference between left and right. The left wants to use the power of the state to make up for the dysfunctions of their families. The right wants to use the strength of their families to protect against the excess and abuses of the state. In that regard it makes perfect sense that advocates for gay marriage cannot

and do not expect the benefits of gay and lesbian relationships to meaningful or fulfilling without the assistance and support of the all encompassing nanny state.

Everything in the State. Nothing outside of the State. Nothing against the State. Establish the General Will through the apparatus of the State.

That's Mussolini by the way.

November 13, 2008 in [Conservatism, Marriage](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(27\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)
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November 07, 2008

Black Republicans: Doing vs Being

It has been suggested without much subtlety that now that Barack Obama has won the Presidency, that the 'white masters' of the Republican Party will cast off black conservatives from their ranks. Following this assumption to its implications, it follows that black conservatives were nothing more than suckups to the party in power and that their duty was to keep, by increasing minority membership in GOP, the Republicans a steamrolling majority party.

It's a rather crude analysis based on the continuing misunderstanding of the value of conservatism itself. Allow me to make a correction.

At bottom the question is what is the advantage of being a Black Republican. The answer is found in looking at the alternative. What indeed is the value of being a Black Democrat? The value, for the overwhelming majority who would 'be' is found in the act of voting, a momentary exercise. But behind the act of voting, if this momentary exercise is to be taken as something other than random, is the discipline of thinking. Thoughtful blackfolks who vote Democrat do so because they have accumulated a set of useful ideas and they expect their candidates to express and run with those ideas. So it is not so much what one does in the voting booth that lends credibility to the democratic process but the legitimacy and value of the ideas in play.

Thoughtful blackfolks do not get their cues on the usefulness of ideas through some shallow idolization of political candidates. It's not about JFK or FDR or LBJ so much as it is with the ideas behind them. Blackfolks rightly look to intellectuals like Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Booker T Washington and WEB DuBois to understand their worldview and ideas. In that constellation of thought and ideas, they find what is useful and true and agitate for their political candidates to act upon the principles of those ideas and conform to those worldviews. It is during the campaigns that voters determine the fidelity of candidates to ideas and solutions. The doing is about the time taken in service of understanding the value and usefulness of those ideas and their implications in policy. The being is the momentary act walking under a banner of like-minded people.

There is difficulty of course, with the only recently liberated African American in accessing ideas other than those preoccupied with immediate liberation. But there certainly are a set of African Americans so fully liberated that they might expand their consumption of ideas and worldviews to those beyond those aimed at the slave, the pauper, the servant, the underclass.

And so it is only natural to see some thoughtful blackfolks take their intellectual cues from intellectuals like Edmund Burke, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Friedrich Hayek, Leo Strauss, Michael Oakeshott and Milton Friedman. It is entirely reasonable to consider their worldviews and their ideas. In that constellation of ideas, blackfolks would choose those they find useful and encourage politicians to apply and run with those ideas. The doing is about the time taken in service of understand the value and usefulness of those ideas and their implications in policy. The being is the momentary act walking under a banner of like-minded people.

So what's the advantage of 'being' a Black Republican? There isn't much outside except having the company of like-minded people. But that's just a simple social benefit, rather like being a fan of a football team. If this is as deep as the analysis goes - merely to the 'being' it does a great deal of disrespect to those who discipline themselves to the task of comprehending great ideas and finding the usefulness of them in their lives. It seems to me that this is the great attraction of politics to thoughtful people in the first place.

We happen to live in a society, which like all societies is full of people with various capacities and desires to apply themselves intellectually over any meaningful period of time. That does not mean, under our Constitution, that they should suffer any disenfranchisement. Everybody gets a vote no matter how serious or shallow they are. So there are, of course, people who find

their entire political raison d'etre in the social benefit of being a fan of a winning team. This is part and parcel of populism and identity politics with which all thoughtful people are aware.

The advantage of conservatism to African Americans is a greater understanding and perspective on a greater set of ideas than those which we have traditionally applied our consideration. To know more is its own benefit. To understand those ideas against which one has been opposed through ignorance is to gain a greater grasp of the political system and all of the interests in it. This is a capacity that more African Americans must develop if they are to advance in this society and in the world.

Lest anyone doubt. I do not mean to imply or suggest that there is only one direction in which the thoughtful African American might mature their political sensibilities. There are not simply Conservative, but Libertarian, Anarchic, Marxist and other categories of thinkers and ideas in Western Traditions and many schools of thought within any and all of those branches. If anyone cares to take a very simple axiom 'By any means necessary' seriously, then one cannot be so simple-minded as to do nothing more than follow the same intellectual and political path without any further investigation.

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November 02, 2008

Spence's List, Isolationism & The Softness of New Jacks

At my daughter's elementary school, I once had to complain to a teacher that they were not teaching sentence diagramming. I then made a brief effort to find any grammar book that did. My search was not rewarded. I haven't been as peckish as I should, but now I am starting to recognize the failure now several years out. One of the things that has brought this up is a large paper Scholar has to produce on Maya Angelou's atrocious multicultural abstract Inaugural Poem. Aside from the fact that everyone has had to live down the preposterous notion of Bill Clinton as a black president and the poison aspects of maintain a color-coded taxonomy of suffering, it's just a bad poem. They should be teaching about the caged bird. There's a lot of things 'they' should be teaching.

So I've been thinking about learning things the good old-fashioned way and the mortarboards of hard knocks, the pedagogy of Catholic catechism and the indelible lessons of bloodied noses, boxed ears, slapped wrists and swatted behinds. I say so particularly noting how out of touch the reality of a slapped wrist is with its metaphor. If any schoolteacher in this country were to actually slap the wrist of a child, she'd be up on charges. Instead we live in a nation of metrosexual passive aggressives (with their patron saint Obama) who have only suffered the metaphors of black eyes. The only thing they strain is credulity. It is only a matter of time until that subculture of our nation collapses into a sobbing heap. It's already in over its head.

While I didn't intend this message to focus on the character of our two candidates for President, it would be irresponsible for me to pass without noting the startling difference between the two. One is a warrior, the other an attorney. I love Arnold's parody of Obama's skinny legs and scrawny arms. It is perfectly apt.

Spence, my dear friend, has put together [a list of 40 or so things](#) that he believes should be the focus of the Executive. I take them to task as a whole for what they leave out. Consider the first ten and my comment in the context of the legacies of liberal politics:

1. Free college tuition.
2. Low interest loans to businesses/homes for energy improvements.
3. Promote micro-loans.
4. Universal preschool.
5. Green public transit.
6. Fund vertical gardens.
7. Fund the Algebra Project.
8. Promote wellness.
9. Create green-collar jobs.
10. Explore Free Government.

I can't help but think of Star Trek's holodeck or better yet, The Construct of The Matrix in which the imagined becomes the realized. Plug an electronic shishkebab into the back of your head, and there's your Algebra Project. You're eyes flutter for a moment, and then you wake up with Newtonian clarity. "I know algebra!" All the physicists at the Pentagon are wasting their time if they're not working to these ends according to the vision of Spence's philosophy. What I say of black politics, I say equally of Progressive politics, it is all about what to do about the marginalized person whose position is the legacy of some oppression. Let's just extend the metaphor a bit to say that the progressive endgame is the 'promised land'. That promised land is squarely in middle class America. There's nothing further - all the I have a dreaming, and we shall overcoming lands Americans in the material world of the American middle class, period. Beyond that, it has nothing to say. Everybody gets free headstart, free college, free algebra competency, jobs that are pollution free, free public transportation, and as close as we can get to free money - low interest loans, surely guaranteed by the government just in case you decide your skinny legs can't bear

the burden. They want to turn the middle class of America from a grunting guttural circus of blood, sweat and tears into a walled garden of polite dancing including a dark corner for the wild thang, just in case people get bored.

But nobody in such a world gets bitchslapped. Nobody gets abused, nobody hits any glass ceilings. All the real oppression is boxed out of the system. You simply register your gripe into the taxonomy of the Angelou Code and are admitted into the new protected class, brought to you by those biters, kickers, screamers, bullies and barbarians who make more than 250k (no wait, 200k) dollars per annum. Welcome to the pain-free zone, all you need is your psychic damage as baggage and your material world is cushioned in the downy softness of Progress. Such is the life charter of those dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights among which are life, liberty and the achievement of ever inflating welfare. People don't die of cancer around here. That's *preventable*. We can stop people from smoking. We can stop people from drinking. We can stop people from risking their lives and the lives of other. Hear me y'all. ITS ALL PREVENTABLE. People don't get their wrists slapped around here. We know what that leads to...

What color is authority? And who is bold enough to wear such a color today in America? The cadres of the people for a better future wear the color of Matthew 25:40.

┆ "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

It is for a reason I picked the New International Version of the Holy Bible. The new internationalists will start in America and they will continue their experiment all the way down. If you're living on 100 dollars a year, your day is coming soon, as soon as America is convinced that its wild west competitive days are coming to a well-managed end. Tame this beast and the rest of the world is a piece of cake. We've already got what they want, and we know how to extend life itself.

People tend to forget that doing for the weak is service to a King. It is payment to a regime of truth and the entire engine is powered by the barbarian beast of burden. Those of us outside of the protected class, those of us subjected to a different standard of right and righteousness are to be dumb animals. Our sinew, sweat and slobber don't have standing in the court of Progress. In this moral inversion, we are to be the silent, subservient help, in service to the general welfare of the protected class. Those of us without a color in the Angelou Code of multicultural complaint have no business partaking in the welfare state. If we are beyond the Pale, if we are not part of the Solution, if we engage in risky behaviors, if we dare to use physical punishments, if we are in the Oppressor Class, then we are not men but freaks. We Cheneys, we Rices, we Palins, we Joes are not to be trusted. We who defy the type, we God damned individuals. We who would bother to kick and scrap for more, to thow an elbow in the paint, to dance in the endzone with utter disrespect for the losers behind us. For there is no tribute valued by the King in doing for us. There is only the acceptability of our sacrifice. There is only our submission to the only value that has value which is all about the least brothers.

We who have decided not to be weak are off the list. Watch your back. The King is not happy with your excess.

[Continue reading "Spence's List, Isolationism & The Softness of New Jacks" »](#)

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October 30, 2008

Socialist Fishing

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he'll eat forever.

Give a fisherman a loan for a boat and he can feed himself, his family and sell more fish in the market. With sales tax on the fish you can pay a policeman to protect the fish market from theft. Grow the fish market through hard work and the man can pay off his loan save for a new boat, hire new fishermen and expand his fleet. More fish allows him to trade with the next village. More spare time allows him to learn new ways of fishing, making his business more efficient, cutting costs, raising profits. Teach a man capitalism and you build a fishing industry.

But there are still people who don't know how to fish. There are still teachers of fishing who don't understand the dynamics of the fishing industry. All they know is that in this prosperous man's town there are still people who can't afford to buy a fish. So they tax the fishing boats. They put tariffs on the fishing export, they put more money into fishing headstart, even though it doesn't produce better boat captains. They say, I don't want to punish your success, I just want to spread the wealth around.

They change society so that nobody feels the need to create a fishing industry - they just tax the one they have until... well until when?

The sea has a bad season and the cost cutting procedures no longer produce profits. Fewer boats can catch their limit so fishermen are idle. The taxes and tariffs have changed the cost of getting into the business, everybody has soaked the rich guy so that only rich guys can afford to stay in the fishing business. People depend upon the public services supplied by taxes, nobody wants to give them up. The bad cycle causes dislocations but with the tax burden it becomes unbearable. Fishing is kaput. People import fish from another country with no minimum wages, retirement plans, health care, dental, vision, savings matching, and workman's compensation for the union fisherman.

The people demand social justice. They sue because the bedraggled business can't afford the quality control it once had. Popular politicians promise change. The President of FishCo closes his doors and takes his money and invests it in a less hostile business environment. He leaves the rest to his son whom he educated with an MBA. The politician regulates and adds more taxes for companies that take their business offshore. The politicians blame speculators, crooks, greed, corruption and promise jobs, jobs. They take tax money from fishing companies, and offer tax incentives to fishing companies so long as they follow the government regulations of the Ministry of Fishing which has a new cunning plan.

The inheritors of FishCo fight back. They hire lobbyists who understand the fish industry to change the laws of the ministry so that the fishing company can do what it used to do when it was profitable. They succeed. They go public and sell shares in FishCo and get listed on the exchange as FC.

OK this isn't fun any more.

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October 21, 2008

The Impracticality of Philosophical Skills

I think that the most hurtful thing I have ever been accused of is being a shill for immoral people, which is the subtext of a number of comments recently posted here at Cobb. I do know how to respond, I'm just not sure that I'll do an adequate job. In the end, I'm sure that I can be seen as useless, which is probably the best outcome for all concerned.

I can recall when I became a national officer of a student organization in college. I had the thrill of being elected several times at the local, state and regional levels and finally at the national level. I was truly learning about leadership. I remember running for a second term at the national level and saying in one of my speeches that leadership was the best thing that ever happened to me as a person, and the worst thing that ever happened to me as an engineer. Today I talk politics, political philosophy and ideology. I find myself in the same ironic position. What I have learned about conservatism is the best philosophical thing I have learned and it is likely the worst thing that has happened to me as a black political partisan. It is ironic that in being a leader of engineers that I became a worse engineer and now that I have gained in philosophical wisdom it spells doom for me in politics.

It is clear to me that the practical things that many folks desire of this curiosity I have become, although not onerous, do not seem to grasp what I want to be all about. And I wonder if I'll ever have enough time or patience to explain how my study has changed me. That is because I am first and foremost a writer and my journey into the realms of how it is that people come to decide what they believe has taken me towards wisdom - a wisdom I often feel incapable of communicating, interactively at any rate. I have taken out my frustrations here noting as I have that half of the things that I find most interesting gain few remarks.

For example, I attempted to identify Barack Obama in his Leftist roots and I've asserted that I feel kinship with him as he has triangulated rightward over the course of his campaign. I recognize how it is that the majority of black political opinion has been shaped by the Left and that it is the failure of this that moves us Right. As I told the reporter from the BBC, I just started my journey sooner than Obama. But it is also the case that in this kinship I assume that Obama's intelligence would compel him not to think his own experience was sufficient to frame his desire to use politics for good and that he would seek the wisdom of the ages, and having done so and landing to the Left of most Democrats that he would be following Socialist ideas and those originating with Marx as have so many black intellectuals of note. But all this has been taken as nothing more than beating of the black man on behalf of the white man, or if anything more than that then something of little use to anyone.

I have asked myself today what of my legacy - what is it that I seek to accomplish when all this writing is said and done, and I think that I have reached the limit of what writing can communicate in this form. If I am such a poor writer as to give such false impressions then I fail to see the point of continuing. This record assists me in making sense of everything I have said and thought on the subjects - almost seven thousand essays, reflections and comic strips over the years.

It is drudgery and I do wonder why I bother.

In discovering Oakeshott just recently I find that I have wasted a great deal of time and breath in evolving my understandings interactively. It is with that in mind that I am pleased to have upped my reading quotas this year, not that having all of these books on my sidebar has generated any discussion about them.

So here is what I'm going to do. I'm going to give up blogging until some distance after the election. Instead of writing new stuff, I'm only going to publish those partial thoughts which have backed up over the months. Maybe that will help. Other than that, the only idea that gives me comfort is the idea of turning off comments completely in the hope that writing without any expectation of interactivity might make me a better essayist in addition to the comfort of not having to attend to arguments which are really not what I want to talk about.

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October 17, 2008

Brooks & Conservatism

To me the most important thing about conservatism then and conservatism now was not Ronald Reagan frankly, it was not politicians, it was a body of ideas. And to me the core principle underlying the libertarians and the conservatives is the principle of epistemological modesty. There are limits to what we can know and understand. The world is simply too complex to plan, too complex to think we can understand it. So we have to respect the institutions that have grown up and stood the test of time. We have to respect the truths that have evolved over the centuries and have been learned and passed down to us. And I think that principle which is the principle of Edmund Burke and Michael Oakeshott and others is the essence of everything conservatives do.

-- David Brooks

Break your neck and listen to this piece by [David Brooks](#).

Hilarious. Insightful.

This is one of those moments where I get a bit frustrated and angry because I have had to take a whole hell of a lot of time figuring out how my own thinking has evolved to come to these same conclusions. I might have been introduced to [Michael Oakeshott](#) a long time ago and saved a lot of time.

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October 15, 2008

Don't Worry, Be Sad

It occurs to me that the thing that annoys me about Hitchens' recent flipflop is that somewhere in his logic is some need for charisma. It occurs to me that without question John McCain is the boringest character to run for President since that other paragon of virtue Bob Dole. My answer. So what?

As much as I like the thrill of a fiesty press conference, I can't bring myself to believe that the most important thing about my electing of a president is the feeling I get in the voting booth. I'm not supposed to vote for the candidate that makes me happy. I'm supposed to vote for the candidate who is going to do the best job in the White House, the one I trust with the boring job of running the government of the United States. Not whom do I like in the campaign, but whom do I trust in the job.

In the end, there's nothing I've seen that makes John McCain a spectacular anything. He's a determined bipartisan workhorse who focuses on the serious issues. Somehow everybody has managed to find reasons to dislike him because he can't pick VPs

who excite the public on both sides of the aisle. He can't manage to suppress the odd lunatic anywhere they speak ill of his opponent. He can't change the perception of people determined to associate him with Bush. These are things that people wish he would do, it would elevate their mood - it would get them charged up to support him, or give him the benefit of accumulated doubt.

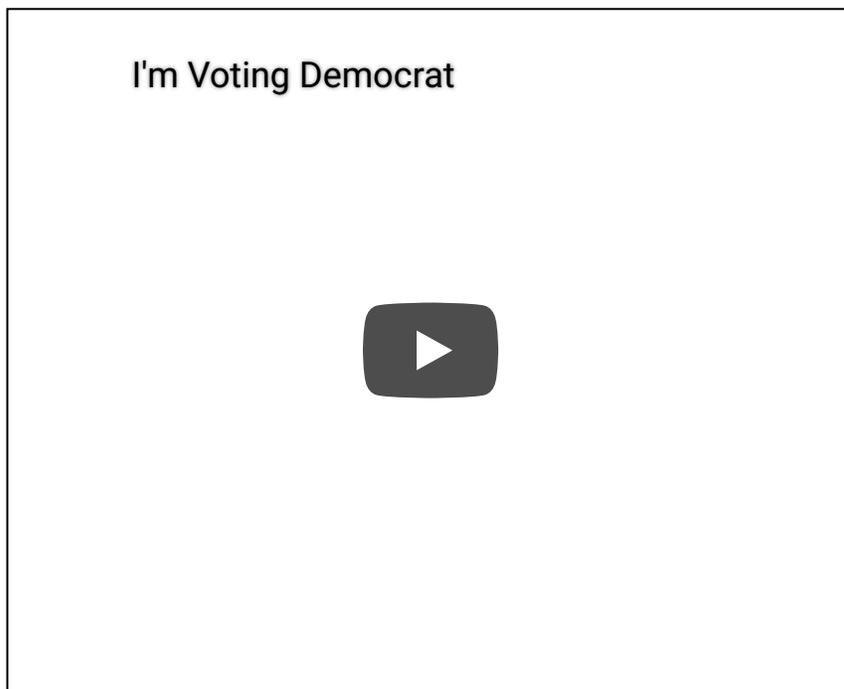
But when it comes to core values, McCain is my guy. Always has been, always will be - so long as he is a moderate conservative. It's really that simple. I cannot see why anybody who calls themselves conservative has any excuse to vote for someone who is not, especially given the fundamental conservative principle that it is not the government's job to provide happiness. That pursuit is on you, bub. So don't worry, be sad, and do the right thing.

Hitchens has decided to raise the properties of character and temperament over values and direction. He sees McCain as dishonest and Palin as a 'sick joke'. I don't see McCain as dishonest, I see him as running a sloppy and lackluster campaign. But I'm not voting for the best candidate, I'm voting for the most trusted president.

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October 08, 2008

I'm Voting Democrat



Just in case you haven't seen it.

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September 16, 2008

The Last Word on Palin's Fitness

You know what the question is. The answer is no.

My answer has always been "no and it doesn't really matter". But quite frankly, it does matter. And I'll tell you exactly why. If you ask me today who I'd rather have running the country between Palin and Rudy Giuliani, I'd pick Rudy. If you ask me who I'd rather have running the country between Palin and Thompson, or Romney or Tom Ridge, Palin would lose. If Palin were at the top of the ticket, in a contest between her and Obama, I'd pick Obama. But she's not.

I've got an itch in my head, and every time I hear 'Vice President' I think, 'leader of the Senate', the tiebreak vote. I don't think of Dick Cheney and all of the extra things he did. I think of the characters from '24' and 'The West Wing', party flacks and

scheming rivals. I think of Vice President along the same lines as Majority Whip. The VP goes to the funerals of foreign dignitaries and rollouts of new weapon systems demonstrations. The VP debates the VP candidates during the campaign. But most of all, I think of the Vice President of the US, not as a second string quarterback, but as the President's man on the Hill, the liaison to Congress. When I really think about it, that's what I mean. So most of the time, I don't really worry about the likes of Dan Quayle in office. I mean exactly how did we suffer with Danny Boy? Everybody knows Palin's stronger than Quayle.

But, that's not the answer to the first question. Who would I rather have running the country? I'd rather have somebody who can do both, well. And I don't believe that Sarah Palin can do both well. She's not the second string quarterback. She's something else entirely.

I am satisfied that Sarah Palin has done exactly what McCain needed as far as the GOP is concerned. And I really love the fact that her nomination puts double emphasis on fiscal reform and fighting corruption. She's got maverick written all over her. She is a phenomenon to match Obama and she is the right breath of fresh air for American electoral politics. In short, as a candidate, she has perfection about her. She has thrown the opposition into fits, derailed their momentum, and exposed their prejudices. She has done so being second banana, which is exactly the right place to do it.

But.

She's not bringing anything to Washington in the same way GWBush brought nothing to Washington. By that I mean, when she comes as an outsider, all she can do is rip the Congress one way or another, rather than steer it from the inside like those who know the pace and flow of the Hill. That means she will be abrasive and will be stalled by legislative tricks, and the consequence of that is that McCain's agenda will have a tough time. The good news is that strategically, given Palin's direct, no-nonsense attitude for the country, rather than as an ideological partisan, she can take all of that public and invigorate a reform of Congress we haven't seen since Gingrich. That is a brilliant strategy and it is what McCain is trying to do. Bravo for him. It's a mixed blessing that could backfire in a time of crisis.

This week, we have crisis.

Crisis serves to remind us that when people run around with their hair on fire, they go to the biggest, strongest, bravest, smartest people they can find and they yell 'save me!'. And when they lack confidence in those in charge, they despair and grumble and backbite. Sarah Palin cannot lead the Democrats in crisis, so therefore she cannot very well run America in crisis. Now, Joe Biden can't lead Republicans in crisis, but to be honest, he'd fake it better. Obama could very well be Bushlike and rise to the occasion, but I have my doubts. McCain is McCain, a man built for crisis. In fact, the more conflict he sees, the better he gets. So we have two extremes on the right and two mediocrities on the left, in either case we have to pray for good weather.

We cannot wish ourselves into a better world. We have to deal with the one we have. You cannot be a real conservative and not expect chaos. Palin is not a natural conservative choice, she is a natural popular choice for social conservatives whose capabilities as a maverick says something important about a serious change in the domestic agenda. I like all that, but I go in with reservations. They are the same kind of what-if reservations I have in general. I quite frankly don't know who else McCain is going to pick or what exactly his domestic agenda is going to be. I'm all for bold action, but what's the action John? I'm all for a feisty, wildly popular partisan, but what's the agenda John? There's too much hope in this season's campaigns, and that makes this conservative uncomfortable. But I'll tell you my hope.

My hope is that McCain wins, because without a McCain win, the Republicans are sunk. With a McCain win, the Republicans moderate from Rovian tricks and work for the center and for the country. Country First is exactly what I want. If Republicans don't get the chance to do Country First, it will be 'Energize the Base' and we move more crazily to Right wing populism, and that even scares me. Sarah Palin is the smartest popular choice the GOP could have made; it could have been Ron Paul who is truly a crackpot. It could have been Huckabee, the Jimmy Carter of the Right.

If Obama wins, the Republicans have a better chance of going ape and reverting to extreme DeLay style arm-twisting in Congress. Why? Because a Democrat Executive and Legislative agenda under anybody but (ironically) Hillary Clinton will become a mad social scientist's dream. In other words, we go from Red and Blue to Black and White. The partisans in this country go berzerk under an Obama administration.

The risk of all hell breaking loose from external, uncontrollable factors that put Palin in charge of more than she can handle are slim but real and they really matter. But the risk of all domestic hell breaking loose from a retrenching GOP fighting as a

I accept the call to help our nominee for president to serve and defend America, and I accept the challenge of a tough fight in this election against confident opponents at a crucial hour for our country. And I accept the privilege of serving with a man who has come through much harder missions and met far graver challenges and knows how tough fights are won, the next president of the United States, John S. McCain. (Cheers, applause.)

It was just a year ago when all the experts in Washington counted out our nominee because he refused to hedge his commitment to the security of the country he loves. With their usual certitude, they told us that all was lost. There was no hope for this candidate who said that he would rather lose an election than see his country lose a war. (Cheers, applause.)

But the pollsters -- the pollsters and the pundits, they overlooked just one thing when they wrote him off. They overlooked the caliber of the man himself, the determination and resolve and the sheer guts of Senator John McCain. (Cheers, applause.)

The voters knew better. And maybe that's because they realize there's a time for politics and a time for leadership; a time to campaign and a time to put our country first. (Cheers, applause.)

Our nominee for president is a true profile in courage, and people like that are hard to come by. He's a man who wore the uniform of his country for 22 years and refused to break faith with those troops in Iraq who now have brought victory within sight. (Cheers, applause.)

And as the mother of one of those troops, that is exactly the kind of man I want as commander in chief. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you.

AUDIENCE: (Chanting.) USA! USA! USA! USA!

[Continue reading "The Palin Speech" »](#)

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July 12, 2008

Why the Left Hates Fox

It finally dawned on me.

I can't help but notice that Right bloggers are defending the legacy of Tony Snow and Left bloggers are trying to call him another loser flack. I'm also noticing how some have blamed Fox for the legs on Jackson's ridiculous gaffe. One has repeated the litany of Righties up to Ailes at the top. I've always noticed that dozens of folks who don't bother to lookup Hayek still can't figure out what a semi-intelligent writer such as myself does following the marching orders of Bill O'Rielly, Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh. The fact is that I don't, but that doesn't stop the guilt by association.

What I've figured out, appropos a phrase that sticks with me, is that the Left associates dissent from its panglossian policy experimentation as stupidity. The reference is [here](#) from William Weston, emphasis mine:

The least educated people have the most diverse group of political discussion mates, whereas people with graduate degrees are the least likely to talk politics with people who disagree with them. I can testify to how easy it is for conversation among academics, the most educated group of people, to turn into a one-position echo chamber.

Liberalism is taken to be an IQ test, and the rare conservative is encouraged to be quiet or go elsewhere. For political disagreement I go to the coffee house, which in our town draws a broader range of people than the faculty club contains.

This is the land I grew up in, and of course with a family background of academics, it made sense. To do for those who previously couldn't is a sign of progress, and we should be all about progress. If you're not, you're stupid. Which naturally includes thier constituency - those who don't know how to do for themselves and need the work of society to help them out - society led by ... academics, the only people smart enough to show the way.

Of course all intellectuals aren't liberal or progressive. And that's what makes the Left agonize. They believe that the progress inherent in their views must be the way that the lumpen masses see things. The Left is elitist, but they assume that their efforts on behalf of the masses will always be supported by the masses. And so in a democracy, they should always win. That's why they hate Fox News, because it destroys their monopoly. It gives people who aren't rich reasons to think like people who

are. (And it's always the rich industrialists who is the intelligencia the academics are most envious of - after all that's where they get their money).

This explains a host of questions that black conservatives get, and any Republican who doesn't appear to be a wealthy miser. "How could you possibly betray your own best interests" is the root question. They simply don't understand intellectual diversity - that people's own best interests is not always down with a policy program or an agenda of 'progress'.

Moreover, on that IQ test thing - they really can't stand that Right Radio connects with average people, and that politics isn't always an intellectual pissing match. That's why the Left tends to gravitate to big hunking world-historical ideas just beyond the reach of the ordinary Joe. Global Warming / Climate Change is just a perfect sort of thing they love to suggest is beyond the ken of the best minds on the Right. Nothing pleases the left more than 'scientific consensus'. Whether it be the Iraq Study Group, or the IPCC or the War Crimes Tribunal. That's why they call it scientific socialism. It's supposed to be good for you.

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July 07, 2008

A Black Conservative Coup

Today I sat with Kevin Ross and Christopher Bracey on News and Notes and had what I consider one of the most civilized, if not the first, good discussion about black conservatives on the radio. Farai and her producers did a great job in putting together the show under slightly adverse conditions. Ross is a Morehouse man who looks the part and we met in the hall outside of the studio. The segment we shared was the second. The first was the [blogger's roundtable segment](#) in which we covered the following.

- A. Iraq and Oil
- B. Barack & Flipflopping
- C. Indigents in Hospitals.

It remains astounding to me how many people still pretend that there can only be one reason for a war. From now on, I'm going to bring a copy of the congressional joint resolution whenever I sense that I will be debating Iraq. They never get past that. I was hoping that some revelation of the facts about exactly how much (not much) oil is forthcoming that they would leaven their bile. No such luck. Starting 2013 the world can expect 1.5 million more barrels per day coming out of the six new fields. That will be split up how many ways? Who knows? But what's clear or should be clear to my opponents in this debate is that this amount, even if the US got 100% of it, would constitute less than 5% of our daily needs. I tried to inject mathematical logic into the discussion but that was very difficult to do. So I simply emphasized that for the first time the Iraqi people themselves get the money.

On Barack, I'm particularly interested to see how furious those whose audacious dreams he shattered will be. As I said the other day, Obama is now simply talking sense rather than crazy talk. There's only so much crazy talk he can spew, and now he has to placate people living in the world of reality, as opposed to such hard Afrocentrics characterized by Wright's version of liberation theology, ass-backwards generals like Wesley Clark and other associated donuts now being splattered under the Obama bus.

As for the poor woman who died at King's County, I really wanted to emphasize how it is that liberal sentiment has caused this situation. Whenever you have laws that assert an indigent person's right to sleep in public places, you deaden the public's ability to be outraged at the very idea. So you see somebody sprawled asleep (or comatose, who checks their pulse) on a subway or a sidewalk or a park bench, and you say that he has a right to be there, then you don't roust them or say 'somethings wrong here'. That's just exactly the kind of mentality that allows people to lay comatose on public hospital waiting room floors - somebody has defended their 'right' to.

--

In the [second segment](#), I joined Ross and Bracey, whom I still owe an apology for not reviewing his book here, to talk about black conservatism itself and how we are dealing with the current campaign's cards.

I dig McCain for several important reasons. Broadly speaking, you either have governors or Congresscritters running for President. When you have governors, you check out their state's budget and how well he ran the joint. Did education improve,

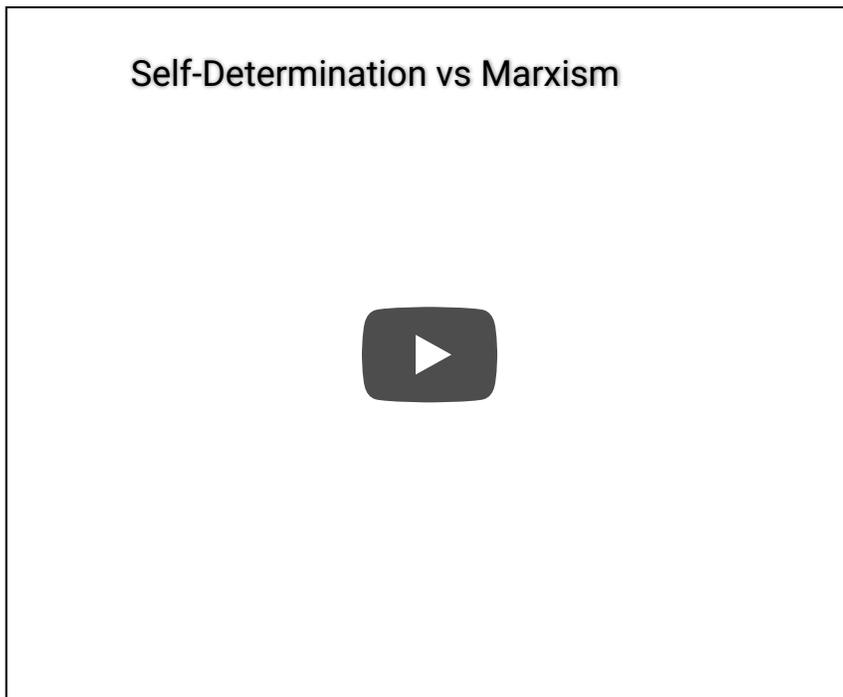
minority against a Democratic full press on Washington is a certainty if Obama wins. And the reality of Obama's waffling and inexperience is as real as the redneck sensibilities of Sarah Palin.

Crisis brings clarity, and both sides give me reasons to freak out and head for shelter. But I'll take the possible risk with McCain over the certain risk with Obama.

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September 12, 2008

Self-Determination



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September 11, 2008

The Danger Zone with Doctor Mo

Two hours of Black Republicans. If you can stand it.

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September 03, 2008

The Palin Speech

did he balance the budget. No such luck with these two. With Critters, you focus on what their legislative history is like. Obama has none. Clinton's was all about moderation in Iraq and health care. A known quantity. McCain is practically legendary for resisting strong-arm party line politics. He actually forged bipartisan coalitions and passed significant legislation. He completely resisted earmarks, he killed the Borking practice of filibustering to stall judicial appointments via the Gang of 14, and he changed campaign finance law. This is a man who knows how to get things done in Congress, and he has said that he wants 'question time' following the British model in which the President answers hardball questions from Congress publicly broadcast. What's not to love? The choice for me is obvious.

Additionally, with regard to black political empowerment, McCain is old school, not evangelical Christian Right. This is the kind of candidate that would support men like Jack Kemp. All Cobb readers should know that's my kind of Republican.

I made the point, which I think we should all keep in mind, that the Republicans are not going to magically find some voodoo to appeal to black voters. When it comes to the ethnic vote, it is what it is, and policy be damned. The only way to get the ethnic black vote is to run ethnic black candidates. Call it the role-model vote, call it whatever. That's our job as black Republicans to energize that black base, and all it takes is the single right candidate. I think Michael Steele still has that capacity, but for me personally - well I don't vote for personalities. So I'm in an odd position of second guessing the black ethnic vote - I'm not part of it. But as soon as that hump is gotten over, it becomes no big deal and people will realize that the Southern Strategy will be as rhetorically dead as it is dead as policy. In other words, black voters need a black voice to say 'it's cool'.

Ross sees in Obama a stepping stone up which happens to have a left foot on it. Existentially, I think that is a big nothing, but again it is because I wouldn't pander to an ethnic vote. Still, Ross is probably right to triangulate Obama into the house that Powell built. Word is that Powell will support Obama, but I've lately had issues with old Colin. Quite frankly, I would have rather that it be Harold Ford, if I had my druthers, and I think that if Ford were in Obama's place that would be more of my nightmare come true. But knowing what Obama is, and has been makes me a great deal more comfortable voting for McCain who is stand-out in his own right. Obama could have been a blue dog, but instead has been flirting with Weather Underground types. No freaking way.

Anyway, the hookup with Ross could be profitable for The Raven Group.

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June 17, 2008

Allegory



This is a great video that presents an excellent argument against nuclear proliferation. If you have the patience and something of a strong stomach, it is worth watching all the way through.

The way I see things, technology is enabling, and idiot-proof technology empowers idiots. This video game, World of Warcraft is just that sort of technology. It is democratized, like many technologies become, and it leverages a class of individuals who are incapable of building the game, but quite capable of mastering the game. But it is not the question of whether people are smart or not, rather it is whether or not they have character which is based on the defense of democratic principles. Here you have Athene, who is rather obviously powerful in the virtual world of Warcraft who makes a very competitive living by keeping people alive that he doesn't respect. He is in a position of power and games the system by appearing to be generous, but he is clearly ruthless and megalomaniacal.

I expect that the experience of seeing the man behind the curtain, as it were, in all sorts of global pursuits will swing the pendulum back towards nationalism. Unless and until there are classic liberal values behind powerful government regimes, this kind of shock is inevitable. I say that with the assumption, of course, that my audience shares the values and ethics which find the person of Athene thoroughly disagreeable.

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May 16, 2008

The Baxter Dissent

I predict that California will have a a constitutional amendment in defense of marriage, and that activists for the cause of gay marriage have made a fatal error. California has insured every right except the express permission to redefine marriage, and now the State Supreme Court has overstepped its bounds in defiance of the will of the people. It's going to get loud and ugly and it is now most definitely a constitutional crisis.

I concur with the thrust of Baxter's dissent:

The question presented by this case is simple and stark. It comes down to this: Even though California's progressive laws, recently adopted through the democratic process, have pioneered the rights of same-sex partners to enter legal unions with all the substantive benefits of opposite-sex legal unions, do those laws nonetheless violate the California Constitution because at present, in deference to long and universal tradition, by a convincing popular vote, and in accord with express national policy they reserve the label "marriage" for opposite-sex legal unions? I must conclude that the answer is no.

The People, directly or through their elected representatives, have every right to adopt laws abrogating the historic understanding that civil marriage is between a man and a woman. The rapid growth in California of statutory protections for the rights of gays and lesbians, as individuals, as parents, and as committed partners, suggests a quickening evolution of community attitudes on these issues. Recent years have seen the development of an intense debate about same-sex marriage. Advocates of this cause have had real success in the marketplace of ideas, gaining attention and considerable public support. Left to its own devices, the ordinary democratic process might well produce, ere long, a consensus among most Californians that the term "marriage" should, in civil parlance, include the legal unions of same-sex partners.

But a bare majority of this court, not satisfied with the pace of democratic change, now abruptly forestalls that process and substitutes, by judicial fiat, its own social policy views for those expressed by the People themselves. Undeterred by the strong weight of state and federal law and authority, the majority invents a new constitutional right, immune from the ordinary process of legislative consideration. The majority finds that our Constitution suddenly demands no less than a permanent redefinition of marriage, regardless of the popular will.

In doing so, the majority holds, in effect, that the Legislature has done indirectly what the Constitution prohibits it from doing directly. Under article II, section 10, subdivision (c), that body cannot unilaterally repeal an initiative statute, such as Family Code section 308.5, unless the initiative measure itself so provides. Section 308.5 contains no such provision. Yet the majority suggests that, by enacting other statutes which do provide substantial rights to gays and lesbians — including domestic partnership rights which, under section 308.5, the Legislature could not call "marriage" — the Legislature has given "explicit official recognition" (maj. opn., ante, at pp. 68, 69) to a California right of equal treatment which, because it includes the right to marry, thereby invalidates section 308.5.5

I cannot join this exercise in legal jujitsu, by which the Legislature's own weight is used against it to create a constitutional right from whole cloth, defeat the People's will, and invalidate a statute otherwise immune from legislative interference. Though the majority insists otherwise, its pronouncement seriously oversteps the judicial power. The majority purports to apply certain fundamental provisions of the state Constitution, but it runs afoul of another just as fundamental — article III, section 3, the separation of powers clause. This clause declares that “[t]he powers of state government are legislative, executive, and judicial,” and that “[p]ersons charged with the exercise of one power may not exercise either of the others” except as the Constitution itself specifically provides.

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February 25, 2008

Jonah Goldberg's Signature Moment

I have just had the good fortune to have run across the set of ideas that are going to help me in properly contextualizing that thing which Nulan has accused GWBush of, which is 'war socialism'. It comes from Jonah Goldberg of the LA Times and National Review. His new book, **Liberal Fascism**, contains the thread of context. I think that it is likely to be the third and last intellectual history I read.

The first was Paul Johnson's Intellectuals which didn't help me a whole lot other than heat up my interest on the subject and set me up for the second which was Cornel West's American Evasion of Philosophy. Since then, and without any assistance from much more than at long last disgust with the kind of bohemian The Nation was turning me into and a realization that I had babies to feed, I have saved myself from Leftist foolishness. And with the small regret that I have yet to get any decent material into me on the philosopher with hiking boots,

What I believe that I will find in parsing Goldberg's history is some clue as why black nationalists have largely turned progressive and embraced identity politics instead of embracing patriotism and embraced the conservative idea of the republic and the mainstream. That is because of affiliations between their intellectual heroes, duBois in particular and his affinity for William James who is back through Rousseau one of those who believes that we can do what we want to. Of course I'm not stating this properly - I have yet to read the book and [Hewitt's interview with Goldberg](#) is flooding me with associations.

American liberalism is a totalitarian, political religion, but not necessarily an Orwellian one. It is nice, not brutal. Nannying, not bullying, but it is definitely totalitarian, or holistic, if you prefer, and that liberalism today sees no realm of human life that is beyond political significance, from what you eat to what you smoke to what you say. Sex is political. Food is political. Sports, entertainment, your inner motives and your outer appearances all have political salience for liberal fascists.

Yes, yes, yes.

What I've always been talking about is **liberal overproduction**, but when it becomes clear of the ambit of power of the will to power of the Left, it puts everything in clear perspective. I heard it in Michelle Obama's UCLA speech, I heard it in the arguments of activists for the cause of Gay Marriage, I hear it in the ambitions of the Greens for planetary planning and I hear it in identity politics. It is the urge towards a holism, it is **the totalitarian temptation**, it is the attempt to soaking politics through and through with 'solutions' for every aspect of life. 



Who is the war socialist? That's easy. The socialist at war, and that was FDR who wisely moderated his ambition, but Walter Lippman wanted him to go further, and his descendants and a number of others desire highly to create a new statist religion which makes the citizen a new man in a new well-wrapped universe. Goldberg shows the ways in which FDR was like Hitler as well as the way GWBush's passionate conservatism was.

If there is a discussion to be kicked off here which is of particular interest to me among the many things that will flow from this is the extent to which my neoconservative bent towards nation-building following in the tradition of Wilson, apparently a liberal fascist of the first order, should

find its theoretical limits. This will force me to reconsider the differences between neoconservatism and paleoconservatism in foreign policy and upon which principles I should guide intervention yet stay away from protectionism and isolationism.

Goldberg's Liberal Fascism also will get us closer to a workable definition of American Fascism that we really never resolved in this old debate. But it is a sterling warning against what Americans buy into for the sake of unity, and few topics can be as contemporarily pressing as that.

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