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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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The NYT Analyzes Madonna (and Bush)

The New York Times publishes an essay on the TV appearances of Bush and Madonna, which I found annoying on several levels. First, we're in the midst of a war and a midterm election, so lumping Bush with Madonna is very clever and post-modern and witty and all that but undermines the seriousness of these times. The link between them is obviously facile -- it's as if they're saying 'What's the difference between a President that most Americans believe lied to them about why we invaded another country, a President who has by his own admission broken the law (and then had the law changed) a President who says he must reserve the right to torture people when signing into law a bill that specifically forbids him to do so and a pop star who adopted a baby?' They're both celebrities, right?

But I save most of my ire for the stuff on Madonna. It said, "Madonna went on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" to assure a skeptical public that she didn't snatch an African baby on a fashionably philanthropic whim." A skeptical public? I don't think so. This whole thing is just a media-created event. I don't think the public has an opinion about Madonna's adoption and if the Oprah audience is any guide (and Oprah rules the world, you know), they're supportive of someone with limitless wealth and kids of her own who is willing to adopt a little boy.

Then it said with her adoption that "Madonna came off as a Lady Bountiful-come-lately, trying to compete with Bono in the world of philanthropy in Africa and with Angelina Jolie in the arena of celebrity mothers without borders." Maybe to the media. The more celebrities who use their fame to promote charitable works the better, I say. Would you rather have stars gabbing about the designer they're wearing or talking about helping to feed starving children or ending the genocide in Darfur?

Most misleading of all, the NYT said "It was interesting to see the

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