

Chronicles

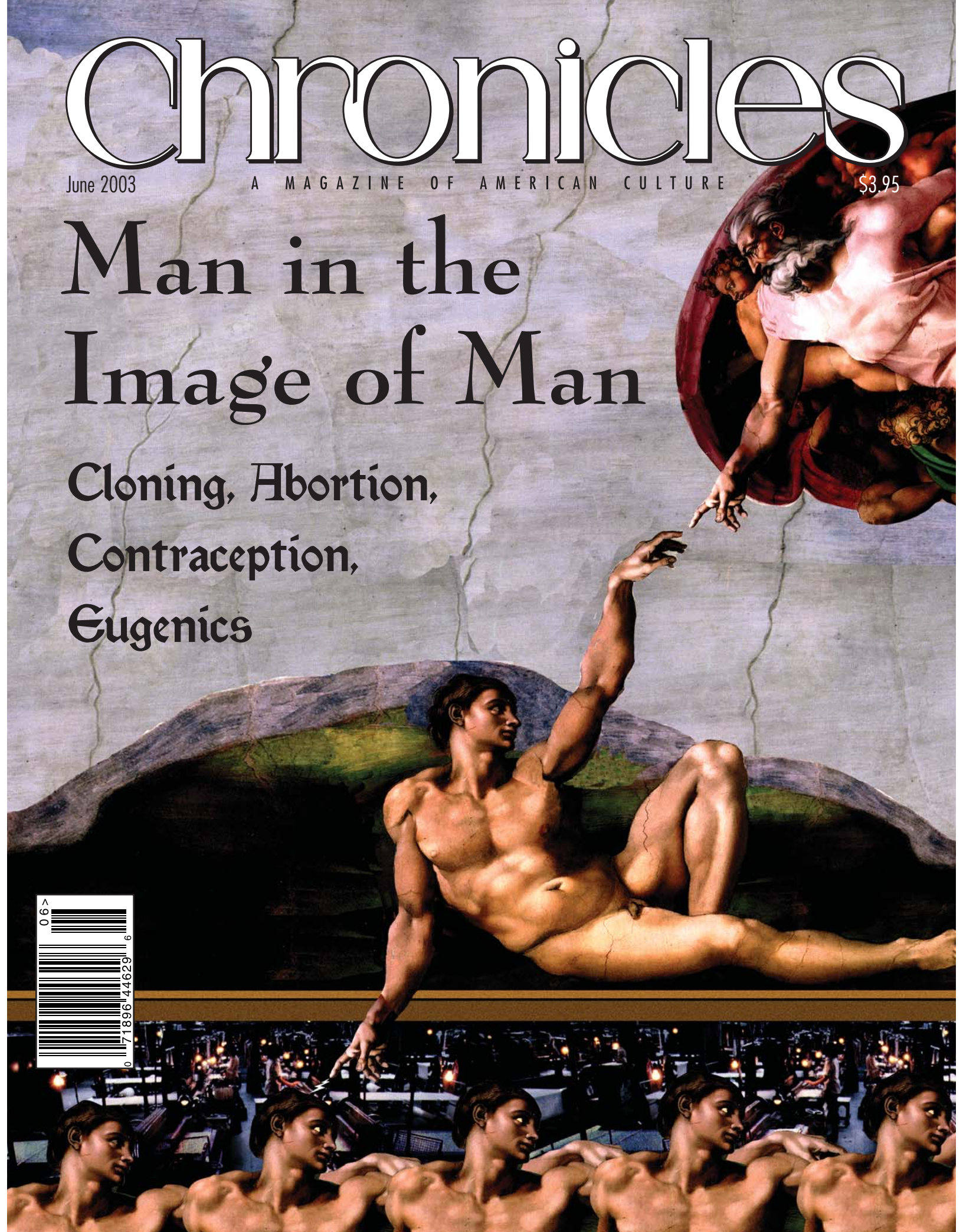
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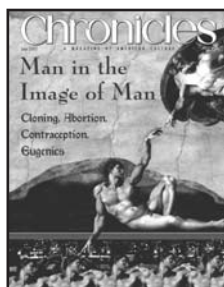
Man in the Image of Man

Cloning, Abortion,
Contraception,
Eugenics



Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE



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EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSISTANT EDITOR
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EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Sarah J. Weber

ART DIRECTOR
H. Ward Sterett

DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis,
George Garrett, Paul Gottfried, J.O.
Tate, Clyde Wilson

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Wayne Allensworth, Janet Scott
Barlow, Bill Kauffman, Donald
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Stephen B. Presser

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

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Website: www.chroniclesmagazine.org
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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On Migration

Samuel Francis's new book *America Extinguished* and Joe Scotchie's review of it ("While America Sleeps," March) deal with the problems resulting from unlimited mass immigration—people from foreign countries bringing a different culture and values to America. Neither one, however, deals with the fact that the United States has experienced and still faces similar and equally damaging problems resulting from unlimited internal migration.

While California does face a crisis resulting from Mexican immigrants, legal and illegal, it also faces problems that are the result of huge numbers of American-born immigrants—the growing water and electric-power shortages being the most obvious. And the steady flow of East Coast liberals has increased the voting power of the political left (witness the election of such people as Sen. Barbara Boxer).

Arizona has problems of theft and vandalism caused by Mexican illegals, but most of these immigrants do not stay; they are just passing through on their way to live in other states. Far worse is that what used to be quiet and pleasant mid-sized Southwestern cities have been flooded with American retirees and are now large, overcrowded cities with the typical

urban problems: traffic, smog, sprawl, and crime in the poorer neighborhoods—as well as organized crime run by retired Mafia bosses who cannot resist the temptation to continue their trade.

For years, Florida and North Carolina have also received huge numbers of American-born immigrants—retirees and working families invited to fill jobs in the auto, insurance, and computer industries. This influx of immigrants has placed heavy burdens on local governments. Some argue that this has produced economic growth, but locals complain that their way of life has been irrevocably changed, and not for the better.

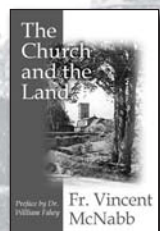
Vermont is another dramatic example. What used to be a nostalgic reminder of the America of the Founding Fathers has been completely changed by immigrants from New York City. A state characterized by small towns, hardworking, church-going people, and traditional values has been overrun by artsy-craftsy liberals and yuppie ski bums. The once sober and industrious Granite State is now blighted by "modern" homes, trendy restaurants, art galleries, and manufacturers' outlet stores—plus a socialist congressman and even a state law legalizing homosexual marriages. A recent backlash has reversed that trend slightly, but it won't last. The unchecked immigration of New York liberals will see to that.

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All over the United States, the form of unlimited migration known as urban sprawl is turning thousands of small towns and quiet countrysides into acre upon acre of “little boxes of ticky tacky” and chain-store shopping malls. While some view this as progress, others see it as a destruction of the civilized life and family ties that used to bind this country together.

Our nation’s history contains other examples, such as the especially heavy migration of blacks into large Northern cities in the 40’s and 50’s. And whites were not the only ones who suffered. Prosperous black neighborhoods that had their own culture were overrun by small-town and rural blacks, producing both an increase in crime and an educational problem still unsolved. Even large Southern cities such as Atlanta were greatly damaged by this migration. Such solutions as Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society often produced more harm than the original problem.

It is obvious that unlimited mass foreign immigration and internal migration are both examples of the law of unintended consequences. There is no way to stop either one without curtailing people’s freedoms. Thus, our cherished way of life contains the seeds of its own destruction. Opium, anyone? Or is hemlock a better choice?

—Jefferson Chase
Fairfield, CT

On Hometown Steel

I had to chuckle when I read Scott P. Richert’s “This Is Your Hometown” (*The Rockford Files*, March). Did it never occur to him that manufacturers in his own hometown might be hurt by a higher steel tariff? The trouble is that some conservatives have ceased being conservatives and have become ideologues on the issue of protectionism. This is just as bad as those “free traders” (Cordell Hull comes to mind immediately) who thought that lowering tariff barriers would lead to international peace and brotherhood. Some protectionists have gone to the point of seeing native steel as some sort of abstraction that must be defended at all costs. I trust far more those Pennsylvania steel barons of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who pushed for higher tariffs and Southern cotton planters of the same time who pushed for “a tariff for revenue only,” as Grover Cleveland liked to say, than I trust ideologues who ignore what is

best for their communities.

—Dr. Tracy S. Uebelhor
Ferdinand, IN

Mr. Richert Replies:

If Dr. Uebelhor found my piece amusing, he should prepare to laugh out loud, because I am in complete agreement with everything he says—with the exception, of course, of his not-so-subtle tagging of me as a protectionist ideologue who would ignore what is best for my adopted hometown of Rockford. Nothing could be further from the truth, as anyone who has read my column over the past two-and-a-half years could testify. Indeed, if, after recovering from his mirth, Dr. Uebelhor had continued to read, he would immediately have come across these lines: “The problem is not that either tariffs or free trade are bad *per se* but that they always need to be viewed in historical context. . . . ‘Free trade’ is an abstract concept that has never existed in reality and never will. Once we recognize that condition, we can also understand that every businessman will try to structure trade in such a way that it will benefit him and his business. That’s human nature.”

That said, my initially favorable reaction to the Bush steel tariff was a result of my misunderstanding of how it worked—a misunderstanding shared by many who remember the steel tariffs imposed, to good effect, by Ronald Reagan in the 1980’s. While the Reagan tariffs were comprehensive and applied to manufactured goods as well, the Bush tariff targets only *certain grades of raw steel*. Over the intervening years, the Bush I and Clinton administrations, in their near-fanatical pursuit of NAFTA, GATT, and other free-trade agreements, effectively sealed the fate of the American steel industry. Today, American firms simply can no longer produce enough steel to meet domestic needs (a condition of which, I suspect, very few Americans are aware), and the steel that is produced here is spoken for by companies far larger than Rockford Acromatic.

Under the Bush II administration, we have the worst of both worlds: Tariffs are being used not to save the remaining jobs of a declining manufacturing class (and, in the process, to prevent the destruction of industrial cities such as Rockford) but to provide a short-term infusion of cash to

near-monopolistic corporations that no longer have any sense of loyalty to the families and communities that once made them strong.

On Making the Chronicles Pilgrimage

As a first-time attendee of the Summer School (“The American Midwest,” The Rockford Institute’s Fourth Annual Summer School, 2001), I can sincerely say that I had one of the best times of my life—intellectually, spiritually, and socially. Having strong family roots in the Midwest, my regional pride and knowledge of this beautiful section of the country were increased immensely. I was even inspired to take a two-day drive through the “Driftless Area” of southern Wisconsin and northwestern Illinois to think about what I had learned and to pray that “Progress” will not ruin this area as it has so many others.

Of particular interest was our visit to the Ditzler farm (see “For Keeps! A Christian Defense of Property,” *Views*, April 2001). To say that I was outraged by the way this family has been treated would be an understatement. People who were trying to preserve the beauties of nature on their land get their motives and character traduced by the now pathetic *Chicago Tribune* and their property seized and ruined, with nary a word from any national environmental organization. This evil alliance of the land developers and local and state governments must be fought before all of the open spaces in Illinois are destroyed. Thank God for *Chronicles*, which, unlike so many so-called conservative publications, has consistently fought the squalid suburban sprawl that is destroying the United States. I would even urge liberals to attend the Summer School, because I think they would find some points in common. Not all conservatives are pro-big-business, anti-environment, and pro-interventionist.

If you love *Chronicles*, you will love the Summer School.

—Alan M. Stock
Barrington, IL

E-mail your letters
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by Thomas Fleming

Santorum, the Supreme Court, and Sodomy

Sen. Rick Santorum is the latest Republican political leader to walk down Trent Lott's trail of tears. Why do Republicans continue to make these gaffes? Most politicians, after all, have spent their entire lives since elementary school telling people what they want to hear, and they ought to realize that the power they hold in their hands does not belong to them: Political power is a p.r. creation, a gift from the media, a will-o'-the-wisp that can be dispelled the first time they step out of line and speak their minds. Why do they never learn?

If Trent Lott's sin was to persist in thinking that a Mississippian did not have to repudiate the South and all it stood for, Santorum's sin was to believe that he might articulate the moral attitudes held by most Americans until nearly the end of the 20th century. Even during the Carter years, the very concept of "gay rights" evoked mirth even from liberals. Even though most Americans still recoil from the notion of gay rights, it is now the public consensus, watched over by homosexual-advocacy groups and policed by the media.

Senator Santorum's fatal gaffe was his comment on a Texas case before the Supreme Court. Two men, convicted of sodomy according to Texas law, were basing their appeal on the right to perform sexual acts within the privacy of a home. Santorum, known for making off-the-cuff statements, replied:

If the Supreme Court says that you have the right to consensual (gay) sex within your home, then you have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything. . . . Whether it's polygamy, whether it's adultery, whether it's sodomy, all of those things, are antithetical to a healthy, stable, traditional family.

Although Santorum has plausibly explained his remarks as a slippery-slope argument that does not necessarily equate all of the vices on his list, he is clearly, at the very least, uncomfortable with the

idea of a right to sodomy.

For reasons that are not entirely clear, homosexual activists and lobbyists chose to express outrage. Admittedly, Santorum's list of illicit sexual activities is incoherent. All that sodomy, bigamy, polygamy, adultery, and incest have in common is that they are illegal in Texas and some other places. Although sodomy, technically, may occur within marriage, it is typically interpreted as a sexual act between males, who, by an almost-but-not-quite universal definition cannot be married.

How could two men having casual sex object to being lumped in with adulterers and bigamists who have violated the rules of marriage? If anything, Santorum, in comparing sodomy with adultery, has given homosexuality a kind of promotion toward quasi-respectability. Even incest, although it may involve the sexual abuse of children, might also be a consenting act of fornication between adults or a marriage between people too closely related. The idea of "gay rights" advocates turning up their noses at practitioners of incest and adultery is ludicrous. Talk about unholier than thou!

If anyone has a right to be angry, it is the polygamists (Muslims and Middle Eastern Jews) or members of religions that once permitted polygamy (Mormons and European Jews). As a Christian, I regard polygamy as a serious distortion of marriage and the family, but it should not be equated with activities that Christians regard as either sinful or perverse. No word yet from Iran or from the Mormon temple, though the head of the United Apostolic Brethren (a group of Mormon traditionalists in Utah) has expressed dissatisfaction with Santorum's comments and accuses him of slandering a religious tradition that goes back to Moses.

Senator Santorum (as his name suggests) is Catholic, and it cannot come as a surprise to homosexuals to learn that all committed Catholics regard both homosexual urges and homosexual acts as sinful. (There are pro-homosexualists who call themselves Catholic, but, then, there are also people who call themselves Napoleon.) The Church's stand, shared by all traditional Christian churches, is hardly unusual. Nearly every known society has

regulated or prohibited homosexual behavior, though enforcement was often admittedly slack. Propagandists like Martha Nussbaum may twist the evidence all they like, but they cannot evade the fact that even the permissive Greeks did not give free rein to homosexuals. At Athens, openly "gay" men were forbidden, on pain of death, from exercising the most fundamental right of Athenian citizens, that of attending the assembly.

Of course, Christians may have been quite wrong to stigmatize homosexuality, and human history may be the black hole of sadistic repression described by leftists, but until the classics of Western literature are burned and Christianity outlawed, it is hard to blame a self-styled "moderate conservative" for believing what most people have always believed—until the Reagan and Bush administrations caved in to the homosexual lobby.

The only conclusion to be drawn from the Santorum affair is that American liberals will not be satisfied until it is illegal for Christians to repeat the traditional teachings of their Church. But that, after all, is the ultimate objective of all forms of liberalism, whether that of Enlightenment *philosophes*, classical liberals, or Marxian leftists. As Voltaire put it, "*Ecrasez l'infame.*" Most Christians, for their part, refuse to fight back or even to defend themselves. "This is still a Christian country," they shriek, in their demonstrations protesting the killing of millions of unborn children. "We are defending Christian civilization," they cry, as they send out America's youth to take over Iraq and denounce the bishops who issue a moral challenge to the American government.

The Church today faces as serious a crisis as the early Church did, when weak-kneed believers renounced Christ in the face of torture and death. Today, they renounce all Christian teaching rather than face public disapproval. The good news is that James Dobson and Focus on the Family are threatening to bolt the Republican Party in the 2004 election if it does not take a strong stand in defense of Senator Santorum. If they were to hold out, it would be the first positive step they have taken to restore the soul of the Republican Party. ◀

THE WAR IN IRAQ's outcome was never in doubt, but the magnitude and speed of the Iraqi regime's collapse are nevertheless puzzling and deserve closer scrutiny.

In terms of numbers and available equipment, the Iraqi military was theoretically a foe worthy of respect. Its past performance was by no means abysmal. It suffered serious reverses in the early stages of the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran War, but it did not disintegrate even when casualties started running into the hundreds of thousands. In the closing stages of that war, when the Iranians turned the tables on the attackers and entered southern Iraq, it fought reasonably well and held its ground in the face of relentless attacks by human waves of Khomeini's *Pazdaran*s.

In 1991, the Iraqi army was comprehensively beaten by the U.S.-led coalition in Kuwait, losing almost half of its inventory, but the crushing magnitude of that defeat was the result of Saddam's strategic ineptitude. Placing tight columns of slow-moving armor on open roads and trying to hold thinly spread, fixed defensive positions was exactly what Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf wanted him to do. With the coalition completely dominating the air, the Iraqis were doomed, no less than Rommel in Tunisia in 1943 or Rundstedt in the Falaise Gap in 1944. The ensuing meltdown of regular troops did not spread to the Republican Guard units, as the rebelling Shias of southern Iraq learned to their misfortune.

Even after the fiasco in Kuwait, the Iraqi army remained the largest in the Middle East and, nominally, the strongest in the Gulf, numbering 430,000 regular troops and close to half a million reservists and militiamen. The U.N. sanctions had prevented the refurbishment of the Iraqi military, but, of its 2,000 tanks, about 800 were T-72s or better, and it also had 2,000 armored vehicles of other types, up to 2,000 artillery pieces, and countless mortars, mines, and small arms. The Iraqi army's ability to halt the coalition's advance in the open field was nonexistent, but its scope for fluid defense—passive deceit, dispersal into urban areas, and guerrilla tactics—was considerable. Skillfully deployed, boldly handled, and aptly commanded—even with its limited resources—it could have created more difficulties like those encountered by U.S.

troops in the first week of the war. Hit-and-run tactics, surprise raids on supply columns, and resistance from fortified urban strongholds offered the regime its only remotely viable strategy for survival: to gain time, to cause civilian suffering, to inflict casualties on the coalition forces, to prompt third-party political pressure, and to hope for increased opposition to the war back in the United States.

That none of this happened was primarily the result of the interdependent issues of morale and the nature of Saddam Hussein's regime. That regime combined the lethal brutality of other Oriental despots (Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Kim) with the operative inefficiency of Mussolini. Saddam's claim in 1980 that "Iraq is as great as China, as the Soviet Union, as the United States" was almost as ridiculous as Il Duce's pretense to parity with the great powers of his time. His boast of a "million-man army" was as hollow as Mussolini's myth of the *otto milioni di baionette*. In both cases, the ambition of the leader was at odds with the capacity of his power base. Saddam could deal with the Kurds; Mussolini, with the Ethiopians; but against first-class powers, they were out of their league. In both cases, bluster was the substitute for strategy, and defeat was preordained by the unwillingness of the leader to test his assumptions against reality and by the understandable reluctance of his entourage to question his assumptions.

One immediate consequence of Saddam's autocratic rule was an officer corps unwilling and unable to take risks and display initiative. Iraqi commanders of tactical units in the previous two wars, lieutenants and captains of 12 to 15 years ago, could have provided Saddam with a pool of battle-tested candidates for top-brass positions. This did not happen: Political loyalty—blind obedience to the leader and tribal kinship—was the ticket to promotion, while even the suspicion of the slightest disagreement with the leader was tantamount to a death warrant. The climate of fear and insecurity has reigned supreme in the Iraqi military ever since Saddam summarily executed over 300 senior officers in the aftermath of a failed major offensive against Iran in 1982. The result in the field was predictable: The bridges over the Euphrates, to take a small but significant example, were not blown

up. The paralysis was comparable to what happened in the Red Army in the aftermath of Stalin's purges of 1936-38, leading to the near-complete immobility of its command-and-control structure in the first months of the Barbarossa.

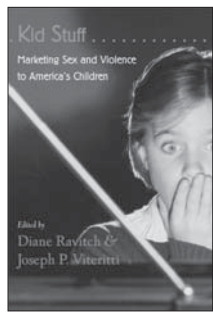
This brings us to another parallel with 1941—the importance of political warfare. Had Hitler called his attack "Operation Russian Freedom," had he presented it from the outset as a war against a cruel, dictatorial regime and not against the Russian people, the Wehrmacht could have staged a victory parade in Red Square within months. Stalin was saved by the Reich's self-proclaimed goal of conquering the *Lebensraum* in the East and clearing it of the Slavic *Untermensch*. He hastily reopened the churches, invoked the ghosts of Suvorov and Kutuzov, and went on to fight the "Great Fatherland War."

Saddam tried to do something similar, invoking Allah, pan-Arabism, and even Nebuchadnezzar, but—unlike the Russians—his long-suffering subjects knew that the option of surrendering was available and that it offered interesting possibilities. We should not be misled by the scenes of joy in Baghdad into believing that most Iraqis actually *like* having American troops in their streets, but very few of them were prepared to risk their lives to prevent it from happening. Support for Saddam did not "collapse at the first whiff of gunpowder," as Richard Perle had predicted. Nevertheless, the character of Saddam's personal regime precluded the creation of necessary conditions for the country's sustained, patriotically motivated defense. Now that the job is done, let us hope that President Bush will have the wisdom and prudence to leave Iraq to the Iraqis.

—Srdja Trifkovic

QUEBEC's sovereigntist movement could learn a thing or two from Liberal Party leader Jean Charest. His return to the premiership of the province should be a lesson to the sovereigntists that it is always darkest before dawn.

The sovereigntists' night, however, will last a while longer, as the provincial Liberals have smashed them to pieces in the recent elections for the National Assembly. Charest will now head a majority government of 76 seats compared to



Kid Stuff

Marketing Sex and Violence to America's Children
edited by
Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti

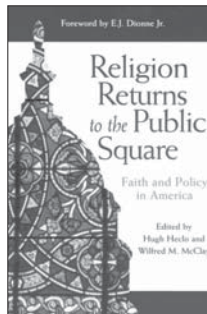
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the deposed Parti Québécois' (PQ) 45 and the Action Democratique du Québec's (ADQ) mere four seats. Not only are the sovereigntists now in the minority, but, if a referendum for independence were held today, only 38 percent—the hardliners—would vote for it.

The decline of sovereigntist sentiment has been steep since the heady days of the mid-1990's, when the PQ nearly led Quebec out of Canada. Since then, the movement has been torn by internal divisions, a general lack of vision, and changing demographics and economics. In 1996, when Lucien Bouchard, founder of the Bloc Québécois, returned to Quebec City to head up the PQ government, achieving independence seemed only a matter of time. But Bouchard, a conservative by nature and political persuasion, was convinced by Quebec's business elite to spend his time fixing the local economy and reforming the provincial government, for fear of economic ruin if independence should come. His policies were carried forward by his successor, the current and soon-to-be deposed PQ leader Bernard Landry. While the PQ was soft-pedaling the sovereignty question and refusing to hold another referendum until the time was right, Ottawa, stunned by the 1995 referendum's near success, sprung into action. Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien allocated millions to promote federalism in the province, and parliament passed the Clear Question Act, making independence referenda a matter for Ottawa's interpretation. When the Canadian Supreme Court upheld the law, dreams of independence were shattered.

Thus, the PQ quit talking about sovereignty. Disgusted nationalists searched for a new party and found the ADQ. Its leader, the youthful Mario Dumont, had supported the 1995 referendum, and so the sovereigntists, especially in rural Quebec, flocked to his banner. In the spring of 2002, the ADQ won several by-elections to increase their ridings to five, and Dumont shot to the top of the polls. This new face on the Canadian political scene strode into the Toronto Economic Club last fall and wowed the Canadian elites with his proposals and charisma.

However, the very moment of triumph for Dumont and his fledgling party became his undoing back home. Dumont may have wowed them on Bay Street, but, on St. Laurent Boulevard, he disgusted them. Sovereigntists were outraged that he made no constitutional demands and failed to engage in the usual

Anglo-baiting; they concluded that he was too "Canadian" for their tastes and went right back into the open arms of the PQ. "It was a catastrophe," said one political observer in the *Globe and Mail*. "Francophone voters expect a premier to have some belief in sovereignty and when he didn't offer it, they deserted him." This, plus the usual frontal assault by the Canadian and Quebec media on any genuinely conservative candidate (and the inevitable flip-flops that followed), sent Dumont crashing back to earth just as fast as he took off. Other symptoms of the diseases that affect Canadian conservatives, such as party infighting and lack of funds, left the ADQ with one fewer seat than they had before the election, despite gaining 19 percent of the vote. Dumont looked like Quebec's version of Stockwell Day.

Perhaps Dumont did not talk about sovereignty because he did not think he had to. After all, the vast majority of political observers told any candidate who would listen that voters in Quebec were sick of the sovereignty question. Certainly, Landry believed this, which is why he spent much of his time promoting all the good things that his government had accomplished, including instituting a four-day work week. This left a vacuum that was nicely filled by the staunch federalist Charest. Without the sovereignty issue, the PQ is no different from the Liberals (and more to the left in many ways, which explains much of the displeasure with the current PQ leadership), and, without sovereignty, the ADQ is seen as a right-wing fringe party. A divided, demoralized, and diffused sovereignty movement was no match for the Grits.

Voter turnout for the election was one of the lowest in decades; the Iraq war overshadowed much of the campaign, and many Québécois felt that none of the parties addressed the real issues facing the province. As one business manager noted in the *Globe and Mail*, "We have one of the world's highest suicide rates among young people, one of the highest rates of single-parent families, not to mention North America's highest abortion rate and lowest birthrate. What are the people we elect to govern us doing to solve these problems?"

—Sean Scallon

VLADIMIR PUTIN, prodded by a reporter's question regarding the collapse

of Saddam Hussein's regime, remarked that Russia, for "economic and political" reasons, "has no interest in the defeat of the United States." Putin's comments were seen by Russian media observers as a sign that the Kremlin had come full circle on the Iraq question. In late January, Putin had hinted that Russia might agree to a new U.S.-backed resolution on Iraq and even back U.S. military action. Then, during a February trip to Germany and France, Putin endorsed the Franco-German plan to prolong U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq and even threatened a Russian U.N. Security Council veto of a proposed U.S.-backed resolution—a resolution that, in Putin's words, opened the door to an "unreasonable use of force" against Baghdad.

The United States had expected that Russia would not attempt to block the U.S. war against Iraq. In exchange, Russia would play a postwar role in the development of Iraq's rich oil deposits, and a U.S.-backed post-Saddam government would repay Iraq's eight-billion-dollar debt to Moscow.

In February, as the Kremlin hardened its line on Iraq, Moscow Kremlin watchers noticed that the Boris Yeltsin "family," the dominant Russian clan, which favors a more U.S.-friendly foreign-policy line, had begun dropping hints that Putin, Yeltsin's chosen successor, may not serve a second term. (The next presidential election is slated for March 2004.) The reasons for the family's threats remain unclear, but the Kremlin subsequently adopted an antiwar line favored by a group of oligarchs who lack the American connections of the family and its allies (and, thus, are less able to exploit possible deals with U.S. oil firms). Moreover, Putin's recent reorganization of Russia's security agencies strengthened anti-American elements in the Russian military and security apparatus (the *siloviki*). Putin seemed to be looking to garner political support for a second term as Russian president.

With the outbreak of war in late March, the *siloviki* apparently began pressuring Putin to mount a full-blown anti-American media blitz, which *siloviki*-friendly pundits swore would play well in the upcoming parliamentary and presidential election campaigns. Indeed, antiwar protests, which quickly morphed into anti-American demonstrations, were organized across Russia by political parties eager to please the powers that be. Meanwhile, Kremlin representatives of anti-"family" groups turned up the heat on

the Yeltsin clan, with the general prosecutor's office opening an investigation of corruption in the Russian cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov, a member of the Yeltsin family.

Since late February, Moscow had been treated to a wave of rumors regarding an impending move against the family and its members in the Russian government. The shakeup has not yet materialized, however, and the Kremlin sharply toned down its antiwar and anti-American rhetoric in mid-March. The rumors about Putin's early retirement have since died out, possibly indicating that Putin had come to terms with the family; one Moscow source reported that Putin had backed away from firing key family-connected officials after an unexpected Kremlin visit by Yeltsin himself in March. Kremlinologists have long suspected that the family is blackmailing the Russian president, which might explain Putin's recent caution regarding relations with the United States, as well as the longevity of the Kasyanov government.

In late March and early April, U.S.-Russia relations hit the skids, following accusations by Washington that Moscow had sold dangerous military technology to Baghdad, including night-vision equipment that may have partly negated U.S. battlefield advantages, leading to threats by the U.S. Congress to cut Russia out of any Iraq reconstruction contracts. Meanwhile, U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice met with Putin and other Kremlin officials on April 7, reportedly to secure Russian support for the U.S. reconstruction plans for Iraq. Moscow still has some cards to play, however, both in Iraq and in the wider "War on Terror": Washington is eager for Moscow to write off Iraq's debt to Russia, even as reports from Afghanistan, where Russia still wields considerable influence, indicate that the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda are regrouping and re-

newing guerrilla warfare against U.S. forces. Thus, in addition to needing Moscow's help with the Iraq debt problem, the United States may once again need the Kremlin's services in Afghanistan. Moscow has already opened the bargaining: During a recent Washington trip, Russian Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin let it be known that the Kremlin is ready to write off the eight billion dollars Iraq owes Russia—if Washington pressures Western creditors to write off Russia's considerable foreign debts.

—Wayne Allensworth

OBITER DICTA: Plan now to attend the 14th Annual Meeting of the **John Randolph Club**, November 14-15, in **New Orleans**, at the charming and elegant Saint Louis Hotel—in the French Quarter, of course. Watch future issues of *Chronicles* for more information, or visit www.ChroniclesMagazine.org.

Our first poet, **Katherine Dalton**, is a former managing editor of *Chronicles* and has written for a number of publications, including the *Wall Street Journal*, *Baltimore Sun*, *New York Post*, and *Harp-er's Bazaar*. She lives on a farm in her native Kentucky. This is her first published poem.

Our second poem is a work of the Russian genius Boris Pasternak, translated by *Chronicles'* European correspondent **Andrei Navrozov**. Mr. Navrozov is the author of *Italian Carousel: Scenes of Internal Exile*, a recently published collection of essays from *Chronicles*.

This month's art is provided by our art director, **H. Ward Sterett** of Roscoe, Illinois. Mr. Sterett received his B.F.A. from the University of Colorado and his M.F.A. from Northern Illinois University, and he attended the L'Abri Fellowship, where he studied the effect of Christianity on art. He currently works as a sculptor, painter, and printmaker in Roscoe.

***Chronicles* is looking for a copyeditor/editorial secretary.**

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Imitation of Life

“You shall have life and that abundantly.”

What did Jesus’ followers make of this bold promise? He had shown them that he could cure the diseases that afflict both body and mind, and, in bringing Lazarus back from the dead, He lifted the veil to reveal a part of the mystery of His own being. Some of His hearers, however, must have taken him for a crude magician, casting out demons (so the Pharisees said) with the help of Beelzebub. Once He had returned to His Father, He left the gift of life with His Church, sending the Holy Ghost to His Apostles. Even then, Simon Magus thought their miracles were a trick, and he was willing to pay Philip good money if only he would share the secret.

Between the miracles of Christ and his Church and the trickery and schemes of Magus runs the gulf that separates Heaven from Hell. The serpent in the garden persuaded Eve that, if she and Adam ate the fruit,

Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

The serpent lied, and one consequence of Eve’s and Adam’s rebellion has been to make us prone to accept, ever since, the same lying promise to make us immortal gods with power over life.

Pagans and Christians alike instinctively sense there is a kind of immortality offered by children, who carry on their parents’ lives (or genomes, if you prefer more scientific language) into the future. Christianity codified this instinct into a system of indissoluble marriage that repudiated Jewish permissiveness on divorce and prohibited all forms of infanticide (whether exposure or abortion) and contraception. The fundamental fact of marriage is that two distinct human beings (of different sexes) become one, merging their opposing identities in the conception of a child who represents half of each parent’s genetic stock. This is a deepening and a strengthening (not a reversal) of early pagan views.

The satanic view, by contrast, tells men

and women they are free to copulate with whom they choose and to marry and divorce according to their whims. If they fail to prevent the conception of a child (as they ought to have), they should do the right thing and abort him or her, thus showing that they are masters of their own pleasure and lords of creation.

Christian opposition to infanticide and contraception is part of a larger commitment to life. Some misguided Christians throughout the ages have concluded that they are forbidden to take a life, even if called upon to serve in a just war, execute a brutal murderer, or defend their family from a predator. To reach this conclusion, they have to ignore the clear testimony of the New Testament—the instruction given to the disciples to buy a sword; Paul’s statement in Romans that the ruler’s sword is an object of terror only to the wicked; John the Baptist’s demand that soldiers be just (not that they leave the army)—to say nothing of the array of bloody penalties in the Pentateuch.

And yet, if Christian pacifists are wrong (dangerously wrong, I should say), their mistake is an understandable overstatement of the Christian tenderness toward human life. St. Augustine made it clear that, while he acknowledged the authority of the Roman state to execute criminals, his priestly office was to ask for mercy. This Christian tenderness, if it can be extended in some instances even to the guilty, is absolute in the case of the innocent. No Christian, whether a ruler or a subject, is ever justified in deciding to kill an innocent human being. Soldiers may be required, by loyalty and obedience, to fight in what they regard as an unjust war or to perform actions in which the lives of civilians are placed unnecessarily at risk. The blood is not on their hands, if they are conscientiously following orders and serving their country, though soldiers who massacre civilians, even under orders, share the guilt of their officers. The little girls on ships who press buttons to blow up hospitals probably do not know what they are doing, but the politicians and generals who make the decision to carpet bomb cities and choose to terrorize civilians in order to facilitate a military conquest can only be forgiven if they

repent and do not repeat the sin.

Christian rulers, despite the teachings of the Gospels, have committed terrible crimes. Some have repented; others have not. No ruler, however, can reasonably ask to be regarded as a Christian, whatever his public professions, who repudiates the fundamental tenet of the protection of innocent life. Edward III and his son, who murdered their way across France in the Hundred Years’ War, raping nuns and burning churches; Christian politicians who profess “neutrality” on abortion or deliberately make war on civilians—all of them, unless they repent, put themselves outside the blessed company of the faithful.

The Christian regard for life is not the undifferentiated reverence for all animate existence professed by some Eastern sects. We do not veil our faces to prevent the accidental killing of flies, nor do we forswear the eating of meat, except as a form of spiritual *askesis*. (Vegetarianism is among the most pernicious of anti-Christian cults). It is human life we revere, not because human beings are more intelligent than monkeys (as Tibor Machan has argued). This fundamental mistake has given an opening to Peter Singer and other dishonest proponents of infanticide, who point out that an unborn child is less intelligent than an adult subhuman mammal. The logical conclusion is to kill the baby and preserve the life of the cat.

Christians revere human life, because man is made in the image of God. A superintelligent android, even if it were as organic as the robots portrayed in Karel Capek’s dramatic masterpiece *RUR*, would merely be man made in the image of man, an individual thing rather than a person. In Capek’s play, one of the earliest works to take up the subject of dehumanization in the modern world, the inventor’s eventual love for his creatures enables them to achieve humanity, but the reality of the human aspiration to create life is something quite different.

Capek himself, although he was not unscathed by his encounters with Masonic ideology, understood this aspiration very well. The inventor who created the robots was looking for something beyond

a cheap labor force. As Capek explains, “He wanted to become a sort of scientific substitute for God. . . . His sole purpose was nothing more nor less than to prove that God was no longer necessary.”

This ambition to replace God is as old as the serpent who tempted the first Adam and as up-to-date as the plans to clone human beings, and it is no accident that Karel Capek lived in Prague, the city in which a rabbi, after studying the *Cabala*, conjured up a Golem to protect his people. Although the feat was originally said to be the work of a cabalistic rabbi of the 16th century, it was later attributed to the chief rabbi, Judah Loew, who was a pious Jew and not known to have pored over the dark pages of the *Cabala*, a work that, along with the Hermetic writings and those of the Arab alchemists, is one of the primary sources of the occult tradition. Infected by both gnosticism and Neoplatonic mysticism, the *Cabala*, rather than being a representation of traditional Jewish wisdom, holds out the promise of power, a power that the God of the Jews and Christians denied man from the beginning. Thus, according to legend, the creation of the golem involves the imitation (or mockery) of God’s creation of the first man.

The cabalistic writings took shape around the 11th century, and there is nothing like the story of the golem in ancient Judaism or the myths of the Greeks and the Romans. Homer does describe robotic serving statues in the palace of Alcinous, but these marvels are merely one of the fairy-tale devices of the *Odyssey*, which also includes shape-shifters, witches, and one-eyed giants. The Greeks, who sensed the presence of gods in every living thing, could only attribute the origin of life, especially human life, to a divine force.

Although Mary Shelley entitled her cautionary tale of the scientist who creates human life *The New Prometheus*, the original Prometheus was a god who did not actually create the human race but only endowed it with special gifts. Taking pity on men, who had been made in the gods’ image, Prometheus stole the fire of heaven and gave it to us poor mortal creatures, for which crime he was punished by Zeus. Greeks hearing the tale or watching Aeschylus’s play on the subject could be grateful to the Titan who saved the human race and yet approve of the punishment he received for his disobedience.

There could be no scheme to ape the Creator without a clear notion of the Cre-

ation, which only Christians and Jews were able to grasp. (Aristotle believed that the universe had always existed, and many Jewish thinkers continue to believe, with the Mormons, that the deity merely gave shape to a preexisting universe.) Renaissance magicians and alchemists, borrowing from cabalistic, Arabic, Hermetic, and Neoplatonist sources, dreamed of outdoing Prometheus by seizing the power of life and raising themselves to the level of God. Paracelsus instructed adepts in the art of incubating semen in an “hermetically” sealed retort submerged in horse manure and subjected to magnetic waves for 40 days, at which time it begins to take on human form and must be fed with some mysterious blood potion for a period of 40 weeks until this “homunculus” can be brought up like a normal child. While some cabalists might wish to keep such mysteries a secret, Paracelsus argued that, since God could do everything, we, too, “shall be able to do everything.” The magician may be under God in His realm, but, in the magician’s realm, God Himself is “under me.”

Paracelsus was a scientist as well as a magician, and there is no contradiction between his search for chemical cures for disease and his dream of stealing the power of life and using it to create anti-men. Both imply the reduction of human life to a formula. Descartes’ philosophical attempts to explain human emotions in primitive mechanical terms, Hobbes’s comparison of human society to a machine, and La Mettrie’s self-explanatory title *L’Homme machine* were all crude precursors of the modern pseudosciences of psychology, sociology, and “political science.” The dream of aping God, however, never died. It is part and parcel of the Rosicrucian and Masonic fantasies of the 17th and 18th centuries, and it is clearly in the mind of Benjamin Franklin (a Freemason), when he suggests that it lies within the power of human science to make man immortal—a notion he passed on to the archetypal English liberal, William Godwin.

In Godwin’s day, the dream began to take on more concrete shape. Franklin had shown that the power of lightning was the same as the mysterious electrical force that could be stored in a Leyden jar, while Galvani had demonstrated that this same force generated muscle activities in an animal, and the quack Mesmer had even healed the sick by applying “animal magnetism.” What was to prevent some new Prometheus from stealing the fire of

Heaven and using it to animate the dead?

In retrospect, the idea seems as inevitable as the buttonhook. Intellectuals of the Romantic period were seeking to liberate themselves from the sterilities of the Age of Reason, and it was quite natural for them to reach back to the dark secrets of Renaissance magic. In *Faust*, Goethe, himself a Freemason and a student of the occult, wrote the classic cautionary tale on the hubristic magus who sought the secrets of youth and vitality. Faust’s servant Wagner even creates an homunculus, who accompanies his master on his journey through time to find his heart’s desire. But it was left up to Mary Shelley, William Godwin’s daughter and the wife of a Neoplatonist who acted as if he had himself created the universe, to combine the new science of electricity with the magician’s fantasy of playing divine creator. And even though the story of Victor Frankenstein and the revenge taken by his monster should have warned modern scientists against presumption, it has, if anything, inspired them to perfect Dr. Frankenstein’s research.

Even Paracelsus acknowledged that an homunculus would be undersized (as Dolly the sheep was underlived), and Dr. Frankenstein, in attempting to create a man, succeeded only in cobbling together a monster. The important truth that is never grasped by latter-day Frankensteins is not that man ought not to play at being God but that he cannot do it. In all the furor over the possibility of human cloning, it is rarely observed that human beings are regularly cloned in nature. What else are identical twins? Of course, once a genome exists, it is only a matter of time and technology before some fool will try to reproduce it, much as a recording engineer reproduces a performance. But who in his right mind does not distinguish Thibaudet at the keyboard from Thibaudet on CD, and who would think that the recording engineer actually wrote and performed the music?

In the end, Frankenstein’s monster tries to destroy its creator, and the rabbi’s golem—the anti-Adam—proved to be so dangerous that it had to be destroyed. Man aping God can only mock himself, and the current attempt to storm Heaven by cloning humans and reengineering the human race, so far from leading to the abolition of man, as C.S. Lewis warned, will only prove the undoing of the Antichrists who concocted modernity from the crucibles of their twisted rationality.



Two Funerals

by Katherine Dalton

Three-plus hours to Monticello: I sat in the back with my book
Through nine counties and Hall's Gap; we talked little along the way.
We buried Papa D. that day,
And I was too little to feel, graveside, much emotion beyond relief.
Today we bury Stuart,
And if I am grown enough now for sorrow, I am still too little to lose;
For we are always children to grief.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly we say in prayer
As the pallbearers step behind the body they are not allowed to bear
We cannot touch the dead, for death is catching
And I sit today face-to-face with God my Father
And my father, as of now his mother's eldest, as I am his eldest;
The last shall be first, and we are next.
We read the text:
He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water
His leaf also shall not wither—
We speak only of rebirth
But he is fast becoming earth.

Uncle, is there a Heaven? If death's a mask, what lies beneath?
Can you help me wrestle confidence out of my unbelief?
Can you pray for us in Heaven, as we have prayed for you?
We go back to dinner; I eat for two.
Then as we leave, forgetting, look for Stuart to say goodbye
So much longer does it take, once a man is dead, for his presence in his house to die.

by Roger D. McGrath

Bury the Facts at Wounded Knee

At Wounded Knee Creek, on December 29, 1890, the last fight of any size or significance between the U.S. Army and American Indians occurred. Although a terrible tragedy involving the loss of Indian women and children, the battle has been wildly mischaracterized, especially by those bent on making the Indian an innocent victim of the Evil White Man. The real story is far more complex—and far more interesting. It begins with the Ghost Dance.

Responsible for the ritualistic dance that ultimately led to the Battle of Wounded Knee was Wovoka, a Paiute from the Walker River Reservation in western Nevada. As a young boy, he was adopted by the Wilsons—a white family who farmed and ranched near the reservation—and reared as Jack Wilson, just another of the Wilson boys. In 1885, he began having visions and preaching that Jesus would return, this time for the Indians. Now calling himself Wovoka, he said the white man would be swept from the earth in a great upheaval, but Indians who performed the Ghost Dance would be lifted into the sky and suspended there until the cataclysm was over. The earth would be covered by a new layer of soil, sweet grass, and great herds of buffalo. Dead warriors would return to life.

Not many listened to Wovoka until his white brothers concluded that Jack needed a miracle. Wovoka told the Paiute of the Walker River Reservation that he would make ice float down the river, a fantastic claim in the middle of summer. While Wovoka chanted, the Wilson boys, well upstream, dumped blocks of ice into the river. On cue, ice came floating past the reservation, leaving the Paiute awestruck. Word of Wovoka's strong medicine spread quickly.

By 1889, his message had reached the Indians of the northern plains, including the Sioux. Soon, Sioux warriors were performing the Ghost Dance and wearing Ghost Shirts, which Wovoka said would repel the bullets of the whites. As the movement gained momentum, Indian agents began to fear that a major uprising was imminent. Several bands of Sioux bolted reservations and headed for the Badlands, immediately west of the

Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

The 7th Cavalry was given the task of flushing Sioux out of the Badlands and driving them back to the reservations. Within weeks, the troopers had corralled several bands of Sioux and had them on the march back to reservations. Then, late in the day on December 28, several companies of the 7th Cavalry caught up with Big Foot's band of Miniconjou, which was camped alongside Wounded Knee Creek. Big Foot was told the cavalry was there to escort his people back to the reservation. The chief was suffering terribly from pneumonia, and some feared he would die. He was provided a warm tent and a stove and treated by the regimental surgeon. Because of the cold, tents were erected for those Indians whose tepees were in poor condition, and rations were distributed to all.

Early the next morning, Col. James Forsyth ordered all Indian warriors to assemble and surrender their arms, as agreed upon by Big Foot, so the march back to the reservation could begin. After an hour, only six unserviceable rifles had been surrendered. Forsyth ordered troopers to search the tepees. Squaws raised a great fuss and did everything in their power to hinder the search. After another hour, the troopers had discovered only 40 more rifles, most of them old and in need of repair. Something was up.

If the men and officers of the 7th had been fluent in Sioux, they would have known that a medicine man, Yellow Bird, was preparing the Sioux warriors for battle. He walked among the warriors and chanted, "You wear Ghost Shirts. No white man's bullet can hurt you." Suddenly, a warrior leaped to his feet and pulled a rifle from under the blanket he wore. A trooper lunged for the rifle, but the warrior fired. As if planned, other warriors instantly threw back their blankets, revealing Winchester repeaters, and opened fire. A bullet shattered a lieutenant's arm. Another blew off the top of a captain's head. Within seconds, a dozen or more troopers fell. Others, however, returned fire, and Indians began to drop.

As the two sides separated, troopers manning four rapid-fire Hotchkiss guns on a nearby hill began raking Indian po-



sitions. The Hotchkiss fired a shell that exploded on impact, sending fragments flying in all directions and not discriminating among men, women, and children. The Sioux stampeded out of camp, with the cavalry in pursuit. The fight was over quickly, but the carnage was frightful. The 7th suffered 25 dead and 39 wounded. The Sioux lost 84 warriors and 62 women and children by the Army's count, although some Indians claimed the losses were higher.

Because so many women and children were killed, the Army launched an investigation, something never even imagined by Indians after an Indian slaughter of white women and children, since such slaughters were intentional and praiseworthy. At the investigation, dozens of witnesses testified, including officers, troopers, Indian scouts, and Sioux. The Army's investigation concluded, "There is nothing to conceal or to apologize for in the Wounded Knee Battle. . . . The firing was begun by the Indians and continued until they stopped."

Nonetheless, the battle is often portrayed as a massacre of innocent Sioux, an interpretation that is long on emotion and short on facts. Some also claim the 7th Cavalry was bent on avenging the slaughter of Custer and his men at Little Big Horn. If it had been revenge they wanted, they had several opportunities to take it during the fall of 1876 and the spring of 1877, when the Sioux who had fought at Little Big Horn were surrendering and returning to the reservation. Moreover, by 1890, only a handful of those who had been with the 7th in 1876 were still in the regiment. The battle was a tragic and dismal end to the Indian wars, to be sure, but the warriors of Big Foot's band had only themselves and their treacherous actions to blame for bringing on the wrath of the 7th Cavalry.

Pro-Lifers and the Psalmist's Curses

“By the Rivers of Babylon, There We Sat and Wept . . .”

by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.



H. Ward Strett

On one bright, cold January day in the early 80's I stood with a group of college students from North Carolina after the annual March for Life in Washington as we were received by Sen. Jesse Helms. He greeted us kindly and then regaled us with a few stories with that combination of gentility and peasant common sense that Southern politicians now no longer dare display, unless they are very old or reckless of their careers. The senator told us of being accosted at the Republican Convention by a “lady” (which word he ironically emphasized, tripping slowly off the *l* and shuffling across a long, wide *a*) who shouted, “Senator, why do you want to control my body?” He replied, “Ma’am, there may be a man in this broad land who has less desire to control your body than I do, but I don’t know who he is.” We all laughed merrily, as we imagined the confusion of the angry amazon. We were all convinced that the “Our Bodies, Ourselves” slogan was patently false. The innocent unborn child is, after all, a human person distinct from his mother, and his inalienable right to life is in no way dependent on her judgment or anyone else’s.

This is true as far as it goes, but, in fact, it goes too far. Not that our conviction about the dignity of human nature was wrong, but, in the *sic et non* of a serious disputation, we should have been convicted of not being sharp enough to notice the point of the objection implied in the poor woman’s rhetorical question. The old scholastics used to say, “*Qui nimis probat, nihil probat*” (“He who proves too much proves nothing”). Pro-lifers (among whom I include myself), then as now, tend to argue their point in a way that, in the long run, is bound to be self-defeating. They avoid asserting the currently unpleasant truths that must underlie their position in the concrete and claim to know more about the unborn than they could possibly know with certainty. “Seldom deny, often affirm, always distinguish” is the rule of sound and effective disputation. In fact, the

feminist’s argument based on her personal, bodily autonomy points to a not-at-all irrelevant aspect of human life that must be understood from the start when dealing with natural rights.

To put it bluntly, even though we deny absolutely her conclusion that she may freely kill her child, we nonetheless answer the “lady” with a double, if only partial, concession to the premises implied in her question: “Yes, as a man prohibiting you from having an abortion, I want to control your body” and “Yes, the child is a part of you, and he does not have strict rights over you.” Let us hear what Thomas Aquinas has to say, keeping in mind that his use of *father* and *son* is also virtually inclusive of the notions of *mother* and *daughter*:

That which is the object of a right, or is just, is said to be so by way of a proportion of one to another. An “other” can be said in two ways. One way is that whereby a thing is simply other, as being entirely distinct, as in the case of two men, one of whom is not subject to the other, but both are subject under one head of state. Among these, as the Philosopher says in the fifth book of the *Ethics*, there is found a right or the just simply or strictly so-called. Another way a thing is other, is when it is not so simply or strictly, but as something belonging. In this way, in human affairs a son belongs to his father, since he is in a certain sense part of him, as it says in the seventh book of the *Ethics*. . . . And so the proportion between father and son is not as of things simply other, and consequently there is not found in their relation the just or right simply, but a certain kind of right, namely paternal right. . . . A wife belongs to her husband, since she is proportioned to him as though she were his own body, as is clear from the Apostle in Ephesians 5. Even so, she is more to be distinguished from her husband than the son is from the father . . . and so as the Philosopher says there is more of simple justice between husband and wife than

Fr. Hugh is prior of St. Michael’s Abbey in Trabuco Canyon.

between father and son . . . but even so the justice between them is not simply political, but rather domestic justice. . . . Since it pertains to justice to render to each his right, granting the difference between one and the other, if then someone were to give himself what was due himself, this would not properly be justice . . . therefore there is no justice strictly speaking from father to son . . . It is to be asserted that a son insofar as he is a son belongs to his father, but insofar as he is considered as a man, then in some sense there is justice from the father to him. On this account there are also some laws which regard the rights of sons from their fathers . . . Even so, insofar as they belong to each other, there will be lacking the perfect form of rights or justice [*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 57, a. 4].

Could it be that to argue the case against abortion solely on the basis of the humanity of the unborn (which, of course, we grant) ignores the immediate, proximate moral context of abortion—that of parenthood and the union of man and woman in one flesh? Long before the discovery of ovulation and modern genetics and the consequent dialectical arguments for the personhood of the unborn from fertilization on, abortion was always held to be a grave evil simply by virtue of the natural relationship between parent and offspring. Aquinas regarded abortion as “a grave sin, reckoned a crime and contrary to nature, since even beasts await the development of the fetus, even though it is less grave than a homicide, if it could be that animation has been prevented” (*Commentary on the Sentences* IV, d. 31, ex.).

An exclusive emphasis on the independent, personal rights of the unborn misrepresents the nature of his relationship to his parents and tends to deprive the pro-life position of what is perhaps the most efficacious motive for forbidding and preventing abortion—the bodily bond between a man and woman and their fetus, a veritable first principle of natural law:

A natural right is that which by its very nature is proportioned to another . . . this can be the case according to one’s nature considered absolutely, as the male has by his very essence as male a proportion to the female that he might beget by her, and a parent to a child that he might care for him. . . . Now to consider something absolutely is not only a characteristic of man, but also of other animals, and so that which is called a natural right in this way is common to us and other animals [*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 57, a. 3].

No reasonable person, educated or not, truly doubts that an abortion is undergone precisely to take a human life already begun. What is lacking in our society is not the awareness of this fact but the sense that procreation begets an obligation to care for what you have brought forth. A man and a woman must care for what they conceive, if they are not to be less reasonable than beasts. “Adoption, Not Abortion” is a fine practical solution to what is, morally speaking, an extreme situation. A society in which there is no shame either in killing or giving away your own children, however, is not one in which many will be found willing to care for someone else’s.

In a sense, a positive law that would define human life in order to protect it, like a law defining marriage, would be a proclamation that a society had become so unnatural, so much less perceptible than the birds and the bees, that it has to try to prove the self-evident, an impossible task that is doomed to frustration

and is evidence of madness or despair. Although it is certain that even an unborn child has rights in the relative sense given by Aquinas, abortion would be far more efficaciously prevented by support and esteem for the natural right of parenthood. It is the lack of this, rather than of any speculative notion of the rights and dignity of the human person as such, that drives so many to kill their own offspring.

The commandment that most persuasively attacks the evil of abortion is not “Thou shalt not kill” but “Honor thy father and thy mother.” It is to the observance of this that the promise of life is attached: “that thy life may be long on the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” If the natural, binding force of blood relationships is strong in a people, few will kill, neglect, abuse, or give up their children. Merely being a human person is barely ever the proximate foundation for any morally binding relationship; being father, mother, son, daughter, as also boss, worker, ruler, subject, is, however. When a particular reality is obscure and its immediate causes unknown, we legitimately have recourse to remote and universal causes to provide what understanding we can have; when the immediate causes are evident, however, then recourse to more general ones is unconvincing and unhelpful. If I drop a potted plant on the head of my neighbor in the apartment balcony below, I cannot excuse myself by invoking the law of gravity, even though it indicates a true cause of the mishap. So, too, between “Spare Your Own Child” and “Respect Life,” there can be little doubt as to which command is more apt to convince. In this way, too, the mindset behind a “Million Man March” would do more to stop abortions than any “March for Life.”

The unborn are not simply human beings: They are our sons and daughters, our grandchildren, our brothers and sisters, our cousins, nieces and nephews.

Perhaps the soundest political strategy to prevent abortion would be along the lines of those laws whereby parents are able to prevent a minor daughter’s abortion. Irrespective of the age of the mother, the father’s right to prevent the abortion could be legally recognized—even the right of anyone who is a direct natural or legal ancestor of the unborn child willing to take the responsibility of caring for him. If the law were to recognize the compelling interest a family has in its young, the binding nature of kinship, this might go further to overcome the casual disrespect for human life that characterizes America today than would simply restricting abortion in one or another form, or at one or another time. Our society will never respect the unborn if our families do not. If fathers and grandparents knew they could stop the abortion, if doctors knew they could be imprisoned for performing them without the family’s explicit consent, a real moral pressure could be exerted, which would save lives.

The unborn are not simply human beings: They are our sons and daughters, our grandchildren, our brothers and sisters, our

cousins, nieces and nephews. The Kantian cult of morally autonomous human personhood—the vulgar corruption (or natural consequence!) of which has led to a denial of natural rights so complete that motherhood includes the right to kill your child as though he were an unjust aggressor on your autonomy—can hardly be trusted to provide a remedy for the evil it engendered in the first place. Is abortion simply a matter of the evaluation of the rights of human persons, or is it more obviously the violent destruction of a natural relationship, a mother killing her child? Human society is not just a collection of *persons*, it is a moral union of those who share a common nature. And *nature* means precisely “birth.”

The sin committed by parents who reject the child of their own flesh is a worse evil than the child’s own death, which will, in any case, occur sooner or later. The honor due to God, by the observance of His law, is the highest norm, not the dignity of any of His creatures.

Elaborate speculative, phenomenological arguments can be composed to assert the strict personhood of the zygote. These might be true, even if uncertain. The ancient and medieval Christian tradition, however, which far more successfully opposed infanticide than does modern personalism, did not base its horror of abortion on arguments for the personhood of the unborn but on the natural relationships necessary for procreation. Some current “pro-life” arguments—like one in a recent Roman Catholic clerical review—so relativize the dignity of the relationship of parent to child that they do not notice or take seriously the obvious objection to the full human animation and personhood of the zygote that arises from the case of identical twins. If the zygote is an actual human person, then the first must be, from a strict philosophical perspective, the parent of any which follow from it, though they will likely never know which is which. Such is the brave new world of personalist anatomy! Its conclusions about the absolute immorality of abortion and other forms of manipulation of human life are utterly sound, but its arguments will not help to end abortion or its laboratory equivalents in the concrete. They are like the natural law of Romans 1; they increase the culpability of the wicked without moving them to do what is right.

The perspective of the Epistle to the Romans is indeed the ultimate foil both for injustice and for inefficacious means of overcoming it. Abraham was commanded by God to offer his only son in sacrifice after receiving the promise of an innu-

merable descent, and yet “in the promise of God he staggered not by distrust, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, most fully knowing that whatsoever he has promised, He is also able to perform, and therefore it was reputed to him unto justice” (Romans 4).

Thomas Aquinas answers the objection that natural law is mutable because God Himself commanded Abraham to kill his innocent son, ordered the Jews to take the precious vessels of the Egyptians, and ordered Hosea to marry a fornicatress. His response is telling:

Everyone dies by a natural death, both the innocent and the guilty, which natural death was induced by the divine power on account of original sin . . . And thus death can be inflicted on any man, innocent or not without any injustice if it is commanded by God. Similarly adultery is commerce with another’s wife, who is deputed to him according to a law established by God, whence it is that if a man approaches any woman by a divine decree, this is neither adultery or fornication, and the same rationale holds for theft . . . so not only in human affairs is whatever is commanded by God due Him, but even on the level of mere nature whatever is from God, is in some sense natural [*Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 94, a. 5].

In the end, abortion is contrary to the natural right because it is an offense against God, on whom the whole dignity of a human person depends. The sin committed by parents who reject the child of their own flesh is a worse evil than the child’s own death, which will, in any case, occur sooner or later. The honor due to God, by the observance of His law, is the highest norm, not the dignity of any of His creatures. He will judge as done to Himself what, of good or ill, we did to His rational handiwork.

In 1588, Pope Sixtus V, in the constitution *Effraenatam*, decreed that those who procure abortion by any means “of the immature fetus, whether animate or inanimate, formed or unformed,” should be subject to the penalties established in civil and canon law for homicides. Why? Because this crime was especially horrible in that it deprived the child, by the loss of Baptism, of “the blessed vision of God,” and God “of the service of His creature” and because “the fecundity of the one who bears children is a divine gift.” The priority of the maternal bond over the concrete personal status of the child, and the assertion of the priority of God and grace over the creature and personal freedom of choice that are implied in his decree, leave the modern pro-lifer uncomfortable. Yet this unease is just the faint and disfiguring impression in the hearts of the just of the outright hatred of family and of God found in the unjust. May that same God efface this dangerous trace from our hearts. Otherwise, we may be “pro-lifers” who are on the side of the First Lady—who, as Aquinas has shown us, has less moral sense than a beast’s—who told us around a decade ago that “family means to us whatever it means to you,” and not on the right side of the Psalmist’s curses:

May they be like a woman’s abortion that never sees the sun [Psalm 58: 9 in the Hebrew].

Blessed is he, O Daughter of Babylon, who shall hold and dash your little ones against the rock [Psalm 137: 8].

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Rending the Seamless Garment

Catholics and Abortion

by Judie Brown



People often ask me, “What is wrong with our priests?” or “Why don’t our bishops say more about abortion? They seem to have no trouble whatsoever speaking out quite freely when it comes to war or capital punishment.”

On the surface, this is disturbing. I find it even more disturbing, however, that I, a layman, have countless people ask me to raise awareness among Catholics concerning the true teachings of the Church. Since our country decriminalized the act of abortion nearly 30 years ago, we have little if any progress to show, despite the alleged strength of the pro-life movement. This movement is clearly in critical condition. The information I am about to share with you may be unpleasant medicine. But without it, it may be too late to save the patient.

Abortion is a crime against human beings and a violation of human rights; at its core, however, the act is a direct attack on God, the Author of life. Abortion denies the creative hand of God and treats a human being as if he were but an object whose existence depends upon the will of another person. Abortion eliminates the “unplanned” result of sexual activity—a result that is neither desired nor accepted by the participants.

The unavoidable truth, however, is that the precursor to abortion is contraception, which encourages people to behave in a manner contrary to God’s will. Contraception presented man with the empty promise of sexual fulfillment with no strings attached—instant gratification without long-term responsibility.

Contraception, however, often failed to meet its promised goal of preventing the creation of new life. These failures were defined as “unplanned pregnancies,” and it became desirable to seek the “termination” of those human beings. Eventually, that termination was granted the protection of law.

In the intervening years, Pope John Paul II brilliantly made the case against contraception and abortion in many of his writ-

ings. However, the bishops of the United States seemed hesitant to teach these truths consistently, despite the fact that they are basic to the Church’s consistent position for nearly 2,000 years and clearly fundamental to any meaningful understanding of what it will take to end abortion.

The last time the U.S. bishops made a clear statement exposing the evils of contraception was on November 14, 1966. Their “Statement on the Government and Birth Control,” read in part:

In connection with present and proposed governmental family limitation programs, there is frequently the implication that freedom is assured so long as spouses are left at liberty to choose among different methods of birth control. This we reject as a narrow concept of freedom. Birth control is not a universal obligation, as is often implied; moreover, true freedom of choice must provide even for those who wish to raise a larger family without being subject to criticism and without forfeiting for themselves the benefits or for their children the educational opportunities which have become part of the value system of a truly free society.

The bishops continued,

We call upon all—especially Catholics—to oppose, vigorously and by every democratic means, those campaigns already underway in some states and at the national level toward the active promotion, by tax-supported agencies, of birth prevention as a public policy, above all in connection with welfare benefit programs. History has shown that as a people lose respect for any life and a positive and generous attitude toward new life, they move fatally to inhuman infanticide, abortion, sterilization, and euthanasia; we fear that history is, in fact, repeating itself on this point within our own land at the moment.

Judie Brown is president and cofounder of the American Life League.

Sadly, that closing prophecy is being fulfilled. In fact, there are Catholic hospitals across our nation where abortionists serve on staff, where birth control is readily promoted without apology, and where various “protocols” permit the administration of chemical abortion for sexual-assault victims. While the statement of 1966 sounded a rallying cry for all Catholics, the deafening silence and, in many cases, dissent that soon followed drowned out the prophecy of those earlier, courageous bishops.

In 1968, Pope Paul VI issued the encyclical *Humanae vitae*, which states with clarity and insight not only why the Church teaches that contraception is evil but what the outcome will be if all men of good will do not avoid the practice. No sooner had the Holy Father signed that letter than Catholic priests and theologians across the United States registered their displeasure. Full-page ads denounced the encyclical. Meetings and press conferences focused on various “opinions” from noted theologians, disagreeing with the authoritative document. There was discord from coast to coast, but the bishops did not silence that dissent, and the crack in the dam became a cavern.

There are bishops, archbishops, and cardinals in the Catholic Church who do preach on the teachings of *Humanae vitae*, but there is no universal education program in place for Catholics dedicated to teaching that the practice of birth control is a sin and that the souls of those who remain in the state of such sin are at eternal risk. In fact, not a month goes by in which someone does not ask me, “What do you mean? The Church teaches that contraception is *sinful*? Nobody ever told me! My priest encouraged my husband and me to use it.”

After *Humanae vitae*, the U.S. Supreme Court decriminalized abortion, the bishops testified in Congress that they were opposed to it, and the intervening years saw less and less being done to teach the basic truths that must be understood if we are to engage the culture of death effectively and convert it.

In 1995, Pope John Paul II issued *Evangelium vitae*, pointing out that all of those prophecies Pope Paul VI had uttered 27 years earlier had come to pass. He called upon Catholics at every level of life, as well as all men and women of good will, to serve Christ, to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable, and to oppose the unjust laws that protect abortion and other crimes.

The waters, however, remained stagnant. Between tolerance and cowardice, even meager attempts to regulate some acts of infanticide (so-called partial-birth abortion) continue to fail.

A single example from the 2003 March for Life is instructive of the problem at hand. The most popular sign at the march was not “Abortion Is Murder” or “Abortion Is Homicide” but “Women Deserve Better.” But a woman who is with child is a *mother*, not simply a woman. If we would only affirm that fact to these mothers, we would go a long way toward offsetting the pro-abortion propaganda that insists that abortion is “a choice between a woman and her doctor.” While it is certainly true that the expectant mother deserves better than to be pressed into killing her own baby, isn’t it primarily the innocent children, slaughtered by the millions, who “deserve better”?

For the right-to-life movement in 2003, and especially for Catholics, the stark reality is disturbing. The movement’s political leadership has, for the most part, limited its battle to surgical abortion—divorced from its precursors. This obfuscation of the root causes of the evil around us has worsened an already serious problem. By seeking legislative solutions to a problem that is spiritual in nature, far too many of these bishops have left millions of Catholics uneducated, uncatechized, and unpre-

pared to fight the real enemy in all of this—the Devil himself.

The Catholic bishops started with a focused attempt to expose the evils of contraception. In the early days following *Roe v. Wade*, they did not hesitate to focus on the child in the womb as a person of equal worth. Over time, however, they have lost their clear focus on the unchanging truth that every human being is a person—from conception—because God is the Author of every human being’s very existence.

Several politicians today claim to be Catholic without fear of reprimand as they blithely lead the battle to “protect a woman’s right to choose.” Many of them claim that they are “personally opposed” to abortion. As we plead with our bishops to expose these men and women who are constantly scandalizing the souls of others, however, our cries fall on deaf ears. When we do receive an answer, it is all too often a timid response that I fail to understand. As a result, the public ministers of falsehood, masquerading as “pro-choice Catholics,” have won the day.

Who is accountable to God for all the souls misled by this public deception? How will God view the crime if a Catholic mother aborts her child because she honestly believes that the act is nothing more than a “choice”? More intriguingly, how will He view the lack of pastoral teaching, which brought that mother to her desperate decision?

Has the Truth, Jesus Christ Himself, become a mere abstraction to be discussed only in reference to a hunger strike? Or a war? Or a prisoner on death row? Did the seamless garment of 20 years ago become a shroud for the millions of silent murders that take place under the guise of choice? Has the gospel of tolerance prohibited the fullness of the Truth from being preached when the subject is abortion or contraception and the listeners may feel discomfort? Will homilies in this new millennium be based on opinion polls rather than the Word of God?

The right-to-life movement cannot exist without public and private devotion to God and His Church. There is a place for God in the halls of Congress, in the White House, in the Supreme Court; in fact, there is no place where God should be unwelcome. Without God, none of these governmental bodies would exist; none of these bodies’ members would exist, either.

The only way to respond to an expectant mother and her child is with charity. The only principled response to contraception is to expose it as a refusal to accept God’s will. The only realistic response to abortion is to describe it as an act that murders a child created in God’s image. The only viable and realistic approach is to seek God’s grace, God’s will, and God’s Son. Christ is Truth, and through Him all evil will be eliminated.

Bishops and priests must begin to educate at every level regarding the reasons why contraception is not only unhealthy but immoral. The facts do not change with society’s moral climate. To adhere to the Word requires that we be faithful to God, in season and out, popular or unpopular, welcome or unwelcome. We faithful cannot accomplish this alone; we need our shepherds to guide their flocks toward the Lord, without Whom we will never win this struggle.

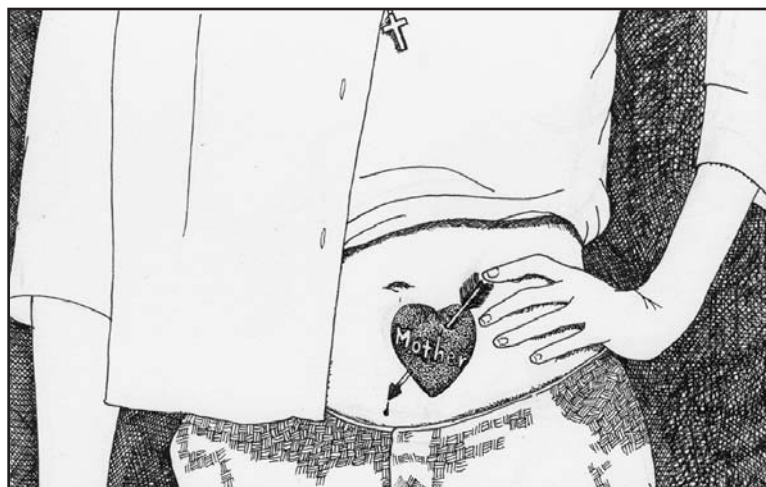
I remain optimistic, however, because, within the Church, from hierarchy to laity, there exists the greatest of all vocations ordained by God—the call to be faithful unto death by imitating Christ and never counting the cost. Where there is life, there is hope. The hope of bringing even one person to Christ and, in the process, saving his or her child is a magnificent possibility. That should inspire each of us to strive harder than ever before to be witnesses to that truth.



Hating Babies, Hating God

Caveat Contraceptor

by Aaron D. Wolf



When I sat down to write this article, Google reminded me that, when it comes to the issue of contraception, the stakes are very high. To check the date of publication of Dr. Charles Provan's important work *The Bible and Birth Control*, I typed "Charles, Provan, Bible, Birth Control" into the mother of all search engines. As fast as my dial-up connection could react, I was confronted with a paid advertisement, spawned by my search criteria, for Ortho Evra, also known as The Patch, the bastard offspring of The Pill. I followed the link and immediately recognized the happy contraceptive from the ubiquitous television ad, who lifts her baby-T to show, just above her panty-line, the flesh-colored patch, which stands up to the ravages of both shower and swimming pool as it pumps norogestromin and ethinyl estradiol into her erstwhile fertile (healthy) body. The Patch, claims the commercial, is for women who just do not have time to worry about taking a pill *every day*.

The first link on the Ortho Evra page is "For Prescribers" and offers a full description of this handy transdermal technology. After stating that The Patch contains the same active ingredients as The Pill, the makers of Ortho Evra disclose something on which Dr. James Dobson and his research group at Focus on the Family, "after two years of extended deliberation and prayer," could not reach a "consensus as to the likelihood, or even the possibility."

Combination oral contraceptives act by suppression of gonadotropins. Although the primary mechanism of this action is inhibition of ovulation, other alterations include changes in the cervical mucus (which increase the difficulty of sperm entry into the uterus) and the endometrium (which reduce the likelihood of implantation).

Aaron D. Wolf, a Church historian, is the assistant editor of *Chronicles*.

Take comfort, then, wearers of The Patch: If you do happen to conceive a child, the fragile embryo will simply be unable to rest in your womb and will disappear, even as The Patch remains intact in the shower or swimming pool.

The list that follows is too long to reproduce here, but suffice it to say, just about every imaginable side effect is warned against, from breast cancer to hemorrhaging to depression to ectopic pregnancy. The one that demands its own box and bold-face type, of course, is that which warns: "WOMEN WHO USE HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVES, SUCH AS ORTHO EVRA, SHOULD BE STRONGLY ADVISED NOT TO SMOKE."

Despite the keen attention given by pro-life crusaders to matters concerning abortion, with far too much detail regularly offered regarding such monstrous practices as partial-birth abortion, very few are willing to consider the possibility that The Pill is an abortifacient. A new life torn asunder from a wicked mother's womb is deemed horrible, but let's roll the dice, when it comes to the chances of discreetly flushing one down the toilet, and hope that those fanatical Catholic anticontraception zealots are wrong.

Behind every pro-lifer who chooses to think, say, about baseball whenever he is told that The Pill kills children is the need to terminate the discussion about contraception in general. There is always the reactionary excuse to fall back on—while Catholics reject (or, at least, they are supposed to reject) contraception because their Pope tells them to, we Protestants listen only to the Bible. From 1517 to 1930, however, no Protestant denomination or group ever permitted the practice, and it was *Protestant* state legislatures across the country that made the trafficking of contraceptives illegal until the Supreme Court intruded in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, paving the way for *Roe v. Wade*.

Last year, a courageous young Protestant couple, Sam and Bethany Torode, urged fellow evangelicals to forsake birth control in favor of an *Open Embrace* within marriage. Their work

reflects the deep commitment in pockets of resistance all over the United States to the official line that contraception is only a Catholic concern. In a well-researched and poignant book, the Torodes argue that Protestant attempts to separate the pleasures of the marital bed from the spiritual blessing of openness to childbearing is gnostic. “By pitting spirit against matter, and companionship against procreation, contraception can become a means of exploiting the body and using one’s spouse—in spite of our good intentions.” They also argue that any attempt to separate the procreative, unitive, and sacramental aspects of marital union leads to all sorts of physical, emotional, and spiritual deformities. And, in a brilliant Foreword, Professor J. Budziszewski of the University of Texas at Austin notes that “Evangelicals in search of God’s teaching turn first to holy Scripture, and that is well and good. But Scripture teaches that God has also built wisdom into the design of his creation, and this is something that evangelicals tend to forget.”

To its credit, *Christianity Today* devoted considerable space in its November 12, 2001, edition to an adapted portion of *Open Embrace*. They could not, however, allow the Torodes to go unchallenged, even for one issue. “This essay,” the editors note, “explains how one young couple answered these questions. An accompanying essay by Raymond C. Van Leeuwen reaches different conclusions.”

Dr. Van Leeuwen’s essay underscores the attitude underlying so many Protestants’ open embrace of contraception. His argument is twofold: First, God is simply bigger than your desire to thwart Him (which, as a principle, is certainly true). If we really believe that God is sovereign, then no barrier can stand in His way:

If God can use even evil to accomplish good (Gen. 45:5-8), surely he can use human actions that seek to serve God with the freedom he has given us. God’s sovereignty works in and through human actions, and, if necessary, in spite of them.

To suggest that birth control is evil or perverse because it undermines God’s sovereignty is to underestimate God’s sovereignty and reject our responsibility to serve him wisely. Of course human choices ought to be made in the realm of freedom set within the limits of God’s law. But where there is no law, our choices are free (Gal. 5)—provided they are wise and serve God.

Here, then, is the *sine qua non* of the righteous use of contraception: Intend to serve God thereby. If God wants you to be fruitful and multiply, He will make it so, despite your best efforts. At issue, therefore, is man’s intent, not his action.

Professor Van Leeuwen’s second argument is even more curious: The famous “Creation mandate” is no mandate at all. “Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28),

is not a commandment, but a blessing. It does not refer to *what humans must do* to please God, but to *what God does* for and through humankind. The text says, “God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply’” (RSV). Fertility is not a command but a blessing that God gives to his creatures, to animals as well as humans (Gen. 1:22) [emphasis his].

Of course, one might respond that the proper answer to a merciful Creator and Redeemer Who offers you a blessing is not “I know better.”

Too many Protestant leaders are simply unwilling to let go of the right to choose—in this case, the right to choose to reject God’s blessing of children. The issue, therefore, is simply not discussed. That life begins at the moment of conception is, thanks to the efforts of courageous pro-lifers, all but universally accepted among Bible-believing Protestant evangelicals. But the notion that the observable order of nature demonstrates God’s gracious design and intention for His Creation is ignored when it comes to so-called birth control.

This stance is not a reflection of the heritage of Protestantism but of the extent to which Protestant theologians have become victims of their times—especially in the realm of biblical exegesis and natural law. We see this in Professor Van Leeuwen’s statement that, “where there is no law, our choices are free.” It is the Enlightenment, not *Sola scriptura*, that tells us that we cannot see the intention of the Creator in the basic operations of nature. Certainly, Lutheran theology does cast doubt upon the ability of “Dame Reason” to lead us to Christ. (In fact, she leads in the opposite direction.) Both traditional Lutheran and Reformed theology, however, underscore along with St. Paul in Romans 1, that “the invisible things of [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead”—but only to the extent that they render fallen man “without excuse” in his disobedience to God.

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.

This is the biblical basis of natural law, which, for centuries, guided Protestants not only in their formulation of morality but in their interpretation of Scripture. (Luther even writes that the only aspects of the law of Moses that are binding on Christians are those supported by natural law.) There need be no proof text for Christians to suggest that homosexuality is a sin. Instead, the biblical witness testifies to that which is already obvious from natural revelation. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul points out that, beyond the validity of the custom of women wearing head coverings in the Divine Service, it is “nature itself” that teaches that “it is a shame for a man to have long hair, but, for a woman, it is her glory.” And, therefore, such violations of nature in God’s house “offend the angels” who are present.

It was obvious to the Protestant Reformers that the natural purpose in marital union was procreative as well as unitive. This revelation of God in natural law was reflected in His dealing with Onan, who, in Genesis 38, was commanded by his father, Judah, to take his late brother Er’s wife as his own, in order that their offspring might be counted as Er’s, receiving his inheritance (a Levirate marriage). Onan took Er’s wife into his bed but “wasted his seed on the ground” and, thus, contracepted. Moses tells us that “the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him . . .”

Modern Protestant scholars insist that it was what Onan intended to do—thwart the purpose of the Levirate marriage—

that displeased God. After all, you cannot thwart God's providence, no matter how hard you try, and Onan was under no natural law and, thus, had freedom to contracept in any other situation. Historic Protestantism, on the other hand, unanimously saw the *action* of Onan as a violation of natural law. In his commentary on Genesis, Martin Luther called Onan's act sodomy:

[T]he exceedingly foul deed of Onan, the basest of wretches . . . is a most disgraceful sin. It is far more atrocious than incest and adultery. We call it unchastity, yes, a sodomitic sin. For Onan goes in to her; that is, he lies with her and copulates, and when it comes to the point of insemination, spills the semen, lest the woman conceive. Surely at such a time the order of nature established by God in procreation should be followed. Accordingly, it was a most disgraceful crime . . . Consequently, he deserved to be killed by God. He committed an evil deed. Therefore, God punished him.

John Calvin agreed, calling Onan's act "doubly monstrous" and tantamount to a "violent abortion" in which the "offspring of his brother" was "torn from the mother's womb" and "cast on the ground." Similar natural-law arguments were made by John Wesley, the great Baptist Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and Reformed commentator Matthew Henry, among countless others.

The Anglican Church became the first Protestant body to sanction the use of contraception, although it took great pains to emphasize that contraception should only be used by married couples. Still, the 1930 Lambeth Conference's declaration rejected natural law in favor of the law of "good intentions": Contraception was deemed permissible "where there is a clearly-felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood." It is precisely married couples, however, who are least likely to have a legitimate reason to avoid parenthood, for having children is what they are commanded (or "blessed") to do. And we know this not only from Scripture (the Creation mandate) but from the birds and the bees, whom God also made.

Conservative Protestants were horrified by Lambeth. T.S. Eliot said that it was an un-Christian experiment to remake society, and Lutheran Hour speaker Walter A. Maier called it "one of the most repugnant of modern aberrations, representing a 20th-century renewal of pagan bankruptcy." The Missouri Synod pointed to St. Augustine's warning that "Contraception makes a prostitute out of the wife and an adulterer out of the husband" and noted that so-called "Companionate marriage has been termed 'licensed prostitution.'"

Nonetheless, one by one, Protestant denominations began to ignore the wisdom of their forebears; by 1981, even the conservative Missouri Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations sanctioned contraception ("Human Sexuality: A Theological Perspective"). While arguing that Christian marriage should be "generally fruitful" and that the Creation mandate is "both a command and a blessing," the commission condemned any "stigma" that is attached to a couple that chooses to "remain childless" (including, presumably, the charge of sodomy) and postulated that,

in the absence of Scriptural prohibition, there need be no objection to contraception within a marital union which is, as a whole, fruitful. Moreover, once we grant

the appropriateness of contraception, we will also recognize that sterilization may under some circumstances be an acceptable form of contraception.

Despite this radical reversal, however, pockets of resistance are gaining ground, thanks to the courageous efforts of such traditionalists as the Torodes, who are calling attention to the Protestant legacy of remembering Romans 1 and the natural law when interpreting Scripture and ordering life. The stakes are high, not only because The Pill and The Patch are, as their manufacturers admit, abortifacients, but, more significantly, because to hate the natural law is to hate God's intention and, thus, to hate God. The Lutheran theologian Lukas Osiander warned, "Such an evil deed strives against nature, and those who do it will not possess the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10). The holier marriage is, the less will those remain unpunished who live in it in a wicked unfitting way so that, in addition to it, they practice their private acts of villainy." We may take cold comfort in the fact that, as contraceptors go the way of the Cathars, who deemed fruitful marriage a sin, their practice is not being passed down to their children, who either are turning against contraception or are simply not around to believe the lie.

[Untitled]

Boris Pasternak translated by Andrei Navrozov

Beloved! Oh hell, when a poet loves
A god falls in love with creation's
Own chaos again, as if from its floods
Comes crawling time's cretaceous.

His eyes may water, as fog by the ton
Envelops him. Antediluvian,
Long out of fashion and probably wrong:
Those days are gone, so get moving.

He sees how the weddings go on and on,
How drink makes the eyelids grow heavier,
How this universally common frog spawn
Can pass, on occasion, for caviar.

He sees how life, like a pearly Watteau,
Is locked in some jewelled cigar-case,
While they object to his whole tone,
His wholesale review of the carcass

Of comfort that, smirking and languorous,
Like dross lies athwart their souls:
Your sister, a Bacchante off amphorae,
He lifts in his arms and consoles.

A thaw of the Andes begins in that kiss,
A night in the open stands dominant,
Its stars freshly dusted and milky its mist,
Its silence now bleating, now sovereign.

Then what the ravine has for centuries breathed,
The gloom of its botany's vestry,
Spreads out the mattress's typhoid grief
And springs into chaos, orchestral.

CHRONICLES INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

Stemming the Tide

by Monica M. Richert and Scott P. Richert

On August 9, 2001, during a speech from his ranch in Crawford, Texas, President George W. Bush put an end to several months of debate surrounding government funding of research on stem cells derived from human embryos. After discussing his administration's research into the matter and declaring his own "deeply held beliefs" in science and technology and that "human life is a sacred gift from our Creator," President Bush announced his decision:

As a result of private research, more than 60 genetically diverse stem cell lines already exist. They were created from embryos that have already been destroyed, and they have the ability to regenerate themselves indefinitely, creating ongoing opportunities for research. I have concluded that we should allow federal funds to be used for research on these existing stem cell lines, where the life and death decision has already been made.

Leading scientists tell me research on these 60 lines has great promise that could lead to breakthrough therapies and cures. This allows us to explore the promise and potential of stem cell research without crossing a fundamental moral line, by providing taxpayer funding that would sanction or encourage further destruction of human embryos that have at least the potential for life.

The President's speech was widely hailed as an acceptable compromise by both advocates of research and pro-life leaders, although there were some notable voices of dissent (the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Judie Brown's American Life League most prominent among them). Almost two years later, however, a number of questions remain unaddressed, not least of which is whether the President's "compromise" has actually restricted the use of government funds to embryos destroyed before 9:00 P.M. EDT on August 9, 2001. Moreover, recent research is calling into question the basic assumption of the President's speech itself: that embryonic-stem-cell research is likely to provide greater advances in the fight against disease than research using adult stem cells.

What Are Stem Cells?

Stem cells may be a source of therapies for a variety of diseases, including diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and heart disease. The National Institutes of Health's primer on stem cells (www.nih.gov/news/stemcell/primer.htm) defines them as undifferentiated cells that can renew themselves and can mature into a variety of other cell types, depending on the stimuli to

which the cells are exposed. Embryonic stem cells are derived from three-to-five-day-old embryos that have been "conceived" through *in vitro* fertilization. They are *pluripotent*, which means that they can become any type of cell in the body. Adult stem cells are found in a variety of tissues but are most often derived from bone marrow. These cells are *multipotent*, which means that they can develop into a limited number of cell types. Until recently, researchers believed that an adult stem cell derived from a specific tissue could only differentiate into cells of that same tissue; in other words, a neural stem cell could only make brain cells, while a liver stem cell could only make liver cells. New studies, however, have demonstrated that adult stem cells can mature into a wide variety of cell types.

Stem cells work by three known mechanisms. They can be introduced into tissue and grow into cells of that tissue type. Alternatively, they can be differentiated in cell culture and then introduced into the target tissue, where they function as a cell of that organ. Finally, researchers have recently discovered that stem cells can migrate to an injured organ and fuse with damaged cells there, regenerating the organ. All three mechanisms are potentially of clinical use.

The Practical Limitations of Embryonic Stem Cell Research

Beyond the moral issue of producing embryos and destroying them in order to harvest embryonic stem cells, there are practical limitations to the clinical use of these cells. Scientists have not yet demonstrated that they can control the differentiation of embryonic stem cells. Moreover, as in a heart or lung transplant, embryonic stem cells may be rejected by a patient, since the cells come from a different person. Finally, if all of the embryonic stem cells implanted into a patient do not mature, tumors may develop. Adult stem cells, on the other hand, do not cause rejection, but researchers have been less interested in them because they are found in very small quantities in most tissues, making them harder to isolate and purify. Also, adult stem cells have not been identified for every tissue. They do not multiply as readily, and, as NIH points out, they could have DNA abnormalities from the environment or genetic disease.

Embryonic stem cells were first isolated from mouse embryos in the early 1980's. They were not isolated from human embryos or fetuses until 1998. To date, no clinical studies have been conducted with embryo-derived stem cells because researchers cannot control their development into various tissue types or prevent rejection.

Adult stem cells, on the other hand, have been used for almost 30 years in bone-marrow transplantation. As early as 1976, reports indicated that bone-marrow-derived cells could be differentiated into bone, cartilage, and fat cells and that these new cells were transplantable. Unfortunately, these observations never became the focus of research, and, by 1999, only a year af-

Monica M. Richert is a research scientist in cell and molecular biology at the University of Colorado Health Sciences center. Her brother, Scott P. Richert, is the executive editor of Chronicles.

ter they were first isolated from human embryos, more was known about embryonic stem cells than adult stem cells. Recent research on adult stem cells, however, suggests that they may be of more clinical benefit than embryonic stem cells.

In fact, studies indicate adult bone marrow may contain a pluripotent stem-cell population that could potentially repair all of the tissues of the body. These stem cells, called *side population cells*, are also found within umbilical cords and in adult blood and other tissues. A relatively abundant source of stem cells is fat obtained through liposuction: Fatty tissue can yield up to 200,000 undifferentiated cells per gram.

The Promise of Adult Stem Cell Research

While researchers cannot control the development of embryonic stem cells into particular tissue types, they have recently demonstrated that adult stem cells derived from one tissue can differentiate into cells of another tissue. Cells derived from skin have been grown into neurons and glial cells, smooth muscle cells, or fat cells, depending on the conditions under which the cells are cultured. An abundant supply of these cells can be obtained through skin biopsies. Bone-marrow cells have been differentiated into cardiac, esophageal, stomach, small and large intestine, kidney, neural, bone, and lung cells in both humans and rodents. Neural stem cells can mature into liver, intestine, kidney, and bone-marrow cells, while pancreatic stem cells can become liver cells. These studies indicate that the ability of adult stem cells to repopulate a variety of tissues may be equal to, or even better than, that of embryonic stem cells.

Doctors at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Michigan, isolated stem cells from the bone marrow of a 16-year-old boy and introduced them through his aorta into his heart muscle, which had been damaged when he was shot with a nail gun while working on his home. The boy's heart regained a significant amount of function after treatment. Moreover, there was no potential for rejection, since the donor cells were his own. In a similar study at the Texas Heart Institute, heart function in patients suffering from congestive heart failure significantly improved after bone-marrow-derived stem cells were injected into their heart muscle.

A 1999 *Nature Medicine* article reported that stem cells derived from bone marrow were differentiated into bone cells and used to treat three children suffering from osteogenesis imperfecta, which causes short stature and brittle bones. The children's condition improved dramatically, and they suffered fewer fractures. At the 2001 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, P. Sanberg reported that stem cells isolated from umbilical-cord blood can be developed in culture into healthy brain cells. When these cells are injected into the bloodstream of rats with brain injury, the cells migrate to the area of injury and repopulate it. In a study of rats who had suffered a stroke, 80 percent of those treated with these differentiated cells recovered, compared with 20 percent of untreated rats. If the procedure works as well in humans, one to two umbilical cords may be enough to treat one stroke victim. This approach may be used to treat stroke patients within two years.

While the usefulness of embryonic stem cells remains unproved, these studies demonstrate the potential of adult stem cells for treating disease. Since there has been less focus on adult-stem-cell research, much is still not known about how adult stem cells function, but, even at this early stage, it seems likely that adult stem cells will be more readily adaptable to

cure disease.

Loopholes in President Bush's "Compromise"

The remarkable advances in adult-stem-cell research over the past two years make the potential loopholes in President Bush's "compromise" all the more disturbing. While government funding of embryonic-stem-cell research is supposed to be confined to cell lines derived from embryos destroyed before President Bush began his speech, NIH's implementation of the President's directive potentially broadens the scope. In a statement released on August 27, 2001, NIH announced that "Such research is now eligible for federal funding as long as the derivation process (which begins with the destruction of the embryo) was initiated prior to 9:00 p.m. EDT on August 9, 2001." Knowing what was coming—as many labs undoubtedly did, since they were approached by NIH before the President's speech to determine whether they had eligible lines—labs may well have decided to keep their options open by engaging in mass destruction of embryos before the President went on TV. Already, of the 11 embryonic-stem-cell lines listed in NIH's Human Embryonic Stem Cell Registry (escr.nih.gov), five are held by ES Cell International, a research lab that had no stem-cell lines listed among the original 64 that NIH had said would be eligible for funding.

Moreover, NIH's implementation relies entirely on the honesty of grant-seeking researchers. The only proof required to make a line eligible for federal funding is a signed affidavit stating that the destruction of the embryo began before the President's speech did. No documentation (such as certified lab notes) is required to support the affidavit, nor is any penalty prescribed for submitting a false affidavit. In other words, the only conditions preventing an embryonic-stem-cell line derived from an embryo destroyed after the speech from becoming a publicly funded line are the integrity of the person signing the affidavit and NIH's willingness to look beyond the affidavit to official research records, which NIH is not required to do.

Of course, these loopholes may be largely irrelevant anyway. By choosing to implement his "compromise" by executive order rather than through legislation, President Bush left the door wide open to its repeal by a future administration—or, for that matter, by his own, if research on the initial pool of embryonic stem cells does not bear the predicted fruit.

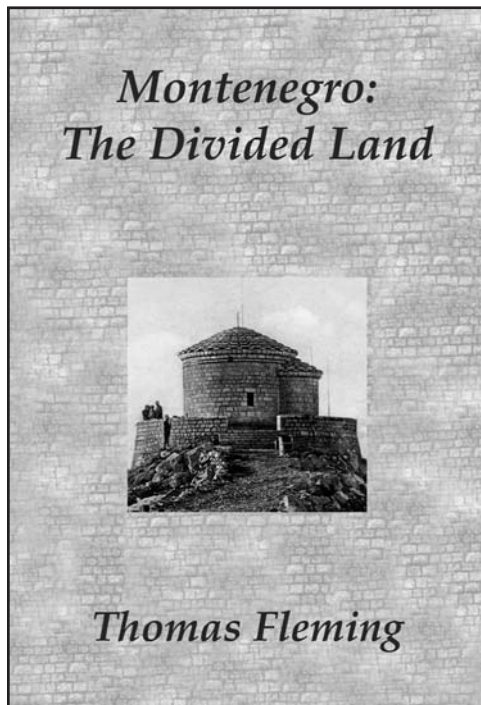
The Brave New World of Embryonic Stem Cell Research

As this article goes to press, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania have announced that embryonic stem cells from mice have spontaneously transformed into eggs, before developing into parthenogenic embryos. (*Parthenogenesis* is a process by which embryos develop from an unfertilized egg. Such embryos do not have a complete set of chromosomes and, therefore, are usually not viable.) Hans R. Scholer of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine declared to the Associated Press his desire "to use these oocytes as a basis for therapeutic cloning and hope that our results can be replicated with human embryonic stem cells." Other news stories indicate that researchers may eventually use this form of human cloning to allow homosexual couples to "conceive" children—eggs made from the stem cells of one male would be combined with the sperm of the other. Welcome to the brave new world of embryonic-stem-cell research, funded by your tax dollars. <C>

This Time, Be Prepared

The Serb land of Montenegro is once again at the crossroads of history. The blood-soaked mountains and dramatic coastline of this small land have been fought over by Illyrians, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Turks, and Venetians, and, in the 20th century, by the armies of Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Germany. In World War II, Montenegro lost more men, per capita, than any nation of Europe, and now it is the latest target of the so-called international community, which has tried to create a phony separatist movement (complete with a bogus national church) to continue the disastrous policies that have involved the United States in wars over Bosnia and Kosovo.

Thomas Fleming has written the first well-researched history of Montenegro in the English language, taking the story from ancient times all the way up to the current crisis over separation from Serbia. This is no dry academic tome but a lively account of a brave people whose brave history rivals the tales of Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae.



“Dr. Fleming has given us an unbiased history of our people that is compact yet thorough, with all the characteristics of a serious, well-documented, scientific study.”

—Slavenko Terzic
Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences

“Dr. Fleming’s book is a fascinating account of the heroic struggle of the Montenegrin people to defend their freedom and liberty against all odds. It tells their magnificent story in a stirring narrative that combines scholarly research with astute observation of how this tiny nation today may yet face its greatest challenge.”

—James Bisset
Former ambassador to Yugoslavia
from Canada

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Long Day's Journey Into Ignorance

by E. Christian Kopff

"There is no use in excellent laws, even ones approved by all active citizens, if the citizens have not been habituated to and educated in the city's way of life."

—Aristotle, *Politics* 5.9

**The Worm in the Apple:
How the Teacher Unions Are
Destroying American Education**
by Peter Brimelow
New York: HarperCollins;
336 pp., \$24.95



In Céline's nightmarish masterpiece, *Journey to the End of the Night*, the hero reaches America in a slave ship. He escapes, but the rest of the crew refuses to go with him. They have their reasons. Being a slave "wasn't such a bad job." (*C'était du boulot moyen.*)

And then—sublime advantage—you never got fired from the galley and the King had even promised them for when they were sixty-two years old a sort of small pension. That prospect made them happy, it gave them something to dream about and on Sundays in order to feel free, in addition, they played at voting.

Céline's slaves come to mind when reading Peter Brimelow's important new book on the "Teacher Trust," his name for the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of

E. Christian Kopff is a professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Colorado in Boulder and the author of The Devil Knows Latin: Why America Needs the Classical Tradition (ISI Books).



H. Ward Street

Teachers (AFT), the two super-unions that dominate K-12 public schools in the United States. (Brimelow follows Milton Friedman in calling them "government schools.") On the top are sensationally overpaid and politically ruthless union bosses. They control the teaching conditions and salaries of millions of teachers, who console themselves for the worsening conditions of their jobs with thoughts of tenure, retirement, and the bogus democracy of union meetings and letter-writing campaigns to newspapers and magazines that publish the truth about the unions.

Brimelow's interest in the hegemony the unions exercise over America's public schools dates to an assignment to write about them for *Fortune*. He tried to pass on it because he had no children and was educated in Britain. "Fine!" his editors replied. "That will make you objective." Brimelow discovered that the unions were

the basis of an important story and an enduring social problem. His specialty is financial journalism, but, as Arthur Griffith, the founder of Sinn Féin, told Ezra Pound, "You can't move the masses with a cold thing like economics." Brimelow, however, has found in immigration and education subjects that can move people, and he reports on them frankly and insightfully.

As a work of investigative reporting, *The Worm in the Apple* is a model of accuracy and intelligence. I hope its readers will include many parents, school-board members, and state and national legislators. They will find in it the facts they need to make informed decisions on one of the most important concerns of an advanced society, the education of the young. Like *Alien Nation*, Brimelow's immigration book, *The Worm in the Apple* presents an important subject with phlegmatic clarity, enlivening its statistics with wry wit. An in-depth discussion of America's teachers unions can be dry and forbidding. Brimelow has a sense of humor and an eye for a good anecdote, like his discovery, in the Michigan Education Association's 34-page pamphlet *Michigan—The Far Right's New Frontier*, of a list of the tactics of the far right: name-calling, scapegoating, exploiting religion and patriotism, threatening, and "demanding information immediately."

SAT scores began to decline soon after AFT President Al Shanker won for New York City teachers the right of collective bargaining in 1961. Jobs once held as public trusts became just another way to make a buck. The NEA, a professional

organization concerned with improving academic standards, became a trade union like the AFT, ostensibly devoted to bread-and-butter issues of pay, hours, and class size. In fact, the teachers' unions became a major source of funding for the far left.

Brimelow is very good on both developments. The unions have little or no interest in professional standards but devote much energy to job protection. Even when a plan is worked out for eliminating bad teachers, the unions are usually able to frustrate it. When states test teachers for basic knowledge, graduates of education schools fail in large numbers, but the unions make it next to impossible to get rid of incompetent and ignorant teachers who have already been hired. The situation is actually worse than the grim picture Brimelow paints, because he concentrates on firing. I worked for months with a high-school principal on a teacher who was consistently killing Latin after the first year. There was no question of firing anybody—just moving the person from a subject that was not being taught successfully to courses that were more impervious to incompetence. When the principal thought the matter settled and was about to hire an excellent Latin teacher, the union intervened and vetoed the plan. The principal took a job with the district's central administration, and I returned to my last. Both of us figured the union made any improvement impossible until the problem teacher retired.

The unions compel magnet schools, with high standards for students, to hire faculty based on seniority rather than teaching excellence. Naturally, good teachers get discouraged and quit. When they do not, the unions may decide to drive them out. That is what happened to Jaime Escalante, the famous calculus teacher celebrated in the film *Stand and Deliver!* When the union officials ran him out of his district in 1997, they sent around a note boasting, "We got him out!"

Ordinary Americans, who worry that public schools are not succeeding, are missing the point. Public schools do what the far left wants. Teachers have average salaries individually, but, as a group, they generate enough money (Brimelow estimates \$1.25 billion per year) to fund expensive voting campaigns, provide a significant portion of the Democratic Party's income, and pay union bosses and their staffs far more than teachers get. In 1930, average class size was 30.5 students.

In 1998, it was 16.5. There are many more teachers in the most expensive school system in the world, and most pay union dues. The far left discovered that there is no need of millionaires to finance their schemes when they can lay their hands on the salaries of America's teachers. With that money, they oppose educational reform and fund candidates who support the leftist agenda.

America has many alternatives to public schools: parochial and private schools, homeschooling, charter schools, etc. According to the NEA, anyone who favors these alternatives is a member of the "Radical Right." The union bosses respond to any discussion of alternatives to the *status quo* in one register. They put out hit lists of the radical right, with the Aryan Nation ranked next to such traditional Christian enterprises as the Christian Coalition and Focus on the Family. Brimelow is coldly ironic about these smears, but it is a question of perspective. Union bosses are so far to the left that they cannot distinguish ordinary Americans from Nazis. People like that should not be educating our children. As French Heleneist Jacqueline de Romilly put it in *Problèmes de la Démocratie Grecque*,

A democracy which allows education to fall into the hands of the enemies of the regime, which does not even try to preserve in education the quality of formation, not for politics, but for citizenship, is lost. Aristotle said it loud and clear.

When the public notices what the unions are doing, the kingpins trot out the New Unionism. The NEA boss will call a press conference to announce that the unions are going to support a reform they have opposed tooth and nail, such as merit pay or charter schools. Reporters dutifully type up glowing descriptions of how the NEA has changed its wicked ways. Brimelow shows in excruciating detail that the reforms are always bogus. Either the bosses never intended to reform in the first place, or they cannot get the members to go along. Reporters who spread these misleading stories receive awards from the unions for excellence in education reporting. There will be no such bouquets for Peter Brimelow.

Brimelow describes memorably the NEA's attempts to found its own charter schools, which fail even when millions of dollars are showered on them, because they are incompatible with the union's

basic commitments. NEA charter schools provide the best evidence for Brimelow's thesis that the teachers' unions are the prime cause of the problems of American education. They cannot compete with experienced and distinguished private and parochial educators, and even ordinary but committed parents can beat them at their own game—not on a level playing field either, because non-NEA charter schools do not have the millions that the NEA wastes on theirs.

The NEA is successful in frustrating most reforms because the strings of power are held tight by very few hands. "In theory the NEA has internal democracy. But in practice it is controlled fairly effectively by its leadership, albeit tempered periodically by chaos." In European communist parties, this is known as "democratic centralism." Brimelow notes that the unions often behave like "the Soviet Union in general and its Communist Party leadership in particular" but adds, "I want to put it on record that I make this comparison clinically and without prejudice, purely as matter of economic analysis. I am not saying the Teacher Trust actually is communist." As the NEA's favorite politician said, that depends on what the meaning of *is* is. I wish Brimelow would explain one thing: What would the union bosses do differently if they were communists?

The Worm in the Apple ends with a "Twenty-four-Point Wish List" with two themes. One is excellent; the other, baneful. The good theme is "remove [the Teacher Trust's] legal privileges." Actually, Brimelow does not suggest removing anything, but rather treating the unions like businesses. His model is the Sherman Antitrust Act, which, by government intervention, restricted the market's natural tendency to monopoly. The power of the NEA lies in its domination of a national market. Brimelow suggests legislation to break up the NEA into its state affiliates, just as antitrust litigation broke up John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil into the separate Standard Oils of New Jersey, California, Ohio, and others. The many good suggestions under this heading are in direct contradiction, however, to the other major recommendation of his wish list.

The problem with America's government school system is socialism. The solution is capitalism—the introduction of a free market. Or, to put it another way, just as economists realized in the nineteenth

century that the tariff was the mother of trusts, so in the twenty-first century we must recognize that the government school system is the mother of the Teacher Trust.

The tariff keeps popping up in *The Worm in the Apple*. It is the King Charles's Head of the free-market Mr. Dicks. Brimelow is a superb investigative journalist, but, once his mind strays to free-market ideology, he and his Gandalf, Milton Friedman, resemble John Nash in Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind*, except that eventually Nash notices that his friend's little girl never grows any older and comes to understand the nature of his delusions, although the visions never go away completely. Free-market true believers see only prosperity and diversity where the rest of us see a decade of record-breaking bankruptcies in good times and bad and the disappearance of entire industries.

Brimelow endorses Friedman's solution to the problems of "government schools": vouchers, where the government hands some of the taxes it has collected for education back to individual taxpayers. Even this is not good enough for purists, who disapprove because the government can and will attach strings to the vouchers.

Pace the purists' theories, historically, governments have played a role in education. In *Bildung: Europas Kulturelle Identität* (Reclam: 2002), German classicist Manfred Fuhrmann discusses three revivals of educational excellence: the Carolingian age, the Reformation, and 19th-century neohumanism. All three were supported by governments: those of Charlemagne, Frederick the Wise and other electors of Saxony, and the Hohenzollern kings of Prussia. I am enthusiastic about America's private and parochial schools and her many effective homeschoolers. I want to see more of all three. The historical record shows, however, that governments have been successful in founding and supporting excellent schools. Our public schools are no longer effective because they have been taken over by the far left.

In a 1998 survey, pollster Julia Kopich revealed why the unions detest charter schools. In charter schools, "levels of salaries and benefits are not a big issue. Even those with lower salaries feel they are compensated for by professional freedom." Charter schools are a standing affront to the unions' vulgar Marxism. Brimelow's support for them is tepid, however, since

we view charter schools as an attempt to import market features into a fundamentally socialist system. Whatever success charter schools have is directly related to the amount of freedom they have to pursue their own visions. Their ultimate responsibility is, and should be to the people who patronize them, not to school boards, teachers unions, or state agencies.

Charter schools succeed because parents are involved in setting academic goals to educate their children in their shared culture. Freedom is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of that success. Both unions and voucher supporters see schools as businesses, with teachers as workers and parents as customers. One group supports workers; the other, customers. The model is the same.

It is the wrong model. Business tries to produce new products, develop new markets, and increase productivity. The search for novelty is at the heart of its mentality. Education, however, is about the transmission of the past. Our nation does not need the innovative courses and departments that deans are always chattering about; it needs students who will become creative and innovative adults. Thousands of years of experience show that traditional courses in challenging foreign languages and mathematics are most likely to achieve that goal. That is the heart of education, where, indeed, no child should be left behind. When they get to college, intelligent students will be able to think critically about their heritage. A few of them will attain real creativity. The last two stages, however, depend on mastery of the first.

Unions are a peripheral problem at universities, where the market model is all the rage among administrators and regents, who say, "We need to run schools like a business." (The business they are talking about seems to be Enron.) Students are customers. The president is a CEO, while teachers have become workers. The ideal of teaching as a lifelong vocation is ignored or derided. Adjunct teachers are preferred to tenured teachers. Courses teaching students the culture that is the source of our way of life are replaced by vocational training or multicultural propaganda. Educational excellence is put on the back burner, while money and positions are wasted in pursuit of "diversity." Grade inflation is encouraged. "Parents are not paying all

this money for their kids to get B's," graders in large courses are told. Innovative courses replace difficult subjects that prepared millennia of Western men and women for lives of piety, creativity, and freedom.

Leftist union bosses and businessmen have the same paradigm in education. *Amicus curiae* briefs in support of the University of Michigan's affirmative-action admissions policies come from both the traditional left and such corporations as Microsoft and American Express. Real education stands in principled opposition to the Enlightenment project, which promises creativity and freedom without tradition. The crypto-Marxism of the union bosses and the economic reductionism of David Ricardo and Milton Friedman both come from the Enlightenment. Their first principles are the same, no matter how much they disagree on means. Handing over our public schools to the NEA and its lackeys on school boards and in education schools has been disastrous. Brimelow has excellent suggestions on controlling and restricting that influence. Man, however, as Martin Luther said, is like a drunken peasant trying to ride a horse. As we prop up the drunken peasant of American education, we must take care that he does not fall off the other side, into the waiting arms of the free marketeer, who believes that money is the root of all goodness; that the market produces prosperity and diversity of itself, without wisdom and self-control and tradition; and that the modern corporation is a good model for schools.

Brimelow includes a sympathetic word for "empowering teachers through true professionalism," one of his many excellent suggestions. Trade-union attitudes undermine professionalism. He cannot leave well enough alone, however. "A better model than 'professional,'" he writes, "might be 'entrepreneur.'" He wants teachers to get a commission for each student, like a salesman.

Teaching, however, is a vocation. Good teachers are driven by something that only other people with a vocation can understand. Brimelow is impatient with this. "This 'profession' stuff is overblown. Journalism is not a 'profession.' It's a trade. Anyone can start writing. . . . Generally, reward depends on individual merit." John Nash, call your office! The most consistently insightful and forceful journalist I know is Sam Francis. The best investigative reporter I know is Peter Brimelow. If Brimelow's Pollyanna vision of the market were true, both would

have positions at major newspapers or magazines, and Maureen Dowd would be editing a website. In the 1950's, urban Americans still had a choice of several local newspapers, where they could read columnists ranging from Westbrook Pegler to Eleanor Roosevelt. Most of those newspapers are gone, and the survivors are in the hands of a small number of conglomerates, which discourage public debate on many important issues—immigration, for instance, as Brimelow knows. The market, not the tariff, tends to produce monopoly. Neither the socialism of the teachers' unions nor the free market has much use for real debate or our ideals of free speech, which developed from a long tradition going back to the Athenian citizen and the Roman senator. They are not likely to survive the rupture with that tradition advocated by union bosses, university administrators, and the CEOs of major corporations.

Alien Nation showed how first-rate economic thinking could contribute to serious discussion of immigration reform, but Brimelow understands, as his indispensable website, *Vdare.com*, shows, that immigration is about more than economics: It is about "the national question," which includes cultural issues, even the status of Christmas in our national life. Culture is important to education, too, because the basic mission of teaching is handing down our cultural heritage. Albert Jay Nock, in his *Theory of Education in the United States*, explained how to go about reforming education. First, we must be clear about our goals. For that, we need a clear vision of our nation's way of life. The Founding Fathers studied and passed on a heritage that was English, Protestant, and classical. Enjoyment of that heritage requires the traditional classical curriculum, taught by educated men and women drawn to teaching as a vocation. Breaking the stranglehold of the NEA and AFT on America's public schools is an important step toward restoring American education. It will profit us little, however, if we drive out the devil of leftist indoctrination only to leave our classrooms to be filled with the seven devils of consumerism, vocationalism, and multiculturalism. The American people owe a debt of gratitude to Peter Brimelow for making the relevant facts available to them. They need to take the next step—not as customers, but as parents, believers, and citizens.

◀

The Patriot

by Bill Kauffman

Dreaming War: Blood for Oil and the Cheney-Bush Junta

by Gore Vidal

New York: Nation Books;
197 pp., \$11.95



Edward Abbey used to say that he took great pride in getting more radical as he got older—no easy task for the anarchist son of a communist father, but an impeccably American maturation just the same. As the American Empire staggers into senseless senescence, what patriot, whether populist, reactionary, or just cantankerously American, *isn't* being radicalized by a Cheney-Bush state that bids to make FDR's reign look like an Edenic age of flower-power pacifism and carefree liberty?

Our greatest living man of letters, 78-year-old Gore Vidal, has grown into our greatest living dissident. If his latest work, *Dreaming War*, does not pass muster with the literary critics of the Department of Homeland Security, so much the better. For patriotic Gore Vidal is fighting a last valiant battle to preserve—no, to reclaim—the American republic that once was.

Vidal as pamphleteering elder is in the mold of his forebear Edmund Wilson, who contributed the corrosive classic *The Cold War and the Income Tax* (1963), in which the absent-minded Sage of Talcottville explained his guileless failure to pay the publicans from 1946 to 1955. Wilson concluded in this strange and prophetic little book that the United States had become "self-intoxicated, homicidal and menacing"—this before LBJ had fulfilled his promise to bring the Great Society to Vietnam, at a cost of only a million-plus Vietnamese and 58,000 American boys dead and a few sleepless nights for Robert McNamara.

In his radical old age, Edmund Wilson protested with equal vigor the depredations of the unspeakable Robert Moses, who was stealing land from the Tuscarora Indians on which to build a power plant, and the state highway department's destruction of the elm tree in front of his house in order to widen one of the highways that were so sacred to the Greatest Generation. A patriot of the America

that had produced Bronson Alcott and Johnny Appleseed, Henry Thoreau and James Fenimore Cooper, Frederick Douglass and Eugene V. Debs, Wilson despaired that

our country has become today a huge blundering power unit controlled more and more by bureaucracies whose rule is making it more and more difficult to carry on the tradition of American individualism; and since I can accept neither this power unit's aims nor the methods it employs to finance them, I have finally come to feel that this country, whether or not I continue to live in it, is no longer any place for me.

And so off Wilson went, hopping down the bunny trail, burrowing ever further into his ancestral home of Talcottville, New York. Mary McCarthy called him an "unreconstructed isolationist"—which brings us to Gore Vidal.

Vidal, then a mere stripling in his 30's, was almost alone in praising Wilson's alternately exasperated and despondent polemic. Now it is his turn to play the Ghost of America Past. The most brilliant essayist of his age, Vidal, like Wilson, has taken up the pamphleteer's pen in his two most recent works, *Dreaming War* and *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: How We Got To Be So Hated*. "How Gore Vidal Got To Be So Hated" would make for an interesting essay in itself, but I get the feeling that we have been down that path before. (See the March 1989 issue of *Chronicles* and the resultant "Stop Payment" orders on foundation checks.)

So what are the policy prescriptions of this dangerous radical? Eliminate the income tax and devolve the taxing power to states and municipalities. Call off the ruinous drug war. Decentralize political power along the lines of the Swiss cantonal system. Bring home our troops. Slash the "atrocious taxes that subsidize this permanent war machine." Decimate the budget of the War Department (coily renamed the "Department of Defense" by the amusingly surnamed President True-Man). Fine ideas all, and within the Jeffersonian tradition. Gore Vidal ought to be a revered elder of the libertarian side of the American right. Alas, said side has simply vanished. As far as I can tell, there is no place for old-fashioned Americans in the party of Limbaugh and Rumsfeld. Hell, I voted straight Green

last November, and even that did not seem nearly radical enough.

The essays in *Dreaming War* compose a witty and erudite isolationist critique of U.S. foreign policy since Pearl Harbor. You must remember that Vidal was a teenage populist who was catechized in Bryanite truths by his Roosevelt-hating grandfather Thomas P. Gore, the blind senator from Oklahoma whose pet cause was submitting any congressional declaration of war to a popular vote. ("Congressional declaration of war": an archaism today on the order of "the cat's pajamas.")

Young Vidal grew up "at the heart of an isolationist family"; he was a leader of the America First Committee at Exeter before enlisting in the Navy. Even in the bleakest hours of World War II, Gen. Robert E. Wood, chairman of that noble Middle American committee, kept an amusing tally of the isolationists in uniform and the warhawks on the homefront. Or as Vidal writes, "in our politics the sissies are always cheerleading the real guys to go on to give their lives." That pipping squeak you hear behind the clanking of the tanks is George W. Bush, yell leader at Andover.

Vidal was raised on plausible tales of Rooseveltian perfidy, of disregarded warnings of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and he asks, quite naturally, if September 11 might not have been "a replay of the 'day of infamy' in the Pacific sixty years earlier?" As a populist whose bloodlines run through Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Mississippi, he wonders what on earth U.S. soldiers are doing 8,000 miles from their homes. He understands that an isolationist America is a peaceful America; had we minded our own business, Bin Laden and his deranged murderers would be as indifferent to our land as George W. Bush is to the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Dreaming War features Vidal in full populist voice; anyone who would criticize him as "anti-American" simply does not know what a real American sounds like. Let him speak for himself:

Our people tend to isolationism and it always takes a lot of corporate manipulation, as well as imperial presidential mischief, to get them into foreign wars.

[O]ur more and more unaccountable government is pursuing all sorts of games around the world that we the spear carriers (formerly the people) will never learn of.

Since George Washington, the isolationist has always had the best arguments. But since corporate money is forever on the side of foreign adventure, money has kept us on the move . . .

Vidal is a proprietary patriot. The country is his, his ancestors built it, and he has been an exemplary citizen-writer of the sort once found in antebellum America. His sense of belonging to America enables him to perform acts of *lese majeste* with glee and impunity. For instance, Vidal has a healthy disrespect for Harry Truman, the nearsighted Godzilla who taught the mothers and children of Nagasaki a thing or two about weapons of mass destruction. Truman, in committing us to an apparently eternal involvement in the broils of Europe—precisely the mistake against which Washington and Jefferson warned—"replac[ed] the republic for which we had fought with a secret National Security State" whose subjects we are. A draft, loyalty oaths, the uprooting of millions of American boys in the service of militarism, "the highest personal income taxes in American history": Such were the rotten fruits of a Cold War that waged war on republican government, local culture, and good old American individualism with an effectiveness the grim commies must have admired from afar.

The Constitution is a dead letter; since Truman, we have lived under the poisonous assumption, writes Vidal, that

the United States is the master of the earth and anyone who defies us will be napalmed or blockaded or covertly overthrown. We are beyond law, which is not unusual for an empire; unfortunately, we are also beyond common sense.

Vidal's politics are really quite simple. As he once told an interviewer, "I hate the American Empire, and I love the old republic."

To what extent the Bush-whacking of Iraq was motivated by oil, Israel, or—my choice—simply the mad logic of empire, I have no idea. I only know that committing the young men and the treasure of the United States to the semipermanent policing of the other side of the world is not in the American interest and is especially not in the interest of the small places, the havens of particularity, the villages and neighborhoods that produce what is

healthy about American culture. Gore Vidal is right: The petulant rich kid in the White House and his retinue of war-dreamers are the enemies of this country. They dream war; we dream America. Welcome to their nightmare.

"Today, we are not so much at the brink as fallen over it," remarks Vidal. Not that he, too, isn't an American Dreamer, given to fits of optimism. In his giddy moments, he dreams of "the coming impeachment trial of George W. Bush." Sweet dreams—and maybe constitutional government—are made of these.

Vidal concludes an essay on Guatemala, scene of his underrated early novel *Dark Green, Bright Red* (1950), with this exchange:

I was at school with Nathaniel Davis, who was our ambassador in Chile at the time of Allende's overthrow. A couple of years later Davis was ambassador to Switzerland and we had lunch at the Berne embassy. I expressed outrage at our country's role in the matter of Chile. Davis "explained" his role. Then he asked, "Do you take the line that the United States should never intervene in the affairs of another country?" I said that unless an invasion was being mounted against us in Mexico, no, we should never intervene. Davis, a thoughtful man, thought; then he said, "Well, it would be nice in diplomacy, or in life, if one could ever start from a point of innocence." To which I suppose the only answer is to say—Go!

How about it, patriots? If it's long past morning (if not mourning) in America, the chimes of midnight have yet to ring. Go!

Bill Kauffman's Dispatches From the Muckdog Gazette has just been published by Henry Holt.

Looking for a good book?



www.ChroniclesMagazine.org

Hello, Mr. Clint

by Thomas Fleming

Grotties Don't Kiss: A Prep School Memoir

by Clinton Trowbridge

Port Jefferson, NY:

The Vineyard Press; 211 pp., \$19.95



As I grow older, I think less and less about trying my hand at fiction. For an old man who has kept his eyes open and made a few mental notes of what he has seen, the great temptation is to write a memoir. Even a good novel may never find a publisher, while even a bad memoir will be read, if only in typescript, by friends and relations, either to see what made the old man tick or, more often, to find reasons to laugh at him. Clinton Trowbridge (Groton class of 1946), giving in to the temptation, has produced a book that will be enjoyed by a circle of readers who have never known a Trowbridge and never attended Groton.

Grotties Don't Kiss is successful memoir written in plain English. The author, by his own account, has gone through life without pretending to understand too much of it, and he records the strange things that have happened with the lack of guile that bears witness to his own follies. Trowbridge, an English professor turned essayist, explains on the first page that, at the age of 12, he "was sent away to boarding school, because, for one thing, it was cheaper than keeping me at home." Trowbridge *père* was a minister and friend of the headmaster, and young Clint (if I may take the liberty) was a "gargantuan eater" who consumed the price of tuition "in boiled potatoes alone."

Clint is not especially mischievous, but he can never stay out of trouble. He is no Tom Brown or Stalkey, only a hard-luck case who always seems to get caught, racking up demerits as if he were competing for a prize. I sympathize. As a high-school sophomore, I once received a minus-40 in deportment (100 was perfect; 70, passing), for nothing more serious than locking the biology teacher in the supply closet and running off to play soccer (a game I otherwise detested).

Trowbridge's Groton years span the late 30's and all of World War II. Groton was naturally Anglophile, and the boys

were asked to help the British by making blankets and scarves. "Groton Knits While St. Mark's Drills" ran the headline in a Boston newspaper. Boys are less susceptible to propaganda than adults are, and, when his father called for Lindbergh's execution or hailed de Gaulle as the savior of Europe, Clint was quietly hoping the reverend gentleman would shut up and not spoil the fishing. "We were supposed to be saving tinfoil and cheering each time the British bombed another city in Germany, but all I wanted to do was to go sailing and play tennis and forget about all that."

The worst nightmare of prep-school life is the predatory homosexual, by no means as common at Groton (as an English refugee explains) as in Britain. Nonetheless, Trowbridge was picked on by an older student, who repeatedly made degrading attacks on him. Trowbridge, in telling this unpleasant tale with the same terse narrative as the rest of the book, offers a quick glimpse into a sick mind of an abuser who cannot admit the nature of his own desires, which he projects upon his victim. As I read his matter-of-fact account, I began to understand some of the bizarre stories I had heard of locker-room rapes performed by apparently macho young athletes.

Young Clint was not much of a student, and, like too many English professors, he had little respect for the formalities of language:

I wasn't good at any subject . . . But in Latin I was hopeless. I couldn't have cared less how many parts Gaul was divided into; and why, I kept asking myself, were we studying a language that nobody spoke any more? Not that French was any better.

He learned enough Latin, however, to give some strength and clarity (if not strict correctness) to his prose. I know my highly grammatical and literate friends in the profession will forgive me if I say that, in general, English professors have the worst grammar and write the worst prose in the academy. I well remember my Latin professor reading Professor Trowbridge's angry letter of resignation from the faculty of the College of Charleston and blue-penciling the mistakes. Yes, Clinton Trowbridge was my teacher in freshman comp, a class I had to take because he detested (quite correctly) my initial essay, which had been written in an "experi-

mental" prose style based on what the Greeks called an *apo tou koinou* construction. What is surprising is that I was not sent in for a psychological evaluation.

I had my ups and downs with Clint. Since I hated going to class—and three cuts were grounds for expulsion—he allowed me to sit in the window at the back of the room and read. I broke my part of the bargain, which was not to disrupt the class, when he turned it into a necktie party, with Wordsworth as the designated victim. I hated Wordsworth up to that moment, but, listening to the dimwitted attack (led by a girl whose brother I would know in later years as a conservative Calvinist), I became an archdefender of the Lake Poets (and still am). Relations did not especially improve in the next few years, and I recall an exchange of insults at a party, Clint's iron grip (sailing had given him strong arms and hands), and my sucker-punch to his academically soft underbelly. I never did apologize. (Sorry for being a jerk.)

Teachers, by definition, are not human beings, though young Trowbridge seems to have appreciated his teachers better than I did, and it gave me a rare pleasure to read this charming and unself-conscious memoir of a hardworking and dedicated teacher.

Thomas Fleming is the author of *Montenegro: The Divided Land*.

The Fronts

Marshall Fishwick

Spreading Misandry: The Teaching of Contempt for Men in Popular Culture

by Paul Nathanson

and Katherine K. Young

Montreal: McGill-Queen's

University Press; 370 pp., \$29.95



We hear much about misogyny (woman-hating) these days but far less about misandry (man-hating). *Spreading Misandry*, coauthored by a woman who has written extensively on women's issues, identifies negative stereotypes and double standards that harm not only men but society as a whole. Paul Nathanson and Katherine K. Young document the hostility toward, and contempt for, men

that pervade our films, TV shows, universities, cartoons—even our greeting cards. This book turns the table on the sex wars.

Misogyny is considered morally and even legally unacceptable. Not so misandry. Most people ignore it, excuse it, trivialize it, or even justify it, as the sex gap grows ever wider. The problem of sexual polarization must be faced, however, not only because tolerating it is inherently dangerous but because overcoming it is inherently good.

This book avoids the emotional outbursts and charges that dominate much recent scholarship and characterize many texts and journals. It is meticulously researched and carefully documented: There are 50 pages of notes and references. The goal is to make clear that society has not only silenced men but dehumanized them to such an extent that many men now find it difficult to recognize their own humanity.

Fostered by political correctness, misandry dominated the 1990's and shows no signs of abating in the new century. It has been actively promoted in academic and political circles, featured on talk shows, and given free reign in popular films and on television (especially in commercials). Popular culture has both mediated and fostered the teaching of contempt for men. The revolution has been successful because, as Marxists would say, the new values are now firmly embedded in everyday life. We hardly see them, let alone challenge them.

The first three chapters discuss relatively “benign” forms of misandry: laughing at men, looking down on them, and bypassing them. These were initial strategies in countering the “plot” (history as a titanic conspiracy of men usurping power from women, oppressing them, and covering up the ugly truth). The more dangerous lines of attack involve the deliberate falsification of evidence to make political claims about sex—the claim that men are ontologically evil and that bad boys end up being beasts. The authors provide numerous examples from film, television, popular culture, and feminists tracts.

The “new order,” based on “feminist values” or “women’s spirituality,” would merely substitute matriarchy, in some form, for patriarchy. In this brave new world, males would be carefully controlled and duly punished for deviating from the prescribed norm. This world can be achieved only by social engineering on a colossal scale. Several observers

have noted obvious ways in which feminist ideology is quasireligious in nature. Like both religious fundamentalism and Marxism, it has an answer for every challenge.

What strategies have been concocted to achieve these goals? Three main ones, Nathanson and Young contend: political correctness, deconstruction, and “fronts” (rhetoric used to conceal ideas and goals that would otherwise be unacceptable). For example, pluralism, diversity, and multiculturalism make ideal fronts for radical feminism, each celebrating ethnic and sexual differences rather than human universals. All of these strategies pit “us” against “them”: “They” deserve nothing but public ridicule and attack. At the same time, it is now unthinkable, especially for public figures, to ridicule or attack women. (It is perfectly respectable for women to ridicule or attack men.) As a result, men are often silenced as effectively as women allegedly once were silenced. There are also more specific fronts for feminist ideology—reform as a front for revolution and anger as a front for hatred. Anger is an emotion; hatred is a worldview.

The authors’ ultimate goal, they claim, is to reverse the current polarization of men and women by laying the foundation for a new social contract between the sexes—one that takes seriously the distinctive needs and problems of both sexes. In the end, our society will have to find ways of solving the pervasive and destructive problem of sexual dualism.

Marshall Fishwick teaches at Virginia Tech.

Sublime Misrule

by Catharine Savage Brosman

The Lords of Misrule:
Poems, 1992-2001

by X.J. Kennedy

Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins
University Press; 93 pp., \$14.95



X.J. Kennedy can be said almost to be a popular literary figure. (A New Jersey native, Joseph Charles Kennedy, born in 1929, adopted his pen name upon settling in Massachusetts.)

This is not at all to say that he belongs to popular, or mass, culture. But his accomplishments in verse have been widely recognized, and deservedly so; and he has helped to make poetry more popular.

The Lords of Misrule, Kennedy’s seventh full-length collection, gathers together a decade’s worth of poems, concluding with “September Twelfth, 2001,” to which are added a few predating 1991. Many of the poems appeared in a variety of journals and magazines, including *Chronicles*. The title refers to the personage, called king, or lord, or abbot of misrule, appointed at the English court in the late 15th century and early 16th to supervise the Christmas revels; similar figures presided in some university colleges and inns of court. A prefatory poem, “Invocation,” calls down the services of “sweet Meter” and “strict-lipped Stanza” to regulate the revels of the poet’s lines, just as the lords of misrule confined “jubilation / To tolerable order.” Kennedy places his collection, thus, under the signs of regularity, control, and formal values—features that characterize his work generally. Control, however, can itself get out of order, charmingly so on occasion. “For Allen Ginsberg,” a short homage to the deceased poet, paints him as “misrule’s lord”—in this case, more a reveler than a disciplinarian—but acknowledges (with a reference to Blake, another weird visionary) his “glee and sweetness, freaky light / Ginsberg, Ginsberg, burning bright.”

Kennedy’s verse ranges from strict meter and rhyme in symmetrical stanzas, sometimes in fixed forms (sonnet, villanelle, brief epitaph), to looser verse displaying slant or other irregular rhymes, irregularly distributed, and with considerable variation in line, stanza, and meter (that is, where “misrule” is not entirely reined in by “rule”). Technical virtuosity is everywhere in the collection; happily, it often seems more a handmaiden to, or facilitator of, other qualities than a purpose in itself. Occasionally, it might seem that the poet’s ear has failed him, when an otherwise-regular iambic beat is interrupted, say, by trochees or anapests; this tactic however, is, probably deliberate, demonstrating that order need not mean utter enslavement to a formula. In fact, such liberties belong properly to a body of work whose substance is contemporary.

Modern, that is, but not *modernist* in the least. Kennedy is not driven by Pound’s aphorism “Make it new.” Yet his realm is the world of today, mostly America, occasionally elsewhere. Exceptions—a trans-

lation of Villon's *Ballade des pendus*, poems on Francisco Franco and a 1930's five-and-dime, on Henry James and Constance Fenimore Woolson, on Longfellow, even Ponce de León—just call attention to the dominant contemporaneity in topics and settings and the pervasive presence of today's world, almost too recognizable, which that final poem, on the events of September 2001, brings chillingly close. Mentions of pizza parlors and soluble tattoos, the evening news and aspirin, proclaim that poetry is fed by and directed to the everyday. Airport bars and waiting areas—where, it seems, the poet has spent no little time—a gathering of bikers, a pile-up on the highway, a scene in police court, a close call in traffic when a woman opens her car door imprudently: All such recognizable pretexts for poems mark Kennedy as an up-to-date author, dealing with what his readers likewise see, but see less well than he until his lens brings it into focus. Perennial themes—death, desire, beauty, aging—arise with ease from these points of departure. “A Snapshot Rediscovered,” for instance, re-does the familiar *topos* of yesteryear's snows, or *ubi sunt*:

... The magic box
Whose simple click froze summer's
passing dream

Has fastened you in childhood,
long before
You opened like a new-built
house a life,
That of a threadbare country
doctor's wife.
How few the years till cancer
closed your door.

But here you are with your invent-
ed toy
This empty cup suspended in
midair,
Arms lifted, sunlight drifting
through your hair,
Your upturned face still wreathed
in utter joy.

Similarly, throughout Kennedy's poems, the diction is generally of easy access, revealing the author as a “regular guy” in speech as well as concerns. There are even a few vulgarities (*e.g.*, “horny man”). If this preference for common language seems to be in tension with the formal symmetry of many poems, perhaps that is a false reading: There is no inherent reason why rhyme and meter can-

not fit today's topics, as yesterday's. Nor is it a matter of sanitizing the deplorable aspects of the times by use of traditional forms; pointed, concise, well-crafted verse makes any critical stance stronger.

Though Kennedy admires in verse what he calls “energy,” he does not restrict it to the dynamics of form; it arises also from his subjects and treatments of them. His modes and tones are various and contrasting, including the satirical vein visible everywhere but illustrated especially in *Cross Ties* (1985) and the lyrical vein dominant in *Dark Horses: New Poems* (1992). In his witty mode, he can be light and amusing, or tender and touching, or acerbic and cutting; he can deftly evoke a scene or a human figure through quick, telling touches; he offers elsewhere thoughtful, though rarely extended, reflections. These modes can be combined felicitously also, the light and the serious elbow-to-elbow. He imitates with great ease the tone of the times, as in “A Scandal in the Suburbs,” a disturbing short satire involving a Christ figure:

We had to have him put away,
For what if he'd grown vicious?
To play faith healer, give away
Stale bread and stinking fishes! . . .
Why, bums were coming to the
door—
His pockets had no bottom—
And then—the foot wash from that
whore!
We signed. They came and got
him.

As easily as it expresses delight elsewhere, Kennedy's rhymed verse may convey pathos, as in “Death of a First Child”:

Christmas. The laden sack
Draws noose-tight now its string,
The cherished gift sent back
Though heralds sing,
Though tinkling carols drift
And dull-tongued church bells toll,
An anti-gift is left
Like stocking coal.

Kennedy does not neglect the natural world, either: He has soft-voiced meditations on deer (and ticks carrying disease), maples in winter, the seasons of New England. In another vein, illustrated by “Mustafa Ferrari,” he can relate a humorous anecdote with economy, borrow the voice of its chief character (an Egyptian boy driving a horse-drawn tourist car-

riage), and end the scene with a flourish: “Farewell, Mustafa Ferrari. You have style.” In contrast, there is the critical seriousness of the splendid long ballad (32 rhymed quatrains and a final sixain) on Fenimore Woolson and James. The poem depicts the friendship (documented) between the two but expands it imaginatively:

Women writers, she knew, in re-
tired shade grew
While the sun shone on male
scribes' names;
Still, a glimmer of admiration grew
Between her and Henry James.

They stroll down the Strand and visit Stonehenge, correspond when Woolson leaves England, meet in Florence, until Woolson, in Venice, takes her own life, from a despair perhaps not unconnected to his absence, geographically and sentimentally:

Some passerby kicked at a bundle
Of white rags that uttered moans—
It was Fenimore leaking her life away
On the cold-nosed cobblestones.

If, according to some critics, Kennedy's verse had too often, in earlier collections, the defects of its virtues, leading some commentators to conclude that he was only an “extremely witty lightweight,” this poem, along with certain others in *The Lords of Misrule*, demonstrates convincingly his poetic breadth and vigor, and the depth of feeling that his verse can convey. The collection confirms his position as a preeminent voice in American poetry today.

Catharine Savage Brosman, professor emerita of French at Tulane University and honorary research professor at the University of Sheffield, has published numerous works of poetry and prose, including Finding Higher Ground: A Life of Travels, which has just appeared from the University of Nevada Press.

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