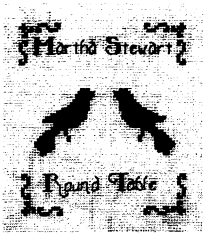

Martha Stewart Roundtable

Kmartha

Shirley Teresa Wajda

With the 1999 offering of Class A common stock to the public, Martha Stewart has made the street—that is, Wall Street—her home. On October 18, 1999, Martha Stewart herself served to the denizens of Wall Street a homemade breakfast of scrambled egg-stuffed, scallop-shaped brioche, chocolate croissants, and fresh squeezed orange juice. The coffee and bagel street vendors in downtown New York stood little chance of a good thing—that is, good business—that morning.

Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO) fared much better. By day's end, the company's stock had soared from the initial public offering (IPO) of 7.2 million shares at $18.00 per share to $35.56 per share.[1] That's a lot of brioche. Indeed, it's a lot of food for thought. The phenomenon that is Martha Stewart—whether the person, the brand, the many companies, or the lifestyle Stewart advocates and sells—stuns by its success, measured in the material evidence of sales and in the advice displayed in material form in many American homes. Others scorn Stewart's enterprises as materialistic, "new Gilded Age" excess, the result of an overbearing (female) CEO driven by (take your choice) greed, perfectionism, or a problematic personal life. (What next, detractors ask, invading Poland with spatulas and fondue forks?)

That Stewart *herself* elicits both avid praise and acrid derision is telling, and what I wish to explore tentatively in this essay is why those responses occur,

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and so loudly. Despite the "Martha-bashing," Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia is wildly successful; any discussion of "Martha-meaning" must thus account for consumerism's relationship to Americans' notions of the self at the heart of this phenomenon. Indeed, when we speak of Martha Stewart we are really speaking of a contested ideal, a "Kmartha," if you will. Kmartha comprises the celebrity, the corporation, the confounding image of American tradition and progress, all brought, literally, home. Martha Stewart offers brioche to Wall Street speculators but brings home the bacon, and this boundary "transgression" of public and private is the one that seems to provoke so much anxiety. Just as quickly, however, Kmartha offers a salve in material goods and comforting advice, nostalgic re-creations of family cohesion and community well-being, all the while advocating both disciplined system and self sufficiency.

In this respect Martha Stewart taps into a deeper American concern about individualism and its place in society. In a special issue of *The New York Times Magazine* entitled "The Me Millennium" (17 October 1999), sociologist and public policy expert Andrew J. Cherlin explored the contradictory definitions of individualism found in the newspaper's survey conducted for that special issue. The American public is extremely selfish. "The selfishness is not shameless," Cherlin writes,

> in fact, the public seems somewhat conflicted. People bemoan the self-centeredness they see around them. They regret that family ties are weakening. They complain that they can't trust most people. But at the same time, they express starkly individualistic views. When presented with a list of basic values, they strongly identify with personal responsibility, self-sufficiency and self-expression. And not many see the contradiction—that if everyone puts highest priority on one's own interests, then family and community ties may weaken further.[2]

Such a contradiction, Cherlin observes, is the product of Americans' ongoing struggle between an older "utilitarian individualism"—that of Franklinesque achievement and Emersonian self-reliance—and a newer "expressive individualism"—one in which "emotional gratification, self-help, getting in touch with feelings, expressing personal needs" define the self. What is so seductive about expressive individualism is that it is so seemingly democratic: middle-class affluence has allowed more Americans more "time and money to cultivate their own emotional gardens." Nevertheless, in their responses to the survey Americans across the spectrums of class, sex, age, race, ethnicity, and political identity exhibited collectively a split personality between these dueling individualisms and commitment, projecting, for Cherlin, a widespread anxiety about their own pursuit of the American dream.[3]

Both individualisms are available commercially to Americans. The phenomenal success of Oprah Winfrey (with whom Martha Stewart is often compared) depends greatly on expressive individualism. Oprah's Book Club, for example, offers participants (in the main, women) "good reads" with which to explore their feelings. Winfrey's recently launched magazine *O* tenders the same advice of "self-actualization." And Winfrey's daily television show has altered its format in the last several years to exclude sensational topics of social and individual depravity and to emphasize emotional well being and spiritual growth.

If Oprah Winfrey cultivates women's emotional gardens by discussing book plots, Martha Stewart sows, mulches, composts, and weeds a quite different form of plot. As *New York Times* columnist Molly O'Neill points out, Martha Stewart's enterprises "are professionalizing the traditional sphere of 'women's work' into an even bigger, and more demanding arena: 'couples' work'." Indeed, this was Stewart's original intent: to fill in "the hole women left after entering the work force en masse." Stewart offers working Americans of both sexes an example of utilitarian individualism: she raises her own food, tends her own chickens, and recycles, all the while remembering to tend meticulously to traditional rituals that bring together family, friends, and community.[4]

Yet Martha Stewart also stewards a phenomenal business enterprise. In 1991, the eponymous home and decorating magazine *Martha Stewart Living* was introduced through Time, Inc., to 250,000 subscribers. The magazine, reacquired by Stewart in February 1997, now boasts a circulation of 2.1 million, and was expanded in January 2001 from ten to twelve issues a year. Quarterly special issues (entitled *Weddings* and *Baby*) now include holiday issues (Halloween and Christmas). Stewart's weekend television show, launched in September 1993, attracts 2.6 million viewers, while her daily show, "Living with Martha Stewart" (launched in September 1997), expanded from thirty to sixty minutes in January 1999, and, according to Stewart's website, reaches 88 percent of households in the United States. The program now airs in Brazil and Japan, and Stewart's other programs air on cable networks HGTV and the Food Network ("From Martha's Kitchen"). Holiday specials are now primetime events. From 1991 to 1997 Stewart appeared weekly on NBC's "Today," and now she visits CBS's "The Early Show." Martha by Mail debuted in Fall 1995, as did *askMartha*, her *New York Times* syndicated column carried by 235 newspapers across the nation. Ninety-second *askMartha* radio broadcasts are currently carried by 285 stations. The corporation's website, introduced on 8 September 1997, attracts 300,000 hits per week. Since 1982, Martha Stewart has written or coauthored with her magazine's editors over thirty books. (Her first work, *Entertaining*, appeared in 1982 and has undergone thirty printings.) In the last four years, Martha Stewart has signed deals with Kmart, Sherwin-Williams, Jo-Ann Fabrics, and Zellers (a Canadian concern), to put her name on lines of home furnishings—kitchen tools, bed and bath items, interior paints, outdoor furniture and garden tools.[5]

Despite this outsized success—or because of it—Martha Stewart herself is parodied on popular television shows such as "Saturday Night Live" (SNL) or "Late Night With David Letterman." Martha Stewart's own private life has weathered biting, even mean-spirited scrutiny, in part to the rage of the age for "investigative expose" masquerading as fully considered biography. In an era in which the former First Lady (and now United States Senator) is known popularly (and in some quarters derogatorily) as "Hillary" (one may imagine the raised eyebrows of Mrs. Roosevelt if addressed as "Hey, Eleanor!"), the popular assumptions of behavior and ambition "proper" to one's gender come fully into public view. Performance artist Karen Finley noted in a 1996 interview that the public's reaction to Hillary Rodham Clinton and Martha Stewart indicates much about the conflicted roles women play. First winning and then losing an advance and contract for her book, *Living It Up: Humorous Adventures in Hyperdomesticity*, because the publisher (Crown) also published Martha Stewart's works, Finley noted that her book (eventually produced by Doubleday in 1996) "criticizes how women spend their days and the fact that the only place a woman can exercise creative dominion or power or decision-making is in the safe haven of domestic territory." Finley sees such territoriality at work in public life as well.

> We've seen similar things happen to more famous public figures, like Hillary with the baking cookies line, a simple sentence, but the whole world caved in and she's never gotten over it. . . .
> . . . . I think Martha Stewart is our first lady. That's why everybody is so into her. The way she's blonde, the way she looks and handles herself. . . .
> . . . . She's smart, she went to Barnard, she has credentials. What they'd really like for Hillary Clinton is to disguise that. Martha Stewart has all the education, but she decided to stay home and bake cookies. That's why the country's all behind her.[6]

On the other hand, Stewart's ambition is at times conflated with her company, characterized by *Salon* critic Mary Elizabeth Williams as "Martha's tastefully decorated evil empire" which grows "ever more ominous by the day." Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, however ominous its corporate name, is not perceived by business analysts as a threat to free enterprise; no trustbusting action is about take place, even as MSLO's success is causing venerable domestic magazines such as *McCall's* and *Redbook* and *Better Homes and Gardens* to suffer major losses, or helping to cause chain department stores such as Sears and Caldor's to lay off workers by the thousands. Noting that MSLO's revenues doubled in the third quarter of 2000 but few financial presses took notice, *Salon* writer Sara Hazlewood surmised that such blindness was the result of MSLO's

devotion to "domestic interests." "If Martha Stewart sold routers instead of linens, would the financial press take notice?" Hazlewood asked. By extension, would the American consumer recognize the enormity of Stewart's power if she sold, say, computers?[7]

Consider the media's treatment of Martha Stewart to that of Microsoft CEO Bill Gates—an oft-made comparison of two "New Gilded Age" titans. Gates is often feminized (as in "Saturday Night Live's" whiny, teenish nerd seeking world domination) for not taking recent federal antitrust suits "like a man." Confronted with damning testimony of his personal knowledge of his corporation's monopolistic activities, Gates as a witness acted petulantly, not defiantly; in deposition he was emotional, not commanding. Subdued not by government force but by the folly of his own deeds and words, Gates appears as a nonthreatening Oz-ian wizard behind the curtain. Perhaps given this characterization, Mary Elizabeth Williams predicted Stewart triumphant in a hypothetical head-to-head (perhaps a "Celebrity Death Match"?) with Gates:

> There have even been rumors of a proposed Martha Stewart computer—designed especially for the kitchen, *bien sur*. Although Martha could probably slice Bill Gates like a handful of fresh strawberries, mix him with steel-cut Irish oatmeal and eat him for breakfast, her publicist, alas, denies the story.[8]

Stewart's "omnivorous" behavior is parodied also in a popular "Top Ten" (and now lengthened to a "Top Fifteen") list lighting its way across the Internet. The title of the list reveals the cultural apprehension of strong-willed, successful women: "The Top Ten [Fifteen] Clues That Martha Stewart is Stalking You." Several of these "clues" are harmless if recast on a list entitled "Signs that Martha Stewart Has Been Visiting Your Home"—for example, "The telltale lemon slice in the dog's water bowl." Nevertheless, other "clues" compare Stewart's persona to that of the Glenn Close character, a successful publisher, stalking an ex-lover and his family in the much debated 1987 film *Fatal Attraction*: "You find your pet bunny on the stove in an exquisite tarragon, rose petal and saffron demi-glace, with pecan-crusted hearts of palm and a delicate mint-fennel sauce." In short, in the celebrity of Stewart and Gates we see popular curiosity about personality and power, but more important we discern a cultural anxiety and confusion about gender and power and changes in the way Americans live: Gates, no Edison as the whiny wizard of Silicon Valley; Stewart, no helpful hintful Heloise but rather the dominatrix of domesticity.

What Cherlin and others seem to have ignored is the implication of gender in the historical generation(s) of the definition of individualism. Franklin and Emerson are evoked as progenitors and exemplars here, and this sort of ideological inheritance is inherently masculine. The "separate spheres" ideology so pervasive in American culture carries with it a stigma for those men and women

who cross over. "It . . . seems clear that the fabric of public life has frayed," writes Chernin, and the reasons he offers for that unraveling are revealing. "One notable change is the loss of job security, which uproots workers and undermines community."

> Another is the infusion of many more women into the work force, meaning more two-earner families and more employed single parents. "Between work and taking care of my children, who are 3 and 5, I don't have much time for community involvement," says Delisa Hunter, a 23-year-old from Norfolk, Va.

Public life, *community*, and *civic engagement* are interchangeable terms in Chernin's essay, and this muddies the historical evolution of individualism and its meanings for certain groups and not for others. Of course, the author could not, in the course of a Sunday newspaper magazine feature, offer readers the breadth of any or all respondents' backgrounds and views. But the example he offers here confuses more than it clarifies: a woman who balances family as a "traditional" mom and "modern" worker, and who hasn't much time for the sort of "community involvement" that elsewhere in the essay is defined as voluntary associations for men, associations that often served as ancillary sites for professional growth and business transactions. Chernin's mention of the decline of the League of Women Voters (along with the Masons, it must be mentioned) is in itself indicative of the way many define civic or public engagement and women's entrance into that public life.

It's not that I'm faulting Chernin for inaccuracy or ideological bias: comprehending individualism as a changing historical construct is an exceedingly complex task, and how Americans define *public* and *private* is equally if not more complicated a conundrum to solve. Still, it's difficult to read that job insecurity is undermining community *and* that, in a parallel manner, the phenomenon that more women are working (that is, outside the home for pay) also serves to loosen the bonds of community. No matter that job insecurity likely necessitates that both parents work, and that men are increasingly the single parent raising children (according to the 2000 United States Census); it's women in the workplace (and "single parents" who are still primarily women) who are part of the problem.

It's also women who are thought to be the (stereo)typical consumers in American society. *Consumption*, *consumerism*, and *consumer culture* are at times interchangeable and at other times discrete, dependent on the critic's politics or scholarly discipline. Scholars such as Ann Douglas, Christopher Lasch, and William Leach view the "culture of consumption" as therapeutic, inauthentic, nonproductive, feminine, antithetical and, indeed, harmful to American civic culture—the same criticisms levied against expressive individualism. Others,

such as Mary Douglas, Daniel Miller, and Janice A. Radway, see in consumption the means by which selves are fashioned, identities defined, confirmed, or, importantly, transformed. Kmartha stirs up Americans' anxieties about consumption and its meanings because, paradoxically, those anxieties are brought home. At one and the same time a homemaker and CEO, Martha Stewart crosses traditional gender boundaries in an area often ignored by critiques of consumer culture. "Keep within compass," an eighteenth-century print charged women; this Oprah Winfrey does, and is adored, if at times ridiculed for weepy sentimentalism. Kmartha, despite the emphasis on the domestic, does not keep within compass: Martha Stewart exemplifies the (masculine) utilitarian individualism at the heart of the "do-it-yourself" movement, through her business acumen, self-reliance, and undeniable achievement.[9]

All that said, however, Martha Stewart also re-enacts the selflessness embedded in women's domestic roles. Fans, for example, tune in to "Martha Stewart Living" not to see what she is wearing, but what she is *doing*. As one GardenWeb forum respondent wrote: "What I like about her is her casual style, the jeans-and-tennies look."[10] Unlike other female celebrities (including First Ladies) who tend to their respective "look" *as* work, Stewart tends to the work itself. Another GardenWeb forum participant observed:

> I usually crawl out of bed, pull on yesterdays [*sic*] jeans and maybe a clean T-shirt if making dinner last night got messy, slip into my garden clogs, brush my teeth, put my hair back into the bun that it slipped out of in the night (foregoing the brush of course), and then my girls and I go out into the yard and weed, trim, clop or do anything that might need us. . . . I guess that's why I love Martha. . . . [s]he's not out to impress by her outward physical appearance. . . . She lets her ability speak louder than her appearance.[11]

Mirrored in Stewart's lack of attention to her physical self-presentation is the attitude conveyed by this fan when she observes that the various plantings in her yard "might need us."

Kmartha promotes a lifestyle in which the individual is not only laborer but also CEO of his or her own household—with all the attendant anxieties about gender and power. Kmartha relies equally upon Americans' expressive consumption to make a living: Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, that is, in which the divide between private and public is confounded. Though Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia generates over $200 million a year in sales in the United States, the company's stock certificate was designed in-house. How appropriate for the doyenne of the "do-it-yourself" generation.[12]

* * *

"Do-it-yourself": this phrase deserves examination. Are we witnessing a return to the "simple life" movement, with its core belief of the rewards of hard work, the virtue of self-sufficiency, the integration of art and life?[13] If so, it is the American consumer, and not the antimodernist, who enjoys a purchase on that ideal—or, perhaps more accurately stated, *purchases of* those ideals, through the products supplied by superwarehouses of building materials, the stores, mail order catalogues and commercial websites devoted to home furnishings, and, of course, from household design and decorating experts dispensing advice in many media. The recent introduction of the epigonous *Real Simple* ("a new magazine about simplifying your life") is telling: the magazine, a visual dose of Prozac printed on matte paper soft to the touch and easy on the eye, presents the "basics" of living through a sparse aesthetic of muted colors, attention to domestic environments to create appropriate moods and labor-saving ease, and counseling of comfort through cleansing and nurturing the body as well as the spirit—even if it costs the reader-as-consumer several hundred dollars for scented pillows, teeth whitening treatments, or the ever-present aroma-therapeutic candles. (Not to mention the fire insurance premium.)[14]

"Do-it-yourself" connotes a purchase on privacy, on work-as-leisure activities spent within or around the home, the rewards reified in tasteful furnishings, perfectly orchestrated family rituals, and thoughtful, handmade gifts. In this sense, Martha Stewart's stuff provides what anthropologist Mary Douglas calls the goods that "are good for thinking." Stewart originally sold kitchen tools, for example, not to make *everyday* cooking easier and efficient—this is not your mother's home economics. Rather, those tools are used specifically to produce wedding and birthday cakes and holiday meals. She offered baking pans and icing tips for festive cakes, outsized cutters for cookies that require chilled dough, floured boards, rolling pins and a lot of elbow grease, and turkey tools for that perfect *holiday* bird. Like Catharine Beecher over a century before her, Martha Stewart advocates system, but only to forward hospitality and love incorporated in those productive acts.[15]

This emphasis on such material and emotional bounty as the fruits of one's domestic labor is occurring at a time when housework has become more, and not less, burdensome, given the increased number of hours spent working by all Americans. Indeed, *homemaker* has trumped *housewife* in common parlance, obscuring the traditional associations of women with housekeeping to keep apace with the demographic shifts in home ownership—single men and single women, young and old and in-between; unmarried partners, gay and straight; married folks with few or no children, living in a variety of dwellings, from urban lofts and apartments to suburban bungalows and "McMansions" to rural renovated stone barns. The gospel of domesticity seemingly applies to all. At the same time, however, the onerous nature of housework remains, primarily, women's unpaid (and in the case of servants, underpaid) labor, a problem that has concerned feminists since the nineteenth century. It is no less a pressing problem today, but it is obscured by consumer desire for home.[16]

The quest, it seems, for "do-it-yourselfers" is comfort, both the physical and emotional ease most often found in family-centered ritual and reverie. In the last two decades the family dwelling itself has changed to accommodate the emotional, perhaps nostalgic, longings for that traditional family life. The *private* recesses of the house have been reconfigured to increase this feeling of homey-ness. "Great rooms" combining kitchen, dining, and recreation areas, filled with oversized, slip-covered furniture and pillows, are located in the rear spaces of the house. What were considered historically production and family (private) spaces in the house are now merged. In addition, bedrooms and bathrooms have increased in size and attention. "Comfort should inspire every decorative scheme," Martha Stewart counsels, "but its special province is intimate spaces: the bedrooms and bathrooms tucked away in the recesses of the home."[17]

It is this combination of comfort, privacy, and intimacy that "do-it-yourselfers" crave. Clearly, Stewart has correctly predicted—and abetted—the trends of the nineteen-eighties and -nineties, emphasizing spaces within the house that were historically under-designed, haphazardly furnished, or forsaken for the expense necessary for the sociability of parlor and living room. She has undoubtedly defined and endorsed the increasing symbolic prominence to those private ideospaces at a time when privacy itself is under political, legal, economic, and social attack. Kmartha sells a nostalgic sense of comfort and family, in an era when a quarter of American households consists of one person, when half of the nation's families are childrenless couples, and when the demands of work daily invade the home.[18]

The title of a 1999 exhibition of architect-designed houses at New York City's Museum of Modern Art (and on its website) puts it best: "The Un-Private House." The urban loft has replaced the family dwelling that needed acoustic privacy for parents, children (and sometimes servants). The telephone, television, and computer have lengthened the workday and allowed commercial leisure to permeate the once-seemingly-fortified fences and walls of the suburban homestead. Gated communities are the "fastest-growing segment of the U.S. housing market," says Terence Riley, the exhibit's curator, but "They're also fantasies—self delusions, really—being played out on a mass scale, with massive amounts of dollars."

> But does a gated community really reinforce this notion of the private house? These mini-mansion guys aren't secluded from the world. They've got their Bloomberg computers to watch their stocks, their satellite dishes, cell phones, security systems. It's not so much keeping anything in or out, as keeping anything.
>
> The mini-mansion may look traditional, but inside are televisions with cabinets that open and close automatically. These houses are wired to the max, and yet their owners are

> more comfortable with the imagery of pre-technological houses.[19]

Martha Stewart offers her dedicated and even occasional consumers the illusion of privacy, and she does so by employing a yearning for, if not implementation of, that pre-technological house. Moreover, Stewart's emphasis on doing is mirrored in and endorses fans' sense of self. One individual, "quite impressed with Martha," posted to an Internet forum that "you'd either have to be a really bored housewife/hubby or a kept man to do everything in the magazine but she has class and lets people get a sense of pride in what they do." Nevertheless, expressive consumerism coexists with this emphasis on utilitarianism. "Maybe I do buy my towels at K-Mart and, [*sic*] maybe they are Martha Stewart 'Sage'," continued the poster, "but they are beautiful and inexpensive and make me feel darn good about myself."

> Now exuse [*sic*] me while I go make my breakfast in a hand-fired skillet over a wood burning antique stove I found in a deserted shop in the Hamptons and refurbished with hand-mixed paint.[20]

The various "tag sale" items Stewart displays on her television show and in her magazine erode the distinction between past and present. Even the new appliances employed to make old-fashioned comfort foods comfort in their physical attractiveness and nostalgic utility. In her many houses and in the studio recreations of one of her kitchens is found a restaurant range manufactured in Europe, an appliance out of economic reach of many of her fans. But this range resembles a traditional cookstove, necessarily never turned off, with all its attendant meanings for hearth and home and women's work. Stewart, in her column "Letter from Martha," perennially bemoans the intrusion and acceleration of work and the concomitant degradation of social behavior due to the demands of communication technologies. She never fails, however, to add a comforting thought about the *inability* of controlling time, referring to those natural phenomena over which humans have little control. "Thank heavens the garden still grows as it did twenty years ago," she added in a "P.S." to one letter, "My favorite tomato ripened in seventy-two days when I first started gardening, and it still does."[21]

Stewart also teaches the skills and pleasures of workmanship *and* connoisseurship, of artisanal production *and* discriminating consumption. Stewart's monthly "remembering" column recounts how she learned to discern the authentic from the imitative. "It's difficult to believe that 'personal style' actually extends to shopping," Stewart observes, "but it certainly does. Just as one has a style of dressing or a style of decorating, one can have a shopping style." But there are shoppers, and then there are shoppers. "To me," writes Stewart,

> a collector is someone who buys to create a discriminating, selective, meaningful grouping of objects that have historical, as well as monetary, value. An accumulator is someone who buys for the beauty or usefulness of a particular thing and not with the main object of forming a "collection."[22]

Essays on everything from furniture forms to potholders are paired with photographic images displaying arrays of the same thing that teach readers period styles, materials, and hues. Editor-in-chief Stephen Drucker explained in the February 1998 issue of *Martha Stewart Living* the use of these "glossaries": "Photographs that present all the possibilities for your home so beautifully."

> This issue we just couldn't seem to stop ourselves, and created glossaries of palms, flowerpots, avocados, household tapes, as well as all the lovely silver implements used in the preparation of tea. Together they make a wonderful point: that it's possible to be a connoisseur of anything. . . .

The goal is to teach the reader as well as become a resource. "So every month you'll continue to find glossaries, our hope being that over the years, your collection of magazines will grow into an encyclopedia of homemaking, with all the answers you're looking for."[23] By such means, accumulation is made a virtue, whether that accumulation is based on economic success of the "do-it-yourselfers" with its attendant gloss of thriftiness or the necessarily frugal habits of Americans with lower household incomes. Collecting "good things," a means by which change over time may be charted, here performs quite a different function.

Questions from readers supply opportunities for basic lessons about the most trivial aspects of household management, in which the trivial becomes meaningful for consumers-as-democrats—or, perhaps, democrats-as-consumers. "How should one fold bath and hand towels and washcloths for the towel rack?" asked Leigh Kardish, of Beach Haven, New Jersey, in May 1998. The answer was not a direct one. Rather, it offered a short discourse about the history of monograms, "first embroidered near the top edges of towels, but . . . later removed to the bottom so that they would be in view when hanging." No mention of the early American function of monograms to mark household (here, considered women's) property is made; no connection to schoolgirl samplers now appraised in the tens of thousands of dollars by elite Eastern Seaboard auction houses is offered. Nor is monogramming considered as a revealing historical phenomenon with distinctively class implications (and explication): the denotation of material symbols to distinguish (or establish) family lineage and class inclusion (and exclusion) during the latter nineteenth-century threat of status forgery possible in the mass production of household goods—particu-

larly linens, silver, and ceramics.[24] Such an examination would likely undermine the Stewart project to appeal to the Everywoman and Everyman by masking traditional class associations of such practices—even as such practices as monogramming are, at least in the abstract, encouraged. The title of the letter offered by the editor, "Folding Towels," elides the messiness of history with the object's utility and display uplifted by the incidental "fact."

The messiness of history is also tidied by Stewart's advice on family trees. "A family tree can be a beautiful work of art as well as an informative genealogical record," begins a "Feature Project" on *www.marthastewart.com*. The guidelines for tracing one's ancestors are those espoused by any good genealogist, but Martha by Mail's Genealogy Fan Chart ("printed on acid-free, poster-size paper and suitable for framing") ignores divorce, remarriage, adoption, and civic unions. Thus this genealogy is indeed more of a work of art than an informative record: "Do-it-yourself" as story-telling, as family tree felling. Consumption, not history, defines the (do-it-your) self.[25]

* * *

Perhaps Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia is working to replace monograms on household linen with the Martha Stewart brand name. Certainly the Kmart and MSLO partnership, with its emphasis on mass consumption, strengthens such a conspiracy theory. Kmart has as many boasts as Stewart: its website proudly announces that 180 million Americans, "from your mom to Donald Trump," shop at Kmart. After all, 80 percent of the U.S. population lives within a 15-minute drive of a Kmart, Big Kmart, or Super Kmart. Launched in March 1997, the original Martha Stewart Everyday home fashions line (bedding, linens, towels, bath coordinates, window treatments, paint, etc.) amassed over $500 million in sales for Kmart in its first year. To this original line Kmart and MSLO have added kitchenwares and dinnerware, available at over 2100 stores nationwide and through Kmart's *bluelight.com* website and MSLO's *marthastewart.com* website. The Everyday collection is packaged in a "store-within-a-store" concept, replete with interactive videos and "Martha managers" offering personal service to customers, and augmented with 1-800 and Internet shopping services. In turn, such attention endorses the presumed wishes of target (and not Target) consumers: "The Martha Stewart Everyday brand offers quality, reasonably priced products at the mass-retail level to help transform everyday 'dreamers into doers,' according to Stewart, known for her 'how-to' teaching style," boasts a May 2001 Kmart press release.[26]

Like her magazine's glossaries, Stewart's "signature" line's various original labels (Blue, White, and Silver) distinguished "good" and "better" and "best" in design and price teach consumer discriminating taste while providing the illusion of choice and autonomy through "mix and match"[27] styles. In March 2001, Kmart and MSLO announced a new collection of sheets and towels "made of luxurious 100-percent Pima cotton." The Silver Label was "re-launched" dur-

ing the Kmart White Sale (3-10 March 2001) as the "5-Star Bed and bath program." Despite this "upgrade," the marketing—or teaching—strategy remains the same.

> The program offers customers an array of exceptional quality mix-and-match possibilities at very affordable prices. Product packaging has been redesigned to include valuable "how-to" information and care instructions, as well as colorful lifestyle graphics. Customers purchasing sheets will find matching bath towel options and coordinating shades of Martha Stewart Everyday Colors paints indicated on the packaging.[28]

Martha Stewart offers consumers a personalized sense of responsibility for the workmanship of her endorsed products. If a Kmart shopper finds any of Martha's products defective, that shopper should return the item and tell the clerk that "Martha sent you."[29] Stewart's many houses are her "experiment centers" in which she tests and evaluates products. At a 1997 Brampton, Ontario, demonstration, Stewart told the audience that she "takes home one of every bath towel, tablecloth and bed sheet she markets . . . and repeatedly runs it through the washer and dryer to ensure its quality."[30] One wonders if she put her pillows to the same rigorous test and inspection. Packaged with various names, these pillows bespeak physical ease ("Puffball"), discernment ("Crest of Down"), and just plain nostalgia ("Grandpa" and "Grandma").[31] At least one consumer who lived with Martha Stewart's stuff found fault. "I bought 2 feather pillows from Miss Martha, I spent over $60 dollars [*sic*] with pillow cases, etc. . . . from the first night I used them, the end of the feathers started to poke through and stuck my head, face and neck. . . . I felt like a victim of voo-doo by Martha. K-Mart wouldn't taken [*sic*] them back because they were used and I was stuck with them. . . ." Ever thrifty, this chatroom writer offered the pillows to the cat, but the cat "just smelled around, got on top of them," and urinated on them. "Talk about a smart shopper," concluded this dissatisfied customer.[32]

Kmartha's "voodoo" works even on those who cannot purchase her products. "I love your towels, sheets etc at k-mart [*sic*]," wrote "Mary lou." "I only wish I could afford to buy some. When we get out of the bind we are in supporting my husband's mother. Our money will be better next year when we get some bills paid out. I know that I have something to look forward[:] new linens for the house. Thanks for giving me something to look forward to. I am hoping that I will get some for Christmas or for our 5th anniversary."[33] The fantasy of comfort, of physical *and* emotional ease, is a powerful one.

* * *

Martha Stewart's appeal—what one business writer has labeled her "broad aesthetic voice"—is supposedly her personal style. In order for the company to

succeed, however, Martha Stewart the person must become Martha Stewart the "brand." Even the company's prospectus to potential investors before the 1998 IPO carried a warning: that it remains "'highly dependent'" on Stewart, who "'remains the personification of our brands as well as our senior executive and primary creative force.'" Steps have been taken to allow more "'team-based content development'" and to promote "'a new generation of Martha Stewart Living experts'" rather than rely on the "'personal images of Martha Stewart'" that have graced an overwhelming number of covers of her magazine and advertisements.[34]

These images are the most fascinating, however. Unlike the images of kitchen accessories architect Michael Graves designed for the Target department store chain, in which the products take center stage and Graves's small black-and-white image appears on the front inside cover, dwarfed by the size of the goods he designed, Martha Stewart sells herself on the front page of her advertising circulars and magazines.[35] Pictured in a bathrobe, under bed covers, or posed clothed but kittenishly upon a decidedly *un*rumpled bed, Stewart—or, rather, Martha—invites us into those zones of intimacy often associated with decidedly *rumpled* behavior. This is all the more intriguing if one considers Stewart's refusal to air President Clinton's appearance on her television show as the Lewinsky scandal spiraled out of control and the impeachment progressed. This September 1998 show featured Stewart making lunch for the president, after which Stewart presented him with a monogrammed, buckwheat-filled *bedroom* pillow.[36] In these current flush times comfort may be more readily purchased in the form of a pillow, a bath towel, or a set of sheets, but the comfort of privacy and intimacy is not easily afforded, politically or socially, to Americans. Martha Stewart may have taken the home to the Street, offering shares of her private corporation to the public, but in so doing she reveals how much the gendered boundaries of public and private have collapsed. "Heck of an entrepreneur," writes one poster to a Martha Stewart Internet forum. "I was getting pretty sarcastic about her for a while, getting hammered by her face everywhere, the pop culture queen of the middle class. The stockbroker who took her whole background public."

Then somebody told me helped her dad keep bees. I like that.[37]

Notes

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1. On the initial price offering of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (hereafter MSLO), see "Martha Stewart Tidies up Wall St.," *New York Times*, 19 October 1999. "The Markets: Market Place; Big Board Fumbles Martha Stewart Deal," *New York Times*, 21 October 1999, C1. For a spoof on the coincidental pairing of MSLO and the World Wrestling Federation, see Tom Kuntz, "Culture Clash; Martha vs. the W.W.F.—the Final Confit," *New York Times*, 24 October 1999, 4:7.

2. Andrew J. Cherlin, "I'm OK, You're Selfish," *The New York Times Magazine*, 17 October 1999, at <*http://www.nytimes.com/library/millennium/m5/poll-cherlin.html*>. The *New York Times* survey was conducted between 17-19 July 1999, and included 1,178 Americans interviewed by telephone.

Cherlin is basing his formulation on the insights of sociologist Robert M. Bellah and his colleagues in *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley, 1985). Bellah and his team surveyed white, middle-class Americans between 1979 and 1984. I thank Norman Yetman for pointing out the connection.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Molly O'Neill, "But What Would Martha Say?" *The New York Times Magazine*, 16 May 1999, at <*http://www.nytimes.com/library/magazine/millennium/m2/recipes.html*>.

5. Information supplied by a variety of sources: see, for example, "Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia Acquires *Martha Stewart Living* From Time Inc.," *PR Newswire*, 4 February 1997; Simon Worrall, "Million Dollar Apple Pie; Profile: Martha Stewart; She's Turned Herself Into a Saint, Home-making Into an Industry," *The Independent* (London), 12 October 1997, 3.

On the repurchase of *Martha Stewart Living* (hereafter *MSL*) from Time Inc. see "The Media Business: Martha Stewart to Buy Her Company," *New York Times*, 5 February 1997, D5; Angela G. King, "Right Time for Martha to Control Her Empire," *Daily News* (New York), 5 February 1997, 26; Mary Elizabeth Williams, "Perfect World," *Salon*, 14 March 1997 at <*http://www.salon.com/march 97/media/media970314.html*>.

On website see George Mannes, "Martha Has a New Home on the Web," *Daily News* (New York), 5 September 1997, 83, and <*www.marthastewart.com*>.

On partnership with Kmart Corporation see press releases archived at Kmart Corporation's website <*www.kmartcorp.com*>.

On partnerships with Jo-Ann Fabrics see Mary Vanac, "Hudson, Ohio-Based Fabrics Retailer Signs Up Martha Stewart," *Akron Beacon Journal*, 28 July 1999; Nancy Romanenko, "Material Girl; Martha Stewart Unfolds Fabric Collection," *Asbury Park Press* (Neptune, N.J.), 19 August 1999, D1.

On MSLO's relationship with Zellers, see Donna LaFramboise, "'Tell them Martha sent you': Lifestyle-Guru Stewart In Marketing Pact With Zellers," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 30 May 1998, F3; Francois Shalom, "Curtain Fell So Fast: Bonavista Fabrics Is Suing Zellers and Martha Stewart. . . ." *The Gazette* (Montreal), 7 September 1999, E1.

On introduction of garden furniture, see Marianne Rohrlich, "Personal Shopper: Perches for the Armchair Gardener," *New York Times*, 25 March 1999, F10; Nancy Meyer, "Martha Stewart Garden Furniture Rolls Out," *Brandmarketing* 6:4 (April 1999): 6; Tim Moran, "Kmart Corp.'s Billion-Dollar 'Brand-Aid' Is Martha Stewart," *HFN*, May 24, 1999: 1.

6. Christopher Busa, "Talking with Karen Finley," *Provincetown Arts*, 12 (1996), at <*http://www.capecodaccess.com/Gallery/Arts/talkingKaren.html*>.

7. Mary Elizabeth Williams, "Perfect World," at <*http://www.salon.com/march97/media/media970314.html*>; Sara Hazlewood, "Martha Stewart Kicks Ass," at <*http://www/salon.com/business/feature/2000/11/07/martha/index.html*>.

On competition, see "Sluggish National Chains Continue to Lose Ground," *HFN*, 9 August 1999, 6.

8. Williams's observation seemingly takes a page from John Kasson's *Rudeness & Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York, 1990), in which Kasson observes that at the turn of the twentieth century, metaphors of eating were applied to Robber Barons and trustbusters alike. See "Table Manners and the Control of Appetites," 182-214, esp. 195-200.

9. The literature on consumption and consumer culture is plentiful: I've mentioned here only a few authors whose work is known to American studies scholars. "Culture of consumption," of course, comes from the title of Richard Wightman Fox and Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (New York, 1983). Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York, 1977); Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (London, 1979); William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York, 1993). Those studies exploring what Arjun Appadurai calls the "social life of things" (*The Social Life of Things* [Cambridge, 1986]) through attention to material culture (or specific genres) see at least a paradox in empowerment and exploitation within capitalism: Mary Douglas with Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods* (New York, 1979); Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (Oxford, Eng., 1987); Janice A. Radway, "Reading is Not Eating: Mass-Produced Literature and the Theoretical, Methodological, and Political

Consequences of a Metaphor," *Book Research Quarterly* 2 (Fall 1996): 7-29; idem, "On the Gender of the Middlebrow Consumer and the Threat of the Culturally Fraudulent Female," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 93:4 (1994): 871-93; and idem, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill, 1991).

For a useful statement of the overlapping fields of material culture and consumer culture, consult Celia Lury, *Consumer Culture* (New Brunswick, 1996). "Keep Within Compass," English, laid paper, 1785-1805. Winterthur Museum 54.93.1, Winterthur, D.E.

10. "Jen – SoCal-9/19," "RE: Resentful of Martha Stewart," 21 March 2000, "Resentful of Martha Stewart?" forum, GardenWeb, at *<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/load/favorite/msg1214041713693.html>*.

11. "Amy," "RE: Resentful of Martha Stewart?", 2 April 2000, "Resentful of Martha Stewart?" forum, GardenWeb, at *<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/load/favorite/msg1214041713693.html>*.

12. Diana B. Henriques, "Martha Stewart, the Company, Is Poised To Go Public. But Is It a Good Thing?", *New York Times*, 12 October 1999, C1.

13. See, of course, David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (New York, 1985), Eileen Boris, *Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America* (Philadelphia, 1986), Wendy Kaplan, *"'The art that is life': The Arts and Craft Movement in America, 1875-1920* (Boston, 1987).

14. *<www.realsimplenetwork.com>*. *Real Simple*'s mission, according to its website, is to provide "practical, modern solutions for simplifying every aspect of our busy lives: health, food, money, clothes, looks, and family. At the same time, in inspires readers with stories of real women who have learned to live in a calm and beautiful way. *Real Simple* is a fresh blend of simplicity, service and style." This characterization could apply equally to *O*, Oprah Winfrey's magazine.

15. Douglas with Isherwood, *The World of Goods*, 62; Catharine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School* (Boston: Marsh, Capen, Lyon and Webb, 1841); Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home: Or, Principles of Domestic Science; Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes* (New York: J.B. Ford and Co., 1869). Kitchen utensils featured in *MSL* and sold through *Martha by Mail* catalogues and on website *<http://www.marthastewart.com>*.

I don't mean to align politically or culturally Stewart with Catharine Beecher and other domestic advice writers of the nineteenth century. Yet I must also point out that Stewart seems to have taken a page from all those advice writers' books, at least in the structure of her advice to preserve the past, to institute system in housekeeping, and to "earn" one's place by attending to one's responsibilities without complaint.

16. See, for example, Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York, 1994); Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982); Ruth S. Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York, 1985); and Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (New York, 1982). Barbara Ehrenreich's recent work investigates those working American women who give up time with their family to tend to other families' physical and childcaring needs: *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America* (New York, 2001).

17. "Kmart and Martha Stewart Everyday—Another Good Thing! Kmart and Martha Stewart Offer Mix-and-Match Product Lines for Everyday" (press release), 19 February 1997, at *<http://www.kmartcorp.com/corp/story/pressrelease/archive_97/pr970219b.stm>*.

18. United States Bureau of the Census, Profiles of General Demographic Characteristics, 2000 Census of Population and Housing, located at *<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2000/dp1/2khus.pdf>*. The Bureau found that the average household size in the United States is 2.59; the average family size, 3.14.

One could easily reverse the observation of the invasion of home: home responsibilities have invaded the workplace. "Casual Fridays," day-care centers, family leaves, and the like are becoming corporate policy. Work hours and job titles are flexible and shared. But office spaces are increasingly nonhierarchical, wall-less, and in the tech sector, flexible in space sharing and desk use. (Job security may be another matter, but surely factors to some degree in this discussion.)

19. Information on American households found at "The Un-Private House" website: *<http://www.moma/org/exhibitions/un-privatehouse/essay.html>*. Terence Riley interviewed by Julie Caniglia, "The New House Blend," *Salon*, 26 July 1999, at *<http://www.salon.com/ent/feature/1999/07/26/house/index.html>*.

Histories of house and home include: Clifford Edward Clark, *The American Family Home, 1800-1960* (Chapel Hill, 1986); Katherine C. Grier, *Culture & Comfort: People, Parlors, and Upholstery, 1850-1930* (Rochester and Amherst, 1988); Witold Rybsczynski, *Home: A Short History of An Idea* (New York, 1986).

20. "Skeeter," "RE: Resentful of Martha Stewart?", "Resentful of Martha Stewart?" forum, GardenWeb, at *<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/load/favorite/msg1214041713693.html>*.

21. On cookstove nostalgia, see Priscilla J. *Brewer's From Fireplace to Cookstove: Technology and the Domestic Idea in America* (Syracuse, 2000). "A Letter from Martha," *MSL* 70 (June 1999): 14. In this letter Stewart contrasts herself with Microsoft Corp. tsar Bill Gates.

22. "Remembering: I'll Take It," *MSL* 59 (May 1998): 224.

23. Stephen Drucker, "Editor's Letter," *MSL* (February 1998), 22.

24. "AskMartha: Folding Towels," *MSL* 59 (May 1998): 57.

25. "Researching Your Family Tree," at <*www.marthastewart.com*>.

26. "Martha Stewart Everyday Offers Fun, Durable Merchandise for Summer Available Exclusively at Kmart and Bluelight.com" (press release), 9 May 2001, at <*http://www.kmartcorp.com/corp/story/pressrelease/news/pr010509.stm*>.

27. Kmart's puffs located at "Fun Facts": <*http://www.kmart.com/corp*> (no longer found on website in May 2001). On the launch of the Martha Stewart Everyday Line, see "Kmart Corporation, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia launch strategic alliance for the design, marketing and retailing of bed and bath product lines" (press release), 19 February 1997, at <*www.kmartcorp.com/corp/story/pressrelease/archive_97/pr970219a.stm*>; "Kmart's $10M Bet On Martha," *HFN* (February 24, 1997): 1; "Mass-Market Martha: The Goddess of Gracious Living Touches Down at Kmart," *The Record* (Bergen, N.J.), 7 March 1997, Y1; Jennifer Steinhauer, "Martha Stewart's at Kmart, Changing the Sheets," *New York Times*, 20 February 1997, C2.

On "store-within-a-store" concept, see "Martha Stewart Kmart Catalog Due," *HFN* (18 August 1997): 6; Melissa Preddy, "Kmart Delivers Martha to the Home," *The Detroit News*, 14 August 1997, B4.

On the addition of the Silver Label line of bed and bath goods, see Melissa Preddy, "Kmart Adds Kitchen to Housewares Line: Sales of Martha Stewart Goods Have Boomed Since March Debut," *The Detroit News*, 25 September 1997, B3.

For a more recent addition to the line, see Stella M. Hopkins, "With Martha Stewart's Golden Touch, Egyptian Cotton Reigns Supreme," *The Charlotte Observer*, 14 June 1999.

Kmart Corporation's success has been attributed to the Martha Stewart Everyday line, but the line, according to gossip and to "unofficial biographer" Jerry Oppenheimer, wasn't selling well in 1997: *Martha Stewart—Just Desserts: The Unauthorized Biography* (New York, 1997), 260-66, 305-10. Kmart said otherwise: see "Kmart Posts Profit, and Earnings Gain at Saks and Gap," *New York Times*, 16 May 1997, D3; "Kmart's Earnings Down in Second Quarter," *The Record* (Bergen, N.J.), 10 July 1997, B2; "Kmart Profits Rose by 14% In 4th Quarter," *New York Times*, 5 March 1998, D3; "Federated and Kmart Post Higher First-Quarter Income," *New York Times*, 14 May 1998, D3; "Kmart's Earnings More Than Double," *New York Times*, 13 November 1998, C17; "Kmart Earnings Sharply Higher," *New York Times*, 4 March 1999, C6; Evelyn Nussbaum, "Martha's Special K; Stewart Sales Seen Topping $1 Billion at Kmart," *New York Post*, 2 February 1999, 28; Lorene Yue, "Earnings Surge 43 Percent at Kmart," *Detroit Free Press*, 13 May 1999.

28. "Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Inc. and Kmart Corporation Introduce an Exclusive Collection of Pima Cotton Bedding and Bath Products" (press release), at <*www.kmartcorp.com/corp/story/pressrelease/news/pr010308.stm*>.

29. The same personal attention supposedly holds true in Stewart's attention to readers *of Martha Stewart Living*: in the March 1998 issue, Stewart noted that "In 1997 we received 48,000 letters, an astonishing 56,000 e-mails (so many of you use your computer and the Internet so well), and more than 8,000 telephone calls and faxes. This volume represents a 146 percent increase over the year before." After citing that "more than 90 percent" of the correspondence was "friendly," Stewart turned her attention to the negative letters. "I personally address all of them; that is, I read and discuss and try to respond through my department to each and every criticism." "A Letter from Martha," *MSL* (March 1998): 14.

Too, Stewart is quick to correct errors about control over goods associated with her name. In a letter to *The New York Times*, Stewart explained that MSLO's relationship with Kmart was not licensing (as stated in a previous article about architect Michael Graves's designing contract with Kmart rival Target), but a "design and marketing arrangement" in which MSLO "carries out and retains control over all creative development, designs, packaging, marketing, advertising and promotion related to all Martha Stewart Everyday programs to ensure brand quality and consistency." "Martha Stewart Designing," *New York Times*, 21 January 1999, F16.

30. LaFramboise, "'Tell them Martha sent you'".

31. Kmart sale circular, 1-10 October 1997. In collection of the author.

32. "Onix 3," "Martha a white-chocolate cover Black Widow spider," 22 October 1999, American Online Bulletin Board. My thanks to Amy Bentley for supplying these messages. (It's a "good thing.")

See also Steinhauer, "Martha Stewart's at Kmart, Changing the Sheets," in which Marianne Rohrlich's "Sleep Test" with Martha's sheets resulted in a "So-So" rating: "Well, they're coarse and scratchy. Even after washing with lots of fabric softener, the 60-40 cotton-polyester sheets in color-saturated florals remained stiffer than the 50-50 polyester-cotton sheets, which were white

with alight colored border. That's because more dye means more stiffness. Still, the Martha Stewart sheets were softer than the "'control' sheet, a generic ensemble of light blue half-and-half bought at a bargain store. For insomniacs, Ms. Stewart even includes projects on the packages, like how to make a sheet into a table skirt."

33. "Aerosfrankt," "Wonderful art in your décor," 22 October 1999, American Online Bulletin Board.

34. Henriques, "Martha Stewart, the Company, Is Poised To Go Public. But Is It a Good Thing?" On the promise and problem of branding strategies, see "Brands at Mass: Puttin' on the Blitz," *HFN* 16 September 1996, 31.

35. See "Michael Graves Design collection," Target sales brochure, Spring 1999. Collection of the author. Compare to Big Kmart sales brochure featuring Martha Stewart Everyday, 6-13 March 1999. Collection of the author.

On Graves-Target venture, see Mary Ethridge, "Mad Shopper," *Akron Beacon Journal*, 20 March 1999; Rene Wisely, "Target launches Michael Graves line," *The Detroit News*, 1 March 1999, B4; Sarah Vowell, "From Bauhaus to Tract House: Architect Michael Graves Turns his Folly to the Mass Market," *Salon* 10 February 1999, at *<http://www.salon.com/ent/music/vowe/1999/02/10vowe.html>*.

36. Douglas Camilli, "Martha Stewart cans Bill: Host pulls the rug from under Clinton—and that's a bad thing," *The Gazette* (Montreal), 16 September 1998, C9; Russ Parsons, "Newsbites," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 September 1998, H2; Lisa de Moraes, "Martha Stewart, Not Doing Lunch With the President," *Washington Post*, 11 September 1998, D9.

Stewart answered a reader's query about making "cushions and neck pillows" with "Buckwheat hulls are my favorite filler for pillows. . . .": "askMartha," *Martha Stewart Living* (February 1998): 30.

Fans of Stewart's television series likely thanked her for her decision. In Omaha, Nebraska, at least one viewer who was upset by the airing on 21 September 1998 of Clinton's videotaped grand jury testimony told a local television station, "'I'm sick of this Clinton stuff; I want to watch 'Martha Stewart'." Jim Minge, "TV Stations in Omaha Get Viewers' Complaints," *Omaha World-Herald*, 22 September 1998, 5.

37. "Steve M.," "Not just another pretty face," "Resentful of Martha Stewart? Forum," 28 February 2000, at *<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/laod/favorite/msg1214041713693.html>*.