

# VANITY FAIR

## JAMES WOLCOTT'S BLOG

### **Klinging to the Wreckage**

A few days ago **notice was taken** (I'm practicing my passive voice) of economist Arnold Kling's contention that the Obama stimulus plan was actually "**reparations**" in disguise. Given the complexion of our new president, this was interpreted as injecting a needless bit of race-baiting into the economic debate, raising the specter of a million Jeremiah Wrights marching on the capital mall with outstretched hands, demanding their cut of the action. Oh dear me no, protested Kling. No coded race talk was intended. He was actually thinking of the Treaty of Versailles, as reflected in the sentence "To the Democrats, the Bush tax cuts were a heinous evil, comparable to Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality in World War I." Idiotically hyperbolic and baseless as Kling's caricaturing is (seriously, name me one frigging Democrat who invoked *violations of Belgian neutrality* in railing against the Bush tax cuts), it did open the door ajar to possible acquittal on the racebaiting charge. To cool things down, Kling (an adjunct scholar at the Cato Institute, which has been taking out all those **big ads**) closed off comments before the mosh pit got any gnarlier.

And there the matter might have rested had not Kling surrendered to heat of candor today at a Heritage Foundation/Club for Growth confab and **decried**, "Barack Obama is destroying my daughter's future. It is like sitting there watching my house ransacked by a gang of thugs."

Now if Kling can't comprehend the implication of racial menace encoded in daughter-gang-thugs/home invasion, he's either fatuously clueless--too innocent for this wicked world--or weaselly disingenuous, and a drama queen either way. Did he feel the sanctity of his home was being violated when the costs of the Iraq war shot into outer space? Did he picture marauders smashing cherished mementoes when Hank Paulson introduced TARP? Anytime Obama's name and "thug" are thrown in close proximity, it's a pretty sure bet that the speaker or author intends to fan the anxiety and animosity of those who think Obama's presidency represents black grievance gloved with the iron fist of the state--and out to punish whitey. No wonder so many would-be Wolverines in the right blogs are talking about stocking up on assault rifles and ammo--they've got ransackers running wild in their imaginations too. I urge these people to confront their racial fears, think of Scarlet Johansson and strawberry snowflakes and the musical numbers in Rent, and join the rest of us in Matisse's **dancing daisy-chain of eternal spring**.

February 10, 2009, 4:03 PM | [Permalink](#) | [RSS Feed](#)  [Digg This](#)  [Post to Facebook](#)  [Yahoo! Buzz](#)



**About James Wolcott**

James Wolcott is a Vanity Fair contributing editor. [Read his full bio](#), or [syndicate this blog](#).

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## Wolcott in Print

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*The Catsitters* by James  
 Wolcott (Paperback | Kindle  
 Edition)  
*Attack Poodles and Other  
 Media Mutants: The Looting of  
 the News in a Time of Terror*  
 by James Wolcott  
*Beene by Beene* with an  
 introduction by James Wolcott

## Notable Books

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*The Bird Catcher* by Laura  
 Jacobs  
*A Vindication of Love* by  
 Cristina Nehring  
*Antoine's Alphabet: Watteau  
 and His World* by Jed Perl  
*Autobiography of a Wardrobe*  
 by Elizabeth Kendall  
*CauseWired* by Tom Watson  
*It Seemed Like a Good Idea at  
 the Time* by Moira Hodgson  
*Geoffrey Beene* by Kim  
 Hastreiter  
*Landscape with Moving  
 Figures: A Decade on Dance*, by  
 Laura Jacobs  
*George Lois: On Creating the  
 Big Idea*, by George Lois  
*Merce Cunningham: The  
 Modernizing of Modern Dance*,  
 by Roger Copeland

## Notable Events

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Laura Jacobs Author Event @  
 Barnes & Noble  
 American Ballet Theatre Spring  
 Season  
 Keigwin + Company at Joyce  
 Theater  
 New York City Ballet Spring  
 Season

## Notable Links

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Antiwar  
 The Ballet Bag  
 Balloon Juice (John Cole)  
 Barry Crimmins  
 The Bird Catcher (Laura  
 Jacobs)  
 Blue Girl/Red State  
 Brenda and the F Word  
 By Ken Levine  
 The Carpetbagger Report  
 Clusterfuck Nation (James  
 Howard Kunstler)  
 Classical TV  
 Counterpunch  
 Daily Howler  
 Daily Kos  
 David Byrne  
 David Kamp  
 Deep Glamour  
 Dennis Perrin  
 The Determined Dilettante  
 (Elisabeth Vincentelli)  
 Digby/Hullabaloo  
 Emdashes (Emily Gordon)  
 Eschaton  
 The Field (Al Giordano)  
 Firedoglake  
 Free Inquiry  
 Glenn Greenwald

Gretchen Rubin--Happiness  
Project  
Huffington Post  
Jeff Jarvis  
In the Next Apartment  
(Siobhan)  
Josh Marshall  
Juan Cole  
Just World News  
Lance Mannion  
Lawyers, Guns, and Money  
Majkthise  
The Medium (Virginia  
Heffernan)  
Narconews  
The New Criterion  
Oberon's Grove  
Oliver Willis  
Pandagon  
Roger Ailes  
Sadly, No!  
Self-Styled Siren  
The Sheila Variations  
Sic Semper Tyrannis  
Snobsite  
Steve Gilliard  
Sunset Gun (Kim Morgan)  
Swan Lake Samba Girl (Tonya  
Plank)  
TAPPED  
TBogg  
This Old Brit  
Tom Watson  
War and Piece (Laura Rozen)  
Wonkette  
You Don't Say? (John  
McEntyre)