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Conservatism

January 20, 2006

The Futures of Conservatism & Religion

After [Jeffrey Hart](#) says this:

Religion is an integral part of the distinctive identity of Western civilization. But this recognition is only manifest in traditional forms of religion--repeat, traditional, or intellectually and institutionally developed, not dependent upon spasms of emotion. This meant religion in its magisterial forms.

What the time calls for is a recovery of the great structure of metaphysics, with the Resurrection as its fulcrum, established as history, and interpreted through Greek philosophy. The representation of this metaphysics through language and ritual took 10 centuries to perfect. The dome of the sacred, however, has been shattered. The act of reconstruction will require a large effort of intellect, which is never populist and certainly not grounded on emotion, an unreliable guide. Religion not based on a structure of thought always exhibits wild inspired swings and fades in a generation or two.

It's hard to know what to say. That is perhaps because I have already spoken about my concern about gay activists' secular effect on the clergy and spasms of emotion seems to have been the subtext. I must have absorbed those sentences elsewhere in some other context. And I am in agreement.

Yet his idea of a completely rebuilt metaphysics. Yikes. Is that the revolution of Conservative thought given by the fellow over at [Body Parts](#)? Hard to reckon. And what of this Resurrection? Is that the Resurrection of Christ? Must the empire be Holy?

The Conservative Mind, it seems to me must have some understanding and recognition of change and improvement and the hard slog back up when chaos rules. What will it cost to reform what we know can be broken so easily? More specifically, what is it that draws us to the East, and how is it that films like 'Hero' so completely outshine films like 'Munich'. We have lost our spiritual Long Now and our sense of eternal beauty, nothing quite speaks to that as our failures in Architecture and our slavery to fashion. Our appropriation of the 'timeless' is a semiotic farce. It's a Ralph Lauren sticker, a Martha Stewart band-aid. And it's destroying the Hamptons, by the way. Those who know, know what I mean.

I think there is certainly within me a powerful sense of diminutive status when confronted with the austere simplicity of certain Asian aesthetics and philologies. I am embarrassed by the West's need for Feminism in its evolution. I am struck by the high-falutin' mumbo jumbo of psychoanalysis. We have mastered so much externally, and yet the Western soul is restless. It is restless because it hasn't yet crafted a home appropriate to its accomplishment. Are we just starting to understand the clues and truly integrating what we lack, or will it be a reduction?

Those who call themselves conservative, namely Social Conservatives, are having nothing to do with a proper multiculturalism, which is actually a middling step towards global-ready diplomacy. And I think Hart nails it when he speaks of hard utopias. That is what Social Conservatives want.

I think that Religion needs to be Catholic in the best sense of that word. There needs to be a new Cathedral built that evolves ever so slightly the wisdom of centuries - that recognizes the usefulness of wide open doors at the front and precise narrow passages at the back. I am hoping for an evolution of thought in the West, although I suspect it may have already taken place in rare places I have yet to find. What I hope to find is a disciplined rationality that does away with silly dichotomies and recognizes an ecology of thought. We should be able to see in Religion a true essence of the timeless and the transcendent, and we should build upon that wisdom of ages while we continue to reach for the stars...

OK, do I sound more like Deepak Chopra or Carl Sagan? Enough.

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January 07, 2006

A Conservative Conclusion

At Cobb, I came to represent the Old School and have done so for the past several years primarily through the personal and the political. In making a lot of noise about my conversion from the standard 'black Independent' to throwing in my lot with the GOP, I have learned a great deal. At this juncture, I can't think of anything in particular that I haven't covered or that compels me to say much more on that subject, although I'm certain that I will again from time to time.

Over the past year, I have gone from self-employment, which began in 2001 to working for a small corporation of about 700. Consequently, I have gone from having plenty of cash and time to having less of both and from rising through the upper middle class to settling into the bottom of it more or less comfortably. Therefore my ambitions to organize GOP politics in Southern Cal and online have taken a back seat to more conventional concerns, like overtime for the bossman.

I have gone through a generation of the blogosphere having created and witnessed the birth and maturity of my progressive group blog Vision Circle which is now hobbling on the legs of one author. I have also created The Conservative Brotherhood which ambles on with its new portal despite defections. Here at Cobb where I spend the overwhelming majority of my time I have been very pleased to join in with the Bear Flag League and attain and maintain Large Mammal status. Although I was invited, I declined membership in Pajamas Media. I don't do ads. I have benefitted greatly from the support and sponsorship of Scott Peterson's Punditdrome, frequent mentions by Shay Riley's Booker Rising and inclusion in Black Blogger's Association syndications. A considerable debt is also owed to my three greatest blogfathers, DenBeste at the late USS Clueless, Sean-Paul Kelley The Agonist and the ever mellow and indescribably warm and collegial George Kelly of Negrophile and all points sophisticated. A special shout out goes to BTD Steve too.

I would also like to spend a moment thanking my most faithful supporters and faithless detractors. You know who you are. Temple3, Matt128, Memer, Southernxyl, Prometheus6, Spence, Brown, Anderson, Dean, Nulan, Dell, Ed, T-Steel, Liz Ditz, Caltechgirl, Brotherbrown, Unclesmrgol, XRLQ and whomever slaps me for not recognizing...

OK stop biting your lip. This isn't an obituary. I'm just done with politics as a prime motivator. Cobb will remain and continue. But I'm probably going to change the tagline. If I deal with politics here, it will be dealt with in wry and snarky rather than arrogant and paternalistic terms, most likely through the comic. I'm still a Republican. Call me an ordinary political animal rather than a predator.

Here's what I conclude at the end of several years of blogging more or less politics vis a vis where I'm standing regards to black politics. The consensus political sensibilities of black folk are in line with the economic positions of black folk, most of whom are blue collar folks. There is and remains no great consequence to the difference between blue collar and white collar politics, the American system is designed to work out compromise. Nor should there any great surprise about those differences.

What remains critically important and has since the devolution of the Black Power Movement is that the failures of Nationalism to do an economic and political race raising are reconciled to American standards of class. They have been, with rare exception, those exceptions primarily being those Progressives of the white collar class who adopt the political sensibilities of the blue collar class and/or the poor and indigent. This, of course, raises the burden of proof of the legitimacy of the Progressive agenda since they work against their own class interests for collective aims, however there is ample precedent and parallels in white Liberalism.

The primary burdens of upper middle and upper class blacks whose politics follows their class interests are mostly existential, which is to say that while their class status is not in question, their blackness is. But that is an inappropriately political question begged by the imposition of identity politics. It should be clearly self-evident that the political ambitions of socially and economically advanced blackfolks are reality-based. This question of blackness, however stems from overworked notions about the unifying ability of Progressives who intend to inherit the mantle and the following of Black Nationalist politics, long after its economic failure. The extent to which either American political party recognizes and deals constructively with the rift between Progressive and Conservative black elites, however is minimal. In the end, I have concluded that the debate is mostly between these two groups and that either party will do what they will. What remains is what to make of this rift. It's an answer that requires perhaps 300 pages I have no interest in writing. In those 300 pages each group would be reconciled to the

historical development of their various political positions and everybody will stand on their square and be square, or at least they should.

Whether or not that reconciliation happens, as a Conservative, I am greatly consoled by the reconciliation of my philosophy with the Western concept of the individual. If there be only 2% of African Americans who stand behind Bush, I'd be perfectly happy with those 600 thousand people. That I have personally met with individuals such as Michael Steele of Maryland allows me to be perfectly content in the knowledge that however small my minority is, it is not lunatic nor on any fringe. It's not about the numbers, it's about the principles. In the context of the history of African Americans I'm on more solid ground than those co-hackers of Nat Turner. I hardly need to be militantly righteous. I am perfectly willing to accept the bourgeois differences between various black political positions and philosophies. I'm betting against it coming to militancy in my lifetime. In the end, I've got other things to worry about.

I will continue to monitor the barking and ravings of my political opponents with amusement, and I will continue to make as crystal as possible those principled differences between us. I'm not putting down the verbal sword by any measure, I'm simply not leading with it. I will however be less likely to get caught up in the struggle at the blogospheric level as I am convinced there is no political forum of substance, depth and popularity here which is capable of changing the dynamic of what goes on in the greater public. I have seen the black blogosphere and it is what it is. But it is hardly the catalyst for change I might have imagined, nor is there any indication to me that may be in the offing. Practically speaking that means I will spend a whole lot less effort making writing things 'for posterity'. With black and other politics, I will be in Popeye mode. I yam what I yam, and iffen you don't like it, prepare for an impatient ass whoopin'. So long as I have kids at home, they deserve my wisdom more than you. Bite me if you don't like it.

What will occupy that fat end of my brain fat will be the more philosophical matters attending to the nature of Religion and ethics here and abroad. I am fully satisfied that American politics, being that it represents the art of the possible, is about as ethical as it needs to be, which is to say sufficient to keep people with pitchforks and torches off the streets and other nations from wiping their asses with our leadership. I am absolutely convinced that there is no impending crisis which makes cops question their loyalties, nor ordinary middle class folks to consider the necessity of taking up arms against the powers that be. In other words, as implied by my lack of tears attending taking up the bossman's business, I can give up studied bloviation because in the end, well it's all just studied bloviation.

The Revolution won't be televised because there is no Revolution. What goes on in the heads of those who believe there will be is beyond my concern.

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October 30, 2005

The Sambo Paradox

This week Lt. Gov. **Michael S. Steele**, a man I respect and admire, was called a 'sambo' because of his association with Gov. Erlich of Maryland. The rationale behind a particular nasty smear of Steele was given as follows:

In an e-mail interview with The Sun, Gilliard said he considers Steele a traitor to his race because he initially dismissed news that his political partner, Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich Jr., held a golfing fund-raiser this year at the Elkridge Club of Baltimore, which at the time had never admitted a black member in its 127-year history.

"Generally, it is an accurate depiction of Steele's groveling, lackey behavior," Gilliard said of the image. "It is 2005, and such an institution [as the Elkridge Club] should not exist, nor should a governor with as many black people as the state of Maryland attend a function at such a place.

I've been thinking about causality recently vis a vis the permanence of the American black ghetto. The first is the issue of ghetto brain drain. Does the black ghetto fail to flower because all of the talented people leave and integrate the mainstream leaving nobody capable of improving the place? Or do the young, gifted and black leave the ghetto because it is such a failure and holds no promise for them? A difficult question indeed. Connected with that question is whether it is in the interest of the getting investment is good for the ghetto. Is it better for poor people to retain the benefits of lower cost housing which is affordable for their low pay jobs? Or should they deal with the challenges of gentrification as proof of a higher standard of living?

These questions are tricky to plumb, but I think I've found one that is not. That is the question of blacks and Republicans. I'll quote [an argument that is very common](#). In fact, a thoughtful person emailed me such an argument just this morning:

The failure of the politics of conservative thought in the Black community has never been a surprise for me I have always known that black people are very astute in rejecting backward ideas, underdeveloped thoughts and philosophies. The media fiction that the GOP and conservative principles are gaining a new foothold with Black folks is nonsense and is nothing more than the exaggerated press releases of GOP balloon blowers and black apologists seeking affirmation from conservative whites as they mine the lucrative cottage industry of black conservatism.

Even absent the bloviation and my claim that such propagandists wouldn't know Hayek from a kayak, there is one thing clear. Most African Americans have looked upon the GOP as a white bastion and have decided to steer clear. Let's assume for the sake of argument that the vaunted '98%' of blackfolks who have recently polled in opposition to GWBush were even more - say 99.9%, and presume that the GOP was in fact, 99.9% white. It would be very easy to see how a top official in the GOP like Governor Erlich of Maryland would be attending all-white clubs and functions. So here's the tricky question.

Are such GOP functions all-white because of white racism or are they all-white because '99.9%' of blacks refuse to join?

Everybody knows, or should know as black Republicans daily attest, blacks are more than welcome into the GOP. Nothing quite speaks to this fact as the Senate campaign of Michael Steele itself which brought heavy hitters in the GOP to raise over \$400,000 recently. He is their best chance to swing the state of Maryland, so this race is key. But if the identity component of some black politics is to have its way, Steele and other African American candidates, movers, shakers and grass roots Republicans will never be considered legitimately black. So despite their presence in the GOP, for cynics like Steve Gilliard a reverse one-drop rule is in effect. If you're black and you have one-drop of Republican blood, then you are considered white. And as long as such twisted logic is taken seriously by black voters, the GOP's 'whiteness' remains an implacable stumbling block.

I have argued in '[The Worst Case Republican Scenario](#)' that if there is any good to be had with influence in America's majority party, then African Americans ought to shed their fears and [cross that Pettus bridge](#) into the heart of the GOP. But in this crossing they won't be met with billy clubs, or at least not from Republicans. It seems that black Democrats are the ones with the biggest axes to grind.

You will note that here at Cobb, there are no advertisements. I've gotten a free hotel room for speaking at a conservative function, but even though C-SPAN was there, they didn't even turn on the camera at our session. If that's a cottage industry, I'm still at the curb. But I am fully in the Republican party and doing my part to do Republicanism the way my experience and values dictate. I don't happen to think that this is a very courageous or dangerous operation. I endured being called a 'sambo' in highschool.

I'll paraphrase Gilliard to show the flaw in his logic. In 2005 a whites-only political party should not exist, nor should a country with as many black people as America allow such a place to exist. So who is involved in integration, and who is making racist threats against those who cross the lily-white line?

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January 24, 2005

Spongebob: Who's Your Daddy?

Dobson is the target and there's not much he can do about that. He wants to be more people's daddy than he deserves.

First of all, let me say for the record that of all the characters I've exposed my kids to, Spongebob is one of the most benign and uplifting. If there is any danger in SpongeBob Squarepants, it's that his sunny optimism, guileless demeanor and ready trustworthiness are too disarming in a world of sharks and monsters. But darn it, he's funny and I like him. If I had the wherewithal, I'd be licensing the recipe from Nickelodeon and opening Krusty Krab Restaurants to dot the landscape. In some

ways, the world cannot get enough Spongebob. He radiates innocent goodness like no other character in an American child's mediasphere. Only Steve, from Blues Clues, comes close.

For Dobson to [mis]interpret Spongebob for some perverted purpose is one of two errors. The first is the direct error, the more innocent of the two. It's just a simply misinterpretation - like foreign journalists taking a story in The Onion seriously. But it's more likely the second type of error, which is that of overreach.

There is are several reasons, I think, for Dobson's overreach. The first, which should never be disregarded, is that he's greedy. He wants more influence and he will compete with everyone to get it. He's found the answers in his own life and he's convinced that everyone should be happy just like him. Groupthink, and he's the leader of the group.

The second is the Dobson does have real enemies behind the moral decline of pop culture. There's no denying all the porno out there, and there's no evading the fact that somebody has got to fight it. There are a lot of people in the 'arts' who are simply there for the money, and I think the death of Johnny Carson gives us the kind of contrast which is necessary at times like this. There are more late night TV shows in his mold than ever, and I'm sure they make more money than ever. But none of them have the genuine decency that Carson possessed, and there is no way today's system could nurture another like Carson. Instead we have a cigar chomping insult sock puppeted dog named Triumph. The triumph of what?

The third reason is the one that concerns me the most, and that is the abdication of critical reasoning by the millions who focus on Focus on the Family and all other fonts of correctness. Of all the basic things on the planet we humans do, one would think that we would need no assistance in raising our own children. This whole industry of second-guessing parents 'for the sake of the children' has infantilized our entire society. Everybody wants to be family in the narrow mold, everybody wants their lover to be a Married Spouse, even if that person is of one gender in the daytime and another at night. Everybody is looking for a new Daddy to approve of their studied indecision. Understand that Nile Rodgers and the tolerance crew are playing the same game. Why do we need institutions (that pop up out of nowhere every damned week) to tell us the right way to think about each other? Because people won't make up their own minds and be responsible for their own choices. There's a lot of blame to go around here, and the result is social confusion. Enter Dobson, and see reason number one.

Dobson's Focus on the Family is a necessary part of a complete and balanced society. But like Cheerios, you don't eat it for every meal. Just because it's good for you doesn't mean that too much isn't bad for you. This is too much.

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September 02, 2004

Real Black Republicans

This is tiring, but I'm going to post it anyway. I will say that in about 12 months I'm going to stop being a black Republican and just become a Republican. I've got about a year's more BS to deal with as a Sophomore and then I'm going to graduate early. I still have yet to make any T-shirts, but that's coming too.

My boy Joe Phillips is doing fine. It's nice to see him mentioned. Meanwhile, lazy editors of presumptuous publications mischaracterize what's real about black Republicans. I'm starting to see why Thomas Sowell spends so much ink. It really is a fight over who owns the race. But as I said, I'm not long for this game. I say that as a [Black] computer scientist. Watch my race disappear and then show up stunningly.

Meanwhile to the [text](#):

The percentage of black Republican national convention delegates grew from 10 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2004, he said. Black Republicans hold office in 22 or 23 states across the country, Watts said.

The former college football star called on the party activists in the room to support black Republican candidates financially and to spread the message themselves of how the Republican Party better matches blacks' values. Bush-Cheney campaign staffers and celebrities, such as former "Cosby Show" actor and Republican Joe Phillips, are overwhelmed by invitations to speak, Watts said.

"We don't have enough time to cover the requests that we have," Watts said. "I am appreciative of all the efforts that all of you make."

I'll be getting in touch with these guys in California in due time. Meanwhile here's the full text of the article reprinted without permission for discussion and review.

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September 02, 2004 in [Conservatism](#), [Keeping It Right](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBack \(1\)](#)

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December 29, 2003

GOP Integration: BYO Blackness

Yet again, I am getting whacked for my realpolitik. I continue to suggest that African Americans integrate the Republican Party, and last week I said those that didn't were chickenshit. Let me say it another way.

I hate analogies as much as the next guy, but they can be awfully useful sometimes. I hope this is a time, and yes I'm going to make it personal too. If the principle of what I am attempting to encourage has not been made self-evident by now, then it only proves the necessity of yet one more try.

This time I'm going to talk about the computer industry. As I mentioned on Kujichagulia to my offspring, there was a knucklehead named Kent who famously told me in 1984 that I had to choose between computers and business. Nobody could do both, they don't mix. Kent was one of the managers responsible for the Xerox computer business. You do the math. In my calculations, Kent was incompetent to decide my future, and I am certain there have been years when I bet he wishes he had my job in the computer business (in the business of business computing) despite his fervent belief that computers did not belong on the desks of business managers. But Kent wasn't the only naysayer in this matter. Legions of folks have been proven wrong.

There are no black women in computing. Do I mean it literally? Of course not. However, if you were a professional man in search of a professional wife, and you had the same tastes in women as I, chances are that during the 80s and 90s your pickings would be mighty slim. I have worked, in the past 18 years, with exactly 4 peers who were black and female in the multi-billion dollar Database and Business Intelligence segment of the computer industry. Not only that, my job as a consultant has put me in scores of different corporations from coast to coast. I'll restate the obvious, black women are scarce.

Nevertheless I have married, raised kids (one halfway to adulthood), and have not been babeless all this time. While I have not been swimmin' in women, I have been very happy and comfortable. But I've never even looked for them in the workplace. Tangentially, one of the reasons I stay bald is because when I'm on the road, I cannot count on finding the right kind of barber, and I should say that because of the French & Indian Creole side of the family my hair is very straight at the roots so even the ordinary black barber can't fade me right. In otherwords, I get what I need by providing it myself or seeking alternative sources. There would be no way I could have any pride or function properly as a black man if I depended on the computer industry to take care of my personal needs. It doesn't matter to me whether the industry is hostile or indifferent with regards to the reasons for its short supply, I bring it myself. So you will see, at industry functions, a black family when families are invited. **I represent.**

I am satisfied with my career because it provides the rewards I expect. But it is not a part of my expectations for them to understand and provide anything related to black culture. If I had to get support from the workplace, I would be in sorry shape. But since I do get what I need, when I am in the workplace the flow goes the other way. They get it from me. I am the provider. So everywhere I work has a little more flavor than it had before I came with it. This is your standard 'strong positive black man' stuff. I got it goin' on and everybody is better off for that. Every once in a while people want to touch my hair. Every once in a while somebody says something incredibly stupid and racist. Every once in a while there are intolerably stark reminders of the white male desolation of computer geekdom. So some days, I have to head for the hills and recharge the batteries. Nevertheless it is not difficult for me to enjoy a week in Boise, Idaho learning MDX, as Cobb readers know.

So to the Republican Party.

My home is my well-wrapped universe. But I still cannot find that poem by Nikki Giovanni that talked about a revolution. She said that when she was younger she had energy stored up to take heat to the Man so that he could never keep her down. But then she had a thought and that was that if she had a revolution in her own mind that she could be liberated from complicity in her own oppression. She didn't need to fight the Man, because she didn't need the Man. She thus accomplished her revolution without firing a shot. This revolution is what I call the sound of the drum. It is the basic operating principles of self-respect which has been maintained through African American culture for more generations than a few. This is what you keep whole and pure by any means necessary.

A man with dignity doesn't need to join a club. His membership dignifies the club.

People need to convince me that membership in an American political party cuts off the sound of the drum, because I don't believe it. What I hear, when people complain about the Republicans and African Americans is that joining deafens the sound of the drum, blanches all that was black and irreversibly corrupts the soul. I say these people have the wrong expectations of political parties in general and are probably not quite well stocked enough at home to survive hostility and indifference.

If you don't believe that good triumphs over evil. If you believe that you can be faded. If you think there can be no such thing as a righteous black Republican (or American, or Muslim, or Gay) then I would suggest you go get your Nikki Giovanni on, because deep down you have not won your own revolution.

I once wrote in my old performance poetry days that the great man keeps his own poetry with him, in rhythm. Pick up an Essence magazine and take it to work with you and leave it on the desk for everyone to see. In fact, put it in the pile in the lunch room. But I digress.

I cannot mean to suggest that there are not legitimate beefs with the Republican or any political party that are not best solved through loyal opposition. That would be pure idiocy. As I said in the beginning, my expectation is to triple black Republicans to somewhere around 10-12% by 2013. But I know that partisanship is weaker than consensus, and I know that the Democratic monopoly on black attention is already broken. Most importantly, I know that home is where the heart is and ain't nobody gonna turn me 'round.

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