



Written by [Jack Kerwick, Ph.D.](#) on February 26, 2013

Why Michelle Obama Appeared at the Oscars

More than a few Americans who tuned into the Oscars ceremony Sunday night were put off by the appearance, via satellite, of First Lady Michelle Obama.

Washington Post writer Jennifer Rubin expresses their disgust when she remarked: "It is not enough that President Obama pops up at every sporting event in the nation. Now the First Lady feels entitled ... to intrude on other forms of entertaining."

Rubin continued: "I'm sure the left will holler that once again conservatives are being grouchy and have it in for the Obamas." However, "if they really had their president's best interests at heart, they'd steer away from encouraging these celebrity appearances." The problem, as Rubin understands it, is that such appearances make "both the president and the first lady seem small and grasping."



This type of analysis is commonplace among those on the right. And the right is so much the worse because of it.

In the wake of their reversals of fortune, Republicans and conservatives have debated much among themselves. For the most part, though, the conflict has centered on the positions that the GOP is known for taking on the issues of the day. But if it is victory that Republicans seek, then it is far more important for them to rethink *how they think* about American politics itself.

This means that they must rethink their views on their opponents, especially the Obamas, who know the nature of American political life better than anyone.

The Obamas may "seem small and grasping," as Rubin asserts, but if so, then they appear this way only to those who have always disliked them. In other words, they seem small and grasping to those Americans with whom the Obamas are no longer concerned.

In contrast, to over half of the country that voted for them, the Obamas seem *connected*. And to those "low information" Americans who are politically disengaged but who live for their movies and sports, the Obamas now seem like folks with whom they can relate, ordinary Americans who share their interests.

This is one reason why Barack and Michelle Obama continue to make "these celebrity appearances" that Jennifer Rubin and legions of other conservatives so lament.

Yet there is another. The Obamas don't refuse the opportunity to make *celebrity* appearances precisely because they indeed *want* to be seen as celebrities.



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All celebrities are famous, it is true, but not all famous people are celebrities. To cite just one example, George W. Bush is famous. But he is no celebrity. Celebrities belong to the pop culture. Usually, a celebrity is mostly loved. Yet even when that celebrity is hated, it is not a real hatred to which he is subjected. It is an obsession, a hatred that the haters *love*. As such, as long as the obsession endures, those who do the obsessing will do anything to make sure that their objects remain in full view of the public.

The Obamas know this well. This, once more, explains why they ache to be celebrities.

There is a third and final reason why the president and First Lady insist upon making their faces seen and voices heard all throughout the culture. They have a desire — one shared by leftists for centuries — to erase the boundaries that modern Western states have drawn between political and non-political arenas of life.

Seeing the president and First Lady at nationally and globally televised sporting events and Hollywood ceremonies makes it all that much easier for the average American to think that there is virtually no area of his life that excludes, or should exclude, government intervention. As feminists have been saying for decades, the personal is political, and the political is personal. To be sure, the Obamas want to make sure that every American believes this.

This can't be stated strongly enough: If Republicans really do want to win national elections again, then they need to understand just how and why their opponents think as they do.

At the same time, they might also want to consider that this approach to politics has proven successful for the Obamas.



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