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## Conservatism

February 20, 2008

### Marry or Die

A. Charles is a thoughtful, diligent and provocative new commenter at Cobb who has done a great deal to help illustrate the difference between perceptions and principles of the American Left and Right. As part of his vision for the aim and role of government, which he now sees as going in the wrong direction, he quotes from Lyndon Baines Johnson in 1965. There is one very salient point I would like to highlight as I do below.

But freedom is not enough. You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: Now you are free to go where you want, and do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please. You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "you are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair. Thus it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates. This is the next and the more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity. We seek not just legal equity but human ability, not just equality as a right and a theory but equality as a fact and equality as a result. For the task is to give 20 million Negroes the same chance as every other American to learn and grow, to work and share in society, to develop their abilities--physical, mental and spiritual, and to pursue their individual happiness. To this end equal opportunity is essential, but not enough, not enough. ***So, unless we work to strengthen the family, to create conditions under which most parents will stay together--all the rest: schools, and playgrounds, and public assistance, and private concern, will never be enough to cut completely the circle of despair and deprivation.***

There is no single easy answer to all of these problems. Jobs are part of the answer. They bring the income which permits a man to provide for his family. Decent homes in decent surroundings and a chance to learn--an equal chance to learn--are part of the answer. Welfare and social programs better designed to hold families together are part of the answer. Care for the sick is part of the answer. An understanding heart by all Americans is another big part of the answer. And to all of these fronts--and a dozen more--I will dedicate the expanding efforts of the Johnson administration.

Johnson made this speech in the same year that the Moynihan Report was published. I cannot imagine that he was unaware of Moynihan's position as a fellow Democrat. Moynihan was right and Johnson was right about the health of the family being key to success in America. Today, only the Right is right in the same way.

Who made black people stop getting married? Countercultural hippy liberals, gays and feminists. Who wants to make black people get married? Conservatives. Johnson said a government revolution was necessary to keep black families together. Conservatives say a social revolution is necessary to keep black families together.

So here's my crazy idea that I know conservatives would vote for in a heartbeat, a big tax break for marriage, as a matter of fact a big regressive tax break. Starting in 2010, you get a \$500 tax break for every year you stay married. Liberals would hit the ceiling. It would be hugely and disproportionately beneficial for blacks, the group that has the most to gain from getting married because we are, I think, the most unmarried group next to homosexuals. But for the sake of gays, I think liberals would trash the idea.

All that aside, it's important to bring [Hymowitz](#) into the discussion, because the status of the black family is indeed a huge debate in which the Left and Right differ greatly.

Given the legacy of slavery that made marriage impossible for blacks and Jim Crow laws that emasculated men, the unmarriage revolution was bound to hit blacks especially hard. When Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote his controversial report "The Negro Family", he was warning the country about a 25% illegitimacy rate among blacks. In one chapter of

my book, I tell the story of how black leaders and black and white academics accused Moynihan of every sin in the p.c. book. He was a racist who could not possibly understand "the strengths of the black family." He was a sexist who failed to appreciate the "strong black woman" and her "extended kinship networks." It became impossible to have an honest conversation about what was happening in the black community for the next twenty years even as black welfare rolls, crime rates, and teen births were soaring.

Well, now the rupture between marriage and black childbearing is just about complete. Seventy percent of black births are to single mothers. Seventy percent. This has had a disastrous effect on men, who have lost their major social roles as provider and father. It is also a tragedy for the country because it makes the goal of full black equality unachievable. Growing up in single parent homes, black kids are destined to stay behind.

As a black conservative I ask the profound question why should blacks petition the government for programs to assist us in keeping black families together when we could do it for ourselves?

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February 18, 2008

## Stuff White People Like

So I'm trying to work out how to communicate this interesting conundrum. I'm using that word a lot, not because I like ambiguity and puzzles, but that's just kind of a theme this weekend. The paradox is that people believe that black conservatives are trying to be white and that the core principle of Republicanism is deny government stuff to blacks, and I can't think of a logical way to disprove them. I mean it would be logical to tell them to go soak their heads, but I am trying to be informative too. I realize I'm being baited, but I'm sure there are people out there who are genuinely confused.

So I went and made a silly video. So silly that I'm not linking to it. You see the problem is that part of my writing thing is self-referential. So I need to involve myself in the answer to make it all personable. Then I'm also dealing with other interesting questions about black culture. So I decided to talk about things that I think that they think are white and black people don't do, but I'm black and I do. The problem is that I don't think of them as 'white' things. So I try class things, upper middle class, and then I come across like a floss rapper.

I cannot guess those things that black people don't do because they think they are too white, but I do. And at this point it's all so confusing that I don't know what any of it means or proves. Lucky for me I read white blogs. And one of those white blogs pointed me to another white blog about stuff white people like.

[Here it is.](#)

Now here's the semi-serious question. Do black people who worry about white people actually believe that white people have things that black people ought to have? Do they think that white people use racism to keep black people away from those things they like? If so, then the list of things white people like ought perhaps to be on that list of holes in the level playing field. Thus if black people could get those things that white people like, we'd know we are making progress.

On the other hand, white people might just like things that black people find irritating, offensive or just plain stupid and therefore not worth liking. Well it seems to me that there's only one way to find out, which is to ask some black people if they like the things that this white person says white people like. And then inevitably, there would have to be a blog about things black people like.

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February 17, 2008

## Obama: Disabilities

The Old School position is that crippled people find ways to make themselves useful, we should help them out. There is more than enough white collar work in this nation to get some kind of productive employment to the physically disabled. I'd onshore a bunch of call centers and take my points from that.

From Obama's site:

First, provide Americans with disabilities with the ***educational opportunities they need to succeed.***

Second, ***end discrimination and promote equal opportunity.***

Third, ***increase the employment rate*** of workers with disabilities.

And fourth, ***support independent, community-based living*** for Americans with disabilities.

All noble sentiments. No noble sentiment should get any more than COLA at the Federal spending level. Maintain what's there.

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## Obama: Civil Rights

My Old School position is that African Americans need to focus their forward thinking on the politics of social power. Implicit in this is that civil rights guarantees for all Americans are pretty much in tact and that there is only marginal maintenance to be done. The idea of expanding civil rights is an overproduction which cheapens and demeans the entire practice and specifically that there is no 'Latina' Rosa Parks and that what illegal immigrants demand is not civil rights because civil rights should only be granted to citizens. Furthermore that the economic and political problems of African Americans today are not largely due to any denial of civil rights.

From Obama's site:

Strengthen Civil Rights Enforcement

Obama will reverse the politicization that has occurred in the Bush Administration's Department of Justice. He will put an end to the ideological litmus tests used to fill positions within the Civil Rights Division.

If indeed Obama ends ideological litmus tests to fill those positions, he will be left with a conundrum of sorts. One hopes that he will. But the conundrum is that in fact, the applicant pool at the CRD has been largely white and the big stink generated last year was that there wasn't proportional racial representation. IE not enough blacks and assertions of a 'hostile workforce'. Some stifling of that BS would be a welcome change. But you have to remember that people who want to work in the CRD are already self-selected ideologically. Changing some questions on a form doesn't mean a whole lot.

Combat Employment Discrimination

Obama will work to overturn the Supreme Court's recent ruling that curtails racial minorities' and women's ability to challenge pay discrimination. Obama will also pass the Fair Pay Act to ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work.

If I recall correctly, there was a basic statute of limitations placed upon lawsuits for discrimination that was set to about two or three years after the fact. It was reduced to about a year. I could be wrong and am too lazy to double check. I think the effect would be negligible and that the Supreme Court was making common sense. If you're being discriminated against at work, it doesn't take a year to figure it out.

The Fair Pay Act sounds reasonable, but it could be anything. I think it opens up a can of worms. Specifically the worm discussed in one Cobb thread that got no comments. Basically, an American employer cannot ask a woman if she plans to become pregnant. Women who have no plans to get pregnant are better employees as compared to those who do plan to get pregnant. It is entirely reasonable to reward those women who will be more reliable and productive on the job than those who will take time off for other purposes. Why can that not be considered? It is only logical to treat women like women, to pretend that pregnancy has no effect on productivity is disingenuous.

Expand Hate Crimes Statutes

Obama will strengthen federal hate crimes legislation and reinvigorate enforcement at the Department of Justice's Criminal Section.

Strengthening is not necessary. He should focus on standardization as a Democrat. As a Republican, I would leave it to the states, each of which, like Georgia, has its own set of criteria for 'bias crime' or 'hate crime'. He can raise the profile if he likes

but this is not really a civil rights issue. It's a marginal subset of crime anyway. If he were to attempt to strengthen sentencing guidelines, mandatory minimums or in any way force judges' hands, I'd oppose it. Again, this looks just like standard talking points. Nevertheless, it sounds like an expensive way to make a Federal Case out of the kinds of crimes that aren't even capital crimes. Nobody is going to get death for a hate crime under Obama, so what's the point? It just expands the prison-industrial complex. (heh) BTW, would a jihadist at GTMO be considered perpetrators of hate crimes?

#### End Deceptive Voting Practices

Obama will sign into law his legislation that establishes harsh penalties for those who have engaged in voter fraud and provides voters who have been misinformed with accurate and full information so they can vote.

Who could be against that? Is it really a problem?

#### End Racial Profiling

Obama will ban racial profiling by federal law enforcement agencies and provide federal incentives to state and local police departments to prohibit the practice.

Double edged sword. Ward Connorly would be the strange bedfellow if Obama was serious about this. You can't "end racial profiling" without generating more racial paperwork. I know exactly how the Feds have gone about this before. They force officers to fill out a new race form at the bottom of all of their citations and traffic stops. Then they analyze the results in spreadsheets. They are forcing a greater racial consciousness into the daily work of officers and generating a bureaucracy to monitor it. LA has been the great experiment and the results have been mixed. I say simplify.

#### Reduce Crime Recidivism by Providing Ex-Offender Support

Obama will provide job training, substance abuse and mental health counseling to ex-offenders, so that they are successfully re-integrated into society. Obama will also create a prison-to-work incentive program to improve ex-offender employment and job retention rates.

Bullshit waste of money. Provide that to non-criminals who are already integrated into society, you twerp.

#### Eliminate Sentencing Disparities

Obama believes the disparity between sentencing crack and powder-based cocaine is wrong and should be completely eliminated.

It has already been done. Obama needs to update his website. Or is he going to take credit for a decision made during the Bush Administration?

#### Expand Use of Drug Courts

Obama will give first-time, non-violent offenders a chance to serve their sentence, where appropriate, in the type of drug rehabilitation programs that have proven to work better than a prison term in changing bad behavior.

Somewhat reasonable for a kinder, gentler America. However the devil is in the details. I think you should call losers losers. I don't see how he puts this under the rubric of civil rights. It should be under crime and punishment or health care.

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February 13, 2008

## Cheney Surprises

Now that I've gotten into the 9/11 and post sections of Hayes' Cheney biography there are a number of rocking surprises,

### Wolfowitz' Reticence

Paul Wolfowitz, in discussing military options for Iraq was a bit ahead of the game after 9/11 and Cheney told him to keep his shirt on. But Wolfowitz' most ambitious plan was to essentially put US in the role that the UK ultimately filled, which was to take control of southern Iraq and stay out of the capitol. The would have the effect of cutting Hussein off from his ports and changing the nature of the sanctions to those we could monitor as being effective on the regime and not hurting the people. It could still be said that this was interventionist and pre-emptive, but it was on a much smaller scale and may have been an adequate compromise.

## Andrew Lundquist's ETF

The flack raised over the substance of Cheney's energy policy was entirely political demagoguery. David Addington, the head of Cheney's staff and chief counsel warned Cheney early on that he should pay attention to the guidelines of FACA. This was the rule that applied to disclosure of task force work in the executive branch. The warning was that FACA was the rule that tripped up Hillary Clinton's health care task force during their time in the White House. Essentially, if you have any non-governmental members of the task force, they are subject to disclosure. There are two important points. One, Cheney didn't run the task force, and two the task force did not run afoul of the FACA ordinance.

Cheney was already aware of the Halliburton jokes and so decided to hire on Andrew Lundquist to be the executive director of the task force. Lundquist took some time to decide but finally left the private sector and signed on. Cheney was in a bit of a pinch to get started because he needed someone already in the energy business to explain exactly the kind of thing that prompted the need for the task force - the energy crisis in California which involved the foolishness of some deregulation and California having to buy electricity on the spot market. (a bit about that)

Folks in the power business understand that electricity demand is generally something we are able to plan for years in advance, and it hasn't generally been a problem handling that. (I built some systems for 3 different energy companies over the years. I know they do commodities hedging up to 20 years in advance). What's difficult is managing freaky weather and peak demand. When this happens, utilities bring small plants, called 'peakers' online. The trick is timing. All power generation plants have to go down for periodic maintenance. What you don't want is to get stuck with peak demand when your peakers are down. When that happens you have to buy power from out of state or out of the region. Hopefully you've had an agreement that allows you to do so, but if you don't and have to buy energy on the spot market, then you lose a huge amount of money - because electricity prices are regulated. You can't sell peak power at too much of a premium over regular power. This gap is essentially what broke PG&E and Edison seven years ago in California.

Several utilities in California had no contracts in place to reserve energy at a low price from outside providers. The DWP in Los Angeles did, and they got through that period with no changes in rates or interruptions in service. Cheney wanted somebody besides himself to do that explaining and run the task force. Lundquist was the man.

The energy policy task force was a 'checkbox' committee. Which is to say, the Bush Administration had already formulated their energy policy and already had their priorities in hand - nothing particularly surprising at all, your standard "expand energy resources, reduce dependence on foreign oil, energy independence stuff". The job of the committee was to run all of that by various interest groups and have them essentially rubber stamp or modify slightly what the Administration had already decided, which was another reason Cheney punted to Lundquist. Naturally, the renewables people were disappointed at their marginal standing and began pitching their bitch. At some point the noise overcame the signal and various individuals ratcheted up the controversy. Specifically, the NRDC sued.

Cheney was simply stubborn and had Addington make the point, and fight on that point, that the energy task force was compliant with the FACA rule on disclosure and there was no legal right nor precedent for full disclosure. Lundquist himself didn't care one way or another, he'd just as soon turn over the papers. Cheney had nothing to hide, but he also had something to prove which is that you simply can't boss the executive around when they are already in compliance.

In the end, the decision to force Cheney to turn over all their papers was vacated.

The current candidate positions are here.

## Clinton's Law

Bill Clinton signed into law a little-remarked upon bill which oriented his administration towards regime change. It was known as the Iraq Liberation Act. For a long time in the lead up to the war and justification for it, I was unaware of the existence of this law and its policy implications, which are specifically for regime change.

Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 - Declares that it should be the policy of the United States to seek to remove the Saddam Hussein regime from power in Iraq and to replace it with a democratic government.

It doesn't get any clearer than that. All the time I wasted talking about No Fly Zones, I could have gone directly here. Wow. Furthermore, it was revealed in the book, and this is something I pay some attention to a little bit better, that the CIA was a shy party to an attempted coup. Some Iraqi whose name I cannot recall, basically told the US that he was, in light of our stance, going to try to take Saddam out himself. It was a disaster and he lost his life. So how exactly did people expect regime

change to take place? My point is that regime change was not a strictly PNACian idea. The more I repeat the phrase, the more I recall Colin Powell saying it, but in fact it was American foreign policy three years before 9/11.

### **Nigerian Uranium**

Yes Iraq was trying to get uranium from Niger. So the whole thing about the 16 words, in the end, were justified. I still haven't been able to wrap my head around everything relating to Wilson & Plame and I'm not through that section of the book yet, but the bottom line was the Bush didn't deserve getting bashed on that point.

### **Powell's UN Presentation**

The biggest surprise of all is that the decision to make WMD the focus of the presentation to the UN was Colin Powell's. Cheney and Wolfowitz' idea was to have two whole days of testimony which included the more substantial documentation on how Saddam was supporting terrorism. Their take as that the best case for war against Iraq was the full case, which would take a substantial amount of time to present. Their tack would be to make it clear that even despite some possibly dodgy intelligence on Iraq, the full context of Saddam's threat to the world had not really been made to the UN Security Council, and they needed to be fully embarrassed into action considering their relative passivity in the past. So they made three six inch binders of the full briefing which included extensive documentation of the role of AQ in Iraq, and the extent to which Saddam was funding suicide bombers in Palestine, using WMD on his own people, and selling technology and arms to AQ and other Saudi terrorist groups. Powell took one look at that pile and threw it out.

Of course the great irony in all this was that the anti-war crowd and the containment crowd would have had their most oft-used rationale more satisfied had Powell not gone for the quick slam dunk. Surely those determined opponents of the Bush Administration would have come up with something else, but I think those who were most pressing for continued sanctions would have had a much more difficult go had the long form prevailed.

So. We have been adjusted.

February 13, 2008 in [Conservatism](#), [Domestic Affairs](#), [Geopolitics](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(11\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: addington, cheney, colin powell, faca, hayes, iraq, iraq liberation act, yellowcake

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February 09, 2008

### **Viguerie's Numbers**

CPAC folks were asked what they would do if McCain wins the nomination:

299	29.9%	“strongly support McCain”
279	27.9%	“I will vote for McCain, but do not expect to work or contribute”
35	3.5%	“I will vote for the Democratic nominee”
90	9.0%	“I will vote for a conservative third party candidate if one is on the ballot in my state”
40	4.0%	“I will not vote”
257	25.7%	“I am undecided at this time—I need to see if Senator McCain reaches out to conservatives in a serious and meaningful way”

“From these results, it is clear that Senator McCain has a challenge in gaining the conservative support he needs in order to win the general election,” says David Franke of ConservativeHQ.com. “Only 3 in 10 conservative activists strongly support him. Even if you add in the people who will limit their activity to voting for him, and *all* of the undecided conservatives (not likely), he will have only 83.5% of the conservative vote. Historically, the Republican presidential candidate needs more than 80% of the conservative vote in order to win. The poll results show he can possibly reach that level of conservative support, but it will be dauntingly hard.”

So he's got better than half the CPAC vote, but perhaps not their money, nor their spirit. Will 50% be enough? I think so and I'm happy for the clarity in difference. I am pleased that McCain is not sucking up but clarifying his positions in order for

respectful disagreement. Again I note that McCain-Kennedy was subjected to the will of the people through Congress and that is the thing that made McCain change his tune - not the love-hate relationship with think tanks and activist groups.

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February 07, 2008

## Mac's Majority

I tried to get on the Hugh Hewitt show this afternoon in the first hour but that was dedicated to callers who were originally Romney supporters, I guess. So I got screened. The point I wanted to make was simple and I think it should be obvious, and that is that the people have spoken and they ought to get some props for that. What people? That's exactly the question nobody seems to want to talk about - instead we get all this belated hagiography of what a great concession speech Romney made.

Hugh was being gracious to the front-runner and it didn't seem much of a stretch for him to do it, but he reduced McCain's viability down to precisely the single point that Romney conceded to him, the War. I know it's difficult for pundits to back off and give the benefit of the doubt to the herrenvolk, but in this case I think the rank and file Republicans were dead right to give Super Tuesday to McCain.

In many ways, this kind of snubbing is parallel to the kind of Christians that get all of the props by the Conservative Movement are those evangelicals who flock to Dobson and Pat Robertson. I can remember a couple weeks ago when a Right Radio caller asked their conservative host precisely what 'evangelical' meant, as if she thought Born Again Christians were the only kind and that label was a secular pejorative. It took the host several guesses to get around to Catholics were examples of Christians who were not evangelical. At times it seems that conservative activists believe that to be the case and that the temperament of evangelicals is the only temperament suitable for Republican politics. Similarly they don't seem to recognize those Americans to whom conservative ideas appeal, but who are not driven to zealotry. It doesn't take much zeal to cast a thoughtful vote and Super Tuesday should stand as a reminder that a majority of Republicans have not found the 'true' conservative candidate to their liking. Instead the Republican who doesn't spend his days evangelizing for the conservative movement has Republican America's confidence. This is Mac's Majority.

It is fundamentally impossible to express conservative principles in lockstep, that is because one of the principles is liberty. We cannot be constrained in our passions, and they will find their way out in a million ways - as of Monday, in three major ways. Now it's down to two. Those who fight truly for the principles will recognize what's best is McCain's victory - the majority of Republicans already have, which is why we are where we are today.

Forging together the new face and expression of Mac's Majority is the task at hand. Romney supporters will be here next week. What they will say is that they're holding their nose. When you hold your nose, you cannot be swayed by flavor. The flavor of contenders no longer counts, but rather the nutritious substance of the front-runner and eventual party nominee.

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February 06, 2008

## Arch-Conservative Reality Check

The past few weeks, certain conservatives, whom I will refer to as arch-conservatives, have been pounding a large and loud drum, which is that McCain is bad for the party. What they really mean to say is that they hate the idea of man who serves the needs of the nation over their narrow interests. Well, as a moderate conservative, I can say tonight that there is nothing quite as satisfying as winning, and now all of the depression I felt after the Super Bowl is over. Let us be clear about it. McCain is the man. On this Super Tuesday, John McCain has won more delegates than Romney and Huckabee combined. It's not even close.

McCain: 525

Romney: 223

Huckabee: 145

Now we will witness the sputtering of arch-conservatives and a realization that they do not control the tent poles of the GOP. Some of them can't stand it, but they're all going to have to live with it. The electorate has spoken, and there's not much else to say.

The other day I was poking around to find the biggest endorser of Romney. I don't know, other than Rush Limbaugh, Coulter, Prager, Dobson, and Hewitt, who are the biggest supporters. But as I mentioned before, Kemp, Giuliani, George P Schulz, Schwarzenegger, Gramm and Tom Ridge are all on McCain's side. I like Right Radio as much as anyone, but they really went off the deep end this time and have just misjudged the heretofore silent majority.

So you can believe that there's going to be a lot of spinning in the wake of the McCain triumph. What is interesting to me is where the RLC is going to stand, and how folks are going to come out, albeit late for McCain. Viguerie has already admitted that the ball is McCain's court and now looks for some kind of way for McCain to make the proper noises in response to the horrible squawks people like Tom DeLay have made, in making the arch-conservatives feel some measure of respectability in the wake of the denial of 'pure' Romney at the polls today. But for DeLay and some others, there's some hell to pay considering how much they have been sounding of late so much like Glenn Close in Fatal Attraction telling us how they will not be ignored.

I wonder if it isn't premature to say that the RINO moment has arrived. And of course moderate conservatives like me will not have to live with that pejorative if we demonstrate our power to make a new majority coalition. What is perfectly clear, and Karl Rove says it himself is that the lessons of the Reagan Era are obvious.

Every presidential election is about change, and no more so than at the end of a two-term president's time in the White House. Parties have to constantly update themselves if they hope to remain relevant. The difficulty for both Republicans and Democrats is that our political system is at a point where more than the normal amount of party growth and development is needed. Both parties are suffering the consequences of seeing substantial parts of their 20th-century agendas adopted; both parties are struggling to fashion new answers to the new challenges of a young century.

But that's not to say that the Reagan legacy is exhausted. Ronald Reagan's legacy was not simply that he was "a campaigner and orator of uncommon skill," as Don Campbell argued last week in USA Today. President Reagan's gifts to the Republican Party were ideas: growing the economy through tax cuts, limiting government's size, forcefully confronting totalitarian threats, making human rights a centerpiece of America's foreign policy, respecting unborn human life, empowering the individual with more freedom. Those ideas endure.

Duh, yeah we get it. We know the value of those ideas, and we also know the marginal value of trying to get absolute lockstep fidelity to the extreme ends and caustic litmus tests for programs associated with those ideas. They are turmoil and resentment and that's what the GOP suffers today, and quite frankly the shiny sheen of newly minted ideologues trying their damndest to jump through those hoops while trying to make it look effortless. Really, did anyone like Viguerie believe this time last year that Romney was their last, best hope? Everybody representing that has lost miserably. Tancredo lost miserably. Hunter got stomped. Thompson was tentative in even entering the race. Why? Because it is now self-evident that the arch-conservative ideological 'base' is not what gets this party started. Alan Keyes is perfect candidate for them and he loses everywhere every time. Nobody is going to draft George Allen nor any other perfect arch-conservative candidate. We have to all grow up and recognize that the Conservative Movement has moved and the arch conservatives are sounding more and more shrill every day. But most importantly, they cannot win alone, and they can't bully the rest of us.

Reality is here, now. Reality is McCain.

February 06, 2008 in [Conservatism](#), [Domestic Affairs](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(10\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: mccain, mccain wins, reagan, viguerie

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February 05, 2008

## Now Viguerie Freaks Out

Richard Viguerie is the next of the ideological purists to have a mental conniption. I got his email this afternoon. He wants to open up the convention and suggests some pure conservatives unsullied by the campaign thus far:



- McCain has Reagan's toughness, is a Vietnam War hero, supports a strong military, and opposes pork-barrel spending, but sides with liberals on immigration, freedom of speech, taxes, environmental extremism, and other important issues.
- Huckabee is a Reagan-style populist and a conservative on social issues, but is sympathetic to Goreism, and he fought conservatives on taxes, spending, immigration, and other issues when he was governor.
- Romney has adopted a mostly-Reaganite platform, but he is suspect because he converted to conservatism only after serving as governor, and, besides, many conservatives see him as a probable loser in November.
- Ron Paul is the real straight-talker in the race, the one who stays truest to the libertarian beliefs that are, as Reagan said, "the heart of conservatism." He is the one candidate who doesn't confuse a strong defense with the failed policy of nation-building. But most conservatives want a powerful U.S. presence in world affairs and will never support Paul's defense and foreign policy. In any event, Paul's chance of getting elected, or even nominated, is infinitesimal.

American Digest sees things clearly as usual.

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January 31, 2008

## Warming To McCain

I've already said it. I trust McCain, and listening to him debate Romney at the Reagan Library, I still like him, despite Hugh Hewitt's shameless commentary. Hugh is still eating the 'conservative base' dog food. What he doesn't seem to recognize is that this is going to be a *general* election. The only candidate who has proven that he can work both sides of the aisle and succeed *despite* the conservative base is John McCain.

But I am listening to McCain have brain farts and it's annoying. I like the way he operates in that he's clearly not one to deal with a lot of hypothetical promises and his rhetoric shows that, whereas Romney gets cheeky when crossed and starts pointing out facts which lie in accord with stereotypical notions which fall onto his side. McCain has a much more reasonable leadership approach, whereas Romney is trying to prove that he's the proper inheritor of the conservative legacy. That makes Romney more brittle because he has to live down his flips. If McCain weren't so impatient, he could break Romney. Instead it's going to be a long slog.

McCain really incensed Hewitt by talking to the Global Warming trope. He emphasized American inventiveness and nuclear energy. Romney suggested that cap & trade will send domestic energy intensive businesses overseas. Huh? What? McCain should have really slammed him on that one. Are you going to let GM move to China? is what he should have said. Anyway, all this global warming crap will blow over, but green marketing is here to stay. McCain is wise not to dismiss the green economy. The real bottom line, it seems to me, is not a domestic cap and trade policy, but a global one. It's not clear to me yet that McCain is taking his regulatory cues from overseas.

Speaking of cues. I tried to find out who has actually endorsed Romney and could find nothing on his site. McCain has got some heavy hitters, including most of the moderate Republicans I've always liked, chief among them, the smartest man in the Reagan Administration, George P. Schultz. You may recall that Schultz ran Bechtel. I find it difficult to imagine that he would fall for any baloney about climate change. Now you should know, in case you don't, that Schultz is buddies with Warren Buffett and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Arnold is scheduled to endorse McCain.

Also, you should know that Jack Kemp and Phil Gramm are both on board with McCain. I don't need to tell anybody that Jack Kemp was one of the first Republicans that I liked, and still do. And he's one of the centrist Republicans that got spit on by cranks like DeLay. Kemp's also on the board of Oracle. I didn't know that. Also Tom Ridge is a major figure on the McCain team. Now the Tom Ridge story, as you know, is very interesting. He was Colin Powell's choice to be SecDef. Then that wanker Gary Bauer spoiled it and we ended up with Rumsfeld. So after 9/11, Ridge got the consolation prize of running Homeland Security when it first started. Now he's in a prime spot.

So it's going to be very clear here that my gang of moderate conservatives is lining up behind McCain and the ideologues who are desperately seeking a reincarnation of Ronald Reagan are going to throw their weight behind Romney. What Huckabee is doing in there, I don't know.

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January 30, 2008

## McCain: The Straightest Moderate

McCain is the candidate I trust the most in the White House, and tonight he just thrashed Mitt Romney. The common wisdom says that Giuliani, who was arrogant enough to suggest that Iowa and New Hampshire don't count, is going to pull out of the race tomorrow and throw his support to back McCain. That makes sense, and I hope it goes that way.

Jay Reding wisely says:

Sen. John McCain is an American hero, a man of great personal integrity and someone who has always stood strongly on the side of his country. He often rubs conservatives the wrong way, and his "maverick" image causes much consternation —however, when it comes right down to it a man who agrees with us 80% of the time is better than a woman who represents the worst of American politics and a man whose great rhetoric is but a cover for a fundamental lack of real-world experience. We may have our issues with John McCain, but when it comes down to the basic principles of the party: fiscal conservatism, a strong national defense and strengthening the family, McCain has his heart in the right place.

I predict that it's what all Republicans are going to be saying in the coming months, as soon as they recognize two out of three things. 1. Perfect is the enemy of good, and 2. Time's up for the standard social conservative hardline. 3. McCain gets serious bills passed in a partisan Congress.

A McCain/Giuliani ticket can only be beaten by a Clinton/Obama ticket. And if Obama sells out to Clinton, well then he'll never get any respect around here any more, and shouldn't get any from any of his devotees to 'change' no matter how misled they already are. It seems to me that Obama only works in Obamavision, but I digress.

A McCain presidency ought to be a single-termer, and I think we'd all be happiest with that. He'll have the good sense to not run again, I think. But the real news here is what a Romney failure means in light of what social conservatives aim to do in the GOP. I think it means that we break from a full press to the right on every issue to a reasonable press on the issues that matter most, National Security and the Economy. If America goes Socialist, a lot of us won't want to have our babies born here. But I kid. The clear message that Florida has sent is that they want McCain, and it really starts to change from here on out, because it wasn't even close.

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January 10, 2008

## Hewitt Freaks Out

Hugh Hewitt has gone from blameless to shameless in 2 years flat. It's hard for me to imagine that I've been listening to him for that long, but that's about right. Hewitt's head is about 180 centimeters up Mitt Romney's anal orifice, and disappearing fast.

I know that I have been terribly unfair to Mitt Romney. There is basically nothing I like about the man, except his rhetoric on policy. But then only when I read it, never when I hear it coming out of his piehole. He hasn't said the thing, he hasn't pounded the fist, he hasn't made the gesture. He's a suit. Not an empty suit, just a suit. I can't figure out a way to like him.

And yet Hewitt is talking about him as if there were no way the Party could survive unless Planet GOP starts revolving around Romney's star. He can't stand McCain, over the bleating protestations of Michael Medved, who makes sterling points about dragging up old stuff that people with more intellectual bandwidth than a squirrel shouldn't nitpick. So today Hewitt drags in Santorum to crap all over McCain on immigration.

Hewitt freaking out is just another symptom of the deeper problem Republicans have, which is the death of the significance of Karl Rove. There is no other political master operative and the GOP is out of ideas with regard to how they can keep all the big tent poles standing. Everyone, it seems, is dumbstruck by the fact that there is no Reagan. There is no 'true' conservative to the rescue. Instead the are lame-duck hacks who led by strongarm, not by inspiration. The fact the Republican Party is suffering from a complete lack of personality is echoed every day by Republicans everywhere who find something admirable to

say about the true charisma of Barack Obama. It's undeniable. None of us Republicans are madly in love with any of our candidates. There are only the Ron Paul obsessives. The rest of us are holding out for a hero who simply doesn't exist.

The Hewitt freak out, and by extension the Republican freak out is going to remain the status quo until one of these guys gets inspirational. It ain't likely, but stranger things have happened. What are the chances that Hillary Clinton will do something to finally appear charming and sympathetic? That's about the same chance as we have of finding another Gipper.

So really the best thing that can happen on the Right is that the gloves come off and Rudy, Fred, John and Mike start cracking on each other and the fur flies. It's something we'll respond to. But better yet, it will give these stiffes some life. It's easy to know we cannot stand Hillary, it's harder to know what we won't allow McCain to stand for. But Romney has to instigate it. He can't be afraid of somebody wagging about 'negative campaigning ads'. That's what politics is all about, bashing your opponent and then bludgeoning him into submission such that the public loses all confidence in him. None of the GOP has really even gone after Ron Paul.

What we have here is a failure to communicate.

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November 26, 2007

## **A Slow Race Car**

I've been told that a 'moderate conservative' is as oxymoronic as a slow race car. Here's what kind of moderate conservative I am. It bears repeating.

The kind of moderate conservative I am would be simply this: I'm a fiscal conservative, believing in small government and generally against the welfare state, but I'm not a social conservative. I don't believe in political activism which values a particular lifestyle or degrades another. My own personal beliefs about lifestyles (for lack of a better term) is indeed conservative, but that's not something I want my Americans to be politicizing.

My think tank is the Manhattan Institute. Of all of them out there, I find most in common with what the guys at Manhattan say, including John McWhorter and [Kay Hymowitz](#).

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October 11, 2007

## **RLC Slate**

Senator John Danforth, Lt. Governor Michael Steele, and Governor Christine Todd Whitman today proudly announced the slate of Republican candidates that the RLC is endorsing in the 2007 elections. You can learn more about the candidates by checking out our brand new website design: [www.republican-leadership.com](http://www.republican-leadership.com).

"We must have strong state and local candidates positioned for the years ahead. Redistricting in 2010 will be a crucial point in the political landscape, and we are determined to ensure that the Democrats do not control that process," said Lt. Gov. Steele. "That's why these candidates and others are so vital to the party's future."

"These candidates and incumbents are the kinds of leaders our nation needs – leaders who will fight for the true Republican values of fiscal restraint and local control," said Senator Danforth.

"We have selected candidates running for local and state offices because we believe in reclaiming the Republican Party from the ground up," noted Governor Whitman. "Returning the Party to its focus on fiscal conservatism and less government interference in people's lives is a crucial goal, and one that these candidates will help us achieve."

[Continue reading "RLC Slate" »](#)

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October 08, 2007

## The Unmarried Black Womb: Ground Zero

Alan Keyes throws a curveball of Middle Passage proportions:

“Did you know that something like thirteen million black babies have been killed since Roe v. Wade, as a result of this holocaust of abortion? Did you know that the black population today is something like twenty-five percent less than it would otherwise be, because of abortion? Did you know that black women are disproportionately likely to have abortions, that more black babies are being aborted today than are being born, and that, as you project these kinds of tendencies into the future, the black population becomes a negligible factor in American politics and other things, over the course of the twenty-first century? I look back on black Americans with a heritage of oppression and slavery that, unfortunately, is involved in this question as well, because seventy-eight percent of the abortion clinics that are provided by the most numerous provider of abortions in America, Planned Parenthood, are located in or near the black community. Blacks are thirteen percent of the population. They account for over a third of the abortions. So I think that, on these important issues, we have to look for the patterns that still target people on the basis of race-and they’re targeting people in the womb.”

Do you hear crickets?

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September 13, 2007

## The Gymnastics of Snubbing Tavis

[Mirror on America writes:](#)

I will give Maryland Senatorial Candidate Michael Steele credit. In an interview this week, Steele said that the GOP should be at Tavis' forum, and that they need to either 'put up or shut up' about being serious about presenting a platform to the Black community.

But, I haven't heard from any more prominent Black Republicans or Conservative Bloggers...**their silence is deafening**. And, until they speak up and out about this, they should just keep quiet about the GOP actually being a 'choice' for Black folk. But, as with so much else with the GOP, Black Republicans will find some sort of mental gymnastics to excuse this away.

My mental gymnastics are simple, and they are simply a reverse of the mental gymnastics that allows people to think Tavis Smiley represents 'the Black community'. The GOP is already a choice for black voters. All we have to do is listen to the candidates when they talk to America. The mental gymnastics that make blackfolks separate and distinct from everyone else are precisely all the trickeration needed. We can all **do** that in our sleep, the hard part is **undoing** that.

Part of the forward flips was the de-blackfication of the Fox News Network. Some politicians decided that Fox Network was not for black people. So when Fox invited black politicians to speak on their network they declined to participate. A lot of people fuss about a level playing field. That act was nothing more or less than a forfeit of the playing field, and suddenly Fox became too white. It wasn't Fox that declared itself white. It was black political partisans that did so.

Republicans shouldn't have to do backflips to undo the racial flips of black political partisans. But that is the standing presumption of those who consider themselves too black for the mainstream to understand. Of course nobody really cares until this multicultural separatism becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy of being 'underserved'. Then having marginalized themselves expertly into minority status, they will come with their special pleas for ways and means for 'outreach' to work. There is no need for outreach. Just turn on the TV.

As for Steele, he's right. The burden should be on Tavis Smiley and everyone else who wants a special audience with the GOP to deliver audience and patronage. We all know that when the NAACP was serious about inviting GWBush, he showed up. That required a change of leadership and attitude. If the NAACP, as weak as it is, knows how to get the President, Tavis Smiley should know how to get candidates. I just happen to believe that Smiley is not backing down from the dismissive and hostile

attitudes his Contract With Black America crew has with the GOP. If it's going to be like that, fine. That's politics. But don't pretend that it's racism, or anything else.

[Continue reading "The Gymnastics of Snubbing Tavis" »](#)

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August 08, 2007

## Local Local Local

*(from the archives, June 2004)*

I have been appointed to startup the new Southwest Los Angeles chapter of the CCR, the California College of Republicans. This chapter's territory is the 47th Assembly district which encompasses, among many other neighborhoods, Ladera Heights, View Park, Baldwin Hills and 'the Dons' which comprise, next to PG County in Maryland, one of the largest upscale African American communities in the nation. It's where I grew up.

The CCR is one of about 7 grass roots statewide Republican feeder organizations. Each has its own charter and character. I have only met a few of the CCR officers, but I do know that the statewide chair is of Arab descent. (The other two CCR folks I have met are black including the president for LA County, and the president of the South Central chapter.)

This Thursday, I will be attending my first meeting, headed by Austin Dragon, the South Central president. Julia McGinty (I believe is her name) will be the featured speaker. She is an officer in the Schwarzenegger camp.

My purpose in Republican activism is to establish an independent grass roots black conservative voice which constitutes a credible and practical threat to the status quo. This should affect Democratic complacency, black political fence-sitting, Republican disrespect and the overall domestic dialog on black progress. My goal was to increase black Republican registration threefold over the next 7 years. My expectation was to move from 5 to 15%, and I expected that the constituency in question would be comprised largely of upscale white collar blacks as well as small businessmen and Independents. However I am finding that there is even a broader spectrum of blacks that the GOP might appeal to.

Along the way I expect to do a lot of mythbusting and basically see for myself what's up with the Republican Party. I am especially concerned at the distance and difference between Ward Connerly and a black constituent base, and my inspection of Thomas Wood, a coauthor of prop 209 (CCRI), demonstrates that there is some real sense of responsibility to anti-discrimination. In otherwords, smart Republicans are calling Ward on his ahistorical shit.

I have been impressed with Republicans in local politics, especially Steve Soberoff, for whom I voted in the last LA mayoral campaign.

Online is crap. And that includes Project 21 which although I don't find suspect in its motives, I find lacking in its sophistication. Still, I think my own prejudices about people needing to come Correct makes me more critical than I need to be. I don't think that the average voter needs a 10 page thesis on why they should vote Republican (or just register Republican), I think they just need a few good reasons. And I find the reasons against such a move to be generally stereotypical ranting.

My focus in Republican politics is local, local, local. While I may be a strategic thinker, I am really interested in patronage. What do I get for delivering votes? Who do I get to know? What plans am I made aware of? This isn't rocket science. Half of the people in government are having conversations that African Americans are not a part of and that has largely been by African American choice. I choose to find out. Nobody's stopping me, and so far I've been encouraged and welcomed.

There is only a limited amount of \*anything\* that's going to get done through politics. And I think that the reason the Sharpton and Jackson et al still get credibility is because blackfolks haven't chosen anyone else. What do we want from politics? What do we want from government? And if the whole universe of black demands are more health care, more civil rights, more decriminalization of drugs, then Sharpton is the answer. If your political agenda comes from the civil rights movement exclusively, then Sharpton has you covered. But if you want something else then you have to turn to somebody else. So part of this is about finding what else is available, because black patronage has been very narrowly defined. That may have been enough for daddy, but it ain't enough for me, and it won't suffice for my children.

The Conservative Brotherhood is working. We may decide to do a group blog but for now, we're all independent voices on the right. And since these are people who already are self-motivated, credible and popular, we don't worry about falling off. I think this is the kind of organization we need to build. Just networking people who, like Cosby, have always been doing the same old thing. It's just a little bit higher profile - because people don't know.

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July 24, 2007

## Against Social Science

I've been waiting patiently to butt into [this conversation](#) as I've caught pieces of it on my PDA from the wilds of New Mexico. Now I am home and can type.

I think firstly, that positive social science cannot game society. That is to say that it is generally understood that social science has imperfect knowledge of society, and I think this is reflected EC, in our mutual difficulty to appropriately categorize the deserving poor vs the undeserving poor several weeks ago. I'm sure I brought up the argument at that time that any hard lines defined by a government program sufficient to alleviate any known problem would itself ossify definitions. In order to gain the benefits people would conform all descriptions of their problems to those of the guidelines. And so I default (am I becoming libertarian?) to those negotiated by people themselves within market contexts. IE Horatio Alger's story becomes a recognized avenue of success and all parties look for such character attributes in those they would call the deserving poor. I happen to believe, however, that such qualities of human measure are constant: they are the virtues, and society itself improves by rewarding virtuous men. This is the fundamental key. But what does social science tell us about the virtue of men? It cares little. It only sees what it measures, and social scientists do not measure virtue.

I think this is something Conservative understand in trying to order a politics around 'values', which it certainly means to be virtuous values. To take any other demographic and select for improvement runs the great risk of stealing from the virtuous and giving to the horde. How can that be intrinsically beneficial? Why indeed should the meek inherit the earth? Of what good is any Leviathan which is indifferent to virtue? Is that actually not the most destructive thing we might create?

The only weakness in this line of thought is the assumption that those who have thus far triumphed have done so virtuously. I would say such guesswork is at least as accurate as any that presumes the status quo is corrupt. Corruption certainly cannot be the simple assertion of inequality. Surely men are unequally virtuous. Why shouldn't they likewise unequally profit? If it stands to reason that the fair man profits best in a fair society, and a dishonest man profits best in a corrupt environment, then I think any honest assessment of the status quo of American society would rightly tell that justice prevails. And so therefore the Conservative is not off the mark in asserting that all experimental forms of wealth redistribution which do not calculate the virtue of the beneficiary are destructive of society. Indeed this is our general view of high taxation.

I think you'll not find many Conservatives who prize law and order who would not have ill gotten gains confiscated or assets seized and resold in the interests of justice. Our constant problem with the Left is that their presumptions against capitalist contracts are that they are immoral from the start.

My greater point is to underscore the fact that any duBoisian project for the lifting of boats of a particular race require the kind of social science which is A) not yet perfected and thus gameable and B) not tied of necessity to virtue.

The consequence of this is that for me, to use the term 'black', there must be some value-bearing basis for this. Of course this was the intent of the Black Power and Black Consciousness movements as I read them. But I think such theories have fallen to simplistic racial denominators and are thus no longer supportable as nobody disciplines the blackness of the common [black] man to theoretical ideals.

It is within this context that Cosby-esque and other 'anti-black' social criticisms are found. It is not that we are insensitive to the fate of the Forty Percent, but we find them undeserving of any program of uplift owing to their direct inversion of social rules. If they will not conform to virtue, why should they be rewarded? Simply because of their economic, moral and spiritual poverty? Simply because of their skin?

I would imagine that there is a Liberal stipend which, in a world of affluence, might be permanently renewed to offset the economic poverty of the ghetto beneficiary. But I think we already know that this stipend has in fact been maintained to such a degree that the very existence of 'ghetto fabulous' culture is practically permanent. It is merely a degenerate middle class - no wonder their franchise is constantly sought.

I would not hope for any sort of social science to be perfected so that there might be some profession of grading the worth and station of mankind. I am satisfied that our own native faculties suffice, and thus I underscore again my belief in Natural Law. Although we all profit from some basic and classic literature on such eternal subjects, I would not prefer to live in a world in which we are constantly subjected to any number of rubrics which measure some 'objective' attributes of our person against which we are ultimately taxed or benefited according to some master scheme of 'equality'. What kind of justice is that? It certainly defies that which any arbitrary group of humans might determine on their own. Moreover, I am not given to trust the administration of any such scheme at the scale appreciable to those who would wish to raise a race or a religious group for that matter. It is the constant failing experiment of liberal democracy, a kind of reverse-eugenics, which must ultimately be suppressed.

I have been of the sort of ethnic chauvinist who would claim that those methods which might have worked for Jews or Italians or Irish here in America are their business. Let the blacks do as they wish in their own best interests and let the chips fall where they may. But I am not so certain that the success of any fraction of any ethnic or religious group is all so different aside from the time frame in which it takes place. But then what else is there? Every man must meet the challenges of his time and it is upon that basis that we should judge him, punish him and reward him.

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June 30, 2007

## Parents vs Seattle

My understanding of the Parents v Seattle decision has marginally increased since yesterday. I've listened to Carol Swain and the head of the NAACP LDF speak out on it on NPR, and I've read a bit more of the actual decision.

Over at [Maxambit](#) we're having a great discussion about race raising vis a vis class criticisms within black America and the extent to which they are valid and useful. My last insight to this, had the Parents decision in mind.

I'm saying that the solutions to black people's problems have already been found, and millions have already implemented them. The future is already here, it's just unevenly distributed.

The question of race raising has to do with the ability to sustain networks of blackfolks who have already handled their business and getting others to follow in similar tracks. So when Cosby says 'GET MARRIED' and other blackfolks don't listen, what are you supposed to do? Say Cosby isn't really black?

The primary difference between liberal and conservative thinking is that liberals prefer that the distribution of black peoples solutions be done through government. Conservatives say the distributions should be done through private enterprise. Malcolm said religion was the proper channel of distribution.

It is that matter of channels of power that are rather crucial to the practicality of the advancement of African American interests. I think one of the primary misunderstandings about the black Conservative agenda is that it proposes no government solutions aside from marginal support for Republican programs like [NCLB](#). The reaction is generally that black Conservatives are disingenuous, but what I think is closer to the truth is that blacks who are conservative, and especially those who are activists, have already overcome the middle class mainstream boundaries that vex so many African Americans. There is a class issue. Our answer is "just go get a job" and we don't realize that we're talking to folks who can't "just go get a job". Our answer is "don't make racial identity your focus" but often we're talking to folks for whom society has no other way, nor they have any other way to distinguish themselves.

If Cobb take a lot of well-deserved flack it's because I'm flip about this in a way that should be familiar to blackfolks. I assert BAP privilege. Which is to say that I've put up with enough jive Negroes in my life not to be especially attached to their plight. I know a nappy headed ho when I see one and I don't give her the time of day. As well, working class brothers know an uppity Negro when they see one and are just as apt to dismiss me. None of this weighs heavily on my mind except when

mischaracterizations are made. I do want to represent my class and political perspectives correctly, and I don't want to do an Imus at anytime. Let me not be misjudging anyone. So I'm especially annoying and fine pointed when it comes to making ambiguity disappear, but I have no problem at all calling them as I see them, and I'm perfecting my vision every day. I've always known that there were going to be harsh class conflicts - I never expected any more than 15% of African America to go Republican by '08.

Be all that as it may

### **Diversity in the breach.**

Are we a diverse nation? I think only a fool would say that we are not. How did we get that way? What do we need to keep it that way. Michel Martin asked this bomb question of her guests and that's when the brother from the NAACP had to pitch out some rhetorical pepper. Unfortunately it was way out of the strike zone.

You really have to tell me what's going on when a school is lacking in diversity. What difference does it make, and what does that have to do with racial segregation? What's not being said here AT ALL is that if all of the plans to integrate were class based, you'd get all of the desired results with one big nasty side effect. You'd have to get all of the inner-city parents to admit that they don't want to live geographically close to the suburban parents. There is no value in 'diversity' which is what I have been saying for years. And if race becomes a tie-breaker, it can become the sole arbiter, there is no way of avoiding it, there are just ways of mitigating it. But if people have already decided that the inconvenience is not worth them moving across town to get out of a bad educational situation for their kids, then they have already decided that they want it to be the deciding factor.

That means as mitigated as race has actually become under the guise of diversity, every inch you take away from it is causing anguish. What people really want is race. There is no getting away from that either. Meaning they want positive racial discrimination in favor of non-whites. This has gradually become, for white parents and people clear-headed to see it for what it is, increasingly intolerable. It may be unfortunate that there are some racists riding in the same bus, but they're not driving and they're not in control. The direction we are heading is proper, which is the direction of disabling racial discrimination period.

For a long time, in fact for most of my political life, I have been an advocate of positive racial discrimination. But I have never been able to reconcile that with my desire to bust up the black monolith, and common sense. There can be no denying that blackfolks aren't all alike, nor do we even experience racism in the same way. So to the extent that I cannot bear to be lumped in a racial box for any reason, given what I know about people within one social category of race actually are, I cannot advocate equally for positive racial discriminations. I know class makes a difference. I know attitude makes a difference. I know geography makes a difference. I know education makes a difference. They must be considered first. I cannot say with any certainty that ought to be law, how the state ought to view race, or what ought to be permissible as a racial distinction for the purposes of positive discrimination. Nor can I say under which conditions racial discriminations are actually zero-sum games. I like to believe they are not, and I like to believe that in the aggregate that white suffering is diffuse enough to absorb the negative impacts of positive discriminations for minorities - but that is all contingent on historical contexts that change.

In short, this game is too slippery to nail down, and it's better left aside.

### **Black Patches, 1966**

I don't want the state telling me how much blackness is enough. Let those who will complain and squirm do so. They will play themselves along with their adversaries. I just don't have enough dog in that fight - not over government resources.

I don't know how many Supreme Court decisions and interpretations it's going to take to satisfy every contingent who are chasing after the perfect balance of 'diversity' in public schools, but I'm losing track of where we are now. Bakke, I understood. Hopwood, I think I understood. Grutter I understood. Loving I understood. Aderand, I didn't really understand. Brown I understood. Why do I have to know all this? Because we're trying to keep track of exactly how much racial privilege should count in America and re-weighting it ever 7 years or so in all aspects of life. Can't we just get off this hamster wheel? I really think we're going nowhere fast.

Somebody said that the law was supposed to be like a jungle. Always permeable by the dogged, always impenetrable by the common man. There is no absolute law but God's laws - the laws of physics, the nature of mankind, the Natural Law. Everything else can be circumvented. At any moment, the validity of the law is determined by the consistency it has with itself and the balance of power it maintains as it is challenged from all sides. But the law is never simple, it is complex for a reason. I am coming to the conclusion that our law on race is becoming like tax law - it gets increasingly byzantine by the decade. The



ultimate question is whether or not the state has any business getting into those weeds in the first place. Certainly the conservative court has applied tougher barriers over time for the state to have any interest in checking up on race. It's very difficult for me to disaggregate the opposition to that coming from professionals who study race and those who stand to gain or lose most from the application of new regimes. Which way is this hustle going anyway?

### **Whose Parents?**

Parents v Seattle. I expect I'll be hearing that it's "White Parents vs Seattle", but only non-whites could call it that. I don't think it's a reason to make new laws. Then again maybe all of those growlers are denizens of Sherwood Forest who can't settle their differences any other way. I think it's really a damned shame considering the quality of public education in the State of Washington, which was, last time I checked, rather abysmal.

The question begged here is that whitefolks should not benefit from the application of civil rights laws, and that's what's just wrong. As long as Americans are going to play games with race, and that's what this is, high existential stakes poker, then we're going to keep suing and keep sending our complaints up the judiciary. I simply don't believe that these decisions are anywhere near as significant as they used to be. After all, this is all about 'tiebreakers' for 'diversity'. I'm trying to see exactly what that is supposed to mean.

### **Next**

I'm keeping my eyes and ears open on this debate.

June 30, 2007 in [Conservatism](#), [Critical Theory](#), [Domestic Affairs](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(1\)](#)

Tags: parents, race, seattle, supreme court

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June 28, 2007

### **Social Welfare vs Honest Work**

Now let me tell you a brief story. A couple weeks ago I went out shopping for myself. I was at a very upscale mall and had my knife sharpened. I also had a package to mail. In fact, it was a video game that I wanted returned to Gamefly. There was no mailbox I could find, so I'm walking around with the game when I'm approached by a dude on a bicycle. He was scruffy and asked me for some spare change so that he could do his laundry.

My brother Doc tells me that there are two kinds of homeless people, those with hope and those with no hope. Those with no hope stop washing their faces. So I knew immediately that this dude had hope. I gave him two bucks and asked him if he might drop off my package if he happens to see a mailbox. I patted him on the back and sent him on his way. No doubt about it two days later I see that Gamefly received the game via email notification.

I cannot be a part-time employer of such scruffy dudes without a whole lot of government regulation. But I gave him honest work. And honest work is what people need, not sociological profiling. Every homeless person that washes their face and doesn't sleep in public areas is a potential part time worker and survivor, but not when we have minimum wage and other government work requirements. We are pushing up the amount of charity establishments and pushing down the number of part-time employers in our system by maintaining minimum wage and such regulatory standards. We are reducing the amount of honest work available.

I don't like the term 'homeless'. I prefer the term 'jobless'. If you give a person a home, they don't necessarily work. But if you give a person a job, they'll make a home.

June 28, 2007 in [Conservatism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: homelessness, joblessness, minimum wage, welfare

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June 20, 2007

### **Juneteenth & Volunteer Slavery**

*"The future is already here, it's just unevenly distributed."*

-- William Gibson

Juneteenth is a reminder that this is the nature of reality. Some groups of people are always dealing with a smaller set of facts, and because of that, they live in a constrained reality.

African Americans are not all fully accustomed to using their freedoms. Though all of us have the right and liberty to pursue nearly infinite options in America, the fact is that most of us don't. We live in the same towns our grandparents live in, we eat the same food, we watch the same TV shows. An example I like to give is this: although all of us have been to McDonald's hundreds of times, how many times have we ordered the vanilla shake?

**Jill Nelson** published a book almost two decades ago called 'Volunteer Slavery'. She describes how for all of her life she was encouraged to break certain barriers and attain certain goals, for her the march up the corporate ladder. When she got there, she found that she was a prisoner of her ambitions, bound by her commitments to fulfill dreams that hadn't changed. She quit and eventually saw herself and life in general in a whole new light. But she had to take that leap of faith, that even though nobody could see what might happen, she had to believe that she could use her freedom and make it work.

How many of us are volunteering ourselves for the same old positions we have always been told are good for us? How many of us are afraid of change? How many of us have become so accustomed to answering the same doorbell that we think that is our purpose? As a black man who is a member of the Republican Party, I know how difficult it is to break old habits. I know how treacherous freedom actually can be. I understand how stepping outside of commitments to old dreams puts one in the crosshairs. I know the feeling of clumsiness when walking on unfamiliar ground. But this is the very challenge of life, to discover, to adapt, to move forward.

Here I am talking about change and yet pontificating about the Old School. How can I reconcile this apparent contradiction? It's actually pretty simple when you think about it. After all, God is older than the Old School. If you believe in some unassailable truths and you seek after them, then you'll find yourself drawn to some permanent facts about the very nature of humanity. One of them is that we were born to be free, and that we have responsibility to that freedom. It must be worked for. Everybody doesn't work at the same pace, that's why freedom and all of God's gifts are unevenly distributed. We all too often fail to acknowledge who we are as creatures of God. We submit to inferior ideas. We hide our lights under a bushel.

Michel Martin asks if we have a shared freedom:

Is Juneteenth something that speaks to *shared* values and experiences? And if we *are* celebrating...what's on the menu?

It seems to me that the answer to that is as easy as asking if you believe that we are endowed by our creator with certain inalienable rights.

June 20, 2007 in [Conservatism](#), [Domestic Affairs](#), [Matters of the Spirit](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: juneteenth, liberty, natural law, william gibson

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May 29, 2007

## The Republican Immigration Holdup

Jonah Goldberg nailed it last week:

2. The chief cause of misunderstanding is the issue of trust. The White House thought that that if they had all sorts of conservative mechanisms in the bill that conservatives would be placated. What they didn't understand is that the anti-"amnesty" wing of the Republican party simply doesn't believe any of these enforcement measures will implemented until they in fact are implemented. "Trust but verify" has simply become "verify." And until there is real enforcement — both in terms of current law and new laws — the base simply doesn't care about any other bells and whistles. "Been there done that" is the de facto official policy of the base when it comes to promises of enforcement, i.e. "No more promises, just enforcement. Then we'll talk" (This basic reality is why I came out in favor of a wall on the border).

If we actually believed that Bush could do what he said he says he wants to do... well that would be quite a world, wouldn't it?

May 29, 2007 in [Conservatism](#), [Immigration](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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May 07, 2007

## Side Notes on Blackified Republicanism

I have a few minutes to digest a few tidbits over at Booker Rising about the soundbites of one Angela McGlowan. She is the latest tip of the black conservative iceberg to show and prove in the mainstream media. McGlowan is now, and if not will soon be the target of some angry bloviation.

In this regard I know that I'm just repeating myself because I've run the gauntlet of black man as conservative. It was a harsh lesson that did not leave me bitter nor crippled, but certainly wiser and a bit less strident than I might have been. You see anyone with the temerity to suggest that black Americans would do themselves a favor by abandoning loyalty to Democrats and applying loyalty to Republicans is in for the political equivalent of a food fight in a junior high cafeteria. Or perhaps a more interesting analogy is to the plot of Danny Kaye's 'The Inspector General'.

An illiterate stooge in a traveling medicine show wanders into a strange town and is picked up on a vagrancy charge. The town's corrupt officials mistake him for the inspector general whom they think is traveling in disguise. Fearing he will discover they've been pocketing tax money, they make several bungled attempts to kill him.

Any illiterate stooge can tell that the Democrats are corrupt when it comes to fulfilling the promises black politics makes for itself and to black people. But the problem is that having discovered such corruption, blacks are targeted for political killing and called illiterate stooges. Or worse. But that's only one third of the problem. Aside from surviving assassination attempts, one has to illustrate the benefits of the alternative loyalty (as opposed to apathy) and one has to get Republicans to pay attention. I have concluded that both tasks are well-nigh impossible in today's political climate. The consolation I get is that of just being right, like a scientist whose theories have been independently verified but not publicly disseminated well.

Just the other day somebody asked why anyone should trust Republicans if it is a scientific proof that steel cannot be melted by jet plane fuel.

It's a political zen koan. It almost makes no sense to answer such questions because it begs questions that are part of conversations conservatives and libertarians and Republicans aren't particularly interested in. I can think of a couple others like:

- Why should anyone listen to John McWhorter if he's married to a white woman?
- Why should anyone trust Republicans when the price of gasoline is \$3.75?

It's not that they're not interesting questions in an of themselves, but that they are gateway questions to taking the Republican alternative to Democrats seriously in the first place. I liken it to a kid from the sticks coming to dinner at Morton's in Beverly Hills. All he wants to do is prove that he's not a hick, so he cuts his eyes at the valet parking guy, he's prepared a retort to the maitre d', he's ready to one up the waiter, and he has a snappy bon mot for the wine steward. You feel sorry for the rube, and you just wish he would shut up and eat the steak, but he's had so many conflicts with the look and feel of the place that he's already to leave in a huff before the appetizers are served. These are the blackfolks we fight when we are diners at the Republican table. Nobody will just shut up and eat the steak.

I understand the class conflict inherent in these ideological skirmishes. That's why I don't really fret about race as an issue per se. You can assert that the majority of blacks are poor and that poor folks have no stake in conservative or Republican policy. I call that using blacks as a human shield. The problem of course is that all blacks are not poor, nor in fact are the majority of blacks poor. And what is to be said about those blacks who are decidedly not poor, and who are decidedly Republican? Well, goes the popular argument, there must be something wrong with them, and who cares about a minority within a minority anyway? This is the source of an interesting dilemma that all of us on the iceberg face. Should we show and prove these critics wrong, or just enjoy our steaks?

I tend to believe that eating the steak and dining with a stake in America from the Right side is quite enough reward in and of itself. That there are already more than enough jacklegs in America trying to prove that their black experience is more universal than somebody else's. But then there is the writer in me who cannot resist yet another attempt at making all of this plain for those who bother to read. Not only can the Zen questions be answered, but they can be dismissed. But there is a limit to the patience anyone can display. I'm past it, but that's where things get ugly.

You see, when it comes to black conservatives who eat steak, you have to deal with a political sticking point. That sticking point is that you're often talking to a mix of people who are vegetarians and those who have never been able to afford steak. So when you tell them about the goodness of the your American viewpoint, some of them challenge the very benefit of what

you're eating. And some will go as far as to make a racial case for it. Black people, they say, should not be capitalists because capital is evil. Black people, they say, should not participate in the American armed forces, because our Army is evil. Black people, they say, should not be a part of the part of America Republicans cherish and defend. Black people, they say, should not stand at attention when the National Anthem is played, should distrust police, should distrust Republicans, should distrust whitefolks, and the list goes on.

When black conservatives and Republicans fight back, it is almost never seen as a war of ideas, but a war on black people.

There is a 'do no harm' omerta of silence in black politics. It has to do with the management of the Black Image. There is no way around it, especially not for whitefolks. The reasons are complex but all you have to do is look at the misinterpretations and petty insults that have gotten various whitefolks the noose in the media. So long as the Black Image is in play, so long as there are those dedicated to the manicuring of that thing (Echoes of Lauren Hill, some guys are only about that thing, that thing, that thing.), then there will always be some criticism the 'black masses' will never be able to deal with in a psychologically honest way. Whether we like it or not, there are certain bones one has to earn in order to have the privilege of dissing black people whether or not such people deserve it. And that privilege has been long maintained and held close by the Talented Tenth of whom I am a previously proud member. You cannot diss the black community or its members unless you have been given explicit permission, and by the way that permission can and will be revoked. Witness Bill Cosby.

I'm thinking today about Shakespeare, Maya Angelou and Nikki Giovanni just to name a few. I cannot recall them having anything to say about current events, and so perhaps by evading commentary, honest commentary, they are keeping their license intact. See I know that somebody like Audre Lorde or bell hooks, has license to talk black men into the dirt. Not that they have or that they might have, but they could. That's because there are legions of black women who are having difficulties with black men who are ready willing and able to take their words seriously. Michelle Wallace who wrote 'Black Macho & the Myth of the Superwoman' messed with my action back in my college days. Just the way the numbers play there will continue to be thousands of black families crossing that boundary into college education for the first time this generation. They'll be listening for black signals signifying in the old argot about what they used to have to put up with, but no more. Those voices of authority have license to criticize black communities. They won't be easily revoked but they could be.

This was the doing of my father's generation. They took the 60s in the streets to the 70s on the campuses. Now black studies, black women's studies, American studies are all institutionalized. The multiculturalisms implied in the 80s when Affirmative Action was still OK, grew wings in the 90s and has now hardened into dogma. My father's generation didn't send any Keynesian economists to the academy in large numbers. You're much more likely to hear black faculty talk about CLR James and Manning Marable in tones of approval. All that complaint (and I mean it in the most non-derogatory way) is institutionalized. You step out of school to eat Republican steak instead of the gruel of Marx. (Stepping out of school is a polite way to say 'leaving the plantation', which is another metaphor we black conservatives are chided about using.) It doesn't stop at English or Economics or Political Science, in just about every academic discipline there are demarcations. Blacks from the 60s and 70s have established the ethos and the rest of us are defectors from it.

It is that context which gives us the sticking points of debate. Thomas Sowell and Walter Williams are not championed as blacks, they are derided and discounted as outsiders. And they are outsiders. Outsiders of the alienated class of black Americans who do not consider themselves politically to be diners at the table of American goods or inheritors of a positive legacy of American political freedom. And this will be my key point. A political majority of black Americans feel that they owe their political freedom to Democrats and indeed a specific subset of 'righteous' Democrats alone, rather than to the American system of government under which the Democrats operate. They therefore mistakenly view antagonism to opposing points of view, Republican points of view, as a necessary condition for black political freedom. They view a Republican majority in Congress as fundamentally and necessarily oppressive of blacks.

The Republican party has no racial agenda. It therefore is not equipped to deal with the load of requirements and expectations that have aggregated over the past two generations of black politics. All of those requirements and expectations can easily be gotten from the legion of black academics and political operatives of the liberal and Democratic Left. The GOP has no interest or need to be part of the infrastructure of maintenance of the Black Image. The Republican Party is breaking its neck to make sure that the supply of steak is healthy. It's not micromanaging the attitudes of the Maitre D'. The whites only sign came off the door a long time ago, but it's still all about the steak.

McGlowan and others like her and I will continue to face this ironic opposition. Yet I still hold out hope, without being particularly blackified about it, that the best ideas will eventually win. Moreover that blacks will come to recognize and

therefore ignore the sometimes juvenile spats between the parties especially as regards who belongs where. That will inevitably involve the subordination of the DuBoisian framework of race raising as a hallmark of political struggle. There is no Black Party. Should there be?

May 07, 2007 in [Conservatism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(18\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: black conservatives, black politics

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April 24, 2007

## Bruce Fleming: Conservatism vs Liberalism

In my elevator pitch about the difference between liberals and conservatives, I know this much. Liberals use the power of the state to defend against the depredations of the family. Conservatives use the power of the family to protect against the depredations of the state.

That's a good start, but Bruce Fleming has written an outstanding analysis of why left and right think so differently. He's a professor at the US Naval Academy and wrote in his essay 'Why I Love Conservatives':

The primary difference at the deep-structural level between liberalism and conservatism is that liberal ethical pronouncements are expressed in terms of *actors*, conservative in terms of *actions*.

This is very significant. He continues:

For conservative thought, the action itself, regardless of the nature of the actors involved in it, is forbidden or allowed. Liberals, by contrast, express ethical dicta in terms of actors. As a result, the particularities of the person's situation are relevant to the liberal, and irrelevant to the conservative. A statement of the form "thou shalt X" or "thou shalt not Y" is an intrinsically conservative dictum. Negatives are better than positives, from the conservative perspective, because they're so much clearer. With positives, we still don't know how we're going to accomplish it. A negative, however, both tells us what we want to do and the fact that we're not going to do it. A negative is a complete little drama, all in itself.

Thou shalt not, for example, steal. Only a liberal, to whom the particularities of the actor's situation are relevant, would ask, Is it alright to steal if you're starving and you're stealing bread from a millionaire who won't miss it? It's not that conservatives always say "no" to such questions. The question itself doesn't process as a legitimate part of the conservative world-view. To conservatives, the individual is a relatively meaningless unit that is constantly wanting with respect to The Action, that great looming thing outside of him. The conservative individual as a result is constantly struggling to achieve what he perceives as something greater than himself, to be able to fulfill a teaching or dictum.

And finally...

Conservative thought doesn't say that everybody has to be alike, because conservative assertions are in terms of actions, not actors.

I want to get all of this into the blog. I will be referring to it often.

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Tags: Bruce Fleming, conservatives, ethics, liberals

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April 12, 2007

## Michael Steele's Africa Campaign

Check this out:

Michael Steele, Maryland's 2006 Republican Senate candidate, announced Wednesday that he is joining LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae LLP.

"The synergies are right," said Steele. "The firm has taken innovative risks in the past with business and law. That is what I have done in the past with my own business and politics."

Steele will be a partner in the New York law firm's Washington office. The former Maryland Lt. Governor expects to help elected officials and corporate executives prepare for congressional investigations under the new majority on Capitol Hill.

"We want to send the word out to these individuals who are subpoenaed that we are there to help and can help network and provide solid counsel," said Steele, who is also looking forward to working with telecom and bioscience companies in Africa.

"My goal is to bring our clients to Africa, and Africa to our clients," said Steele.

A completely different direction. Why be a has been in America when you can be a kingpin in Africa? Maybe I need to look into this kind of stuff.

April 12, 2007 in [Conservatism](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Tags: Michael Steele

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April 09, 2007

## America: Christian Nation?

On several occasions as I visited Ofaris, now two long years ago at least, I can recall one particular gent among the conservatives who would consistently defend America as a Christian nation. I've heard the argument before but never so pointedly and often as from this guy. Everything it seemed depended on our recognition of his assertion. I've always been rather uncomfortable with his emphasis although I could certainly see the merit of his position. I've only more recently figured out how to deal with that class of debates.

Though my frat brother JC Phillips was often at the same functions, and familiar with the same arguments I never was quite sure if he was pressing them until [he wrote the following](#):

God made man free and independent. As free men, we must own our bodies, our ideas, and the fruits produced by same. It is upon this concept that we properly define rights and upon this rock America was founded. Rights are those things to which we claim by virtue of simply being human -- by belonging to God -- and are therefore things that cannot be granted by other men.

In response to that I wrote a bit offhandedly:

What I'm afraid many Christians, and especially fundamentalists don't understand is how the same inviolability of conclusions can be [derived from] secular philosophy.

He followed up for some clarification and so I turned my full attention to the question of whether America, at its founding was or should be considered a Christian nation.

I think that the secular case for our founding is clear - taxation without representation, and I am not particularly convinced that the founding of the US was an act anointed of God. I am not familiar enough with the case of Israel to say, but I believe that in that case and others, they see their nation existing as it does and where it does as fulfillment of a holy covenant. America, by contrast, was never a 'promised land'.

I do believe, however, that the founding principles of the US were a natural consequence of the understanding of the purposes of man. That is to say this country's founding was exceptional in that the Founders did their level best to assess the nature of man and his needs in the world and organized a nation around the defense of those needs. The concepts of the Rights of Man, thus is central. But I am not so sure that the French were any further off from the truth of those definitions as they overthrew their monarchy. I've yet to hear anyone declare Robespierre as a divinely inspired character or that France is similarly a Christian nation.

I believe that a more comprehensive accounting of the Enlightenment values of democracy, citizenship and inalienable rights will find a combination of secular and inspired sources in their proponents. But I do believe that faith in God was totally integrated into the thinking of many Founders. In fact, I have recently come to appreciate that Christianity's strength is found in its consistent practice in reconciliation with reason. This is something I learned only last year thanks to Benedict and Larry Arn. So it makes perfect sense to me that the highest form of rational, moral thinking can indeed be considered Christian and

divinely inspired. God inspires men to think. I do indeed trust in American theodicy, but I don't believe it to be an exclusive parent of our rights. Further I do not believe that patriotism is the full and final expression of our souls.

With regard to our contemporary dilemmas, I think it is facile to suggest that our devotion to the life of Christ is near enough to those so inspired in history (William Wilberforce comes to mind) to argue that our faith will defend such founding principles as rigorously as their faith did. We therefore must depend on the constancy of atheists, heathens and even imbeciles to their unreflective self-interests as well as the thoughtful defenses of our nation that come from non-religious study. Christians may desire America to be a Christian nation but if today's American Christians were the only defenders of our core principles, we would be in poor shape indeed. In this I am constantly reminded of the life and efforts of John Brown who stands above all in my thinking as the model Christian of his time. He clearly saw what his fellow Christians did not, which was the inherent corrosion of a nation with a double standard for inalienable rights, citizenship and democracy. And while I don't now doubt that the Founders recognized the extent to which their vision was compromised by the reality of slavery, none of them stands as tall as a divinely inspired operator as does John Brown, Harriett Tubman or Sojourner Truth. So this is an indictment of the failings of Christians to their earthly duty in understanding and defense of the Rights of Man even as they are divinely inspired. Even as we are called, as I was yesterday, to Worship, Glorify and Praise the Holy Name of Jesus, I am acutely aware of how little patriotic sacrifice is demanded of us from the pulpit. God inspires us to think but do we think hard enough to be considered worthy?

My reading of the accounts of "The God of Nature" is that thoughtful men of the period did indeed grasp the profundity of creation and I believe most felt morally obligated to understand the workings of nature. My details are kind of sketchy on this as my best references are 'Master & Commander' and Stephenson's excellent Baroque Series, both fictional works of verisimilitude. I see the accommodation of Christianity to scientific discovery as a form of revelation. Think of it this way, today when we bless our meals, we know that they contain vitamins and minerals essential to our health, it even gives us more reasons to be thankful. We would be foolish to thank God for Twinkies. (I guess). My point is that I don't see any fundamental conflict between Christian faith and reason. The Church accommodates and grows as it must with the growth of knowledge and still the core of faith remains. We believe that our ethics are constrained, but not our knowledge, and so this is why we conflict with radical Islam, which forces its adherents to be circumscribed and defined as souls in submission to an absolutely arbitrary God, a God who might defy nature, a God who might black out the Sun tomorrow for no humanly comprehensible reason. If we must respond to an arbitrary God who would defy nature and the world, then there are no reasons for good works in the world, all we could do is worship, glorify and praise the name of God, and what do worldly things matter?

So I think I may have shown the parallel between religious fundamentalists who would claim that all man can and should be is a vessel for worship. God could just as easily worship Himself were that all we could be. Why bother with Creation? Why make us apart from dumb animals? God could look in the mirror and give Himself perfect worship and not be bothered with the Universe at all. Instead God created the Universe and set us on a path of discovery, and that righteous path will lead us back to Him, and I think we have galaxies to conquer before that journey is complete, and yet in all our ignorance we can still feel close to God. We can still know, down to the smallest most insignificant act, which direction is towards Good and which is towards Evil. In that we are profoundly blessed. Because no matter how small our life and efforts, we can still know the love of God.

America is different from a nation of worshipers and its greatness as a nation in the affairs of the world does not owe from the piety of its Christians. It is from our freedom to engage the world and our experience of the life of liberty that gives us the knowhow and wherewithal to be an agent for positive change. I think the life of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and her choice to become an American is ample and adequate testimony to that, as are the lives of millions of other immigrants who have had to undergo no religious conversion to recognize and respect what it is great about America.

America needs the devotion of all its citizens engaged morally in issues of liberty and freedom in a tradition not only established by the founders, and not only by Christians. We need to be a nation dedicated to the purposes of a continuing defense of liberty for ourselves and for the world. If Christian charity motivates you towards that end, fine. I expect that conservative Christians engaged in the moral issues of the nation will understand these things implicitly or come to very fine conclusions in their study of Natural Law; I support that tradition and I admire it. I don't think that is the only way to discover the truth about what's great in America and I hope that those who may be put off by a shallow understanding of this tradition get their heads on straight about it. As I tend to say, it's about **do** not about **be**.

April 09, 2007 in [Conservatism](#), [Domestic Affairs](#), [Matters of the Spirit](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

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March 25, 2007

## A Conservative Review of the BL Jackson Letter

At some point I might do the same kind of analysis of such a personal open letter about John Edwards or Rudy Giuliani. I haven't, but then nobody has taken the trouble to mail me such a letter from a black man or woman. They have done so with this, the BL Jackson Letter over the Kwaku Network. The original letter is indented and in italics, my response outdented and straight up. So here we go:

*As I and my husband sat watching The State of Black America 2007, presented by Tavis Smiley, we were awe struck, motivated, inspired, filled with pride and edified by the broad ranging views of the impressive collection of black intelligencia represented on the stage. Following each of the richly-crafted commentary from rapper Chuck D to astronaut and engineer Mae Jemison to Professor Cornel West to poet Sonya Sanchez to one of my innovative classmates Omar Wasow (just to name a few), I oohhed and ahhed out loud as each broke it down, laid it out and spoke truth to power.*

I watched some highlights of the conference as pointed out by P6, and commented here. I've personally met Mae Jemison as well as a large number of the professionals who have been on the black political circuit for many years including Sanchez and West, and so I am familiar with their books and positions for the most part. As part of the junior league of that cadre as a college man, I feel qualified to comment on them.

*But then it happened . . . my enthusiasm came to a screeching halt! Here we go again . . . that same gratuitous question mainstream media outlets across America seem to be commissioning ambitious black folk to answer and justify: Is our brother, Barack Obama, down enough with the cause to deserve our support?*

*I just knew this panel of amazing minds and deep souls would once and for all stop the madness and give a resounding, "we're not falling for another Rove-ian mindtrick to sidetrack us from the substantive issues at hand to debate your historical lies and give credibility to your ignorance." I just knew this conscientious crew would cite to Obama's academic excellence and obvious intelligence, his outstanding achievements, his proven commitment to our community through his life's work, his impressive legislative record, his coalition-building skills and political experience. But instead, Malcolm's proverbial crabs started grabbing, pulling, pinching and reaching for dear brother Barack's neck. I was mortified.*

It is exactly because Obama is not a part of this cadre of 'speakers to power' that his political aims are made suspect by this group. A Marxist like Sonia Sanchez couldn't get elected dogcatcher in any town in America. That is why she has converted her political speechifying to verse. None of the sorts of intelligencia assembled do anything like coalition building or legislation. They are purists of a sort who have nothing to do with the business of governance. Of course they distrust him. He works for the System. He represents the powers that be.

*Seeming to come to his aid, one of my longtime heroes, Professor Olgetree, pointed out that Barack, Michelle Obama and others of his students had not only been impressive students at Harvard, but had dedicated their lives and careers to public service. But, (damn it), he added, he can't take our vote for granted.*

*Then, Brother Cornel (whose audio version of Race Matters I listened to so many times I almost committed chapters to memory) chimed in, not to save Brother Barack, but to highlight his absence from the State of Black America panel to be (how dare he) at some other event to boost his Presidential candidacy when he knew about Tavis' event more than a year ago. While Professor West did mention that his questions about the depths of one's love for the people were relevant for all candidates everywhere, they, unfortunately, were explicitly asked only of Obama.*

*Finally, our fearless leader and host, Tavis, who, by his own admission, knew Barack before he was "Barack Obama" sealed the tomb. He assured the audience that, the night before, he got a call from an apologetic Barack who was unable to attend, but "really wanted to be here." As if completely cued in by the tone in Brother Tavis' statement, the audience gave a loud and unambiguously sarcastic "Aaawwww." Adding salt to the wound, dear friend Tavis responded, "well, that's what he told me" in that familiar I-know-he-sounds-like -he's-full-of-it-but-I'm-going-to-pretend-to-be-his -brother-anyway delivery.*



*Now, I don't point out the dynamics of this dialogue to take away from the amazing legacies of Brothers Ogletree, West or Smiley. They've all made important and lasting contributions to our community and will likely continue to do so, but I do question why they, and we as a community, tend to be so uncharitable toward our own, but inexplicably benevolent to others.*

Understand the politics at work here. West is a socialist. Ogletree wants Reparations. Smiley is the organizing force of the day and has come up through the Left and NPR. That's not black America and it is not the black American intelligencia. It's just the group of folks who do what they do. Understand further that these folks, while influential on opinion, are not leaders. Their greatest power lies in their ability to praise or diss. They can't hire or fire. All they can do is read what somebody else says and write reviews. Same as you and me. Their power only comes from the willingness of their audience to let them do the thinking. So if that were your job, how would you feel if some Obama comes out of nowhere and captivates America?

*For example, how does a white man who signed the deeply disparate crack-cocaine bill into law, introduced a devastating crime bill that further entrenched the prison industrial complex at the expense of black communities and black political power everywhere, oversaw the murder of more people on death row during his presidency than any president in the history of our country, completely dissed and dismissed our sister Lani Guinier, who would have been an amazing Attorney General for our country and for our community, purely for the sake of political expediency, get to be dubbed the "First Black President"?*

*Is our loyalty so easily spawned because one acts like a "pimp," plays the saxophone and visits a few pulpits? I am absolutely amazed at the absence of critical black analysis about Clinton's performance in office while Brother Barack has to be hyper-analyzed, criticized and have his thumbnails extricated for DNA samples before we'll believe he's one of "us." There is no other candidate in this or any other Presidential race (save Shirley Chisholm who, in her day, was hung out to dry by the Black Caucus) who has had to work so hard despite an extraordinary track record to show us that he or she is about the business of making the country better for black people and thereby making the country better for all people.*

I'll only suggest that you have unfortunately been listening to the wrong pundits. The whole 'black president' thing started not so much on the Arsenio Hall Show as when people started hating him for Gennifer Flowers & Whitewater. When Clinton became a victim, people who identify with the persecuted brought him into their bosoms. That whole feeling pain appeals to lots of blackfolks, and some consider it the basis of their politics. That's them. There's a simple test here. If you as an African American believe that Republicans are generally evil then it's a very small political step for you to believe in a Vast Right Wing Conspiracy. I think that's what made Bill Clinton 'the first black president', because those Americans who like to believe conservatives are out to get them have every sympathy.

I would add that now you really have to think about who Hillary Clinton is and where she's been. If you think Bush is bad to trust Karl Rove and that Rove is dectieful, at least they're not married.

*Al Sharpton, you are absolutely right that everyone who looks like "us" is not one of "us" - at least to the extent that you mean not all black people work for what's in the collective best interest of black people (that is, if such a collective interest still exists - which is another discussion altogether) - but when did you become the blackometer? And, why raise a question of loyalty when you have no substantive evidence of disloyalty? Just to hear yourself talk? Because he's getting more press than you? I'm not suggesting for a minute that Obama and every political candidate not be held accountable for their voting records, their political past, or even their personal judgment, but to question Obama's blackness simply because he is black is the ultimate irony and a dumb distraction, for which Republicans and racists everywhere are cheering us on. And, to question Obama's loyalty simply because he didn't make an appearance at this week's forum hosted by the black gatekeeper flavor of the month is sheer idiocy.*

*I think a more relevant question is what do the black commentators who make the television and radio appearances to raise and answer the question of Barack's blackness have to gain? It certainly provides them with more face time before the American public and cushions their backsides with a blacker-than-thou throne (even if only in their own minds). I think a more relevant question to our so-called black leaders and academicians is what (other than a supersized ego or potential profits) gets in the way of their unequivocal support of the only person in the race who has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to implementing policies that best serve black people?*

The whole idea of blackness is undergoing change, and has been for a long time. If you cannot see yourself as anything but black, then you are actually stuck in the confines of an intellectual invention whose political component is stuck in second gear. Of course that serves the interests of the likes of those at Smiley's Summit, which is just another conference in the thousands of conferences that happen every year in America. How did Sharpton become influential? You should ask the same question of anyone who can throw a conference and say they represent black America.

What anyone has to gain is the attention of blackfolks who otherwise don't pay attention. I don't know a better simple way to explain it than this. Some people pay attention to football at the highschool, collegiate and pro level year-round for decades. Most people pay attention only during the Super Bowl. When it's Super Bowl time, advertisers pay the big bucks to associate themselves with the winners. The same thing goes for politics. Most people only pay attention to the Senator from Illinois when he happens to be in the Presidential race. I would wager that 85% of the people who support Obama have no idea who he beat in the senate race or who sat in his seat before. They're just TV fans at the Super Bowl picking a favorite.

What does any commentator have to gain? Influence in the off-season among the newbies. Most sports commentators can't tell a real sports fan jack.

*To be sure, there may be valid critiques of Obama, but his absence from a forum, his failure to be stereotypically "black" or the fact that he is black are not valid or even useful critiques. So, forgive me for being just a bit skeptical of those black politicians (who reside in key states - e.g., Brother Al and South Carolina State Senator Robert Ford) whose primary critiques are that Barack just may not be black enough or, even better, that America's just not ready for a black President, so they can gain the political spoils and spot light press of selling out a brother early and often. If I had the technological savvy, I would jump off this page with all the passion, hope, rage and volume of Spike Lee's Dap and tell you, brothers and sisters everywhere, please please please WAKE UP!!!!!!!*

"Wake up?" That's like saying, just 'Get a job', or 'Lose Weight', or 'Go to college'. People don't 'Just do it'. They work at it for years. If you expect blackfolks or anyone to just get politically sophisticated, you're dreaming.

*The best thing Barack can do for us is to win, not show up at yet another black forum simply to prove he's one of us by placating the egos who believe Barack should clear his calendar for their "ultimate black" event! There are plenty of other candidates (and so-called leaders) who warrant our scrutiny and skepticism - not to mention a host of misogynistic lyricists, child molesting musicians, and other unaccountable black-community-made millionaires. Barack, however, has proven with his excellence, his achievements, his commitments, and his life's work that he warrants our support.*

Now here's where I'm going to challenge you. I want you to keep in mind that there are black presidents in the Fortune 500. You may or may not be aware that the leaders of the following companies are black men. Sears, American Express, Time Warner, Symantec. OK. Sears is still Sears. Time Warner is still Time Warner. If and when America gets a black President, America will still be America.

Consider the precedent. Do you think Colin Powell changed the Army? That the black mayor of your town changed your town? That Oprah changed television? That Michael Jordan changed basketball?

*Rather than using his credentials and connections to build his personal wealth, Obama chose to pursue careers like providing job training for residents of poor neighborhoods, directing voter registration drives and fighting for civil rights. Unlike other candidates in the race, Obama has been consistent in speaking against sending our black babies to murder, and to be murdered by, brown people in the Mesopotamia for the sake of multinational corporate interests. He has successfully forged coalitions with people across racial and political lines to introduce a host of legislation that would, among other things, get guns off our streets, reduce greenhouse emissions, and limit the influence of special interest lobbyist on Capital Hill.*

Now, what part of America is structured to hinder multinational corporate interests? What lever in the White House does the President pull to make poor people go to school? (Unless you know some kind of job training the just seeps into your brain and makes you suddenly worth more money on the job). Since when did the President of the US call the soldiers that defend the nation 'babies'. Since when did a Harvard educated lawyer not know the difference between war and murder? And since when did all of these special interests you claim, somehow not add up to 'special interests' lobbying on Capitol Hill?

This is all wishful thinking, and someday you may come to realize that. Perhaps on the day Obama loses, if this is not merely a projection of wishful thinking on Obama and not his actual agenda.

*As for whether Barack's black enough, let us not forget that race exists in America not in our biology, genetic code or even our phenotype, but rather by the institutionalization of the economic and social construct of chattel slavery and its vicious offshoots. Under that regime, "a dab'll do ya." Whiteness equates to economic and social privilege and that privilege fades as it traverses the racial spectrum.*

*Anyone who has any black ancestry living in this country, whether for a day or for generations, will experience the vestiges of slavery and the consequences of white privilege, making the question of whether one is descended from enslaved Africans or colonized and oppressed Africans irrelevant. It is not simply the experience of that oppression, however, that demonstrates loyalty to our community and that deserves our community's loyalty, but rather recognition of the injustice of it and actions taken to dismantle it. Clearly, Obama has met this test!*

That's almost a coherent definition of blackness. Unfortunately, it's only politically coherent. There may be a legion of people who define themselves as black in that way, but that sounds to my ears, EXACTLY like the same sort of people who are still fighting against a Vast Right Wing Conspiracy. People who can believe one lie that's big enough will have no problem being suckered around a host of smaller deceptions. That's them.

By the way, haven't you heard of ending the monolithic definition of 'the black community'? It's a good idea. Individualism. If you can't trust individualism, then it must make sense that Obama would have a 'natural' built-in constituency. After all, that's the Test that you have determined Barack Obama to have passed.

*Let the record of each candidate speak for itself. But, for the sake of our ancestors and, more importantly, our descendants, do not inadvertently become a pawn of white privilege by demanding that Obama's record be scrutinized more closely and meet a higher standard than his white counterparts simply because some narcissistic crab in a barrel didn't find himself at the top.*

You put him in the barrel, Jackson. He cannot ever escape his ancestry. And so long as you are deciding what that ancestry is supposed to mean with regard to black slavery and white privilege anchored in a hundred years of history, then there is no escape from the crabs, black or white. Racial scrutiny is destiny for those who are committed do certain things for the sake of their ancestors. You will stew in that barrel until you shed your skin.

--

I don't really believe that this is everything Obama wants to be or represent. If he wants to be the carrier of black dreams, he's in the wrong business and needs to get in line behind Maya Angelou. But this is a significant part of the constituency whose votes he needs to bind up in order to win. In that regard, Obama is a proxy in a war between Americans who hate each others guts and don't have the nerve to resolve their own differences. Peasants!

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March 21, 2007

## **The Old School Core Values**

### **Pride**

We are African Americans of all backgrounds and ethnicities. We are proud of our heritage, and respect the lives, triumphs and tribulations of our forebears in this country and beyond. We aim to represent their greatest hopes for us and honor their memory.

### **Patriotism**

The United States of America is our home, not simply by default but by choice. We take our duty to our home seriously and we defend it. We seek to improve it by our work and values and leave it better than we found it.

### **Family**

We are extended families and we put family first. It is the primary organization to which our lives are dedicated. We fight for the proper upbringing of our children. We demand respect and consideration of our elders. We love and support our brothers and sisters.

**Industry**

We work twice as hard and sometimes get half as far, but we work with dignity and we expect and enjoy our rewards. We are not materialistic but we know the value of a dollar. We seek self-improvement through creativity, dedication and effort in our jobs, businesses and partnerships.

**Piety**

We have abiding faith in God and the principles of righteousness. We strive to be true to transcendent values and take the long view of our purpose on Earth. We conduct ourselves as vessels of spirit and we guard our own souls and the souls of others from corruption.

**Liberty**

We believe in the rule of law and rights of people to be free and to determine their own fate. We fight tyranny and oppression of all kinds keeping in mind the battles of those who struggled and died that we might be free.

**Pluralism**

We believe in a tolerant and open society, and we welcome all people to enjoy its benefits and responsibilities.

[Continue reading "The Old School Core Values" »](#)

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January 24, 2007

**A Black Conservative Review Of Immigration**

I had to stick black in the title of this for two reasons. The first is that I'm not convinced that there is a Conservative position worth articulating. And by that I mean Conservative in the tradition of what is conservative about the Founders. It is an admission that I have a bit of work to do understanding how Augustine leads to Jefferson leads to Hayek in the moral philosophy of Conservatism. The second reason is that Erin Aubry Kaplan is getting invited to represent in hoity salons and since her invitation is about 9 months too late, there is some consensus that black opinion has not been tapped on this particular subject. So 'black' is for the search engines, y'all.

There's nothing particularly that I would like to amend from [Cobb's Rules on Immigration](#) although I'm certainly at a more dispassionate remove from the days I wrote them. If it appears that I hadn't acknowledged the reasonableness of non-tattoo identification, then let this be that acknowledgment. However at this moment it is clearer to me that there seems to be no resolve in the matter of law enforcement. It seems like every month there is a new outrage.

The prosecution of [Ignacio Ramos](#) is really a slap in the face. Add to that [this latest story](#):

A gunman in a group of six to eight men came within 35 feet of National Guardsmen watching the Mexican border earlier this month, according to a Guard report.

The four Guardsmen from Tennessee were manning an observation post near Sasabe on Jan. 3, looking for illegal border crossings. The men approached, split into two groups and surrounded the site, according to the report.

The troops began to withdraw to avoid a confrontation. As they were loading their gear into their vehicle, one of the armed men approached within about 33 feet, according to the summary.

"Both groups kept their weapons 'ready low' and never pointed them at each other. No shots were fired," the report states.

The troops finished loading the vehicle and drove away. They then called Border Patrol agents, who tracked the armed men back to the border but were not able to find them. Officials have said they do not know who the armed men were and what they were doing near the observation post.

People in California are really fed up with the epistemological battle over 'immigration'. The matter is illegal immigration and the great nothing that is being done about it.

So there's just a little update really of what I've said before with a couple new items thrown in. Just being timely. The issue isn't so very complicated. Illegal immigration hurts. Blacks and Mexicans are at low level conflict here in Southern Cal. Some people think that Black+Brown politics will achieve something special, it won't. Blackfolks are getting kicked to the curb by the same radical chic buttlickers who have nothing constructive to add to the American political debate other than their own obsessions about race and ethnicity and pity for the poor.

**NOTE: Those reading this post from the mention in Christopher Bracey's book should consider my Conservatism Category. Those without the patience to read should consider my YouTube musings.**

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January 11, 2007

## Arnn on Strauss Against Historicism & Relativism

Here follows my transcription of the introduction of Larry Arnn's 'cooks tour' of Western Civ produced for the Hugh Hewitt Show several years ago in which he outlines the fundamentals of Straussian Political Philosophy. I am in a particularly favorable dispensation to this and it bolsters my siding with Hayek.

Larry Arnn is a student of Strauss via Jaffa. I think he's 95% correct in everything I've heard. The exception was [this thing I said about the size and shape of the human soul](#). I believe that the soul is indeed constant - certainly through our history of being human.

I would also add importantly that the study of philosophy in this regard adds some skepticism against Jared Diamond who from the distance I've studied seems to be overly pre-disposed to give more credit to environment than is due.

Arnn says Strauss uniquely came to recognize:

..that the modern world is dominated by two doctrines that are fatal to freedom and to the pursuit of truth. The first one is Relativism, which is the doctrine that if a person thinks a thing is right, that is the source of its rightness if there is any source.

The secone one is Historicism and that is the idea that each age involves a kind of evolution of the human consciusness and perspective and the standards of right, of good action tend to flow from the age. This gives rise to all kinds of things like the political movement that seeks to perfect the society. Hillary Clinton said one time famously. "Our mission is to change what it means to be a human being in 21st Century." It turns out that she said that at the University of Texas in the commencement addresss in June of 1993. It turns out that's a big project and it takes a lot of government to complete it.

It also changes the nature of government because it has a different account of the nature of man in it. The government under this dispensation is not so much organized to respect our rights - which rights come from our nature which is a fixed thing. All of a sudden our nature is evolutionary and we are the creatures who have the particular ability to get control of process of evolution. [...] CS Lewis wrote brilliantly and famously about this.. That turns out to mean not so much that the human race is in control of physical nature around us as it means that some human beings are in control of others.

And so seeing all that unfold in part in the the Nazi project which was a form of this historicist utopianism, Leo Strauss rebelled against that.

These are elemental concepts to my Conservatism. The way they are stated here is very useful to crystalizing my approach, which from the perspective of black mental liberation are perfectly parallel to Strauss' own observance of the Nazis as a Jew. What I've been emphasizing as Old School is that aspect of patriotic nationalism of African Americans that predates the Black Nationalist movement and owe to values more permanent and prominent in times before our relativist post-modernism and multiculturalism. Or as Arrested Development might have said, it all goes back to Tennessee.

In particular however the warnings of Strauss against Historicism are very useful for getting out of the trap of an emergent blackness that constantly needs a new politics to satisfy its projects. And this is why I'm hard on black partisans who cannot hew to Old School, bumping along merrily from Afrocentrism to Nouveau this to Post- that. When black identity can't be

nailed down, in fact entirely consumed by human identity, you have blacks who must out of this historicist necessity reject the whole of America and Western Civilization because they are convinced that the kind of black person they must be has never existed before and no putatively 'white' person could possibly understand recognize or respect such a human being. Therefore an irrational desire to remake black and remake white without regard to the human substrate or the modernism inherent in Western & American teaching that says that humans are self-evidently equal. Therefore an irrational desire to deny that American institutions work for human beings, that the social ostracism of racists retroactively applies to all American institutions, that America must be undone in order to function morally.

This slavish painting of everything racist white is foolish in the extreme and thus obviates any investigation of Western thought and America's place in it. It's willful ignorance that keeps hope alive - hope for some symbol or new politics that will miraculously transform whites into a new kind of people and blacks into a new kind of people. It recasts all human agency through the prism of race, and it is a trap. Moreover it is a hustle.

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December 29, 2006

## Advocacy Shift

### *Two Months Ago*

I'm sitting in my new office which is six floors up in the South Bay and I can see all of Los Angeles from the center north and east. As I view this metropolis on the eve of this election, I realize that I really, really don't care how they vote tomorrow.

It has come to this, and at this particular moment, I'm interested primarily of the electoral fate of Michael Steele to the extent (and only to the extent) that he adequately represents the Old School, which I think he does very ably. He has been out there, and he has made a national name for himself, and despite the endorsement of good guys and popular guys he may still lose. I want Michael Steele to replace Alan Keyes in the minds of Americans when they think about black Republicans, but I'm not convinced I can do much to influence that change of mind. So as I look out at the city of Los Angeles, I have to ask myself exactly how much I care. Not quite enough.

I'm looking at the state of my advocacy online for the Right and I think I've done a decent job. But I know that bits and pieces of this work are falling off at the edges. Having founded The Conservative Brotherhood, I think we've made some headway in staving off a modicum of ignorance about the center-Right and Right from a black perspective. But ignorance persists as does opposition. I happen to be one of those people who doesn't like repeating himself, and so I'm wondering what it is that I have yet to say and the answer is not much.

I think I've been a fairly good partisan, but others do a much better job than I. I'm much more likely to be analytical than to add to the chorus of me-too on each political meme. And quite frankly as of late I have found that my own patience with the chorus is getting shorter. Not that I don't agree, I'm just sick of hearing the same stories every week from multiple places. Not that my opinion does anything to clarify at a level that isn't mostly echo-y. Sure I personify and give a different spin, but the marginal effort doesn't seem worth it. Besides, the blogosphere is way too large for such nuance to be handled at the trackback level, or so it seems to me. That's where we were 2 years ago, now everything has gone mega, and I lost a lot of my audience when I came to Typepad. Today, I no longer miss being a Large Mammal.

I'm interested in History. I've lost my sense of humor in this blog and that needs to change. I'm interested in Science and Technology. I'm interested in making money. None of those things are Righty Bloggy things. I'm interested in Theology, where heresy matters and people actually keep track. And so Cobb will follow those interests more closely, current events be damned.

### *Today*

**War:** We are going to have our piece of Iraq for better or worse. And we will swallow the bill just like we swallowed the Savings and Loan scandal. Noone will have Rumsfeld's head on a pike, and I seriously doubt that a Democratic House will have the power or courage to do anything remotely resembling... well anything. The model is Iran-Contra and the horse is

already out of the barn. So aside from the nonsense one would have to bear hearing from a Democratic Speaker, I've decided that it's beneath my concern. Saddam is dead. Thus endeth an era.

**Economy:** The rich will get richer but they won't become wealthy. That takes real craft. The poor won't get any poorer unless and until there is a typhoid epidemic. Those sorts of things don't happen. I still think about it but it was the 80s when we were first warned about Tuberculosis in Los Angeles among the illegals. That didn't happen either. I'm no longer keeping one eye open for that. The stock market is boring once again. Hurray.

**Religion:** I am much deeper into matters of the spirit than I have been in memory. I am truly beginning to enjoy what had been a frightening prospect. I have a long way to go but I'm confident in my first steps. This will be very practical and very theoretical. I'd like to think I might have a priest, but I'm not sure I will. The possible split in the Anglican Church is resonating with me. I'll be following that more closely, and I'll be specifically watching the Archbishop of York.

**Black Partisanship:** I'm going cultural, and more specifically into preservation and recovery. I'll be looking for artifacts and creations that emphasize Old School values and aesthetics. I'm not sure whether to focus on mental liberation and the links to that in mainstream culture, but in some ways I'll certainly be calling out the Sound of the Drum.

**Politics:** Current affair curmudgeonry for the most part. Keeping an eye out for deceptions and geopolitical trends. The usual, just a touch more bloodlessly.

**History:** I'm going to establish this diet. It should be interesting. It will go along the lines of digestion of Classics and the general kind of Recovery I do. So I'll be saying things that sound obvious to the more well-read among us. First stop, Shakespeare.

**The New Organicism:** I am on the verge of establishing a five year run of being 'just a guy with a job'. I've gone through the technical roof once again, to no good ends. I'm not particularly interested in changing jobs. Gigs that pay 135K don't just grow on trees. So I'll be bored with mine. No big deal. But at the present moment I'm kinda tired of even thinking entrepreneurially. I'm spending more time with the family *now*. I'm not going to the mistake of trying to fix things when the kids are pissing away their teenage vitality on unsavory endeavors. I'm going to get them all reading Dickens & Mark Twain.

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December 14, 2006

## The Last Manifesto

Represent.

That's a very difficult word to be spontaneous with. I would say that it cannot be done except that every once in a while some individual will do it and gain a following who've been sorta doing it, and some kind of 'movement' is born. I know why Americans are susceptible to movements. It's the same reason we're extraordinary inventors; we organize for progress. We do that because we don't care about history unless we do it in our own language, and get some marketshare of for our version. Our institutions are flawed in that way - we don't properly know them or respect them. We ignore them and in our ignorance, we use our own marginal intelligence over those with a tiny bit less.

It doesn't help that there's not much of an interest in black American politics, not really. So every once in a while we get something declared a Manifesto. I suppose I'm just as guilty because I've stopped counting Nouveau Negroes. Well, that's what I get for being old.

Just in case you haven't heard, there's a new Nouveau Negro in town and his name is ... uhm hold on, let me Google him again. Ahh yes. Trey Ellis. Ooops, wait. It's **John Ridley**. Yeah. His manifesto is called, interestingly enough *The Manifesto for the Ascendancy of the Modern American Nigger* just published in Esquire. I forgot all about Esquire. In fact, I forgot all about magazines. I thought all the modern American stuff was happening here on the web. Damn.

I am stuck with the proposition that a brave new aesthetic has caught me off guard because well, I liked the Trey Ellis aesthetic better, or at least I remember that he was a better writer. The Ellis aesthetic gave me a break from the John Singleton manifesto with which I was manifestly pissed. If you recall Singleton, he's the one who made us all Boyz. And sometime afterward we needed to get Boys II Men just to make sure we weren't considered boys, then they fell off... Meanwhile, I fell in love with the writing of **Darryl Pinckney** and he never got on the radar. So I decided to count my blessings and stop hoping

for a manifesto and be happy with the actual friends I had managed to acquire. As soon as I left New York, Suzan Lori-Parks and Savion Glover blew up. Then there's the Colston Whitehead problem which is of an interior life so complexly dense and festooned with symbolism and second sight that he makes Woody Allen seem like Eminem. Ahh pity the poor aesthete. What are we to make of all this? Isn't there some way to scoop up all these branches and keep ourselves warm by just one fire?

Sure. Pick the ones you like and then just call the rest of them niggers. Which is just what John Ridley did. Brilliant! Why didn't I think of that?

I'll tell you why but then that wouldn't be very fair to Mr. Ridley who has got work to do in Hollywood. Who knows, he could be down to 2 degrees of separation for Seinfeld, and we need all the power we can get, yo. Besides we're not supposed to hate. After all, Ridley did this in the political sphere where writers are supposed to kick ass and take names. Why not just be an ass and call names? It works for Esquire. It works for the Huffington Post.

Right about now, since I'm going to hop on board and pretend to get excited about this new new thing (after all, a political ally is a political ally, right?) I may as well try to take Ridley as an important writer, and in that regard add a few more paragraphs bonding him to myself and the aforementioned writers as well as Spike Lee.

See when Spike Lee came out with his minstrel satire, Bamboozled, people really didn't know what to think about it. I for one had been taking Spike Lee the wrong way, and I didn't realize my error until I read Gwaltney who gave me reason to adopt Cobb's Rule #5 which is: Never second-guess black people. You remember and I remember all of the late night bull sessions when we got so pissed at our shining black director for leaving all of the black dirty laundry out there without slamming home a manifesto. It turns out that is why Spike survived. He never painted himself into a corner. All Spike Lee's movies say 'It is what it is' and he left us to deal with it, like it or not. We didn't like it because, given all of his power to Represent, in the end all he did was make the movies he wanted to make. He always left us holding the ball. We found out that we didn't own Spike Lee and he made us look at ourselves anyway. Oh so many years after "She's Gotta Have It" I'm not in love with Nola. But it was a cool story. I'm not mad at Sal from "Do The Right Thing", but what a story! What makes Spike Lee a great filmmaker, aside from his talent is his judgment.

So we are met on a great battlefield of the moment testing whether people should long note this manifesto. Whether this controversial vocabulary will imbue a new generation with the passion to recognize geopolitics. The answer is hell no. John Ridley may have written the best political hip-hop song of the decade. Unfortunately he thinks he was doing something more serious than that. Serious people don't listen to political hip-hop, except for the beats. Ridley's direction is correct but his rhythm blows chunks. There is nothing to be gained but the enmity and scorn of right thinking people when you call your political enemies niggers. The editors of Esquire and Huffington may dig them bongos, thinking they've found the next beat poet for black conservatives, but this black conservative ain't buying it. Sorry but I'll never march to that drum. I don't care who's beating it. I know that the path to righteousness is not paved with the bodies of rhetorical niggers. We still have people with good judgment. I'm trying to imagine this man trying to slap five with Dr. Rice. I'm sure she, like I, would leave him hanging.

John Ridley will get to represent, and we probably won't be rid of him for a good while. The pimps over at Esquire and Huffington will get him to shake his ass over a few more solemn subjects, and who knows, he may become as influential as Sista Soljah or maybe even Eldridge Cleaver. Yay for free speech. Yay for America.

December 14, 2006 in [A Punch in the Nose, Conservatism, Domestic Affairs](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#) | [Reblog \(0\)](#) | [Digg This](#) | [Save to del.icio.us](#) | [Tweet This!](#) |

December 01, 2006

## **Cobb Vision VII - Black vs Human**

This is a particularly noteworthy commentary in that I am bold enough to say that I have figured out The Black Problem. And I am convinced that it is that Black is substantially and materially different. Different from what? Different from anything. I'm vamping on [Dell Gines](#).



## Cobb Vision VII



Interestingly I had to do this one in two takes, because the first time I exemplified black personalities and not black problems. It's rather difficult to not sound vague about 'human problems' and 'human solutions'.

December 01, 2006 in [Conservatism](#), [Critical Theory](#), [Domestic Affairs](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(17\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)  
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November 30, 2006

### **Patently Obvious**

I have a smidgen of something to say about the controversy over patents, and along with an increasing number of areas of expertise, I tend to believe that we're dumbing down and selling out the Patent Office. It's not the Office itself, but the entire kit and caboodle, case law, special courts and all that. We have a problem that bigger than our willingness to stick to some principles and insure that smart and disciplined people manage it. Surely someone will figure a way to outsource it to India.

The fundamental question I have has to deal with the level of responsibility begged by patenting the obvious, And I think it is a question that is related directly to the other question before the courts these days which is the regulation of 'greenhouse gasses'.

What cannot be monetized? The answer is nothing. So long as we can express human ambition and desire through the investment of treasure, people will put their monies where their mouths are. But the ever increasingly pressing question is how can I make a million and survive? The answer is through building something quick and dirty and getting enough of a jump on the competition so that your company can be acquired by people with enough sense to look a bit further into the future than you - or at least have the skill in managing a business or a product well enough to squeeze actual revenue out of it, rather than just cashing in on the idea. But since actual companies who manage products and people have competition as well, they must have a leg up on the competition - which is to say a legal leg up. For in the end, our economy is one of broadcasters and marketers, companies who are about equal in building, but getting to market is what matters, and it is because of this phenomenon that the culture of invention is a wholly owned subsidiary, not of necessity but of the Business Business.

But while human desire is infinite and in the species of human called 'homo consumus', endlessly manipulatable. In spite of this, human needs are fairly fixed. And so I wonder how much of the American GDP attends to needs and how much attends to desire. My guess is 2/5 need over desire. So perhaps there are wealthy marketing mavens at Procter and Gamble who understand that they should keep their legal department harassing all those in favor of legalizing prostitution. If enough men and women.. err, consumers.. figured out that bouncing and behaving hair is not really desirable in comparison to the delectables of the world's oldest profession, well it could be a disaster for Madison Avenue. That is, if they don't get the Heidi

Fleiss account. Chances are, of course that this edge of the GDP will flourish quite well without broadcast advertising, as does internet porn and the marijuana business.

So why do we continue to live with the conceit that our entire economy can be leveraged by constant invention? Is this the kind of balance we should deliver, in which every generation can expect to live in greater comfort, with newer shinier kitchens? You should know that presently the answer is yes, or at least to the crowd that has managed to sell out self-stirring mugs. Surely there is a patent on this device, and surely only one company can sell it, and surely any lazy teenager could engineer one. It's obvious. And it is this same kind of obviousness that can continue to be marketed, and whose market will be protected by those of us foolish enough to live on and invest in the cutting edge of luxury.

But in a way I'm not sure how to define, I am a Conservative who says that constant and mindless innovation is but the froth at the edge of the ocean. Oh, surely it's the place where water most combines with air and rock to provide the music of the surf and the constant erosion of the land. The shore changes most and provides the waves over which the adventurous ride, but the fate of the ocean is its middle and its unchanging depth. And the greatest beasts of the ocean reside and thrive within its deep currents. On the cutting edge of the oceans, great whales die.

I am not against invention. For ironically invention of the new as it fills the market like songs by Britney Spears, lower the price of less popular, better music. But then there comes a tipping point at which preservation of the classic becomes more expensive and less profitable than creation of the novel. At that point, our heritage is jeopardized. And it is this game of jeopardy we can't long afford to play.

You recall the adage: make new friends and keep the old. Let's not try to make silver into gold.

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November 13, 2006

## **A Conservative Review of Abortion**

Patterico is burning through a number of partial-birth abortion issues to the extent that I think he's putting too fine a point it. But he's an attorney so we can forgive him that.

Nevertheless I still do have a problem with Conservatives who come up with the wrong-headed initiative to create a 24 point rubric for determining the breadth of conditions under which these single-issue voters get their way with abortion. And I think it has something to do with the way I am turning my attention to the nexus of sex, religion and power.

First things first. What I believe:

Do I think abortion is murder? No.

Do I think abortion is manslaughter? No.

I think abortion is roughly akin to reckless endangerment. But I'd be hard pressed to think of any situation in which abortion should be a felony. But this is in fact exactly what anti-abortion activists do in their spare time.

I think the universe of legitimate and moral reasons to have abortions is small, but I think it is larger than the universe social conservatives would allow. I think the legality of abortion is not a problem primarily because I don't think we need, from a national standpoint, all of those children. This sounds like a crass thing, but I don't think it is any more crass than the assertion implied by the illegality of abortion, that we are obliged to make our sex payoff in babies.

Quite frankly, I find it difficult to take any anti-abortion sentiments seriously from some hypocrite with fewer than four children. If there's anything worse than an armchair quarterback, it's an armchair OB/GYN. And I resent their endless second-guessing of this highly personal decision making process. Think of it this way, what if we had a Minister of Sex who interrupted primetime television with a public service announcement whose tagline was 'Fuck Responsibly'. How long would you think that was cool?

Am I pro-life? Absolutely. Should people be persuaded against the practice of abortion? Sure. But just as there should be ethical limits on the practice of meaningless sex in the form of self-restraint, there should be ethical limits on the bullying trying to find its expression in the power of the State. It's not as if nobody knows that abortion is controversial and that many find it morally inexcusable. The problem is that of hubris. There is no point in rubbing the nose of a woman who has an abortion into the mud, and there is truly no excuse for the arrogant political activism of establishing prior restraint.

The difficulty is that the anti-abortion lobby has essentially lost all credibility in addressing their concerns in public debate. I don't see any evidence of anti-abortion activists trying to come up with a new public consensus. Rather they are rather shamelessly trying to stack the deck with, ahem, activist judges, and an ever tightening skein of legislative attacks around the edges of the practice. Because of the way this activism plays, especially around the highly wonky details of partial-birth, or this or that procedure, I'm convinced that advocates for reversing Roe v Wade have dropped all pretense of accepting public criticism. That's a miserable business for a Conservative to be in.

I very much agree with the axiom of difference between Liberals and Conservatives that goes like this. A Liberal's emphasis is using the power of the State to protect against the dysfunctions of the community and family. A Conservative's emphasis is using the power of the community and family to protect against the dysfunctions of the State. So there is a fundamental contradiction in the legislative and judicial agenda to increasingly restrict men and women from abortion, which is at the very least an effort made by them to correct, albeit by drastic means, an abuse of their sexual freedom. Like it or not, abortion is restraint.

To take away this particular choice from adults, which is essentially one of lethal force, is to infantilize the public. It is to say, we do not trust you enough to allow you this life or death decision and therefore we deny you the right to make it. It is tantamount to pre-emptive sterilization. But before I run off the rhetorical cliff, I think there are a good number of fundamental points that can and should be made by anyone who cares how children are brought into this society.

If the pro-life crew says that it is preposterous to suggest that a potential parent should abort because they are unsure about the quality of life of the child, I agree with them. The possibilities are endless for any newborn and we should never abort hope. But the logical consequence of this is that those who recognize endless possibilities should be more willing to sire offspring. There is something wrong with America in that wealth is not associated with large, but with poor families. This contradiction cannot be overlooked.

If the pro-life crew says adoption and foster parentage are viable alternatives that should be more transparent and used, I agree with them. Let's get rid of the corruption of those government bureaucracies. Children are not an agricultural commodity, let's manage their placement with more compassion.

If the pro-life crew says we ought to recognize life at conception or codify the sanctity of life at some genetically significant moment other than birth, I disagree with them. You are not a person until you are born and a fecund or pregnant woman should have no more legal standing than one who is as barren as the surface of the moon.

BTW, raise your hand if you are a woman and you would rather lose a child or an eye as the result of a miscarriage.

The so I think there is a fundamental difference that I would like to express between pro-life and anti-abortion. I think it is reasonable to consider pro-lifers Conservative, but those who are seeking to overturn Roe vs Wade are not. Whereas the former are properly concerned with the abuse of sexual freedom the latter group is ready to use abortion as a litmus test to abuse the Judiciary.

I wonder about the probity of people who 'see dead people' when thinking about the effects of abortion on our nation. Such a vision does not accommodate itself to the real economy of sex, and seeks to regulate all sexual behavior in one fell swoop. It is becoming clearer to me that the anti-abortionists are enemies of liberty. And so I believe that overturning Roe is a step that we cannot afford to let them take. The principle at hand is simple. Individual liberty vs State force.

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November 01, 2006

## Malcolm X: Religious Conservative

Yesterday I spent a lot of time looking for a decent quote from Malcolm X in support of direct action and dealing with people who are blatant enemies as opposed to closeted enemies. I did so in support of some flogging of my Internet Hunt over at P6, the best I could do was insult the denizens there as 'voodoo practitioners'. Interestingly enough, I did find this quote over at [Blackprof](#), a site I've been neglecting of late. The context was how 'subtle racism' has found a home in the GOP because of 'code words'.

| *But values can be a code word for many things*

The game is over at this point. From here on in you will hear only what you want to hear. If you decide that certain phrases are code words which have hidden meanings that you know how to correctly interpret, then conversation is a waste of time.

It's no longer Ernest talking to you, it's you talking to yourself.

If I had the presence of mind of that poster, KT Cat, I'd have said as much as the Internet Hunt got off to a rocky start.

Nevertheless, in searching to find the right Malcolm, I found little more than misappropriated Malcolm. One most notably [here on Google Video](#) edited and graffitied to remove the context of Malcolm's words and almost all of those of his interlocutors, by none other than [Xyborg, the nutcase who wants the African Bomb](#) following the example of Kim Jong Il (!!). Elsewhere there are excellent more scholarly disciplined [sites like this one](#), however there is very little content to be found.

But there was one very interesting clip that I located which served to remind me of Malcolm's split with the NOI and prompted me to write the following over at Blackprof:

Liberals try to use the power of the State to insulate against the dysfunctions of family and community. Conservatives try to use the power of family and community to insulate against the dysfunctions of the State. Most everything follows from that.

From a black perspective, I think the salient choice is determined by a thoughtful consideration of what your family and community situation is. I think there can be no clearer illustration of this difference in black than the paths of Malcolm X and MLK, keeping specifically in mind that Malcolm X' split from the Nation of Islam was a direct result of his discovery that Elijah Muhammad was the baby daddy of EIGHT illegitimate children.

Malcolm X did not support Affirmative Action. He was a religious conservative. This is the big open secret few black Democrats ever debate or consider.

Malcolm opposed Affirmative Action. He called it a 'trick' of the white power structure used to dissuade the masses via the employment of upper middle class Negroes who would convince the masses to 'slow down'. He categorically dismissed integration as an avenue towards freedom. He saw irreconcilable differences and characterized the black masses as on the verge of explosion, something he said would 'break the furniture' in the house of the white power structure.

Freedom is bigger than middle class status. It is something towards which we should all strive, and we should be similarly committed to act as free men, to assume our freedom and fight any and all that would stand in the way of our rights to it. Malcolm understood this implicitly and articulated it persuasively and cogently. That is why his voice resonates clearly to this day. He dealt honestly and with integrity with the fundamental elements of human struggle towards liberty.

I am under no illusion that the masses of blackfolks today are continuing to struggle with Malcolm's terms and scope in mind. Most of the agitation of blackfolks is aimed squarely at middle-class status in America, nothing more, nothing less. And to a certain degree it is disappointing. But not so much when one considers how well America has accommodated those who have assimilated and integrated, and equally how well America has supported and sustained those African Americans who have gone above and beyond that call. It was perhaps unthinkable in Malcolm's time that a black man would run Sears, Time Warner or American Express. And yet today they are captains of all three at once. So somebody must have been aiming that high. And while someone in my generation finds such achievement daunting, I expect that my children will find it less impressive and perhaps reach even higher. Still, I'd be happy for a doctor, a lawyer and a teacher. That's goodness, alas not greatness.

What made Malcolm great was that he had great faith and tied himself unswervingly to his religious discipline in ways that seem extraordinarily rare to us these days. He displayed an uncommon unity of mind and spirit. He embodied a kind of integrity we don't often see in public life. But he was also very clear about the work that he saw blackfolks needed, and it was very much in the vein of personal responsibility. I recall my brother's metaphors of the the past week. He works as a beat cop on Skid Row and he said of the indigent homeless that they do not wash their faces. They remain dirty because they have cut themselves off from society seeing no hope of ever fitting in. But of folks with hope, we wash our face every day because we expect to fit in. The culture of despair begins when one decides not to wash your face, when you decide to be dirty, and it is catching. Similarly, the dysfunctions of the black community Malcolm sought to address started with us washing our faces, of acknowledging our value in the eyes of God, of negotiating our respectability in society starting by cleaning up our act. To wit:

The platform that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, our religious leader, stands on is the platform of complete freedom, justice and equality for the 20 million black people or so-called Negroes here in America. And he teaches us that because of the seriousness of the condition that our people now find themselves in that it is absolutely impossible to solve our problems with means other than religion. And he teaches us that the religion of Islam is the only religion that will instill within our people the incentive to stand on our own feet. And instead of trying to force ourselves upon whites or force ourselves into the white society or blame the white man for our predicament and constantly beg him for what he has, he says that the only way that we can solve our problem is to unite together among ourselves, among our own kind, ***clean ourselves up, rid ourselves of the evils that we've become addicted to here in this society*** and try and solve our problem ourselves.

The emphasis is mine, and this is a Conservative principle, and I strongly believe that it is an Old School principle that has always attended the success of African Americans. We tend to forget the days when blackfolks asked nothing from Congress and survived nonetheless. So there is only so much cred I can assign to people who are resigned to the contradictions and corruptions of the political parties. On their best days, with their best pols, they only approximately represent Conservatism and Liberalism, as well as a crypto-Leftism I still can't quite understand from the actions and positions of assorted Organics and Progressives (is it Socialism? is it Populism? is it Anarchism?). Whatever the failings of the GOP, I know they are trying to be Conservatives and that the actualization of Conservative principles stand a much better chance under their administrations than that of the Democrats.

Since I have confidence in the Old School and in the unity of mind and faith and much less in the machinations of government social programs, I fall on the side of Conservatives with very much the same skepticism of white liberals as Malcolm X. But that goes to my highest aspirations which lie far beyond middle class dreams. Still, I am much more respectful of American and global middle class aspirations than I have ever been. So I advocate, in the context of what Bush has explained in the terms of the Ownership Society, for adequate assimilation and integration into the broad American mainstream. I think every American should do so on their own terms and at their own pace with no assistance, guidance or interference from so-called 'social conservatives' who are mostly nosy and paranoid Evangelicals and fundamentalists still unable to quite get their heads around the ultimate implications of Liberty and Justice for All.

America must, among its highest priorities, be a nation that imposes no restrictions on the free exercise of religion, because that freedom will inevitably produce such minds in unity with spirit as was exemplified by Malcolm X. We can only hope sooner rather than later.

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## My Conservatism Vs Yours

As a moderate conservative and civil libertarian, the biggest problem I have with my fellow GOP mates is their shameless ass kissing of the Christian Right. It often borders on fundamentalism, and of course I have no doubt that there are fundies in the big tent. I also have a problem with GWBush's inability to lead by example from the bully pulpit on much of a force of personality, and while he doesn't preach, I know a lot of folks of the Christian Right get warm and fuzzies from his personal spirituality as a born-again. So I wait patiently for folks of the bearing of McCain, Giuliani, Whitman and even sometimes Arnie, to take center stage. Oh yeah, one more gripe I have is for the no-op Congress that hasn't been pulling its weight and leading by example (discounting for the moment the great [conviction of Patrick Leahy](#)).

Particularly in Congress, I never liked either Dick Arney or Tom DeLay, and I happen to believe that their strongarm tactics to be a degeneration of the spirit Newt Gingrich started. They basically killed the ideological appeal of Conservatism in Congress, and put us back on the path of government bloat, if only for their own special interests. I am probably as guilty as any Republican of not looking enough past my own tax bill to watchdog the OMB, but I do care and not for nothing do I call myself a fiscal conservative. So I can't speak to more than a sense of unease and distaste as those two fatheads wielded power, but listen to [what Abiola has uncovered](#):

..small government is fundamentally incompatible with "socially conservative" meddling with people's private lives, and a party intent on keeping advocates of small government and social conservatives within the same tent is one too

ideologically incoherent to be a party of ideas. Reagan squared this circle by paying mere lip service to the nanny-state moralists, and what Bush Jr. has done has been essentially to take the opposite approach, which is precisely why you have a situation in which two big-government parties are reduced to exchanging inane sexual innuendos in lieu of substantive arguments.

Exactly.

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October 31, 2006

## Southern Strategy: Dead

I suppose it won't be long until the Reparations movement targets the Republican Party for the Southern Strategy. Wouldn't that be interesting? But just for the record, I wanted to include the official apology, just in case people are curious about the Healing part. Here's the link to the [Washington Post article](#). And just in case that goes dead, here's the document on my site, always and forever. [Download mehmans apology.pdf](#)

Now let's see. Maybe we can find it in USA Today as well. Yep. [Right here](#). Where else? Here's the [Wikipedia entry](#) for all the context that's fit to debate.

Case closed.

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October 13, 2006

## Art In America

For the past year or so, I have been completely turned off of the 'art' of Hollywood. More specifically, I have been perturbed by the kind of creativity produced by what I percieve to be a class of limousine liberals and it has brought me to a question about the state of art in America.

In writing about conservative and liberal principles, as part of disambiguating the Left from Liberalism, I pose the question of the purpose of art in society. I am inclined to believe that Liberals believe in an absolutist defense of the individual, and that the ultimate expression of such an absolute individual would be someone cast out from society. [Jonathan Livingston Seagull, for example](#). The value of this individual is taken for granted by the Liberal in that his exclusion demonstrates the cruelty of society and it is this cruelty that Liberalism combats. With regards to the purposes of art, then, the lessons of this individual can show society the error of its ways. And because of these assumptions about isolation and exceptionalism, we associate creativity, the propensity to create art, with individuals who are somehow abnormal. Ideally, the abnormal outcast, by demonstrating his humanity artistically shows society how its intolerance is immoral, and this is a regulating force in society. The liberal view of progress then is by continually opening up society to those deemed outcasts we better understand ourselves as humans of unlimited potential and we strip away the injustice inherent in inequality.

Hollywood illustrates this principle by pushing the limits of civility in its creations. We have come to celebrate the anti-hero in productions like 'Oz' in which the lives of prisoners is the central drama - where all of the protagonists are convicts, and the viewer is forced to follow the ethics and morality of the murky world of the fraternity of thugs, thieves, murderers and rapists. Indeed, 'murky world' shows are all the rage. Andre Braugher's 'Theif', the HBO series 'The Sopranos' as well as 'Deadwood' and the British show 'Hustle' all take us to places where deception and moral equivocation (if not depravity) are the norm, and the hero is the person who can hold his own life together by being the most successful in those murky worlds. Showtime and FX have their entrees as well, the new show 'Dexter' is about a serial killer who kills serial killers. 'The Shield' is about a cop who continually breaks the law in order to uphold the law.

This may be entertainment, but is it art? I'm not sure the difference makes a difference if the principle remains the same.

I have always been attracted to essays, novels and plays and the moral discourse therein. The writings of Voltaire, Moliere, Martin Amis, Arthur Miller, Amiri Baraka and Eugene O'Neill stand out for me in this regard. I also used to read John Updike and John Steinbeck in my youth in a similar vein. In the 90s, I believed that multiculturalism would be led by artistic

productions of that caliber but the thrust of the multicultural movement fell off of that track. So while it was useful and inspiring for me to read Borges, Vikram Seth and Carlos Fuentes, I think that the import of this literature has left little impact on most of America. This is obviously complicated by the fact that most Americans have shallow expectations of art but it doesn't change the fact that lighter entertainment can express the same principles as great art.

So we are left with a problem which is probably best expressed by the futility our creative producers have in addressing the moral implications of the difficulties Americans have with the great issues of our contemporary lives. And it is into this gap which more and more Americans find themselves turning to religion. But it is not, by and large, the religion of inspiration I see Americans finding, rather the religion of medication, literally the opiate of the masses. It is because of the default of American Art.

I am surely not the first to recognize this, but I must confess that my time to read contemporary accounts is limited. I'm late for work today as it is. I simply pose this question? Why has the artist been replaced by the commentator - those people Michael Savage rightly call 'hollow men'? If even Keith Olbermann finds himself compelled to enter said fray of punditry, are we not in the brink of some soul death?

It seems to me that artists in America have not exercised their craft in any influential way to meet the moral needs of a nation of millions. There is nothing spellbinding that arrests our imaginations and slices through the Gordian Knot of contemporary spin, PC ethics and disingenuous debate. A proper religion will certainly do so and should, but isn't it curious that our creatives have wandered so far from being useful?

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October 06, 2006

## Diversity and Conservatism

I am largely thinking of Conservatism these days as the possible saving grace of America and Western Civilization. What concerns me the most is how socially conservative our Conservatism will have to be in order to be that in the face of Jihadism and Relativism.

As *The Looming Tower* is making clearer for me, the Khomeinists are at war with modernity and secular rule. As the American Opposition is making clear to me there is no single unifying principle in the American ideosphere they believe is worth fighting for. And so it is likely that they will relent and face their own destruction rather than to stand for something. I make the case extreme for the purposes of illustration, but it isn't clear to me that the mainstream of Democrat politics is willing to create a defensible unity. You know, [Eclexia](#).

Eclexia is characterized by a restless antipathy to the established and an overweening desire to get away from it. The eclexic is eclectic to a fault. Their fatal flaw is that once the novelty of the thing has worn off, once it becomes established, their interest and respect fades rapidly.

Eclexia is a sin because it is fundamentally disrespectful of the efforts made by people who bother to study something specific. It acts against collaboration in solving standing problems. It refuses to focus. Thus the eclexic requires some outre personality which allows him to eschew the 'mundane' tasks that are faced by all of us. In that regard, eclexics are dependent on an established alternative subculture - something that allows them to easily be understood as 'cutting edge' or 'radical' even if they are not talented or committed in any way.

So last night I complimented Los Angeles because of its ethnic and religious diversity. But as I did so, I realized I did so in the context of a balance which is not necessarily permanent. You see what America offers previously persecuted minorities and immigrants is the opportunity to move from the Third World to the Second and then possibly to the First. So long as that material opportunity survives, then participation in mainstreaming is a useful, even critical source of national unity. I've always said that the act of raising the flag is patriotic and it is the struggle of snatching that honor from one generation, or one ethnicity to the next which insures the integrity of patriotism. The overkill of PC is a reasonable reaction to the oppression of ethnic minorities, but the eclexic aren't necessarily demanding that the ethnic be patriotic, and therein lies the problem. Inclusion for it's own sake is not good enough. It has to be inclusion into the nation which requires demonstrated affinity for national principles. But that is not how anti-conservatives see it. The very idea that '[Nobody is illegal](#)', demonstrates this problem.

As I remarked in [Derbyshire's Dilemma](#), what cuts us to the chase is the question of black progress. More generally, it is this same question of progress which should be the razor on any matter of diversity. It's not inclusion for its own eclectic radical chic sake of 'social change', but inclusion for the purposes of social progress, of real self-enabled elevation, of taking advantage of what the nation has to offer.

For Conservatism to be right and proper, it has to assure that inclusion is reflective of a diversity of sources and a unity of purpose, rather than a many-to-many relationship. That is because it is under attack from those who expect nothing less than conversion of the planet to Islam. And so Conservatism has to be defensive of liberty and religious freedom, but not absolute freedom to the point of eclexia and disposable consumerist culture. We must conserve Modernism, we must conserve Rationalism, we must preserve the road to social mobility and mainstreaming.

October 06, 2006 in [Conservatism](#), [Critical Theory](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(21\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)  
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September 29, 2006

## Michael Steele Hates Puppies

Michael Steele's Real Ideas for Change



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September 28, 2006

## Derbyshire's Dilemma

[John Derbyshire makes some interesting observations about race](#) in American society. His analysis has a rather nice syllogistic air to it but I'm afraid he's a bit short on some details. Specifically, he initiates a dialog with an audience that is not accustomed to talking about race, and he knows it. While he hits on many cogent points, he invents new terms and combats them without really addressing the reasons he talks to this imaginary group those who cannot disambiguate his implications.

Derbyshire points out that Conservatives are both ignorant and cowardly when it comes to the subject of race. He's right. It is a daunting challenge but not a pressing one. It is analogous to the matter of being 40 pounds overweight. It's something you can live with, but it's unhealthy and you really have to work at changing. But overweight people get love too. The current atmosphere of anti-racism is the equivalent of drinking Diet Coke, or sometimes two Diet Cokes, just to be sure. In other words, we Conservatives are the elephant in the room.

The problem with race in America is not petty details of our inability to talk about race healthily, its that we don't understand, we meaning mutually understood between blacks and whites about the nature of what is, and how it came to be. This is



because the political parties have their narratives about racial justice and the Democrats is larger only because the Democratic base is more black. Blackfolks have their own narrative about race in America and it doesn't often coincide with what the parties are saying nor with what they have done. Serious black anti-racists don't trust either party to have their best interests at heart. Still, conservatives and Republicans are perceived to have much more to prove.

When it comes to the GOP, there are high points to talk about, but broadly speaking most blackfolks are ignorant of the Dirksen story and largely overly impressed with the Southern Strategy. Republicans and conservatives will get nowhere with African American voters until they can disabuse themselves of an image which is agnostic about black progress. What conservatives need is a creation myth that resonates with blackfolks. The facts are not enough and it is the fault of the Conservative Movement for not bringing blackfolks along, deep in the dialog.

Conservatives don't talk about race because they are socially inept and not familiar with the ways black people discuss it amongst themselves. So they are incapable of distinguishing between the rhetoric and ideology of our so-called 'black leaders' and the actual aims of African Americans. It is for this reason that I am convinced that to even have this conversation, the GOP must be integrated. And no conversation about race solves any significant social problems unless it begins by generating enthusiasm with all parties involved. And no politics that fails to communicate in common terms across lines are going to enable successful coalitions. We know that political operatives spend a great deal of time crafting 'message', and anything that is 'off message' is cast aside. But there is no 'message' that points to advancement of racial dialog. And this is insufficient for the extended conversation that must take place for there to be a black/white consensus on race matters.

A more thoroughly integrated GOP must be a reflection of the political will of the people, it cannot reach out to blacks merely for the sake of solving racial issues. Blackfolks are political animals, but we don't have a nose ring labeled 'racial issues' through which we can be led around. This sets up a paradox. Blacks will not migrate to the Republican Party because of its policy on race, but Republican weakness on racial issues of the past and present remains the greatest disincentive keeping blacks away. This is why you will consistently find black Republicans who appear to be indifferent about the lack of a GOP 'racial agenda'.

Let's be clear about something here. Talking about racial issues in a way that generates consensus and enthusiasm is an important matter, but it is not the same thing as 'raising the race'. Talking about something and doing something are two different things. Republicans certainly want black progress, but they only expect to facilitate it the same way they facilitate middle class folks. Furthermore . Republican conversations never get off the ground with blackfolks because there is an unstated desire that Republicans use their power to *do* something for African America, *according to the way the black narrative runs*. As part of that narrative, the Republicans have to first admit that they are all closet racists who secretly hate blacks and shelter overt racists, all because of the Southern Strategy.

This status quo works because the Republican party has the blessing of naive consistency. It preaches no special considerations by race and delivers none. Instead, the only people who talk about race 24/7 are unelected white liberal activists and unelected black political activists who are working out of a static view of the government solution to our social problems. Conservatives rightly criticize the very basis of this thinking, but by doing so are hitting their greatest stumbling block in addressing the concerns of black voters, which is a presumption of making progress on the racial front.

So the problem is black progress. Who's responsible?

The kneejerk Right answer is that blackfolks are responsible for their own progress, that there is nothing that the government can do for them. This is sheer hypocrisy. Why have politics? Why have government if it doesn't benefit its constituents? In countering the welfare-state mentality, which they should, some conservatives wrongly assume they have eliminated the entire basis of their appeal to the majority of African Americans. That is because they pay too much attention to think-tank wars and not enough to the people themselves. But this is not delusion in a vacuum. Every black voice that states opposition to the Republican party on the basis of it not supporting Affirmative Action and entitlement programs fuels this fire.

The Affirmative Action debate as the locus of black/Republican relations is an exercise in futility. Anyone who engages in that is doomed. Consider the following, while keeping in mind Malcolm X's position. He saw right through it. Whites and Asians don't talk about race because it is generally accepted, while untrue, that Asians are superior to whites on average. So while Asians seem to be more integrated into white society, I argue that is a consequence of the size of the statistical sample. A common sense way to look at this is to imagine that any social program, or Affirmative Action has a certain amount of force. And to exercise that force on the object to be lifted. We all know that in the main, Affirmative Action has had a strikingly

positive effect on the careers of white women. On aggregate, white families have benefited as much as black families. So it has done some excellent and exceptional things, but it is not what has raised the race, and anyone who believes its impact can be anything more than marginal hasn't learned what Malcolm X knew 40 years ago.

White Conservatives won't say so because they don't generally understand the black racial narrative, nor the message of Malcolm X, but in fact they are in perfect harmony in their basic beliefs. It will not be politics or government largess that will raise the depressed stature of the Black Man, it will be a revolution of values based on religious discipline. Whitefolks are not fundamentally a part of that equation of refining the qualities of the Black Man towards the ends of self-sufficiency. It continues to stun me that this parallel isn't widely understood, but it does go to underscore how weak Conservatives are on matters of understanding the black narrative on race and how they bumble around searching for the right message. Hello. It's not coming from the Heritage Foundation. Here is Malcolm:

The platform that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, our religious leader, stands on is the platform of complete freedom, justice and equality for the 20 million black people or so-called Negroes here in America. And he teaches us that because of the seriousness of the condition that our people now find themselves in that it is absolutely impossible to solve our problems with means other than religion. And he teaches us that the religion of Islam is the only religion that will instill within our people the incentive to stand on our own feet. And instead of trying to force ourselves upon whites or force ourselves into the white society or blame the white man for our predicament and constantly beg him for what he has, he says that the only way that we can solve our problem is to unite together among ourselves, among our own kind, clean ourselves up, rid ourselves of the evils that we've become addicted to here in this society and try and solve our problem ourselves.

### **Props to the Struggle**

Black culture retains a dialog and conversation about the progress of the race which is assumed to be the part-time avocation of anyone involved in successful life. The presumptions against blacks, whether stated or unstated present various stumbling blocks to success, and successful blacks are always presumed to 'work twice as hard'. Whether or not that is actually the case, all those who persevere against the racial problems of America are expected to understand this conversation and communicate something about that back to the black community at large. We must testify. Whether it is a rap song about bling, a gospel song about deliverance, or Colin Powell being booed when he speaks positively about Affirmative Action at the GOP National Convention, there is communication that must go down about The Struggle. What is never, under any circumstances acceptable to this ethos is that we suck up to The Man at the expense of black pride. This is the very definition of Tomming.

The unfortunate presumption has always been with regard to the upward mobility on the Right, an individual must be a part-time or full-time Tom. What irks blackfolks is not the upward mobility, but that someone cannot stand up to their full height as a black man or woman. When we perceive that that fundamental element of their humanity is being suppressed in any way, we dismiss that person as a sellout. And who wouldn't?

The recent endorsement of Republican candidate for Senate Micheal S. Steele, who is currently Lt. Governor of Maryland by hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons and CEO Cathy Hughes of Radio One is immensely significant in this regard because it communicates within that dialog of Struggle that Steele is one who has a common bond with those popularly acknowledged by blackfolks *not* to be sellouts in their ascent.

African Americans today are suffering the ill effects of diaspora. Since the passage of the Civil Rights Movement and the ascension of black social capital, African America has disbursed through the country. In 1950, only 14% of blackfolks graduated from highschool. Today it is not uncommon for there to be married black families with two college graduates who grew up in different parts of the nation and live in a third. This is a tremendous increase in social mobility. And yet it comes at the expense of the traditional black ghettos where we were all once forced to live. The end of the Civil Rights and subsequent Black Power movements dispersed black leadership who have been absorbed into mainstream professional and managerial classes. The principle of 'each one teach one' is challenged. The role of racial testimony has gone cyber. Gone are the corner men and the 'mayors' of black neighborhoods. Here in Southern California, many traditional black neighborhoods aren't even majority black any longer. So the quality of the narrative of black struggle is undergoing great change - it is borne today by more media at more levels with less signal and more noise. So it is increasingly difficult to steer African American opinion either by traditional media or by blacks themselves.

Therefore conservatives face a very daunting challenge in addressing the narrative of black progress in ways that resonate with blacks from the old ways of their communication reconciled with their new media sophistication. But it is insufficient for them to stand on the sidelines and not engage in the subject of black progress, especially given the massive investments the Conservative Movement has made and continues to make against the tradition of liberally angled journalism in all media. What an embarrassment it is for John Derbyshire, a Brit, to be the one who initiates this debate.

I could go into examples of the Conservative default. They are numerous, but I would like to highlight two which I find rather notable. The first is the career of neoconservative David Horowitz who constantly and consistently demonizes his association with the Black Panthers and the second is the attack on Kwanzaa sustained on an annual basis by Ann Coulter. There are certainly perfectly logical and sound reasons to offer critiques of the Panthers and of the personal history of Ron Karenga, founder of Kwanzaa. But like the dismissal of Affirmative Action these very narrow ways of dealing with issues of interest and importance to the narrative of black progress is insulting and reinforces the stereotypes against conservatives and Republicans. I get mad about it and I'm already an activist for the Right.

Waiting for black accretion towards the Right, which I believe is inevitable as blacks advance through society, is lazy and unacceptable. The Old School values which are clear and present in black politics and society are close to conservative values in more ways than just Bible thumping black evangelicals. Conservatives need to move forward. It will take work, persistence and patience, but most of all it will take initiative. The direction to go is in the direction of success, and that is what the conversation needs to be about. That is what will generate enthusiasm. Conversations about dysfunction and pathology and the analysis of such.. well that's the province of the Left agenda, and it is a non-starter. At least it is over here at Cobb. I challenge Conservatives to talk about upward mobility in synch with the enormous desire within African Americans to fulfill their potential in that regard. America is unified in its antipathy to racism so both blacks and the Right should stop pretending that racism is what's keeping them apart. It is not. It is a demonstrated inability to appreciate each others narratives about black success and what it means. When they both start talking about it with each other instead of past each other, eyes will begin to open.

September 28, 2006 in [Conservatism](#), [Domestic Affairs](#), [Race Man](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(5\)](#)  
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September 04, 2006

## The Practical Limits of Neoconservatism



It isn't very fashionable to be a geopolitical neocon these days. That is because the War in Iraq is going badly. It is going badly because it has been managed poorly, and it has been managed poorly because of GWBush's fidelity to expediency and value of loyalty over flexibility.

But even though the Bush Administration has its foot in a steaming pile, there are reasons to be optimistic in Iraq, as well as for the prospects of our current and future efforts against Jihadism. That is because America is so much more than GWBush and the best minds in this country are really looking to address and solve these problems. That includes neoconservatives.

I have always asserted that the greatest mistakes that Bush made in his lead up to war in Iraq was that of his timetable and subsequent inability to maintain coalition. However neither of these are a damaging as the simple fact of losing to the Iraqi insurgency. While it is clear that Jihadists have taken to Iraq as a front, I have been persuaded that the Iraqi insurgency was genuine and is primarily a consequence of patriotic sentiment and

not of ideology. It needn't have been that way. In that regard there was no equivalent to the Taliban, who without weapons of mass destruction, deserved the thrashing they got at the hands of a more righteous American-led coalition. Although a case can be made for al-Sadr, I wouldn't make it.

For me personally, now is a time for retrenchment. I am currently assimilating all of the best criticisms of the Bush

Whitehouse which isn't too difficult given the paucity of people not suffering Bush Derangement Syndrome or Right Wing Kneejerkism. I think it puts me in the company of experts, which is all I can hope for. What remains is a strategic rethinking of what it is America must do in projecting its ample resources in a different manner.

I think that a fundamental premise of the PNACian neoconservatism has been broken, and that is the power of American military hegemony. It can be asserted, although not with finality, that the threat of American military intervention is not so effective at this moment in history as it was before Iraq. But that is not because the effectiveness of our military is in question, but that the political will exists in the US to sustain that threat. What George W. Bush sought to accomplish as a 'uniter and not a divider' has been utterly destroyed. Red and Blue states came to be under his watch, and his very personality has been divisive. He has inspired instead great logic defying defenses and seditiously shrill denunciations. And this has left the prospects for neoconservatism in the lurch.

What might have saved the face of neoconservatism would be a good war. We don't have it. What might have saved the face of neoconservatism would be effective diplomacy. That has been patchy. What would have been best for neoconservatism would have been that GWBush himself was a neocon. But he isn't, and that has blurred the distinction between those things that neocon policy makers would like to have seen happen and what has actually transpired in the past 5 years.

When asked about neoconservatism and the PNAC agenda many people will mistake corporate cronyism, an earlier criticism of Bush vis a vis Cheney and Halliburton. That is not a principle. Many people would assert that pursuit of oil in the Middle East is an unalterable principle of neoconservatism. It is not. I hear neoconservatism conflated with a fundamentalist Christian antipathy to Islam almost on a daily basis. Nothing could be further from the truth. The GWOT would be in effect no matter who was President of the US, Jihadists don't have an anti-Christian agenda so much as an anti-semitic, anti-Western and anti-statist agenda.

What I think can be fairly placed at the foot of neoconservatism was Wolfowitz' eagerness to convert the threat of military hegemony to military engagement. In short, I'll cop to 'pre-emptive war' as a neocon overproduction. We were on the Cheney Bus. We drove the Cheney Bus. And in that regard, I'm not so sure it mattered to us whether the *causis belli* was marketing of WMD, post-hoc rationalization of an Al Qaeda connection, the danger of Saddam's expansionism, regional stability, the corruption of the Oil For Food program or the suppression of Democracy. It could have been any and it didn't need to be all of them. Of course I had my own reasons for supporting the War in Iraq and I won't back away from them. In fact, I'd say that it's one of the aspects of this crisis that has gone exactly as it should have:

There are no insurgents in Kurdistan. Nor are there any kidnappings. A hard internal border between the Kurds' territory and the Arab-dominated center and south has been in place since the Kurdish uprising at the end of the 1991 Gulf War. Cars on the road heading north are stopped at a series of checkpoints. Questions are asked. ID cards are checked. Vehicles are searched and sometimes taken apart on the side of the road. Smugglers, insurgents, and terrorists who attempt to sneak into Kurdistan by crossing Iraq's wilderness areas are ambushed by border patrols.

The second line of defense is the Kurds themselves. Out of desperate necessity, they have forged one of the most vigilant anti-terrorist communities in the world. Anyone who doesn't speak Kurdish as their native language—and Iraq's troublemakers overwhelmingly fall into this category—stands out among the general population. There is no friendly sea of the people, to borrow Mao's formulation, that insurgents can freely swim in. Al Qaeda members who do manage to infiltrate the area are hunted down like rats. This conservative Muslim society does a better job rooting out and keeping out Islamist killers than the U.S. military can manage in the kinda sorta halfway "safe" Green Zone in Baghdad.

In a region where rule by reactionary clerics, gangster elites, and calcified military dictatorships is the norm, Iraqi Kurdistan is, by local standards, an open, liberal, and peaceful society. Its government is elected by a popular vote, competing political parties run their own newspapers, and the press is (mostly) free. Religion and the state are separate, and women can and do vote. The citizens here are tired of war, and they're doing

everything in their power to make their corner of the Middle East a normal, stable place where it's safe to live, and to invest and build.

Now it is entirely possible that my reading of the neoconservative agenda is warped. It is true that I haven't read either of Fukuyama's books. But I remain convinced that as much as any active citizen, that I understand its principles. In either case I am willing to take the full heat for those which I do support even as we witness potential disasters in our foreign policy.

So what I'm saying is that there's a practical gap between the aims of the neoconservative engagement and the implementation of foreign policy that has been hijacked by events, undermined by lack of political support and straight botched by incompetency and lack of coordinated planning. We have chosen a bold path, I think rightly, but we have also made strategic errors.

I'm keeping my eye on the PNAC signers and watching them as they process reality, and I close with these principles intact:

[The] United States must be prudent in how it exercises its power. But we cannot safely avoid the responsibilities of global leadership or the costs that are associated with its exercise. America has a vital role in maintaining peace and security in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. If we shirk our responsibilities, we invite challenges to our fundamental interests. The history of the 20th century should have taught us that it is important to shape circumstances before crises emerge, and to meet threats before they become dire. The history of this century should have taught us to embrace the cause of American leadership.

Our aim is to remind Americans of these lessons and to draw their consequences for today. Here are four consequences:

- we need to increase defense spending significantly if we are to carry out our global responsibilities today and modernize our armed forces for the future;
- we need to strengthen our ties to democratic allies and to challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values;
- we need to promote the cause of political and economic freedom abroad;
- we need to accept responsibility for America's unique role in preserving and extending an international order friendly to our security, our prosperity, and our principles.

Such a Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity may not be fashionable today. But it is necessary if the United States is to build on the successes of this past century and to ensure our security and our greatness in the next.

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August 24, 2006

## Change The Game

Today is a red letter day for the Old School, black conservatives and Republicans in America. Today is the day that an American multimillionaire decided to raise funds for a candidate for the US Senate. It's an old tradition, but today the players making headlines are both African American men of my generation.

It's about damned time.

From NRO:

The Maryland Democratic Party's traditional support among blacks appears to be slipping, now that hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons — who has helped register thousands of Democratic voters — has endorsed Republican Michael S. Steele for the U.S. Senate.

Mr. Simmons is scheduled to hold a fundraiser tonight at Baltimore's Frederick Douglass-Isaac Myers Maritime Park for Mr. Steele, the lieutenant governor and the first black to win a statewide office in Maryland.

"Russell Simmons is one of the leading progressive voices in America," said Donna Brazile, who managed Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign.

"This is a major endorsement for Lieutenant Governor Steele that will help him attract young people, as well as black voters," Ms. Brazile said. "Once again, this should serve as a wake-up call to Democrats not to take their most loyal constituents and voters for granted."

This is the second shoe in a trifecta of events that will make August a superb month. The first shoe was the publication and press around Juan Williams' book 'Enough'. This is the second. If something else of this magnitude happens it will be a three legged monster. But there's already enough for the word to get up and walk around.

I've long admired Russell Simmons and have basically defended him from wack charges from trippin' Lefties before. We've long known that he's been pally with Pataki and other NY powers that be, and we've known that among all of the hip-hop producers out there, he's the one with his head on most straight. This is just another feather in his cap.

The implications for black politics are very significant. It's rather like the debut of Denzel on screen. For years blackfolks were on the outs and putting up with okeydoke roles - those kinds of things that made superstars of (at best) mediocre talents like Jimmy Walker. (I use the Denzel / Walker comparison a lot). In both cases, the unbelievable just took a matter of time; there was never any reason for blackfolks to sweat that we wouldn't have the talent. Steele is the man who has no problem with the huge existential hurdles many blackfolks have in dealing with Republicanism. When Kanye West made a fool of himself over Bush & Katrina, we had to suffer through yet another barrage of idiotic stereotypes about who black republicans might be and if they were 'authentically black' or 'cared about black people'. In one minute, Russell Simmons has given everybody who finds unquestionable black love and authenticity in hip-hop something heavy to think about.

First they ignore you. Then they acknowledge you but dismiss you. Then they take you seriously but fight you. Then they disagree with you but say you have a point. Finally they say they were with you all along. The denial stops today.

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July 31, 2006

## Right Enemies of the Right

Every once in a while, I get a lot of barf on me that was aimed at some Conservative or Republican I don't know or can't stand. This is very typical of the 'Uncle Tom' attacks. Starting this week, I'm going to repurpose some of my history in service to Conservatism, basically making a Conservatism category in the blog. The hope is that I can bring some clarity and focus to my own developing conservatism and some things that apply in particular to the Old School but may not apply to the Right, Conservatives and the GOP (and vice versa).

In the meantime, here's some interesting gruel to chew on, people whom the Right dislike who are also on the Right. I was invited but missed participation in this poll. My selections would have been Buchanan, Coulter, Robertson, DeLay and Rove, but I'm also starting to dislike Andrew Sullivan based on signals i'm getting from people I like. Oddly enough, I'm starting to enjoy listening to Michael Savage, which must be proof that I'm not getting enough of something that's good for my soul.

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May 15, 2006

## Post Blogging the President

I'm at work but this is an issue that is important to me. I won't be live full time. I'll be popping back in here periodically. The best stuff will be written later this evening.

### 1. Secure Borders

Bush confirmed that the National Guard will be hands off. Just eyes and ears. UAVs! Some contractor feels good. Catch and release is over. Good. As of when?

### 2. Temporary Worker Program.

What the heck is this? Background checks? This is a management nightmare and I cannot believe it will work.

### 3. Employers to account.

How does anyone check the document fraud? Ahh. Cogent Systems. I told you.

### 4. No Automatic Path.

He said the magic words. No Amnesty. So waiting in line shows they pay their debt to society? Not harsh enough for my tastes.

English, Clean Record & Paying Taxes. So when are they swept up?

## 5. Assimilation.

Nothing new here. Bluster.

### Frist's 20 Amendment Slots

This is hilarious. Here you have the good Senator reserving a huge number of slots for dithering. If this 375 mile fence amendment is to be done, then we're going to have to use up all the amendments to get a full border full of fences.

[Continue reading "Post Blogging the President" »](#)

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May 12, 2006

## Raging RINOs: Joining the Disjointed

*"I want to wear dreadlocks. It shows that I'm a rebel."*

-- Anonymous

One of the reasons that I'm not rich is that I am arrogant and think too highly of my own wisdom. Furthermore, I'm one of the true geeks that really enjoys sitting in front of a computer screen all day and half the night. My skills assessments say that I should have been either an architect or a surgeon. Well, so much for not being arrogant. But I could have been a damned good lawyer. But at the time I was considering law school, I didn't realize that lawyers didn't necessarily have to be straight laced. So I didn't talk to enough lawyers to understand what kind of money I could have made dealing with very very gray areas. Depending upon how broke I retire, I may come to regret the decision I made not to do law. I simply believed in my naivete that I couldn't stomach the idea that the law might be as spaghetti as I know computering is. At this point in my life, I relish that very complexity and inconsistency. Eh. You live and learn.

As part of my arrogance, I am not much of a joiner. Thus I write. Why? Because I am not satisfied most of the time that somebody else might have said what I'm thinking only better. So what? I still have to say it, or as far as I'm concerned, it hasn't been properly expressed.

This is the reason I am not a [Raging RINO](#).

I thought about joining up with these cats a week or so ago when somebody accused me of 'drinking koolaid'. I hate koolaid, both real and metaphorical. See, I'm a builder. I have no time for theories I haven't invented. I make stuff work, and half the time, I make crap work. The important thing to me is that it works.

So the question of the propriety of the Raging RINOs or any other such camp, is 'do they work'? So if the Raging RINOs as a party faction do work, then eventually I might join them. But I don't want to drink their koolaid either. Well, actually the RINOs don't have koolaid. All they are saying is what they are not. Now I'm a secular conservative, so I basically fit. Yeah I'm a Christian, but I'm not a Republican because I'm a Christian, nor am I a Christian because I'm Republican. I happen not to see any fundamental conflicts and some interesting synergies, but I don't want anybody confusing possible rivalries. For example, how would I answer the question, why Raging RINOs and not Blogdom of God? I'm sure I could come up with an answer that sounds waffly. But fundamentally since the RINOs don't have a real pledge they're really not really raging are they?

So I'm basically here. If it's just another tag to generate blog traffic and I'm generally sympathetic with the 'no koolaid drunken here' message, is it better to join a group of non-joiners, or just not join them?

The other problem, aside from my hair-splitting persnickety attitude, is whether or not this RINO thing helps my Conservative Brotherhood message or dilutes it. I am leaning towards believing that it helps it, depending upon the practicality of how much more traffic Cobb gets as a result of joining the RINOs. If perhaps I think of it as nothing more than a label, then that could work. The problem which I don't really have but might get is...

OK enough dithering. I'm joining. But you understand my point, right?

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April 30, 2006

## **A Report Card for GW**

I am not a Republican because of George W. Bush. For some people this sounds like a contradiction. To quote Craig Mack's partner, I don't understand how they don't understand, so I'm going to throw down some futuristic, robotic, George Jetson..

### **GW Positives:**

#### **Taking the War to the Enemy**

George W. Bush could not wait to get over to Iraq and start stomping Saddam into the carpet. He absolutely did the right thing, so much more the better if he took Saddam's threat against Sr, personally. Bush has done what no president since Roosevelt has been able to do. Turn the Defense Department into the War Department. He did it in plain sight of the world community. He took the opportunity to once and for all put America on an old school military throwdown. No illegal funding of Contras. No CIA assassinations. No half-assed single helicopter rescue missions. No symbolic bombing gestures. Just hundreds of thousands of ass-kicking GI boots on the ground. And the biggest complaint anybody can really muster is 'You shoulda sent more' to which his perfect response is, we didn't want to turn Iraq into a police state.

I just found some fascinating support for this particular 'Bushism' in a review of my heretofore all-time favorite government person, George P. Schultz.

#### **Greenspan's Economy**

Despite his bumbling with Snow and that idiotic steel tariff, Bush has done the right thing with respect to the domestic economy by not doing anything to override Greenspan. And the successor to Greenspan is continuing the same thing. Interest rates are creeping up, but for most of his watch GW has left well enough alone. That said, 2003 was the worst freakin' year in my life economically speaking. But on the whole, I'm perfectly satisfied. Enron got what was coming to them. Bernie Ebbers got appropriately clobbered as did the crook running Tyco. I still don't understand how SBC ate AT&T, but Michael Powell let it happen.

#### **China Policy**

Bush has not flubbed the China card. He let the thinktankery spit fire on the matter of 'currency manipulation' and he has held a hard line on Taiwan. So far, there have been no major negative repercussions. He's riding that thin line quite well. China holds a lot of American bonds. They're still holding and not selling them off. That's good. The US has engaged China into diplomacy on NKorea, and we've still neither sold out Taiwan nor embarrassed the Mainland on that issue.

#### **Axis of Evil**

Bush put the world on notice that Iran and NKorea are being eyeballed by the big bad USA. He played that card well. While I think it's crazy to expect that we could resolve major issues with three nations under one administration, the stakes were raised. Whomever is next in the Oval Office is going to have to deal with them.

#### **Pakistan**

It's not often said how difficult and yet successful Bush has been in treading the fine line of supporting Musharraf who is essentially a military dictator, and gaining progress in the GWOT. The bust of AQ Khan was a huge success. The ability for the US to keep Pakistan and India from each other's throats is also a big plus for the Bush Administration.

#### **Secretary Rice**

Condi rocks.

#### **Cheif Justice Roberts**

Also rocks.

#### **Dubai Ports**

GW said the right thing and stuck to his guns. Good on him.

#### **Social Security**

He may not have any of the answers, but he has been gutsy enough to bring this problem front and center with the American people. No there is not crisis, further there is no evasion.

### **GW Negatives:**

#### **Mexico Policy**



This is an unmitigated disaster. The Bush guest worker program is catastrophic BS, and he has a lot of nerve pushing it. I think Fox has something on him.

### **Deficit Spending**

He's busted the budget, and has played the one note of tax abatement to death.

### **Outing Plame**

I still believe it was a crime.

### **Defensive White House**

We have suffered the most weaselly press secretaries in memory. Bush should have hired David Brooks.

### **The IQ Factor**

As one who has done a fair amount of public speaking, it kills me to have a President who can't. His speechwriters are excellent, and there is almost no time when he says the wrong thing. Still, he should be able to wrangle the press corps and do many detailed briefings himself.

### **No Vetos**

Bush hasn't stood up to Tom Delay. That's weak, for a number of reasons.

### **Africa Policy**

Too little too late. But that AIDS stuff was great and right on time. That's Condi's doing. Condi still rocks. I'm rethinking and triangulating on Africa now, however.

### **Colin Powell**

GW Bush killed Colin Powell's political career. For that he shall never be forgiven.

### **DHS Shuffling**

One of these days that organization will be right. Not under Bush.

If I have patience later, I'll comment on all the meaningless crap spewed from Bush Derangement Syndrome patients.

On the whole, I give him an 83% That's a B or a B- depending upon how conservative you are.

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April 28, 2006

## **GOP Rent-A-Negro**

I have been waiting a bit too long to get this post started. My apologies. What I want to do is comprehensively address the POV of many critics who have posted here and elsewhere with incredulity about the role of blackfolks in Republicanism and Conservatism. The popular idea floating around is that basically, the *only* reason blackfolks are 'drinking the koolaid' of the Republican party is because they are getting PAID. It's a myth, and so long as I don't debunk it, it grows in power and remains a convenient way for the incredulous people to be morally dismissive. I hope to debunk that myth so that it can then be called what I think it is, a lazy excuse and a lie.

There are two ways to address this. The first is to go after the premise of drinking the koolaid. That's difficult to do primarily because most blackfolks who are antagonistic towards the GOP are pitifully ignorant of it. They don't distinguish between the various factions within the Party, they don't know the differences between Bush & Reagan, they don't know the difference between Fiscal and Social conservatives, they don't distinguish between Neocons and Paleocons, and they inclined to believe that any garbage that sticks to Donald Rumsfeld for example, sticks to every black Republican. So instead of them listening to what it is we're actually saying, they're pitching whatever garbage they can dream up and saying 'what about this?'. In other words they have been educated by gibberish and they believe it enough to consider their antagonism logical and proper. Most of the time it is broadly prejudicial, flatly ignorant and quite frankly embarrassing. People who don't bother to consider the intellectual distinctions between blackfolks are pains. Likewise more often than not I am likely to ignore such people, or tell them they are full of dookie. To which they generally respond that their dookie doesn't stink as much as my dookie, the problem being they have no idea which dookie I claim, to what extent, to what ends and for what motivation. So basically, I'm not going to chase down that monkey business because it's like arguing with people who think all rap sounds the same.

They're never going to get it, so to hell with them. My message to you is learn to speak in politically coherent terms and you'll get real feedback, in the meantime all of your questions sound like stupid questions to me.

The second way to address this is to refute and/or quantify what little they do understand about the business of political advocacy vis a vis the GOP's 'Message to the Black Man' as it were. This is a bit easier to do, since it generally focuses on nameable individuals, and the vicissitudes of selling out. Still there are problems. Despite that, I'll press forward on this tack - basically if and how much is the GOP in the Rent a Negro business.

Part of my predicament is that I don't know whom I'm talking to. So the first thing I would ask in this vein is, how much money do you think is a lot of money? Some people think, for example, that \$10,000 is a lot of money. Others would say that's something, but not much. It really depends on one's perspective. So what I'm going to do is suggest a relative measure of influence and a somewhat false equivalence for the sake of making my point and putting things in perspective.

Let us imagine, then, that you believe that everything black conservatives & Republicans say to black America and America in general is complete and utter degenerate dog vomit. I will then conversely say that the very same is true of the entire genre of Hiphop music. In the end we will thus try to determine who gets paid more for saying what and the net effect of that verbiage on black American behavior, etc. And so we begin.

[Continue reading "GOP Rent-A-Negro" »](#)

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April 10, 2006

## Six Questions: Asked & Answered

[James Manning asks:](#)

1. What do you attribute to the plight of black men?
2. What are some things we can do to assist black youth?
3. What part does racism play in the plight of black men?
4. Do you believe Conservatives actually care about this issue or using it as an extension of the "Southern Strategy"?
5. What role has Liberal policies played in the state of black men?
6. What would you do to alleviate the hopelessness that plague man young black men?

1. The Ghetto.

The ghetto was designed, built and maintained to isolate blackfolks from the benefits of the mainstream of America. Jim Crow worked so well, that the Nationalists of South Africa took it as a model for Apartheid when they came to power in 1948. Living inside the ghetto during your formative years encapsulates your life so that you believe that it is your destiny. And so millions of ghetto folks have basically come to love the ghetto and expect nothing different for themselves or others whom they think are the same as themselves. This is appropriately called 'The Ghetto Mentality'. There is only one thing new about this in the past 50 years, which is that the success of commercial hiphop has broadcast this mentality back into the ghetto. It is thereby reinforced in a new way upon ghetto folks and folks external to the ghetto. The ghetto is incapable of destroying or reforming itself. It was a prison to begin with and it remains a prison today - except that some people are proud of it.

2. Duh.

Remove said pauper from the ghetto and educate them. cf Carter G. Woodson, Booker T. Washington & a million other teachers.

3. 7.5%

4. That Depends

If you are talking about black conservatives, then the answer is no. If you are talking about libertarian conservatives, the answer is no. If you are talking about conservatives in the blogosphere, the answer is no. If you are talking about racist conservatives, then the answer is yes. How many conservatives are racist? I answered that in question number 3. How many of those racist conservatives have a racist agenda with the GOP, none that get any play or props in the national party. See David Duke, Pat Buchanan for examples, your ghetto may vary.

The Southern Strategy has been followed up with about 50 other strategies since the 50s which most people who flap their lips about the GOP have no clue about. Be that as it may, the very presumption that the plight of the black underclass is bound in politics is a liberal fallacy which has been essentially disproven. There will never be a liberal administration in American government which will specifically target and save the black underclass. The Republicans will tell you this in a heartbeat, the Democrats never will. Or to put it in their words, 'Keep hope alive!'

5. 7.5%

#### 6. Reinstate the Draft

There are several places for the relatively low-skilled American male who is not a criminal. Most of them involve jobs that don't fit the profile of the ghetto fabulous. Black Nationalism has done great things, but it has also overproduced in a way that is particularly noticeable now. It has created outsized egos in the heads of young black men who sustain an inordinate amount of false pride. They think they better than they actually are, and that they have nobody to answer to. They don't answer to black women. They don't answer to God. They don't answer to law & order. They don't answer to their families. They don't answer to their communities. In a way, this false pride only reveals a true lack of self, all explainable of course by the Ghetto Mentality. And since nobody will dislodge them from the ghetto for any purposes other than jail, which only accelerates the bad, the situation pretty much festers. It dries up like a raisin in the sun; it doesn't explode worth jack.

The draft would put thousands of ghetto men to productive useful work. It has always been thus since the dawn of civilization, and even before that. Men who cannot find their way to independence need to be put to work, lest they become predators on society. The Armed services are not afraid of ghetto boys and will straighten out any nonsense notions they have accumulated by dint of their ghetto isolation from the real world. They will either sink or swim, but they will have been given the same deal as billions of men throughout history - the chance to serve their country with honor, dignity and respect, even if they're just dishwashers or truck drivers.

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