

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Albert Inexcusable



London

Every spring about this time the popular British historian Paul Johnson and his wife Marigold hold a garden party at his London home. The mix of politicians,

intellectuals, and businesspeople is unlike anything one would come upon in the United States. Political Correctitude is not yet a religion here.

At the Johnsons' party there are apt to be people from the left such as the playwright Harold Pinter and Lord and Lady Longford. Like me they are now war resisters. Then too there were authoritative, if divergent, students of the Balkan fracas, such as Noel Malcolm and John Keegan, the author of a very good history of World War I. The playboy philosopher Taki was there, postulating his tricky metaphysical theories. And there was even a London-based reporter from a mainstream American newspaper, who lived up to my expectations. He was very nice, very superior, and very convinced that this London crowd was so much wittier than any group of sophisticates one might find in America. Furthermore, no one at Paul Johnson's would be so gauche as to inveigh against Our President in the shocking way that the *Washington Post's* Sally Quinn and David Broder had. Allow me this footnote: Broder waited until the last minute to express his indignation over Clinton's transformation of the White House into animal house. When Broder did finally fall on Clinton he did it with the utmost restraint. It is a defect he can rectify the next time the 42nd president disgraces himself.

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times column syndicated by Creators Syndicate.

At any rate there were many diverse views expressed the other night, but most seemed to agree with the philosopher Taki that when Vice President Al Gore termed President Clinton's sex life "inexcusable" he committed a major political blunder. Better it would be for Gore and all Democrats up for election simply to stay the course. Continue to say that fellatio in the White House with a young intern is a private matter. Continue to say everyone does it. Continue to insist that every American president from George Washington to the present had a small harem somewhere behind the drapes.

Gore has been stalwart in defending the ithyphallic adulterer, obstructor of justice, and dog-wagger in the White House. On the very day Clinton was impeached for doing what any red-blooded American sexual deviant would do when brought before a grand jury—that is to say, commit perjury—Gore stood on the White House lawn and described the Boy Pedophile as "one of our greatest presidents." Now he says he was just being loyal and that voters should marvel at what a good, loyal vice president he is. Well, he should not be surprised that his sudden disparagement of the president triggered uncomfortable questions from the press. He gave them the provocation.

Had Gore stuck to his earlier lines that the president should be allowed his privacy and that presidents will be presidents, it is unlikely the press would have pounced. If the press did take issue with Gore, he could merely rely on the Democrats' party line. It did not get them into hot water in the past. Why should it get them into hot water now?

The Clintons have been successful in overcoming their scandals because they are reflexive liars. Even when caught with an abundance of evidence they merely

avoid the topic. Then they excoriate those who amassed the evidence and remind the world of the incipient Nazism of their political opponents. At best they are Clinton-haters or extremists—a term that has not been so effectively used since President Lyndon Johnson used it against Senator Barry Goldwater in the presidential campaign of 1964.

Rather than call Clinton's behavior "inexcusable" Gore should be laughing it off as the price Bill Clinton pays for being the handsomest Southern president since Jimmy Carter. Then the vice president should remind the journalists of their complicity in the Spanish American War and the Red Scare. He should repine over

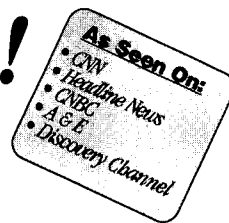
25 YEARS AGO IN The American Spectator

There is nothing dreamlike about technology: It works—and because it works, it gives plausibility to the notion that modern man is uniquely in the position of being able to convert his idealized dreams into tangible reality. It also gives plausibility to the notion that, because the development of technology—of man's control over both nature and man—is progressive, therefore human history itself can be defined as progressive, as leading us from an imperfect human condition to a perfected one. The ancient Hebrews, the Greeks, the Christians, all felt there was a diabolical aspect to the power of technology; they saw no reason to think men would always use this power wisely, and thought it quite probable we would use it for destructive ends. But modern technology, emerging in a context of millenarian aspirations and rationalist metaphysics, was not bothered—at least not until recently—by such doubts. Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* is the first truly modern utopia—a society governed by scientists and technologists....

—Irving Kristol
"Utopianism, Ancient and Modern"
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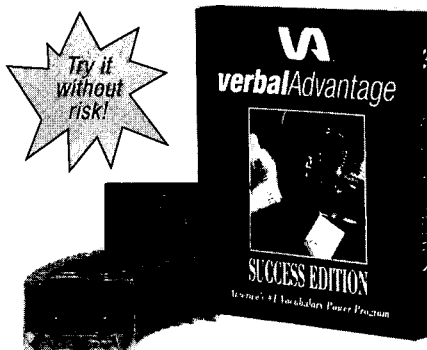
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the politics of personal destruction and denounce the Republican Party as a "vast right-wing conspiracy." Recent history suggests this really works. He might also suggest an air strike against Monaco.

That Gore would depart from his old tactic of defending the boss so early in his race for the presidency is curious. Remember that it has worked for years. The Clintons have been lying, obstructing justice, breaking campaign laws, and perhaps even swapping nuclear technology with the Chinese for campaign funds. Gore has been as good at covering up for

them as they have. This is no time for Gore to begin telling the truth about Clinton.

Frankly, it makes Washingtonians edgy. It leaves them wondering if the man who would have his finger on the nuclear trigger is unstable. If Gore begins telling the truth about his boss, seasoned Washington political insiders might even begin to question *his* character. I can see it now: Gore badgered along the campaign trail by "the character issue." All because finally he told the truth about Bill Clinton. ❀

dition of public schools in the inner city and conclude that many students fail to score well on SAT tests because of their schools. Would it not be better to improve the high schools than to further degrade the colleges?

The consequence of the Department of Education's attack on the SAT tests is that colleges will actually get worse. Colleges are supposed to be our most rigorous educational units. They are the gateway to graduate work. Education bureaucrats tell us college degrees are essential for high-paying jobs. But this is not always true. Graduate degrees in the humanities often lead to low-paying jobs. One of the reasons that colleges are in the muddle they are in today is that forty years ago college administrators, greedy for more government funding, insisted that a college-educated population would increase the wealth of the community. That is not always the case, and if colleges continue to decline to the condition of 1950's high schools, the value of a college degree will be even smaller.

Yet, as I say, the purpose of many Liberals in debate is merely to confuse the public. The Department of Education comes up with this abstruse notion of "significant disparate impact." More lucid minds would look at the SAT test score and see "disparate results." They would go right to the source, to wit, inferior high schools, and do something about them. Improving the schools is too vast an undertaking for the bureaucrats. Hence they make an education issue into a civil rights issue. In the end their effort to confuse the public has brought them to confusion—not for the first time. The SAT test should remain. ❀

This Is Just a Test

One of the great and anti-democratic goals of American Liberalism is to make public matters so complicated that the public despairs and transfers the matter at hand over to the liberal bureaucrats. Another of the great and anti-democratic goals of American Liberalism is to stand on both sides of every issue. Again, confusing the public is the Liberals' desired end, all the better to control the public.

On the matter of improved education, the Clintonian Liberal stands four square for educational standards. Yet now when it comes to the standards maintained by SAT college-entrance examinations, the Liberals are against those standards. The SAT standards have for decades proved to be accurate predictors of a potential college student's likelihood to earn a college degree. Now, however, according to the U.S. Education Department's Office for Civil Rights, when those standards have what the bureaucrats call "significant disparate impact" on members of a particular race, national origin, or sex, they are to be waived. Ill-prepared students are to be accepted by colleges on some other basis. Thus the Liberals are again on both sides of the issue: for standards but against them.

The consequence is that students who are not likely to graduate from college or

to benefit from a college education are gently coerced to set aside years of their lives on college campuses that can do little for them. Another consequence is that students are to be chosen for college on the grounds of race, gender, or national origin. That, of course, is precisely the opposite of the color-blind society that Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights pioneers fought for.

If the Liberal bureaucrats at the Department of Education have their way, the scholastically unqualified student will waste years of his life. His family and the state will waste funds and resources. And no educational purpose is served. Colleges will be even more heavily burdened with unhappy students who do not belong there. Finally, high schools that have failed to prepare students for college will be allowed to continue to fail as educational institutions.

Implicit in the Education Department's campaign against the SAT tests is bigotry, racial and otherwise. The notion held by the department is that women, blacks, and certain groups from poor countries are incapable of doing well on SAT tests. So the tests are to be eliminated. Others have a more optimistic view of these groups' possibilities. They believe in the essential equality of the races, sexes, and ethnic groups. They blame the disparity in test scores on the deplorable con-

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Liberalism's Attempt to Seduce Holy Mother Church

The greatest imaginable triumph of secular liberalism in history would be its conquest of the 2,000-year-old Catholic Church. To date, secular liberalism has, under the guise of "liberal Catholicism," led much of American Catholicism astray. Consider:

- Liberal "therapeutic" priests are silent about sin. But then what did Christ save us from? No wonder Catholicism seems incoherent to many!

- Liberal priests refuse to talk about Hell. But if there's no Hell, why be good? No wonder Catholic attitudes about immorality are virtually as permissive as the rest of society!

- Liberal clerics excuse their people from the Church's high sexual standards. No wonder certain clerics excuse themselves too, hence so many sex scandals among the clergy!

- Liberal priests don't explain Catholic teaching to their flocks. No wonder Catholics are easily won over by New Agers and secularists!

- Liberal Catholics, bitten by the bug of Political Correctness, are forever bellyaching about the "sexist, homophobic, oppressive" Church. No wonder they don't attract converts to the Church!

- Liberal Catholicism denies the binding character of Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium: One need only "follow one's conscience," which amounts to doing only what's convenient. But people instinctively do what's convenient, without any coaxing from the clergy, so why go to church? No wonder church attendance has dropped dramatically!

Liberal Catholics are just pathetic imitators of liberal Protestants. By making Christianity comfortably ambiguous, have liberal Protestant churches been flooded with new members? *No. They're actually dying.* (Just what secular liberalism wants!) Why are they dying? Because they offer no authoritative answers to life's big questions: why am I here? what is true religion and virtue? how do I get to Heaven? By essentially turning themselves into debate clubs, therapy centers, and concert halls, they've failed to offer people anything unique and unsurpassable. They elicit no commitment and little interest.



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The Prophet of Profits

George Gilder extends his seamless web.

What's George Gilder up to these days? He used to write about feminism, marriage, and tax cuts. He's still interested in those things but now he is studying the new economy of what he calls the Telecosm, and putting out the *Gilder Technology Report*. He keeps an eye on Silicon Valley, and then, by a process that no one quite understands, figures out which companies are making the new products that the new technology needs. He keeps his subscribers informed of these developments. The first issue of his newsletter came out three years ago, and investors who followed his advice would have done very well financially. So he is practicing the great capitalist art that he has all along preached. The good capitalist learns how to serve others effectively, he has said, and does so by creating something that is worth more than it cost. Which is not an easy task by any means. His monthly newsletter costs subscribers \$300 a year, but that would have been a bargain for those who followed the investment advice it contained.

One of the impressive things about George Gilder is the way one interest has led to another in seamless fashion. In 25 years, he has gone from writing about feminism to Wavelength Division Multiplexing, or whatever the latest digital or fiber-optic technology may be, without seeming to have changed the subject in his own mind. Feminism (*Sexual Suicide*) led to family, and to the travails of growing up

without a father (*Naked Nomads*), which led to the ill effects of welfare (*Visible Man*), thence to an interest in economics and supply-side theory (*Wealth and Poverty*). This led to a study of entrepreneurship (*Spirit of Enterprise*) and so to the new technology of semiconductors and the digital world (*Microcosm*), and its likely effects on society (*The End of Television*) which has turned into an ongoing examination of which high-tech companies are doing what (*Gilder Technology Report*).

Physics itself has been his latest venture, because in order to know which companies are doing things that will prove successful in the long run (a few years, in the fast-moving world of high-tech), he has to know which ones are employing technology that is going with the flow of the underlying physics, and which ones are fighting that flow. So the omnibus volume of Gilderian wisdom goes from Betty Friedan to Richard Feynman without logical leaps, and classifying it would puzzle the conscientious librarian. He told me the other day that debating misguided European advocates of something called Time Division Multiple Access technology (bad), not to be confused with Code Division Multiple Access (good), both having to do with cellular telephony, "was as emotional as debating Ti-Grace Atkinson and Germaine Greer in the feminist wars." I can believe it. Gilder's next book, summarizing his latest findings, will be called *Telecosm*. He also has a book on religion in his future.

Gilder lives and works in the Berkshires, in Western Massachusetts, far from Silicon Valley. But in the telecosm, what does distance matter? Gilder Technology

Group occupies a rambling suite of office in a huge old textile mill in a small town called Housatonic. The mill is about the size of a World War II troop ship, with dusty floorboards and echoing corridors and great bare wooden rooms, seemingly empty for decades. They provide space that Andy Grove could hardly afford in Santa Clara. Gilder himself was squeezed into a rather small office, with physics books shelved on the wall behind him. He was tapping at a laptop, replying to some bulletin-board comments on his website (www.gildertech.com). Gilder is close to his sixtieth birthday. His hair is thinning but he is still as alert-looking as ever, and if anything leaner. He runs five miles a day, preferably uphill. That puts less strain on the knees.

When Gilder was working on *Wealth and Poverty* twenty years ago, Peter Sprague told him about the semiconductor industry and the coming microcosm. Soon, scores of transistors would be placed not on the head of a pin but on the point of a pin! Framed above his bed George had a quotation from William Blake: "To See a World in a Grain of Sand." It turned out that microchips were made of silicon, or sand, and a world of information could be inscribed within them. That technological echo of the poetic image captivated him. Small was indeed beautiful, and good, too. Pinned to his wall today is another saying, which captures Gilder's most essential quality: "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not, genius will not, education will not. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

"It just seemed to me to be the most important thing that was going on," he said of the new technology. "I didn't think our literature was especially impressive, or our poetry, art, or films. They were not as representative of what this era was accom-

TOM BETHELL is TAS's Washington correspondent. His latest book, *The Noblest Triumph*, was recently published by St. Martin's Press.